Influencing Gender Specific Perceptions of the Factors Affecting Women’s Career Advancement Opportunities in the United States

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Influencing Gender Specific Perceptions of the Factors Affecting Women’s Career Advancement Opportunities in the United States

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration
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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to:

My Mom and Dad for lovingly pushing me beyond my self-imposed limits to make me strong, independent, and unafraid of life’s challenges and adventures.

Sisters Kelly and Kim, brother-in-law Tom, and brother Gene, for always being there to pick me up when life knocked me down.

Kim, my soulmate and best friend of 22-years, for keeping me grounded and providing love, support, and a strong opinion, no matter what.

Sons Steve, Logan, and Chase, for teaching me much as they grew from challenging little boys to strong, capable men.

Most of all, it is dedicated to my special and loving daughters, Sophie and Brandi, and granddaughter Emilia; all of whom I absolutely worship. I pray this study benefits you the most.

I love you all…may God bless you and keep you!
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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. It examines how awareness and knowledge shared through the #MeToo (hashtag Me Too) movement influenced gender specific perceptions about the factors affecting women’s workplace opportunities. Finally, it recommends measures to alter the divergent gender perceptions that remain an obstacle to gender equality in the workplace.

This study was conducted because gender inequalities continue in the U.S. workplace in 2018. Currently women fail to advance in careers at the same rate as men, and they are paid 21% less for similar work with equal skills and experience. Women comprise approximately 51% of the U.S. population and 47% of the workforce, so equality would dictate a one-to-one male to female ratio throughout all levels of government and private industry. The current male to female ratio in the U.S. Congress is four-to-one. The male to female executive ratio in Fortune 500 companies is three-to-one, and in the U.S. Government it is two-to-one.

The researcher conducted a mixed method experimental study by comparing pre- and post-treatment interview and survey data to determine how much awareness and knowledge shared through the #MeToo mass media events impacted gender specific perceptions of women’s equality struggles in the workplace.

The qualitative interview analysis indicated a moderate shift from divergent gender perceptions in Study 1 to convergent viewpoints in Study 2 following the #MeToo media events.
The quantitative analysis of pre- and post-treatment survey studies supported the qualitative findings and showed a 43% reduction in the gender perception gap in the post-event assessment. With outcomes from three independent qualitative and quantitative investigations aligning, the researcher concluded the overall statistical results demonstrate a strong impact on men’s and women’s perceptions and a largely reduced gender perception gap following the #MeToo media events. Because it is unknown if those changes are permanent, the researcher believes future research could focus on awareness, education, and accountability initiatives to more adequately address gender equality problems in the workplace and bring about lasting change.
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

This mixed method research investigates the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. It examines how awareness and knowledge shared through the #MeToo (hashtag Me Too) movement that brought millions of people out of the shadows to report sexual assault and harassment influenced gender specific perceptions about the factors affecting women’s workplace opportunities. Finally, it recommends measures to alter the divergent gender perceptions that remain an obstacle to gender equality in the workplace.

Women have struggled for gender equality throughout history and have achieved varying degrees of success around the globe. As a world leader in human rights issues, the United States professes to greatly value equality and actively pursues equal treatment of all U.S. citizens. The U.S. also strongly encourages other countries to place equal value in the rights, freedoms, and treatment of their citizens (Geneva, 2016). To show its’ commitment, federal agencies such as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Labor (DoL), and the U.S. Department of Justice; along with a number of watchdog groups monitor diversity and inclusion initiatives within the U.S. government and private business sectors. Numerous constitutional amendments, laws, Supreme Court rulings, federal regulations, policies, and procedures have been developed and implemented to ensure equality for all and provide
instruments to pursue justice when violations occur. In spite of those efforts, data collected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from nearly 60,000 households show gender inequalities in the workplace remain an unremitting problem plaguing the U.S. (US BLS, 2015).

Though Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed more than 54 years ago prohibiting employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin; women still do not advance within the workplace at the same rate as men (Title VII, 1964). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014), women make up 50.8% of the U.S. population; yet they fall far short of 50% representation in workplace leadership positions. In S&P 500 companies, women comprise 45% of the labor force, 36.8% become mid-level manager, 25.1% rise to executive managers, 19.2% hold board seats, and only 4.0% achieve top CEO positions (Catalyst, 2016). Female representation in senior U.S. elected positions is also low with women filling 19.8% of the Congressional seats in 2018 (CAWP, 2018). Additionally, women today experience a substantial pay and compensation gap earning 21% less than their male counterparts in similar positions with equivalent experience levels (DoL, 2016).

With closely regulated U.S. laws, regulations, and policies protecting against discrimination, researchers recognize a host of possible reasons for those workplace imbalances, but they fail to deliver specific solutions to ultimately close the gender leadership and compensation gaps. More comprehensive research is required to identify and isolate the precise gender specific problems that lead to inequalities and effectively develop the necessary changes to permanently correct those imbalances. Each contribution to the greater body of knowledge moves the effort closer to achieving equality and, combined, those efforts may eventually place women on equal standing with men in all levels of the workplace.
As this research was underway, a social media and news event transpired that many suspected would be the catalyst for permanent change. In October 2017, actress Ashley Judd accused famous movie producer, Harvey Weinstein, of sexual harassment and alleged he used his power and influence as a weapon for sexual favors (Bahr, 2017). In response to Judd’s public allegations, actress Alyssa Milano posted a Twitter message calling for the sexually harassed, assaulted, or abused to write ‘me too’ to highlight the magnitude of the problem (Stevens, 2017). By the next day, nearly 40,000 people responded to Milano’s message (Bahr, 2017). In the following months, the #MeToo phrase was posted millions of times and drew global support from 196 countries (Langone, 2018). This academic investigation examines the impact that these events and the surrounding events had on men’s and women’s perceptions of the factors known to negatively impact women’s career advancement opportunities. For simplicity, the researcher will use the “#MeToo” label to describe that event and the significant related surrounding events.

The research began with a literature review that produced enlightening results regarding the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities. To further examine those factors, the researcher conducted Qualitative Study 1 to determine if any significant differences existed in gender specific perceptions of male and female workplace performance, drive, confidence, competitive nature, relationships, and family responsibilities. Study 1 results aligned with the literature review findings and confirmed both genders recognize significant gender differences exist regarding each of those factors. The unexpected discoveries were the significantly different perceptions men and women hold about the origins, causes, and effects of the factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities. To more deeply investigate the gender perception gap discovered in Study 1, the
researcher conducted a mixed method experimental study using interviews in Qualitative Study 2 to assess the significance of the differing male and female perceptions. To validate the Study 2 findings, he used surveys in Quantitative Study 3 to assess the level of impact the awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo and surrounding media events had on the gender perception gap.

**Research Questions and Units of Analysis**

Three units of analysis were used in a mixed method approach to investigate four research questions, explore a research premise, and test a research hypothesis. Three independent investigations conducted through a literature review, a qualitative interview study, and a quantitative survey study demonstrate rigor in the research process and help validate the findings.

RQ1: What sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affect women’s career advancement opportunities?

The literature review was the primary unit of analysis for RQ1. The literary search identified 14 underlying factors from three major themes; sociological, psychological, and physiological, that heavily influence women’s career advancement opportunities.

Sociological: Three sociological factors were identified as impacting women’s workplace advancement opportunities: stereotypes, biases, and beliefs. Specifically, the literature addressed social stereotypes and biases that lead to instilled beliefs and ultimately create gender specific expectations.
Psychological: Nine psychological factors were identified as impacting women’s career advancement opportunities: emotions, confidence, competitive nature, performance, interactions, relationships, attitudes, desires, and choices. Specifically, the literature discussed gender variances in confidence, risk aversion, competitive nature, real and perceived levels of performance, and family choices.

Physiological: Two genetically inherited factors, instincts and hormones, were identified as impacting women’s advancement opportunities in the workplace. Specifically, the literature disclosed how gender specific instincts and hormones associated with menstruation, pregnancy, child bearing, and child rearing impact women in the workplace. Though instincts and hormones impact an individual’s psychological outlook, investigating the female physiological factors beyond the literature review discoveries was deemed outside the scope of this research.

RQ2: How do gender specific perceptions about male and female confidence levels, competitive nature, workplace performance, emotions, interactions, relationships, attitudes, desires, and choices impact women’s career advancement opportunities?

The researcher used a qualitative interview study to explore RQ2 and address his premise that men and women in the current professional workforce had progressed beyond views of unequal gender capabilities.

RQ3: How significantly did the #MeToo media events influence gender specific perceptions about the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities?

Two pre- and post-event qualitative studies were used to examine RQ3. The researcher replicated the interview questions from Study 1 (pre-event) and interviewed the same eight
respondents a second time (post-event) to determine how significantly the #MeToo media events influenced gender specific perceptions.

RQ4: What level of impact did the #MeToo media events have on the gender perception gap regarding the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities?

Two pre- and post-event quantitative survey studies were used to investigate RQ4. The researcher replicated specific Pew Research Center survey questions (pre-event) that aligned with this study and surveyed another sample population (post-event) to statistically assess the level of impact awareness and knowledge, generated by the #MeToo media events, had on men’s and women’s perceptions.

**Substantive Focus**

With women comprising roughly 51% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2014) and 47% of the workforce (US BLS, 2015), researchers are perplexed as to why significantly fewer women rise to the senior leadership positions within private industry and the U.S. government. With only 25% rising to executive management positions in S&P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2016), one might suspect private industry does not value or follow the extensive federal laws and regulations designed to protect against discriminatory acts. Because the federal government is heavily regulated and closely monitored for diversity and inclusion, logic would imply the U.S. government has better female representation than men’s 3:1 ratio in the S&P 500 companies.

The U.S. Office of Performance Management (OPM) oversees human resources issues for the entire federal government. OPM’s latest report for fiscal year (FY) 2014, released to
Congress in February 2016, showed women in permanent positions in the federal sector at 43.2% (821,899) of the total government civilian workforce of approximately 1.9 million. Within that workforce only 33.9% of the Senior Executive Service (SES) top leadership positions were filled by women (FEORP, 2016). The number of women entering the federal civilian sector is also trending downward, and the number of women leaving is trending upward. Since 2012, roughly 13,000 more women are leaving the federal workforce each year than are joining (FEORP, 2016).

Though women are somewhat better represented in senior leadership positions in the U.S. government than in private industry, men’s 2:1 ratio is strong evidence heavy regulation and close monitoring are not the final solutions to workplace gender inequalities.

The literature review studies identified some possible causes for those inequalities, but the complex interactions between the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors make it difficult to pinpoint specific problems and solutions. This research examines gender specific perceptions of those affecting factors and identifies possible measures for altering men’s and women’s divergent views of the origins, causes, and effects of women’s workplace issues. The researcher’s goal is to identify the root causes of women’s workplace struggles and recommend permanent solutions to those gender inequalities.

**Research Design and Methodology**

This research investigates the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities and began with a detailed literature review centered on the initial research question. As themes and factors emerged, the research question was refined and a conceptual model developed (Appendix 1) which helped identify and illustrate where additional research was
needed. A qualitative interview study (Study 1) was conducted to assess some of the specific findings in the literature review. Suspecting men and women in the current professional workforce had progressed beyond beliefs of unequal gender capabilities, the researcher conducted a qualitative study to test his premise that there are no gender perception differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers.

In Study 1, the researcher used the organizational justice and psychological contract theories as the research foundation. To further investigate the findings from the various literature review studies, he developed a series of interview questions to capture gender specific perceptions of male and female traits in the workplace as they relate to the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities.

Study 2 was the qualitative portion of the mixed method protocol designed to determine if the awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events influenced gender specific perceptions about the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities. The researcher replicated Study 1, conducted one-year prior, and asked the same eight participants the same interview questions. Four additional participants were interviewed in Study 2 and used as a control group to help identify any possible demand effect in the second interview responses.

Study 3 was the quantitative portion of the mixed method protocol designed to statistically assess the level of impact the awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events had on the gender perception gap. The researcher statistically compared pre-event data collected from three national-level Pew Research Center surveys conducted between 2013 and 2015 to post-treatment survey data collected by the researcher. The post-event survey was
constructed using 23 questions from those Pew surveys that fell within the scope of this research and closely aligned with study objectives.

The researcher developed and launched the post-event survey using the Qualtrics survey software. He anonymously invited adult business professionals from three USF DBA cohorts, their interested business associates, and coworkers from his organization to participate. The email invitation generated 110 responses with 89 deemed valid and usable for analysis. After organizing survey data in an Excel spreadsheet, a statistical analysis was conducted in RStudio using a Fisher’s exact test and Wilcoxon’s signed rank test.

Statistically assessing men’s and women’s pre- and post-event perceptions enabled the researcher to determine if each gender was possibly influenced by the awareness and knowledge generated by #MeToo media events. Additionally, measuring the pre- and post-event gender perception gaps and statistically assessing changes, allowed the researcher to study the potential impact of the awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events on the gender perception gap.

The next section of this research is a detailed literature review that investigates three research themes and identifies 14 factors known to affect women’s advancement opportunities in the workplace.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research investigates the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. It also identifies gender specific traits that influence gender inequalities in pay, benefits, and representation in senior leadership positions. The general academic examination of gender inequalities in the workplace is extensive with researchers conducting thousands of academic studies globally (ProQuest, 2018). Women’s advocacy groups and self-help authors have also written volumes of books, articles, and opinion pieces on women’s struggles to gain equal standing with men, yet their longstanding dilemma continues today.

Women’s rights have improved markedly since the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on August 18, 1920, recognizing women’s right to vote (History, 2010). Numerous U.S. laws, regulations, policies, and procedures have been implemented and are closely monitored to protect women against all forms of discrimination and harassment and ensure a clear path to gender equality. In theory, women today have the same rights, privileges, and opportunities as men; but reality exposes a series of confusing and often misinterpreted obstacles that facilitate persisting gender inequality problems. A host of surreptitious sociological, psychological, and physiological factors merge to significantly impact women and their career advancement opportunities. As perspective, women fill only 25% of the executive
manager positions in S&P 500 companies and 4% of the CEO seats (Catalyst, 2016). Women also earn 21% less than their male counterparts in similar positions with equivalent experience levels (DoL, 2016). This research identifies the most predominant factors known to influence the two genders and seeks to better understand the factor’s underlying impact on women. The investigation concentrates on the works of prominent researchers to explore the depth of influence those factors have on women’s advancement opportunities in the workplace.

**Research Approach**

This literature review is focused on the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities and was conducted using multiple database searches. JSTOR, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and ProQuest best aligned with the topic and scope of this research and were used to find related scholarly articles. Database searches were limited to peer reviewed publications to ensure academic rigor. Scholarly books cited in peer reviewed articles and deemed relevant to this study were also examined.

Top tier journal articles, according to the SCImago Journal and Country Rankings, were used to assure scholarly rigor in the academic published articles (SCImago, n.d.). Keyword searches included: gender, equality, workplace, and advancement; and key phrases included: workplace gender advancement, and gender equality in the workplace. The initial searches revealed approximately 10,000 articles published worldwide. Limiting the search to the western world produced roughly 2,000 articles. Of those, approximately 300 academic abstracts were reviewed with 95 considered academically rigorous and within the scope of this investigation. The bibliographies of those selected articles were used to focus on specific subject area searches and cross reference the citations to help guarantee a thorough review.
Nine books written by PhDs and well-respected business women were also reviewed and deemed academically sound and relevant to this study. A detailed literature analysis focused specifically on the research question captured 46 academic articles and books on the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affecting women’s career advancement. Those works formed the framework for the researcher’s literature review and provided the foundation for his dissertation study.

Sheryl Sandberg is Facebook’s chief operating officer and was ranked in the top five on Fortune’s 2017 list of 10 Most Powerful Women in Business (Fortune, 2017). She was also listed in Time’s 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2013 (Steinem, 2013). Because of her unique perspectives as a female C-Suite executive and her reputation as a published researcher and author, Sandberg’s research is used extensively throughout the literature review as a means of tying academic findings to business practices.

Three national-level Pew Research Center studies conducted in the U.S. between 2013 and 2015 were acquired using the same word/phrase searches and provided a substantial pool of survey questions and an added frame of reference for comparison in the researcher’s analysis and findings. In addition, U.S. laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and population references were retrieved from authoritative sources such as the Whitehouse, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the U.S. Census Bureau websites.

To organize the literature for discussion, prominent factors affecting women’s career advancement were categorized within the three emergent themes: sociological, psychological, and physiological. In some cases, factor characteristics fell into multiple themes or interacted across themes. Though impossible to neatly categorize human instincts, beliefs, behaviors,
perceptions, and actions because they intermingle and interact in such complex manners, these themes provided a logical structure to examine and better understand the literature.

Developing a conceptual model (Figure 2.1) from the themes and factors identified in the literature review enabled the researcher to systematically explore a complex array of gender specific behaviors such as personal interactions, emotional reactions, career-altering choices, attitudes, desires, perceptions, performance, confidence, and competitive nature. Illustrating the research in the conceptual model helped the researcher understand how societal norms develop from gender specific instincts and hormones to create cultural stereotypes, biases, and beliefs. The model also helped identify explicit gaps in the research regarding women’s workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers.

Figure 2.1. Women’s Career Advancement Conceptual Model
The researcher’s conceptual model visually illustrates the themes and factors investigated in the literature review and identifies the planned research approach for each area.

**Sociological Factors**

An individual's sociological makeup stems from a vast array of lifelong influences espoused from their country, region, culture, religion, upbringing, life experiences, and moral values to name a few (Culture, 2018). This complex assortment of interconnected characteristics can converge to produce stereotypes, biases, and beliefs individuals may carry with pride or fail to see in themselves. As like thinkers form groups, organizations, and societies, their stereotypes, biases, and beliefs transpose into accepted practices, policies, rules, and laws. Due to generations of conditioning, societal norms can naturally evolve with deeply engrained and often hidden prejudices. This sociology section will review 25 academic works that address societal and organizational norms, family culture, and individual beliefs and choices that grow from those sociological influences to affect career advancement opportunities.

The 1950s and 60s sitcom “Leave It to Beaver” portrayed the ideal All-American family lifestyle of the day. Actress Barbara Billingsley played the submissive housewife, June Cleaver, in the popular sitcom. The perfect suburban wife and mother was always immaculately dressed, kept a spotless house, seamlessly coped with the exploits of two rambunctious boys while teaching them daily life-lessons, and she tended to every need of husband and patriarch, Ward Cleaver (Leave It to Beaver, 2018).

Ward, played by Hugh Beaumont, was the quintessential ‘man of the house’. The hard-working family provider would return home promptly from a tough day at the office and settle into his favorite chair reading the paper, with June making him as comfortable as possible while
she prepared dinner. Ward appeared to make all the important family decisions with few questions or challenges from June. By standards of the time, they were the perfect American family living wholesome, stress-free lives (Leave It to Beaver, 2018).

In many ways the United States social views have evolved immensely since Ward and June Cleaver characterized their simple suburban family routine on television sets across America. In the decades following their portrayal, the world has become infinitely more complicated and fast-paced. Technology and modern conveniences make it possible, even necessary, for us to see, do, and accomplish more than the Cleaver’s would have dreamed possible. Today’s business executives can start their day on one continent and finish their day on another while conducting virtual meetings during transit. The near instantaneous flow of information shortens decision cycles and blurs lines between office and home. With no clear delineation between work and leisure, stress levels climb, family life suffers, and a stark contrast to the Cleaver’s portrayal can evolve.

As the world evolved, so too has the female workforce in numbers and capabilities. When President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act of 1963 into law, roughly one-third of the female population was in the U.S. workforce. In 2014, 57% of women were in the workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015) making up nearly half the total U.S. labor force with a growing number as primary family breadwinners (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).

To help organize and add clarity to the literature review discussion, the fourteen factors influencing women’s career advancement opportunities were subcategorized under the three major themes. Beliefs is the first of those subcategories.
Beliefs

In spite of significant progress, some of the social beliefs from the Ward and June Cleaver era linger still today. In 1970, 11.2% of women ages 25 to 64 in the labor force had a college degree. By 2014, that number more than tripled to 40.0% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015) with women currently slightly outpacing men in earned college degrees (White House Council of Economic Advisers Issue Brief, 2015). In 1979, full-time working women in wage and salary jobs earned 62% of what men earned. Though women’s education and workforce representation today roughly equal their male counterparts, women still earn only 79% of what men earn in comparable jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

Unequal pay is only one of many current gender disparities and the literature attributes those inequalities to a number of social factors. A recent study published in *Gender in Management: An International Journal* collected gender perceptions from 1,070 males and 1,139 females and found statistically significant differences in four of five areas. This study found that men are more likely to believe they have more rights to jobs when jobs are scarce. Women believe more than men that having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent. Men believe they make better political leaders and better business executives than women. Neither men nor women believe a woman earning more than her husband will cause problems at home (Kiser, 2015).

Those findings align with another *Gender in Management* article that surveyed 220 business men to gain their opinions about gender-based inequalities at work. Sixty five percent of the male participants were age 40 or older with advanced educations beyond high school and 45% had more than 10 years of experience. Seventy six percent were married or in long-term relationships and 52% had children living at home. Seventy six percent had higher pay than their
partners with 56% of their partners working full-time. The Bergman, Larsman, and Löve (2014, p. 203) study found that the “existing socioeconomic structure is powerful in modeling the gender roles: the man being the provider of the family and the woman the caregiver as ‘taught by family, parents, grandparents and society’.” Respondents also believed men and women displayed different styles of behavior with men finding it easier to understand other men because of the differences in male and female ‘thinking’ (Bergman et al., 2014).

The Bergman study identified issues with benevolent sexism, where men’s attitudes toward gender were discriminating, but hard to detect. Sandberg and Scovell (2013, p. 153) defined benevolent sexists as men in traditional marriages that are not overtly hostile toward women, but hold positive, yet outdated views about women. Those men may even hold unconscious beliefs “that women have superior strengths in certain areas like moral reasoning, which makes them better equipped to raise children – and perhaps less equipped to succeed in business.”

The Bergman et al. (2014) study showed men have different, often invisible, gender expectations in life priorities grounded in societal norms and when situations work out differently for the two genders, it is due to choices rather than structural problems. Men were conscious of societies’ views that parenthood was an obstacle principally for the working woman because the mother had primary responsibility for housework and children.

Interestingly, men also believed in “the importance of changing the predominant hierarchy of power according to gender and the problematic situation for women in the workplace.” The studies’ ultimate finding was that gender-based problems in management are not solved and there is need to uncover, highlight, and correct hidden aspects in gender management to bring about gender equality in the workplace (Bergman et al., 2014, p. 205).
Though researchers commonly agreed social culture disadvantaged women, their beliefs in the origins of cause and recommended approaches to correcting those disparities were widely varied. A study published in *World Politics* in January 2013 implied economic development was the key to gender equality. Eastin and Prakash (2013, p. 157) built on the premise that “outside employment provides women with an independent revenue stream, facilitates human capital development, and strengthens their domestic bargaining power, which in turn should undermine patriarchal social structures.” The study claimed development effects on gender equality should resemble an S-shape and proceed along a mostly positive slope in three stages.

In stage one, labor force participation enhances female domestic bargaining power and gives women greater social and economic visibility. Some patriarchal institutions will recognize women’s empowerment and attempt to roll it back. As a result, stage two is a plateau or a possible decline in gender equality. Further increases in economic development can generate new momentum in gender norms and social institutions and enable women to continue building on previous progress. In the third stage, “education and human capital development and the concomitant high opportunity costs of female labor-force abstinence encourage greater labor-force participation and greater acceptance of women in positions of authority” (Eastin & Prakash, 2013, p. 160). The researchers claimed economic growth affords women an independent income stream and provides them with the social and economic visibility necessary for them to accumulate the human capital necessary to create a demand for change (Eastin and Prakash, 2013).

White and Gardner (2009) suggested a different approach altogether for breaking societal gender stereotypes. Their research suggested gender stereotypes cannot be unlearned, so women who work in male-dominated organizations should act counter-stereotypical to change their self-
They further suggested in addition to thinking and behaving counter-stereotypical, women should try seeing themselves through the eyes of their less prejudiced colleagues and avoid internalizing the perspectives of their more prejudiced colleagues. When women find themselves thinking ‘women are warm’ they should think women are competent as well (White & Gardner, 2009).

Sandberg and Scovell (2013, p. 91) countered White’s argument stating that “true leadership stems from individuality that is honestly and sometimes imperfectly expressed.” Leaders should strive for authenticity over perfection. Women should not attempt to come across as more stereotypically male, but instead, follow their emotional instincts while seeking and speaking the truth.

**Biases**

Heim, Hughes, and Golant (2015) suggested as a society we subconsciously give power to men and take power from women due to deeply engrained, hidden stereotypes shared by both genders. To illustrate her claim, Heim shared a story about her regular travels with a male colleague. When she and her male colleague boarded a plane, it was not unusual for the flight attendant, normally female, to glance at their names on the roster and automatically refer to the male colleague as “Dr. Heim”. If there was only one doctor between them, clearly it had to be the male (Heim et al., 2015).

Heim’s research proposes those stereotypes stem from childhood conditioning where “boys learn to be sturdy, independent, active, assertive, aggressive, and unemotional” and girls are “taught to be fragile, dependent, compliant, cooperative, and nurturing”, so we learn to give power to the ‘sturdy’ boys and take power from the ‘fragile’ girls (Heim et al., 2015, p. 23).
Wilson (2004, p. 60) stated, “When boys are mean, they are expressing their power; when girls are mean, they are expressing their lack of power”. Following years of conditioning, adults naturally give power to men and take it from women. Eagly and Carli (2007) also discussed the hidden stereotypes that ultimately lead to discrimination against women. Their research cited a number of social science experiments that showed hiring biases with anti-female, or more appropriately labeled, pro-male prejudices.

Those experiments revealed men were advantaged over equivalent women for jobs traditionally held by men, as well as jobs considered gender-integrated. The studies showed male leaders were more favorably evaluated than equivalent female leaders and women’s success was usually ascribed to hard work rather than ability and their failures were attributed to being overwhelmed by the difficulty of the work (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

To further illustrate the Eagly and Carli (2007) findings, Sandberg and Scovell (2013) shared another study conducted by Flynn and Anderson to test perceptions of men and women in the workplace. These researchers selected a Harvard Business Review case study about real-life entrepreneur, Heidi Roizen. The case detailed Ms. Roizen’s climb to success as an outgoing and vastly networked venture capitalist (Flynn & Anderson, 2003).

In an experiment, the Flynn and Anderson changed “Heidi” to “Howard” in half the cases with all other information remaining the same. Interestingly, the respondents found Heidi and Howard equally competent, but Howard was a more appealing colleague. Heidi was seen as selfish and not the kind of person respondents would want to hire or work for. In this study, gender alone, “created vastly different impressions” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 40).

To investigate male and female impressions, the Pew Research Center (2015) conducted a study to explore public attitudes about gender and leadership with a particular focus on
leadership in U.S. politics and business. Pew collected data from two sample populations for the study; the first was an online survey that included 1,835 respondents, 921 women and 914 men age 18 or older. The second sample population included 1,004 adults, 511 women and 493 men, who were phone interviewed (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Analysis showed the majority of respondents believed women were as capable of being good political and business leaders as men, but women were underrepresented in political and business leadership positions due to a double standard for those seeking high positions. Women had to do more than men for the same recognition and credit (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Another similar Pew Research Center study focused on Millennials ages 18 to 32 to determine if they had more positive perceptions and a brighter outlook for resolving gender disparities. Researchers surveyed 2,002 adults, including 810 Millennials and found that despite dramatic gains by women to close the education and workforce participation gaps, young women still viewed this as a man’s world. The results showed 51% percent of young women as opposed to 55% of their older colleagues believed society favored men over women. Millennials believed women are paid less than men for the same work and that it is easier for men to get top executive positions. Millennial women also believed it will be harder for them to advance in their careers when they have children (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Social biases that favor men permeate organizational cultures and produce significant workforce disadvantages for women. Though numerous laws, regulations, and policies are closely monitored to ensure workplace equality, the elusive and concealed nature of gender discrimination makes enforcement ineffectual except for obvious violations. Evidence shows it is impossible to regulate hidden biases that lead to blind prejudices and hugely difficult to identify the subtle forms of discrimination that result. Similar to social culture, the literature
revealed widely dispersed views and recommendations for correcting organizational disparities in gender equality.

The U.S. Federal Government is heavily regulated and closely monitored by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information (U.S. EEOC, 2016, p. 1).

In spite of their intense focus and high level of effort and enforcement, the U.S. Government struggles along with private industry to ensure equality in the workplace. Wynen, Beeck, and Ruebens (2015) conducted a study to analyze U.S. Federal employee perceptions of career opportunities between men and women within the Federal Government. The researchers collected a random sample of 20,000 surveys from more than 598,000 Federal Employee Viewpoint Surveys administered in two annual cycles.

They found women are less satisfied than men over their opportunities and their satisfaction level is not improving with time. The researchers also determined stereotypes are not quickly changed, even in the wake of changing social influences, and disparities between men and women on career opportunities continue. As a result, they suggested “better enforcement of existing laws and regulations as well as stronger laws can help in gradually changing these gender stereotypes.” They also recommended government organizations encourage employee training and place stronger emphasis on fair performance appraisals (Wynen et al., 2015, p. 392).
The U.S. Intelligence Community (I.C.) is a large Federal organization actively pursuing gender equality. An April 2016 Congressional Research Service Report, prepared by Anne Miles, identified eight cross-cutting management issues that affect the I.C.’s ability to counter “pervasive and emerging” threats to the United States (2016, Summary). Diversity of the workforce was one of the eight issues identified as recurring in intelligence-related legislation and I.C. policy directives over the past decade. The study found agency directors believe strongly that “greater diversity leads to a greater chance for ‘mission success’ by decreasing the impact of shared, common biases” (Miles, 2016, p. 15). Women have been critical members of the I.C. with active roles in the U.S. intelligence mission since the Revolutionary War. Their key contributions, however, have not earned them the same advancement opportunities as their male counterparts (Martin, 2015).

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), one of seventeen institutions comprising the I.C., is focused intently on diversity issues and conducted a 2013 study specifically to improve gender equality within the Agency. Concerned over low female representation at the executive level, known as the Senior Intelligence Service (SIS), the CIA Director assembled the Director’s Action Group (DAG); a team of senior researchers headed by Dr. Madeleine Albright. The Director tasked the DAG to identify problem areas affecting women’s advancement within the CIA and make recommendations to improve equality and effectively increase the number of women in SIS positions (Albright & Director's Advisory Group, 2013).

The DAG undertook a research-driven approach to address low female promotion rates and after careful analysis, the DAG recommended ten organizational changes they were confident would “enable CIA to reap the full benefit of its talented workforce—both men and women—in order to meet an increasingly complex and challenging mission” (Albright et al., 2013).
The CIA implemented those changes and they carefully measure and report annual progress to the CIA Director (Albright et al., 2013).

Alonso-Almeida (2014), Peterson and Wiens-Tuers (2014), and Eagly and Carli (2007) came to similar conclusions as the DAG. All four studies agreed organizational policy changes were necessary to give women more flexibility in resolving conflicting family-work schedules. Pregnancy and childcare issues were noted factors affecting women’s advancement opportunities and all argued organizations have an obligation to resolve those significant issues with formal policy revisions as an initial step toward gender equality.

Cunningham-Parmeter (2015) suggested a particular organizational change policy that works in Sweden would also be effective in the U.S. In 1995, Sweden started giving an additional month of family leave bonuses if fathers utilized thirty days of paid leave reserved exclusively for them to stay home with young children. Soon after ‘daddy month’ became law, the percentage of men staying home during their children’s first two years increased from 40% to 75%. Sweden added a second bonus month in 2002 and by 2006 the proportion of fathers taking family leave jumped to 90%. Those bonus incentives also drove a decrease in mother’s leave by an average of 20 days (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2015).

Rehel (2013) expanded on that argument stating by drawing fathers into the daily childcare routine, free of workplace constraints, it helps them develop parenting skills and a sense of responsibility that allows them to be active co-parents rather than mother helpers. Both studies argued that more co-parenting creates the opportunity for gender equality in the workplace through a shared division of labor.

Taking a different approach, Perrault (2015) argued more female representation on corporate boards is another important aspect for attaining gender equality. She claimed by
breaking up all-male ‘old boys’ networks through real and symbolic representations “women enhance perceptions of the board’s instrumental, relational, and moral legitimacy, leading to increased perceptions of the board’s trustworthiness which in turn fosters shareholders’ trust in the firm” Perrault (2015, p. 149). The researcher also found the network representatives interviewed for their study generally opposed any form of regulation mandating gender quotas on boards, but instead, proposed using novel and applicable strategies for increasing female representation.

Carter, Franco, and Gine (2017) came to a similar conclusion, that the lack of gender diversity on corporate boards affects the size of the executive gender pay gap. The Carter et al. findings aligned with de Vries (2015), who claimed male champions are necessary to bring about gender equality changes. Her research showed well-positioned, powerful men have the influence required to lead gender change much as they lead any other business-driven change agenda.

Aligned with the DAG’s recommendation to promote sponsorship (Albright et al., 2013), Sandberg and Scovell (2013) stated that, “mentorship and sponsorship are crucial for career progression. Both men and women with sponsors are more likely to ask for stretch assignments and pay raises than their peers of the same gender without sponsorship” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 66). However, men and women do not seek sponsorship at the same rate, with men acquiring and maintaining those relationships more easily and freely than women. Sandberg goes on to explain how critical the matching process is between mentor and mentee and when done correctly, everybody flourishes from a reciprocal relationship (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

Stereotypes (Choices)

Women may feel overwhelmed or diminished by the difficulties associated with trying to change social and organizational cultures, but family culture is an area where they should feel
more in control. Unfortunately, the literature provided evidence to the contrary. A Pew Research Center study conducted in 2015 examined how working parents share responsibilities for raising children and running a household.

The study surveyed 1,807 U.S. parents with children under age 18. In 2015 in two-parent households, 46% had both parents working full-time; up from 31% in 1970. Only 26% had a father who worked full-time and a mother who did not work outside the home; down from 46% in 1970. The report showed 59% shared household responsibilities equally, but 54% of the mothers did more to manage the children’s schedules and activities. Those households were mostly balanced on career priorities with 62% reporting equal priority between the two careers; 22% giving priority to the father’s career, and 15% giving priority to the mother’s career (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Among both parents, 56% said it was difficult to balance job and family responsibilities, while 59% reported being a parent did not impact their career advancement. For fathers, 66% said there was no career impact while 20% reported interference in career advancement. For mothers, 51% said there was no career impact while 41% reported interference in career advancement (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Household earnings indicated that 50% of fathers earned more, 22% of mothers earned more, and 26% reported that mothers and fathers earned roughly equal income. The overall results showed even in households where both parents work full-time, a large share of the day-to-day parenting responsibilities rested on the mother, while fathers experienced less career impact due to family responsibilities, and enjoyed higher incomes (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Eagly and Carli (2007) found similar results with women’s domestic work far exceeding that of men’s. Their study revealed women spend more time doing housework, caring for
children, making appointments for other family members, caring for old or sick family members, and arranging children’s activities. “Even women world leaders at the top of their professions in government and business perform more childcare than their male counterparts” (Eagly et al., 2007, p. 51).

To help explain the impact of these inequalities, Livingstone, Pollock, and Raykov (2016) argued the “glass ceiling” maintained by men, coupled with women’s primary responsibilities for household work, remain major obstacles to equitable promotions. They stated, “family responsibilities have consistently been among the most important promotion barriers commonly identified by women in senior management” and “virtually all in-depth studies of household relations have found that the domestic duties of women in heterosexual couples take significantly more time and energy than the domestic tasks assumed by men” Livingstone et al. (2016, p. 148). Using data from the entire Canadian adult population collected in three annual surveys, Livingstone et al. (2016) conclude that for women to gain equality in the workplace there must be reforms in job structure, alternative work-time arrangements for women and men, and gender equality fostering at home.

Sandberg and Scovell (2013) found 43% of highly qualified women with children leave careers or ‘off-ramp’ for a period of time. Sandberg said the single most important career decision a woman makes is her choice of a life partner. She supported her claim stating “I don’t know of one woman in a leadership position whose life partner is not fully – and I mean fully – supportive of her career. No exceptions” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 110).

Sandberg also challenged the popular notion that only unmarried women can make it to the top in the business world and shared that the majority of successful female business leaders have partners. She said of 28 women who served as CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, 26 were
married, one was divorced, and one had never married. Those former CEOs attribute much of their success to their husband’s help with children and household chores, and willingness to move. “Not surprisingly, a lack of spousal support can have the opposite effect on a career” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 110).

Eagly and Carli (2007) agreed with Sandberg but challenged the long entrenched ‘glass ceiling’ idea held by Livingstone et al. (2016) and many others. They argued women no longer face inflexible limits that block their workplace advancement opportunities. Instead, women face a labyrinth of varied challenges and indirect paths on their way to leadership positions. Contributing to those challenges are the choices women make while traveling those indirect paths.

Datta, Guha, and Iskandar-Datta (2013) found women chose to forgo higher compensation for family-friendly factors such as location stability, and they were less likely than men to jump to other firms. Results from Ezzedeen, Budworth, and Baker (2015) showed barrier perceptions shaped women’s career choices and that women fit career interests to gender expectation. Sandberg and Scovell (2013) used evidence from a 2007 survey of Harvard Business School alumni to illustrate the impact of women’s choices. In that study, men’s rates of full-time employment never fell below 91%, while only 81% of women who graduated in the 2000s and 49% of women who graduated in the 1990s were still working full-time. Of Yale alumni who reached their forties by 2000, 56% of women remained in the workforce as opposed to 90% of men.

Sandberg also made an interesting argument that women’s personal choices are not always as personal as they appear and are “influenced by social conventions, peer pressure, and familial expectations. On top of these forces, women who can afford to drop out of the
workplace often receive not just permission but encouragement to do so from all directions” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 100). Women do not want to appear to put families above careers and will overwork to overcompensate. Even in organizations that offer reduced or flextime arrangements, women fear that reducing their hours will jeopardize their career prospects. Faced with that work-family dilemma, many women choose to exit the workforce permanently or ‘off-ramp’ for an extended period to care for children and tend to family responsibilities (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

The research is consistent that U.S. sociological factors heavily disadvantage women. Men and women hold differing views, attitudes, and labels for the two genders; and they interact differently with one another, especially in the workplace. Though most study respondents believe that they treat men and women equally and likely take pride in their views and associated actions, evidence is clear, neither men nor women view or treat the two genders equally.

The Cleaver’s gender specific expectations of the 1950s and 60s are socially unacceptable in today’s progressive society. The literature, however, shows both male and female Americans hold more closely to Ward and June Cleaver’s views than they would believe or admit. People are often blind to their own prejudices and though they may truly want to treat others equally, they cannot easily escape the lifelong conditioning and influences that surreptitiously flow from one generation to the next. Much more research is needed to help individuals identify and understand their hidden biases and assist society in overcoming these deeply engrained issues without destroying the positive aspects of gender identity.
Psychological Factors

In addition to the complicated network of sociological influences, an individual’s psychological makeup is likely infinitely more complex and impactful. A host of instincts and ever-changing hormones and emotions combine to drive moods, choices, desires, attitudes, and perceptions that impact decisions, relationships, and interactions with others.

This psychological factors section of this study examines 26 published works to explore a variety of male and female mental processes and behaviors that potentially influence work relations and career progression. It predominately explores the impact of emotions and competitive nature on career advancement opportunities. Specifically, it examines the complex array of gender specific behaviors such as personal interactions, emotional reactions, choices, attitudes, desires, perceptions, performance, confidence, and competitive nature as they relate to the work environment.

Emotions and Attitudes

In general terms, the means by which men and women react to their emotions is drastically different. From birth males and females are programmed to respond differently to their emotions. Young boys are taught not to cry or react openly to hurt feelings. Young girls are encouraged to connect with their emotions and crying is an accepted and expected outlet for emotions (Heim et al., 2015). Wilson’s research (2004, p. 102) claims by programming our children in this manner we force them to “hack off emotional limbs”. Boys are expected to suppress their caring side and softer emotions; while girls maintain relational sensitivities but are ultimately marginalized for those emotional sensitivities (Wilson, 2004).

Benenson (2014) took this emotional programming back to an evolutionary human gene. She concluded men’s basic instinct is to fight the enemy to protect his offspring; whereas
women’s basic instinct is to protect her offspring by protecting herself. Since men and women have genes designed to confront different problems their fears and emotions evolved differently. Men primarily fear the enemy and women primarily fear for the wellbeing of their children (Benenson, 2014; Heim et al., 2015). Those genetic differences, coupled with the swirl of hormonal changes women experience regularly, create vastly different emotional dynamics in the male and female brains (Benenson, 2014).

According to Kay and Shipman (2014), women are keenly aware of everything happening around them, all of which becomes part of their cognitive stew. Women also process information differently; they see, smell, and sense danger more readily and have developed broader peripheral vision as a result (Heim et al., 2015). Different emotional dynamics lead to different outlooks and expectations for, and from, males and females. Women’s words and emotions are closely tied and any inability to verbalize the feelings associated with a significant emotional event causes stress. Men feel words change nothing and wonder why women continue to belabor a point (Heim et al., 2015).

In addition to talking through their emotions, crying is another emotional release most common in women. Men are conditioned to believe an emotional display is a sign of weakness, so they generally fear crying in public (Heim et al., 2015). Women understand their tendencies to verbalize and display emotions, especially when upset; but there are differing views amongst women researchers on the appropriateness of crying in the workplace.

Frankel (2015) takes a different approach and states that crying is a way that women show they are thin-skinned (Frankel, 2015). Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer (COO), Sheryl Sandberg, agrees crying at work is not a good idea, but admits to tear-filled eyes on rare occasion when she was overly frustrated or felt betrayed. Sandberg also believes sharing emotions builds
deeper relationships and the men and women who recognize the role emotions play and are willing to discuss them makes them better managers, partners, and peers (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

The literature reviewed for this study revealed the female nurturing instinct as another common discussion item when exploring female emotions (Benenson, 2014; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Heim & Murphy, 2003; Kay & Shipman, 2014). The literature is consistent that, in general, women nurture. Benenson (2014) argued the female nurturing instinct is programmed within women’s genes because they bear sole responsibility for the survival of their offspring, at least until weaned, and constantly worry about the child’s wellbeing. Consequently, women are guided by their genes to worry, even when there is no reason for serious concern (Benenson, 2014). Women’s deep programming to care for their children is strong and it transcends bloodline boundaries. Women have, “communal associations of being especially affectionate, helpful, friendly, kind, and sympathetic as well as interpersonally sensitive, gentle, and soft-spoken” where men are viewed as agentic, “aggressive, ambitious, dominant, self-confident, and forceful as well as self-reliant and individualistic” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 86).

For women, those communal associations evolve into relationships that form the critical elements of their daily lives, and they become central to their business dealings. According to the Heim and Murphy research, with relationships forming the basis of their social interactions, women judge and care for others based on their innate qualities rather than their corporate or hierarchical position. Therefore, women tend to think relationally, where men think hierarchically (Heim & Murphy, 2003). As a result, female executives, more than males, adopt collaborative leadership styles to share information and involve others in the decision-making process. They want colleagues to make their work fulfilling and enjoyable to maximize
productivity. Women pay attention to emotional issues in the workplace and make a concerted effort to get along with their female colleagues. They openly share feelings and use heartfelt empathy to ease hurt feelings and mitigate difficult situations (Heim & Murphy, 2003).

The expectation for a highly communal (warm, affectionate, friendly, and sympathetic) female leader creates a double bind for women. The socially-focused communal female leader may be criticized for not being agentic enough (aggressive, ambitious, self-confident, and forceful) whereas the agentic focused female leader may be criticized for not being communal enough. The double bind penalizes women, “by denying them the full benefits of being warm and considerate” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 102). The desired female traits of being self-sacrificing, helpful, and supportive bring approval, but, “they do not produce respect for women as authorities and leaders” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 102). Thus, warmth and selflessness are ideally suited for homemakers, nurses, and teachers; not senior level leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Monzani, Bark, Dick, and Peiró (2014) confirmed the Eagly and Carli (2007) findings that female managers do face a double bind or double standard, and that this is due to inconsistencies between the female gender role (communal) and the leadership role (agentic) which could possibly lead to a lower organizational identity and lower authentic leadership behavior.

The Monzani research found authentic leadership is an important determinant of a leader’s organizational identity, but women are disadvantaged for showing authentic leadership due to the gender-leader role incongruence. Women who perceived themselves more as the prototypical leader reduce the detrimental effects of that incongruity. This implies women leaders who are self-confident allure confidence from others (Monzani et al., 2014).
Confidence

According to Kay and Shipman, for women to develop enduring confidence on par with men’s self-assurance, they need to “toughen up, to shake off the warm and fuzzy image” (2014, p. 121). Their research shows parenting over the last twenty years, based on the self-esteem movement, is misguided and creating an abundance of flimsy self-esteem and low confidence. Because children are rewarded for everything instead of genuine accomplishment, girls especially develop false confidence and hollow self-esteem.

Kay and Shipman (2014) also argued that by indulging children who have done little to deserve praise, parents prevent their offspring from losing, failing, or risking. Those sheltered children fail to develop the skills and fortitude necessary to face and overcome life’s trials and tribulations. Eventually, they leave their overly protective home environment and the realities of “the big, cold world of work” intervene (Kay & Shipman, 2014, p. 122). The researchers also claim this coddled generation, with their inflated sense of entitlement and unrealistic views of their own abilities, crumbles quickly under the pressures of the business world. Women of this generation are particularly sensitive to their weaknesses and failures and struggle more than men to recover from adversity. Female confidence levels lag those of their male counterparts (Kay & Shipman, 2014).

Kay and Shipman extensively researched confidence traits to understand the origins and impact on male and female genders. They found women are in ‘alarmingly short supply’ of confidence, especially in the workplace, yet the reasons for this imbalance elude them. Women’s abilities to meet challenges and succeed consistently equal those of men, but women do not believe in their abilities to succeed at the same level as men. Women focus so intently on getting everything right and so fear failure, they will not take risks to reach the next level (Kay &
Shipman, 2014). Risk aversion can cause women to be more reluctant to take on challenging tasks. Carter et al. (2017) attributed risk aversion as one substantial contributing factor to significant salary and compensation gaps between male and female executives in S&P 1500 companies.

Men look for stretch assignments and high-visibility projects, while women avoid such challenges worrying they may not have the skills needed for the new role (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013). Before moving to Facebook, in six and a half years at Google, Sheryl Sandberg hired 4,000 employees. When she announced the opening of a new office or the launch of a new project, men quickly approached her to explain why they should be selected. She found men to be impatient about their own development and believing they were capable of more. To the contrary, women were cautious about changing roles and seeking new challenges and she found herself on countless occasions trying to persuade them to work in new areas. Sandberg also found men, more than women, focus on how to manage a business, where women focus on how to manage a career. Men want answers and women want permission and help (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

While studying business school students, Babcock and Laschever (2003) found men negotiated salaries at four times the rate of women, and when women did negotiate, they asked for 30% less than men. Kay and Shipman (2014) attributed women’s reluctance to negotiate to lower levels of confidence when compared to men. Cotton, McIntyre, and Price (2015) compared predictions developed through their game theory model to the results of two empirical studies where 373 randomly selected male and female participants competed in contests to solve math problems and mazes as quickly as possible. The researchers found males were better than
females at handling competitive pressure and enjoy competition more. Female under-confidence and higher risk aversion gave males an advantage during competition (Cotton et al., 2015).

Another empirical study completed by Hargittai and Shafer (2006) collected data from a random sample of 100 diverse internet users on web-use experiences and online skills using surveys and in-person observations. They found men and women did not differ significantly in their online abilities, but women’s self-assessed skills were significantly lower than men’s. Because women undervalued their self-perceived skill levels, they were less likely to take advantage of life’s changing opportunities. During their research on the confidence gap, Kay and Shipman found a number of male executives enormously frustrated with the women they supervised. The executives saw tremendous merit-based potential in the women, but those very capable women allowed low confidence to hold them back. Unfortunately, the executives said nothing to those women for fear of sounding sexist (Kay & Shipman, 2014).

Following more than two decades of research, Dr. Pat Heim determined women’s confidence deficit is a result of their upbringing and competitive conditioning (Heim et al., 2015). According to psychologists Thomas and Kilmann (2010) there are five basic behaviors people use to settle disputes: accommodation, avoidance, compromise, collaboration, and competition.

To better understanding the influence of gender conflict resolution in the workplace, Thomas, Thomas, and Schaubhut (2008) conducted an empirical study of 2,400 participants to examine the way conflict styles vary by gender at six different organizational leadership levels. They randomly selected 200 men and 200 women from each of six organizational levels – from entry level to top executive. They used data from a national data base on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) collected over a three-year period from 2002 to 2005. Using an
ANOVA with a Bonferroni test for pairwise comparison to statistically analyze their data, the researchers found men scored moderately higher than women on competing; women equaled men on collaborating; and women scored higher than men on compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Those substantial gender differences were consistent across all six organizational levels of leadership (Thomas et al., 2008).

**Competitive Nature**

In an investigation of gender differences, the Heim research team found boys learn to resolve conflict differently than girls through their upbringing and childhood games. Boys most often resolve disputes by competing in goal-oriented games bound by time limits. Boys are out to destroy their opponent on the field; but when a winner is declared, they accept the outcome and move on. As a result, boys learn to separate their feelings about their opponent from the behavior displayed in the game, and as Heim noted, two fierce rivals on the field are immediately best friends after the game (Heim et al., 2015).

As boys develop into men, they regard business as simply another game in which a winner will be declared. Their goal-oriented development conditions them to compartmentalize feelings and tasks, and “use conversation to convey information, make points, reach objectives, give instructions, and expound on their view(s)” (Heim et al., 2015, p. 201). As a result, men are most often motivated by external rewards, money, and status. They want to outmaneuver, outsmart, and outperform their opponent; winning at all costs and bragging about their exploits (Heim et al., 2015).

Unlike boys, girls negotiate to preserve relationships and will eagerly choose any of the other four behaviors identified in the Thomas-Kilmann study (accommodation, avoidance, compromise, collaboration) over competition to avoid a head-on confrontation. They play games
with no time limits and place strong emphasis on getting along and playing nicely together. Girls also focus on the interpersonal process of building intimate relationships and view competition and conflict as potentially damaging to the interpersonal process. During play activities, there are no winners or losers and the game is never over (Heim et al., 2015).

Women view their work as an integral part of their personal lives and they do not compartmentalize the different aspects of their lives. What happens at work impacts the woman’s home-life and carries over into the future. Women talk to establish closeness and friendships, validate feelings, share intimate details of their lives, and build rapport. They are normally motivated by internal gratification and win by doing a perfect job and keeping relationships intact. There is no game to win and no need to brag (Heim et al., 2015).

Those innate and vast gender differences are difficult to understand, but they naturally affect all aspects of the work environment and substantially impact male and female career advancement opportunities. Kay and Shipman attempted to understand the origins of those deeply ingrained gender traits by researching studies on neurotransmitters and chemical reactions in the brain to determine if men have a genetic advantage over women. After studying the effects of serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine on the brain, they determined that the influence of nurture on nature is really what makes people who they are (Kay & Shipman, 2014).

Nurture is so powerful it can alter nature’s original programming and turn certain genes on or off (Kay & Shipman, 2014). The power of habitual thinking (nurture) creates physical changes and new neural pathways in the brain, which can reinforce and even override genetics and change brain chemistry (nature). The researchers concluded the choices people make in life matter as much, if not more so, than what they are born with. They stated a watershed moment for them during their extensive research was when they began to understand the promise of brain
plasticity. Plasticity is the cornerstone of the idea that confidence, like most emotional feelings, is a choice; thus, women can alter their brain makeup and develop permanent, solid confidence with the right training and practice (Kay & Shipman, 2014).

**Performance**

Because women’s confidence levels and competitive desires can differ significantly from their male counterparts, the next question is how those differing traits actually impact competitive based performance? The Barnett et al. (1998), Gneezy et al. (2001), Cotton et al. (2015), and Monzani et al. (2014) published studies were consistent in their findings that there is a gender performance imbalance with men generally outperforming women.

Barnett, Carr, Boisnier, Ash, Friedman, Moskowitz, and Szalacha (1998) conducted a regression analysis to evaluate the relationships between internal and external career-motivating factors on academic productivity. Internal or intrinsic career motivation was defined as a view that work is chiefly an end to itself. External or extrinsic career motivation was defined as an emphasis for rewards obtained for work, rather than gratification derived from work. The researchers randomly selected 24 U.S. medical schools and collected data on 1,764 faculty participants.

The Barnett researchers’ main findings were that intrinsic career motivation was positively associated, and extrinsic career motivation was negatively associated with the number of publications. Female faculty members published less than their male colleagues after controlling for the internal-external career motivation, but the differing publication rates could not be accounted for strictly by gender. The researchers determined other outside factors such as institutional support, family obligations, harassment, and others could affect academic productivity. Barnette concluded that additional research is needed in those areas to identify and
comprehend the extent of impact outside influences have on women’s performance levels (Barnett et al., 1998).

The Cotton et al. (2015) study, previously discussed in the confidence section of this literature review, is relevant to the gender performance discussion as well. The Cotton researchers compared the results of two empirical studies that included a total of 373 participants to predictions developed through their game theory model. Two hundred fifty-three participants competed to solve math problems as quickly and accurately as possible and 120 competed to solve mazes as quickly as possible.

In Cotton’s study comparisons, that totaled 196 males and 177 females, the game theory model found perfect matches with observed performance patterns. In those observations, males were better than females at handling competitive pressure, and males enjoyed competition more and had a greater desire to win than females. Female under-confidence and higher risk aversion gave males an advantage during competition; though their data failed to show established orderings to predict performance patterns (Cotton et al., 2015).

Based on the empirical data analysis in those two studies, which perfectly aligned with the predictions of the game theory model, the Cotton researchers concluded policy makers should recognize performance differences in competitive settings are unlikely due to misperceptions about abilities; and therefore, policies aimed at eliminating stereotypes are unlikely to reduce performance differences. The Cotton team also suggested that, “more effective policies may aim to give females greater exposure to competitive environments at earlier ages, with the intention of improving their ability to deal with the pressures of competition” (Cotton et al., 2015, p. 63).
Gneezy, Niederle, and Rustichini (2001) developed a controlled experiment to precisely measure gender performance that exclude discrimination or any perception of discrimination. The Gneezy et al. (2001) researchers first noted that prior studies attempting to explain the earnings gender gap in high profile jobs focused mainly on two broad areas: gender differences in abilities and preferences, and discrimination in the workplace leading to differential treatment. These researchers proposed an alternative explanation “that women and men differ in their ability or propensity to perform in environments in which they have to compete against one another” (Gneezy et al., 2001, p. 2).

To test their alternative explanation, the Gneezy researchers held a succession of competitive tournaments with 30 male and 30 female participants. The series of competitions included small mixed groups of three males and three females, or single gender groups of six males or six females who solved a sequence of computerized mazes (Gneezy et al., 2001).

In the first experimental event, participants competed only against the clock to solve as many mazes as possible and the results showed no significant difference in gender performance (Gneezy et al., 2001). In the second event, the rules were changed to a mixed gender tournament where all participants competed against one another to solve the largest number of mazes. In that situation, women’s performance was unchanged, but men’s performance significantly increased. As a result, men greatly outperformed women. In the third event, the rules were changed to a single sex tournament where the men and women competed only against their own gender. That resulted in an overall increase in women’s performance with men’s groups only slightly outperforming women’s groups. Based on those findings, the Gneezy researchers concluded there is an emotional barrier that affects women’s performance when they compete against men (Gneezy et al., 2001).
Relating to gender performance, the Monzani et al. (2014) study, previously included in the double bind communal, agentic discussion of the emotions and attitudes section has additional relevance in this discussion. The Monzani researchers found male managers to be more authentic leaders, identifying more with their organizations, and thus outperforming female managers. Some viewed those findings as an unfair assessment because women managers face a double bind and are penalized for being too communal or too agentic; but, those who perceived themselves more as prototypical leaders reduced the detrimental effects of that incongruity. The Monzani study alludes women leaders who are self-confident allure confidence from others, and are essentially in control of the double bind predicament with the power to break the stereotype (Monzani et al., 2014).

According to Kay and Shipman (2014), female managers have the ability to train and rewire their own brains in accordance with the plasticity discussion. Therefore, female managers who ‘choose’ to be more prototypical will become more authentic leaders and identify more closely with their organizations. Through choice, women managers can ultimately close that portion of the managerial gender performance gap themselves.

The literature is consistent that women’s competitive nature, confidence, and performance are negatively impacted when they compete against men. This evidence is significant when exploring factors impacting women’s advancement opportunities in the workplace and provides some insight on how those psychological barriers impact progress in achieving workplace equality.

**Interactions and Desires**

The literature highlights another substantial psychological factor that strongly impacts women’s career advancement opportunities. Due to the lack of consistent terminology, the
researcher refers to this factor as ‘competition leveling’. In simple terms, competition leveling occurs when a single female rises above her female peer group and the peer group rallies to pull her back down to the group level.

Heim and Murphy (2003) extensively researched this topic and provided essential insight. In their research, the competition leveling foundation is best explained using their ‘Golden Triangle’ concept. The Golden Triangle is a complex and interconnected array of relationships, power, and self-esteem; and all three elements are essential to women’s happiness.

According to Heim and Murphy (2003), relationships are explained as connections with friends, family, and colleagues; all crucial to women’s well-being because relationships help define them. Heim states that power is a woman’s external force that takes on many forms: work title, relationship with authority figures, physical attractiveness, net worth, husband/partner status, clothes, sense of humor, personality, and other tangible and observable factors. Self-esteem is a woman’s internal power represented by feelings of inner strength and self-worth. The Heim researchers referred to the female need to keep the three legs of the Golden Triangle equally balanced as the ‘Power Dead-Even Rule’. Heim and Murphy (2003) argued any imbalance in relationships, power, or self-esteem violates the Power Dead-Even Rule and negatively impacts the woman’s happiness.

For two or more women to maintain positive relationships, there cannot be an imbalance or even the perception of an imbalance of the Golden Triangle. When a female co-worker gains power, or is perceived as trying to gain more power, balance is tipped on the Golden Triangle and conflict normally ensues. Because women are conditioned to play nice, the conflict usually evolves through passive-aggressive behavior. Women tend to “stomp off, gossip, snipe, snub, and with-hold friendship instead of confronting” the individual with which they have the issue
(Heim & Murphy, 2003, p. 54). That indirect form of aggression helps the attacker maintain power and self-esteem; but, ironically, their own behavior “is invisible to most women” (Heim & Murphy, 2003, p. 54).

The Benenson (2014) research helps explain the basic instincts and natural conditioning elements that cause women to react differently from men in those situations. The warrior instinct in boys naturally leads them to ‘rough-and-tumbled’ play fighting as part of their preparation for serious future battles. Because there is strength in numbers, boys form loosely organized groups gradually expanding into larger and more integrated networks. Those informal groups and networks develop the characteristics of a formal hierarchical military structure. To stay organized and properly functioning, boys recognize the need for a clear leadership structure. Horizontal group dynamics where everyone has equal input cannot move the group forward or effectively adapt to changes because all members have to agree on the direction of movement and the specifics of change. The competitive instincts in males provide a valuable avenue for selecting leaders and, when a leader is needed, males know immediately who is best suited to assume that role (Benenson, 2014). Boys learn to excel in a rank structure that requires “continual respect, challenge, and renegotiation” (Benenson, 2014, p. 115).

Girls are instinctual caregivers and do not play fight or engage in rough-and-tumbled competitive games. They do not choose friends due to their physical and emotional toughness, nor do they value hierarchical group dynamics. Girls build relationships and mutually share problems and difficulties. They divulge personal vulnerabilities as a sign of honest intent and as insurance against personal attacks (Benenson, 2014).

Girls and women remain friends so long as they are assured others have no intentions of usurping their status. To portray a non-threatening posture, females communicate with
collaborative and inclusive words such as ‘let’s’ and they use questions rather than direct statements to draw consensus from the group. “Commands or insults are forbidden”; and they expect other girls or women to be nice (Benenson, 2014, p. 114).

Because playing nice is so important to maintaining relationships, from early childhood, girls develop competitive “strategies that minimize the risk of retaliation and reduce the strength of other girls” (Benenson, 2013, p. 1). They avoid direct interference with other girl’s goals, and they compete overtly only from a position of high status within the community. Girls enforce communal equality by socially excluding other girls who violate the horizontal structure rules (Benenson, 2013).

Benenson’s research detailed a series of three competitive strategies women tend to follow: In Stage 1, women hide the fact they are competing with other females to reduce the risk of retaliation. Unaware of their own competitive instincts, they try to outmaneuver other females and gain an advantage while insisting everyone share equally. If that fails to achieve the desired outcome, they may switch to Strategy 2, where they ally with other females and employ social exclusion against their target. That overt tactic reduces the risk of retaliation because the target is outnumbered. Strategy 3 is a final emergency or retaliatory strategy used only as a last resort on subjects of vital importance after a woman realizes she has failed with previous strategies. She will turn mean and vindictive, knowing such unacceptable behavior will cause her allies to abandon her. Women who are pushed beyond their limit and attack other women directly in this manner are considered out of control and dangerous. Such women are beyond mean; they are a menace and must be excluded permanently from the community (Benenson, 2013).

The Heim et al. (2015) research found that female executives, when first promoted, are resoundingly attacked by women. The majority of those female executives “experienced former
coworkers, now their direct reports, turning on them, often by making personal comments behind their backs” (Heim et al., 2015, p. 181). The Heim researchers argued that by becoming the boss, those female executives tipped the balance of power and violated the Power Dead-Even Rule. In response to such a violation, female subordinates instinctively attack because “their cattiness is an unconscious attempt to re-flatten the hierarchy” (Heim et al., 2015, p. 181).

Sheryl Sandberg shared a similar example from past experience about the first female Navy officer to join the U.S. Submarine Force. Prior to embarking on her first sea mission, the female officer was prepared for opposition from the all-male crew and worried about the possibility of being discounted. The newly assigned officer was surprised and extremely pleased that from the time she stepped on board, she was respected and accepted as a valued member of the crew. Her troubles started only when she returned to shore and encountered resentment from the Navy wives. Though successful in honorably performing her duties, the officer was shocked to find out that, “the wives of her colleagues pounced and accused her of being a ‘bra-burning feminist out to prove a point.’ They forced her to defend her career choice, reputation, and personal life” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 168). Sandberg says women must rise above such behavior to gain equality. “The gender wars need an immediate and lasting peace. True equality will be achieved only when we all fight the stereotypes that hold us back” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 168).

Dr. Lois Frankel, President of Corporate Coaching International, explained in her seminal research on women in the marketplace that the best way for women to overcome detrimental behavior is to replace ragging with raving to build up the reputation of female colleagues. She suggested women recognize other women’s qualifications and recommend them for promotion or high-profile assignments and stop feeling threatened by other’s opinions. Frankel proposed
starting women’s affinity groups, if not already done, as an internal support mechanism. Lastly, she recommended disengaging from conversations where women gossip about other women; or show even more courage by confronting those spreading gossip and stating the need for them to support other women in the workplace instead of tearing them down (Frankel, 2014).

Heim and Murphy (2003) also advised how a recently selected female leader might avoid, or minimize, attacks from other female coworkers as she assumes her new position of authority. The new female leader should preserve relationships by proving the promotion was genuinely deserved based on merit and reassuring her female colleagues she still values them and respects their opinions. Once a woman establishes herself in a leadership position she must work hard to protect her authority and maintain her position. Research shows women in positions of power over other women are in a precarious situation when they have to exert power. Friendship implies sharing and giving to others, whereas invoking power can result in taking things away and withholding from others. If not handled delicately, this can appear as hostility directed toward subordinate women and may provoke a proverbial ‘catfight’ (Heim & Murphy, 2003).

**Relationships**

Hostility from a female leader, whether real or perceived, is referred to as the Queen Bee Syndrome. A Queen Bee is defined as an alpha female boss who feels threatened by subordinate female counterparts and tries to preserve her own power by obstructing their corporate progression (Ludwig, 2011). Queen Bee Syndrome is widely studied with numerous researchers agreeing it exists, but there is some debate over why it exists and how it manifests. The *Association for Psychological Science* (2011) quoted Joyce Benenson in their published explanation of the origins of the Queen Bee Syndrome. “Preemptive social exclusion appears to be a valuable strategy for women because it allows them to protect their relations by keeping an
outsider at bay” (APS, 2011, p. 1). This is evidence some women leaders continue using
Benenson’s three competitive strategies, previously discussed, as a means of maintaining their
positional power. A preemptive “Strategy 2” strike against a female competitor ensures the
competitor loses the support of her female colleagues and weakens her chances as a potential
challenger (APS, 2011; Benenson et al., 2014).

To contrast Ludwig and Benenson, Ezzedeen et al. (2015, p. 363) found young women
who do not identify with senior women leaders essentially perceive them as “mean, competitive,
and biased toward younger women.” From a sociologic aspect, those same respondents believed
a “glass ceiling” still existed forming a barrier to their ability to advance. Interestingly, they
attributed that barrier to personal limitations such as their lack of ambition and preference for
family over career rather than the result of being stung by a queen bee.

Though those young women may have formed unfair perceptions of their senior female
leaders, the resulting damage was real. Dr. Pat Heim provided evidence to show queen bees do
exist quoting Susan Estrich, who was a published author, law professor, the first female president
of the Harvard Law Review, and well-known Fox News contributor. Heim noted that,

When you talk to women at the very top, it becomes clear that part of their success
is due to convincing men that they aren’t like other women…. Denying their status
as women becomes a reflex. So when they get high up enough – far from making
a difference for the women who come after them – they’re still in the business of
proving to the guys that they’re really not one of the girls (Heim et al., 2003, p. 57).

Aligning with Estrich and Heim, the Derks, Laar, and Ellemers (2016) and Kawakami,
White, and Langer (2000) studies found that female leaders in male-dominated organizations
may feel the need to display masculine characteristics to gain respect and be seen as effective.
Though Derks and Kawakami agreed some women display masculine characteristics, they differed significantly in their views on the social influences driving women’s psychological display.

Kawakami et al. (2000, p. 50) claimed that gender stereotyping women as, “warm, nurturing, and caring” and men as “cold, competitive, and authoritarian” may contribute to the perception that women are less effective than men in leadership positions, when “in fact they are equally effective.” They provided evidence to support their claim that women are naturally genuine leaders and are significantly more favorable as either warm or cool leaders. However, women seen as playing a role with scripted behavior are viewed as disingenuous and unfavorable to all. Those findings aligned with Sheryl Sandberg’s leadership style and may account for some of her incredible leadership success in her rapid rise to her current position as Facebook’s Chief Operating Officer.

In contrast, Derks et al. (2016) found as a consequence of gender discrimination, women were inclined to assimilate and adjust their leadership styles to fit the masculine culture by becoming queen bees. The Derks researchers also stated queen bee behavior is not a natural feminine response but rather “part of a general self-group distancing response” (Derks et al., 2016, p. 1). Queen bees kill off the competition and distance themselves from the group to become stronger. Female leaders who assimilate in that fashion legitimize gender inequality in their organization (Derks et al., 2016).

Sheryl Sandberg’s observations and research align with Derks et al. (2016) findings. In Sandberg and Scovell (2013) she discussed the evolution of the Queen Bee Syndrome since the 1970s. As women began to flourish as leaders in male-dominated industries some became queen bees as a means of self-preservation. “For others, it reflected their coming-of-age in a society
that believed men were superior to women” (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 163). Sandberg argues that as a result,

queen bee behavior was not just a cause of gender discrimination but also a consequence of that discrimination. Queen bees internalized the low status of women and in order to feel worthy themselves wanted only to associate with men. Often, these queen bees were rewarded for maintaining the status quo and not promoting other women (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013, p. 163).

In a 2016 publication, Sandberg admitted queen bees still exist, but contended they are far less common than believed. She went on to say “queen bees aren’t a reason for inequality, but rather a result of inequality” (Sandberg & Grant, 2016, p. 2). Sandberg and Grant found women today are more likely to worry about their standing in male-dominated settings resulting in their reluctance to advocate for other women. A female leader may see another talented woman as a threat if there is only one seat at the table for a woman. She may also view a marginally talented woman as a threat to the feminine cause due to her potential to make women in general look bad. Sandberg stated that regardless of gender, that form of hostility is a natural reaction to discrimination when an individual belongs to a non-dominant group. “Fearing that the group isn’t valued, some members distance themselves from their own kind. They internalize cultural biases and avoid affiliating with groups that are seen as having low status” (Sandberg & Grant, 2016, p. 2).

White & Langer (1999) and White, Schmitt, & Langer (2006) conducted extensive empirical research that supports Sandberg’s findings. Both studies explored how prejudice formulates between members of similar minority groups. The White researchers found that horizontal hostilities normally occur when one minority group perceives the other as becoming
too mainstream and no longer sharing their values and social identity. To disassociate with the mainstream view, one minority group will distance itself from the other minority group.

Irrespective of why the Queen Bee Syndrome exists, or how other women’s hostilities manifest within the business world, prominent researchers and respected business leaders such as Heim, Estrich, and Frankel agree women must stop hurting each other to ever have a chance of gaining workplace equality. Sandberg and Scovell (2013) argue the more women help one another, the more they help themselves. Acting as a coalition will truly produce positive results for all women.

Research shows from a psychological standpoint, women are more complex than men. Genetics, primal instincts, and lifelong conditioning all contribute to an emotional cauldron, men tend to avoid and women themselves find difficult to understand and control. The female nurturing instinct leads to views that women are warm and sensitive caregivers who should follow a specific path in life. Conditioning from birth reinforces those views and instills additional limits and beliefs on women that can manifest as guilt and emerge as low confidence and inferior competitive drive; all of which can affect performance and professional choices.

As with sociological factors, the literature shows psychological factors also greatly disadvantage women in the workplace. Women’s reliance on relationships and innocuous resistance to hierarchical norms can lead to gender specific hostilities that further impact their career progression. That psychological mixture drives a host of interactions, choices, attitudes, desires, and perceptions that feed an unremitting cycle of gender inequalities.
Physiological Factors

Though not as broad or complex as sociological and psychological factors, certain physiological factors can heavily impact an individuals’ career advancement opportunities. This section examines five academic works that explore the physical gender differences potentially impacting women’s career advancement. The most obvious outward physiological elements are likely an individual’s size, stature, and physical appearance. Though size and strength may bear heavily in physically demanding career fields, these elements have less impact in traditional white-collar positions. For the purposes of this study, the physiological section will focus on gender-related elements possibly impacting career advancement in white collar professions. It will specifically explore the challenges and impact of menstruation and pregnancy, child bearing, and child rearing on women’s work experiences and career advancement opportunities.

Hormones

A physiological aspect often ignored and avoided at all costs, particularly by men, is the female menstruation cycle. Because that natural female function is so private, it is unacceptable in most office settings, especially in mixed company, to openly discuss the physical impact on the female body. Heim et al. (2015) suggests women avoid any references to menstruation in the company of male colleagues because men simply cannot handle the discussion. The reality of this unmentionable topic, however, can be significant for some women prior to and during their period. Hormonal fluctuations are normal and may cause outward signs others accurately interpret or completely misread. Some women experience increased energy and creativity while others suffer from mood swings, fatigue, irritability, depression, bloating, tenderness, headaches, or severe cramping (OBOS, 2014). These physical changes range from completely manageable to intolerable in extreme cases. “A small but significant number of (women) do experience
extreme premenstrual depression that interferes with work, social interactions, and general well-being” (OBOS, 2014, p. 1).

Men’s misunderstanding of the female menstrual cycle can significantly impact the workplace. Armed with limited knowledge, men develop perceptions and attitudes toward women’s emotional responses and readily share those with other male colleagues when deemed appropriate. Any female emotional response is easily attributed to, ‘that time of the month’ (Heim et al., 2015).

That stereotypical phrase conveniently explains unusual emotional responses without further investigation and enables men to compartmentalize and dismiss any associated occurrence. Men’s misinterpretation and dismissal of certain female emotional responses potentially leads to miscommunication and misunderstandings at home and in the workplace. Similarly, a general lack of knowledge about the physical and emotional effects of pregnancy can cause additional problems.

Pregnancy is another physiological factor that can potentially impact women’s long-term career progression. Women can experience heavy emotional stress long before the pregnancy as they worry about the right time to have a baby. Typical questions arise over whether it is better to have children early or late in a career, or if a career or a particular career move is even a reasonable option (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

Once pregnant, some women obsess over finding the right time and venue to tell their supervisor and coworkers (Frankel, 2014). Others may experience guilt for letting their colleagues down, casting a shadow over one of life’s most magical events. Some may even end careers or make choices that significantly impede their advancement opportunities.
Physically, the female body undergoes significant changes throughout the pregnancy with varying degrees of impact on daily activities. Some women become task oriented and focused on meeting firm deadlines. Others experience sickness and fatigue making it tremendously difficult to function in their normal effective manner (Wilson, 2004; Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

**Instincts**

Immediately following childbirth, women face another potentially emotional decision of when to return to work, if at all. With few exceptions, women want to spend as much time as possible with their new babies, and the cold reality is workplace requirements continue in their absence. The longer the absence, the more others fill the void left by the new mother, and the greater the impact to the woman’s career (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

Once the new baby joins the family, parents are faced with a multitude of decisions to adequately fulfill both family and career responsibilities. Though most child rearing elements align more closely with sociological factors, one substantial physiological aspect easily overlooked by organizational leadership is the needs of nursing mothers. With the advent of modern technology, women are now able to use breast pumps at work and refrigerate milk for later use (Sandberg & Scovell, 2013).

This rather personal activity requires a private setting suitable to nursing mothers’ needs. Because of these special requirements, some question the need for working mothers to breastfeed with the vast selection of baby formulas so readily available and accessible. On the surface that may appear a legitimate question, but Benenson (2014) suggest women’s genes have programmed their bodies to perform specific child rearing acts. A woman’s body is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of a fetus. Immediately following the child’s birth, primal instincts drive the woman to feed and care for the baby. Throughout most periods of history, that
meant producing enough milk to keep the baby well-nourished for a couple years (Benenson, 2014).

Though modern developments give women other options for feeding their babies, asking new mothers to go against their instincts and give up breast feeding upon their rapid return to work may only add to the emotional turmoil they experience from leaving a newborn. Organizations that do not understand and account for those needs by making reasonable accommodations put nursing mothers at a disadvantage.

The research examined in this section of the literature review shows physiological factors do affect women's career advancement opportunities. The depth of misguided perceptions and the extent of lacking knowledge surrounding those factors, at both individual and organizational levels, determine the degree of impact on women’s careers.

**Summary**

The literature provides extensive evidence of a host of sociological, psychological, and physiological factors that combine to create overwhelming disadvantages for women in the workplace. Misguided perceptions and lacking knowledge about women’s physiology negatively impact their opportunities at the individual and organizational levels.

Likewise, the complexity of women’s psychology, much of which is drawn from their physiology through genetics and primal instincts, appears more complicated than men’s and results in an emotional chasm between the genders. Women’s lifelong conditioning also instills additional limits and beliefs that can manifest negatively and affect performance and professional choices that can produce irreversible career damage. Societal norms align against women through the tide of hidden gender biases flowing naturally and covertly through the generations.
Though researchers have gained an understanding of how those factors impact gender equality and have developed ideas and theories about the factors’ origins; none specify a clear understanding of the totality of the impact from the underlying causes, or how to effectively resolve this complex array of elusive issues. Gaps and conflicts in the literature indicate more research is required to adequately address gender specific perceptions and the convoluted effects of the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities to achieve and sustain true gender equality.

The prominent and respected researchers and business professionals examined in this literature review identified notable gender perception differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers. The next research section, chapter three, qualitatively assesses the more prominent findings. An equal number of male and female respondents were interviewed to gather gender specific perception of the factors identified in those findings to determine if they persist on a wide scale basis in the modern professional business world.
CHAPTER THREE:

QUALITATIVE STUDY 1

Following the literature review that explored the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities, the researcher conducted a separate investigation to determine if previous research findings remained valid in the current U.S. work environment. Numerous literature review studies revealed that on average, when compared to men, women tend to underperform, have lower confidence levels, a reduced competitive nature, are less apt to accept professional risks, and are more likely to make choices that negatively impact their careers. Though those academic studies were conducted primarily by female researchers within the last ten years, the researcher further investigated the findings to determine if they aligned with the current professional business environment. Suspecting men and women in the present professional workforce had progressed beyond beliefs of unequal gender capabilities, the researcher conducted this qualitative study to test his premise that there are no gender perception differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers.

After conducting eight interviews from an equal mix of male and female business professionals, the researcher discovered evidence that strongly aligned with the literature review findings and failed to support his research premise. In addition to those outcomes, the researcher exposed significantly different gender beliefs of why those factors exist. The gender perception
gap identified in this study highlighted the need for additional research to better understand gender specific perceptions regarding the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities.

**Statement of Research Questions**

According to John Creswell, “In a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives or hypothesis” (Creswell, 2014, p. 139). In Qualitative Study 1, the researcher questioned some of the literature review findings and conducted additional research to explore his assumption that the modern business environment had evolved toward more equal views of the two genders. Since Creswell states a hypothesis is inappropriate in qualitative research, the researcher developed his assumption in the form of a research premise.

RQ1: What sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affect women’s career advancement opportunities?

RQ2: How do gender specific perceptions about male and female confidence levels, competitive nature, workplace performance, emotions, interactions, relationships, attitudes, desires, and choices impact women’s career advancement opportunities?

The literature review was conducted to examine RQ1. RQ2 and the research premise were developed to further investigate prior study findings and determine if those findings remain valid in the current professional business environment.
Research Premise:
There are no notable gender perception differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers.

Research Method

Qualitative research was most appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to interview multiple individuals and gain insight on gender specific perceptions of the factors that influence men’s and women’s career advancement opportunities. This research focused on the interview participants’ lived experiences in the workplace to determine how closely their work experiences aligned with previous academic research findings. The research question for this study (RQ2) was designed to explore variance between men’s and women’s perceptions of the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities.

Study Design

The researcher analyzed the academic literature and performed an initial review of three Pew Research Center survey findings. He designed a conceptual model (Appendix 1) based on the findings in the literature review with a focus on identifying and mapping a strategy for additional research that ensured a rigorous and complete investigation of the research questions. The physiological factors discovered in the literature review were important and helped the researcher gain a clearer understanding of their impact on the sociological and psychological factors; but additional physiological investigation beyond the literature review was deemed
outside the scope of this research. This study focused primarily on the nine psychological factors illustrated in the researcher’s conceptual model. The stereotypes, biases, and beliefs associated with the sociological factors were not examined directly, but became apparent in the participant responses addressing the psychological factors.

Nine interview questions (Appendix 2) were carefully developed to further test findings in the literature review studies and Pew surveys. This qualitative research used interview responses from eight business professionals to investigate RQ2 and the research premise. Though the academically sound findings from the literature review were consistent, the researcher did not expect the interview results to align with previous research. Instead, he believed this research would show no gender perception differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers.

**Type Data Collected**

Primary data was collect through interviews with eight participants - four males and four females. Participants were randomly selected from five different industries and three primary age groups: Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964), Generation X (Born 1965-1976), and Millennials (Born 1977-1994). An equal number of males and females was selected to gain a balanced mix of perceptions. The Pew Research Center surveys indicated some differing perspectives between generations, so the researcher selected individuals presumed to fit each of the three generally accepted age categories to capture the broader generational viewpoints. One Baby Boomer, two Generation X, and one Millennial from each gender were interviewed. Five different business organizations were also used to ensure a breadth of organizational perspectives. Participants were told the interviews were part of a workplace gender equality study conducted through the
University of South Florida and that the study was not affiliated with their organizations. Once the participants initially agreed to the interview, they were asked to read a consent form (Appendix 3) and verbally agree to take part in the research study.

The interview questions were devised to address specific areas identified in the literature review as needing additional investigation. The researcher’s conceptual model provided a visual representation of the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities and helped the researcher develop a balanced mix of interview questions. The interview questions for this study were developed to explore the nine psychological factors associated with RQ2, and gain additional insight about the three sociological factors.

Interview lengths ranged from 20 minutes to over two-hours and were conducted behind closed doors in the participants’ office settings. To better protect the participants’ identity, no recording equipment was used. As a result, the researcher took detailed notes and transcribed the information from notes and memory immediately following each interview to preserve the participants’ intended message.

Analysis

The researcher had two primary objectives when analyzing interview responses. First, he used a positivist approach to determine the validity of each interview question by assessing the rigor, accuracy, and completeness of the responses as they related to question objectives. Second, he assessed the interview responses from an interpretivist viewpoint to gain a complete understanding of each participants’ beliefs, perceptions, and intended message. The positivist analysis began with the researcher reviewing individual participant’s responses with a precise focus on the intent and objective of each question and the specific information it was intended to
extract. The researcher transferred key words, phrases, and other pertinent information into a spreadsheet matrix as a means of coding the qualitative data. Colors were assigned to like responses in the spreadsheet as a secondary means of visually coding and easily recognizing similar response patterns. Red was used for negative responses toward women, yellow was used for neutral responses, and green was used for positive responses. The categorized number of coded responses were then totaled and recorded in the top rows of the spreadsheet (Appendix 4).

Due to the open ended line of questioning, not all extracted information fit under the specifically designed interview question. Participants sometimes answered multiple questions, or gave partial answers to other questions, in a single response. They also occasionally added clarifying remarks or gave additional thoughts on previous questions. During the analysis and matrix development, the researcher restructured some of the participant’s statements to better align their responses with question objectives. Though some response information was shifted, added, or transposed into other sections of the spreadsheet matrix, the researcher protected the response integrity by holding true to the participant’s intended message.

After coding the participant’s answers, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of the responses as they pertained to the corresponding RQ2 factors. The interview questions and subsequent responses were broken down into nine psychological factors: performance, confidence, competitive nature, emotions, interactions, relationships, attitudes, desires, and choices. Due to the close relationship of the factors, each interview question focused on at least one central or primary factor and up to three cursory or secondary factors to ensure RQ2 was addressed.
**Positivist Assessment**

Question 1: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments? (Primary: Confidence – Secondary: Desires, Choices). One participant (male) perceived women as more aggressive at pursuing challenging assignments than men because of their strong need to prove themselves. Two participants (one male, one female) perceived no differences in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments. Five participants (two males, three females) believed women are less confident, more risk averse, and less likely to pursue challenging assignments than men.

**Table 3.1. Numerical Assessment of Question 1**

| Q1: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments? | Total Views Toward Each Gender |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                 | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Men                                                                                             | 3        | 0       | 5        |
| Women                                                                                            | 3        | 0       | 5        |

Question 2: What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities? (Primary: Competitive Nature – Secondary: Confidence, Attitudes). Three participants (two males, one female) perceived no differences in men’s and women’s performance when competing for career advancement opportunities. Five participants (two males, three females) believed women are less competitive and less aggressive in pursuing career advancement opportunities.
Table 3.2. Numerical Assessment of Question 2

| Q2: What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities? |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Views Toward Each Gender  | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Men                             | 4        | 1       | 3         |
| Women                           | 3        | 0       | 5         |

Question 3: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties? (Primary: Performance – Secondary: Confidence, Attitudes). One participant (female) perceived no differences in men’s and women’s approach to problem solving in performance of their duties. Seven of eight participants (four males, three females) believed women are more risk averse and less aggressive in performing their duties, which likely gives the appearance men outperform women.

Table 3.3. Numerical Assessment of Question 3

| Q3: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties? |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Views Toward Each Gender  | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Men                             | 5        | 0       | 3         |
| Women                           | 1        | 0       | 7         |

Question 4: What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them? (Primary: Emotions, Attitudes – Secondary: Interactions, Relationships). One participant (female) perceived no differences in men’s and women’s reactions. Seven participants (four males, three females) believed men are initially resentful but eventually accept the female leader; while women immediately and continuously work to undermine the female leader and are unlikely to ever accept her in her new
role. Those seven men and women also perceived that as women work to undermine the new female supervisor, their attitudes deteriorate and their performance suffers.

**Table 3.4.** Numerical Assessment of Question 4

| Q4: What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them? |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| **Total Views Toward Each Gender** | **Positive** | **Neutral** | **Negative** |
| **Men** | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| **Women** | 1 | 0 | 7 |

Question 5: What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? (Primary: Relationships – Secondary: Interactions, Competition, Emotions). Two participants (one male, one female) perceived no differences in the way female leaders interact with subordinate females. Six participants (three males, three females) believed female leaders treat female subordinates much harsher than male subordinates. The participants’ common consensus was female supervisors either feel threatened by subordinate females and work to minimize their efforts to eliminate potential competition, or they actively attack other women to gain acceptance in their male dominated role.

**Table 3.5.** Numerical Assessment of Question 5

| Q5: What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| **Total Views Toward Female Leaders** | **Positive** | **Neutral** | **Negative** |
| **Female Leaders** | 2 | 0 | 6 |

Question 6: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace? (Primary: Interactions, Desires – Secondary: Relationships, Attitudes). Two participants (two males) perceived men to be more genuine than women and
stated women use sexuality in the workplace to gain an advantage over others. Two participants (two males) perceived no differences in the way males and females interact with others in the workplace. Four participants (four females) believed men ignore and exclude women through a form of passive discrimination, and work to minimize women’s efforts and accomplishments through a form of active discrimination. Three of the four women believed men are responsible for the sexual undertones often present in the office environment, while one of those three females stated men fall victim to sexuality and will voluntarily help women more than men as a result. Those responses show significant differences in male and female perceptions in the motive and means behind men’s and women’s workplace interactions. This question generated surprising results and indicated a need for additional research to better understand the significance of the male and female perception gap.

Table 3.6. Numerical Assessment of Question 6

| Q6: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace? |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| **Total Views Toward Each Gender**              |
| Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Men      | 3        | 0         | 5        |
| Women    | 2        | 0         | 6        |

Question 7: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization? (Primary: Choices – Secondary: Desires, Emotions, Attitudes). One participant (male) perceived no differences in the way home and family responsibilities impact men’s and women’s job opportunities. Seven of eight participants (three males, four females) believed women experience a significant negative impact because they choose family over careers and men choose careers over family. Men also tended to believe women are in control of their
choices and should address family issues at home if they desire a different career outcome. Women tended to blame men for not taking a more active role at home, and they blamed the organization for not providing mothers more flexible work schedules. Men and women largely agreed home and family responsibilities negatively impact women’s performance in the workplace due to the additional demands on their time.

Table 3.7. Numerical Assessment of Question 7

| Q7: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization? |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                  | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
| Men                              | 8       | 0       | 0       |
| Women                            | 1       | 0       | 7       |

Question 8: Is there anything you would like to add? (Open Forum). One participant (female) perceived women as hurting their own feminist cause by tearing one another down instead of building each other up through a strong support network. Three participants (three females) perceived men as the biggest obstacle to their success. They believed men discriminate, minimize their efforts, ignore their accomplishments, and create an unfair advancement system to disadvantage women. Four participants (four males) perceived men and women as having the same advancement opportunities. The men generally perceived women as hurting themselves through the choices they make and their character attacks on one another. Those responses showed significant differences in male and female perceptions of why women do not advance at the same rate as men. Men accepted little responsibility for women’s slow advancement in the workplace, and women tended to place heavy blame on men as the primary reason women do not advance at the same rate as men. Those unexpected results indicated a need for additional research to better understand the opposing gender viewpoints.
Table 3.8. Numerical Assessment of Question 8

| Q8: Is there anything you would like to add? | Total Views Toward Each Gender |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                            | Positive | Neutral | Negative | No Input |
| Men                                        | 0        | 1       | 3        | 4        |
| Women                                      | 0        | 1       | 1        | 6        |

Question 9: What do you believe created your perceptions of those differences? (Background). This question produced little information deemed valuable and pertinent to the research question.

Interpretivist Assessment

After assessing each questions’ validity through a loosely structured quantitative analysis, the researcher then accomplished an interpretive assessment to focus on the specific message and meaning in each response and gain an accurate understanding of the factors men and women perceived to impact women’s career advancement opportunities.

The researcher began the interpretivist coding by extracting all key words, phrases, and ideas from the participant’s answers and grouping the information into one of six general categories; “General (Men and Women) Views of Women”, “General Views of Men”, “Women’s Unique Views of Men”, “Women’s Unique Views of Women”, “Men’s Unique Views of Men”, and “Men’s Unique Views of Women” (Appendix 5). The analysis was then organized to show similarities in male and female perceptions and highlight their divergent beliefs.

In general, men and women perceived women to lack confidence and underestimate their own capabilities and value to the organization. Both genders believed women must go out of their way to prove their workplace competence and show they deserve their positions. Men and
women also viewed females as less aggressive and more risk averse than males. They perceived
women to prefer a slow, methodical, collaborative decision making process to assess the impact
on others and consider the repercussions of their decisions before moving forward. They also
felt women are less likely to pursue challenging assignments or ask for additional responsibilities
because they fear failure. “Women are less likely to pursue challenging assignments. Women
are less competitive and less confident at work. Men are overconfident in their abilities and
women are under confident” (Female - PFBB022417). All generally agreed women’s
methodical, collaborative decision making style could make them appear weak and indecisive.
Likewise, women’s reluctance to volunteer for more responsibility or pursue riskier assignments
could give the impression females are less dedicated to the mission than their male counterparts,
who are quick to take action and aggressively pursue greater responsibility. Even women with
superior knowledge, skills, and abilities who display lower confidence and higher risk aversion
can give the impression they underperform compared to their more confident, aggressive male
counterparts. “Women seem to lack confidence, especially when competing against men, and
that shows in the way they perform. Men are more aggressive, so even less qualified men will
appear to outperform the more qualified women” (Male - PMML030117).

Men and women generally agreed women are less competitive than men and avoid
competing when possible. Men, on the other hand, are highly competitive and not only
comfortable competing with others, but seem to enjoy the process. By avoiding the expected
competitive practices in a male dominated organization, others can develop the impression
women are underperforming.

Participants also believed women are nurturers and view them as warm, sensitive, and
people focused; where men are considered impersonal and mission focused. They perceived
women to care more about relationships and the impact their decisions and actions have on others. “Women are more nurturing and always consider the personal impact on others before they make a decision. Men are cold and mission focused. Women are more people focused” (Female - PFGX022817). They observed that women tend to talk much more than men and value the personal interaction with others, especially when discussing relationships and feelings. Women also feel they gain power by sharing information, where men are far less concerned about feelings or the personal impact to others and are quick to make decisions and implement change. In general, the participants felt men see little value in discussing relationships and feelings and believe withholding information gives them power. Similarly, men and women strongly believed women put their families first at the expense of their careers, while men put their careers first believing their job is their best means of caring for their family. “If forced to make the choice, women will always put family and home first. Men will choose work because they feel that is how they can best take care of the family” (Female - PFBB022417).

Men and women agreed that women are often their own worst enemies regarding helping other women advance. The general consensus was women want other women to fail and will use passive-aggressive behavior to undermine their success. “Women sit back and wait for an opening to attack. They will look for a weakness and exploit it. Even if the female colleague proves to be a good leader, women subordinates will remain distant and non-supportive. They want her to fail” (Female - PFGX030717). Both genders agreed women lack transparency and readily spread gossip and create drama to drive their hidden agendas. They generally agreed women struggle with the news of a female colleague promoted over them and are extremely unlikely to accept her positional authority. Men and women felt women are personally insulted by another females’ directions and guidance and will intentionally underperform to undermine
her authority and sabotage her success. “Women especially like to talk about how their colleagues must have slept their way into a promotion. They have a hard time being happy for the other woman’s promotion and will work hard to undermine her…not to her face, but in the presence of her other subordinates” (Female - PFBB022417). Men, on the other hand, are initially insulted when a female colleague is promoted over them, but they soon accept her as a leader if she proves competent. In direct contrast, men avoid office drama and approach issues in a more direct, transparent manner with no hidden agendas.

Men and women both agreed the Queen Bee Syndrome is a perpetual problem in the workplace, where female supervisors treat female subordinates much harsher than male subordinates. Participant’s shared two possible reasons for that unacceptable conduct. One participant’s theory was women supervisors assimilated to what they perceive as male behavior to gain popularity and acceptance from their male counterparts. “Some women believe they have to assimilate to men’s ways and will treat other women especially harsh. I think they believe if they mimic men, they will fit in and be more accepted by the men” (Female - PFBB022417). Another participant’s theory was female leaders feel threatened by female subordinates and intentionally demoralized them to eliminate possible competition. “Two women supervisors I directly observed degraded the women who worked for them by talking down to them and humiliating them in front of others. I think the one was protecting her territory by ensuring the other females were not a threat to her position. The other was just mean” (Female - PFGX022817). In either case, participants believed female supervisors who exhibit harsh, uncharacteristic behavior lose the respect of all men and women who witness their atypical interactions.
For women’s unique views, they generally felt men are overconfident and overestimate their own professional value. They believed men minimize women’s work contributions and the significance of their family responsibilities and elevate their own importance in the workplace and at home. Women also generally believed husbands do not give their wives the level of support necessary for the wife to have an equal opportunity for career advancement. Women perceived men to discriminate against them, treat them unfairly, and take passive and active measures to hold them back; likely because they feel threatened by women’s capabilities. The women claimed men surreptitiously discourage them from applying for jobs and use their “good old boy” networks to hurt women’s advancement opportunities. “I have spent many years watching the “good old boy” system in action. The connected favorites get the position every time and there is no way to prove the system is rigged” (Female - PFGX022817). Women believed men give less merit to their ideas and actions and ultimately want them to fail. Women stated their performance suffers because men discriminate against them and work intently to undermine their efforts. “People listen to men; they do not listen to women. It shuts women down when they are ignored and they no longer participate in the discussions. Their lack of participation is then viewed as a lack of performance” (Female - PFBB022417).

Men had completely different views and see themselves as very confident and unaffected emotionally by losing to a formidable competitor. Men believed they were quicker to identify and solve problems and could easily accept constructive criticism, unlike women who take criticism personally. “Men take criticism differently and are able to separate criticism of their performance and actions from an attack on their person. They don’t get emotional when another man criticizes their performance, as long as the criticism is accurate” (Male - PMGX030817). Men said they are often uncomfortable dealing with women due to potential misperceptions of
their intent, and the possibility of offending a woman and facing the repercussions of a formal complaint. Men viewed themselves as internally driven, drawing satisfaction and self-esteem from their own self-assessment of quality work. They saw themselves as more logical than women, and more straightforward and blunt with other men. “Men approach problems from a more logical point of view. Women approach problems from an emotional point of view and always consider the relationship perspective” (Male - PMGX030317). Men stated they were less frank and genuine with women because they fear repercussions from offending them. Men acknowledged “good old boy” networks exist, but believe such favoritism hurts men and women equally. “The good old boy network is still active and it hurts women. Actually, it hurts anyone who is not favored by the network. I have seen too many people get jobs because of the people they knew who were doing them a favor, even though they were not the most qualified for the job” (Male - PMBB030717). Men did not allude to discriminatory actions or reference any conduct one could perceive as intent to hold women back or discourage them from advancing.

Though the researcher did not ask a specific question about sexuality in the workplace, five of eight interview participants volunteered perceptions of sexual harassment, tensions, and undertones. The women saw men as sexually focused and the source of the sexual undertones and tensions that permeate the work environment and can lead to sexual harassment. To illustrate sexual undertones, one female participant discussed men’s significantly different reactions to male and female questions and the degree to which they willing help others. “I have observed countless times that guys will flock to the attractive females that come in for help, unable to do enough for them. They barely flinch when another man comes in for help. Women would never act like the men if an attractive man came in for help. It seems there are always sexual undertones with the men” (Female - PFGX022817). In general, women did not view
themselves as contributing to the sexual undercurrent, but rather are disinclined recipients of men’s sexual comments, actions, and advances.

Men also stated they sense the sexual undertones present in the workplace, but men viewed women as the source of those issues. Men perceived women to use sexuality and femininity as a tool to gain an advantage over others. The men claimed women intuitively act helpless, needy, or sensitive as a means of controlling men, gaining sympathy, or getting men to perform certain tasks for women. "Women regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool in the workplace. I don’t think it is even a conscious decision or action, but they seem to like to be confused and helpless in front of men; even when they are highly competent" (Male - PMGX030817). Interestingly, men admitted they instinctively react to women in need and quickly step in to provide assistance they would not otherwise provide to another man. "Women flirt with men to gain attention and get what they want. Women put on the sensitive, helpless act to get men to help them, and the stupid men always play into the act. Men fall all over themselves to help women; especially the pretty women. It is not because the women are less capable. It is almost like a control issue; women like the power they have over men and enjoy using it" (Male - PMML030117).

Men also believed women had an unfair advantage due to hiring quotas and special allowances that enable less qualified women to advance over their more qualified male counterparts. "I have witnessed some women getting promoted to fill quotas, which I think is wrong" (Male - PMBB030717). Men see women as too emotional and unable to separate constructive criticism from personal condemnation. They viewed women as externally driven and needing reassurance, affirmation, and recognition to boost their self-esteem. Men also
believed work is an extension of home for women, who are unable to separate their personal feelings and lives from their professional activities.

Women believed organizations had a responsibility to make special family accommodations so women could meet their heavy family demands while maintaining a rigorous career. Women admitted they are attracted to drama and see themselves as weak negotiators who have difficulty establishing professional networks and finding strong mentors. “Women have a more difficult time establishing professional networks, which are critical to advancement. Women also don’t negotiate like men. Most men are hard negotiators and believe they deserve more. Women tend to underestimate their own value and are reluctant to ask for more” (Female - PFBB022417). The women also stated women are ostracized by others and believe their failures are viewed as weaknesses; while men’s failures are excused as someone or something else’s fault.

Results

The overall study results aligned with previous research findings discovered in the literature review. Due to the outcome, the researcher’s premise was not supported. The positivist analysis confirmed the researcher’s seven primary questions and one general information question produced rich results that aligned with the researcher’s literature review findings and three Pew Research Center quantitative survey studies. Those results validated the rigor and accuracy of those eight questions. The single background question produced little valuable information and was considered ineffective at addressing any portion of RQ2.

The qualitative analysis from the interpretivist viewpoint showed men and women generally agreed women underperform, have lower confidence levels, are less competitive, more
risk averse, and far more likely to make choices that negatively impact their careers. Though men and women mostly agreed there are performance differences between men and women in the workplace, the truly interesting discoveries in this study were the differing male and female perceptions of why such differences exist.

Women believed the root cause of their inability to advance at the same rate as men is ultimately caused by men. Their underperformance, lower confidence levels, aversion to competition and risks, and family choices are a result of males actively and passively discriminating against them and creating a promotion system that prevents women from advancing at the same rate as men.

Men believed women have the same opportunities and as much control over their careers as men. The men alluded they have little direct bearing on women’s underperformance, lower confidence levels, aversion to competition and risks, and family choices. Men perceived women in full control of their own character, emotions, and home situation and believe women are only limited by their own desires, priorities, choices, and willingness to sacrifice.

Males and females also agreed sexual undertones are common in the workplace. Two women identified the serious issue of men sexually harassing women in the workplace as a continuing problem, but of less prevalence today than in years past. A far more common issue identified by four women and two men are the subtle sexual undertones and insinuations that often emerge when genders interact. Again, though men and women generally agreed these activities regularly transpire, they had differing views over the origin and motivation behind that behavior.

Women tended to believe men focus intently on sexuality and are the source of the sexual undertones present when men and women interact. As a result, men fall victim to their own
desires and weaknesses. Men believed women use their sexuality as a form of control over men, or as a tool to gain an advantage over others; thus, women are responsible for the sexual undertones present when men and women interact. Interestingly, both male and female perceptions indicated women have some form of control over men in the workplace due to sexuality.

The overall results show significant differences in male and female participant perspectives, but only a few discernable differences existing between generations. One Millennial female, one Generation X male, and one Baby Boomer male participant perceived fewer male and female performance differences; while one female Baby Boomer, two females and one male Generation X, and one male Millennial perceived significant differences in workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, and willingness to accept professional risks. The Millennial female had six years’ professional experience, far less than any other participant, with the next closest at 15 years’ experience. The researcher was unable to determine if her significantly differing views from the other females were a product of her age group or a result of her limited workplace experience.

The unexpected discoveries from this study highlighted the need for additional research to examine the significance of the gender perception gap and explore possible means for reducing the substantial divide between men’s and women’s views of the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities. The researcher used a mixed method approach in the following chapters to explore the significance of the gender perception gap. He also incorporated a naturally occurring event as an experimental event to assess its impact on gender perceptions. Chapter four is the qualitative assessment of that mixed method investigation and chapter five is the quantitative evaluation.
CHAPTER FOUR:

QUALITATIVE STUDY 2

After conducting the literature review and the Qualitative Study 1, a phenomenon occurred with potentially significant impact on women’s issues in the United States and 196 other countries around the world (Langone, 2018). The #MeToo (hashtag me too) movement generated large press and social media attention focusing on women’s issues, primarily sexual misconduct against women. To explore the possible impact of the #MeToo movement and surrounding related media events on men’s and women’s perceptions of the factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities, the researcher conducted a second interview of the participants from Study 1 and developed a survey to quantitatively analyze the post-media events’ influence on the two genders.

As background, the Me Too organization was founded in 2006 by social activist Tarana Burke to help sexual violence survivors (MeToo, 2018). The organization became the focal point of the #MeToo movement in October 2017 when actress Alyssa Milano sent the following Twitter message that instantly went viral (Stevens, 2017). “If all the women and men who have been sexually harassed, assaulted or abused wrote ‘me too’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem. #metoo”. The following morning, nearly 40,000 people had responded. Milano’s efforts were sparked by the sexual misconduct allegations actress Ashley Judd made against Harvey Weinstein, an immensely successful American film producer,
who was accused of sexually harassing countless women in the film industry over many years. As a powerful figure with tremendous influence over acting careers, Weinstein allegedly used his power and influence as a weapon against women for sexual favors (Bahr, 2017). In less than three months, the #MeToo phrase was posted millions of times, often with never before shared stories of women’s struggles against sexual violence. Women across the U.S. were encouraged by the outpouring and empowered to speak out because of similar stories shared by high-profile celebrities. The surge quickly grew beyond boarders touching 196 countries around the world (Langone, 2018). The movement became so prominent and well-known in the U.S., by April 2018, defense attorneys struggled to find unbiased jurors to serve in the Bill Cosby retrial. Referencing the #MeToo movement’s influence in the Cosby retrial, jury consultant Richard Gabriel, who has worked on more than 1,000 trials stated: "We really have had this explosion of awareness since that last trial (June 2017) and it has changed the entire environment," (De Groot and Sisak, 2018).

To determine the potential impact of the events surrounding the #MeToo movement on male and female perceptions in the U.S. workplace, the researcher used the media events collectively as an experiment and analyzed data through a mixed method approach. References to #MeToo throughout Qualitative Study 2 and Quantitative Study 3 include the awareness and social phenomenon that evolved from the media events; not the Me Too organization itself. Likewise, all generalized references to men and women or males and females in this research are limited to working business professionals in predominantly white-collar positions. The generalized references are not intended to address the perceptions or perspectives of the entire U.S. male and female populations. To assess the gender perception gap discovered in Study 1, two additional studies were accomplished to determine if awareness and knowledge about
women’s issues generated through social and mass media coverage of the #MeToo movement influenced or changed gender specific perceptions about the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. The qualitative Study 2 of this mixed method approach compares interview data collected by the researcher seven months prior to the #MeToo events to interview data collected five months after the initial surge started by Ashley Judd and Alyssa Milano. The quantitative Study 3 compares nationwide survey data collected by the Pew Research Center between 2013 and 2015 to survey data collected by the researcher six months after Milano’s October 2017 viral tweet.

Chapter four discusses and assesses the Qualitative Study 2 research in the mixed method review and chapter five discusses and analyzes the Quantitative Study 3 research. The interviews conducted in the Qualitative Study 1 showed men and women generally agreed with the literature review findings that on average, when compared to men, women underperform, have lower confidence levels, are less competitive, more risk averse, and far more likely to make choices that negatively impact their careers. The study results failed to support the researcher’s premise that men and women would perceive no differences between the genders regarding those factors. The unexpected discoveries from Study 1 were the male and female perceptions of why they perceived such gender differences. Though not specifically questioned about the reasons, both genders appeared compelled to volunteer their thoughts on the origins, causes, and effects of the study factors.

The participants somewhat distanced themselves from any involvement or direct impact on others and accepted little responsibility for negatively impacting women’s career advancement opportunities themselves. The women shared numerous examples of how they were negatively impacted by the actions of both genders; but women believed the root cause of
their inability to advance at the same rate as men was ultimately caused by men. The men tended to believe they had little direct bearing on women’s underperformance, lower confidence levels, aversion to competition and risks, and family choices. The men shared numerous examples of how women hurt themselves and others. Though they believed some men do actively or passively discriminate against women, the men felt women were predominately responsible for their own progress and in control of the factors that negatively impact women’s career advancement opportunities.

**Statement of Research Questions**

RQ3: How significantly did the #MeToo media events influence gender specific perceptions about the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities?

RQ4: What level of impact did the #MeToo media events have on the gender perception gap regarding the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities?

Two research questions were designed to explore the gender perception gap discovered in Study 1 and the impact of the #MeToo movement on gender specific perceptions. RQ3 was designed to qualitatively evaluate men’s and women’s perceptions of the factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities and determine if the #MeToo media events significantly influenced gender perceptions. RQ4 and a research hypothesis were developed to quantitatively assess the impact of awareness and knowledge on male and female perceptions by collecting and analyzing pre- and post-event data to statistically measure the #MeToo
movements’ level of influence on the gender perception gap. RQ4 and the hypothesis will be addressed in Chapter Five.

Research Hypothesis:
The awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events will strongly correlate with reductions in the gender perception gap regarding factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities.

Theories Related to Research

The research conducted in Qualitative Study 2 and Quantitative Study 3 is grounded in the Organizational Justice Theory, the Psychological Contract Theory, and Dr. Dan Ariely’s “Predictably Irrational” Research.

Organizational Justice Theory - A perceived sense of fairness within the company impacts the employees by instilling pride, morality, belonging, and a positive view of themselves and the organization. The employees’ perceptions then guide their behaviors and attitudes (Miles, 2012).

Psychological Contract Theory - The unwritten perceived agreements between the company and the employee. The company expects a certain level of performance and dedication from employees, and in return, the employees expect a safe work environment and fair compensation and benefits (Miles, 2012).

Ariely’s “Predictably Irrational” Research - Demonstrates how humans act in fundamentally irrational ways due to misguided behaviors that are systematic and predictable. As a result,
people keep their options open while failing to recognize the costs, and they allow expectations to drive their perceptions (Ariely, 2009).

Research Method

A mixed method approach was most appropriate for this experimental study as it enabled the researcher to explore the research questions through multiple independent means. For the Qualitative Study 2, the researcher replicated the qualitative approach used in Study 1 to ensure consistency in the investigation process and most accurately assess perception changes likely generated through the #MeToo movement. The same interview questions were asked of the same eight participants interviewed one-year prior in Study 1. Four additional participants were interviewed in Study 2 to compare consistency of answers and help identify any possible demand effect in the second interview responses, where participants may have anticipated a desired outcome and changed their answers. Creswell (2013) states a range of five to 25 interviews is needed for sound qualitative data collection, so the twelve participants interviewed in this study provided rigor and instilled confidence in the data. For this qualitative study, RQ3 was designed to explore the possible changes in men’s and women’s perceptions about factors influencing women’s career advancement opportunities following the #MeToo events. Quantitative Study 3 of the mixed method approach addresses RQ4 and the research hypothesis in chapter five.

Study Design

Eight of the original nine interview questions from Study 1 were retained in the Qualitative Study 2 (Appendix 6) and one single background question that produced little valuable information was dropped from Study 2. One additional question was added at the end
of the second survey to assess the participants’ views on the #MeToo events’ impact on the
women’s movement in general. The researcher used those responses to determine if the
individuals had informed knowledge of the #MeToo media events, and to assess the participants’
perceptions of the movements’ impact on sexual harassment and misconduct, and women’s
equality issues in general. The additional #MeToo question was critical to this study because
without informed knowledge, the #MeToo event could not have influenced any change in the
participants’ perceptions.

**Type Data Collected**

Primary data was collect through interviews with the same eight participants; four males
and four females, from Study 1 that was conducted one-year prior. Four additional participants
were randomly selected and treated as a control group to help the researcher identify any
possible demand effect in the second interview set. The twelve participants, six males and six
females, came from six different business organizations to ensure a diverse mix of organizational
perspectives. To account for generational perspectives, an equal number of males and females
were also selected from each of the three primary age groups: Baby Boomer, Generation X, and
Millennial. Interview lengths ranged from 20 minutes to one-hour and were conducted in the
same manner as Study 1 interviews.

**Analysis**

The researcher had two primary objectives when analyzing interview responses. First, he
wanted to determine what level of impact the #MeToo media events had on the eight original
participants’ perceptions about factors influencing women’s career advancement opportunities.
Second, he wanted to ensure any perception changes were attributed to the #MeToo media events, and not a result of demand effect.

The research analysis began on the eight original participants with the researcher coding the data by extracting each response from the original Study 1 interview and pasting it below the corresponding response in the Study 2 interview. Key phrases from each of the two responses were identified and set apart from the extraneous information that was deleted from the coding analysis worksheet. With only key phrases remaining from the first and second interviews, the researcher then color coded the two responses, using green highlights for positive perceptions of factors affecting women’s advancement opportunities, yellow for neutral perceptions, and red for negative perceptions (Appendix 7). The four new participant answers were coded in a similar manner and their results were compared to the eight originals to determine if the second set of responses generally aligned. In all cases, no demand effect was identified and the resulting perception changes were attributed to awareness and knowledge gained from the social and mass media coverage of the #MeToo movement.

Once all twelve participants’ responses were coded, the overall assessment for each question and each participant was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for a visual representation of the results (Appendix 8). The same color coding scheme was used in the single spreadsheet that was used in each participants’ coded response document. Letter and word codes were also used to add additional depth to the analysis: M=Men, W=Women, Mixed=Mixed Review, and Future=Equality Outlook for Women. The analysis spreadsheet was used to gain an overall perspective of participant responses, and the individual coded response document was used to add details to the analysis assessment. The response assessment scale in Table 9 was devised to uniformly categorize the assessed impact of the #MeToo event on participant perceptions. The
researcher used the scale to weigh the amount of positive change in post-event responses to each interview question for the eight original interview participants. He also used the scale to quantitatively categorize the overall positive views toward women from all twelve interview participants.

**Table 4.1.** Response Assessment Scale

| Impact Scale |   |
|--------------|---|
| 0%           | None |
| 1 - 33%      | Low  |
| 34 - 68%     | Moderate |
| 69 - 100%    | High |

Question 1: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments? The Study 2 responses for both men and women changed little from the Study 1 responses where five of eight participants (two males, three females) believed women are less confident, more risk averse, and less likely to pursue challenging assignments than men. The Study 2 results also showed that, in general, women lack confidence and underestimate their own capabilities and value to the organization. Both men and women viewed females as less aggressive and more risk averse than males and consistently stated women prefer a slower, more methodical, collaborative decision making process to assess the impact on others and consider the repercussions of their decisions before they act. Women were also viewed as less likely to pursue challenging assignments or ask for additional responsibilities because they fear failure. Study 2 responses were somewhat less negative than Study 1 responses where participants generally believed women’s cautious decision making style made them appear weak and indecisive, and gave the impression they are less dedicated than their more aggressive male counterparts. One of the original eight participants (male) changed from
negative views of women’s confidence to neutral views. Another of the original eight (female) remained unchanged in her negative views but voiced a more positive outlook for women’s future. Two of four new participants (one male, one female), had very positive views for the future, while two others (one male, one female) believed women are less aggressive in pursuing challenges. Overall, seven of 12 participants (four women, three men) still view women as more cautious than men and less likely to pursue challenges. Due to the slight positive change, the #MeToo media attention appeared to have a low positive impact on perceptions of women’s confidence with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.

**Table 4.2. Question 1 Post-Event Impact Assessment**

| Q1: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments? | Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
|---|---|---|
| **Change** | **%** | **Impact** | **Total** | **%** | **Impact** |
| 2 of 8 | 25% | Low | 5 of 12 | 42% | Moderate |

**Question 2:** What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities? Responses in Study 2 changed slightly over the Study 1 responses where five of eight participants (two males, three females) believed women are less competitive than men and avoid competing when possible. In Study 2, the same five of eight original participants still viewed women as less competitive than men. Two of the original eight (two males) had less negative views of women’s competitive nature. Two of four new participants (one male, one female) held positive views of women’s competitive nature. Overall, five of 12 participants (four males, one female) displayed slightly more positive views of women’s competitive nature, and two others (two
females) had a more positive outlook for the future believing women are becoming more competitive. The #MeToo media attention appeared to have a low positive impact on perceptions of women’s competitive nature with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.

Table 4.3. Question 2 Post-Event Impact Assessment

| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Change % Impact Total % Impact                      |                                             |
| 2 of 8 25% Low 5 of 12 42% Moderate                |                                             |

Question 3: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties? Responses in Study 2 differed some from Study 1 responses where seven of eight participants (four males, three females) believed women are more risk averse and less aggressive in performing their duties, which likely gives the appearance men outperform women. In Study 2, men and women generally agreed women take a more methodical, collaborative approach to problem solving; while men are more forward and independent. Four of the original eight participants (two males, two females) were unchanged in their views, while three (two males, one female) improved their views on women’s approach to problem solving. Three of four new participants (one male, two females) held neutral views of women’s problem solving abilities, and one male held positive views. Overall, five of 12 participants held positive views about women’s focus on details and their methodical, cautious approach to choosing the right solution. This shift from predominately negative views of women’s performance to primarily neutral views indicates the #MeToo media events appeared
to have a moderate impact on men’s and women’s perceptions of women’s performance and approach to problem solving with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.

Table 4.4. Question 3 Post-Event Impact Assessment

| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Change | % | Impact | Total | % | Impact |
| 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 5 of 12 | 42% | Moderate |

Question 4: What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them? In Study 2, perceptions shifted slightly toward positive reactions from men and women over a female colleagues’ promotion. In Study 1, seven of eight participants (four males, three females) believed women immediately and continuously work to undermine a female colleague promoted over them and are unlikely to ever accept her new role; while men are initially resentful but ultimately accept her as a leader. In Study 2, three of the original eight participants (one male, two females) shifted toward positive views on women’s reactions to a female colleagues’ promotion; while one male shifted toward a more positive view of men’s reactions. Three of four new participants (two male, one female) believed men react positively; while one (female) believed men react negatively toward a newly promoted female. Two of four new participants (one male, one female) perceived women to react positively and two (one male, one female) perceived women to react negatively toward a female colleague promoted over them. Overall, six of 12 (two males, four females) believed women react positively; while six (four males, two females) still
believed women react negatively toward a newly promote female colleague. Nine of 12 (six males, three females) thought men reacted in a positive manner; while three females believed men reacted negatively. Because three of the original eight participants (one male, two females) changed toward a more positive view of men’s and women’s reactions to a female colleagues’ promotion over them, the #MeToo media events appeared to have a moderate positive impact on men’s and women’s perceptions of female promotions with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.

**Table 4.5. Question 4 Post-Event Impact Assessment**

| Q4: What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them? |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
| Change | % | Impact | Total | % | Impact |
| 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 6 of 12 | 50% | Moderate |

Question 5: What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? Responses in Study 2 improved significantly over the Study 1 responses where six of eight participants (three males, three females) believed female leaders treat female subordinates much harsher than male subordinates. In Study 2, three of those six (one male, two females) completely changed from a negative to a positive view of female leaders. Three others (two males, one female) changed from a completely negative view to a mixed view of female leaders, where they believed some help and some hurt female subordinates in their career progression. Two of four new participants (one male, one female) believed women supervisors are helpful to other women, while one female saw them as hurtful, and one male viewed female supervisors as mixed in their treatment of female subordinate. Overall, six
of 12 participants (three males, three females) held positive views of female supervisors, and five of 12 held mixed view. With six of eight original participants changing from a negative view to a positive view of female leaders, the #MeToo media events appeared to have a high positive impact on men’s and women’s perceptions of female supervisors with a high number of participants holding positive post-event views.

Table 4.6. Question 5 Post-Event Impact Assessment

| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Change % Impact | Total % Impact |
| 6 of 8 75% High | 11 of 12 92% High |

Question 6: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace? Responses in Study 2 changed strongly from the Study 1 responses where six of eight participants (two males, four females) held negative views of the way females interact in the workplace. In Study 2, four of the original eight participants (two males, two female) developed more positive views of women’s workplace interactions. Of the four new participants, two (one male, one female) held positive views of women and negative views of men. One female held a negative view of men, and one male participant held neutral views of both genders. Overall, eight of 12 (five males, three females) held positive views of women’s interactions in the workplace and four of 12 participants (two males, two females) held positive views of the way men interact. With half the original eight participants developing more positive views of men’s and women’s workplace interactions, the #MeToo media events
appeared to have a moderate impact on men’s and women’s perceptions with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.

**Table 4.7.** Question 6 Post-Event Impact Assessment

| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Change % | Impact | Total % | Impact |
| 4 of 8 | 50% | Moderate | 8 of 12 | 68% | Moderate |

Question 7: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization? The Study 2 responses for both men and women changed significantly from the Study 1 responses where seven of eight participants (three males, four females) believed home and family decisions had a substantial negative impact on women because they choose family over careers and men choose careers over family. In Study 2, three of the eight original participants (two males, one female) changed their perceptions believing men and women are now sharing home and family responsibilities more equally, while one female believed the equality shift is quickly approaching. Three of four new participants also believed home and family responsibilities will be shared equally in the future. Overall, seven of 12 participants held positive views for men and women to equally prioritize careers and families in the future. This substantial shift in perceptions indicates the #MeToo media events had a moderate impact on men’s and women’s perceptions about how home and family responsibilities should be shared and prioritized with careers with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.
Table 4.8. Question 7 Post-Event Impact Assessment

| Q7: What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization? |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
| Change | % | Impact | Total | % | Impact |
| 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 7 of 12 | 58% | Moderate |

Question 8: In your opinion, does the #MeToo movement media event help or hurt the women’s movement? This new Study 2 question was developed to serve two purposes. First, the researcher needed to know if each participant had an informed opinion of the #MeToo media events to attribute any change in perceptions to the movements’ influences. Second, the researcher wanted to understand whether males and females held positive or negative perceptions of the movements’ impact on sexual harassment and misconduct, and women’s equality issues in general.

All twelve participants had a strong understanding of the current #MeToo events and were well informed of the movements’ focus and impact since October 2017. Each had an equally strong opinion about the movements’ influences and impact on women’s issues. Five of 12 participants (three males, two females) viewed the #MeToo movement as completely positive for all, and felt it gave men and women a large, powerful, united voice against sexual misconduct. They also believed the movement, or one similar, could positively influence other gender inequality issues. Five of 12 participants (one male, four females) had mixed views on the #MeToo’s influence. They expressed very positive views about the awareness the movement generated and the voice it gave to victims of sexual assault and misconduct, but they feared some innocent lives were ruined over false accusations. They also expressed concerns that the
immense public focus could make innocent men withdraw from normal interactions with women to avoid a misunderstanding leading to a possible accusation. Others felt the movement might hurt gender relations to the point men would eventually retaliate against women. Two of 12 participants (two males) believed the #MeToo media events would only hurt gender relations and ultimately damage other women’s equality progress. Both stated it was good that sexual assault victims had a voice, but believed too many lives were destroyed by false accusations. Overall, a high number of men and women viewed the #MeToo media events in a very positive light and credited the movement with generating a significant positive impact on sexual assault and misconduct problems through awareness. They also commended the movement for bringing justice to numerous alleged sexual predators like Harvey Weinstein and Matt Lauer. The vast majority of men and women (10 of 12) felt strongly #MeToo, or another such high-profile media event, could greatly help with other gender equality issues through awareness and knowledge sharing.

Table 4.9. Question 8 Post-Event Views of #MeToo

| Q8: In your opinion, does the #MeToo movement media event help or hurt the women’s movement? |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| **Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward #MeToo** |
| Total | % | Impact |
| 10 of 12 | 83% | High |

Question 9: Is there anything you would like to add? In Study 1, this question generated a host of responses from participants continuing their thoughts on previous questions. The responses were predominantly negative and highlighted the extensive divide between men’s and women’s perceptions. Women admitted hurting themselves and others, but attributed the cause to men’s active and passive discrimination against them and their negative attitudes toward
women. Men generally perceived women as hurting themselves through the choices they make and their character attacks on one another. Men also believed women had an unfair advantage due to hiring quotas and special allowances that enable less qualified women to advance over their more qualified male counterparts. Neither gender accepted responsibility for contributing to the prevalent gender inequalities in the workplace. In Study 1, five of the eight participants also volunteered perceptions of sexual harassment, tensions, and undertones. Again, both genders placed blame on the opposite sex for creating the atmosphere that leads to the sexual problems within the workplace.

In Study 2, responses to the general information question were more positive. Six participants (three males, three females) expressed a bright outlook for women in the future, and attributed the positive change to the #MeToo movements’ influence. They believed #MeToo had opened a dialog between men and women that had strong potential for addressing and solving other gender equality problems. No additional negative thoughts were generated and shared in the responses to this question, nor was blame placed between genders. The positive shift in the male and female responses from Study 1 to Study 2, following the #MeToo media events indicated a moderate impact on men’s and women’s perceptions about the future and the potential for finally resolving the long-standing gender problems with a moderate number of participants holding positive post-event views.

**Table 4.10.** Question 9 Post-Event Impact Assessment

| Q9: Is there anything you would like to add? |
|---------------------------------------------|
| Post-Event Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women | Total Post-Event Positive Views Toward Women |
| Change | % | Impact | Total | % | Impact |
|--------|---|--------|-------|---|--------|
| 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 6 of 12 | 50% | Moderate |
Results

The overall results from this research showed a moderate affect on men’s and women’s perceptions about factors influencing women’s career advancement opportunities following the #MeToo media events. In varying degrees, all eight original interview participants developed more positive views about women’s workplace equality and advancement issues. The new participant control group responses aligned closely with the second interview responses from the eight original participants and gave the researcher confidence that perception changes in the second set of interviews were unaffected by demand effect.

Similar to Study 1 results, men and women generally believed women are less confident and have a lower competitive nature than men. A small number saw some improvement in those factors, while others voiced only guarded optimism and hope for a more positive shift in women’s strengths in those areas. That small change indicated a low impact on perceptions of women’s confidence and competitive nature following the #MeToo media events.

There was a more positive change in the groups’ perceptions about women’s workplace performance, emotions, and attitudes. Though women were generally viewed as less aggressive than men at problem solving, both genders saw some increased value in a more cautious, methodical approach to resolving issues. The group also expressed a slight improvement to women’s emotional reactions and attitudes toward another female’s advancement. The more positive shift showed a moderate impact on general perceptions of women’s workplace performance, emotions, and attitudes.

Participant’s general views of men’s and women’s workplace interactions, desires, and choices also improved more for women and less so for men. Women were viewed as more collaborative and people focused, while men were seen as more independent and mission

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focused. Nearly half the group saw value in both approaches. Likewise, men’s and women’s perceptions about family responsibilities shifted strongly from Study 1. In Study 2, participants mostly believed men are taking a much more active role in home and family responsibilities and giving women increased opportunities to focus on their careers. Interestingly, participants did not mention the sexual undertones that were heavily discussed in the first interview. They likely avoided the topic in the second interview because of the recent intense media focus on sexual harassment and misconduct. That positive change showed a strong moderate impact on general perceptions of workplace interactions, desires, and choices.

The most profound perception changes in this study centered on relationships. The majority of the group significantly changed their Study 1 perceptions and now believe many female leaders are actively engaged in helping subordinate females advance. Those significant perception changes indicated a high impact on men’s and women’s perceptions of women’s workplace relationships.

Overall, the #MeToo media events correlate strongly with the moderate shift in men’s and women’s perceptions of the psychological factors known to affect women’s advancement opportunities in the workplace.

**Table 4.11. Classification of Psychological Factors**

| Psychological Factors | Impact of #MeToo Media Event |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Confidence          | Low                          |
| 2 Competitive Nature  | Low                          |
| 3 Performance         | Moderate                     |
| 4 Emotions            | Moderate                     |
| 5 Attitudes           | Moderate                     |
| 6 Interactions        | Moderate                     |
| 7 Desires             | Moderate                     |
| 8 Choices             | Moderate                     |
| 9 Relationships       | High                         |
| Overall Assessment    | Moderate Impact              |
This research is grounded in the Organizational Justice and Psychological Contract Theories that focus on organizational fairness and perceived expectations for just treatment. With 83% of the participants intensely supporting the #MeToo movements’ efforts and applauding their accomplishments, the results strongly align with both theories. Though men and women still have differing views of the factors impacting women’s career advancement opportunities, the majority of male and female participants expressed a positive outlook for the future, expected positive change, and embraced just and equal treatment for both genders. With men and women receptive to changes that will ultimately cultivate workplace gender equalities, the next steps are identifying specific requirements to drive those changes, and determining how to effectively implement the requirements to generate gender equality.

These study results show widespread awareness focused intensely on women’s issues does generate positive change in the short-term. What remains unknown, however, is how long that positive change will last.

To further investigate the Qualitative Study 2 findings, chapter five quantitatively assesses the #MeToo events’ impact on men’s and women’s perceptions of the factors known to influence women’s career advancement opportunities by statistically analyzing pre- and post-event survey results.
CHAPTER FIVE:

QUANTITATIVE STUDY 3

The pre- and post-event interview analysis conducted in Qualitative Study 2 indicated a moderate change in gender specific perceptions with a significant shift from divergent to convergent viewpoints following the #MeToo media events. To validate those findings, the researcher conducted the Quantitative Study 3 experiment to assess changes in the post-event gender perceptions of the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. He then statistically compared the differences in men’s and women’s perceptions in the pre- and post-event data to assess changes in the gender perception gap.

Statement of Research Question

Quantitative Study 3 was designed to validate the findings in Study 2 and investigate RQ4 by comparing pre- and post-event data to assess changes in gender specific perceptions. The Study 3 hypothesis was tested by statistically measuring and comparing the pre- and post-event perception gaps to determine the amount of change generated through awareness and knowledge of women’s gender struggles.
RQ3: How significantly did the #MeToo media events influence gender specific perceptions about the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities?

RQ4: What level of impact did the #MeToo media events have on the gender perception gap regarding the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities?

Hypothesis:

The awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events will strongly correlate with reductions in the gender perception gap regarding factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities.

Research Method

A mixed method approach was used for this experimental study to ensure research rigor and validate the findings using two independent assessments. For Quantitative Study 3, the researcher replicated portions of three national-level Pew Research Center surveys conducted between 2013 and 2015. Twenty-three Pew survey questions that fell within the scope of this research and closely aligned with study objectives were regenerated for use as a post-event collection tool. The Pew survey questions and response options were replicated in their exact format to ensure consistency in the statistical investigation and most accurately measure perception changes following the #MeToo events.
Study Design

The 23 selected questions from previous Pew Research Center surveys were used to quantitatively measure differing gender perceptions of the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. This survey was conducted following the mass media coverage of the events surrounding the #MeToo movement and the post-event responses were compared to pre-event responses.

Type Data Collected

Response rates in each of those three Pew surveys came from a mostly balanced mix of males and females, which ranged from 1,807 to 2,002 respondents. The greatest gender response spread from all three Pew surveys was 47% female and 53% male.

The researcher developed and launched the Study 3 surveys using the Qualtrics survey software. He anonymously invited adult business professionals from three DBA cohorts, their interested business associates, and coworkers from his organization to participate. The email invitation generated 110 responses with 104 deemed valid and usable. Among the 104 that participated, 44% were female and 56% were male.

Analysis

After organizing pre-event data collected from the Pew Research Center surveys and post-event data collected from the researcher’s Qualtrics survey, a statistical analysis was conducted in RStudio using a Fisher’s exact test and Wilcoxon’s signed rank test.

The Fisher’s exact test is used to determine if the proportions of one nominal variable are different among the values of another nominal variable. The Fisher's exact test is considered
more accurate than the chi-square test when sample numbers are less than 1,000 (Handbook of Biological Statistics, 2018). Because the Fisher’s exact test gives an exact probability instead of an approximation, the researcher is confident pre- and post-event changes were minimally impacted by the small sample size (R. Thurman, personal communication, May 23, 2018). The Wilcoxon's signed rank test is similar to a dependent samples t-test but provides better results with ranked, or ordinal data (Wilcoxon’s Sign Test, 2018). It was also selected because the non-parametric test tends to perform well on small samples sizes (R. Thurman, personal communication, May 23, 2018). The Quantitative Analysis Conceptual Model in Figure 2 illustrates the statistical analysis structure used to assess gender perception changes.

![Quantitative Analysis Conceptual Model](image)

**Figure 5.1.** Study 3 Statistical Analysis Scheme

The researcher first separately compared men’s and women’s pre- and post-event perceptions to assess changes in gender specific perceptions following the #MeToo media events (RQ3). The researcher then statistically measured the pre- and post-event differences in men’s
and women’s perceptions and assessed changes in the gender perception gap following the
#MeToo media events (RQ4).

Of the 104 valid survey responses, 50 men and 39 women indicated familiarity with the
events surrounding the #MeToo movement and its impact on global sexual assault issues. Those
89 responses were used to address RQ3 and RQ4, and answer the research hypothesis.

Results
RQ3: How significantly did the #MeToo media events influence gender specific perceptions
about the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities?

Male Assessment

The statistical results in Table 5.1 show men’s perceptions changed significantly (p-value
<0.05) in 21 of 35, or 60%, of the post-event responses. Because the Fisher’s exact test only
identified significant change in responses, and did not indicate direction of change, the
researcher reviewed each line of responses to determine positive and negative direction. For the
male and female assessments, positive (P) labels were assigned to responses that indicated a
positive view toward women or women’s equality issues, or an increase in awareness about
women’s workplace issues. Negative (N) labels were assigned to responses that indicated a
negative view toward women or women’s equality issues, or a decrease in awareness about
women’s workplace issues.

Of the 21 significant changes in male post-event responses, 16 were positive and five
were negative. The overall assessment shows a 46% positive change rate and 14% negative
change rate in men’s post-event perceptions. Of additional interest in the male responses, men
contradicted themselves in Q9 and Q10 a., b., and c. In the post-event responses to Q9, more
men felt they had been discriminated against due to their gender. In the post-event responses to Q10 a., b., and c., fewer men believed they had been denied promotion, earned less salary, or were denied jobs due to gender. The researcher could not find a reason for, or explain the anomalies in those male responses.

Table 5.1. Male Significant Change Analysis

| Study Question | Pre-Post-Treatment P-Value | Significant Male Change <.05 | Notes on Positive (P) and Negative (N) Changes |
|----------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1              | Q1                         | 0.906                        |                                               |
| 2              | Q2                         | 0.362                        |                                               |
| 3              | Q3                         | 0.036                        | * P Improved view of female managers          |
| 4              | b.                         | 0.314                        |                                               |
| 5              | c.                         | 0.018                        | * P Improved view of female capabilities      |
| 6              | d.                         | <0.001                       | * P Recognize female networking issues        |
| 7              | e.                         | <0.001                       | * P Recognize female reluctance to ask for promotion |
| 8              | f.                         | 0.945                        |                                               |
| 9              | g.                         | 0.025                        | * P Recognize bias against females            |
| 10             | Q4                         | 0.014                        | * P Improved view of female leader advantages |
| 11             | Q5                         | 0.014                        | * P More neutral view on women having children |
| 12             | Q6                         | 0.010                        | * P More males helping with family            |
| 13             | Q7                         | 0.006                        | * P Male - Female views more closely aligned  |
| 14             | b.                         | 0.643                        |                                               |
| 15             | c.                         | 0.370                        |                                               |
| 16             | d.                         | 0.951                        |                                               |
| 17             | e.                         | 0.011                        | * P Male - Female views more closely aligned  |
| 18             | Q8                         | 0.005                        | * P More recognize female struggles in society|
| 19             | Q9                         | <0.001                       | * N* More males felt discriminated against due to gender |
| 20             | Q10                        | <0.001                       | * P More they were denied promotion due to gender |
| 21             | b.                         | 0.002                        | * P More they earned less salary due to gender |
| 22             | c.                         | 0.019                        | * P More they were denied jobs due to gender   |
| 23             | Q11                        | <0.001                       | * N Fewer males desire top leadership position |
| 24             | Q12                        | 0.059                        | (∗Q9 contradicts Q10, b., c.)                 |
| 25             | Q13                        | 0.428                        |                                               |
| 26             | Q14                        | <0.001                       | * P More recognize female struggles to advance|
| 27             | Q15                        | 0.428                        |                                               |
| 28             | Q16                        | 0.834                        |                                               |
| 29             | Q17                        | 0.231                        |                                               |
| 30             | Q18                        | <0.001                       | * N Increased number feel males more focused on careers |
| 31             | Q19                        | 0.010                        | * N More attribute pay imbalance to different occupations |
| 32             | b.                         | 0.018                        | * N More attribute pay imbalance to female choices |
| 33             | c.                         | 0.915                        |                                               |
| 34             | d.                         | 0.022                        | * P Fewer saw female work hours as major reason for less pay |
| 35             | Q20                        | 0.467                        |                                               |

21/35 Change in positive responses = 16/35 = 46%
60% Change in negative responses = 5/35 = 14%
Female Assessment

The statistical results in Table 5.2 show women’s perceptions changed significantly (p-value <0.05) in 18 of 35, or 51%, of the post-event responses. Of the 18 significant changes in female post-event responses, seven were positive and 11 were negative. The overall assessment shows a 20% positive change rate and 31% negative change rate in women’s post-event perceptions.

Table 5.2. Female Significant Change Analysis

| Study Question | Pre-Post-Treatment P-Value | Significant Female Change <.05 | Notes on Positive (P) and Negative (N) Changes |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Q1             | 0.582                     |                                |                                               |
| Q2             | 0.050                     | *                              | N More females felt easier for men to get promoted |
| Q3             | 0.842                     |                                |                                               |
| b.             | 0.260                     |                                |                                               |
| c.             | 0.141                     |                                |                                               |
| d.             | 0.119                     |                                |                                               |
| e.             | <0.001                    | *                              | P More recognize they are less likely to ask for promotion |
| f.             | <0.001                    | *                              | N More felt held to a higher standards than males |
| g.             | 0.026                     | *                              | N More felt businesses are not ready for female executives |
| Q4             | 0.020                     | *                              | P More felt increased female leaders would help women |
| Q5             | 0.006                     | *                              | N More think they have to sacrifice having children for career |
| Q6             | 0.324                     |                                |                                               |
| Q7             | 0.216                     |                                |                                               |
| b.             | 1.000                     |                                |                                               |
| c.             | 0.745                     |                                |                                               |
| d.             | 0.245                     |                                |                                               |
| e.             | 0.078                     |                                |                                               |
| Q8             | <0.001                    | *                              | N Increased number believe society favors men over women |
| Q9             | <0.001                    | *                              | N More females felt discriminated against due to gender |
| Q10            | 0.034                     | *                              | P Fewer believed they were denied promotion due to gender |
| Q11            | <0.001                    | *                              | P More females are boss or want leadership position |
| Q12            | <0.001                    | *                              | P More females asked for previous pay raises or promotions |
| Q13            | 0.019                     | *                              | N Country needs more change to create workplace equality |
| Q14            | <0.001                    | *                              | N Harder for women to advance in career |
| Q15            | 0.010                     | *                              | N More believe men earn more for same work |
| Q16            | <0.001                    | *                              | N More believe men earn more where they currently work |
| Q17            | <0.001                    | *                              | N Believe decreased number of opportunities in current work |
| Q18            | <0.001                    | *                              | P More think males and females focus equally on job |
| Q19            | 0.019                     |                                |                                               |
| b.             | 0.765                     |                                |                                               |
| c.             | 0.683                     |                                |                                               |
| d.             | <0.001                    | *                              | P Fewer saw female work hours as major reason for less pay |
| Q20            | 0.666                     |                                |                                               |

Change in positive responses = 7/35 = 20%
Change in negative responses = 11/35 = 31%
To maintain consistency between the qualitative and quantitative assessments, the researcher used the Qualitative Study 2 response assessment scale (Table 5.3), to categorize the post-event changes in male and female perceptions.

**Table 5.3. Response Assessment Scale**

| Impact Scale |  |
|--------------|---|
| 0%           | None |
| 1 - 33%      | Low  |
| 34 - 68%     | Moderate |
| 69 - 100%    | High |

Though males were more positively influenced than females, the results indicate both genders were moderately influenced. The independent outcomes of Quantitative Study 3 align with the findings in Qualitative Study 2 and validate the qualitative results. The statistical findings in Quantitative Study 3 address RQ3 and demonstrate an overall moderate impact on men’s and women’s perceptions of the factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities following the #MeToo media events.

**Gender Perception Gap Assessment**

RQ4: What level of impact did the #MeToo media events have on the gender perception gap regarding the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities?

Hypothesis: The awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events will strongly correlate with reductions in the gender perception gap regarding factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities. The statistical analysis in Table 5.4 shows males and females held significantly different (p-value <0.05) views in 31 of 35 pre-event responses.
The post-event data show males and females held significantly different views in 16 of 35 responses.

**Table 5.4. Perception Gap Analysis**

| Study Question | Pre-Treatment P-Value | Significant Difference <.05 | Post-Treatment P-Value | Significant Difference <.05 | Perception Gap Reduction |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Q1           | <0.001                | *                           | 0.015                  | *                           | **                      |
| 2 Q2           | <0.001                | *                           | 0.166                  | **                          |                         |
| 3 Q3           | <0.001                | *                           | 0.444                  | **                          |                         |
| 4 b.           | 0.013                 | *                           | 0.361                  | **                          |                         |
| 5 c.           | 0.012                 | *                           | 0.828                  | **                          |                         |
| 6 d.           | 0.003                 | *                           | 0.033                  | *                           |                         |
| 7 e.           | <0.001                | *                           | 0.027                  | *                           |                         |
| 8 f.           | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 9 g.           | <0.001                | *                           | 0.355                  | **                          |                         |
| 10 Q4          | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 11 Q5          | 0.102                 |                             | 0.530                  |                             |                         |
| 12 Q6          | 0.002                 | *                           | 0.986                  | **                          |                         |
| 13 Q7          | <0.001                | *                           | 0.016                  | *                           |                         |
| 14 b.          | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 15 c.          | <0.001                | *                           | 1.000                  | **                          |                         |
| 16 d.          | <0.001                | *                           | 0.083                  | **                          |                         |
| 17 e.          | <0.001                | *                           | 0.397                  | **                          |                         |
| 18 Q8          | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 19 Q9          | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 20 Q10         | 0.005                 | *                           | 0.196                  | **                          |                         |
| 21 b.          | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 22 c.          | 0.219                 |                             | 0.071                  |                             |                         |
| 23 Q11         | <0.001                | *                           | 0.004                  | *                           |                         |
| 24 Q12         | <0.001                | *                           | 0.246                  | **                          |                         |
| 25 Q13         | <0.001                | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 26 Q14         | <0.001                | *                           | 0.024                  | *                           |                         |
| 27 Q15         | <0.001                | *                           | 0.001                  | *                           |                         |
| 28 Q16         | 0.005                 | *                           | <0.001                 | *                           |                         |
| 29 Q17         | 0.002                 | *                           | 0.052                  | **                          |                         |
| 30 Q18         | 0.568                 |                             | 0.112                  |                             |                         |
| 31 Q19         | 0.649                 |                             | 0.085                  |                             |                         |
| 32 b.          | <0.001                | *                           | 0.124                  | **                          |                         |
| 33 c.          | <0.001                | *                           | 0.031                  | *                           |                         |
| 34 d.          | 0.007                 | *                           | 0.117                  | **                          |                         |
| 35 Q20         | 0.013                 | *                           | 0.062                  | **                          |                         |
| **31/35**      | **16/35**             | **15/35**                   | **89%**                | **46%**                     | **43%**                |

With 15 fewer significant differences in the post-event results, the researcher concluded the gender perception gap regarding the sociological and psychological factors known to affect
women’s career advancement opportunities was reduced by 43% following the #MeToo media events. Therefore, the research hypothesis is satisfied that there is a strong correlation between the awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events and reductions in the gender perception gap regarding factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities.
CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This research demonstrates how a host of sociological, psychological, and physiological factors combine to create an atmosphere that cultivates gender inequalities. The findings are consistent that both genders perceive differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers. The researcher also discovered that men and women have completely different views of the origins, causes, and effects of the factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities. The gender perception gap that results from men’s and women’s misunderstandings and misperceptions about the influencing factors and traits is problematic and clearly impedes gender equality. Though difficult to change, those misunderstandings and misperceptions must be resolved and the gender perception gap eliminated for women to achieve true workplace equality in pay, benefits, and advancement opportunities.

This research answered four related research questions (RQ), explored one research premise, and tested one research hypothesis using three units of analysis in a mixed method approach. Figure 6.1 illustrates how the Organizational Justice and Psychological Contract Theories formed the foundation of the overall research. Additionally, it demonstrates how the literature review, two qualitative interview studies, and a quantitative survey study provided
three independent means for investigating the research questions, premise, and hypothesis to ensure academic rigor and validity in the findings.

**Figure 6.1. Research Triangulation with Theory as the Foundation**

The literature review was the primary unit of analysis used to investigate RQ1: What sociological, psychological, and physiological factors affect women’s career advancement opportunities? An examination of 46 scholarly works identified three sociological factors, nine psychological factors, and two physiological factors perceived to affect women’s career advancement opportunities. That examination also highlighted specific traits women exhibit within the psychological factors that negatively impact their career advancement opportunities.

Believing men and women shared more positive attitudes and perceptions about those female traits than indicated in the literature review findings; the researcher conducted Qualitative Study 1 to test his premise that there are no gender perception differences in male and female workplace performance, confidence levels, competitive nature, willingness to accept professional risks, and choices that impact careers. Study 1 also addressed RQ2: How do gender specific
perceptions about male and female confidence levels, competitive nature, workplace
performance, emotions, interactions, relationships, attitudes, desires, and choices impact
women’s career advancement opportunities? Results from the qualitative interview study
strongly aligned with the literature review findings and failed to support the research premise.
The study confirmed both genders strongly believe women exhibit specific traits that negatively
impact their career advancement opportunities.

Additionally, the study identified a gender perception gap between men’s and women’s
views of the origins, causes, and effects of the factors influencing women’s’ career advancement
opportunities. Women believed the root cause of their inability to advance at the same rate as
men was ultimately caused by men actively and passively discriminating against them and
creating a promotion system that prevents women from advancing at the same rate. In contrast,
men believed women have the same opportunities and as much control over their careers as men.
Men believed women are only limited by their own desires, priorities, choices, and willingness to
sacrifice.

Viewing the gender perception gap as an obstacle to achieving true gender equality in the
workplace, the researcher began to explore measures to influence and possibly reduce the gap.
The timeliness and impact of the #MeToo media events provided a unique opportunity and
enabled the researcher to examine the events’ effects on gender specific perceptions of women’s
issues in the workplace.

Qualitative Study 2 replicated the approach used in Study 1 to examine RQ3: How
significantly did the #MeToo media events influence gender specific perceptions about the
factors affecting women’s career advancement opportunities? The Study 2 qualitative analysis
indicated a moderate shift from divergent gender perceptions in Study 1 to convergent viewpoints in Study 2 following the #MeToo media events.

For Quantitative Study 3, the researcher used two surveys to explore RQ4: What level of impact did the #MeToo media events have on the gender perception gap regarding the sociological and psychological factors known to affect women’s career advancement opportunities? Study 3 also addressed the research hypothesis: The awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo media events will strongly correlate with reductions in the gender perception gap regarding factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities.

The statistical analysis of Quantitative Study 3 supported the research hypothesis and showed a 43% reduction in the gender perception gap in the post-events assessment. The statistical results showed men’s perceptions changed moderately with a more positive view toward women’s issues. Women’s perceptions also changed moderately, but with a more negative view about workplace equality issues. Those outcomes aligned with the Qualitative Study 2 results and validated the Study 2 research findings. The overall statistical results demonstrate a strong impact on men’s and women’s perceptions and a largely reduced gender perception gap following the #MeToo media events.

Contributions

Though women’s rights and freedoms have improved markedly in the United States since the country’s founding, gender inequalities continue to confound researchers and leaders at all levels of government and private industry. To help resolve gender equality issues in the workplace, this research attempts to help men and women understand how their genetic makeup, coupled with societal and cultural influences, produce gender specific perceptions that contribute
to workplace inequalities. This study generates additional thoughts and ideas for continued research that may help resolve workplace inequality problems. This research also helps senior government and business leaders understand the breadth, depth, and impact of differing gender perceptions so they might develop actionable plans and implement processes and procedures that permanently assure full gender equality.

**Discussion**

Academic research consistently shows men and women differ significantly in the way they process information, solve problems, perceive events, interact with others, approach challenges, and view home and family responsibilities. Those differences have carried over from the earliest of times when men and women were physically designed and internally programmed for explicit tasks to ensure the survival of the human race. Over the millennia, civilization has evolved and, beyond giving birth, nearly eliminated the need for gender specific duties. Though civilization evolved, men’s and women’s physical design and internal programming has not progressed at the same rate. As a result, modern society still holds gender specific views and subconsciously assigns gender labels to different activities and careers.

Many of today’s gender problems stem from engrained instincts and social and cultural norms instilled and reinforced over a lifetime. Unlike outward physical features, the internal gender characteristics are hidden from view and far less understood. The lack of awareness, misperceptions, and ignorance about those internal features results in gender biases that ultimately lead to unequal treatment. Since core gender instincts remain intact and social and cultural changes progress slowly across generations, short-term changes must focus on increasing awareness and knowledge to alter perceptions and behavior.
Numerous U.S. laws, regulations, and policies designed to ensure workplace gender equality have proven highly ineffective at changing behavior. In spite of efforts to formally regulate the issues, gender and cultural ignorance and insensitivities that feed inequalities flourish. To illustrate the severity of those veiled problems, in March 2018, two distinguished U.S. Government organizations, with a combined workforce of nearly 40,000, proudly celebrated Women’s Appreciation Month in their standard public manner. To kick off the month of appreciation, the first organization chose to hold a panel discussion about courageous women in the workforce and focus on the attributes courageous women hold. Unfortunately for the organization and the women it intended to honor, the panel of five experts were all male. Due to widespread criticism following the announcement, the panel discussion was cancelled prior to the event.

The second organization, who was aware of the previous mistake, chose to pay tribute to women through a webpage announcement to the entire workforce. A male member of the organization’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office created and posted the following public announcement: “Yes, man made the car, train, boat and electric light. But it takes a woman to grow a life. How awesome is that?” That excerpt from the James Brown song, ‘It’s a Man’s World’ was again met with substantial criticism from the workforce and overwhelmingly viewed as insulting to women. The webpage was quickly taken down and the Director of the organization offered a formal email apology to the entire workforce in the days following.

Both situations were intended to honor women, and neither was likely created with malicious intent; but because of ignorance and insensitivities, each had a detrimental and demoralizing effect. Of particular interest to the web announcement situation, as the assigned equal opportunity enforcers, EEO personnel are expected to be the best trained, most informed,
and exhibit the greatest sensitivities toward gender and cultural issues. Those two situations demonstrate the lack of awareness, knowledge, and understanding that form the foundation of the longstanding gender problems and provide strong evidence as to why women’s equality issues in the workplace are far from resolved.

**Future Research**

Based on the consistent findings of this mixed method study, the researcher believes future research could focus on awareness, education, and accountability to more adequately address gender equality problems in the workplace and bring about lasting change. The events publicized by the #MeToo movement had a crucial impact in bringing sexual harassment and assault crimes into public view and helped highlight the pervasive problems women face on a daily basis. Those efforts demonstrate the impact awareness can have on public opinion and the altered behavior that results. Eighty-five percent of the male and female interview participants in this study strongly supported the #MeToo movement and its accomplishments. Similarly, 69% of the males and 85% of the females responding to the study survey felt parallel efforts could benefit other women’s movement issues and positively influence gender equality initiatives.

This research confirms men and women fail to understand each other, and often the motives behind their own actions. Evidence shows men are becoming more aware they subconsciously impact women’s advancement opportunities in the workplace, but they fail to understand the full effect of their actions or how to correct those issues. Women also openly admit their propensity to make negative career altering decisions, and the manner in which they hurt other women by actively undermining their authority and damaging their reputations. Like men, women also fail to understand why they are
compelled to hurt themselves and others, or how to reverse the trend. A strong majority of survey respondents (69% male, 88% female) believed formal education and training programs dedicated to understanding subtle gender differences are necessary to achieve gender equality.

Though this research shows awareness did help reduce the gender perception gap, it is unknown if those changes are permanent. More research is needed to determine appropriate measures to make full and permanent changes. Because of the level of ignorance and insensitivities present in the workplace regarding gender differences, the researcher believes future research could also focus on education programs and accountability initiatives as follow-ups to awareness.

In just five months, the #MeToo movement and related events generated a surge of awareness and outpourings from millions of victims of sexual crimes and misconduct. The movements’ intense focus gave many the strength and courage to share their stories for the first time and garnered support from 196 countries around the world (Langone, 2018). That event not only changed attitudes, perceptions, and outlooks; it also highlighted how awareness can shape public opinion that ultimately leads to action. More research could focus on identifying other effective means of generating awareness.

Men and women are markedly dissimilar in countless physical and mental aspects. A vastly complicated assortment of instincts, hormones, and emotions merge with a lifetime of social and cultural conditioning to cause the two genders to view, value, and approach problems, relationships, and communications differently. This research shows men and women fail to understand each other’s perspectives and their own personal impact on the gender equality problems. To eliminate those misperceptions and misunderstandings, the researcher believes
education programs could be developed, earnestly promoted, and continuously improved to effectively teach men and women about their hidden and misunderstood gender specific differences. Future research could explore the impact of instruction courses that precisely address the origins, causes, and effects of the sociological, psychological, and physiological factors known to impact women’s career advancement opportunities.

The awareness and knowledge generated by the #MeToo movement gave countless sexual assault victims the strength to report their attackers and see them held accountable for their crimes. Two possible forms of accountability could effectively drive permanent change in women’s equality issues. The first is the enforcement of established laws, policies, and regulations that are designed to ensure equality across cultures and throughout society. The #MeToo movement drove many powerful sexual predators out of the shadows and generated intense pressure for society to prosecute them for their crimes. The extent to which this level of accountability will create change is an empirical question. Future research could also focus on understanding whether a retribution free environment where men and women are comfortable holding themselves, and others, accountable to treat every member of society with respect and dignity could affect change.
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APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Women’s Career Advancement Conceptual Model

Women’s Career Advancement Conceptual Model
Appendix 2: Study 1 Gender Equality Interview Questions

1. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments?

2. What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities?

3. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties?

4. What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them?

5. What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? Please describe those various relationships.

6. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace?

7. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization?

8. Is there anything you would like to add?

9. What do you believe created your perceptions of those differences?
Appendix 3: Interview Informed Consent

Script for Obtaining Verbal Informed Consent

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: Interview Study of Factors Affecting Career Advancement Opportunities

The person who is in charge of this research study is Kevin Taliaferro. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

You are being asked to participate because your workplace experiences make you a reasonably informed person with an informed view. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how various factors affect gender equality issues in the workplace.

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to share your own personal views of those factors through a private interview with the Principal Investigator that should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The interview will be conducted in a private setting in the location of your choosing and at a time convenient to you. The Principal Investigator will do everything in his power to protect your identity and make it impossible for anyone other than the researcher to associate your responses with your identity.

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer and should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. This study is not linked to your employment status so your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your employment status in any way.

This research is considered to be minimal risk.

We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are. However, certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:
• The research team, including the Principal Investigator, and the Advising Professor, also known as the Research Chair.

• Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.) These include:
  - The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the staff that work for the IRB. Other individuals who work for USF that provide other kinds of oversight may also need to look at your records.

A federal law called Title IX protects your right to be free from sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. USF’s Title IX policy requires certain USF employees to report sexual harassment or sexual violence against any USF employee, student or group, but does not require researchers to report sexual harassment or sexual violence when they learn about it as part of conducting an IRB-approved study. If, as part of this study, you tell us about any sexual harassment or sexual violence that has happened to you, including rape or sexual assault, we are not required to report it to the University. If you have questions about Title IX or USF’s Title IX policy, please call USF’s Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Opportunity at (813) 974-4373.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the investigator, Kevin Taliaferro, at (727) 710-0003 or by email at kct3@mail.usf.edu.

If you have question about your rights as a research participant please contact the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

Would you like to participate in this study?
## Appendix 4: Study 1 Positivist Interview Coding

| Women | Neutral | Moderate | Moderate | Significant | Significant | Significant | Significant | Lette | Significant |
|-------|---------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| 2M, 3F | 2M, 3F | 1F | 1F | 2M, 3F | 2M | 3M | 1M | 1F | 1F |

### Primary

| Secondary | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Desire, Ambition | Confidence | Competition | Performance | Interactions, Relationships | Interactions, Relationships | Interactions, Relationships | Interactions, Relationships | Interactions, Relationships | Interactions, Relationships | Interactions, Relationships |
| FTBB022417 | Female, Baby Boomer, Woman of color, 40+ years experience | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior |
| FTG002285 | Female, Gen X, 23 years experience | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior |
| FTG003071 | Female, Gen X, 28 years experience | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, more obstructive, sexual and discriminatory behavior |
| PTHL022717 | Female, Millennial, 6 years experience | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men | Gender has no bearing, it is personality driven, women are “go getters”, and act the same as men |

### Secondary

| Overall Perceptions | FTBB022417 | FTG002285 | FTG003071 | PTHL022717 |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Women unfairly treated; women underperform, own ambitions, intentionally hurt each other, less competitive, less confident, less aggressive, choose family over career, discrimination and sexism hurt women | Women unfairly treated; women underperform, own ambitions, intentionally hurt each other, less competitive, less confident, less aggressive, choose family over career, discrimination and sexism hurt women | Women unfairly treated; women underperform, own ambitions, intentionally hurt each other, less competitive, less confident, less aggressive, choose family over career, discrimination and sexism hurt women | Women unfairly treated; women underperform, own ambitions, intentionally hurt each other, less competitive, less confident, less aggressive, choose family over career, discrimination and sexism hurt women | Women unfairly treated; women underperform, own ambitions, intentionally hurt each other, less competitive, less confident, less aggressive, choose family over career, discrimination and sexism hurt women |

### Women

- Women are more collaborative, considerate, and caring.
- They are more friendly and approachable.
- They are more practiced in negotiations, often being perceived as the one who makes concessions.
- They are more practiced in conflict situations, often being perceived as the one who resolves conflicts.
- They are more practiced inskip to ذات منصب، والذين ينظر إليهم كناشطين، يفعلون الأمور بنفس الطريقة.
- They are more practiced in navigating career advancement, often being perceived as the one who leads.
- They are more practiced in exploitation and manipulation, often being perceived as the one who manipulates others.
- They are more practiced in retention, often being perceived as the one who retains.
- They are more practiced in confidence, often being perceived as the one who is confident.
- They are more practiced in leadership, often being perceived as the one who leads.
- They are more practiced in emotional intelligence, often being perceived as the one who is emotional.
- They are more practiced in decision-making, often being perceived as the one who makes decisions.
- They are more practiced in communication, often being perceived as the one who communicates.
- They are more practiced in problem-solving, often being perceived as the one who solves problems.
- They are more practiced in networking, often being perceived as the one who networks.
- They are more practiced in collaboration, often being perceived as the one who collaborates.
- They are more practiced in negotiation, often being perceived as the one who negotiates.
- They are more practiced in conflict resolution, often being perceived as the one who resolves conflicts.
- They are more practiced in communication, often being perceived as the one who communicates.
- They are more practiced in decision-making, often being perceived as the one who makes decisions.
- They are more practiced in emotional intelligence, often being perceived as the one who is emotional.
- They are more practiced in leadership, often being perceived as the one who leads.
- They are more practiced in networking, often being perceived as the one who networks.
- They are more practiced in collaboration, often being perceived as the one who collaborates.
- They are more practiced in negotiation, often being perceived as the one who negotiates.
- They are more practiced in conflict resolution, often being perceived as the one who resolves conflicts.
- They are more practiced in communication, often being perceived as the one who communicates.
- They are more practiced in decision-making, often being perceived as the one who makes decisions.
- They are more practiced in emotional intelligence, often being perceived as the one who is emotional.
- They are more practiced in leadership, often being perceived as the one who leads.
- They are more practiced in networking, often being perceived as the one who networks.
- They are more practiced in collaboration, often being perceived as the one who collaborates.
- They are more practiced in negotiation, often being perceived as the one who negotiates.
- They are more practiced in conflict resolution, often being perceived as the one who resolves conflicts.
- They are more practiced in communication, often being perceived as the one who communicates.
| Male Perceptions | Male, Baby Boomer, 41 years experience | Male Perceptions | Male, Gen X, 20 years experience | Male Perceptions | Male, Gen X, 27 years experience | Male Perceptions | Male, Millennial, 15 years experience |
|------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| **Confidence**   | Women more aggressive and men, feel stronger need to pursue challenges to prove themselves | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, women are risk adverse and fear failure, men are confident and aggressive, women do not consider failure, men will take assignment only marginally qualified for | Women less confident, competitive, aggressive, women are risk adverse and fear failure, men are confident and aggressive, women do not consider failure, men will take assignment only marginally qualified for | Women more confident, competitive, aggressive, women are risk adverse and fear failure, men are confident and aggressive, women do not consider failure, men will take assignment only marginally qualified for | Women more aggressive and men, feel stronger need to pursue challenges to prove themselves | Women more aggressive and men, feel stronger need to pursue challenges to prove themselves | Women more aggressive and men, feel stronger need to pursue challenges to prove themselves |
| **Competition**  | Women more methodical and collaborative, care about impact, more cautious in solving problems; Men are decisive, move quickly, make quick decisions | Women avoid competition, emotional event, take loss personally, women are emotional and always consider impact of decisions on others; Men are logical and less caring if impact to feelings | Women use performance as direct reflection of personal value, see criticism as an attack, emotionally tied to criticism; Men associate performance and personal value, good at taking criticism | Women use performance as direct reflection of personal value, see criticism as an attack, emotionally tied to criticism; Men associate performance and personal value, good at taking criticism | Women are more methodical and collaborative, care about impact, more cautious in solving problems; Men are decisive, move quickly, make quick decisions | Women are more methodical and collaborative, care about impact, more cautious in solving problems; Men are decisive, move quickly, make quick decisions | Women are more methodical and collaborative, care about impact, more cautious in solving problems; Men are decisive, move quickly, make quick decisions |
| **Performance**  | Women get promoted to leadership | Women get promoted to leadership | Women get promoted to leadership | Women get promoted to leadership | Women get promoted to leadership | Women get promoted to leadership | Women get promoted to leadership |
| **Emotions**     | Women commonly practiced | Women commonly practiced | Women commonly practiced | Women commonly practiced | Women commonly practiced | Women commonly practiced | Women commonly practiced |
| **Relationships**| Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful | Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful | Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful | Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful | Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful | Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful | Women want to be part of the team, but they regularly use femininity and sexuality as a tool to gain an advantage; Men are frank but genuine; men easily fall victim to helplessness, women sexuality keeps human race going, cannot eliminate it outside or inside the workplace, instincts are too powerful |
| **Desires**      | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice | Women choose family over career, Men choose career over family, Women have to do more at home and suffer for their choice |
| **Chances**      | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents | Women are much more personable and make work and extension of extension of home; no separate work from personal life; genetics and conditioning keep us from being equal, we should accept and embrace difference, there is a big difference between equal treatment and fair treatment; All should be treated fairly based on capabilities and talents |
| **Open Forum**   | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; | Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers; |

Women are more aggressive than men, women are more methodical and collaborative and care more about impact of their decision; Men are more decisive; No difference in competitive nature or confidence; Queen bees are common and hurt other women; Women choose family over careers;
Appendix 5: Study 1 Interpretivist Interview Coding

Common Views of Men and Women

General (Men and Women) Views of Men
Men (are):
Competitive Nature
- more competitive

Risk/ Performance
- more aggressive and pursue challenges
- less risk averse
- mission focused

Confidence
- quick to make decisions

Instincts/ Choices
- do not consider feelings or impact to others
- transparent and have few agendas
- put careers first
- talk less; see no value
- take the news hard when a female colleague is promoted over them, but soon get over it
- challenge a new female leader, but will accept
- avoid drama

Sexuality
- go out of their way to help women

General (Men and Women) Views of Women
Women (are):
Confidence
- lack confidence – avoid more responsibility
- go out of their way to prove competence
- want to be respected for talents
- underestimate their value
- work harder for equal recognition

Risk/ Performance
- less aggressive
- methodical and collaborative; appear weak and indecisive (underperform)
- slow to make decisions; consider all repercussions
Competitive Nature
- not competitive; avoid competition (underperform)
- make decisions based on the impact to others

Instincts/ Choices
- nurturers
- relationship focused
- put family first at expense of career
- warm and people focused
- talk much; see value in sharing

Competition Leveling
- own worst enemies
- lack transparency; have many agendas
- criticize and tear other women down
- backstab and love to gossip
- want women to fail
- target and undermine successful women
- not happy about other women’s success
- take the news hard when a female colleague is promoted over them; never get over it
- undermine new female leaders and will never accept them; performance drops as result
- take directions from other women very personally

Queen Bee Syndrome
- Women supervisors treat women more harshly than men
- Women supervisors assimilate to men’s ways to fit in
- Women supervisors feel threatened by female subordinates and hurt them to eliminate competition
- Women who are manly are not respected by men or women

Women’s Unique Views of Men
Men (are):
Confidence
- overconfident – anxious for more responsibility
- overestimate their value

Discrimination
- cause women to underperform
- do not support wives’ careers
- minimize women’s career and family responsibilities and elevate their own importance
- take women less serious and ignore their input
- minimize women’s input and maximize their own
- threatened by women’s capabilities
- hold women back
- discriminate against women
- treat women unfairly
- surreptitiously discourage women from applying for jobs
- Men’s “good old boy” network hurts women
- make more money for equal performance
- criticize women and tear women down
- will not help female colleagues
- want women to fail
- target and undermine successful women

Sexuality
- sexually harass women
- responsible for the sexual undertones in the workplace

Competitive Nature
- withhold information because it equals power; gives advantage
- hard negotiators

Male Advantages
- get empathy
- fail; others view it as someone or something else’s fault
- establish networks
- find mentors

Women’s Unique Views of Women

Entitlement Beliefs
- need special family accommodations from organization

Discrimination
- make less money for equal performance
- Women fail; others view it as the woman being weak

Confidence
- weak negotiators
- difficulty establishing networks
- difficulty finding mentors
- share information because it equals power

Queen Bee
- Women supervisors believe women are not supposed to show emotions
- get ostracized
- attracted to drama

**Men’s Unique Views of Men**

Men (are):

**Confidence**
- unaffected emotionally by losing and take no personal offense
- take criticism well when it is about their performance and make no personal connections
- uncomfortable dealing with women due to misperceptions of their intentions
- concerned with offending women and worry about the possible fallout

**Performance**
- internally driven

**Discrimination**
- Men’s “good old boy” network hurts all, both men and women not in network
- more logical

**Instincts**
- blunt and straight forward
- frank and genuine with other men
- separate home and work; home is personal and work is impersonal

**Men’s Unique Views of Women**

Women (are):

**Sexuality**
- use sexuality and femininity as a tool in the workplace
- use femininity to act helpless or needy to gain male sympathy and control men
- responsible for the sexual undertones in the workplace

**Women’s Advantages**
- promoted to fill quotas
- have an unfair advantage due to their gender when competing with men for positions

**Women’s Disadvantages**
- cannot separate home and work; both home and work are personal
- externally driven
- affected emotionally by losing and view it as something wrong with them personally
- do not take criticism well about their performance and make personal connections
- are emotional
Appendix 6: Study 2 Interview Questions

1. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments?

2. What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities?

3. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties?

4. What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them?

5. What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? Please describe those various relationships.

6. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace?

7. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization?

8. Events associated with the Me Too Movement, such as the Harvey Weinstein and Matt Lauer sexual scandals, went viral on Twitter in October 2017 when actress Alyssa Milano encouraged victims of sexual harassment and assault to share their stories on #MeToo. In the months that followed, millions of people have come out of the shadows with their stories.

In your opinion, does this historic media event help or hurt the women’s movement?

9. Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix 7: Study 2 Interview Coding Example

Gender Interview Coding
(PFGX022817-030618)

1. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments?

030618 (Consistently negative toward men)
Women don’t pursue challenges as aggressively as men.
Women see it as why bother?
Women are outnumbered and feel disadvantaged.
Few women in all my years have aggressively pursued challenges and promotions.
Men are the majority and fill most of the leadership positions.

022817
Women are discouraged from applying for the challenging assignments because it is usually men doing the hiring.
Women follow an unwritten rule that these jobs are reserved for men and women need not apply.
Women know they don’t stand a chance, so they don’t even bother to apply.
Even though preselection is illegal, we all understand there is normally a favorite the hiring official is targeting and the supervisors all know how to make their favorites look like the most qualified on paper. I think this mindset and way of doing business is changing, but at a very slow pace.

2. What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities?

030618 (Somewhat more positive toward men in the second interview)
Women question the position and their qualifications to fill the position. They are less inclined to compete because they are less confident.
Men become more competitive and aggressive in the mid-level and high-level positions.
Men are more focused and throw their qualifications forward without question and are confident with their capabilities.

022817
Women have to work much harder than men to be considered for the same opportunities.
Men get all the leadership and advancement opportunities and I only get a carrot once in a while.
Men get the opportunities, though I am more skilled and it has to be because I am a woman.

3. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties?
Women take things more personally and are more likely to view things through an emotional lens.
Women have a hard time separating emotions from the process.
Women are more passionate than men and make emotional decisions about the solution.
Men are more methodical and less emotional.
Men gather the facts and make an unemotional decision on the solution.

022817
I think personality plays a big part in the way we all approach and resolve problems.
Women are more nurturing and always consider the personal impact on others before they make a decision. Less aggressive.
Women are more people focused.
Men don’t account for the personal side when making a decision.
Men are cold and mission focused.

4. What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them?

030618 (Slightly more positive on women in second interview)
Women compete more internally with other women, though they tend to try to hide it.
Women encourage each other and are happy when another woman gets promoted.
Men question my capabilities and qualifications anytime I get additional responsibilities.
Men don’t encourage women and they are less appreciative when a woman gets promoted.

022817
Women are happy to see other women advance, because it opens doors for them.
Women have been bitter toward me. (Contradictory statement from above)
Men will always question, “why her?”
Men don’t seem to question other men’s advancement, but they always seem to question women’s advancement.

5. What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? Please describe those various relationships.

030618 (Tremendous change from vicious female leaders to kind nurturing female leaders)
Women leaders are tremendously supportive of other women.
Female leaders take more interest in others than male leaders.
Women are nurturing and want to know how things are going with all who work for them…men and women.
Women are very encouraging and uplifting.
The two women supervisors I directly observed were just pure mean to other women. Female leaders degraded the women who worked for them by talking down to them and humiliating them in front of others. Female leaders did not talk to their male subordinates in the same manner; they always treated the men with respect. One was protecting her territory by insuring the other females were not a threat to her position. I think the other would tear women apart because she was just mean. She also humiliated them, she would destroy women on their annual appraisals, but not tell them throughout the year how they could improve their performance to get a better appraisal. She kept her expectations a secret so she could be sure the other women would fail.

6. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace?

030618 (Somewhat more positive toward women; far more positive toward men; no mention of sexuality in the workplace)

- Women are more nurturing and caring.
- Women often look out for others and are more outspoken on other’s behalf.
- Men are more focused on their work.
- Men care about others, they are just too absorbed in their tasks to worry about other people.

022817

As a woman, I stay out of their competitive games, I am as experienced, knowledgeable, and as capable as any man in the organization. Women never allow sexuality to interfere when helping an attractive man. Men compete constantly for opportunities to be in charge when the boss is gone, or to be the team lead on a project. Men’s egos can’t handle not being in charge and I am sure they would die if I was named team lead or asked to fill in for the boss. Men will flock to the attractive female that come in for help, unable to do enough for them. Men barely flinch when another man comes in for help. It seems there are always sexual undertones with the men.

7. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities impact job opportunities for the men and women employees in your organization?

030618 (Consistent message on women’s responsibilities; no additional negative comments toward men)

- I think it has a big impact on women!
- Women take on the majority of family responsibilities and are the ones who take off work to deal with family or home issues.
- Women’s extra responsibilities cause them much more stress and I think that keeps many women from seeking promotions.
Women want to get promoted but fear the impact the added responsibilities may have on their family and home life.

022817

Men’s requests for personal time or an exception to their normal schedule for family reasons are always granted without question. Women have to go out of their way to justify similar requests, which are often denied. As a single mother, my son is my number one priority, and though I have to keep this job to support him, I will pass on opportunities to further my career if I think they will impact our family life. I think some men share similar family priorities, but most men put work first. It is not that they care less for their families, they are just conditioned to believe work has to come first unless it is an emergency. Though work is my livelihood, it is a distant second priority to my family. I only know of one man who will drop work as quickly as me to attend to family issues. His wife is pregnant with their third child and he will leave work in a second if she is feeling bad or has an appointment.

8. Events associated with the Me Too Movement, such as the Harvey Weinstein and Matt Lauer sexual scandals, went viral on Twitter in October 2017 when actress Alyssa Milano encouraged victims of sexual harassment and assault to share their stories on #MeToo. In the months that followed, millions of people have come out of the shadows with their stories. In your opinion, does this media event help or hurt the women’s movement?

030618 (Mostly positive about MeToo Movement, but fears retaliation from men)

I actually have mixed views on that topic. I think it is extremely important for women to have a voice that is heard, especially when they are the victim of a crime, but I would like to see another more private mechanism for reporting. I am glad women have this way of being heard, but I fear men will begin to view it as women jumping on the bandwagon and they will eventually retaliate against women. The good news is, the mass media focus on this problem put society in check. It is good to publicly show that society will no longer accept this kind of behavior, even from the very powerful. I am afraid, however, the momentum of this movement will fade. I hope I am wrong about the movement losing momentum because I think this type of outlet has great potential to solve other issues for women. It could put other socially unacceptable practices under a similar microscope and drive real change for women.

9. Is there anything you would like to add?

030618

No, that is all I have.

022817

No, I think I covered everything already.
## Appendix 8: Study 2 Coded Response Assessment and Categorization

| Gender | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Post-Treatment Views | Total Positive Views Toward Women | Shift to More Positive Views Toward Women |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Study 1 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 2 of 8 | 25% | Low | 5 of 12 | 42% | Moderate |
| Study 2 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 2 of 8 | 25% | Low | 5 of 12 | 42% | Moderate |
| Study 3 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 5 of 12 | 42% | Moderate |
| Study 4 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 6 of 12 | 50% | Moderate |
| Study 5 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 4 of 8 | 50% | Moderate | 8 of 12 | 66% | Moderate |
| Study 6 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 3 of 8 | 38% | Moderate | 7 of 12 | 58% | Moderate |
| Study 7 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 4 of 8 | 50% | Moderate | 8 of 12 | 66% | Moderate |
| Study 8 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 5 of 8 | 63% | Low | 6 of 12 | 50% | Moderate |
| Study 9 | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | M | W | 4 of 8 | 50% | Moderate | 8 of 12 | 66% | Moderate |

| Color Code | Letter/Word Coding | Impact Scale |
|------------|--------------------|--------------|
| M = Men    | M = Women          | Impact Scale |
| 1-25       | 26-50              | Impact Scale |
| Neutral    | Mixed Review       | Impact Scale |
| 51-100     |                    | Impact Scale |

**Questions**

1. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women pursue challenging assignments?
2. What differences, if any, do you perceive in men’s and women’s performance when they compete for the same career advancement opportunities?
3. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women approach and resolve problems in performance of their duties?
4. What differences, if any, have you observed in the way men and women react when one of their female colleagues is promoted over them?
5. What have you witnessed in relation to the way female senior leaders interact with subordinate females? Please describe these various relationships.
6. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way men and women interact with others in the workplace?
7. What differences, if any, do you perceive in the way home and family responsibilities, impact job opportunities for men and women employees in your organization?
8. In your opinion, does this historic MeToo media event help or hurt the women’s movement?
9. Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix 9: Study 3 Survey Questions

Pro #00034187

Gender Perceptions of Factors Affecting Career Advancement Opportunities

USF DBA Dissertation Survey Study
PI – Kevin Taliaferro, USF DBA Student
Chair – Dr. Lisa Gaynor

D1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

D2. Do you have children under 18 years' of age living in your household?

- Yes
- No

D3. Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?

- Married
- Living with partner
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Never been married
- Don't know/Refused
Q1. Which one of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as BUSINESS LEADERS?

- Men generally make better business leaders than women
- Women generally make better business leaders than men
- In general, women and men make equally good business leaders
- No answer

Q2. Thinking about TOP EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN BUSINESS these days, would you say it is generally...

- Easier for men to get these positions
- Easier for women to get these positions
- Not much difference
- No answer

Q3. Very few top executive positions in business in this country are filled by women. Here is a list of some possible reasons why. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why there aren't more women in TOP EXECUTIVE BUSINESS POSITIONS.

| Reason                                                                 | Major Reason | Minor Reason | Not a Reason | No answer |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| a. Generally speaking, women don't make as good managers as men        |              |              |              |           |
| b. Women's responsibilities to family don't leave time for running a   |              |              |              |           |
| major corporation                                                      |              |              |              |           |
| c. Generally speaking, women aren't tough enough for business          |              |              |              |           |
| d. Women don't have access to the same kinds of personal networks and  |              |              |              |           |
| connections that men have                                              |              |              |              |           |
| Generally speaking, women are less likely than men to ask for           |              |              |              |           |
| promotions and raises                                                  |              |              |              |           |
| Women are held to higher standards than men and have to do more to     |              |              |              |           |
| prove themselves                                                       |              |              |              |           |
| Many businesses are not ready to hire women for top executive positions |              |              |              |           |
Q4. How much, if anything, do you think having more women in top leadership positions in business and government would do to improve the quality of life for all women?

- A lot
- Some
- Not much
- Nothing at all
- No answer

Q5. In general, what do you think is better for a woman who wants to reach a top executive position in business?

- Having children early on in her career
- Waiting until she is well-established in her career to have children
- Not having children at all
- No answer

Display This Question:
If Do you have children under 18 years' of age living in your household? Yes Is Selected

Q6. How difficult would you say it is for you personally to balance the responsibilities of your job with the responsibilities of your family?

- Very difficult
- Difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Not difficult
- Not too difficult
- Not at all difficult
- Don’t know/Refused
Q7. When it comes to each item below, do you do more than your (spouse/partner/child’s or children’s other parent), or does your (spouse/partner/child’s or children’s other parent) do more than you, or do you share this about equally?

| Task                                                                 | Respondent does more | Spouse/partner/other parent does more | Share about equally | Other | Don't know/Refused |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Managing your (child’s/children’s) schedule and activities          |                      |                                      |                     |       |                   |
| Taking care of your (child/children) when they are sick             |                      |                                      |                     |       |                   |
| Disciplining your (child/children)                                 |                      |                                      |                     |       |                   |
| Playing or doing activities with your (child/children)              |                      |                                      |                     |       |                   |
| Household chores and responsibilities                               |                      |                                      |                     |       |                   |

Q8. Do you think society generally treats men and women equally, or does it favor women over men, or men over women?

- Men and women equally
- Women over men
- Men over women
- Don't know/Refused

Q9. Have you ever been discriminated against at work because of your gender, or has this never happened to you?

- Yes
- No, never happened
- Don't know/Refused
Q10. Thinking more specifically, have any of the following things happened to you or not?

|                                | Yes | No | Don't know/Refused |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|-------------------|
| Been denied a promotion        |     |    |                   |
| because of your gender         |     |    |                   |
| Earned less salary than the    |     |    |                   |
| opposite sex because of your   |     |    |                   |
| gender                         |     |    |                   |
| Been turned down for a job     |     |    |                   |
| because of your gender         |     |    |                   |

Q11. Thinking about your work life, would you like to someday be a boss or one of the top managers?

- Yes, would like to be a boss or top manager
- No, would not like to do this
- Already the boss/top manager
- Depends
- Don't know/Refused

Q12. Have you ever asked for a pay raise or promotion in any job you've held?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Refused

Q13. Which of these two statements comes closer to your own views—even if neither is exactly right?

- This country has made the changes needed to give men and women equality in the workplace, OR
- This country needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace
- Don't know/Refused
Q14. How hard do you think it is for men and women to get top executive jobs in business or government these days? Generally, is it easier for men, easier for women, or isn't there much difference?

- Easier for men
- Easier for women
- No difference
- Don't know/Refused

Q15. What about salaries? These days, if a man and a woman are doing the same work, do you think?

- The man generally earns more
- The woman generally earns more
- Or, both earn the same amount
- Don't know/Refused

Q16. What about where you work? Do you think women are paid more, less, or about the same as men for doing the same job?

- Women paid more
- Women paid less
- About the same
- Not applicable
- Don't know/Refused
Q17. Where you work, do women have greater opportunities than men for promotion or advancement to top executive and professional positions, do women have fewer opportunities than men, or do men and women have about the same opportunities for promotion or advancement?

- Women have greater opportunities than men
- Women have fewer opportunities than men
- Men and women have about the same opportunities
- Not applicable
- Don't know/Refused

Q18. Now thinking about the people you know who are around your age. Which of the following most closely reflects your experience?

- The men I know are more focused on their jobs or careers than the women
- The women I know are more focused on their jobs or careers than the men
- Or, both are about equally focused on their jobs or careers
- Depends/Can't generalize
- Don't know/Refused

Q19. As you may know women earn less money, on average, than men. Please tell me whether you think each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason or a not a reason why women earn less than men.

| Reason                                                      | Major reason | Minor reason | Not a reason | Don't know/Refused |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Work in different occupations                               |              |              |              |                   |
| Make different choices about how to balance work and family  |              |              |              |                   |
| Are treated differently by employers                        |              |              |              |                   |
| Don't work the same number of hours                         |              |              |              |                   |
Q20. Do you mostly prefer having men as co-workers, women as co-workers, or doesn’t it matter to you?

- Prefer having men as co-workers
- Prefer having women as co-workers
- Doesn’t matter
- Don’t know/Refused

Q21. Which of the following have you heard more about and/or have the most knowledge of?

Please select 0 for "None at all", 1 for "Little", 2 for "Some", or 3 for "Much"

| 0       | 1       | 2       | 3       |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| The Me Too Movement or #MeToo (hashtag me too) on Twitter |         |         |         |
| The Harvey Weinstein sexual misconduct scandal |         |         |         |
| The Matt Lauer sexual misconduct scandal |         |         |         |
Q22. Events associated with the Me Too Movement went viral on Twitter in October 2017 when actress Alyssa Milano encouraged victims of sexual harassment and assault to share their stories on #MeToo. In the months that followed, millions of people have come out of the shadows with their stories. In your opinion, this event...

|                                                                 | Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Helps the women’s movement by encouraging victims of sexual misconduct to publicly share their stories. |                |       |                |                           |                  |          |                   |
| Hurts the women’s movement because it can ruin innocent lives through false accusations. |                |       |                |                           |                  |          |                   |
| Helps the women’s movement because it unites women with strength and courage to fight for full gender equality. |                |       |                |                           |                  |          |                   |
| Hurts the women’s movement because millions of women coming forward over such a short period gives the impression they are attacking men in general. |                |       |                |                           |                  |          |                   |
| Is proof social media can help solve other gender equality issues. |                |       |                |                           |                  |          |                   |
| Highlights the need for formal education programs to adequately address gender equality issues. |                |       |                |                           |                  |          |                   |

End of Survey
Appendix 10: Survey Informed Consent

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Pro # 00034187

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study. We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: Gender Perceptions of Factors Affecting Career Advancement Opportunities. The person who is in charge of this research study is Kevin Taliaferro. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of how various factors affect gender equality issues in the workplace. To do so, you are asked to share your own personal views of those factors through an anonymous online survey that should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Why are you being asked to take part?
We are asking you to take part in this research study because your workplace experiences make you a reasonably informed person with an informed view.

Study Procedures
If you take part in this study, you will be asked to share your perceptions of the factors affecting gender equality issues in the workplace. You will provide your responses in a roughly 15 minute electronic online survey. Your identity is anonymous and cannot be associated with this research. Likewise, your responses are anonymous and cannot be linked to your identity.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal
You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer; you are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. This study is not linked to your student or employment status so your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student of employment status in any way.
Benefits and Risks
We are unsure if you will receive any personal benefits by reading the material or taking part in this research study. There are no direct promotion or monetary benefits gained from taking part in this study.

This research is considered to be minimal risk.

Compensation
We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses because you are responding online.

Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are: Kevin Taliaferro, the Principal Investigator; Lisa Gaynor and John Townsend, Advising Professors from the University of South Florida, and The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB).

- It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet. However, your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person’s everyday use of the Internet. If you complete and submit an anonymous survey and later request your data be withdrawn, this may or may not be possible as the researcher may be unable to extract anonymous data from the database.

Contact Information
If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu. If you have questions regarding the research, please contact the Principal Investigator at (727) 710-0003 or by email at kct3@mail.usf.edu.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are. You can print a copy of this consent form for your records.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by proceeding with this survey that I am agreeing to take part in research and I am 18 years of age or older.

https://usf.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_5aoIyd7BgulDPx?Q_CHL=preview
Appendix 11: IRB Approval to Conduct Interviews

March 1, 2018

Kevin Taliaferro
COBA Executive Program
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Exempt Certification
IRB#: Pro00034198
Title: Interview Study of Factors Affecting Career Advancement Opportunities

Dear Mr. Taliaferro:

On 3/1/2018, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets criteria for exemption from the federal regulations as outlined by 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF HRPP policies and procedures.

Please note, as per USF HRPP Policy, once the Exempt determination is made, the application is closed in ARC. Any proposed or anticipated changes to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB review must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant an amendment or new application.

Given the determination of exemption, this application is being closed in ARC. This does not limit your ability to conduct your research project.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
Appendix 12: IRB Approval to Conduct Surveys

February 27, 2018

Kevin Taliaferro
COBA Executive Program
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Exempt Certification
IRB#: Pro00034187
Title: Influencing Gender Specific Perceptions about the Factors Affecting Women's Career Advancement Opportunities in the U.S.

Dear Mr. Taliaferro:

On 2/26/2018, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets criteria for exemption from the federal regulations as outlined by 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF HRPP policies and procedures.

Please note, as per USF HRPP Policy, once the Exempt determination is made, the application is closed in ARC. Any proposed or anticipated changes to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB review must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant an amendment or new application.

Given the determination of exemption, this application is being closed in ARC. This does not limit your ability to conduct your research project.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
Appendix 13: Email Invitation to Participate in Interview Study

Dear Business Professional,

My name is Kevin Taliaferro, a researcher from the University of South Florida, Muma College of Business.

I am conducting a research study (Pro#00034198) on how gender specific factors influence gender equality issues in the workplace. My ultimate goal is to add to the academic body of knowledge that may eventually help resolve longstanding gender equality issues. Part of my study involves collecting data to map and scale certain dynamics believed to influence the workplace environment.

As an experienced business professional, your views are immensely important to this research, and I am inviting you to participate in a short private interview that should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Your involvement is completely voluntary and there is no compensation or known benefits for participating. I will make every effort to protect your identified to include coding your response sheet so your identity and responses to the questions are known only to me as the researcher and so your responses cannot be linked back to you.

If you choose to participate, or if you have questions or concerns, please reply to this email or call Kevin Taliaferro at 727-710-0003 to schedule a time and location convenient to you.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Kevin Taliaferro
USF, Muma College of Business
Kct3@mail.usf.edu
727-710-0003
Dear Business Professional,

My name is Kevin Taliaferro, a researcher from the University of South Florida, Muma College of Business.

I am conducting a research study (Pro#00034187) on how gender specific factors influence gender equality issues in the workplace. My ultimate goal is to add to the academic body of knowledge that may eventually help resolve longstanding gender equality issues. Part of my study involves collecting data to map and scale certain dynamics believed to influence the workplace environment.

As an experienced business professional, your views are immensely important to this research, and I am inviting you to participate in a short online survey that should take less than 15 minutes to complete.

Your involvement is completely voluntary and there is no compensation or known benefits for participating. You cannot be identified by participating in this anonymous survey, and your responses to the questions are also anonymous and cannot be linked to you.

If you choose to participate, please open and read the attached consent form and click on the survey link at the bottom of the form.

If you have questions or concerns, please reply to this email or call Kevin Taliaferro at 727-710-0003.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
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