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A Phenomenological Study of Female Gender Inequality in the Defense Industry

Erica Helaine Woods
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

A Phenomenological Study of Female Gender Inequality in the Defense Industry

by

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MBA, Davenport University, 2004

BA, Michigan State University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Applied Management and Decision Sciences

Walden University

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Abstract

Despite advances made during the women's movement, gender inequality is a problem for women seeking leadership opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry today. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced gender inequality obstacles in their professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The mommy track framework, defined as the family/work imbalance; the gatekeeper framework; and the institutional sexism framework were used to guide this study. The research questions focused on how these women perceived both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. Defense Industry. A criterion sample of 18 civilian females who worked within the defense industry was interviewed. Data analysis included coding, categorizing, and analyzing themes. The resulting 5 themes were worker bee, traditional mentality/transitional workforce, education/training/network, traditional organizational culture, and fighting back. The findings also identified that gender inequality is apparent, women limit their potential growth, Queen Bees sting Wannabees, and traditional organizational cultures maintain the status quo as the norm and enforce gendered stereotypes. The study leads to positive social change by raising awareness to policy-makers, educators, and women that can help set an agenda to overcome gender inequality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In chapter 1 the researcher discussed the background of this study that reflect on the struggles that females face in the fight for equality from the 18th century to present. This chapter also included information on the barriers that civilian females face in not being able to climb the ranks within the United States Defense Industry. The nature of the study included discussion of the pros and cons associated with three research designs: biography, ethnography, and phenomenology. In addition, two research questions are identified. Next, the conceptual framework included discussion of the following theories: mommy track, human capital theory, occupational segregation, gatekeeper philosophy, institutional sexism, glass ceiling, and cultural transformation. Several operational definitions are also identified by the researcher to give the readers an understanding of how the terms are used throughout the development of the dissertation. The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are discussed by the researcher in this chapter. The researcher closes out chapter 1 by discussing the significance of the study that included the implications for social change.

Background

In the 1800s, females in the United States were beginning to demand rights they had not previously realized. For instance, females wanted a voice within the United States political system via the right to vote and by the mid-1800s the Women's Rights Convention was formed to bring large numbers of females together for the right to vote ("Women's Rights Movement," n.d.). By the early 1900s, organizations were formed to

focus on the development of females beyond their traditional gender roles (“Women’s Rights Movement,” n.d.). However, female’s entry into the workforce did not guarantee gender equality.

As World War II began, females in the United States entered the workforce. During this time females were approved by society to provide income assistance to their families and fill the vacancies in industries that were left by males who had become soldiers overseas (Turk, 2012; Miller, 2011). As females fulfilled the needs to work to assist in the survival of their families and to support the rise of industrialization, they were not being paid adequate wages.

The female struggle to obtain equality in the workplace continued. Many industrialists believed they could hire females as cheap labor because of their societal insignificance (Pettit & Ewert, 2009). It was not until the 1960s that the core of the women’s movement began to make serious changes within the social order in relation to women’s rights (“Women’s Rights Movement,” n.d.). The feminist movement became widespread throughout the United States and some in society were beginning to accept its premise. However, the women’s movement alone was not enough to drive significant change.

Although, Affirmative Action and the Equal Pay Act of 1964 were also significant advancements for gender equality. The debate was if these policies were intended to grant equality within the workplace. Pettit and Ewert (2009) suggested these policies were not intended to grant equality to females within society; rather, they were laws implemented to end racial and ethnic disparities in business. In addition, Cooke

(2003) and Pratto and Espinoza (2001) argued, Affirmative Action did not guarantee equal pay, nor did it provide for promotional opportunities. Bridges and Nelson (1999) suggested the Equal Pay Act was not initially intended to focus on females. The intention of the act was to ensure that all people of like qualifications, performing like duties, were entitled to compensation that was equal (p. 1). According to Bridges and Nelson, equal pay did not force businesses to promote females into positions of authority and, as time progressed, females were delegated to positions subservient to males within the workforce, such as teachers, secretaries, and nurses. Equal pay only meant people filling the same positions were required to receive equal wages. Cooke (2003) suggested when only females were being placed within specific jobs, equal pay was not related to gender equality, and only focused on position equality. This led females to compete against other females rather than be considered equals in the working environment.

The development of policies such as Affirmative Action and The Equal Pay Act, along with the spread of global female organizations and the impact of female contributions to society demonstrate changes have occurred. Today, females control corporations, serve in high governmental offices, and even aspire to become president of the United States (Barclay, 2006; Schein, 2001). However, gender inequality remains a factor in the makeup of the social order. Women still face several obstacles to succeeding in male-dominated organizations (Washington, 2011; Catalyst, 2010). As a consequence, it was the researcher intention to get an understanding of how females respond to gender inequality within the workplace.

This research study focused on a segment of the United States Defense Industry. The defense industry of the United States is made up of various organizations, such as the military, and tier 1 and tier 2 suppliers (organizations that produce products and services for the military) that assist the government in its mission. Research suggested,

Militaries have been identified as masculine institutions, not only because they are populated with men, but also because they constitute a major arena for the construction of masculine identities and play a primary role in shaping images of masculinity in the larger society. (Sasson-Levy, 2011, p. 91)

According to Levy and Ramant-Gan, (1998, p. 873) “the military reflects civilian inequalities in its ranks and the extent to which power acquired in the military can be converted into social position in return to social life. Levin (2011) described the military structure as masculine. Gustavsen (2013) suggested that the armed forces embody one of the society’s most gendered realms and that female’s represent a significant minority in the armed forces. The defense industry of the United States is male dominated and cultivated during patriarchal times, this constitute as a barrier to women’s advancement within the military.

Although studies have been done to examine inequality in terms of jobs, missions, or leadership within the military. Sasson-Levy (2011) examined the gendered balance of power in Israel military and found that women are victims of the military gender regime. As women are not assured equality in terms of jobs, missions, or power; women are assigned roles aligned with their biological differences of helpmates to and mothers of soldiers, and convoy escorts (p. 75). Females in the British armed forces are not

permitted to serve in direct combat posts (Woodward & Winter, 2004). There was little literature found that explored the perceptions of civilian females that worked within the U.S. Defense Industry that addressed inequality issues along the lines of promotional opportunities. This created the idea to gain an understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had encountered problems with advancing up the ranks within the U.S. Defense Industry. No adequate answer has yet set stage for reform. In addition, phenomenological studies were not conducted to understand the perspectives of women themselves (Sasson-Levy, 2011). As in the first wave of the feminist movement, most of the studies in the second wave replicated liberal feminism that reflected the development of women into the workforce promoting social change. Despite reforms, gender inequalities continue to show relevance.

Problem Statement

In this study, the researcher wished to understand how females responded to gender inequality and how females perceived the lack of opportunity to attain leadership roles. Qualitative research problems typically involve determining the “what” and the “how” of the subject matter (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 88). Despite advances made during the women's movement, gender inequality is a problem for females seeking leadership opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry today. The gap found within literature was the lack of information supported by women that work within the U.S. Defense Industry with regard to their encountered issues of gender inequality and their perceptions of the barriers that exist to their professional advancement opportunities. With that being said, there is a need to understand the perceptions of women that work within the U.S. Defense

Industry about encountered issues of gender inequality and the lack of access to professional advancement opportunities.

Some females are denied equal opportunity in fulfilling leadership roles. The ratio of males to females in executive roles is nearly 10:1 (Gunelius, 2012). Gunelius (2012) found that in the state of California, “Women hold only 10.4% of the board seats and highest-paid executive officer positions. That’s one woman for every ten men in the top leadership roles at these 400 high-profile public companies” (para 4). Catalyst (2012) displayed the representation of females in the top Fortune 500 companies to be 14.4% of Fortune 500 executive officers and 7.6% of Fortune 500 top earners.

Females make up nearly half of the workforce. Yet, females only make up 2.6% of Fortune 500 chief executive officers (CEOs) and 7.6% of Fortune 500 top earners.

Consequently, there is a need to yield insight on the subject of females who experienced issues of gender inequality regarding career opportunities to determine barriers that prevent females from professional advancement opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the phenomenological design was to interpret the experiences of individuals regarding a phenomenon in order to understand the individuals’ meanings ascribed to that event. The objective of this phenomenological study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The central phenomenon to be explored was described by the gap in promotional opportunities available for females in the U.S. Defense Industry.

It is the responsibility of all to ensure gender equality for females in the workforce. When one segment of the population is oppressed in any manner and prevented from experiencing the freedoms that are available in society, it is the responsibility of that society to take action and prevent such unfair circumstances from continuing (Hewlett, 2007). Esmaili, Kaldi, & Navabakhsh (2011) discussed gender inequality and how the lack of promotional opportunities for females had become a business standard in many organizations. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) reported unequal pay for females in businesses throughout the United States, by indicating that females only make up 31% of the corporate industry's highest earnings, or only 81% of male weekly earnings. In addition, Catalyst (2012) reported that females were underrepresented as corporate officers at only 14.4%. More females earn lower wages than males do and are underrepresented among the highest earners. Because of the historical precedence of gender equality, some females believe that advancing within a company is not possible (Gunelius, 2012). Consequently, the objective of this study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced barriers, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry.

Nature of Study

In this section, the researcher discussed the features of a qualitative research method, a phenomenological design, the instrument to gather the data, and identified the sample population. The researcher present the advantages and disadvantages of two methods, qualitative and quantitative, and the pros and cons associated with three

research designs (biography, ethnography, and phenomenology) to explain why one method and design was preferred over the other research methods and designs.

Qualitative methods are criticized as not being as scientific as the quantitative method (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012). The qualitative research method involves explaining an action or meaning through a narrative style. Creswell (2013) explained a qualitative researcher must be willing to do the following, "commit to extensive time in the field; engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis; write long passages ...to show multiple perspectives; and participate in a form of social and human science research that does not have firm guidelines" (49). An advantage to qualitative research may be in the opportunity to gain insight in the form of comprehensive explanations. Janicijevic (2011) expressed "qualitative methods are used for exploring symbolic elements of culture" (p. 70). A qualitative study unfolds the context and social meaning from a broad spectrum to the specifics of how it affects individuals. Pandey (2009) explained the qualitative method entails gathering in-depth data on people's perceptions, contexts, and processes of social events.

According to Creswell (2013), the essential reason for selecting a qualitative method may be due to the need to explore the research topic; the need to present a detailed view of the topic; to study individuals in their natural settings; to maintain the role as an active learner to narrate the story from a participant's view; and because of the nature of the research question. A quantitative method cannot be used to explore the meanings held by people through a collection of in-depth analysis. As a result, the

research method chosen for this study was qualitative as the researcher wished to describe, explain, and understand the meaning of the experience in relation to gender inequality for females in the U.S. Defense Industry.

There are several qualitative research design models, such as biography, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case study. However, in a sense, all qualitative research is phenomenological (Merriam, 2009). The researcher decided to briefly discuss the phenomenological design in-depth. The purpose of the phenomenological design is to identify a phenomenon commonly experienced. To focus on the experience and how it is transformed into conscious and interpreted (Merriam). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the researcher must describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding a phenomenon in order to understand the individuals' meanings ascribed to that event. In this approach, the researcher focuses on the psychological side of human experiences. There is a search for the essential meaning associated with the single phenomenon, provided by the participants; these meanings are bracketed into themes, and then the researcher integrates these themes into a narration. In this study, the researcher wished to identify the commonalities the females experienced regarding the phenomenon within a natural setting. As a consequence, a qualitative research method using a phenomenological design aligned with an interview method as the instrument to collect data was selected to understand the experiences of females who have encountered issues of inequality and their perceptions of barriers to their professional advancement opportunities. A criterion sampling design was used to allow the researcher to select a sample of 18 subjects, satisfying the criterion.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gain understanding of the reality of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The effect of this quandary resulted in several questions (see Appendix A). However the main research questions identified in this phenomenological study was:

1. What was the lived experiences and perceptions of females who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to professional advancement opportunities?
2. How do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry?

The objective of this study was to understand the perceptions of civilian females not being able to climb the ranks within the U.S. Defense Industry and to explore the lived experiences of females who have encountered barriers in the pursuit of professional advancement opportunities.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, theories that grounded the research were described. The following theories were used to address the human and social premises that affect female professional development, which will follow a more detailed explanation in chapter 2. The theories explored were used to assert philosophies that support issues of gender disparity. Theories such as the second sex, the feminine mystique, and sexual politics pertaining to gender in modern organizations echo out-of-date research. Therefore, the

theories of the gatekeeper philosophy, institutional sexism, glass ceiling, and occupational segregation were needed in this study. Lambert (2005) claimed most theories on the issue of gender and the workplace are from the perspective that males are allowed independence, while females are penalized for independence (p. 331). Connell (2005) argued in the workplace, males maintain a masculine culture that is unfriendly to females and males are in charge of most resources necessary to employ female independence. De Beauvoir (1949) suggested females must first define their role as a female. Male norms associated with the corporate world include “male forms of expression and achievement” (Lambert, 2005, p. 331), associated with independence, focus, clarity, discrimination, competition, individualism, control, and activity. Lambert suggested females associated with the corporate world are “penalized for independence” (p. 331), and are connected to perceptions of interdependence, desire for acceptance, receptivity, and perceptions of being part of a whole. De Beauvoir also implied that females are reliant upon males and, in the economic spectrum, males hold better jobs, get paid higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than females. The seven theories that have been used to explain workplace gender inequality are mommy track, human capital, occupational segregation, cultural transformation, gatekeeper philosophy, institutional sexism, and the glass ceiling.

Mommy track

The mommy track theory is used to explain why gender inequality continues to exist, despite female participation in the workforce. Most females who have entered the labor market struggle with juggling the responsibility of parenting and working, in

addition to striving to continue their education to pursue and obtain certain careers (Miller, 2011). Sidle (2011) defined the mommy track as females taking reduced work hours or an extended leave of absence to focus on family. The natural act of becoming pregnant and bearing a child is the primary element that ends female career aspirations (Miller, 2011). During the stages of social development, nature often interferes with female educational and career goals.

Motherhood provided the basis for occupational segregation between genders. Laurin, Gaucher, and Kay (2013) described the mommy track as a social maturity that hinders female career advancement and leads to less education and experience gained. Not only do females have the primary role in nurturing children, but Nguyen (2013) suggested that females who have entered the labor market struggle with managing the primary responsibility in the home and child care after birth. Proponents of this theory encourage equality and shared parenting, and offer solutions to change the inequality of parenting roles (Craig, & Mullan, 2011). The mommy track theory is used to explain why gender inequality continues to exist, despite female participation in the workforce. Mommy track theorists also raised awareness about the division of household labor and power and gender.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theorists have identified various variables that hinder female career advancement. Dunn (2012) defined the human capital theory as the talents that individuals offer based on their knowledge, training, and experience that are referred to as qualifications organizations search for. Most workers seek to find the best paying jobs

that fit their lifestyle (e.g., children), skill set (e.g., education and experience), and preference (e.g., work environment and location). Danjuma, Malami, and Gatawa (2011) explained human resources as the supply and full employment of expanding resources (i.e., labor) and efficiency as demand. According to Huffman (2013) the human capital theory may be described as voluntarily investments, such as: education, skills, and labor market experiences known as the supply side of what employers demand from individuals. Most employers seek to find the best human resources such as: education, experience, and skillset to meet the demand of their organization.

On the other hand, certain organizations seek to find individuals that major in a specific field of study. Spark (2010) suggested education was the key to human capital development. Kubik (2010) voiced that the most acknowledged interpretations of the human capital theory is the average years of schooling (p. 63). Chattopadhyay (2012) expressed that human capital is the outcome of learning and that education is considered an investment that involves sacrifices of resources with no present benefit but with an expectation of future gains. Bunting (2013) described the human capital theory as a cash generating potential or an asset class for an individual by stating:

...what is left behind if a person's real and financial assets are completely stripped away: cash, shares, property, cars - the lot. The residual in this doomsday scenario of a thought experiment is a person's set of skills, education and abilities. (p. 17)

Besides education and training, Dunn (2012) explained the human capital theory as the experience, expertise, reputation, and association to networks and organizations. Miller (2011) argued females achieve less experience in the labor market due to having

children during the childbearing years. The difference between the genders is that females invest less into their human capital. Employers may view females as unreliable if they are “unwilling or unable to relocate due to family responsibilities, women who are seen as juggling a career and a family are sometimes perceived as not adequately committed to the organization” (Brown & Lewis, 2005, p. 39). The human capital theories discussed include three variables significant to motherhood, experience, education, and association to networks that affects women’s career advancement.

Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation is the differences in task-oriented and character traits individuals or groups exhibit. Van der Lippe (1998) described occupational segregation as unequal chances of obtaining income, status, and power. According to Kalantari (2012), occupational segregation forces females to pursue careers that are identified with their gender roles such as nurses, school teachers, and secretaries, which also mirror a low pay scale. Klimova and Ross (2012) discussed the gender division among industries and occupations, and made it clear that women concentrate in low paying occupations despite their high levels of education and have remained at a disadvantage in terms of pay and status. Men associate themselves with higher pay scale jobs like engineering. Occupational segregation is distinguished by demographics, such as: gender, in connection with superiority and inferiority. Occupational segregation by gender is common in social and cultural environments. However, placing this theory into the context of the work environment is detrimental to female capability, as it contributes to wasted human capital, and reduces the economy’s ability to adapt to change.

Gatekeeper Philosophy

The gatekeeper philosophy is similar to most organizational hierarchies, whereas males are the headship or gatekeeper. Cheng and Tavits (2011) explained how gatekeepers are powerful enough to control the pipeline of candidates that have an indirect effect on women. Bucerus (2013) suggested that gatekeepers can significantly influence the process of gaining access and trust. Fisher (2014) expressed:

It's no secret that the retiring generation of senior business professionals in America today is disproportionately represented by white men. The progress of growing diversity in our business culture over the last few decades has left the impression that new demographic groups are only grudgingly invited to the party as each of them pass through a painful vetting process with the gatekeepers. (p.14)

This philosophy was used to create the existing workforce that developed from traditional employment practices to control access to resources and to determine barriers that prevent women from professional advancement.

Institutional Sexism

The concept of this theory have changed over the years from gender discrimination being taught in early childhood through the education system to violence or harassment toward a specific gender. This paper make use of the theory in the past context. According to Stalk (2005), Western civilization promoted institutional sexism “instructing generation after generation that white male dominance is either biologically determined or God-ordained” (p. 197). Lawrence (as cited in Barclay, 2006) described institutional sexism as “hidden, unconscious, and unwitting attitudes affecting the behavior of the organization” (p. 1). Barclay (2006) hypothesized that institutional

sexism referred to unconscious stereotypes embedded into the cultures of people and structures of organizations. O'Reilly and Borman (1984) described institutional sexism as a stereotype developed and influenced in educational settings replicated into patterns of hiring and promoting. O'Reilly and Borman characterized this theory as a process of schooling that reinforced chauvinist attitudes "in this society, schools reward sex-role conformity, socializing girls for motherhood and boys for work and leadership" (p. 110). Institutional sexism was taught early in childhood from generation to generation. This theory was used to explain why gender inequality continues to exist, despite female participation in the workforce.

Glass Ceiling

Females have entered the workforce in significant numbers and continue to face struggles. The glass ceiling theory is widely recognized in society as the barriers for professional women seeking promotional advancement into leadership roles. Bosses and Taylor (2012) confirmed the phenomenon continues to influence behavior among gatekeepers. Zamfirache (2010) linked the glass ceiling theory to invisible obstacles and artificial barriers stiffened by stereotypes, media related issues, and informal boundaries. She explained that the media plays a significant part in perpetuating stereotypes and setting standards for women. There are a number of reasons for the glass ceiling effect and some of these reasons are beginning to be removed from the workforce by technological advances and cultural changes. First, females bear children and are considered the primary caregiver of the family, meaning females will devote more time to raising children than males (Singh & Kiaye, 2013). Having to take time off from their

career, they may be overlooked for advancement and lose time to pursue goals and develop skills (Bombuwela & Alwis, 2013). Some companies are unwilling to offer power to females (investing in professional development), as these females may then have to take temporary or permanent leave to have children (Singh & Kiaye). However, with the advent of computer technology and the acceptance of telecommuting, females have been able to work from home to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities while they stay home to raise children (Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2012). Studies revealed that the glass ceiling remain to exist, whereas females can only rise so far within an organization.

Cultural Transformation Theory

The market is continuously evolving with technologies, new strategies, and improved talent in the global market. In order to remain competitive, organizations must stay diverse (Frontiera, 2010). Technology provides insight in the modern workplace for females because the virtual marketplace has terminated some issues of gender inequality (Anderson, 2013). However, many organizations embrace the European American male-dominated culture (Saseanu, Toma, & Marinescu, 2014). Itzin (as cited in Agapiou, 2002) expressed, “organizational cultures as: hierarchical, patriarchal, sex-segregated, sexually divided, sexist, misogynist, resistant to change, and to contain gendered power structures” (p. 699). Saseanu, Toma, and Marinescu (2014) claimed that in many organizations, female values are given less significance than male values. Hakim (2006) argued corporate policies lead to gender inequality in the labor force, which promotes segregation between the genders. Cultural transformation theorists have proposed systematic changes that triggered cultural patterns of development from past, present, and

future expectations (Frontiera, 2010). Anderson (2013) described the cultural transformation theory as a development from historical male domination to modern partnership. The cultural transformation theory was used to explain why gender disparities remain to exist within diverse growing organizations.

The conceptual frameworks provided insight as to how gender inequality manifests itself in the workplace and how individuals perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry. These manifestations are punishment for maternity leave, lack of knowledge, skills and experience between genders, ascribed work-related roles, and traditional organizational cultures. These logical connections have developed in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of gender, which will be explained more in-depth in chapter 2, literature review.

Operational Definitions

Diversity: Diversity is defined as the perceived difference among people in age, profession, or gender. Ely and Thomas (2001) defined diversity as “a characteristic of groups of two or more people and typically refers to demographic differences of one sort or another among group members” (para 4). However, Cox, Quinn, and O’Neill (2001) stated that “diversity is the variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined employment or market setting” (p. 3). Diversity is a necessary trait in any organization as it engenders creativity and cultural integration in a business environment increasingly characterized by transnational trends. Without diversity, there can be no gender equality.

Discrimination: Discrimination may be described as the difference in benefits to individuals based on various attributes of how others identify people. The difference in characteristics such as ethnicity, weight, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, combat exposure, military rank, and gender (Foynes, Shipherd, & Harrington, 2013). According to Zweich (2010) the significant pay difference between male and female was described as pay discrimination; employment opportunities for certain groups of individuals was described as employment discrimination; and arbitrary restrictions on access to some professions, to managerial or decision making positions was described as professional and positional discrimination, respectively. Sasson-Levy (2011) explained that women's promotion in the military served as the basis for discrimination (p. 86). Within this paper discrimination is scripted as the difference in promotional opportunities between genders.

Inequality: Inequality may be described as the unequal balance between genders within the division of child care, house hold responsibilities, pay, power, and status. Inequality is the difference in any number of domains, such as: education, economic, and gender (Dorius & Firebaugh, 2010). Prentice and Shelton (2012) described inequality as a relationship that links the haves and the have-nots. Melamed and North (2010) suggested that inequality relate to interpersonal prejudice, stigma, or power relations. This paper focus on the imbalance impacting mainly females.

Gender gap: The gender gap is defined as the difference in pay and promotions between males and females. It is the differences that exist between males and females in the access to opportunities and resources, such as political activities, equal compensation,

and educational institutions (Esmaili, Kaldi, & Navabakhsh, 2011). Brooks and Valentino (2011) defined the gender gap as the divergence between males and females. Gender is the social category specifying the cultural and social prescribed roles men and women are to follow and are a universal dimension on which status differences, between the sexes, are based. However, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (as cited by Borass & Rogers, 2003) the gender gap can be described as the difference in jobs held by females and males, and the difference in earnings between genders. Boraas and Rodgers described factors that contribute towards the widening of the gender gap that include years of schooling, experience, industry of employment, and occupational choice. However, Boraas and Rodgers suggested that the primary factor contributing toward the widening of the gender gap is those industries that pay above average, which are usually industries that are dominated by males. This definition delineates gender inequality.

Gender inequality: Gender inequality may be defined as the imbalance between genders. According to Beneria and Permanyer (2010), gender inequality may be described as, but not limited to, the gender gap in the division of labor, education, access to resources, financial autonomy and bargaining power, and political leadership. Esmail et al. (2011,) explained gender inequality as the “differences between men and women in receiving social and economic advantages which is often to the benefit of men at the expense of women” (p. 564). In this study, gender inequality refers to occupational segregation along the lines of gender, whereby certain opportunities are offered to a particular gender over another. As Xiaoping (2006) explained that occupational segregation exists when the percentage of one gender group in a certain occupation is

higher than that of the other gender group or when gender differences in employment opportunities exists. This terms was used to point out the imbalance between men and women with respect to promotional opportunities.

Gender stereotypes: The assumption is that gender inequality is being carried out through gender stereotypes existing in the corporate world. According to Carl (2012), gender stereotypes are ill thoughts of gender differences. It is believed that these stereotypes are based on traditional male-oriented discriminations that are in place because of built-in inequalities. Heilman (2001) stated, “stereotypes influence evaluations in work settings’, being competent provides no assurance that a woman will advance to the same organizational levels as an equivalently performing man” (p. 657). Such stereotypes include the notion that females are too emotional to effectively make decisions in the interests of the company, males are incapable of practicing a sensitive management style, females do not have the intelligence to manage companies, and males do not have ability to change in their acceptance of female leadership (Heilman, 2001).

Catalyst (2005) reported that male traits are defined as aggressive, rational, and independent, whereas female traits are defined as friendly, sentimental, and caring. However, these notions are based on the traditional struggle between the sexes, in which females have no place in the economic and social world because they are too domestic and emotional, and males are particularly suited to a style of leadership that is logical, distant, and hard-edged. In other words, stereotypes are generalizations categorizing individuals into groups (Aina, 2011). Stereotypes are strengthen and carried out in the media and throughout organizational cultures.

Leadership: Leadership may be defined as earned authority or headship. Burns (1978) defined leadership as a motivational process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual understanding to collaborate and focus on the mission of the organization through the leader's vision. Salas-Lopez et al. (2011) identified leadership as the ability to influence others to do their best and to want to follow the vision of the leader. Leadership is the ability to enable, influence, and motivate others to effectively contribute towards the mission of the organization (Van Emmerik, Wendt, & Euwema, 2010). Hawkins (2009) described leadership as the ability to influence success through the use of employees in alignment with the mission of the organization. This term was used to identify the role that gatekeepers protect from females.

Phenomenological study: A phenomenological study is used to describe the lived experiences of individuals in relation to a phenomenon. According to Byrne (2001), phenomenologists examine experiences of humans to gain an understanding of the essential reality of the lived experience (p. 830). Pringle, Drummond, Mclafferty, and Hendry (2011) explained the phenomenological design as a qualitative experiential research approach rooted in psychology for the purpose of making sense of personal experiences by focusing on participants' cognitive, linguistic, affective, and physical well-being. Merriam (2009) suggested, "Phenomenology can manifest what is hidden in ordinary, everyday experiences and help to describe and assimilate human experiences" (p. 390). Phenomenology is a means for understanding the phenomenon that affects the lives of individuals from their conscious perspectives (Giorgi, 2012). Applebaum (2012) described the phenomenological design as a psychological method that is a reflective

engagement supporting a discovery process that is always implicitly intersubjective. The phenomenological study was used to identify the essences of the phenomenon, gender inequality.

Promotional advancement: Promotional advancement may be used interchangeably with professional opportunities, professional development, and career advancement opportunities, or leadership development. A professional may be described as an expert in their occupational field, development may be described as growth or a consequence, and opportunity may be described as the chance for advancement in rank within that work field (Dictionary.com, 2012). Ayers (2009) explained that education leads to increased opportunity into well-paying, socially powerful professions requiring specialized knowledge and skills that family and social networks secure. Opportunity creates a condition favorable for progression toward a goal.

Lewis-Enright et al. (2009) described the model of career progression as the male commitment of working long hours. Though some may describe their career as their livelihood. Crafts and Thompson (2007) also associated long working hours and geographic mobility to career success. This term is used to demonstrate a significant change toward success, and growth in rank exemplified by title change, capital gain, skill development, and greater access to information and resources.

Role models and mentors: In traditional organizational cultures, there is a lack of female leadership role models and mentors. According to Fried and MacCleave (2009), a mentor has influence over a protégé's career decisions by encouraging certain behavior and by providing support, advice, and information; a role model is a person an

individual admire. A role model may be described as someone others can look up to and aspire to be like, and mentors may be described as coaches and teachers who provide direction, and help in developing individual's skills and intellectual growth supporting personal and professional goals.

Traditional organizational cultures: People within each culture are taught what their positions are in order to be accepted within the dominant culture. It is a socially constructed framework for understanding and making sense of the organizational norm and experiences (Bellott, 2011). Individuals within minority cultures eventually accept there given roles as a means of conforming to built-in expectations. Traditional organizational cultures consist of customary managerial hierarchy patterns of social interaction through which European American males exert more influence and exercise more leadership in board rooms and in top leadership meetings (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Catalyst Quick Takes, 2007). Lewis-Enright, Crafford, and Crous (2009) described organizations enforcing such cultures as the “gentlemen’s club” where males build relationships based on similarities and where leaders do little to support the development of disadvantaged groups. Within traditional organizational cultures, there is a prevailing philosophy that affects how people will interact with one another and how each culture will operate in relation to other cultures.

United States Defense Industry: The U.S. Defense Industry may be described as organizations that operate out of the United States to produce weapons for the defense of the United States. Many have described the U.S. Defense Industry as being a “major world power” (Agapos, 1971, p. 41), and a military industrial complex of “weapons-

makers” (Schevitz, 1970, p. 49). The U.S. Defense Industry includes the ground combat, aerospace systems, information systems, electronic systems, and military defense supporting the U.S. national security and nondefense applications (Oyler, Pryor, & Pane Haden, 2011). The defense industry is a part of an increasingly interdependent global economy (Coffman, 1998), which includes companies such as Tacom, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, United Technologies, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Eaton, L-3 Communication, Ecosystems, and Textron (Guay, 2009). This term was used to identify the population sample.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

In this study, it was assumed that all the participants interviewed would be honest. It was assumed that the interview questions would allow the participants to be able to identify modern barriers. It was assumed that gender inequality is recognized by those who are subjected to it or at least the appearance of inequality is realized. It was assumed that the participants have encountered some form of issues align with gender inequality and are employed by the U.S. Defense Industry.

Limitations

While there are low numbers of female-headed corporations in the United States (only 15.6% of corporate officer positions), there is no evidence this is due to gender inequality specifically (Catalyst, 2007). Therefore, the study was limited in its ability to provide proof of extraneous variables that could have affected gender inequality due to the reliance on case studies, such as role evolution, career selection, field of study, and

task suitability that influence the development of the industrial system. Another limitation, may be align with the phenomenological design selected, which can explain the understandings of participants from their perspectives and may help to later develop casual studies. However, because of design limitations, this study may not be generalizable to a larger or different population, this limitation was intentional because of the need to formulate a foundation for future research and to explore the issue in its initial stages.

In addition, the study was restricted to the examination of females and their individual cases pertaining to their experiences of gender inequality within the U.S. Defense Industry. This means that there is no capacity to make generalization about other industries. However, it was hoped that the unit of analysis would include diverse females at different levels of an organization so that the researcher may determine the impact that organizational career models relative to stereotypes regarding professional development have in terms of gender equity and to allow the researcher to present general findings on the experiences of gender inequality among females from various backgrounds. There was no control for ethnic bias.

Scope and Delimitations

This phenomenological study was limited to only the investigation of females who have encountered issues of gender inequality and who are employed by the U.S. Defense Industry. Individuals who do not recognize gender inequality was excluded from the study. The experience was measured by the reality of females who experienced inequality in career advancement opportunities based on their gender. Due to the

sensitive issue under investigation, ethical concerns and the risk of publicizing confidential information, some aspects of the case material was disguised to protect the identity of the participants. Because it was essential not to change the variables related to the phenomena being described, the researcher altered characteristics and disguised the case detail by adding extraneous material (American Psychological Association [APA], 2001). Name changes occurred to protect the identity of various companies and the participants interviewed.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study was to gain understanding of the reality of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The central phenomenon to be explored was described by the gap in promotional opportunities available for females in the U.S. Defense Industry. Given the intricacies of leadership, compensation, and gender in U.S. Defense Industry, the significance of this study was in the suggestion of possible ways to eliminate gender barriers and to create equal opportunities in higher levels of leadership and the compensation scale.

Changes have occurred in the number of females entering the U.S. Defense Industry. According to Rosen, Knudson, and Fancher (2003), the number of females entering the military workplace has evolved. However, Booth (2003) suggested the female unemployment rates in the defense industry are characterized by the disadvantage females experience in the defense labor force. Rosen et al. also claimed that the military culture enforces a “male-only” social environment. The effect of this research problem

has been the cornerstone of much debate and research. For this reason, the objective was to fill a gap in the literature by gaining an understanding of the perceptions of females not being able to climb the ranks within the U.S. Defense Industry. In addition, it was the researcher intent to find out where females see themselves in their organization's hierarchy, to find out if females are seeking opportunities to move into leadership roles, to find out what females are doing to make themselves marketable for promotions, and to find out some barriers females have experienced during their career development.

The participants who experienced issues of gender inequality in promotional opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry may offer insights for females who are interested in climbing the corporate ladder. The analysis of the participants' experiences provided many answers to understanding the issue of gender inequality. The design permitted the researcher to gather information about the participants' experiences that allowed the researcher to describe the reality of the experience.

Implications for Social Change

It was believed this research has the ability to promote positive social change in the workplace and throughout society, as well as the ability of changing perceptions of gender issues among individuals. The research has value because it allowed the creation of a basis for future research that can be conducted on the same phenomena. Using the phenomenological research method offered an insight into the essence of the experience about gender inequality for females in the U.S. Defense Industry. Future researchers could expand on this issue by examining a culture group (i.e., African American females) in a more in-depth manner.

The results of this study may lead to a better awareness of gender inequality, thus creating a need to change the mindset of existing leaders that represent the U.S. Defense Industry. Bridges and Nelson (1999) contended that the “laws that have been created to date only serve to support the existence of gender inequality in the workforce and that through an examination of these laws it is evident that equality in the workforce has consistently been avoided” (p. 1). Bridges and Nelson examined political decisions, labor laws that have focused on pay, and judicial decisions that have supported the separation of genders in relation to all aspects of society (p. 309). Bridges and Nelson explained, “what was accomplished consistently is the legalization of gender inequality and that in order to realize actual change is needed in relation to the separation of genders, the entire social structure would have to be altered” (p. 309). Change may be needed, but “realizing that change is needed is not a realistic goal” (Bridges & Nelson, 1999, p. 309). People need to work together as change agents, females need to allow their voices to be heard, and the education system needs to enforce change early on during childhood development.

Although many females have advanced in the corporate world, gender inequality remains in the way of opportunities for career advancement and access to leadership positions for females in the workplace. McDonagh (2010) argued that stereotypical attitudes are present in organizations, but not all females understand these challenges, which makes it difficult to address. McDonagh discussed experiencing the labyrinth in health care and found the glass cliff theory as one explanation why some females are appointed into leadership positions. McDonagh also found that females in leadership

positions found themselves living in a male's world, as one participant explained, "she was almost fired as a young executive for speaking up on an issue. A senior male executive wanted her terminated but was stopped by a valued mentor who recognized this was a totally ego-driven issue." (p. 42). In addition, McDonagh claimed that female experience was being stereotyped as not being intelligent enough to be leaders and those stereotypes initiated doubt about female leadership abilities which causes females to work twice as hard to outperform males to be seen equally competent. This revealed evidence that gender inequality still exists.

Research reveals that gender inequality remains to exist within most industries. Bagchi-Sen, Rao, Upadhyaya, and Sanggmi (2010) confirmed the shortfall of females in high ranks within the information technology (IT) area of cyber security. Bagchi-Sen et al. argued, "women must evaluate the required skills and the existing barriers if they want to advance to executive levels" (p. 25). Bagchi-Sen et al. identified social, institutional, and personal challenges as barriers to female career advancement in cyber security. The "hacker culture" was one institutional barrier that reflected long hours, obsessive behavior, and the "good ole boys" network. Bagchi-Sen et al. stated, "To be ready for a 24x7" work culture is difficult for most women due to the role of managing a work/family balance (p. 28). Bagchi-Sen et al. also found that females find it hard to build a sense of belonging in a network of like-minded peers; however, without such a bridge, females are unable to establish necessary relationships, learn the game, and gain access to internal information. More males pursue computer science in higher education, which implicates the lack of female mentoring opportunities for those females who

decide to pursue such program of study. There is a lack of female trendsetters in the field for female students to emulate. Personal challenges such as interests and abilities are another barrier to gender equality, but the most critical skill barrier is the lack of effective training in communication skills. Bagchi-Sen et al (2010) pointed out that for career advancement to take place, it is critical to have the ability to establish relationships within and outside the organization, exhibit organizational loyalty, actively participate in teamwork, and to acquire new knowledge and efficient communication skills related to the four P's (product, process, people, and policy). In other words, adapt to the 24x7 work culture.

Social change is necessary to support gender equality initiatives. Majcher (2002) stated, "although gender inequality has existed in every society throughout history, social change has the ability of occurring if each segment of society that is associated with inequality is addressed separately" (p. 221). Majcher discussed the issue of gender inequality in academia and stated "long-standing separation of genders has occurred throughout all institutions of higher learning in relation to students and professionals" (p. 221). Majcher believed one approach in altering gender inequality in these instances was to "award financial compensation to institutions when they achieve quotas in relation to equal pay, equal placements, and equal opportunities to both genders" (p. 221). Because the action occurs within a societal institution that impacts a vast number of people, including children, the desire to extend equality in relation to education will ultimately occur as a natural form of social evolution. As this takes place over time, the philosophies

supporting gender inequality within society will be altered and societal change will take place because it is necessary for the development of all people.

Summary

There is a need for each segment of society to address the issues of gender inequality. Bagchi-Sen et al (2010) identified the need to bring about social change within the IT area of cyber security to create gender equality; McDonagh (2010) acknowledged the need to bring about social change within the healthcare field to create gender equality; Washington (2011) made known the need to bring about social change within a variety of professional organizations to create gender equality; Sasson-Levy (2011) recognized the need to bring about social change within the military in Israel to create gender equality; and Herrera, Exposit, & Moya, (2012) identified the need to bring about social change within academic institutions to create gender equality. The first wave of the feminist movement led to positive social change by promoting gender equality in the workplace. During the second wave of the movement, changes within the social order occurred with the development of the National Organization for Women, the implementation of affirmative action by President Johnson, the Equal Pay Act (1964), and the case of *Roe v. Wade*. The most recent demand for change has been in the business sector with the advent of global competition. The spread of global female organizations, such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Women in Defense (WID), and the impact of female contributions to society have demonstrated change has occurred; yet, more change is needed to accomplish equality.

Various issues have hindered female professional growth in the defense industry of the United States. Two primary issues originated from stereotypes in devaluing female development were rooted in traditional organizational cultures (Heilman, 2001; Hewlett, 2007). Other variables have affected female professional development, such as family, education, and social networks (Barclay, 2006; Guerrina, 2001; Hewlett, 2007). The researcher reviewed literature to find out how women respond to gender inequality and how subtle forms of gender inequality in society and organizational cultures interfere with career advancement opportunities for women.

In chapter 1, the objective was to discuss gender inequality in the workplace and display the struggle females experienced fighting for gender equality. Within this chapter the researcher identified the purpose of the study, the problem, the nature of the study, the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, delimitations, limitations and scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the implication for social change. The issue of women subjected to on-the-job discrimination and the premise suggesting these issues were no longer discussed at length within society, was explored because it appeared women have grown to accept that gender inequality will always be a part of their lives and the struggle for acceptance will continually be evident (Hewlett, 2007). Despite effort and successes, no country has yet managed to eliminate gender inequality. It was this issue that led chapter two to combine empirical data with the framework that affected the reality of women's professional growth. The empirical data included principles of human, social, and leadership development identifying the needs for change to provide opportunities for women within the defense industry of the United

States. In addition, chapter 2 closes by exploring methods and designs as the initial process of elimination for selecting the method and design that can best answer the research questions. In chapter 3 the researcher address how the research design derived from the research questions that drove this study investigation, justify reasons for pursuing a qualitative study, identify the population sample, and explain the role of the researcher during the data collection process. In chapter 4 the researcher reports the findings of the study to address the research questions, how the patterns and themes developed out of the findings, and how the researcher followed procedures to ensure reliability and validity.

Finally, chapter 5 includes the interpretation of the findings, explains how this study has the ability to promote positive social change in the workplace and society, and provides recommendations for action and an insight toward reflection.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The information explored within this literature review included various principles of human, social, and leadership development based on gender inequality and the need for change to provide opportunities for civilian females in the U.S. Defense Industry. Factors put forward to explain the continued phenomenon of the small percent of female involvement at higher levels within organizations explored was: (a) biological differences as the driving force in forming gender roles of inequality between males and females; (b) family/work imbalance impacting mainly females due to the division of labor in parenting; (c) gender stereotypes reflecting preconceived perceptions of leadership attributes with male characteristics affecting female career advancement; (d) traditional organizational cultures promoting segregation between genders; (e) institutional sexism providing the foundation for gendered social inequalities through the education system; and (f) the lack of access to networks and mentoring hindering female career advancement. In addition, the researcher explores two research methodologies within this literature review: quantitative and qualitative. The researcher investigated the resources that may validate the outcomes of the study, including different designs, such as experiments, case studies, ethnographic approaches, and phenomenological studies. In addition, different groups were explored to establish the degree to which the phenomenon extends from an organizational standpoint into various sectors of society and cultures.

Strategy for Searching the Literature

The researcher developed questions in alignment with the topic of interest (see Appendix A) as a strategy used for searching the literature. Based on input from Walden University faculty mentors and the dissertation rubric the researcher developed a method for searching the literature that included an inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify potentially relevant articles that had to address one of the predictor variables, fall within 5 years, and be peer-reviewed. Also the strategy involved in the query of database searchers included six online databases: Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) Plus; Dissertations and Thesis at Walden University; Elton B. Stephen Company (Ebsco); LexisNexis; Management and Organization Studies; ProQuest; and Sociology Index (SocINDEX). In addition, the Michigan Mel-Cat Library System and Walden University Library were used to obtain books related to the literature. The search terms used to find articles are marked with double quotes once throughout the literature review.

Female Barriers in Career Advancement

U.S. corporate companies need to attract the best talent in order to remain competitive and survive economically. Those who occupy leadership roles in organizations may not mirror the diversity that is represented by those who have the knowledge, skills, and ambition to occupy senior roles. Females fill only 14.4% of executive officer positions in the Fortune 500 (Catalyst, 2010); however, females earn more than over half of the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees (Catalyst, 2010) and still only earn 81% of what males earn in a weekly pay (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

[BLS], 2010). A lack of earnings places a strain on the gendered organizational system and puts professional development for career-orientated females at the forefront of diversity issues that females, society, and organizations face. As a consequence, this body of literature is making a contribution toward women and leadership studies, the researcher investigated if “gender inequality” exists in relation to career advancement opportunities and leadership roles, how females respond to “gender inequality”, and what barriers hinder “female professional development”.

Structural barriers refer to the organizational cultural fit associated with the model of leadership roles being defined as masculine and situational barriers may be related to dual roles, such as managing work and family demands. According to Washington (2011), career barriers can be broken down into two categories: internal barriers and external barriers. Internal barriers are correlated with personality and trait variables. This barrier is related to gender stereotyped roles society has placed on males and females in the workplace. Washington explained, “the roles and jobs assigned to women in the workplace are linked with personality traits, motivational needs, and behavior patterns that are not common among most managers and other high-ranking positions” (p. 167). Alev, Gonca, Ece, and Yasemin (2010) pointed out stereotypes are the preconceived perceptions of a group that coincide with certain characteristics. Kliuchko (2011) described, “gender stereotypes” as a socially constructed category determining a person’s psychological needs, behavior, and place within the social hierarchy. Internal barriers are correlated with “gendered stereotypes”. On the other hand,

external barriers are related to situational and structural variables (Washington, 2011).

Both internal and external barriers can hinder female's professional growth.

Human Development from Adolescent to Womanhood

Biological Differences

The heart of U.S. organizations is male-dominated. The original phenomenon that led to inequality between the sexes was the claim that biological differences between the sexes were the cause of different social roles (De Beauvoir, 1993; Rigney, 2011).

According to Sharabi and Harpaz (2013), the only difference between genders is assigned in biology, which was established at birth by the infant's reproductive functions. Lee-Rife (2010) confirmed that the reproductive capacity assigned at birth leads to pre-assigned part of women's identity. Harris (2010) claimed that pregnancy and childbirth lead to the "gender differences" between males and females. Danjuma et al. (2011) argued that the female image is developed from childhood to be subordinate to males through gendered stereotypes (p. 3,962). Although family and society assign gender roles to children, gender is determined by biology and not society. As society dictates the "gender roles", females are the "subject rather to that second nature which is custom and in which are reflected desires and the fears that express their essential nature" (De Beauvoir, 1980, p. 38). According to Rigney (2011), society supports gender roles as the child transforms from infancy to early childhood. Girls and boys are given gender-related toys and are made to dress in a manner acceptable according to gender. Phrases such as "sugar and spice and everything nice" and "boys will be boys" define the ideology associated with gender identity as the child continues to age (Hewlett, 2007). Biology may be described

as the growth, development, and evolution of the science of life phenomena. Biology is the driving force in the growth and development stages between the genders that assists in forming gender roles. The foundation for this biological content was to formulate the biological characteristics assigned by nature into the development of gender roles.

Family-Work Imbalance

Research suggested that the division of labor inside the home hinder female's professional growth. Although stay-at-home dads have become more common (Dunn, Rochlen, & O'Brien, 2013), females deciding to bear children face obstacles to be successful in the workplace. In the theory of "mommy track", Sharabi and Harpaz (2013) explained the barriers to female career success were due to a trifold responsibility: females are mother, wife, and worker, whereby family commitments have led females to leave their career to bear and care for children. Yoshioka, Saijo, Kita, Satoh, and Kawaharada (2012) argued females are unable to remain committed to their job demands working part-time due to parenting responsibilities that delay career opportunities. In other words, "the gendered character of mommy track is women's share in care responsibilities and in part-time work . . . part-time work is only possible in low qualified jobs" (Rothstein, 2012, p.325). Sharabi and Harpaz also mentioned that females experience more time out of work due to child bearing and family responsibilities than males. Clearly, there are gender differences in household and work life, but the proportion of women working outside of the home is rising at a steady rate.

Although there is an increasing awareness towards women entry into the labor market. Research (Stewart, 2003) revealed that childbearing was negatively related to

economic outcomes for females. Sperlich, Peter, and Geyer (2012) spoke of an interpersonal reward with respect to child care. Stewart claimed females with children had less opportunity for educational and occupational development, suggesting, “gender socialization that continues to emphasize women’s prominence in the home may be counter to educational and occupational attainment” (p. 7). O’Neill (2003) suggested the factor underlying the gender gap was productivity differences between genders that affects the quantity and quality of education, commitment to the labor market, and occupational choice. O’Neill argued, because of family responsibilities, females invested less time into the labor market, which led to a depreciation in skills and earnings, which affected the “gender gap”. Klasen (2005) also argued education was a factor that contributed to the gender wage gap. According to Klasen, educated mothers in turn produced smaller families, which allowed for greater investments into promoting better health and education for their children. Klasen concluded

That the casual chain from lower gender gaps in education to higher growth appears to include the following pathways: (a) lower gender equity in education improves the human capital stock of a country, because society will draw on its entire pool of talent (rather than only men) for the creation and use of human capital; (b) the marginal benefits of education decline with increasing education and thus adding to already higher level of male education will have a lower social benefit than adding to the lower levels of female education; and (c) through the impact of female education on fertility, smaller gender gaps will reduce

population growth rates, which in turn will help promote economic growth and poverty reduction. (p. 247)

On the other hand, Borass and Rogers (2003) argued the gender gap was likely not affected by educational background. Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson, & Siddiqi (2013) pointed out that flexible working hours should help parents develop a culture of integration and that the equivalence of education could ensure that every person had the opportunity to fulfill their professional goals. Now, females have attained higher levels of education and experience (BLS, 2011). Mellor (2003) also argued the primary reason inequality exists between genders was because females had to arrange their schedules around childcare responsibilities, while males arranged their schedules around their workforce. Cowdery and Knudson-Martin (2005) confirmed that motherhood was correlated to how fatherhood was constructed, and that the “division of labor” in parenting was allocated based on time and resources that affected females most, especially if they were in the workforce. Harris (2010) also explained the inroads into leadership positions are challenging for females with family responsibilities because it conflicts with the “ideal worker” model identifying the breadwinner-homemaker family arrangements and requires total work commitment. Females with families are not able to commit to the labor market equally as their male counterparts, nor are they able to invest in an equal amount of time into their education to strengthen their skill set to advance equally as their male counterparts in their career.

Research suggested that time related to work commitment has increased. Sabelis, Nencel, Knights, and Odih (2008) found correlations between the concepts of gender and

time, which means that organizations have increased the amount of time and the amount of work that employees have to commit to their job. Simultaneously, the number of females in the workforce with children has increased, along with the demand for workers to invest more time to their job. Employers reward ideal workers; the ideal worker has to work uninterrupted full-time to move up the ranks and to keep their place on the job (Gerson, 2009). This leads to a problem in finding a balance between longer work hours and the disruption of family time (Harris, 2010). The BLS (2011) confirmed that females who have attained higher levels of education and experience spend more time working. However, females with families are not able to commit to additional hours of work, due to responsibilities inside the home, which may affect their professional advancement.

The Development of Social Structures

While the sex is determined through biology, gender behaviors are encouraged through sociocultural development. As a result, identity and development between genders are different, which leads to different roles for males and females (Rigney, 2011). Laurin, Kay, and Shepherd (2011) claimed males are biologically more likely to possess the skills necessary to succeed in traditional, male-dominated positions. However, this has led to gender inequality between the sexes (Sharabi & Harpaz, 2013). Gender segregation exists both inside and outside of the home. Gender differences exist due to both biological and social factors.

Self-Stereotypes of Gender Roles

Research suggested that stereotypes hinder female's professional growth. Stereotypes may be referred to as templates for interpersonal and intergroup judgment to

satisfy motivational needs within the social system (Laurin et al., 2011). It is the standardized concept used by members of a group. Alev, Gonca, Ece, and Yasemin (2010) claimed stereotypes are preconceived perceptions of a group that coincide with certain characteristics, attributes, forms, or traits. Lun, Sinclair, and Cogburn (2009) described “cultural stereotypes as widely known beliefs that broadly influence how individuals are evaluated and treated” (p. 117). Kliuchko (2011) described gender stereotypes as a socially constructed category that determine a person’s psychological needs, behavior, and place within the social hierarchy. Alev et al. explained stereotypes are “derived from limitations in the ability to process information” (p. 118). Stereotypes are created to conceal ignorance, satisfy motivational needs, and as a way to assign social structures to the world.

Humans have distinct characteristics, regardless of gender. However, some occupations are perceived as either masculine or feminine (Alev et al., 2010). Laurin et al. (2011) described female traits as relationship-oriented and warm and male traits as competent and competitive. Alev et al. (2010) defined female attributes as “caring nature, skill and experience at household related work, greater manual dexterity, greater honesty and physical appearance” (p. 18). Kliuchko (2011) suggested male traits reflect “activity, dominance, self-confidence, aggressiveness, logical thinking, and leadership ability” (p. 18). In opposition, “dependence, solicitude, anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotionality” coincide with female characteristics (Kliuchko, 2011, p. 18). These characteristics may exemplify gendered stereotypes. These stereotypes dictate unfair gender roles (Alev et

al., 2010; Laurin et al., 2011; Oswald, 2008). Both self-stereotypes and gendered stereotypes confine the female role to be subservient to males.

Occupational segregation. According to the occupational gender model, there are perceived abilities in occupation for which gender roles exist. Anker (1997) argued “occupational segregation” negatively affects the self-identity of females and how males view females; it affects female status and income and negatively affects education and training that create gender stereotypes. Oswald (2008) found that females make career choices correlated with success in feminine occupations and “self-stereotypes” influence their attitude and decisions for selecting careers. Many women are in role conflict in terms of career goals due to the expected norm.

Self-identity. Work goals may be regarded as a reflection of the individual’s identity. According to Coleman and Hong (2008), self-identity relates to perceptions about the in-group and how different paradigms influence self-perceptions. Oswald (2008) explained that self-stereotypes arise when targets possess the stereotyped role, characteristics, and behaviors associated with the in-group. Lun et al. (2009) pointed out how continuous exposure and evaluations, and occasional behavior consistent with stereotypes, lead people to incorporate stereotypic beliefs about their in-group into their own self-concept. Schmitt and Wirth (2009) found that gender differences in social dominance orientation, “unequal relations among social groups... intergroup inequality and domination” result from self-stereotyping related to traditional gender roles and the dominant group-interest responses to patriarchy (p. 429). Laurin et al. (2011) found that self-stereotyping is a means to justify social and economic inequality. Some females have

accepted their inferior role that confines females to gendered organizational structures, limiting their ability to climb the corporate ladder.

Stereotypes in the Workplace

Research revealed that stereotypes limit female's potential to advance within their careers. Stereotypes associated with differences in the workplace originate from traditional paradigms identifying female roles as wife and mother and males as the breadwinner (Sultana, 2011). Coleman and Hong (2008) explained "the nature versus nurture debate with regard to the origin of gender differences is without question one of the biggest issues facing researchers" (p. 35). Coleman and Hong claimed that females accept gender inequality, lower social status, and limitation in the roles offered to them due to the lay theory—a biological gender theory and a social gender theory—they hold about their own gender identity. As a consequence, gender self-stereotyping leads to a rationalization of the division of labor (Schmitt & Wirth, 2009, p. 431). Schien et al. (as cited in Alev et al., 2010) suggested that gender role stereotyping is a psychological barrier limiting the number of females in leadership. If gendered stereotypes devalue female achievements, then such stereotypes affect how females are expected to perform at work (Heilman, 2001). In an organizational setting, if a model of successful management reflects masculine values, then making promotional decisions to evaluate potential managers is tied to traditional male-managerial cultures and females do not fit into that executive mold (Hewlett, 2007). Overall, studies claimed that men prefer pay, promotion, power, and autonomy; while women prefer interpersonal relationships that reflect nurturing characteristics.

It is important to determine how gender stereotypes lead to gender bias in the workplace and how “traditional organizational cultures” promote gender stereotypes. Heilman (2001) and Kliuchko (2011) suggested gender stereotypes dictate how males and females should behave, not the actual characteristics of their behavior. Because leadership attributes are associated with male characteristics, Heilman suggested a, “good manager is described predominantly by masculine attributes” (p. 659); females may not fit that executive mold (Hewlett, 2007). Alev et al. (2010) also explained that success is perceived to depend on masculine attributes and masculine jobs are attributed with higher prestige and higher income. However, females have proven they can be tough and fair, while males have proven that they can be sensitive and interactive (Heilman, 2001). Heilman, Block, and Martell (as cited in Heilman, 2001) stated, “Women managers as more competent, active, and potent . . . more deficient in these same attributes than men managers” (p. 658). Linehan and Scullion (2008) mentioned females are capable of succeeding in male-dominated organizations by demonstrating male characteristics, but they choose to maintain their traditional roles to support their spouses to avoid social and political pressures. Alev et al. (2010) found female accountants “to be considered creative, open to variety, interesting, exciting, interactive with others, solution finders, extrovert, conceptual, innovative, intuitive, people-oriented, effective, imaginative, unpredictable, detailed, changing, caring and mathematical” (p. 23). In addition, Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2011) found that some females trade feminine qualities in the interest of conveying competence by being aggressive, self-promoting, and power hungry. Both males and females have incorporate stereotypical responses that are driven by their

gender. The stereotype norms prescribed for females hinder females from advancing to top management.

To understand the experience of the females interviewed for this research, it was necessary to identify stereotypes and analyze how they relate to cultural representation of women and gender issues today. Some stereotypes are tied to reality in some fashion, which makes them more dangerous and potentially long lasting (Heilman, 2001). For example, some business may be suspicious of females leaving their company to raise children. Some believe that males are more suited to certain types of work (e.g., mechanical trades), which requires physical strength more than intellectual ability. These stereotypes have some basis because females bear children and males are physically stronger than females, in general. However, with telecommuting and new tools of technology, females are now able to telecommute and do mechanical work. Even these stereotypes may eventually fail to exist.

Occupational Segregation

Research suggested that occupational segregation separate females from the leadership opportunities. He and Xiaoping (2006) studied the theory of “occupational segregation” and “gender differences” in terms of employment opportunities. He and Xiaoping suggested, with the growth of the market economy, occupational segregation has not changed and few females enter certain male-dominated occupations, especially in white-collar occupations: “the number of blue-collar male occupations was increasing; the speed of the increase was much slower than in white-collar occupations” (p. 43). He and Xiaoping also examined the determinant of education to explain occupational

segregation; He and Xiaoping determined that while the percentage of females obtaining education has increased, the gap in the occupational status has increased at a greater multitude. He and Xiaoping explained, “With control for education level, gender inequality still exists on all educational levels except elementary schools” (p. 47). Although females are continuing their education at a higher rate than their male counterparts, occupational segregation in terms of employment opportunities continues to exist.

On the other hand, the existing gap in occupational status between genders may be the result of the pre-existing patriarchal system that historically determined the power structure between genders. Anker (1997) explored education but found that both genders in the same occupation should close the gender gap. When this does not occur, it is due to gender inequality or inappropriate education and experience on the part of the female (Anker). However, Baron and Cobb-Clark (2010) found that disparity in education qualification are not significant in explaining occupational segregation in terms of the wage gap, rather it is women experiences. Stier and Yaish (2014) suggested that women opportunity for promotion is limited as a tradeoff to fulfill their dual role in society. The existing social system determines power structures within households and work settings (Sultana, 2011). Ridgeway (2014) suggested occupational segregation developed from social systems that was an institutionalized system of social networks that distinguish male and female roles based on their social status. Gender differences in employment opportunities are expected, since no reform has taken into effect to undermine the pre-existing power structures.

Although gendered stereotypes have different impacts on females, the relative contingent factors attributed are leadership characteristics that organizations value most. For most U.S. organizations, leadership attributes favored are characteristics such as power, aggressiveness, assertiveness, and experience (Burk, 2005). Some female leadership characteristics have been downgraded to stereotypical behaviors, such as inferior, timid, kind, and sensitive (Stier & Yaish, 2014). In the U.S. Military, leadership characteristics are described by a stratification of ranks, where power or authority is held in higher ranks and the culture pays deference to superiors (Morgan, 2003, p. 380). According to Terriff (2006), leadership attributes are defined as the brothers, the war fighters, and the heroes. Metz (2006) suggested the U.S. Military shares one characteristic: “a nearly total focus on war-fighting between state armed forces” (p. 4). In addition, Stanford (2004) stated that U.S. corporate culture can be described as “businesses that have extensive power within the social order” (p. 14). Power impacts the lives of all citizens through their ability to earn wages, supply the basic needs of lives, and function in relation to the larger society (Stanford, 2004). Furthermore, Morrison and Glinow (as cited in Brown & Lewis, 2005) added that these “organizational cultures” follow models developed by traditional European American males (p. 37). Stalk (2005) described the U.S. corporate culture as a promoter of unfairness and discrimination. Stalk argued that Western society is

Most influential exporter of ideologies of dominance throughout history . . .
 instructing generation after generation that White male dominance is either
 biologically determined or God-ordained . . . categorize men and women into

ranked groups, and then train them from childhood to reject human traits of tenderness and vulnerability as proof of individual or group superiority... that male dominance of women is a natural outcome of cultural advances. (p. 205)

Millett (2000) argued it was “because of our social circumstances that men and women are really two cultures and their life experiences are different” (p. 31); women constrained by their dual roles as caregiver and provider (Steir & Yaish). Discrimination, stereotypes, and devaluation of women characteristics are detrimental effects of occupational segregation in term of career opportunities.

According to the glass ceiling theory, barriers exist in female career development due to gender stereotypes. Although laws such as the Equal Pay Act (1963) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) were passed to promote fairness and to protect females from discrimination, researchers have demonstrated a slow growth among female executives in the United States (Catalyst, 2010). According to Ridgeway (2014), in the theory of expectation, gender is associated with social hierarchies because gender stereotypes categorize the status worthiness and competence in relation to social practices. In the expectation theory,

The status element of gender stereotypes that causes such stereotypes to act as distinctively powerful barriers to women’s achievement of positions of authority, leadership, and power. Theory defines status beliefs as widely held cultural beliefs that link greater social significance and general competence . . . with one category of a social distinction (men) compared to another (women). When status beliefs develop about social groups, they ground equality between them in group

membership itself rather than in other differences in power or material resources.

(p. 638)

Stereotypes occur within social networks of dominance that interact regularly to achieve common goals (Schmitt & Wirth, 2009). As Ridgeway (2001) stated, “when people interact in regard to collective goals . . . inequality quickly develops” (p. 640). Gender inequality was most likely to occur in that work environment related to performance and evaluation (Ridgeway, 2014). Gender remains a barrier to success for females, as gendered stereotypes undermine and devalue female leadership abilities.

It is important to determine how social contexts hinder career-committed females from climbing the ranks. The shortages of females promoted into high-ranking positions are due to the traditional male-dominated organizational culture catering to the male ego and gender stereotypes (Salas-Lopez, Deitrick, Mahady, Gertner, & Sabino, 2011). Some males prefer to prevent females from succeeding in the workplace, and the only way to do so is to control the career rank that prevents female independence (Herrera, Exposit, & Moya, 2012). Chin, Lott, and Sanchez-Hucles (2007) suggested that male fear of female control has made some males feel intimidated. As Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (2009) explained, hostility is directed toward females who threaten male power. The lack of females in leadership roles is a result of male discomfort with females as superiors (Hoyt, Johnson, Murphy, & Skinnell, 2010; “Women in U.S. Corporate Leadership,” 2003). Some males are not willing to offer career advancement opportunities to females (Linehan & Scullion, 2008). Female independence may be seen as a threat to the male dominant position in the home and in the workplace (Steir & Yaish, 2014; Herrera et al.,

2012). According to the theories of mommy track, social dominance orientation, “gender self-stereotyping”, occupational segregation, expectation, biological differences, and social gender, the traditional stereotypical perceptions regarding female leadership abilities lead to gender stereotypes in the work environment.

The Gendered Nature of Leadership

While biological differences that exist between the sexes play a part in forming gender roles, those differences are amplified by sociocultural influences that prevent female achievement from being evaluated in an unbiased manner. Research have examined gender inequalities across a wide variety of social contexts. Yet, questions remain regarding how females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry. Although, females make up half of the workforce, they only account for 14.4% of executive officer positions in the Fortune 500 (Catalyst, 2010). The uneven distribution of women and leadership in the U.S. defense industry is not surprising. Hierarchical differentiation of individuals with regard to status and authority is nearly universal across a large array of social contexts (Yang & Aldrich, 2014). Barriers remain for females who have the skill, desire, and ambition to occupy top leadership roles.

Gendered Organizational Structures

A precise definition of organizational culture was difficult to determine. According to Madu (2011), leadership in organizations starts the culture formation process. The culture of an organization is created by a set of structures, rules, values, beliefs, perspectives, habits, and prejudices that guide and constrain behavior (Bellot,

2011; Mandu, 2011; Schein, 2010). Siehl and Martin (1983) implied that the organizational culture is socially constructed based on a set of values, social ideals or beliefs, and shared experiences. Alvesson (2002) explained that culture is a cohesive system of meanings and symbols where social interaction takes place. Foss, Woll, and Moilanen (2013) pointed out that many organizations embrace the European American, male-dominated culture. Itzin (as cited in Agapiou 2002) expressed, “organizational cultures as: hierarchical, patriarchal, sex-segregated, sexually divided, sexist, misogynist, resistant to change, and to contain gendered power structures” (p. 699). In many organizations, female values are given less importance than male values in traditional organizational cultures (Foss, Woll, & Moilanen). Schein (2010) defined the organizational culture as a “dynamic phenomenon that surrounds us at all times, being constantly enacted and created by our interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior” (p. 1). Traditional organizational cultures consist of customary managerial hierarchy patterns of social interaction through which, the dominant culture, being European American males exert more influence and exercise more leadership in board rooms and in top leadership meetings (Crawford & Mills, 2011). Eddy and Cox (2008) referred to the traditional organizational culture as gendered organizational structures that formed power structures that form the basis of the hierarchy that evaluates females against the male model of leadership. Bellot (2011) stated, “organizational culture is socially constructed, arising from group interactions” (p. 36). Valentine (2011) defined culture as the existing ideologies, values, norms and expectations shared by an

organization that affects its members and performance. Sultana (2011) argued that traditional gender ideologies influence the roles of females and males, meaning that “men are considered as the breadwinner and women fulfill their roles in nurturing and homemaking activities” (p. 1,558). Washington (2011) explained that traditional organizational cultures do not value females by incorporating norms, rules, practices, and values in organizations that exclude females and limit their ability of advancing into leadership positions. Organizations should do more to counteract the occupational segregation that occurs due to gender differences.

The nature of culture within an organization is the learned values, beliefs, habits, and prejudices that become shared as organizations become successful. When an organization is successful, leaders often see no need for change and maintain the continuity of the existing culture. Bruckmuller and Branscombe (2010) suggested organizations are more likely to maintain the status quo by employing traditional organizational cultures for males for leadership positions in times of success and a glass ceiling for females who aspire to leadership positions. As Valentine (2011) explained, “some organizations are so fortunate, due to factors such as power, size, experience, or luck, that they can prosper without substantially changing their cultures over periods of time” (p.103). As Bruckmuller and Branscombe (2010) stated “most companies have been historically and continue to be structured with top management positions being primarily held by men and with the resulting success context of think manager-think male” (p. 438). Traditional organizational cultures have a tendency to be developed and cultured in contexts of male dominance that are disadvantageous to females (Mills,

2003). Yet, speculation exists as to why there remain a small percent of females in top leadership positions. If the difference between success and failure depends on the value created by the culture of the organization, then the problem is rooted in the existing leader's values and beliefs enacted and created by the founders of traditional organizational culture tying successful management to masculine values.

Some leaders have maintained the system of values developed by the founders of a patriarchal society. As Mills (2003) explained that the climate of an organization is developed out of two structures, linking the non-organizational division of labor and the organizational division of labor. The non-organization of labor relates to female primary responsibilities of taking care of the home and nurturing and caring for the children and the husband. The organizational division of labor refers to the male as the breadwinner working outside of the home. In the past, females had no influence over the biological decisions of life (De Beauvoir, 1980), which demanded the nurturing wife to manage all household responsibilities while the husband supported the family and managed all responsibilities outside of the home (Cowdery & Knudson-Martin, 2005). This reflected the "human capital theory" of prejudice toward female leaders, which suggests the incongruence of masculine task demands and gender stereotypes kept females from leadership development (Ritter & Yoder, 2004). Kabeer (2005) argued, "if a woman's primary form of access to resources is as a dependent member of the family, her capacity to make strategic choices is limited" (p. 15). The patriarchal structure continues to influence males and females by assigning traditional gender roles and identities (Ruterana, 2012). Gender inequality remains embedded in cultural values.

Gender gaps at work arise in multiple forms, the culture of the organization establishes the core disparity between genders. Employment for females has increased since the 1960s in developed countries around the world (D'Exelle & Holvoet, 2011). As a result, females have become empowered, as their roles have become critical to ensure continuous economic development (Klugman, Kolb, & Morton, 2014). The increase in employment for females around the world has positively affected female independence of household decision-making (Kabeer, 2005). Although females have gained control over sharing household responsibilities, some females do not take advantage of the power of decision-making within traditional organizations, which affect their ability to advance.

Institutional Sexism

Education leads to better career opportunities and to higher income for individuals. According to Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009), proponents of the human capital theory claim that investments in education yield positive pecuniary returns. However, Shaw (1995) blamed education as the bottleneck in the pipeline for females, creating gender inequality. Nevertheless, more females are taking advantage of educational opportunities to gain knowledge of strategic choices. Catalyst (2011) showed that females earned more bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees than males from 2008 to 2009. Zeher (2007) found that females outperform males in educational achievement; females enroll in college in greater numbers and graduate with college degrees. However, Boudarbat and Montmarquette argued that the differences are more significant in terms of the field of study than in the level of education. In support of this, Klugman, Kolb, and Morton (2014) found that females remained the minority in the following career fields:

science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Education is essential to female cognitive abilities, as it increases the probability of female independence, enhances female influence in relationships, and increases female tolerance for interacting and fighting for social fairness (Kabeer, 2005). “Education is one key to unlocking the power of women,” (Gupta, 2006, p. 7) as it creates access to various opportunities, reduces gender unfairness, and affects life outcomes such as economic security. Stalk (2005) also stated that education is a driving force of socialization, which is a factor in freeing individuals from the bondage of fear, rage, and hate. To close these gaps, we need to explore existing constraints and understand the practices that can bring about gender equality.

Kabeer (2005) claimed that continuous education hindered female empowerment as social inequalities are often reinforced through school systems--girls often study fields like nursing with boys study engineering. Klugman, Kolb, & Morton (2014) suggested that gender inequality is evidenced in the field of study that females select, such as education and humanities rather than engineering and computer science. Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) stated that females hold the majority of teaching positions in the United States; they hold approximately 40% of the faculty and senior staff positions in higher education, but just under 22% manage superintendent roles and only 21% occupy presidencies in universities. Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009) pointed out that the salaries of teachers are usually set by public budget constraints. Alexander, Entwisle, and Steffel (1997) suggested that “institutional sexism” “begins in kindergarten when young children are taught that males are supported to a greater degree in their educational

endeavors than females and that males will historically receive higher marks for the same work accomplished than females” (p. 12). Ruterana (2012) found that children have knowledge about gender in the school curriculum as early as in the second grade in the subject of civic education (p. 93). Ruterana argued that education reinforces gender roles in courses such as home care, economics, and general hygiene for girls, while boys are prepared for dominant roles that carry responsibilities in the army and other leadership aspects of society-activities often requiring intelligence, wisdom, and strength (p. 86). A separation of gender roles exists in educational institutions, which contributes to gender inequality.

Male work is more valuable to teachers, to the school system, and to society than female work. Lahiri and Self (2007) suggested that the traditional family cultures value the son’s education for being more significant to the family economically. Ruterana (2012) also explained the effect of children’s literature and movies that limits both genders’ full realization of their potential and expectations. Ruterana argued that stereotypic-gendered traits are influenced through fairy tales whereas the female characteristics are portrayed as impotent, weak, passive, and naïve, along with the sexual themes such as beauty, marriage, emotions, and motherhood; the male image is reflected as being strong, potent, and powerful (p .89). Learning traditional gender roles early on in the educational experience provides the foundation for gender inequality (Kabeer, 2005), the separation of gender roles, and the contest of male versus female competency (Alexander et al., 1997). The relationship between gender inequality and education presents another barrier for females in their pursuit to professional advancement.

Growth in education for females does not automatically guarantee professional advancement. Catalyst (2010) reported that females earn more than over half of all bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees; 52.3% of females earned doctorate degrees. However, the BLS (2010) showed that females still earn only 81% of what males earn in weekly pay. In the armed forces, military presence and the earnings of female workers are negatively correlated; the greater the local military presence, the lower the average earnings of female workers (Booth, 2003). Educational attainment by females has not yet balanced the gender gap (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Catalyst, 2010). There are gender imbalances in many occupations (BLS, 2010; Bona, Kelly, & Jung, 2010; Catalyst, 2010). For example, BLS (2011) found that females account for 13% of architects and engineers, 32% of physicians and surgeons, 60% of accountants and auditors, and 82% of elementary and middle schools teachers. The occupations weighted over 60% are described as traditional female-dominated fields influenced by female educational choices to develop skills that reinforce their socialized roles (Ruterana, 2012). This follows the occupational segregation theory, suggesting that females concentrate in traditionally female occupations that are devalued as a result of their nurturing characteristics (Klugman, Kolb, & Morton, 2014).

The selected field of study in education contributes to gender inequality beyond its relationship to occupational segregation. Females consistently work in positions that are labeled appropriate for the female gender and that function in support of males (Ritter & Yoder, 2004). Zeher stated, "women are concentrated in jobs that are devalued as a result of their nurturing character" (p. 5). The BLS (2010) showed that females accounted

for the majority of all workers in the following fields: financial activities, education and health services, hospitality, and other services. Also, the BLS reported that females were underrepresented in sectors like agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, and transportation and utilities (p. 2). Ryan and Haslam (2007) referred to this as the gender-based division of labor. For example, females serve as secretaries, assisting male leaders and managers. Females are accepted as professional nurses, who take orders from predominantly male doctors, and who are not allowed to determine the care of patients without physician approval. Females are accepted as teachers with the role of caring for children, nurturing their growth, and preparing them to accept their gender roles in society (Kabeer, 2005). Ryan and Haslam explained that females occupy positions with little authority, small rewards, and inflexibility. In the military, military wives traditionally served as voluntary cooks and laundresses, nurses, servants, and prostitutes that were poorly compensated for their services (Booth, 2003, p. 26), with only males fighting for the country (Ruterana, 2012). Female choices of their field of study, stereotypes that reinforce specific gender roles, and traditional cultures that places a higher value on the male's education and their contribution toward work can hinder female's professional growth.

Glass Cliff

Research suggested the need to promote females during a crisis is aligned with the glass cliff theory. Females have become accustomed to working following the need for factories to employ females during both world wars. Employing females allowed industries to continue to function in the absence of males who had entered the military.

Yet, when males returned home from war, many females desired to remain working as a means of assisting with the care of their families (Kabeer, 2005). As this occurred, the acceptance of female roles that mirrored their place in the home was created (Ritter & Yoder, 2004). According to the glass cliff theory, females are seen as better suited in leadership positions during a crisis. Ryan and Haslam (2007) examined four experimental studies in which female leaders were preferred during an organizational crisis. Ryan and Haslam argued that females only break through the glass ceiling if the organization or the economy is in a crisis because of the gender-stereotyped characteristics assigned to females as being understanding, helpful, aware of feelings, intuitive, and creative; these attributes makes females better equipped to deal with the socio-emotional challenges that crises present (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Bruckmuller and Branscombe (2010) claimed that females are more likely to achieve leadership positions during a state of crisis or when organizations assume risk of failure. Ruterana (2012) also pointed out after a genocide, females challenged to rebuild their communities, and not only enroll in nontraditional professions, but hold highly visible positions in occupations such as construction, police forces, and politics. Ren and Foster (2011) pointed out that females often perform jobs that require emotional demands. Based on the glass cliff theory, in a crisis, leadership opportunities are created for females.

Lack of Access to Networks and Mentors

Access to network circles and mentors is significant to female's professional growth. Developmental relationships are described by two variables mentoring and networking as a means by which females gain increasing opportunities and career

development experiences within their professional arena (Hersby, Ryan, & Jetten, 2009). Although there are similarities between mentoring and networking that involve developmental relationships (Wang, 2009), the difference in networking is the longevity of the relationships created (Linehan & Scullion, 2008) that are personal and less intense (Wang, 2009). Mentoring, more so, involves a hierarchical relationship (Linehan & Scullion). Metz (2009) suggested that individuals make many contacts in “networking relationships”, taking greater effort to develop and maintain than “mentoring relationships”. Metz also found a difference in advancement between mentoring and networking for females. Eddy and Cox (2008) stated, “The model of positional leadership as the pinnacle of success begins to leave no alternative role models for women coming up through the ranks” (p.75). Wang (2009) pointed to gender differences in forming networks, as well as discrepancies in access to and use of networks (p. 36). Network structures and mentoring relationships often exhibit inequalities.

Networks. The lack of access to network circles may be hindering to female’s career advancement opportunities. Ehrich (1994) argued that mentoring relationships are more valuable than networking relationships. In contrast, Linehan and Scullion (2008) found that networking can influence positive career advancement and acceptance. Dalton (2011) expressed that networking is a factor needed for career advancement. Networks can open doors to leadership opportunities (Ely et al., 2011). Bevelander and Page (2011) suggested that networking is needed for success in gaining a promotion. Hersby et al. (2009) pointed out that networking serves as two functions: (a) identity as a means for individual females to climb the ranks within organizations and (b) collectively as a means

of shared knowledge, resources, and support to fight against gender barriers. The benefits of networking include career progression and success (Linehan & Scullion, 2008).

Networking allows individuals to develop alliances, collaborate, exchange information, share knowledge, and gain visibility and support. “The purpose of engaging in networking is to help individuals develop their social capital” (Wang, 2009, p. 35).

According to Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, and Wenpin (as cited by Bevelander & Page, 2011), social capital is created from relationships between individuals through which resources are shared and synergies are gained to benefit both the individual and the group. Individuals gain access to information, resources, and favor, while organizations lower turnover cost. D’Exelle and Holvoet (2011) also pointed out three benefits of networking relationships for females: (a) access to goods and services as they relate to land, childcare, and financial services; (b) the strength of bargaining power created inside the home; and (c) to stimulate collective action to increase awareness and bring about changes in gender norms. Networking is essential for females to climb up the corporate ladder; it provides the resources, insights, and support into the upper echelons (D’Exelle & Holvoet, 2011; Hersby et al., 2009). However, despite knowing how important networks are to female career advancement, there is a lack of networking relationships for females to advance their careers.

Good ‘ole boy. Research suggested that gender inequality exists within network circles. There may be systematic differences in the structure and contents of networks established and dominated by males versus females (D’Exelle & Holvoet, 2011; Wang, 2009). Linehan and Scullion (2008) stated, “Access to organizational networks is not

always equitable” (p. 31). Variations in the contents and structural characteristics of social networks matter in terms of the individuals who benefit (D’Exelle & Holvoet, 2011). According to Bevelander and Page (2011), male’s dominant the “good old boy” social structure and females do not have equal access to these networks. Linehan and Scullion found that the “good old boy network” is strong in most organizations, which are traditionally composed of males and exclude females. Metz (2009) stated that males are the decision-makers in male-dominated hierarchies, which may be disadvantageous to females. Purcell (2012) suggested there is no easy access to male-dominated networks that take place after work hours, in bars, or during sporting events like rugby, football, and golf. Berry (2010) confirmed females do not have the opportunity to practice what they are successful at because the male-dominated culture of the organization prevents females from advancing. D’Exelle and Holvoet (2011) found that networks are used as gatekeeper functions to maintain existing norms and status quo, traditional organizational cultures, and to strengthen present stereotypes in society. With the establishment of the good old boy network are the systematic differences found in male and female preference to interact with others with similar characteristics (Ely et al., 2011). According to Metz (2009), people prefer to work and establish relationships with others like themselves. For example, males like to interact with other males similar to them, males favor groups based on demographic similarity, and females find it difficult to establish connections in male-dominated networks (Metz, 2009). D’Exelle and Holvoet (2011) argued people are embedded in networks by at least two structural dimensions determining placement and access to resources and opportunity: ego-networks and heterogeneity. Many people are

connected by ego – age, education, marital and work status, geographic proximity, and wealth.

The good ole boy network circle is structured to exclude females and maintain the European American, male-dominated culture. European American, male-dominated networks have greater influence, better visibility, access to informal discussions, and speed of promotions (Bevelander & Page, 2011; Ely et al., 2011), in which males achieve higher positions in organizations (Bevelander & Page, 2011). Females who belong to networks not part of the dominant coalition experience greater hurdles in career advancement (Bevelander & Page, 2011). Metz (2009) revealed that females have established their own network circles due to their preference to be and work with others with similar characteristics and because they find it difficult to gain equal access to dominant male networks. Patton (2009) stated, “Women tend to feel comfortable with having women mentors and are more appreciative of these relationships” (p. 513). The other significant obstacle females face regarding female-dominated networks is the continued lack of support from other females who have adopted the queen bee syndrome.

Queen bee. Females who make it to the upper echelons of the hierarchy do not support other females seeking professional advancement. The presence and support of senior females who act as role models for other career-oriented females striving to advance their career position can legitimize and encourage female membership into networks (Hersby et al., 2009). Mavin (2008) found that solidarity behavior between females’ means that senior females must engage in practices that support and sponsor alliances with aspiring females to progress into leadership roles by acting as role models,

mentors, and resources in “female networks”. However, these expectations are difficult to fill with the limited number of females reaching senior management. Females are less aware of social networks and how to use them (Bevelander & Page, 2011, p. 625).

Females have difficulty in finding the developmental support that could help to strengthen a leader identity (Ely et al., 2011). Females have low trust levels in working with other females (Johnson & Helm, 2011). Some people do not like to work for females (Mavin, 2008). Also, some females do not have time available for networking due to family responsibilities (Parcell, 2012). Unfortunately, the dominant group determines the human resources that are valued and individuals who meet the organization’s cultural standards are more likely to be promoted than those individuals who cannot.

There is a trade-off for the few females who achieve senior management positions. According to Ely et al. (2011), the organizational structures and cultural biases remain to shape senior female developmental and leadership experiences. Masculine and feminine traits are grounded within culture and the cultural association of power and authority is tied to masculine characteristics that make it difficult for females to achieve positions of leadership (Mavin, 2008). Senior females show little interest in collective initiatives to facilitate the climb of other females wishing to follow in her footsteps (Hersby et al., 2009). In other words, females who make it into leadership positions do not take the responsibility to address the lack of females in leading roles (Mavin, 2008). Johnson and Mathur-Helm (2011) found “women naturally take on masculine traits when they are in predominantly male environments” (p. 51). The “queen bee” title is used to label senior females in organizations who make it to the upper echelons of the hierarchy

and do not support other career-oriented females through their journey into senior management. The queen bee behavior is described as bad as she mimics male characteristics of not bonding with other females and as acting as a “gatekeeper” by withholding information and power (Mavin, 2008). The queen bees prefers to work with males, tends to promote and support males ahead of females, and refuse to bond with other females unless they are in equal positions of power (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). The behavior of queen bees tends to contribute to gender disparities in relation to professional advancement outcomes.

The benefit of networking is not the same for all individuals. According to D’Exelle and Holvet (2011), male characteristics lay the foundation for exclusion related to the sociocultural gendered network structures. Bevelander and Page (2011) found that the main reason for differences in networks were that males tend to have common associations with other males, both in their social and professional networks. The difference between the two social groups is “women’s network yield fewer leadership opportunities, provide less visibility for their leadership claims, and generate less recognition and endorsement” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 13). Wang (2009) suggested that males will continue to seek and maintain their dominance by excluding females from the good old boy network. Metz (2009) found that females suffer from social isolation due to the managerial hierarchy dominated by males. Senior females withhold information and resources, compete with other females for recognition and benefits, and display an unwillingness to support other females in their ambitions and aspirations to reach senior management.

Mentoring relationships. A mentor has the knowledge, skills, and ability to help protégés develop by a means to support, direct, motivate, and share learning experiences. Linehan and Scullion (2008) stated, “It is important for everyone to have a mentor” (p. 33). It is the most significant success factor in developing leadership characteristics (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011, p.19), and is a developmental resource to assist female career advancement (Tharenou, 2005). Sharing the learning experience includes telling “stories about establishing visibility and credibility, about their profession, about the importance of education and learning, about how gender impacts career development, about taking risks, about relationships, about perspective, and about values,” sharing the experience that binds the mentoring relationship (Mysyk, 2008, p. 211). A mentor is knowledgeable, has mastered the learning curve needed for their own career advancement, and give back by supporting others to achieve their career goal (Mysyk, 2007). According to Zachary and Fischler (2009), “Mentoring is a reciprocal learning relationship in which the mentoring partners agree to work collaboratively toward achieving mutually defined goals that will develop the mentee’s skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking” (p. 8). Mysyk (2007) defined mentoring as a developmental experience for both the protégé and the mentor through reflective learning (action, voice, and feedback). Mentoring is comprised of coaching, providing challenging tasks, protecting mentees from criticism, creating visibility, and sponsoring protégés for advancement (Petersen et. al., 2012). Mentoring enhances career development for the protégé (Ramaswami, Huang, & Dreher, 2014). Mentors provide sponsorship and visibility and protect protégés from criticism and the consequences of mistakes (Dunbar

& Kinnersley, 2011). Washington (2011) pointed out that the mentoring relationship provides protégés with access to resources and networks and creates opportunities for promotions and higher salaries that contribute to long-term career success. Mentorship is a developmental resource designed to help protégés prepare, grow, and develop in their work towards advancement (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Zachary & Fischler, 2009). Mentoring relationships are a developmental resource for female career advancement.

Female mentors. Females have opportunities to gain access to mentors who will help provide visibility and resources necessary to transform into senior roles. Females must seek resources for building their career (Mysyk, 2008). According to Linehan and Scullion (2008), mentoring relationships are essential for females because they face greater barriers to career advancement. Females face different barriers than males (Washington, 2011). Tharenou (2005) stated that mentors are important to female career advancement because females encounter more obstacles, such as gender inequality, dissimilarity from male managerial hierarchies, and lack of networks. Mysyk (2008) suggested that mentoring is a benefit to both the mentor and protégé as it informs both parties about the roles, identities, challenges, relationships, values, and the power of controlling the development of a career (p. 216). Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) found that mentoring helps females to achieve career success. Washington (2011) suggested that females need mentors who can coach them and pull them through the ranks as mentoring support is known to create opportunities for promotions, higher salaries, and increased job satisfaction. The traditional structure of mentoring programs may hinder female career advancement.

Barriers in the mentoring relationship may occur, which often arise as a result of traditional mentoring hierarchical relationships and the small supply of mentors available. According to Levitt (2010), models for mentorship are traditionally masculine in nature (p. 73). Patton (as cited in Darwin, 2011) explained, “traditionally, the mentoring relationship has been framed in a language of paternalism and dependence and stems from a power-dependent, hierarchical relationship, aimed at maintaining the status quo” (p. 512). The traditional mentoring relationship is supported in the model of positional leadership that leaves no alternative role models for females coming up through the ranks (Eddy & Cox, 2008). Mentors may not select female protégés (Linehan & Scullion, 2008, p. 31). Washington (2011) pointed out two problems related to the organizational structure: organizational culture and formal mentoring. There is a lack of support from organizational culture to expand resources and opportunities for females. Formal mentoring relationships may be forced by organizations, forced meaning that someone in a higher authority selects the mentor and protégé. A hierarchical relationship is comprised of a senior person who mentors a less-experienced protégé matched through a mentoring program (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). Washington found that the forced mentoring relationships are less effective in the sense of time invested into the mentoring relationship “six months to one year” (p. 163); the relationships are less sympathetic and formal mentors are reluctant to engage in career development behaviors such as providing challenging assignments and visibility due to fear that their place may be taken.

There is a difference in the choice of a protégé being male or female. Males may be more likely to expect it as part of the career game and females are just learning the

informal rules (Mysyk, 2008). The difference in choice of the mentor being male or female for female protégés has both advantages and disadvantages. According to Tharenou (2005), female protégés gain from being mentored by someone with a similar identity having experienced the same stumbling blocks females face; female protégés learn more career strategies in alignment with their identity. Linehan and Scullion (2008) suggested that females are more comfortable selecting female mentors to avoid the difficulties associated with males and sexual harassment. However, Linehan and Scullion found that the mentor's gender does not influence the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. Mavin (2008) proposed that having female protégés enables female mentors to minimize the number of barriers into senior management. Patton (2009) referred to the "female mentor" and female protégé mentoring relationship as a form of mothering that reflected positive interactions because females share similar needs, interest, and cultural experience. Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) stated, "A female mentor is perceived to be a role model and guide who can better relate to the experiences of the female mentee" (p. 19). Due to similar needs and challenges females face, the female mentor and female protégé mentoring relationship should create a collective vision for females to support one another in career advancement. However, there are not enough females in senior management to act as mentors (Linehan & Scullion, 2008); females are harder on other females than males, many females undermine female authority, some females devalue each other (Mavin, 2008), queen bees are not willing to invest the necessary time to expose other females to various career opportunities (Washington, 2011), and some

females do not trust other females (Bevelander & Page, 2011). There is a lack of female mentors within senior positions.

If effective female mentors are available to females seeking professional advancement, then female career advancement may increase. Heilman (2001) suggested that there is a demand for female role models, but traditional organizational cultures devalue female competency, “casting women as unsuccessful in their accomplishments regardless of their actual performance quality” (p. 663). According to Guy (as cited in Brown & Lewis, 2005), the necessity of female role models is needed for females with similar struggles: “women need mentors who have successfully forded the barriers that confront women but which men may not even be aware of” (p. 37). A lack of female mentors is another factor affecting female professional growth, whereby the development of female role models and female mentors can enhance the opportunity for female career advancement.

Methods

Exploring Methods

In this section of the literature review, the researcher explored the differences in research methodologies, settings, and analyses to explain the diverse findings. The selection of method was dependent upon the research problem (Creswell, 2013). There was a need to identify the best qualitative approach so reviewers can assess the research study. This section of the literature review compared two types of research methodologies, described the meaning of the following (one quantitative and three

qualitative approaches): investigated experiments, case studies, ethnographic approaches, and phenomenological studies.

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research

The most effective method for a study is a method that can best answer the research questions. This yields the need to review the strengths and weaknesses of two types of research methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. This section of chapter 2 discussed two research methodologies and explained why one methodology was preferred over the other. Arriving at a precise definition of both methodologies may be controversial, without claiming to be able to provide a complete definition of both research methodologies precisely, multiple perspectives was reviewed.

Quantitative methods are numerical in a sense that they include numbers, measures, and statistics. Janićijević (2011) expressed that quantitative researchers use measurement to obtain knowledge. It is the study of relationships between variables. Janićijević stated, “In quantitative analysis these patterns are revealed by relations between numbers” (p. 83). According to Pandey (2009), the quantitative approach may be used to collect data measuring in numerical terms. Pandey’s examples of quantitative variables included a demographic structure, levels of income and education, and access to resources. Pandey argued that these variables make statistical analysis of linear and multiple relationships possible by comparing the status of the population in relation to events. Pandey described these variables as discrete entities quantitatively identified in proportions, percentages, and averages. Žydziumaite (2007) also recognized quantitative properties in averages and proportions by suggesting that traditional results are reported

in terms of group average. The objective of quantitative methodologies is to quantify information; justify relationships from facts and evidence.

Compared to the qualitative method, the quantitative method is known for the reliability of the results and the ability to create visual aids to distinguish relationships between two or more patterns to describe main ideas. Scholars belonging to the positivist school of thought argue that this method is reliable because it reduces individual bias, it takes observed facts as an absolute reality, it permits verification by other researchers, and it imposes the Western value of capitalist ideas. Pandey (2009) expressed the quantitative method has “a neutral stand unaffected by any personal values and moral prescriptions in the process of collection and interpretation of data on social events” (p. 4). Janićijević (2011) also confirmed scholars must be neutral and objective towards the object of research. Žydziumaite (2007) explained quantitative researchers are “detached” to guard against the researchers influencing the findings of the research. Janićijević claimed quantified results reinforce credibility with scholars, provide practical recommendations for change, require less methodological knowledge, and are simple to replicate and appraise the validity and reliability of the analysis. Quantitative data deals with numbers and variables that can be measured.

Quantitative methods allow researchers to capture a large section of the population. Pandey (2009) stated, “It makes it feasible to summarize and simplify with precision the mass of information collected from large sample” (p. 2). Žydziumaite (2007) stated that “large-scale studies can afford to cast the net relatively wide. Large numbers of participants can be involved; several sub-groups established; perhaps a range

of different contexts covered; and more possible mechanisms tested out” (p. 9).

Janićijević (2011) also pointed out that the advantage of quantitative research lies in the size of the sample and generalization and quantification of results. In addition, the graphs and charts can be created to distinguish relationships between two or more patterns to describe main ideas. By introducing tables and pictures into the presentation, the speaker`s message is much more likely to reach and convince a viewer (Sevilla & Somers, 2007). Graphs and charts are a quick way to summarize large amounts of information, which may be easier to understand because the visual allows people to see the big picture rather than reading through the whole text.

The qualitative method is opposite from the quantitative method. The qualitative research methods are problem-centered. They involve explaining an action or meaning through a narrative style. They focus on meaning in context. As Creswell (2013) stated,

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or call for change. (p. 44)

Žydžiūmaite (2007) suggested qualitative methods include the identification and explanation of facts. Pandey (2009) expressed that the qualitative methods penetrates into the contexts of events and activities and into perceptions and meanings held by people about them. This approach may be described as interpretive because it involves an exploration of in-depth knowledge from the participants under study to allow the researcher to describe rich meanings in relation to the context of their existence. Wertz et al (2001) stated the “Interpretive analysis is required to distinguish parts of mental life and to grasp their meaning interrelations within the context of the whole” (p. 80). Merriam (2009) emphasized this approach is used to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon for the participants involved, what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Merriam stated, “The overall purposes of qualitative research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience” (p. 14). The objective is to explore the diversity of meaning held by the participants enabling the researcher to find the connection between those objective facts and unique perceptions about their meanings, which would result in an extensive, philosophical, and thorough understanding.

Limitations of the qualitative design include the time to complete the study, reliability and validity issues due to the inability to quantify the information, and a potential bias from the researcher’s interpretation. As Creswell (2013) explained, a qualitative researcher must be willing to do the following:

Commit to extensive time in the field; engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis; write long passages ...to show multiple perspectives; and participate in a form of social and human science research that does not have firm guidelines. (p. 49)

Fisher and Stenner (2011) explained that resources might be invested into qualitative investigations. Merriam (2009) also suggested researchers often spend an extensive amount of time in the natural setting of the study, often in contact with the participants. The objective for qualitative research is to reveal participants behavior and their perceptions with reference to a specific phenomenon.

Quantitative researchers argue that the qualitative approach has a negative impact on the study due to the personal values and moral prescriptions of the human instrument in the process of collection and interpretation of data. Qualitative researchers have the ability to influence the outcome of their research. Wertz et al. (2011) expressed “part of the rigor of qualitative research involves self-disclosure and reflexivity on the part of the investigator” (p. 84). Janićijević (2011) pointed out that qualitative researchers are subjective and can affect the results of the study because participants are purposefully selected. However, Peshkin (1988) argued a person’s subjectivities “can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected” (p. 19). Merriman (2009) also defended this shortcoming by suggesting that qualitative researchers identify subjectivities and monitor them to determine how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of the study. The results of

qualitative research are descriptive in nature rather than predictive and allow the investigator and participant(s) to build synergy as they build on each other correspondence.

Advantages to qualitative research may be the opportunity to gain detailed insight in the form of comprehensive explanations. Merriam (2009) explained the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The benefit is the immediate responsiveness and flexibility in the research. The researcher has the opportunity to clarify, summarize, and check with participants for the accuracy of the interpretation during the data collection phase. The design is flexible because it is responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress (p. 16). Janićijević (2011) cited there is a “high degree of flexibility, since feedback information regarding the adequacy of certain questions is easily and quickly obtained, and therefore the questions can be easily adjusted and changed” (p. 83). Janićijević stated that the scope and depth of exploration encompasses different elements of the experience and all its layers. This method is used to unfold the context and social meaning from a broad spectrum to the specifics of how it affects individuals.

The difference between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies is that qualitative scholars focus on quality, the nature, and essence of the study, whereas the quantitative focus of research is on quantity: how much and how many. Quantitative data may be generated by qualitative variables that are measured numerically (Mann, 2010). A quantitative researcher’s philosophical roots are positivism, logical empiricism, and realism. A qualitative researcher’s philosophical roots are phenomenological, symbolic

interactionism, and constructivism. The qualitative research goal of investigation is to understand, interpret, describe, and discover meaning, whereas the quantitative goal is to predict, confirm, and test hypothesis. The design characteristics for qualitative studies are flexible, evolving, and emergent, whereas quantitative characteristics are predetermined and structured. The sample in quantitative research is large and random, while the same for qualitative studies are usually small, nonrandom, and purposeful. Quantitative researchers use inanimate instruments such as scales, tests, surveys, and questionnaires during the data collection period. During the data collection period in a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument in conducting interviews, observing, and documenting information. The primary mode of analysis is inductive and comparative in qualitative studies and deductive and statistical in quantitative studies. Finally, quantitative research findings are precise and numerical, while qualitative findings are comprehensive, holistic, expansive, and richly descriptive.

Research Designs

Different methods are driven by different research questions, problems, and objectives. No one method is superior to the other. According to Creswell (2013), the essential reason for selecting a qualitative method may be due to the need to explore the research topic, to present a detailed view of the topic, to study individuals in their natural settings, and to maintain the role as an active learner to narrate the story from a participant's view. Each method can make a contribution to the research; the approach depends on the nature of the phenomena to be investigated and the research problem (Žydziumaite, 2007, p. 8). The criterion for selecting a research design is relevant to the

research problem. Gender inequality is a problem for females seeking to advance their career opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry.

Experimental design. The objective of an experimental design is to manipulate one variable and observe the outcome. Asgari, Dasgupta, and Stout (2012) conducted an experimental study on the effect of successful, professional female influence on young female's leadership self-concept to find out when (if) exposure to counter stereotypic in-group members, enhance versus impair, a female's self-perceptions of leadership. Asgari et al. revealed there is a shared stereotype among males and females about professional leadership roles being more suited for males in those leader-like roles, behaviors, and traits are attributed to the male species. Females are more suited for caretaking roles and are interested in the arts rather than STEM professions and majors. Asgari et al. questioned the conditions that might allow females to imagine themselves as having counter stereotypic traits and occupying counter stereotypic roles. Consequently, the research objective was to identify factors making females resilient to stereotypes and helping them to develop counter stereotypic beliefs about their professional potential and to explore female subjective identification with successful in-group members and their career aspirations (Asgari et al., 2012, p. 381). Asgari et al. found that exposure to female leaders portrayed as dissimilar from the self, did not produce counter stereotypic self-beliefs, which lead participants to have fewer leadership qualities and career aspirations. As a result, female beliefs about their leadership ability remained stereotypic across all three experiments.

Ethnographic design. The objective of the ethnographic approach is to understand and describe the culture in a rich context. The ethnographic approach stems from anthropology (Creswell, 2013) and sociology, but used in a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, education, and medicine (Lambert, Glacken, & McCarron, 2011). Ethnographic research may be defined as the understanding of the behavior, language, and interaction among a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2013). Lambert et al. defined the ethnographic approach as the work of describing a culture or picture of a group of people, things the group does, and the beliefs, values, and practices they hold; and the discovery of what knowledge people use to interpret experience and mold their behavior in the context of their culturally-constituted environment (p. 19). Creswell suggested that an ethnographic approach is used to understand the essence of how the culture sharing group functions. Ethnographic researchers seek to address the “what” in question, “what do people in this setting have to know and do to make this system work,” what behavior do they exhibit, what language do they speak, and what do they use? (p. 92). Ethnography involves the understanding of how people live their life.

The ethnographic approach is used to explore a cultural group to develop themes about power, leadership, and inequity experienced by groups based on socioeconomic class, gender, and race (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher describes the everyday life of the individuals and then advocates for the group by stimulating change (Creswell, 2013). Pandey (2009) described this design as describing the customs and traditions, the structure and the skeleton, and the typical ways of thinking and feeling associated with the culture of a group. Ethnography scholars focus on culture, the beliefs,

values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a group of individuals. Ethnographic researchers strive to understand the interaction of people within the culture of the society in which they live in (Merriam, 2009). Sangasubana (2011) described the process of conducting ethnographic research and defined ethnography as the art and science used to describe a group or culture. Sangasubana explained three characteristics of the ethnographic method as conducting research in a natural environment in which real people live, the role of the researcher being both an observer and participant, and dialogic or reflexive in terms of the researcher having the ability to reflect thought given feedback from those who are under study. Lambert et al. explained that research is gathered first-hand, as researchers participate in the daily lives of people for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions through informal and formal interviews (p. 18). Ethnographic researchers work in the field to learn how to recognize the characteristics that make up a culture and how to describe it to others.

The purpose of the ethnographic approach is to understand and describe the culture in a rich context. The advantages of conducting an ethnographic study is gaining a detailed and rich database for further investigation and writing, the opportunity to learn about another culture, and the opportunity to study marginalized groups of people closed to other forms of research (Sangasubana, 2011, p. 568). The heart of ethnographic work is cultural patterning and interpretation (Creswell, 2013; Lambert et al., 2011, p. 18). The challenge in conducting an ethnographic study is the need to have an understanding of cultural anthropology and social-cultural system, extensive fieldwork in looking for

patterns of a cultural sharing group, gaining access from the gatekeeper, and possible ethical issues that may arise (Creswell, 2013). This method is best suited for describing and interpreting the shared patterns of a culture-sharing group.

Case study method. The objective of the case study approach is to explore an issue, an event, or phenomenon in depth and in its natural context. The case study approach is rooted in clinical practice and research (Crowe et al., 2011). The method is used in a variety of social science disciplines (Amerson, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Crowe et al., 2011), including psychology, sociology, anthropology, education (Crowe et al., 2011), medicine, law, and political science (Creswell, 2013). Creswell defined case study research as a qualitative approach to explore a real-life, contemporary case or multiple cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection and to report a case description and case themes (p. 97). According to Amerson (2011), the case study method is beneficial when the researcher must take into account the contextual conditions of the phenomenon being studied, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not easily understood, and in supporting and expanding previously developed theories (p. 427). Creswell explained that the case study approach is “useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great-depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information” (p. 1602). In addition, Crowe et al. (2011) stated that case studies are used to explain, describe, or explore events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur (p. 4). This research design is useful for investigating trends align with a specific phenomenon.

Case study research generally answers one or more questions that begin with “how” or “why”. Researchers (Amerson, 2011; Crowe et al., 2011) suggested the case study method is a research strategy concerned with “how” and “why” questions that allow the investigation of contextual realities. Crowe et al. added “what” to the “how” and “why” questions by explaining that the approach offers additional insights into “what” gaps exist in its delivery (p. 4). Researchers (Amerson, 2011; Crowe et al., 2011) also suggested the limitation of this research method is the lack of scientific rigor and the issues of generalization. Another weakness is deciding the boundaries of a case, such as volume of data (Crowe et al., 2011), time constraints (Creswell, 2013; Crowe et al., 2011), and identifying a case worthy of study (Creswell). This method is best suited for providing an in-depth understanding of case(s).

Phenomenological method. The objective of the phenomenological study is to identify a phenomenon, investigate the experience, and describe the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experience. Creswell (2013) explained that the phenomenological study is used to describe or interpret a common meaning that participants experienced that may be a phenomenon, such as inequality, being left out, professional growth, or fibromyalgia. According to Norlyk and Harder (2010), there is debate about phenomenology being primarily a philosophy rather than a scientific research method (p. 420). Phenomenon, as it relates to science, is described as the foundation for knowledge (Norlyk & Harder, 2010, p. 424). Creswell suggested phenomenology is rooted in the social and health sciences that describe “what” participants experienced and “how” they experience it. On the other hand, Wakahiu and

Keller (2011) stated the “phenomenological approach is embodied in social and cultural experiences” (p. 127). Nonetheless, phenomenology is related to the experience held by an individual or group, or of perceptions of social phenomena.

There is a search for the essential meaning in relation to the single phenomenon provided by the participants. Norlyk and Harder (2010) suggested the general concepts in phenomenological philosophy are in alignment with experience or lived experience, essence or essential meaning, and phenomenon. Experience means having the knowledge or skilled gained through exposure or involvement; it relates to the conscious events that a person may have lived through. In philosophy related to phenomenological studies, essence relates to the deeper meaning tied to the experience (Norlyk & Harder, 2010, p. 424). Creswell (2013) stated “the essence is the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study” (p. 79). Phenomenology is a way of investigating experiences (Pringle, Hendry, & McLafferty, 2011). Aspers (2010) defined phenomenology as a descriptive science, and stated that it is the study of “that what appears” (p. 215). Arditti and Parkman (2011) believed that phenomenologists focus on the lived experience and the meaning individuals attach to their everyday lives. Arditti and Parkman further explained that the lived experience embodies events whose true meaning is something recognized in retrospect, perhaps by narrating a story or recounting specific encounters. Essence is the perception tied to the experience, this is the significance to explore the meaning of the essences.

Phenomenological research is a strategy to interpret individual’s experience as they relate to a specific phenomenon. Pringle et al. (2011) discussed the interpretative

phenomenological analysis (IPA) as it relates to health care. Pringle et al. explained that the IPA foundation is built in psychology as it is used to interpret a person's beliefs and what they are saying. Smith (2011) explained the difference between phenomenology as "the philosophical movement concerned with lived experience and phenomenological philosophers converge on the need to conduct the detailed examination of experience on its own terms; and that "IPA has theoretical roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography" (p. 9). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the researcher is to describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding a phenomenon in order to understand the individuals' meanings ascribed to that event. Pandey (2009) stated the objective of this design is "to find out the meanings held by actors in an interaction" (p. 9). Žydziumaite (2007) explained the participants' interpretive descriptions of lived experiences stimulate deep reflection on their meaning. Pringle et al. (2011) mentioned that the investigator's task is to go beyond the interpretive description to look at common life experiences. The interpretive phenomenological approach serves to enhance understanding and make sense of the data generated.

The objective of phenomenological studies is to uncover meaning from participant stories and discover themes through commonalities from direct quotes. Once the meanings of individual experiences are described, the investigator is to cluster these meanings into themes, and then integrate these themes into a narration (Pringle et al., 2011). The approach provides the basis for describing the perceptions and experiences as they pertain to a concept, practice, or occurrence (Creswell, 2013; Wakahiu & Keller, 2011). The type of problem best suited for phenomenological research is one in which it

is important to understand several individuals' common experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 81). Pringle et al. (2011) claimed that this approach do not seek to find one single answer or truth, but rather a coherent and legitimate account attentive to the words of the participants. The phenomenological method is known for its diversity of data collection methods, creativity, and flexibility (Pringle et al., 2011). Although the phenomenological method offers a different perspective from other approaches, the limitation of this method may be described as the drawback of the small sample size constrained by the theoretical roots needed for a richer depth of analysis. As Pringle et al. (2011) explained, the depth of analysis draws the researcher away from the original meaning and the light it sheds should judge the effectiveness in a broader context that affects the transferability and links to other areas or groups, which is more difficult to make with small samples. On the other hand, Smith (2011) suggested the sample size is sufficient for the purpose of IPA to be realized by stating "the best IPA studies are concerned with the balance of convergence and divergence within the sample, not only presenting both shared themes but also pointing to the particular way in which these themes play out for individuals" (p. 10). Finding participants who have all experienced the phenomenon may be challenging given the research topic (Creswell, 2013). Another limitation may be the difficulty of disregarding prior knowledge and understanding as it relates to bracketing (Creswell, 2013; Pringle et al., 2011). The purpose of the phenomenological method is to provide an enriched understanding of individual experiences as they relate to the phenomenon.

No one method is superior to the other. Each method can make a contribution to the research; the approach depends on the nature of the phenomena to be investigated and the research problem (Žydžiumaite, 2007, p. 8). The key is to ask good questions because different types of questions will yield different information. Merriam (2009) explained, “The way in which questions are worded is a crucial consideration in extracting the type of information desired” (p. 13). According to Smith (2011), the difference between experiments and IPAs is in how researchers examine what participants say in order to learn about how participants are constructing accounts of experience and to try and learn about how they are making sense of their experience (p. 11). Phenomenologists focus on the common experiences individuals share, ethnography emphasis is on an entire culture sharing group to determine how the culture works, and case studies are used to explore issues using a single case or multiple cases to illustrate a problem.

Exploring Outcomes

Future research is needed to track the career paths of females who are victims of gender inequality. Case studies can provide findings on the outcome of such phenomena. Ren and Foster (2011) employed a case study approach, as well as a questionnaire and semi-structured interview as methods of data collection, to investigate family-work conflict experienced by female air staff in three different job types (ground staff, cabin crew, and flight training staff) in Hong Kong. Ren and Foster discovered that no females occupied leadership positions, the airline focused on biological differences between the sexes and the division of labor in parenting, paternalistic policies reinforced rather than challenged existing gendered stereotypes that neglected female professional development

and influenced expectations of female roles, and contributions in the workplace despite their lived realities in this case study. In addition, flight attendants experienced more conflict than those on the ground, and air staff experienced a moderate level of work-family conflict.

Exploring Different Designs and Methods

In looking to build on the study outlined in this review, additional research is needed to establish how widespread and how severe one of the themes are (e.g., institutional sexism, lack of access to networks/mentoring relationships) or if all of the themes are systematically related from a social to organizational realm based on the reality of participants experience. According to researchers, there may be a reliable correlation across contexts. Through narrative stories, Mysyk (2008) examined how mentoring informed both the protégé and the mentor about roles, identity, challenges, relationships, and the power of professional development. Significant themes, such as learning in building a career, learning from mentors, and learning from being a mentor, were identified in this phenomenological study captured by interviews referred to as an open-ended data analysis.

In comparison, Eddy and Cox (2008) identified four themes expressed by six females holding president positions in community colleges. These females described their career experience in climbing the scholastic ladder at the college level. The first theme “embodied family life” perpetuated career choices for the females in alignment with family responsibility. All the females were married and some with children made choices to seek advanced career positions once their children were grown and once their

husband's career could accommodate the move. They expressed this time allowed them to embrace the male norm and act as a disembodied employee, in order to secure their career advancements. Theme 2, "getting tough," suggested that females are expected to mold themselves into the male-norm leadership model. Although females are penalized for acting out male characteristics, they are judged against these same attributes. Consequently, these females shared a voice in stating that females cannot appear to be tough, but need to act tougher to meet the expected work roles. "Working in a man's world," was another theme that mention traditional organizational hierarchies, positional power, and the disembodied worker is still evident; therefore, the quickest route up the ranks is to mirror the expected practice (Eddy & Cox, 2008, p. 71). Finally, the "breaking away," theme included a recommendation for a paradigm shift from the traditional organizational culture based on male norms to transformational leadership that embraced female ways of leading.

There was a need to establish findings across different types of organizations (e.g., automotive, defense, health, education, traditional male organizations, transformational organizations, etc.). Bruckmuller and Branscombe (2011) conducted two experiments to test the hypotheses that attitudes about gender and leadership help create the glass cliff. Bruckmuller and Branscombe revealed a status quo bias: as long as an organization is doing well, people prefer leadership characteristics that align with masculinity and see no need to change the culture of male leadership, but once an organization faces a crisis, female leadership is preferred due to the stereotyped female attributes. In another experiment study, Bansak and Starr (2010) focused on gender bias

in the education of children and found discrimination against girls in school enrollment by their families because boys earn a higher income for their family while girls earn income for their in-laws' families. Bansak and Starr also investigated gender differences in predispositions towards economics viewed as a business field, traditional male-dominated field of study, which prioritizes math skills. The target sample attended San Diego State University (SDSU); 762 students in the first introductory economics course were surveyed. Bansak and Starr (2010) found that females were not interested in economics, in part due to the difficulty of the subject, the expectation of a hostile work environment aligned with economic career fields, and the low interest of quantitative workloads. However, the females in the study expressed more interest in economic topics related to social welfare and concerns about the work/family balance.

Exploring Different Groups

In addition to making comparison across different industries, there is a need to establish the degree to which the phenomenon extends from an organizational stand point into various sectors of society and cultures. Ethnographic studies can provide findings if the phenomenon is visible in non-Western cultures (eg. China, Africa, Japan, Europe, etc.). The effects of gender inequality may be more apparent in societies whose culture is tied to patriarchal beliefs because the division of labor and sexism are more institutionalized. Ethnographic studies, as described by Sultana (2011), can be used to examine female gender ideology concerning their children's education, their privilege rights, and to determine the factors affecting female beliefs in the north region of Bangladesh. In this mixed method, ethnographic and survey research, Sultana focused on

how education, occupation, and income might be used to overcome traditional ideology. Sultana revealed that all three variables had an effect on female awareness towards their right in the family. Education was the key indicator to increased female awareness about gender relations, employment and income, and female mobility and confidence towards their rights in the division of labor. Education, occupation, and income awareness enabled females to overcome gender barriers.

Summary

With the information explored within this literature review, from the various principles of human, social, and leadership development, the researcher drew the conclusion that the issue of gender inequality still exists and barriers remain in the way of women who have the skill, desire, and ambition to advance their career. Chapter two made a contribution to leadership studies by exploring the correlational nature of barriers that limit females from advancing through the ranks. This synopsis covered biological differences that pre-assigns the gender roles of inequality at birth; the trade-off females are faced with between work, family, and continued education; gendered stereotypes dictating leadership attributes tying successful managers with masculine characteristics devaluing female worth; institutional sexism supporting male initiatives toward continued education in fields molding their knowledge and skill set to match leadership attributes; traditional organizational cultures enforcing gender roles as ascribed by the patriarchal society to maintain the status quo; and the lack of leadership development through networks and mentoring relationships that limit females from gaining the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to take advantage of promotional opportunities. Continued

transformation is needed. Recognition of gendered organizational structures within the U.S. Defense Industry offers a forum for dialogue for change and the need for future research.

The researcher found that direct relationships exist among biological differences, the division of labor in parenting, gender bias, institutional sexism, traditional organizational cultures, the lack of access to effective mentoring and networks, and female career advancement. Each of the theories explored outlined the obstacles that limit female professional development systematically across organizational contexts (i.e., division of labor, institutional sexism, and organizational norms). The propositions explored created a clear agenda for future research. Further research is needed to follow female career paths that find themselves in glass-cliff situations. There was a need to determine why gender differences in network practices and mentoring relationships still exists, and future researchers can explore nontraditional methods of mentoring, such as e-mentoring. In addition, pedagogical theories have failed to keep pace with practice. As a result, educators and practitioners lack a theoretical base and framework for discovering professional development programs for career-orientated females. Consequently, there is a need to address the gender imbalance in senior roles and the opportunities for career advancement for females.

Some females adhere to traditional female roles as ascribed by the patriarchal society. Therefore, it is the government's responsibility to enforce policies and programs that strengthen gender equality (Brown & Lewis, 2005). In addition, it is society's duty to help influence positive change and eliminate institutional sexism (Babcock & Laschever,

2003). Consequently, interventions assisting in eliminating unequal gender norms need to be implemented to enable society to change its attitude, beliefs, and behavior (Gupta, 2006, p. 21). The key for females gaining access into leadership requires females to empower themselves through human, social, and professional development with the support of society, institutions, and the government. Although these various principles may be the key to unlocking various avenues for females to advance their career, females need to acquire the necessary job characteristics of leadership, engage in social networks, and establish mentoring relationships associated with the traditional masculine managerial cultures.

The next section, chapter three, the researcher describes why the phenomenological study design was selected to investigate current barriers contributing to the under-representation of women in leadership roles and the lived experience of women who have encountered issues of gender inequality hindering them from gaining the knowledge and the skills necessary to advance their career. The researcher described the role of the investigator in the data collection process, as well as the criteria for selecting the participants involved in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In chapter 3 of this dissertation the researcher described how this phenomenological study derived from the research questions that drove the investigation. The researcher addressed how the research questions were structured around the study and included a description and justification for using the qualitative research methodology. The researcher identified the population sample, and discussed procedures for gaining access to participants and the measures that were taken to ensure the ethical protection of participants. The writer described the role of the researcher in the data collection process, defended the technique used to collect data, and described the system used for keeping track of the data and emerging themes. In addition, the reliability and validity of the study were discussed.

A Phenomenological Study of Qualitative Research

The researcher was interested in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for civilian females who sought advanced career opportunities, but encountered barriers related to gender inequality. The objective was to interpret the experiences of individuals regarding a phenomenon in order to understand the individuals' meanings ascribed to that event. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. This research focused on the insight and understanding of civilian females involved in the study by asking the following research questions: (a) what is the lived

experience and perceptions of females who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to professional advancement opportunities; and (b) how do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry?

For the research methodology and design, no one method or approach was superior to the other. Each method made a contribution to the research; the approach depended on the nature of the phenomena investigated and the research problem (Zydziumaite, 2007, p. 8). The most effective research methodology selected for this study was qualitative because of the research purpose to describe, interpret, and understand the essence of the experiences of females in the U.S. Defense Industry who experienced gender inequality. The criterion for selecting a research design was relevant to the research problem. Gender inequality is a continual problem for females seeking advanced career opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The design must be significant to the research as it confronts its topic. As a consequence, the phenomenological design was appropriate to the problem being studied because there was a need to yield insight on females who had experienced issues of gender inequality regarding promotional opportunities. In this study, the essence was the lived meaning, which referred to the way these females' experienced different barriers and how they understood it.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

This section of the chapter: (a) described the population from which the sample was drawn; (b) described and defended the sampling method used and sample size; (c)

described the eligibility criteria for study participants; (d) described the data collection tools to include the type of the instruments, the system used for tracking data, and how the meaning was processed for assessment of reliability and validity; and (e) explained how the data analysis was used to logically and sequentially address all research questions.

Setting and Sampling

The researcher maintained the role as an active learner by narrating the lived experiences from the participant's view. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) suggested that the implementation of a phenomenological study is significant to both the investigator and the participants involved. Both parties usually work together in bridging the gap to the problem. It was the researcher best interest to exhibit empathic listening skills, as participants described their experience related to the phenomenon, to catch meaningful cues in participants' gestures, expressions, questions, and occasional pauses.

Setting. Participants who have experienced the phenomenon explored were located at various locations. The data collection process took place face-to-face in the following settings: public library, restaurant, locker room, and meeting conference rooms. The data collection process also took place by phone. It was the intent of the researcher to schedule all face-to-face interviews at a public library convenient for the interviewees. The library site was the primary location selected based on the friendly, quiet, and educational environment most libraries enforce. For individuals who were willing to participate, but were unable to meet with the researcher face-to-face for the interview, the researcher asked the participants if they were willing to participate in a phone interview.

The average interview duration was 60 minutes. The frequency of data collection events averaged at three dialogs for each participant: formerly for the initial recruitment (15 minutes), once for the actual interview (25 minutes), and then for the follow-up summary that included an exit interview (20 minutes) where the researcher thanked individuals for participating in the research.

Sample. The researcher used the criterion form of sampling, which allowed the researcher to rely on participants having experienced the phenomenon being studied. In the case of this phenomenological study, “the criterion sample works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon,” which may be useful for quality assurance (Creswell, 2013, p. 155). A criterion sampling design was used to allow the researcher to select a sample of 18 subjects, satisfying the criterion. Given the focus of this study on females’ lived meaning, the target sample size selected was elevated to leave room for error. Arditti and Parkman (2011) claimed that the fewer the participants, the deeper the inquiry per individual by stating “data from only a few individuals might suffice for this purpose – a typical sample may range from 1 to 10 participants” (p. 209). Conversely, Merriam (2009) stated that the sample size depends on the research question, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, and the resources needed to support the study. Sampling is exhausted when no new information is forthcoming. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explained that the typical sample size for a phenomenological study is from five to 25 participants having direct experience with the phenomenon. Creswell (2013) also suggested that phenomenological studies traditionally carry out long, in-depth interviews with up to 25 participants, which would allow the

researcher to obtain real life characteristics. The recruitment of participants for this study followed a mix between the Merriam and Creswell approach. The target population was civilian females having experience working within the U.S. Defense Industry, from which the sample was drawn. The sampling frame included a phone directory list of individuals from a defense and security organization, which included males and females having careers related to the defense of the United States and National Security. There was no one procedure for identifying participants in the phone directory, except for the exclusion of males. Thirty names were highlighted in the directory list; the researcher initiated contact by phone, introduced herself as being a member of the associated organization, explained the reason for the initial contact to solicit females having experienced the phenomenon, and then asked individuals if they could participate in the research with a follow-up interview.

Access and Rapport

Because there may have been an access issue with finding individuals who had experienced the phenomenon, the researcher had to collect written permission to study potential participants. According to Creswell (2013) “it is convenient for the researcher to obtain people who are easily accessible” (p. 117). A consent form was presented to all potential participants (see Appendix C). To explain the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used in the data collection process, the confidentiality agreement, the known benefits and risk associated with participation, and their right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time. The consent form held a place for both the participants and the researcher to sign and date.

Pilot Test

The interview process began with a pilot test recruitment of three individuals. The first individual was a male student selected based on his interest to review the research and to check for bias or leading questions. The second individual was a male peer the researcher recruited to review the pilot interview for bias, content error, and understanding. The third individual was a female coworker of the researcher and student of Walden University who took interest into the topic and sought out the opportunity to challenge and critique the discussion questions. Two of the three pilot tests were done face-to-face and one pilot test was done by telephone. The purpose of the pilot interviews was to identify any difficulties that could occur in the actual interview and to build the researcher interviewing skills (Allen & Carlson, 2003). Consistency was maintained throughout the pilot process by following the same interview approach and strategy with all participants. The discussion and data collected during the pilot test calculated to be one hour of recorded audio. The IRB approval number is 02-01-08-0314202.

Data Collection

It was essential for the researcher to gain an understanding of the lived meaning participants had related to the phenomenon. The researcher had to bracket any preconceived notions that may have influenced the study, and focus on identifying common themes in the participants' descriptions of their experiences. Ordinary to all qualitative methods was a need to identify an appropriate sample from which to acquire data, in which this study decided to target 18 participants. An additional element was the form of data collection, such as observation and interview methods.

Interviews. Interviews are a data collection technique used to gather useful information. Interviews may be defined as a meeting or conversation between two or more individuals for whom information is sought after by engaging into discussion. Merriam (2009) identified with DeMarrais's definition of interview as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p. 87). The purpose of using this method was to gain rigorous information when the observation of feelings or behavior was not used or simply when observation was not enough to build the case. This data collection method was necessary because the researcher was interested in capturing the lived meaning of past events that were impossible to replicate (Merriam, 2009). Interviews are a good data collection technique if the method is relevant to obtaining information specific to the research questions.

There are three common interview structures: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured, which vary depending on flexibility, the types of questions asked, and the nature of interaction between the investigator and the participant. Flexibility relates to time, place, and the number of interviews to be scheduled. Unstructured interviews may take more time than structured interviews due to the probing questions coming about during the process of the interview. The key is to ask good questions because different types of questions will yield different information. Merriam (2009) explained, "The way in which questions are worded is a crucial consideration in extracting the type of information desired" (p. 87). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explained that good questions should include questions in alignment with facts, perception about the facts, feelings,

motives, present and past behaviors, standards for behaviors (what should be done in certain situations), and conscious reasons for actions (p. 146). Merriam also displayed a model including six types of questions: (a) background/demographic questions (this follows a structured format), (b) experience and behavior, (c) opinion and value (beliefs and thought process), (d) feeling questions (how did this make you feel), (e) knowledge (actual factual knowledge), and (f) sensory (more in-depth about what was seen, heard, touched, etc. – unstructured format). The objective in this process was not to leave room for doubt. Merriam also pointed out three variables determining the nature of interaction between the investigator and the participant: (a) the personality and skill set of the interviewer, (b) the attitude and orientation of the interviewee, and (c) the definition of both in the situation. It was important for me to be seen as respectful, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening. This allowed the interviewer to establish and maintain rapport. An interviewer with an advanced skill set is more flexible with an unstructured approach and is able to learn enough about a situation through informal conversation.

The limitation of the interview method is researchers must rely on participants' memories of past events, behaviors, and perspectives. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) stated that human memory is subject to distortion, memory is not as accurate as a tape or video recorder, and people always only recall what might or should have happen rather than what actually did happen. Information from the interviews are subject to bias. Another shortcoming maybe inadequate preparation or skill set held by the interviewer.

Observation. Observation was another technique to collect data. This method is usually used in conjunction with interviewing to validate the findings. Observations make

it possible to provide specific incidents and behaviors as it is happening. Merriam (2009) suggested that this technique is helpful in understanding ill-defined phenomena. This technique is useful when participants were not willing to discuss information or fear they will be punished for sharing their lived meaning.

It is not humanly possible to observe everything at one time. Because no one can observe everything, the conceptual framework, the problem, and the research questions drove what was to be observed (Merriam, 2009). Merriam described two models reflecting a list of things to observe and the relationship between the observer and the observed. The checklist of element to observe included: (a) the physical setting (environment); (b) the participants (people and their roles – focus on patterns); (c) interactions (structures and relationships); (d) communication (the content of conversations); (e) subtle factor (the unplanned, nonverbal, and unobtrusive measures); and (f) your own behavior (the investigator role in the field). In addition, five relationships are described between the observer and the observed: (a) complete participant (this is when the investigator conduct observation as an observer, but belong to the group being studied and hide their observer role); (b) participant as observer (here the observer role is known to the group and the researcher spends more time involved as an active participant than observer); (c) observer as participant (the observer role is known to the group and observation is primary, while participation is secondary); (d) complete observer (the investigator observes as an outsider hidden from participants); and (e) mix (this is when the investigator reverses roles interchangeably as either a complete participant, complete observer, participant observer, or observer as participant)

(Creswell, 2013). Regardless of the role selected by the researcher during the observation process, the need was to record as much detail information as possible with descriptions, direct quotes, and observer comments to form the database for analysis. As a result, both data collection techniques (interviewing and observation) were combined to offer a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. There was no one right technique to collect qualitative data, only the advantages and disadvantages involved in any combination.

Research questions. The research design was developed from the research questions linked to the purpose statement. The research questions were (a) what is the lived experience and perceptions of females who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to professional advancement opportunities; and (b) how do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry? Both techniques mentioned in this paper assisted the researcher in uncovering meaning; develop understanding, and discovering insights relevant to the research problem. Limitations affiliated with the use of observation and interviews was that no one can observe everything and it takes practice to learn interview skills and how to ask good questions. However, the researcher decided to use a combination of both techniques described to maximize the search for lived meaning.

The primary data collection technique included an in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended, interview format to enable a range of questions and related issues to be explored that the researcher produced (see Appendix B). Initial warm-up questions (i.e., demographics) started the process, with the intent of leading the sequence of questions to

flow from general to specific. The researcher collected the data. An interview log was used during the research study to maintain a record of observation from the interviews sustained by the researcher, which contributed to the process of identifying categories and themes within the data (Allen & Carlson, 2003). An audiotape retained by the researcher was used for critical listening to improve the interview techniques and to code the responses from the interviewees. The researcher was responsible for recording the data with an audiotape. The frequency of data collection events was three, first for the initial recruitment, second for the actual interview, and third for the follow-up summary and exit interview. The average interview time was 60 minutes. The research questions were linked with the interview questions.

Data Analysis

In order to make sure each question stayed in alignment with the purpose of the research and the research questions; a chart was developed (See Appendix B) supporting the interview questions. Research Question 1 supported Interview Questions, 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Research Question 2 supported Interview Questions, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

The purpose of this study was to gain understanding of the reality of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The methods of collection in search for lived meaning included the researcher role as a mix-observer (observer as participant and complete observer) and an in-depth, semi-structured (specific to demographic data but flexible enough to add in probing questions) interview.

The plan of analysis was important because it was the blueprint of the process that

developed the study. It was the process of making meaning of the data collected through observation and interviews. According to Merriam (2009) the “data analysis is the process used to answer your research question(s)” (p. 176). Specific to this phenomenological study, the objective of data analysis was to find meaning through themes. The intended plan of this study was to develop the research questions around the conceptual framework: (a) what is the lived experience and perceptions of females who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to professional advancement opportunities; and (b) how do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry? The basic plan was to describe how the research design derived logically from the research questions. However, because the phenomenon and context were not always distinguishable in real-life situations, the data collected from the initial research questions were the logical sequence connecting the research design to its findings; then the research strategy began with the logic of design defining the scope of the phenomenological study.

To carry out the analysis, the researcher first obtained a sample population (i.e., females) within their own work environment and an associated network organization, carried out semi-structured interviews, and maintained the role as a silent observer in the office of a defense organization (i.e., relevance of the topic, gender inequality). The researcher then related content categories to variables (i.e., coding), sampled the elements of the text by category, quantified the categories, and related the category frequencies (i.e., themes) to variables.

The process of data analysis may be grouped into three phases: the beginning, middle, and the end. The beginning analysis takes form during the data collection period. Merriam (2009) expressed “the much preferred way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection” (p. 171). The middle may be referred to as the ongoing analysis and the final analysis is shaped by the data collected and the analysis complementing the entire process (Merriam, 2009). The process began by identifying segments in the data set responding to the research questions. Based on the research design, the challenge was how to analyze experience. The first step was to obtain descriptions of lived experiences. Merriam explained that the researcher needs to “think of having a conversation with the data, asking questions of it, making comments to it, and so on,” (p. 178). The questions that drove the process of analysis are shown (see Appendix A).

The next step was to obtain descriptions of lived experiences from participants by creating a dialogical openness by conducting the interviews in an environment comfortable for the participant(s). As the participants described the meaning of experience for the researcher, she wrote margin notes on the participant’s descriptions and nonverbal gestures. The second step to this phase was to become immersed in the data and become fully aware of the experience of the participants by transcribing the significant statements brought out during the interview(s) (Burnard as cited in Diver et al., 2003). The transcripts were read to gain a “global sense of the whole,” (Kleiman, 2004, p. 13), which complimented the phenomenological methodology (Diver et al., 2003). The interview transcripts were read again and the audiotape was reviewed to code

the data into noncompetitive, meaningful categories. The researcher wrote out a textural and structural description (examples) of the experiences verbatim and reflected on social implication, relevance, and incidents leading to the curiosity about topic, seeking all possible meanings and divergent perspectives about the phenomenon, and constructing themes of how the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the researcher wrote the narrative report on the essence of the experience.

After the phenomenological analysis of the data was completed, the intensive analysis followed to verify concrete detailed information was obtained from participants and essential meaning was discovered. According to Merriam (2009), once the two phases of analysis have been completed, there is a period of critical analysis when tentative findings are substantiated, revised, and reconfigured. To further validate the study, the researcher verified with the participants the analyses in the form of summary descriptions of the themes developed, where new relevant data were offered and incorporated into the analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Validity

Validity must be measured in order to determine whether or not the data represents reality. The meaning of reality surrounds validity. However, Merriam (2009) argued that because reality cannot be captured, validity has to be assessed in relationship to the purpose and findings of the research. Merriam pointed out five strategies that qualitative researchers can use to increase the validity of their findings. Triangulation, or what some researchers now refer to as crystallization, is the use of multiple approaches

such as multiple methods (quantitative and qualitative), multiple methods of data collection (documents and interviews), and multiple theories (glass ceiling and mommy track). Another strategy to ensure for credibility is respondent validation. This is when the investigator solicits feedback from the participants involved in the interview process or observed to avoid misinterpretation of the meaning on what interviewees described and their paradigms. The third strategy is adequate engagement in data collection. This means that the researcher must purposefully seek data supporting alternative explanations and challenge the researcher's expectations or emerge findings. The fourth strategy, reflexivity, refers to when the researcher understands how his or her perceptions and values can affect the shape of the study; as a result, the researcher explains his or her biases and assumptions regarding the research. The final strategy, peer review, is when a colleague or dissertation committee reviews the raw data and assesses whether the findings are plausible based on the data.

To ensure credibility, the researcher used triangulation (i.e., respondent validation, reflexivity, and peer-examination). With the triangulation approach, the researcher made use of multiple methods of data, including observations and interviews. The researcher employed the member check strategy during the analysis phase to interpret the meaning of the data collected during observation and interviews to confirm if the interpretation captured their true lived meaning. The peer-review has been consistent throughout the dissertation process, where the researcher had the opportunity to work with two committee chairs that read and commented on every section of the dissertation. Also, there was a panel of experts, consisting of three people, who reviewed

the content validity of the interview questions. The panel had an approximate total of 15 years of experience in dealing with social studies. Three participants targeted for the pilot test evaluated the face validity assessment. The pilot test is described as

A test given to a random representative sample that is separate from the intended projected research sample. This test is usually a check-and-balance of the efficiency and effectiveness of the questionnaires developed. It tests the reliability of test with a small sample of the projected sample. (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2005, sec. 4)

The researcher used the pilot test to test the validity of the developed interview questions.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the overall accuracy of your measurement. With regard to reliability, a measurement is only reliable when it consistently produces the same results (Lombard et al., 2005; Singleton et al., 2005). However, Merriam (2009) claimed that the experiences explained by participants may be unique, but this does not discredit the results. Merriam explained that human behavior is never static, replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results, and there can be numerous interpretations of the same data (p. 221). The key is that the results are consistent with the data collected. Merriam explained, “the human instrument can become more reliable through training and practice” (p. 222). Reliability can be tested using various strategies such as the triangulation; peer examination, reflexivity, pilot, and audit trail methods.

The audit trail strategy may be described as the log of explanation showing how the researcher arrived at the results. It is a detailed description of how the data were

collected, how the categories were developed, and how decisions were made throughout the research process (Merriam, 2009). This may be found in the researcher log (available upon request) or audio file capturing the researcher reflections, questions, and decision-making process correlated with problems or ideas developed during the data collection period.

Triangulation, respondent validation, reflexivity, and peer-examination were strategies applied to ensure credibility. These strategies remain valuable to ensure reliability. The researcher kept a manual log of notes. However, due to the length of the notes taken and the sensitivity of the notes that included the identification of individual names and organizations, a copy of the log notes are available to committee members only upon request.

Ethics

Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves collecting data in an ethical manner. Due to the moral dimension of this research study, it was the researcher responsibility to develop and enforce proper ethical measures as a duty to the research community, for the liability of scientific findings, and to protect research participants.

The researcher selected the qualitative research design to include a phenomenological method, interview protocol, and non-participatory observation. This methodology was selected to reduce creating an issue of ethical harm to the potential participants in the research study. The significance of the selected methods allowed the data to speak for itself and not to permit preconceptions of the research to establish

reliability and validity of the data (Hopwood, 2004). As Singleton et al. (2005) suggested, an interview and non-participatory observation method is less harmful than experiments; however, the risk of interviews included asking threatening questions and the risk of observation. The ethical concern related to recruitment was the ability to identify participants, the organization they worked for, and their feedback related to the phenomenon.

Due to the concern related to identity the researcher disguised the name of participants investigated to protect the reputation of the participants. The participants' statements or positions may not easily identify the information discussed within the dissertation. As a result of the potential risk that may still arise from using the selected methods, the researcher, along with the help of Walden University, developed a consent form (see Appendix C) , confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D), and cover letter (see Appendix E) covering the subjects' right to privacy and the risk and benefit of participating in the study . The consent form was used to gain permission from individuals to participate in the research study and the institutional review board (IRB) application was approved to conduct the research (see Appendix F). The research participants were females over the age of 18 who experienced the phenomenon and who worked within the U.S. Defense Industry. All participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without any sort of penalty. No incentives were advertised for individuals to participant in the research study.

Summary

There is more than one method, quantitative and qualitative, available for the research related to gender inequality. The qualitative method was selected due to the researcher's interest in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for females who sought after advanced career opportunities, but encountered barriers related to gender inequality. The researcher discussed three out of five research designs related to the qualitative method. The researcher found that the biographical research design was inappropriate, as the research question did not pertain to any one specific person. The limitation of the ethnographical design was the focus on culture, beliefs, values, and attitudes structuring the behavior patterns of a specific group of individuals. However, the researcher used the phenomenological research design to interpret the lived meaning of participants, influencing the outcome of the research and providing patterns.

The researcher maintained the role as an active learner to interpret the lived meaning from the participant's view. A purposeful criterion sampling design was used, allowing the researcher to select a sample of 18 subjects who satisfied the criterion. Two data collection techniques, interviews and observations, were combined to offer a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon studied. To carry out the analysis, the researcher first obtained a sample population to draw inferences, developed a content analysis by creating a conceptual framework (originated out of interviews and during the investigator role as a silent observer), related content categories to variables, sampled the elements of the text by category, quantified the categories, and related the category themes to variables.

Validity and reliability are the most prominent quality assessors in the scientific research community of any empirical social research. The triangulation method included: respondent validation, reflexivity, and peer-examination. These strategies were applied to ensure credibility. These strategies, along with the pilot test and audit trail, were used to ensure the analysis at the end of the study was consistent and credible.

The strength of this phenomenological study was in the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about the phenomenon. The phenomenological study approach was selected to investigate females to enhance the understanding of why gender inequality exists in the U.S. Defense Industry. This approach was selected to develop a theory related to a theme or increase the validity of an existing theory of how U.S. organizations can adapt to change that equalizes gender hierarchical leadership and equal compensation.

In chapter 4, the researcher address how the research tools were used to gather various data to support the research, how the findings were built logically from the problem, and how the research design was presented in a manner addressing the research question.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In chapter 4, the researcher addressed how the research tools were used to gather various data to support the research, how the findings were built logically from the problem, how the research design was presented in a manner addressing the research questions, how the patterns and themes developed out of the findings, and how the researcher followed procedures to ensure reliability and validity.

Analysis and Findings

The researcher employed a qualitative research design using observations and a semi-structured, open-ended interview format reflecting a phenomenological approach for the research data collection process. This design was selected because of (a) “phenomenology can manifest what is hidden in ordinary, everyday experiences that help to describe and assimilate human experiences” (Diver et al., 2003, p. 392) and (b) the concern that there is a lack of opportunity for women because of certain barriers preventing women from professional advancement. This issue led the research question of how can organizations create conditions limiting female professional development and how do females respond to gender inequality? The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the essential reality of civilian females who have experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry.

The method included in-depth interviews that the researcher produced. The researcher sustained the role as both a silent observer and participant observer and

retained the audio recordings and the interview's log. The in-depth interviews were undertaken in a location selected by the participants: public library, restaurant, locker room, and meeting conference rooms. The average interview time was 60 minutes. The frequency of data collection events averaged at three dialogs for each participant: formerly for the initial recruitment (15 minutes), once for the actual interview (25 minutes), and then for the follow-up summary including an exit interview where the researcher thanked individuals for participating in the research study (20 minutes). The semi-structured interview format allowed various issues that were identified in the literature review to be addressed through open-ended questions. This permitted consistency within the interview while maintaining the flexibility needed to enable participants to raise unidentified topics and issues (Allen & Carlson, 2003, p. 23). A record of observations from the interviews, departmental and management meetings included the participants' real thoughts, gestures, and tone, along with reflections and emerging issues that contributed to identifying themes within the data.

Pilot Test

The interview process began with a pilot test of three individuals. Two of the three pilot tests were done face-to-face and one pilot test was done by telephone. The purpose of the pilot interviews was to identify any difficulties that could occur and to build the researcher interviewing skills (Allen & Carlson, 2003). Consistency was maintained throughout the pilot test process by following the same interview approach and strategy with all three participants. The data collected during the pilot test averaged at 35 minutes each from the participants' critique and feedback. There were no changes

in instrumentation, only changes in verbiage to reduce leading questions and preconception.

Audit Trail

In the researcher's log, the researcher maintained a record of observations from the interviews, including the participants' gestures and tone, along with reflections and emerging issues, which contributed to identifying themes within the data. Copies of the log notes are available to committee members only upon request.

Demographics

There were 18 females working within the U.S. Defense Industry who participated in this study. Of the 18 females, 36.8% fell in the age bracket of 26 – 35, 31.6% fell in the age bracket of 36 – 47, and 31.6% were at least 48 or older. Of the 18 participants 5% were engaged, 26% were single, 47% were married, and 21% were divorced during the time of this study. The 18 participants' educational level reflected 57.8% with an undergraduate degree, 15.7% with a graduate degree, and 21% with a postgraduate degree. For their occupational status, participants reported 52.6% as management support workers, 36.8% at the management level, and 10.5% at the executive level. As for the salary range, 21% decided not to respond, 5.2% reported less than \$40k, 5.2% reported between \$40-\$46k, 5.2% reported between \$47-\$53k, 15.7% reported between \$63-\$69k, 21% reported between \$70-\$80k, 5.2% reported between \$90-\$100k, and 21% reported exceeding the \$100k mark.

Data Collection

The benefit of the researcher being the primary instrument for data collection was the immediate responsiveness and flexibility to improve understanding through verbal and nonverbal communication. Merriam (2009) explained that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The researcher had the opportunity to clarify, summarize, and check with participants for accuracy of interpretation during the data collection phase. During the data collection period in this qualitative study, the researcher was the primary instrument in conducting interviews and observation.

The primary data collection technique included an in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended, interview format to enable a range of questions and related issues to be explored. Initial warm-up questions that covered demographics started the process, with the intent of leading the sequence of questions to flow from general to specific. An interview log was used during the research study to maintain a record of observation from the interviews, which contributed to the process of identifying categories and themes within the data (Allen & Carlson, 2003). An audiotape was used for critical listening to improve the interview techniques and to code the responses from the interviewees. The researcher was responsible for recording the data with an audiotape. The frequency of data collection events was three: first for the initial recruitment, second for the actual interview, and third for the follow-up summary and exit interview. The average interview time was 60 minutes per participant. A criterion sampling design was used to allow the researcher to select a sample of 18 subjects who satisfied the criterion (Creswell, 2013). The data collection process took place face-to-face in the following settings: public

library, restaurant, and meeting conference rooms. This process took place by phone. The research questions were linked with the interview questions (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using Creswell's approach to discover patterns and themes. All transcripts were read carefully to get a sense of the entire message that the participant was attempting to get across. Coding and recoding of the transcripts were done manually and independently by the researcher and an independent coder until both were satisfied all feedback and experiences participants reported were represented by a code category. Confirmation was undertaken with a sample of transcripts to ensure that the independent coder and the researcher agreed on the labeling of passages of text. Code words were categorized using a highlighter. A list of all topics was formed and was turned into categories. Grouping of related topics was illustrated by highlights to show interrelationships until a final theme was developed.

Data collected within themes were analyzed for common and unique features of the experience. Experiences that did not appear to fit the theme were closely examined, resulting in a more subtle and complex understanding of the data (Allen & Carlson, 2003, p. 24). The analysis resulted in identification of some common features of experiences, such as worker bees (a term the participants used to describe themselves), traditional mentality/transitional workforce (a category used to describe leadership traditional thoughts and the evolving diverse workforce), education/training/network (ETN), traditional organizational culture (TOC), and the concept of fighting back that may be seen in the personal communication from interviews (see Appendix G).

Evidence of Quality

In this study, using four validation strategies insured trustworthiness: ironic validation, member checking, clarifying research bias, and peer review. Creswell (2013) suggested that two validation strategies are sufficient enough to support evidence of quality. Ironic validation was demonstrated when the researcher presented the truth as a problem (Creswell, 2013, p. 247). One participant (Participate S, 2012) in this study expressed that she would like to see a female represented in the upper echelon of her organization, but she has yet to see a female president within her organization. Catalyst (2012) showed the representation of females in the top Fortune 500 companies to be 14.4% of Fortune 500 executive officers and 7.6% of Fortune 500 top earners. Despite advances made by women in the women's movement, gender inequality is a problem for females seeking leadership opportunities.

Another validation strategy to ensure evidence of quality was member checking. Member checking consists of the participants judging the credibility of the interpretations and findings for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). The researcher employed the member check strategy during the analysis phase to interpret the meaning of the data collected during observation and interviews to confirm if the interpretation captured the participants' true lived meaning. First summarizing the interviews and returning them to participants for deletion of any identifiers, editing, or clarification of meaning undertook participant verification. All participants were invited to give feedback regarding their interview and a summary of the interview in writing or by telephone.

In clarifying research biases, the researcher commented on how past experiences, assumptions, and biases could have shaped the interpretation and approach to the study (Creswell, 2013). In chapter 1, the researcher highlighted the assumptions regarding the research. One assumption was if organizations lack female role models and mentors functioning in high management positions that sustain traditional organizational cultures, then barriers are created to the occupational aspirations and achievement directed behaviors of females in the labor force.

An external check of the research done by a panel of experts, referred to as a peer review, was used throughout the dissertation process, where the researcher had the opportunity to work with two committee chairs who read and commented on every section of the research paper. Credibility was established with the use of an audiotape that provided accuracy along with the interview log (notes) and coding. A number of strategies were used to ensure research rigor in the data collection and data analysis stages. Through credibility, consistency, and communication between the researcher, the participants, the independent coder, and the panel of experts, trustworthiness was realized.

Findings

The findings built logically from the following: (a) the belief that gender inequality exists and there is a lack of opportunity for females because of certain barriers preventing females from professional advancement and (b) experiences helping to describe and assimilate the essential reality of civilian females who have experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement

opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The following research questions directed this study: (a) what is the lived experience and perceptions of females who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to professional advancement opportunities; and (b) how do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry? The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry.

Findings confirmed that the problem of gender inequality likely rest within traditional organizational cultures. The customary managerial hierarchy patterns of social interaction allow European American males to exert more influence and exercise more leadership in boardrooms and top leadership meetings. These workforce cultures do not operate in the same manner for females as they do for males when it comes to promotions and leadership opportunities. The essential structure for organizational career models included traditional stereotypes regarding female leadership. Traditional organizational cultures were a barrier to female professional development (27% of participants acknowledged); and traditional organizational culture was one reason females continued to lack access to power and leadership (32% of participants acknowledged).

To facilitate interpretation of these findings, some of the interview responses were transcribed. During the interview process, each participant was asked 12 open-ended questions (discussed below) associated with the research questions (see Appendix B).

Question 1

In Question 1, the researcher asked the following: Where do you see yourself within your organization's hierarchy? Half of the females interviewed indicated that they felt they were at the bottom of their organization's hierarchy and referred to themselves as "worker bees." Participant Sa (job title: senior buyer) argued that there were no advancement opportunities for females and males were targeted and groomed for advancement. Sa claimed that males rather than females were selected for exposure-type projects. Sa was one of the participants who described herself as a worker bee.

Participant S (job title: senior buyer) expressed, in a serious tone and with a straightforward look, that she sees herself at the bottom of the organization and described herself as a "worker bee" because "those in my department do not give recognition to African American women" (Appendix G). Participant Se (job title: buyer) reiterated this notion and stated that she perceived herself at the bottom of her organization's hierarchy because "this organization does not move people of my color or gender to higher positions" (Appendix G). These two participants alone suggested that traditional organizational career models included many stereotypes regarding promotional opportunities for females.

Participant Mo (job title: small business liaison) explained that she did not feel she was able to make decisions without others' involvement. Participant Na (job title engineer) described the feeling of being left out of the "loop" and believed she was at the bottom of the corporate ladder "because of the good ole boy network system" (Appendix G). Participant Na also stated that she perceived herself as one step away from entry

level. These participants described how traditional organizational cultures are currently a barrier to females obtaining career advancement opportunities.

One participant believed that she was stuck in the middle of her organization hierarchy because she felt individuals who worked in administrative positions were at the bottom of her organization's hierarchy. Another participant also felt she was at the midlevel area of her organization's hierarchy because she was a manager and not interested in moving further up the corporate ladder because of time and self-interest. Participant Tis (job title: engineer) expressed that she was in the middle of her organization's hierarchy because she was given autonomy and was, therefore, included in the decision-making process in her department.

Two participants felt that they were at the top of their organizations' hierarchies. Participant LM (job title: a President) explained that she started her own company and was the president and there was no one coming in to take her position. Participant CC (job title: a CEO) mentioned that she was at the top of her organization's hierarchy because she was the president.

Of the 18 females interviewed, half believed they were at the bottom of their organization. Consequently, the theme developed out of this question, in relation to how most females identified them selves, was worker bees. Furthermore, two participants felt that they were at the bottom of their organization because of their gender and race.

Question 2

In Question 2, the researcher asked the following: How would you describe your organization's culture? Participant Sa described her organization's culture as traditional.

She argued, “Men take over meetings and women have little respect in meetings” (Appendix G). Participant G described her organization as male-dominated. Participant Na described her organization as traditional and said there were more males in managerial positions. Participant D described her organization’s culture as political in nature. She said, “Who you know determines how you advance” (Appendix G). Participant S described her organization’s culture as traditional, and she expressed that employees have no empowerment and the vision of the organization was filtered down from the vice presidents. These participants suggested that promotional decisions to evaluate potential managers were tied to traditional male managerial cultures and that females did not fit into that managerial role.

Many individuals described their organization as traditional in the sense that European males dominant leadership roles. However, few have suggested that many organizations are in a transition phase. Participant C described her organization’s culture as traditional and transitional. She described her organization as having a traditional mentality but a transitional workforce. Participant L labeled her organization’s culture as transitional, explaining that her organization had a traditional mindset, but it was not pursued in practice. Participant P (job title: engineer) also termed her organization’s culture as transitional, claiming her organization was “now White male-dominated, but in the process of hiring a diverse workforce” (Appendix G). These participants suggested that females are noticing change within the workforce because the workforce is becoming diverse, but the high-ranking positions are still filled by traditional-thinking males.

Based on the participants' comments about their organizations' cultures, traditional organizational cultures appeared to be a barrier for females who were seeking promotional opportunities. Although there were a few participants who believed their organization was in a transition phase, they still perceived top-level management as "traditional thinkers". As a consequence the theme developed out of this question, in relation to how the participants, describe their organizations culture, was traditional mentality/transitional workforce.

Question 3

In Question 3, the researcher asked the following: Are you seeking opportunities to move up the corporate ladder? If so, what are you doing to prepare yourself (i.e. talent, skill, abilities) for that ideal position, to make yourself marketable? Participant L (job title: engineer) specified that she was learning more about her position and developing her leadership and communication skills through Toastmaster to learn to speak more eloquently and make her more marketable. Participant L also indicated, with slight tension in her voice that other people do not have to put forth as much energy as she has to move up the ladder. Participant L explained that she has made lateral moves, involved herself in network circles, and has taken risks within the organization to make her marketable. This participant suggested that females are interested in moving up the corporate ladder but are still experiencing issues of gender inequality regarding promotional opportunities. This participant acknowledged her organization as one offering development opportunities through toastmaster within her organization and tuition reimbursement for continuing education. Participant Lu (job title: technician)

specified that she became involved in all training opportunities to make herself more marketable. Participant Tis explained that she has attempted to learn more about the organization she works for, the company network, and to perform as well as she could to move up the corporate ladder. Participant Se expressed that she was continuing her education to make herself more marketable and her organization offered tuition reimbursement for employees interested in continuing their education. Participant D made known that she tried to make her presence known throughout the organization, to be friendly, and to continue her education. Participant Phi (job title: engineer) articulated that she was continuing her education, training, and researching her position to climb up the corporate ladder and receive a promotion. Each of the participants indicated that females are striving to knock down barriers hindering them from climbing the corporate ladder by furthering their education, seeking training opportunities, and by becoming involved in social networks within the workplace. The researcher found that defense organizations do promote professional development opportunities for both genders such as tuition reimbursement for continuous education and training. However the outlier was the stipulation on the types of college and professional programs the defense organizations approved or disapproved tuition reimbursement for and the types of training provided.

Although many females are seeking career advancement, there remain a few whom are not interested in pursuing professional advancement opportunities. Participant Na claimed that she had no desire to move up the corporate ladder and that she liked to be in the “worker bee” position. Participant S expressed that she was not looking to climb

the corporate ladder, but did indicate that she believed she would face barriers if she attempted to do so due to her gender and race. Participant S suggested the following reasons for not climbing the ranks to be favoritism to young males, prejudice, and that hard work goes unrewarded and unrecognized. She made the statement:

The experience crowd is undervalued. Only the younger employees, especially men, are shown favor, recognition and succession planning to make them eligible for promotion. Our division does not value experienced workers. It appears they put more value on new college graduates. I feel they rush the older workers into retiring to replace them with more new college graduates. I prefer to work in a management position where the culture is fair, friendly, and equal for all.

In addition, Participant Na explained that she was brought in as a low-level entry buyer, although she already had education and experience. These participants confirmed that some females are comfortable with low-level positions and not interested in promoting themselves because they feel they will be continuously undermined. Some females are giving up seeking a higher career path without a fight. In addition, the theme developed out of this question, related to what are you doing to make yourself marketable, was ETN.

Question 4

In Question 4, the researcher asked the following: What are some barriers you have experienced during your career development? Participant R (working in administration) mentioned three barriers she experienced during her career development: family, stereotypes, and males. Participant R said, “Men have power to hold women back

in certain positions” (Appendix G). Participant Sa indicated that aggression and stereotypes were barriers she experienced during her career development. She stated, “Aggression works against women, and men have no respect for women” (Appendix G). Participant CC suggested that time and money management were two barriers she experienced during her career development. Participant Tis mentioned stereotypes as a barrier to her career development. She said, “Men do not understand women and what they bring to the table, and men are usually reluctant to give women a chance because they inherently believe women are not as capable as men” (Appendix G). Participant L communicated that traditional organizational cultures were a barrier to female career development because upper management was filled with European American males who promoted one another and gave each other breaks. Participant LM explained that she experienced hitting the glass ceiling during her career development and that the lack of female mentorship was a barrier to female career development. Participant Mo claimed, “Men steal credit from women and women are so combative with each other they do not help one another” (Appendix G). The participants discussed both internal and external barriers they encountered during their career development.

For this particular question, the participants were convinced that gender stereotypes were a barrier to females obtaining leadership roles. The participants believed that males tended to hold all the power, were traditional thinkers, and males were the “gatekeepers” holding females back from career advancement. The participants suggested that traditional organizational career models, controlled by males that did not promote females, included stereotypes regarding leadership and gender inequality in many

organizations. In addition, participants suggested that males hold females back because they are the gatekeepers who steal credit from females, withhold resources, and promote those with similar identities.

Question 5

In Question 5, the researcher asked the following: Do you believe that women possess equal qualities of leadership as men? Participant D (job title: engineer) believed that females possess equal leadership qualities to males. Participant D stated, “stereotypes are past their time; however, men and women have different styles of leadership” (Appendix G). Participant LM voiced that females possess leadership qualities equal to males when given the opportunity, but the problem is the traditional, male-dominated career models females have to deal with. Participant P indicated that if females can manage a home, they could use the same skills to manage a workforce. Participant L mentioned that females are not given opportunities but are as competent as males. Participant Tis suggested that females are better leaders because females are more inclusive and rational. Participant S explained, “There are more women in college than men, more women striving for leadership roles, and we are doing what needs to be done.” (see Appendix G). Participant C argued that females are better than males at most everything they attempt to do, while Participant CC believed that females are convinced by society that they do not have the same leadership skills as males. The participants indicated that career-committed females are determined to climb the corporate ladder and attempt to knock down extant barriers preventing them from professional advancement. However, the current career model of successful managers reflects masculine values. The

participants suggested that gender inequality in many organizations is due to the traditional organizational career models that incorporate stereotypes regarding leadership.

A possible discrepancy found relates to the interview question. The question should have been posed to ask not only do you believe women possess equal qualities of leadership as men, but do you believe women possess equal compensation, promotion, recognition, and professional development as men? The second half of this question would have allowed females to share both their experience and perception of how they are valued by both personal mastery and leadership within their organization in relation to promotion, recognition, and succession planning.

Question 6

In Question 6, the researcher asked the following: Do you believe women are equally represented in top leadership positions, as men? Participant R mentioned that there were few females in top leadership positions, but some females are beginning to be promoted into director positions. Participant Sa argued that there were only males in top leadership positions in her organization. Participant Na believed that there were not many females in upper management and “women are not promoted into CEO positions because women are timid when it comes to promoting themselves, and women don’t ask for the respect and promotions they deserve” (Appendix G). Participant DD (job title: financial analyst) expressed that there was only one female director in her department. Participant LE (job title: material representative) said, “Positions high in rank are usually held by men” (Appendix G). Participant C suggested that “females are not equally represented in top leadership positions, but her organization was in its transition stage” (Appendix G).

Top rank managers still hold traditional values and are more comfortable with people who look, talk, and act like them; hence, they are mainly European American males. Participant S had not seen a female vice-president within her organization and claimed it was still the “good ole boys’ club” (Appendix G) who are interested in seeking people of their kind rather than those with qualifications. Participant CM argued that as a manager, she was always overlooked, while male managers were constantly praised and promoted. The participants suggested that making promotional decisions when evaluating potential managers is tied to traditional male managerial cultures imbued with stereotypes regarding leadership, and this is the reason that females continue to lack access to power and leadership.

Question 7

In Question 7, the researcher asked the following: Do you feel there are issues of gender inequality in United States organizations today? Participant P believed that “there are issues of gender inequality in the U.S. Defense Industry because there are few opportunities for females, and males feel as though females are incompetent” (Appendix G, June, 2012). Participant LM argued that males hold political power and “men are not promoting women and the promotions come from men” (Appendix G). Participant S indicated that within her organizational hierarchy, management is the same homogenous gender and race: male and European American. Participant Tis stated that females are not represented beyond the director level in her company. Participant C thought that males occupy high leadership ranks and males are not comfortable placing females in top management positions because of their values, which reflect stereotypes going back to

female and male responsibilities, “men work for family whereas women work for themselves” (see Appendix G). Based on these participants’ actual life experiences regarding the workplace and promotions into leadership roles, females continue to lack access to professional advancement opportunities because the traditional thinkers holding political power are males. Traditional career models hinder female professional growth.

Question 8

In Question 8, the researcher asked the following: Have you been exposed to gender inequality? If so, how have you dealt with it? Participant LM described her position as a prime contractor for the government and explained how a male supplier refused to work with her because she was a female. The male supplier refused to even consult with her and preferred to talk with her male subordinates because he assumed all females were “stupid” (Appendix G). However, according to participant LM, what the supplier failed to realize was that all the males he preferred to deal with reported to her. Participant LM mentioned that she reported the information to her legal department and a conference was held. Participant LM’s male boss advised the supplier to “back off.” This scenario was an indication gender inequality exists and career models are rife with stereotypes regarding leadership.

If more females report such injustices and allow their voices to be heard, reparations can be made with the ultimate goal being positive change. Participant Na explained that she was exposed to gender inequality when she interviewed for a job and the male manager suggested to her that she should work from home because she was a mother. Na articulated that she was frustrated with the interviewing manager’s feedback

but did not say anything to defend herself. This participant indicated that the biggest problem with females initiating change and breaking the current barriers existing against female leadership was that females do not fight back and many times allow males to treat them unfairly.

Although many females do not allow their voices to be heard to make known that the phenomenon remain to exist. There are a few females that exist whom refuse to give up the fight. Participant G claimed that she was exposed to gender inequality when a male in her department continued to refer to her as a “young girl,” suggesting that she did not know her job responsibilities. Another individual witnessed the actions and reported the misconduct to a manager. Later, Participant G filed a complaint with her human resources department. This is an example of how females can make change by fighting back and allowing their voice to be heard.

Participant Phi indicated that she was exposed to gender inequality at work on a daily basis because her work was always second-guessed or questioned. Phi explained that she had to educate others and defend her work to convey data. Participant C believed that during a business dinner, a male customer refused to join the dinner party if she was present because of her gender and because she was pregnant. These participants indicated that females have to assert themselves and not allow biased behavior, gender inequality, sexist behavior, and stereotypes hinders female professional development.

Question 9

In Question 9, the researcher asked the following: What are your thoughts regarding women’s access to professional development? What factors contribute to

gender inequality? According to Participant Sa, males hold females back from career advancement opportunities because males have the power to wield. Participant G stated, “Women let it go” when people treat them unfairly, and family responsibilities and stereotypes are reasons men use to rationalize gender inequality (Appendix G).

Participant Na argued that the lack of female mentorship was one reason females continued to lack access to promotional opportunities as well. This participant identified the lack of female mentors being a factor contributing to gender inequality.

Some females simply don't know how to play the game. Participant CC articulated that there is not a lack of access but rather a lack of knowing how to get there. She argued, “Women are not trying to take it, and you don't get what you don't ask for” (Appendix G). With this in mind, the researcher tested this theory, and asks for a promotion at work. Surprisingly, a promotion was awarded. The lessons learned was that you have to allow your voice to be heard and ask for what you want. Participant C suggested that females are the cause of their own lack of access to power and leadership due to the queen bee syndrome, which means, “there can only be one queen bee that must go out and kill all the other female bees, instead of creating a sisterhood” (Appendix G). The participants indicated that the problem with females knocking down the barriers existing may be a result of females not banding together and collectively fighting for change.

Participant LM suggested that traditional organizational cultures are the reason why females continue to lack access to career advancement opportunities, but organizations need to even the playing field with young workers as well as old, and with

females as well as males. Participant Tis communicated that females continue to lack access to professional development because there is a gender difference in raising children. Tis surmised that females leave the workforce to bear children; therefore, they do not learn how to “play the corporate game.” Participant P expressed that females are not given opportunities because of male fear combined with the fact that females do not seek promotional opportunities because females are convinced they will not be promoted. These participants claim that females need to band together collectively to allow their voices to be heard and to make a change and to gain access to power and leadership in the U.S. Defense Industry.

Question 10

In Question 10, the researcher asked the following: How significant or insignificant do you feel female mentors are in United States organizations? Participant LM believed that mentors are significant, but she argued, “The art of mentoring was the good, the bad, and the ugly” (Appendix G). The participant viewed the concept of mentoring as good toward intellectual, professional, and social development; but the obstacles to the mentoring relationship between the mentor and protégé may lead to dissatisfaction, which may affect the value of mentoring. Participant LM also mentions that females need to help each other and stop looking at one another as competitors. She stated, “A woman that sees you as competition will not mentor you well, and until we learn how to play out in the field, lose, and still be friends, we are losing” (Appendix G). Participant G indicated that female mentors were crucial to the development of young employees within an organization in its transitional stage. Participant G also suggested

that females need mentors to guide them through the loopholes and explain things to them from a different or female point of view, along with guiding them toward the proper skills needed to be promoted. Participant T is said that female mentors were significant because “if women do not see other successful women and are not included in mentorship roles to learn how to play the game, it will take women forever to learn the game” (Appendix G). Participant S suggested that female mentors were significant to demonstrate to other females how to handle various situations. The participants indicated that female mentors are significant to female career development and the lack of female mentors in the work place is a barrier against females seeking career advancement.

Question 11

In Question 11, the researcher asked the following: Do you feel gendered stereotypes affect women’s professional development? Participant P argued that gendered stereotypes limit female chances for professional development. She stated, “gendered stereotypes make it difficult for women to pursue tasks if she is already perceived as inadequate” (Appendix G). Participant S suggested that females need to take ownership of their own professional development through education and training and females can develop into the type of professional they need to be, regardless of gender stereotypes. Participant Sa believed that stereotypes might create a fear of losing one’s job, preventing females from speaking their minds. Participant Na explained that gendered stereotypes set limitations. The participants indicated that although females need to take ownership of their professional goals, the problem is gender inequality in many organizations remains.

This is because traditional organizational career models incorporate stereotypes that females are weak and inadequate and would be unable to embrace leadership roles.

Question 12

In Question 12, the researcher asked the following: How might an organization's culture contribute to promoting gender stereotypes? Participant R explained that an organization's culture might contribute to promoting gender stereotypes by implying that females with children cannot hold the same position as males. Participant Phi said this occurs "by not allowing women to study and excel in professions that are male dominated" (Appendix G). Participant Se suggested that an organization's culture could contribute to females remaining stagnant in one position instead of ascending into higher ranks of the organization. Participant CC claimed that pressure from society and the manner in which females take care of their families are factors in how organizational cultures contribute to promoting gender stereotypes. Participant C indicated, "young women are looked at as if they will only last until about five years, then they will quit and have children" (Appendix G), which correlates with the stereotypes about female family responsibilities. The participants suggested that traditional organizational career models are rife with stereotypes regarding leadership.

Females who have experienced issues of gender inequality in leadership opportunities expressed that they have become use to such biases and stereotypes. As Participant Phi indicated prior, she is constantly second-guessed, which left her frustrated. However, she would educate and train others to better convey her data to the males within her organization. The models of successful managers in the U.S. Defense

Industry reflect masculine values, meaning that promotional decisions to evaluate potential managers is essentially tied to traditional male managerial cultures rife with gender stereotypes, and females are not seen as fitting into the executive mold.

As the researcher interviewed the participants, the researcher found that when most females who experienced issues of gender inequality regarding their leadership skills were challenged, they said or did nothing to resolve any problems or issues that occurred. The researcher found that the participants who were interviewed face-to-face seemed more hesitant about providing information than participants who were interviewed by telephone. This was because in a face-to-face interview, participants were less anonymous and probably felt as though they were revealing more of themselves than those who were interviewed by telephone.

Results and Discussion

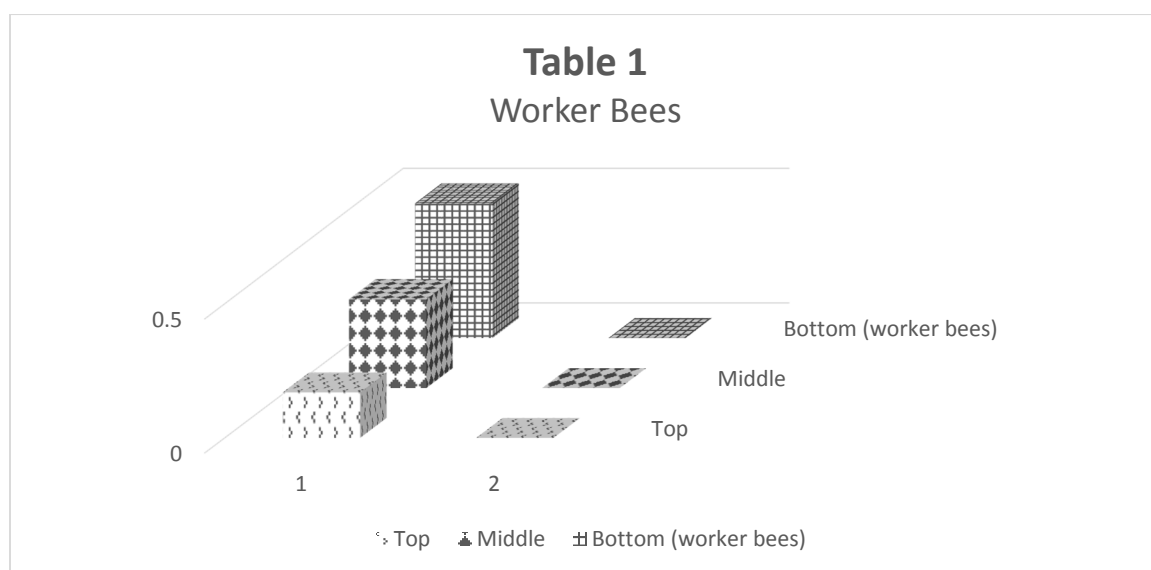
The main themes identified in this study reflected the individual nature of the participants' experiences and feedback. The following themes developed from talking with 18 females who experienced inequality based on their gender while pursuing career advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry were identified as the worker bee, traditional mentality/transitional workforce, ETN, TOC, and fighting back.

Participants revealed that the underlying issues behind gender inequality in many organizations are traditional organizational career models containing stereotypes regarding leadership and that gender inequality in many organizations is due to traditional organizational cultures. All participants were employed within the U.S. Defense Industry

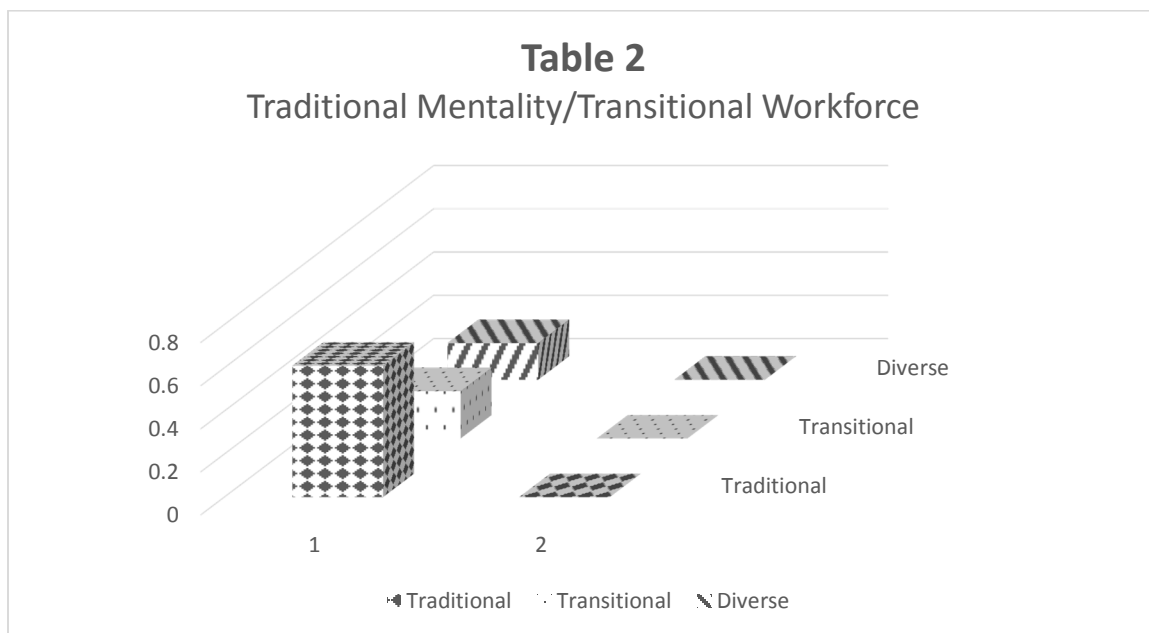
and either experienced inequality they believed was gender-based or observed gender inequality first hand.

Themes

Worker bee. When asked where participants saw themselves within their organization's hierarchy, of the 18 participants, 50% identified themselves as worker bees (see Table 1, Appendix H) or employee's one step away from entry level, where employees are not able to make decisions without management's involvement. One participant pointed out that workers at this level are not given proper recognition.



Traditional mentality/Transitional workforce. When participants were asked how they would describe their organization's culture (i.e., traditional, transitional, or diverse), 61% described their organization's culture as traditional (see Table 2, Appendix H).



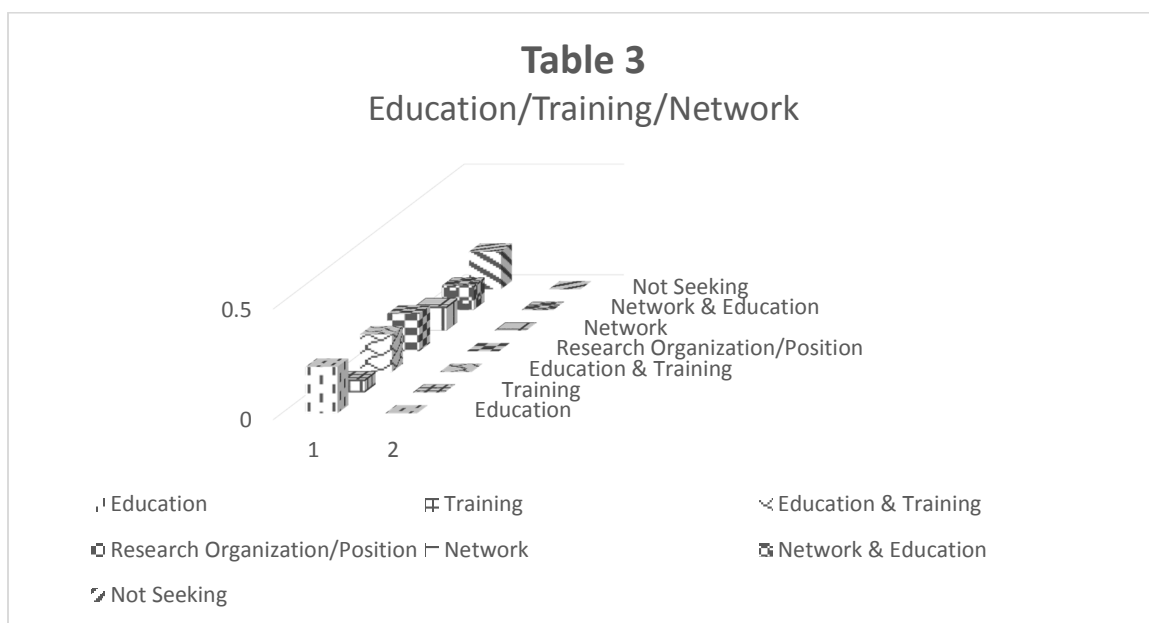
The participants described the culture as traditional, with a European American, male-dominated sense of leadership, where European American males controlled organizational meetings and the majority of males occupied top managerial positions. During the interview process, Participant C described the traditional mentality/transitional workforce as

Those in power and influence have traditional behavioral thinking. When the organization demographics of society have forced them to create diversity within the people . . . and there is diversity, but the people don't have the power or influence to make change.

Alternatively, participants as those individuals in the workforce who are diverse, with varying races/ethnicities and both genders, described a transitional workforce. Participant Mo described the culture as transitional by stating the organization “has the mind set, but

it is not placed in practice” (Appendix G). Participant P also described the same organization as transitional, stating the organization is “now White male-dominated, but in the process of hiring a diverse workforce” (Appendix G). This theme was developed based on the participants dialogue related to the traditional mentality carried out by European male leaders and the diverse employees that are now entering the workforce that was once described as predominately white male.

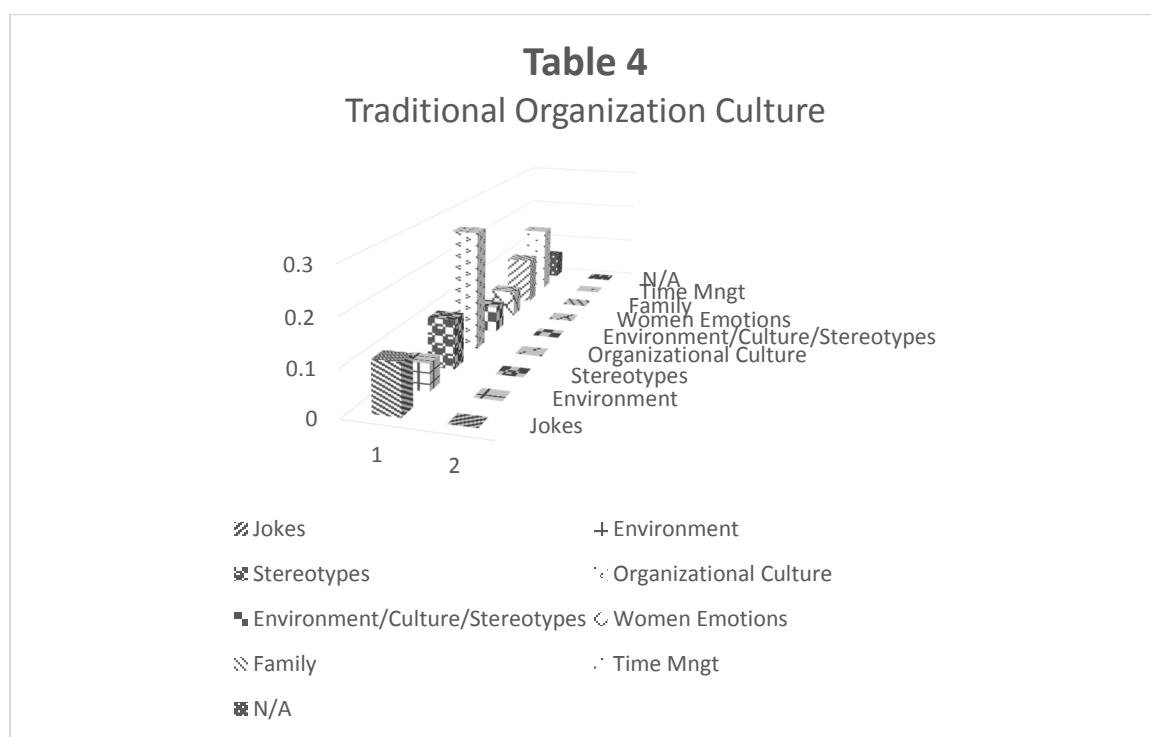
Education/Training/network. When participants were asked whether they were seeking opportunities to move up the corporate ladder and what they were doing to increase their marketability, 21% responded they were furthering their education (see Table 3, Appendix H).



A small number of females, 17% of participants, claimed that they were not going out of their way to move up the corporate ladder. Participant S (job title: senior buyer) mentioned she was “not looking to climb the corporate ladder due to her gender and race,

but there were more women in college than men striving for leadership roles, so women are doing what needs to be done” (Appendix G). However, most participants (83%) implied they were making themselves marketable by continuing their education, taking advantage of training opportunities, networking, or taking the time to research their organization and what their position entails.

Traditional organizational culture. When asked about the barriers participants experienced during their career development, 27% described the organizational culture as the biggest barrier to female professional development (see Table 4, Appendix H).



Participant T (an engineer) said

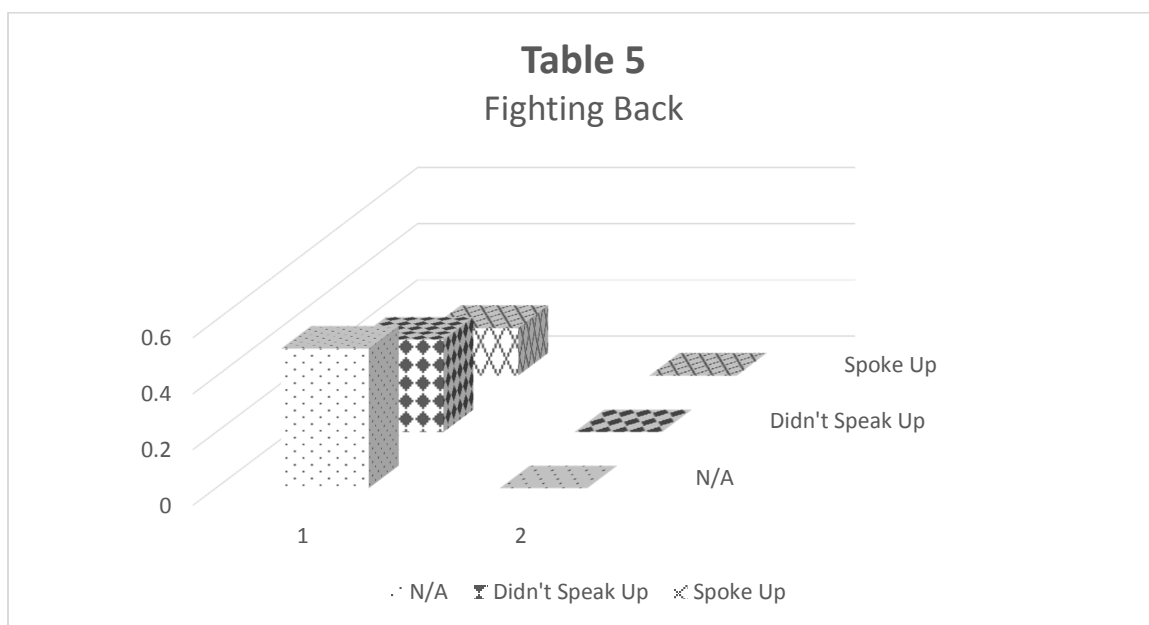
Although the military is genderless, the public sector has the issue with stereotyping and men don't understand women and what they bring to the table.

Usually, men are reluctant to give women a chance because they inherently believe women are not as capable.

Participant S also expressed that within the government sector of the defense industry, there were no blatant issues of gender inequality. However, she indicated in the public sector of the defense industry, “managers are seeking a yes person and they don’t want people more qualified than they are, and women may get held back because of their qualification and education” (Appendix G). In reference to traditional organizational career models being permeated with stereotypes regarding leadership and career advancement opportunities, Participant T (an engineer project lead) defined “culture as a long established norm or pattern of behavior, patterns of behavior in a traditional organization. It is difficult to change stereotypes, because stereotypes are aged, which hinders women’s professional development” (Appendix G). Stereotypes affect judgment related to career advancement opportunities between genders.

The researcher can relate to the TOC theme due to her workplace experience. Almost 7 years ago, the researcher was expecting a child, and when it was announced to her boss, the first thing he asked was “do you intend to quit?” Another scenario the researcher could relate to regarding a participant who stated that because she was viewed as a “young girl,” she was not seen as an equal. In the researcher situation, her previous boss referred to her as “kiddo,” as he does with most of the young females working within his department. Until now, the researcher never correlated his comments with the organization’s culture or stereotypes. This reference and sexist attitude bled into the corporate culture of the organization the researcher worked for.

Fighting back. There was no common question leading to the identification of this theme, but rather it emerged from the information gained from listening to the female participants whom experienced gender inequality. The biggest problem with females initiating change and breaking the glass ceiling is that females “let it go” (Participant Sa). Females seem to allow males to treat them unfairly and, according to the participant interviews, females do not speak up for themselves (see Table 5, Appendix H). The participants revealed that 33% believed that they had experienced inequality because of their gender did not speak up to defend themselves, 17% of the participants spoke up to defend themselves, and 50% of the participants made no comment related to speaking out when treated unfairly.



Participant Na argued that there are few females in upper management because “women don’t ask” for promotions the way males do; females are less aggressive than males when it comes to promoting themselves, and females are “people pleasers” (Appendix G).

Participant G (job title: a President) explained that females lack access to power and leadership because they are not trying to take it and “you don’t get what you don’t ask for” (Appendix G). Participant S also said

Women need to take ownership over their own professional development through education, training, and researching the organization’s culture. Watch how managers interact with one another. Whether promoted or not you can still develop into the type of professional you need to be – master where you are.

In addition, Participant S expressed those females who are trying to move up the corporate ladder need to expound on their experiences, accomplishments, and awards. Furthermore, females need to keep portfolios to provide evidence to get what they want.

Another common sentiment found in the participants’ interviews was female mentors are crucial to female professional development and to guide females seeking career advancement opportunities. Mentors can aide in obtaining the right skills to get promoted, to lessen the learning curve, to pass on valuable information, and to show other females how to play “the good ole boys game” (Appendix G; Participant LM). Participant C made a valid point labeling the queen bee syndrome, where there could only be one queen bee and that she must “go out and get rid of all the other female bees” (Appendix G). Participant C said, “instead of sisterhood there is a Queen Bee Syndrome that renounces women from helping each other” (Appendix G).

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender

inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. This qualitative phenomenological research study derived from the concern that there is a lack of opportunity for females because of certain barriers preventing females from professional advancement. The researcher found that most females identify themselves as worker bees and are comfortable with low-level positions and give up seeking higher career paths because they feel they will be continuously undermined; traditional organizational cultures appear to be a barrier for females seeking promotional opportunities and males are the gatekeepers that maintain gender stereotypes, steal credit from women, withhold resources, and promote those with similar identities. The researcher found that female mentors are significant to female career development and females need to band together collectively to promote change and to gain access to leadership roles.

In chapter 4, the researcher addressed how the research tools were used to gather various data to support the research study. The researcher demonstrated the system used for keeping track of data and emerging understandings, how the findings were built logically from the problem and how the research design addressed the research questions. The researcher identified themes that supported the data and discussed how she followed procedures to assure accuracy of the data. In chapter 5, the researcher will evaluate the results of the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In chapter 5, the researcher interprets the findings and explains how this study has the ability to promote positive social change in the workplace and society. The researcher demonstrates how this study provides a basis for future research conducted on the same phenomenon explored through different methods and designs. The researcher provides recommendations for action and an insight toward reflection.

Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. The researcher relied on a qualitative research method using a phenomenological design to create a holistic picture on the in-depth analysis from females and their experience of the current barriers females encounter while seeking professional advancement opportunities. In this phenomenological study, the researcher addressed the concern that there is a lack of opportunity for females due to barriers preventing females from career advancement. Females represent nearly half of the labor force and earn more than over half of the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees (Catalyst, 2010); yet, only 2.6% of females are CEOs, 7.6% fall in the category of top earners, and only 14.4% hold executive officer positions (Catalyst, 2012). Consequently, this resulted in several questions (see Appendix A) that led the researcher to develop the following key research questions: what is the lived experience and perceptions of females

who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to professional advancement opportunities? How do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry? Also, does gender inequality still exist?

From the female participants in the study and their experience regarding the phenomenon, the essential meaning in relation to the phenomenon was narrated into an in-depth analysis. The researcher then integrated the participant's descriptions of their experience into five themes: worker bee, traditional mentality/transitional workforce, ETN, TOC, and fight back. To facilitate interpretation of the findings, some of the interview responses were transcribed. During the interview process, each participant was asked 12 open-ended questions associated with the research questions (see Appendix B). As one participant expressed, "The experience crowd is undervalued. Only the younger employees, especially men, are shown favor, recognition and succession planning to make them eligible for promotion" (see Appendix G). Participant C suggested, "females are not equally represented in top leadership positions ..." (see Appendix G). Participant S had not seen a female vice-president within her organization and claimed it was still the "good ole boys' club who are interested in seeking people of their kind rather than those with qualifications" (Appendix G). Participant P believed that "there are issues of gender inequality in the U.S. Defense Industry because there are few opportunities for females, and males feel as though females are incompetent" (see Appendix G). The researcher found that the participants perceive that gender inequality still exists because there remains a difference between men and women in receiving promotions.

The reality described by half the participants implied that females identify themselves as worker bees. Participant S described herself as a “worker bee” because “those in my department do not give recognition to African American women” (see Appendix G). Sa was another participants who described herself as a worker bee. Participant Na claimed that she had no desire to move up the corporate ladder and that she liked to be in the worker bee position. Some females fear that they will be continuously undermined, the fight is not worth it, and they are comfortable in their current position.

The defense industry culture is traditional in the sense that European American males dominate the high-ranking positions, sustain traditional thinking, and pose as gatekeepers to maintain the status quo while the actual workforce is in transition to include diverse human resources. Participant Sa described her organization’s culture as traditional. She expressed that “Men take over meetings and women have little respect in meetings” (see Appendix G). Participant D described her organization’s culture as political in nature. She said, “Who you know determines how you advance” (see Appendix G). Participant C explained, “Those in power and influence have traditional behavioral thinking. However, organization demographics of society have forced them to create diversity within the people. There is diversity but, people don’t have the power or influence to make change.” (see Appendix G). Traditional organizational cultures appear to be a barrier for females who are seeking career growth.

The modern barriers were identified as (a) males – they steal credit from females, they only promote others with similar identity, and they withhold resources; (b) family –

the accountability of having to balance responsibility of family life and the workload affects time available to pursue ETN's to make females marketable as they seek career advancement opportunities; (c) stereotypes –females are not given opportunities because gendered stereotypes are embedded into traditional organizational cultures labeling females as incompetent which undermine and devalue female leadership abilities, and gendered stereotypes tie successful management to reflect masculine values; (d) lack of female mentorship – the lack of female mentorship creates a longer journey for females to peek into the upper echelons and hinders females from obtaining the knowledge in how to play the traditional game, from joining network circles to negotiating; and (e) Queen bees – the Queen bee renounces bees from helping other wanna-bees, the queen bee acts as another gatekeeper to prevent competition from wanna-bees.

Females seeking career advancement opportunities market themselves with continuous education and training, and become actively involved in different network circles. The researcher found that the defense industry supports continuous education and training by offering tuition reimbursement to both genders. However, the researcher found that some females seeking professional advancement opportunities often “let it go”, they stop pursuing promotions due to the challenges that come along with it, and they often lose insight and remain quiet during opportunities to fight against gender inequality.

The researcher found an underlying issue related to gender inequality in the defense industry that entails the overlap involving family-work imbalance, European American males, gendered stereotypes, traditional organizational cultures, lack of female

mentorship, lack of access to networks, queen bees, and the fact most females do not fight back. Family-work imbalance relates to the mommy track theory explored in the literature review that the biological nature of childbearing often interferes with female educational and professional goals. As Harris (2010) explained, the inroads into advanced career positions are challenging for females with family responsibilities because it conflicts with the “ideal worker” model identifying the breadwinner-homemaker family arrangements and require total work commitment.

The social difference between genders was explored in the philosophies of occupational segregation, cultural transformation, and institutional sexism. The occupational segregation theory was used to explain gender differences in terms of task- and character-oriented traits that individuals or groups revealed in connection with superiority and inferiority relevant to the task at hand. A traditional work environment hinders female professional development, wastes human capital, and creates disadvantages for organizations to compete globally because female roles in the workplace have become important to ensure continuous economic development. According to the cultural transformation theory, there are gendered power structures in relation to traditional organizational hierarchies and the diverse workforce.

According to the philosophy of institutional sexism, there are unconscious attitudes and stereotypes embedded into the cultures of people and structures of organizations. It was suggested that this attitude was taught early in childhood from educational settings that replicated into organizational patterns of hiring and promoting. Education is essential to female professional development as it reduces gender unfairness

and creates access to various promotional opportunities. Proponents of the glass ceiling effect and the gatekeeper philosophy describe males as being in the positions of power necessary to employ female claims for equality. The researcher found that the males in the positions of power, known as the gatekeepers, were characterized as traditional thinkers who were interested in promoting people of their kind in positions of power rather than females with qualifications.

The researcher concluded that females must learn that although their organization's culture may still be presumed traditional, times have changed and the workforce is becoming much more diverse (traditional mentality, but transitional workforce). Together, females can demonstrate to society that they have equivalent or superior to leadership skills of males. Females should be equally compensated and promoted to the same levels of their male counterparts. Females need to stand firm, let their voices be heard, and fight back when they are faced with injustices. Without speaking up, females are holding themselves back and cannot facilitate change. Instead, if females band together to fight injustice collectively, this will allow them to engender change and have the opportunity to career advancement.

Implications for Social Change

The researcher believed that this study has the ability to promote positive social change in the workplace and society. First, the researcher highlighted that gender inequality still exists and transformation is needed. As Eddy and Cox (2008) pointed out, organizational power structures form the basis of the hierarchy, females are judged by the masculine leadership model, and gendered stereotypes exist. Male-dominated

organizations can assist female career goals by nurturing a culture of including females in their influential networks and mentoring relationships (Metz, 2009). Levitt (2010) stated, “Mentoring relationships are needed to ensure equality for women as they enter into leadership positions” (p. 69). The researcher found at least five modern barriers (family-work imbalance, gendered stereotypes, lack of access to mentoring and networks, traditional organizational cultures, and queen bees) that females face when seeking professional advancement opportunities. With modern barriers being identified, females can collectively encourage organizations to create more gender-equality human resource policies assisting females in fighting inequality and common career barriers (Washington, 2011). There is a need to influence people’s desire to see more females promoted into leadership positions.

The education system has the ability to change perceptions of gender issues among individuals. Schooling is not gender neutral; there is a gender structuring in the school system (Connell, 2010). Phrases such as “sugar and spice and everything nice” and “boys will be boys” define the ideology associated with gender identity as the child continues to age (Hewlett, 2007). Children have knowledge about gender in the school curriculum as early as in the second grade. Good education is education that is just, which has often been made on the basis of rights (Connell, 2010). This creates a need for society to develop a structure system of equality through education reform.

The researcher encourage females to band together to fight injustice collectively by allowing their voices to be heard, continuing their education and training, engaging in network circles, and by participating in mentoring relationships. Society has a chance to

analyze gender issues, if power relations are to change. A participant in the study mentioned that the biggest problem with females initiating change and breaking the glass ceiling is that females “let it go” (Appendix G; Participant Sa). Females allow males to treat them unfairly and females do not speak up for themselves. Positive social change can be achieved if females are aware that there are ways to reverse the stigma if females band together to fight injustice by allowing their voices to be heard. One example of an organization promoting positive social change in the workplace to encourage gender equality is Ernst & Young. Ernst & Young adopted a program, Career Watch, which combats stigma and ensures that females are eligible for promotion. According to Hewlett (2007), this program has accelerated progress for the Ernst & Young organization, the outflow of female talent, and saved the company \$10 million in 2005. Organizations can promote positive social change in the workplace by establishing metrics to maintain track of female progress within the organization. The metrics may be used to eliminate stereotypes linked with traditional thinking and to encourage female leadership.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research has value because it provides a basis for future research that can be conducted on the same phenomenon explored through different methods and designs. Using the phenomenological research method has offered insight into the essence of the experience of gender inequality for females in the U.S. Defense Industry. Using this same method and design, future research may be conducted across different types of industries (i.e., automotive, banking, health, education, etc.). Future researchers could expand on

this issue by examining the female workforce in the U.S. Defense Industry through a quantitative method. Experiments may be used to test the hypotheses related to gender inequality and childhood development within the home and the education system.

The results of this study have the potential to create a stronger awareness of gender inequality, thus creating a need to change the mindset of traditional thinkers. As Participant C said, “those in power and influence have traditional behavioral thinking. However, organization demographics of society have forced them to create diversity within the people. There is diversity, but people don’t have the power or influence to make change” (see Appendix G). As Participant C indicated, change may be slow in coming because many changes have taken place due to mandates, rather than voluntarily within the ranks of organizations. This leads to a new research question of how reversing gender inequality can be expedited.

Recommendations for Action

The education system has the ability to change perceptions of gender issues among individuals. There is a gender structuring in the school system (Connell et al., 2010) interrelated with early childhood education. This creates a need for society to develop a structure system of equality, a paradigm shift through education reform. According to Eddy and Cox (2008), individuals can begin to change the microenvironments within their institutions. As a consequence, educators should pay attention to the results of this study.

The participants who experienced issues of gender inequality related to career advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry offered insights for females

who are interested in climbing the corporate ladder. Consequently, females should pay attention to the results of this study. The participants provided many answers to the research questions and expanded on the issue of gender inequality. However, a major concern uncovered during the interviews was that females were not raising concern about gender inequality and were not asking for promotions. Thirty-three percent of participants proposed reasons for concealing inequality issues, from frustration to securing employment, while 50% of the participants preferred to fight back by allowing their voices to be heard.

The researcher believe that, together, females can demonstrate to society they have equal leadership skills as males. Females need to stand firm, let their voices be heard, and fight back. The researcher propose that females acknowledge gender inequality, become aware of the issues surrounding barriers preventing female leadership in the workplace, and take action by fighting back and voicing their opinions and concerns to obtain equality in leadership.

The social changes taking place in society have been inclined toward increased gender equality for at least the past few decades, and what was a somewhat new idea in the 1960s is no longer new at all. However, as females enter the workforce in increasing numbers, inequality against females has remained constant in hiring, promotion, and pay (Catalyst, 2012). Although there is increased gender equality, more needs to be done before the ideal is achieved (Gottfried & Reese, 2004). Females need to fight back and the education system as a whole needs to be modified to teach each student on an equal platform, starting from grade school, regardless of gender. Organizations have multiple

reasons for seeking organizational change promoting gender equality. These reasons include the need to conform to legal mandates, envisioning a clear business advantage in a more equitable workplace, and recognition that such a change is simply the right thing to do.

The process of change has corrected some issues dealing with gender inequality; yet, it has created new issues of gender inequality and occupational segregation affecting females in the U.S. workforce. The development of theories to address human and social premises affecting the ability of females to be promoted provides a foundation for a shift in corporate policies in the future.

Reflection

With the introduction of this research to others, the researcher became the contact person for females to discuss their experience with on-going interactions of gender inequality related to the study. The females discussed their on-going issues and expected feedback and advice from the researcher as they shared their experience. As the researcher listened to the stories of females identifying queen bees, complaining of barriers and traps males set, the researcher opened up a dialogue with the participants and shared knowledge related to the literature review and encouraged these females to fight back by actively engaging in ETN's and allowing their voices to be heard. The researcher was pleased she was able to bring about awareness of the continuing issues females face and to encourage females to stand up and fight back for the equality they believe in. Females are underrepresented in top rank positions within the U.S. Defense Industry. As a result of this study, the researcher thought process has changed from the assumption

that traditional organizational cultures is the primary responsibility for the traditional models of leadership sustaining the status quo, to the assumption that institutional sexism grounded in the educational system is initially responsible for gender inequality. Change must begin during childhood development; therefore, family and the education system are primarily responsible for enforcing and practicing change as it relates to gender equality.

Summary

The first wave of the feminist movement had an impact on increasing the numbers of females in the workforce. During the second wave of the movement, changes within the social order occurred with the development of the National Organization for Women, the implementation of affirmative action by President Johnson, the Equal Pay Act (1964), and the case of *Roe v. Wade* (“Women’s Rights Movement,” n.d.). The most recent demand for change has been created by the business sector with the advent of global competition.

The globalization of trade has created great opportunities for businesses to compete globally and, as the marketplace has expanded, companies have discovered there are new technologies, business practices, and organizational structures that are more effective in influencing diversity and equal opportunity. Agapiou (2002) suggested that traditional cultures may limit organization’s competitiveness in the following manner: (a) limit the skill, talent, and quality base of the organization; (b) limit value of the organization; and (c) limit innovation created from diverse teams (p. 697). For most U.S. organizations, leadership favor characteristics such as power, aggressiveness, assertiveness, and experience (Burk, 2005). Female leadership characteristics have been

downgraded to stereotypical behaviors, such as inferior, timid, kind, and sensitive (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). According to Heilman (2001), gender stereotypes dictate implications of how males and females should behave, not the actual characteristics of their behavior. However, because leadership attributes are associated with male characteristics, Heilman suggested a “good manager is described predominantly by masculine attributes” (p. 659), and it was assumed females did not fit that executive mold (Hewlett, 2007). Although gendered stereotypes have different impacts on females and males, the depending factors are the leadership characteristics their organization value most. People tend to resist change, which creates a cultural embedding mechanism of continuous stereotypes, biases, and discrimination (Barclay, 2006). As a result, the issue is the misconception that males and females are different in terms of behavioral-, social-, and character-oriented traits that reflect aggressiveness, achievement, and assertiveness (Hewlett, 2007). Collaborative efforts should be enforced to manage gender equality by changing traditional organizational cultures and education reform.

It is the responsibility of leaders of organizations and government to enforce policies and programs that strengthen gender equality. Also, it is society’s duty to help influence positive change and eliminate institutional sexism. The key for females gaining access into leadership requires females to empower themselves through human, social, and economic development with the support of society, the education system, leaders of organizations, and the government. Females have to be aware that, although their organization’s culture may still be presumed traditional, the workforce is changing to become more diverse (i.e., a traditional mentality but transitional workforce). By not

speaking up and standing up for themselves, females are holding themselves back. Fighting back will allow female voices to be heard collectively so females can strive for change and climb the corporate ladder into leadership positions.

Organizational change has allowed organizations to focus on visible differences in underrepresented groups and create productive and respectful working relationships across similarities and differences. Change will allow organizations to focus on the culture, systems, processes, and policies to ensure that everyone can contribute and focus on tapping the full potential of all employees to maximize organizational effectiveness (Wooten, 2006). The strength of this phenomenological study was important, “because phenomenology can manifest what is hidden in ordinary, everyday experiences” (Diver et al., 2003, p. 392). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain understanding of the perceptions of civilian females who had experienced obstacles, related to gender inequality, in regard to professional advancement opportunities within the U.S. Defense Industry. In addition, it was the goal of the study to provide either evidence of the problem of gender inequality or dispel the notion that a problem exists.

The researcher found that gender inequality exists and although females are striving to knock down barriers hindering them from climbing the ranks, some females limit their potential growth by identifying themselves as worker bees. Modern barriers these females have experienced relate to males being gatekeepers, the queen bee stinging other “wanna-be-bees,” the lack of access to female mentors, the lack of knowing how to get invitations to the good ole boys network, and traditional organizational cultures maintaining the status quo as the norm and enforcing gender stereotypes. On the other

hand, the researcher found that the wanna-bees fighting back market themselves with continuous education, take advantage of training opportunities, allow their voices to be heard, join network circles, or take the time to research the organization to find an opportunity to take advantage of recognition. There is a need to develop a structure system of equality through education reform on a universal level allowing the next generation of wanna-bees to be able to compete in an environment offering equal opportunity for earnings, professional development, and leadership roles.

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Appendix A: Key Words in the Literature Review

Questions that drove the strategy to search for key words to develop the literature are listed below:

1. How to expand work opportunities for women?
2. How subtle forms of gender bias in society and organizational cultures interfere with career advancement opportunities for women? How education relate to career opportunities for women?
3. What is the common leadership attributes?
4. How can organizations create conditions that encourage females to take on the role of mentors (scarcity of senior female mentors)?
5. How organizations create conditions that limit women professional development?
6. How women are confined to gendered social structures?
7. How women leaders perform once placed in leadership roles (Queen Bees)? How women leaders perform once placed in leadership roles (Queen Bees)?
8. What happen to organizations that appoint women to senior positions (Glass Cliff)?
9. What type of challenges do women face as they move up the corporate ladder?
10. How stereotypes devalue women's achievements?
11. How does having children affect women career advancement?

12. How do specific social contexts hinder career-committed women from climbing the ranks?
13. How do women respond to gender inequality?
14. What social frameworks create barriers that prevent women from attaining leadership roles?
15. How does the lack of professional development hinder women from gaining the knowledge/skills necessary to take advantage of promotional opportunities?
16. How do organizational structures limit women ability to climb the corporate ladder?
17. How do women eliminate institutional sexism and gain access into leadership?
18. How do we create a gender-neutral language of diversity and choice in the workplace?
19. How do mentors assist their protégés in becoming successful?
20. How can we change gender inequality in the workplace?

Appendix B: Research Questions versus Interview Questions Chart

RESEARCH QUESTIONS VS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CHART

What is the lived experience of women who have experience issues of gender inequality regarding career advancement opportunities?

1. *Where do you see yourself within your organization's hierarchy? Why?*
2. *Are you seeking opportunities to move up the corporate ladder? If so, what are you doing to prepare yourself (i.e. talent, skill, abilities) for that ideal position, to make yourself marketable?*
3. *Do you believe that women possess equal qualities of leadership as men? Explain.*
4. *Do you believe that women are equally represented in top leadership positions, as men? Why?*
5. *Do you feel there are issues of gender inequality in American organizations today? Explain.*
6. *Have you been exposed to gender inequality? If so, how have you dealt with it?*

How do females perceive both internal and external barriers to their professional advancement in the U.S. defense industry?

1. *How would you describe your organization's culture?*
2. *What are some barriers that you have experienced during your career development?*
3. *Do you feel there are issues of gender inequality in American organizations today? Explain.*
4. *What are your thoughts regarding women's access to power and leadership? What factors contribute to gender inequality? Explain.*
5. *How significant/insignificant do you feel that female role models and/or mentors are in American organizations? Why?*
6. *Do you feel that gendered stereotypes affect women's professional development? Explain.*
7. *How might an organization's culture contribute to promoting gender stereotypes? Explain.*

Appendix C: Consent Form

Gender Inequality: The Fight for Women in Corporate America

You are invited to participate in a research study of gender equality. You were selected as a possible participant due to association with GD. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Erica Woods, a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of the reality of women who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to pursuing career advancement opportunities.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a short interview that may be audio recorded.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with GD. If you initially decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no risks associated with participating in this study and there are no short or long-term benefits to participating in this study.

In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Erica Woods. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Black, #941-727-9906. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact them via #313-779-5701. The Research Participant Advocate at Walden University is Leilani Endicott, you may contact her at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210, if you have questions about your participation in this study.

You will receive a copy of this form from the researcher.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Name of Participant

Participant Signature

Participant Email

Signature of Investigator

Ms. EH Woods

Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer: Erica Woods

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: "Gender Equality" I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature:

Ms. EH Woods

Date: 12/11/07

Appendix E: Interview Cover Letter

January 9, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

A study has been engaged to investigate a phenomenological study of gender equality in American organizations and you are invited to participate in this research study. You were selected as a possible participant due to association with the American defense industry. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Erica Woods, a highly qualified doctoral candidate at Walden University, with extensive experience and knowledge in the field of Leadership and Organizational Change. The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of the reality of women who have encountered issues of gender inequality in regard to pursuing career advancement opportunities. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a survey questionnaire and possibly a short interview.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with GD. If you initially decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

There are no risks associated with participating in this study and there are no short or long-term benefits to participating in this study. In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful. In addition, there will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study.

The records of this study will be kept private. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

If you have questions later, you may contact them me at #586-825-4609. The Research Participant Advocate at Walden University is Leilani Endicott, you may contact her at 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210, if you have questions about your participation in this study.

Again, thank you very much.

Appendix F: Institutional Review Board Approval

Dear Ms. Woods:

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "GENDER INEQUALITY: THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN."

Your approval # is 02-01-08-0314202. You will need to reference this number in the appendix of your dissertation and in any future funding or publication submissions.

Your IRB approval expires on February 1, 2009. One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application materials that have been submitted as of this date. If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive an IRB approval status update within 1 week of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained at the IRB section of the Walden web site or by emailing irb@waldenu.edu:
http://inside.waldenu.edu/c/Student_Faculty/StudentFaculty_4274.htm

Researchers are expected to keep detailed records of their research activities (i.e., participant log sheets, completed consent forms, etc.) for the same period of time they retain the original data. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Please note that this letter indicates that the IRB has approved your research. You may not begin the research phase of your dissertation, however, until you have received the **Notification of Approval to Conduct Research** (which indicates that your committee and Program Chair have also approved your research proposal). Once you have received this notification by email, you may begin your data collection.

Leilani Endicott, Ph.D.
Chair, Walden University Institutional Review Board
Email: irb@waldenu.edu
Fax: 626-605-0472
Tollfree : 800-925-3368 ext. 1210
Office address for Walden University:
155 5th Avenue South, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link:
http://inside.waldenu.edu/c/Student_Faculty/StudentFaculty_4274.htm

Appendix G: Personal Communications from Interviews

Participant C (job title: engineer).

Interviewed: February 17, 2008.

Quote 1: “men work for family whereas women work for themselves.”

Quote 2: “Queen Bee Syndrome, which means there can only be one Queen Bee that must go out and kill all the other female bees, instead of creating a sisterhood”

Quote 3: “young women are looked at as if they will only last until about five years, then they will quit and have children”

Quote 4: “Queen Bee Syndrome, where there could only be one queen bee and that she must go out and get rid of all the other female bees.”

Quote 5: “instead of sisterhood there is a Queen Bee Syndrome that renounces women from helping each other.”

Quote 6: “those in power and influence have traditional behavioral thinking. However, organization demographics of society have forced them to create diversity within the people. There is diversity but, people don’t have the power or influence to make change.”

Participant CC (job title: CEO).

Interviewed: February 14, 2008.

Quote 1: “Women are not trying to take it, and you don’t get what you don’t ask for.”

Participant D (job title: engineer).

Interviewed: February 11, 2008.

Quote 1: “Who you know determines how you advance.”

Member check: February 25, 2008.

Quote 2: “stereotypes are past their time; however, men and women have different styles of leadership.”

Participant G (President)

Interviewed: February 10, 2008

Quote 1 reads: “Women let it go.”

Member check: February 14, 2008

Quote 2: women lack access to power and leadership because they are not trying to take it and “you don’t get what you don’t ask for.”

Participant LE (job title: material representative)

Interviewed: February 11, 2008

Quote 1: “Positions high in rank are usually held by men.”

Participant LM (job title: engineer)

Interviewed: February 25, 2008

Quote 1: “men are not promoting women and the promotions come from men.”

Quote 2: “The art of mentoring was the good, the bad, and the ugly.”

Quote 3: “A woman that sees you as competition will not mentor you well, and until we learn how to play out in the field, lose, and still be friends, we are losing.”

Participant Mo (job title: small business liaison)

Interviewed: February 24, 2008

Quote 1: “Men steal credit from women and women are so combative with each other that they do not help one another.”

Member check: June 26, 2012

Quote 2 reads: described the culture as transitional by stating that the organization “has the mind set, but it is not placed in practice.”

Participant Na (job title: engineer)

Interviewed: February 11, 2008

Quote 1: felt left out of the “loop” and believed she was at the bottom of the corporate ladder, “because of the good ole boy network system.”

Quote 2: ... she liked to be in the “worker bee” position.

Member check: June 27, 2012

Quote 3: “women are not promoted into CEO positions because women are timid when it comes to promoting themselves, and women don’t ask for the respect and promotions they deserve.”

From initial interview (February 11, 2008):

Quote 4: few women in upper management, because “women don’t ask” for promotions the way men do, women are less aggressive than men when it comes to promoting themselves, and women are “people pleasers.”

Quote 5: felt left out of the “loop” and believed she was at the bottom of the corporate ladder, “because of the good ole boy network system.”

Participant P (job title: engineer)
Interviewed: February 22, 2008

Quote 1: described her organization’s culture as transitional, claiming that her organization was, “now White male-dominated, but in the process of hiring a diverse workforce.”

Quote 2: “gendered stereotypes make it difficult for women to pursue tasks if she is already perceived as inadequate.”

Quote 3: the organization is, “now White male-dominated, but in the process of hiring a diverse workforce.”

Member Check: June 27, 2012

Quote 4: “there are issues of gender inequality in the U.S. Defense Industry because there are few opportunities for females, and males feel as though females are incompetent.

Participant Phi (job title: engineer)
Interviewed: February 9, 2008

Quote 1: “by not allowing women to study and excel in professions that are male dominated.”

Participant R (job title: administration)
Interviewed: February 21, 2008

Quote 1: “Men have power to hold women back in certain positions.”

Participant S (job title: senior buyer)
Interviewed: February 17, 2008

Quote 1: “worker bee” because “those in my department do not give recognition to African American women.”

Member check: June 27, 2012

Quote 2: The experience crowd is undervalued. Only the younger employees, especially men, are shown favor, recognition and succession planning to make them eligible for promotion. Our division does not value experienced workers. It appears that they put more value on new college graduates. I feel that they rush the older workers into retiring to replace them with more new college graduates. I prefer to work in a management position where the culture is fair, friendly, and equal for all.

From initial interview: February 17, 2008

Quote 3: “There are more women in college than men, more women striving for leadership roles, and we are doing what needs to be done.”

Member check: June 27, 2012

Quote 4: “not looking to climb the corporate ladder due to her gender and race, but there were more women in college than men striving for leadership roles, so women are doing what needs to be done.”

Quote 5: “managers are seeking a yes person and they don’t want people that are more qualified than they are, and that women may get held back because of their qualification and education.”

From initial interview: February 17, 2008

Quote 6: Women need to take ownership over their own professional development through education, training, and researching the organization’s culture. Watch how managers interact with one another. Whether promoted or not you can still develop into the type of professional that you need to be – master where you are.

Quote 7: Participant S had not seen a female vice-president within her organization and claimed it was still the “good ole boys’ club who are interested in seeking people of their kind rather than those with qualifications.”

Member check: June 27, 2012

Participant Sa (job title: senior buyer)

Interviewed: February 8, 2008

Quote 1: ... described herself as a “worker bee.”

Quote 2: “Men take over meetings and women have little respect in meetings.”

Quote 3: “Aggression works against women, and men have no respect for women.”

Quote 4: The biggest problem with women initiating change and breaking the glass ceiling is that women “let it go.”

Participant Se (job title: buyer)

Interviewed: February 11, 2008

Quote 1: “this organization does not move people of my color or gender to higher positions.”

Participant T (job title: engineer).

Interviewed: February 19, 2008

Quote 1: Although the military is genderless, the public sector has the issue with stereotyping and that men don’t understand women and what they bring to the table. Usually, men are reluctant to give women a chance because they inherently believe that women are not as capable.

Quote 2: “culture as a long established norm or pattern of behavior, patterns of behavior in a traditional organization. It is difficult to change stereotypes, because stereotypes are aged, which hinders women’s professional development.”

Participant Tis (job title: engineer)

Interviewed: February 19, 2008

Quote 1: “Men do not understand women and what they bring to the table, and men are usually reluctant to give women a chance because they inherently believe that women are not as capable as men.”

Quote 2: ... women leave the workforce to bear children; therefore, they do not learn how to “play the corporate game.”

Quote 3: “if women do not see other successful women and are not included in mentorship roles to learn how to play the game, it will take women forever to learn the game.”

Appendix H: List of Tables

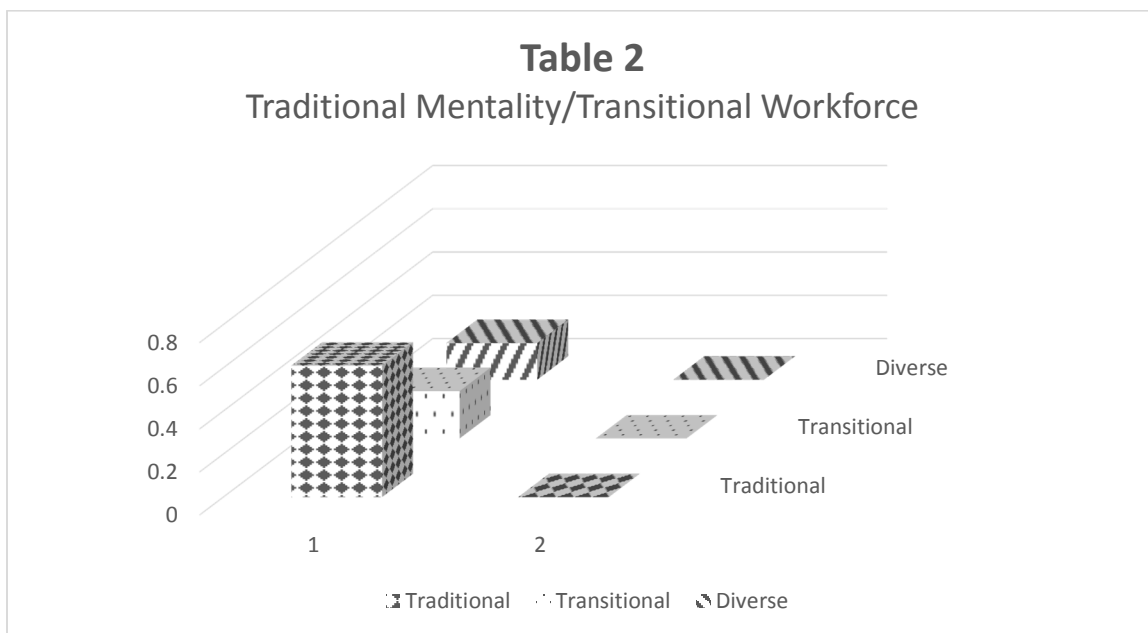
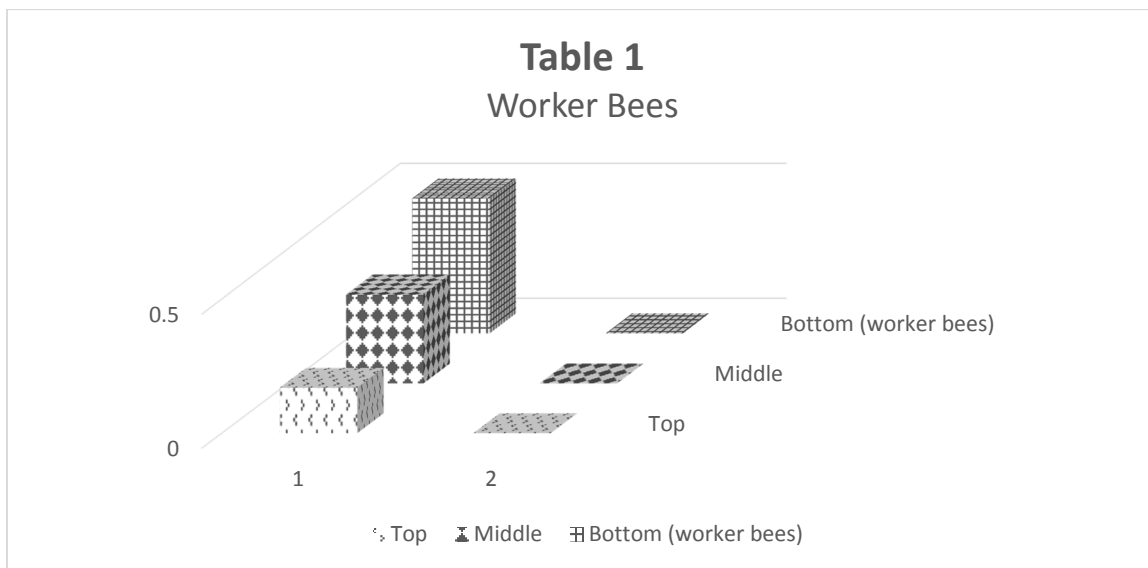
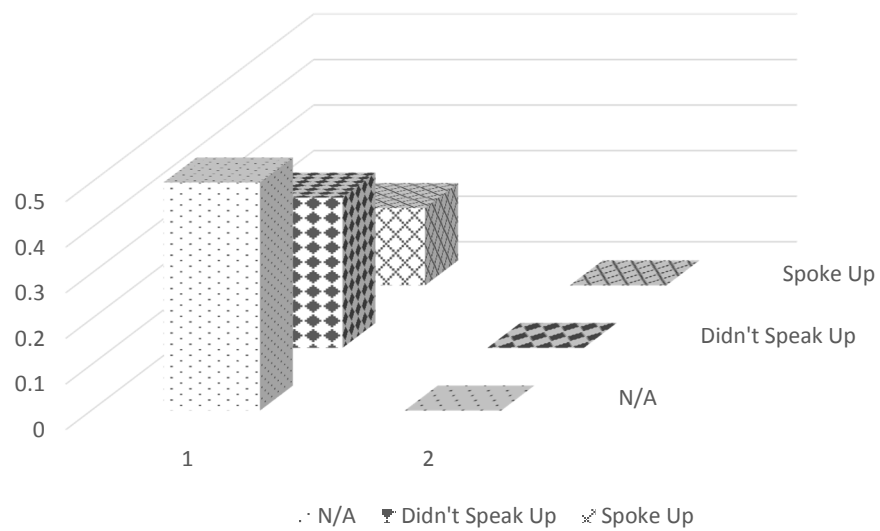


Table 5
Fighting Back



Appendix I: Interview Protocol

Project: Gender Equity and Women in Leadership

Date:

Time:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Demographic Survey

Age: ___ Under 21 ___ 21 – 25 ___ 26 – 35 ___ 36 – 47 ___ 48 - older

Marital Status: ___ S ___ M ___ D ___ W

Educational Level: ___ H.S. ___ Undergrad ___ Graduate ___ Ph.D

Occupational Status: ___ Mngt Support ___ Mngt ___ Direct ___ VP
 ___ UAW

Salary: ___ ≤\$40k ___ \$40k-\$46k ___ \$47k-\$53k ___ \$55k-62k

___ \$63k-\$69k ___ \$70k -80k ___ \$90k-\$100K ___ ≥\$100k

Questions

- 1) Where do you see yourself within your organization's hierarchy? Why?
- 2) How would you describe your organization's culture?
- 3) Are you seeking opportunities to move up the corporate ladder? If so, what are you doing to prepare yourself (i.e. talent, skill, abilities) for that ideal position, to make yourself marketable?
- 4) What are some barriers that you have experienced during your career development?

- 5) Do you believe that women possess equal qualities of leadership as men? Explain.
- 6) Do you believe that women are equally represented in top leadership positions, as men? Why?
- 7) Do you feel there are issues of gender inequality in American organizations today? Explain.
- 8) Have you been exposed to gender inequality? If so, how have you dealt with it?
- 9) What are your thoughts regarding women's access to power and leadership? What factors contribute to gender inequality? Explain.
- 10) How significant/insignificant do you feel that female role models and/or mentors are in American organizations? Why?
- 11) Do you feel that gendered stereotypes affect women's professional development? Explain.
- 12) How might an organization's culture contribute to promoting gender stereotypes? Explain.

Appendix J: Copyright Permissions

Permission #1

Erica,

You have my permission to use the material. Now you need to get the permission from Sage Publications since they hold the copyright to my work. Thanks. John Creswell

-----Original Message-----

From: woodseh@GD.com [mailto:woodseh@GD.com]

Sent: Monday, April 02, 2007 5:19 PM

To: jcreswell1@unl.edu

Cc: Ewoods423@cs.com

Subject: Request for use of Copyright Material

Hello, Dr. Creswell

You do not know me. However, I am familiar with your work. I am a student at Walden University. I am currently working on the first three chapters of my dissertation and I would like to include one of your table's in my paper, from the text QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND RESEARCH DESIGN: CHOOSING AMONG FIVE TRADITIONS. (Creswell, 1998, p. 65).

The use of the table will help illustrate why I selected the phenomenological study research design opposed to the biography or ethnography designs. If possible, can you grant permission, so that I may include your table in my research?

Thanks,

Ms. Erica Woods

Permission #2

Dear Erica,

Please consider this written permission to republish the table detailed below in your dissertation. Proper attribution to the original source must be included. This permission does not extend to any 3rd party material found within our work. Please notify us of future usage or upon publication of your thesis.

Good luck on your thesis!

Best,
Ellen

Ellen Salvador
Permissions Department
Sage Publications
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
805-375-1718 (f)

-----Original Message-----

From: WOODSEH@GD.COM [mailto:WOODSEH@GD.COM]

Sent: Tuesday, April 03, 2007 6:27 AM

To: permissions

Subject: Permission Request

Permissions Request

Requestor's Information

--

Name: ERICA WOODS
Affiliation: WALDEN UNIVERSITY
Street Address: 22122 HESSEL AVE
City: DETROIT
Zip/Postal Code: 48219
State: MI
Country: USA
Phone: 313-779-5701
Reference Code:

Publication Information for the material that Requestor Intends to Use:

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Publication Title: QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND RESEARCH DESIGN: CHOOSING AMONG FIVE TRADITIONS.

Publication Type: Book

ISBN/ISSN: 0-7619-0144-2

Publication Date: 1998

Volume and Issue: DIMENSIONS FOR COMPARING FIVE RESEARCH TRADITIONS

Title of Material: TABLE 4.1, PG. 65

Authors of Material: J.W. CRESWELL

Title of Material: TABLE 4.1, PG. 65

Publication Type: Book

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Requestor's Use of the Material

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Type of Use: republish in a thesis/dissertation

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Title: THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN IN CORPORATE AMERICA

Type: ORAL & WRITTEN DISSERTATION

Author/Editor: ERICA WOODS/VICKY BLACK

Publisher: WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Publication Date: AUGUST 2007

Entire Publication: Other:

Comments:

Hello, I would like to request permission to use one
 >of your tables in the text QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND
 >RESEARCH DESIGN: CHOOSING AMONG FIVE TRADITIONS. By
 >J.W. Creswell. (Creswell, 1998, p. 65).
 >
 >The use of the table will be demonstrated in the
 >Proposal portion of my Dissertation to compare 3
 >research designs.
 >
 >Thanks,

Permission #3

As long as you a) credit the GSS as the source of you items and b) send us one copy of any report, paper, etc. using GSS items, you are free to use GSS items in your research.

-----Original Message-----

From: woodseh@GD.com [mailto:woodseh@GD.com]

Sent: Monday, April 23, 2007 11:50 AM

To: Smith-Tom

Subject: GSS Permission Request

To Who It May Concern:

I would like to request permission to use the General Social Survey to assist in developing a survey questionnaire for my organization. My objective is to assess the attitudes of individuals, employed for an American organization, and how they feel towards gender inequality in the home and the workplace.

The use of GSS will be demonstrated in the survey/interview portion of My Dissertation to inquire attitudes and beliefs of gendered stereotypes And gender inequality in corporate America.

Title: THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN IN CORPORATE AMERICA

Type: ORAL & WRITTEN DISSERTATION

Author/Editor: ERICA WOODS/VICKY BLACK

Publisher: WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Publication Date: AUGUST 2007

Entire Publication: Other:

Please see attached questionnaire developed.

(See attached file: Survey Questions.doc)

Thanks,

Ms. Erica Woods,

Phone: 313-779-5701

Fax: 586-268-9514

Email: woodseh@GD.com

Permission #4

Hi Erica,

Attached is a copy of your permission letter.

Karen Lee

Senior Permissions Coordinator

Thomson Learning Global Production and Manufacturing

10 Davis Drive, Belmont CA 94002 USA

karen.lee@thomson.com; www.thomsonrights.com

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From: woodseh@GD.com [<mailto:woodseh@GD.com>]

Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2007 4:38 AM

To: Lee, Karen (GPMS)

Subject: Re: Your Request [# 156761] for [The Research Methods Knowledge Base]

Finally, I have found my copy. Please see attachment.

Please open the attached document. This document was digitally sent to you using an HP Digital Sending device.

To view this document you need to use the Adobe Acrobat Reader.(See attached file: Document.pdf)

Thanks,

Ms. Erica Woods

Email: woodseh@GD.com

<karen.lee@Thomso

n.com>

To

04/03/2007 04:35 <woodseh@GD.com>

PM

cc

Subject

Your Request [# 156761] for [The
Research Methods Knowledge Base]

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Karen Lee

Senior Permissions Coordinator

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04/27/2007

Erica Woods

Walden University

AMDS

22122 HESSEL AVE

DETROIT, MI 48219

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Title: The Research Methods Knowledge Base 3rd edition

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Specific material: Table in Chapter 4 - Markers of Malnutrition

Total pages: 1

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Sincerely,

Karen Lee

Permissions Coordinator

Page 1 of 1 Response # 156761 Requestor email: woodseh@GD.com

Curriculum Vitae

ERICA HELAINE WOODS

7143 Creeks Crossing ♦ W. Bloomfield, MI 48322 ♦ 313-779-5701 ♦
 woodseh@email.phoenix.edu

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Art Institute, Troy Campus*Adjunct Faculty, Undergraduate Course*

September 2013 – Present

*Fashion Merchandising – Retail Math**Fashion Merchandising – Business Management**Fashion Merchandising – Event Planning & Promotions**Fashion Merchandising – Retail Buying**Fashion Merchandising – Inventory & Stock Controls*

- Implement a stimulating lesson to ensure that each student is able to retain and understand the learning objectives
- Develop unit-based projects that are centered on real-world situations to show students the importance of gaining a solid education and how math correlates with everyday life
- Provide an understanding of the various financial tools used by retailers to evaluate performance.
- Calculate, analyze, and interpret financial concepts associated with accounting from a merchandising perspective.
- Provide constructive criticism and encourage substantive participation
- Collaborate with colleagues to integrate new activities and allocate effective resources

University of Phoenix, Online*Adjunct Faculty, MBA Course*

September 2008 – Present

*MBA Course – Quantitative Reasoning**BA Course – Statistics*

- Facilitate Qualitative Reasoning in relation to Business and Research
- Implement a stimulating lesson to ensure that each student is able to retain and understand the learning objectives
- Utilize discussion based lessons in order to promote a deeper understanding of the weekly learning objectives
- Develop unit-based projects that are centered on real-world situations to show students the importance of gaining a solid education and how math correlates with everyday life
- Provide constructive criticism and encourage substantive participation
- Collaborate with colleagues to integrate new activities and allocate effective resources

General Dynamics Land Systems, Sterling Heights, MI*Supply Chain Management*

October 2004 – December 2012

*Senior Buyer**Reverse Logistics Manager**Internal Auditor*

- Create and maintain business relationships with vendors by checking cost, quality and levels of service
- Negotiate and Reconcile favorable pricing agreements between engineers and vendors
- Monitor stock levels to maximize business efficiency, process and review purchase orders
- Maintain and account for inventory at storage facility
- Manage reverse logistics; interface with and provide support for internal and external audits
- Evaluate bids and make recommendations based on commercial and technical factors

Walsh College, Troy, MI*Adjunct Faculty, MBA Course*

July 2008 – April 2009

- Facilitate Management and Organizational Learning in relation to Systems theories
- Provide personalized instructions based on the following criteria: content, organization, APA format, grammar, punctuation, spelling, readability, and style
- Develop syllabus, create lesson plan, provide constructive criticism, and encourage substantive participation

DaimlerChrysler, Auburn Hill, MI*Senior Staff Agent*

April 2004 – September 2004

- Addressed customer's warranty coverage inquiries by investigating, resolving and summarizing concerns
- Tracked vehicles once orders were placed through the assembly to final destination
- Provided technical information, prepared correspondences and managed the retention of pertaining data

EDUCATION

Walden University ♦ PhD, Leadership & Organizational Change ♦ Honors ♦
12/2005-Present (ABD)

Davenport University ♦ MBA, Strategic Management ♦ Deans List ♦
8/2003-10/2004

Michigan State University ♦ BA, Management ♦ 8/1999-5/2002

SKILLS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Microsoft Proficient: Windows, Power Point, Microsoft Word, Excel, Access. Siebel, SAP, Oracle, PeopleSoft, Data Entry, and Typing Speed 60-65 wpm. Professional Capabilities: Team Leadership, Negotiating, Planning, Supply Chain Management, Sales Productivity, Management, Research and Marketing, Reverse Logistics, Teaching on-ground/on-line.

*Women in Defense, Member

Certifications

Certified Tax Specialist, Information Security Awareness, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Compliance, Export & Import Compliance, Material Acquisition Cost and Price Analysis. Federal Income Tax.

Presentations

Dissertation * A Phenomenological Study on Women and Leadership*
Thesis * Out of the Woods Consulting *Strategic Planning for Daimler-Chrysler*