

CAREER PROGRESS: IMPACTS OF A SAME-GENDER MODEL¹

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Abstract

Over the past two decades women have been gaining access to management and administrative positions in increasing numbers. In contrast, however, with their male colleagues they often lag behind and consequently have not risen to top management positions. This paper examines the career progress of women who graduated from a post-secondary Management Development for Women Program, including the challenges encountered and strategies used in advancing into and through management. Survey methodology and documents (i.e., formal end of course evaluations, informal feedback from students, instructors, and mentors) were used to collect data for the study. The scholarly literature with respect to organizational factors, and advantages and disadvantages of same sex and mixed educational programs was reviewed. Analysis indicates that completion of a same-gender Program appears to be associated with improvements in economic outcomes such as advancement into higher levels of management and higher income. It is clear, however, that while the impacts of career interruptions and socially produced and historically constructed perceptions of women's role in the workplace and society cannot be overcome entirely by any one aspect of the social structure, undoubtedly a same-gender educational program that facilitates discourse on systemic causes of women's oppression significantly improved these women's employment outcomes.

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Résumé

Depuis les vingt dernières années, les femmes ont de plus en plus accès à des postes de gestion. Toutefois, contrairement à leurs collègues masculins, les femmes tardent à gravir les échelons jusqu'à la haute direction. Cet article examine l'avancement professionnel de femmes ayant diplômé d'un programme de formation à la gestion réservé aux femmes, y compris les défis rencontrés et les stratégies utilisées pour franchir les étapes vers la gestion. Les données relatives à notre étude proviennent de sondages et de divers documents (ex. évaluations de fin de cours, rétroaction informelle par les étudiantes, les personnes chargées de cours et accompagnatrices). Nous avons revu des articles scientifiques sur les facteurs organisationnels et les avantages et désavantages de programmes éducatifs mixtes et unisexes. Notre analyse montre que la complétion d'un programme de formation unisexe est synonyme de meilleures performances sur le plan économique, comme un meilleur avancement professionnel et un salaire plus élevé. Il est clair que l'interruption de carrière et les perceptions du rôle professionnel et social de la femme induites par la société et l'histoire ne peuvent être contrecarrées par aucun aspect de la structure sociale. Il n'en demeure pas moins cependant qu'un programme de formation unisexe, qui facilite le discours sur les causes systémiques de l'oppression des femmes, améliore de façon significative leurs chances d'avancement professionnel.

Over the past two decades women have been gaining access to management and administrative positions in increasing numbers. In contrast, however, with their male colleagues they often lag behind and consequently have not risen to top management positions: women hold 42 per cent of management, administrative, and executive positions, but occupy only 5 per cent of senior management positions. If the competitive edge of the future is the development of human resources then one primary goal of management development activities is to develop and promote skilled senior managers, including women, who will help organizations become more productive and competitive (Hite & McDonald, 1995; Okanlawon, 1994; Still, 1994). This study describes the effects of a same-gender management development program, as reported by graduates of the program.

Related literature

There is dearth of longitudinal studies on the links between women managers' barriers to full participation in senior management positions and program development activities. Some studies describe barriers to career progress within organizations, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages

of programs, including women-only and mixed-programs. The available literature, however, has little to say on the ways in which these women's careers unfold over time. This literature review examines organizational and educational factors that influence their career progress within management.

Organizational factors

The metaphor of the glass ceiling explains women's lack of career progress and identifies "what" and "how." It, however, fails to explain "why" the glass ceiling exists within organizations (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Simon, 1995; Still, 1992; Veale & Gold, 1998). Barriers to women's career success are multifaceted and exist at many levels of their career path. Some women, no doubt, lack the necessary knowledge to pursue managerial positions. Current organizational cultures, nevertheless, including the old boys' network, and formal and informal policies and practices act as barriers to their access and equal participation at senior management, inhibit their career progress, and impede their ability to be effective strategic decision-makers (Better-Reed & Moore, 1995; Harris, 1995; Melamed, 1995; Still, 1994; White, 1995).

The old boys' network implies that men in senior positions are more comfortable sharing relevant organizational knowledge and experiences with other men rather than with women. This male management culture is based on mateship rather than merit. There is also a clear pattern of adherence to career development models that are designed on traditional male career paths (that is, chronological career timetables and separation of work from family). Criteria of rank and specialization that are used in the selection process are cause for concern for women managers. Research has demonstrated that women are unable to follow progressive, linear career models because of their interrupted career patterns, and women managers concede that attitudes and prejudices have had a negative impact on their career paths (Alimo-Metcalf, 1993; Veale & Gold, 1998).

Organizational barriers that limit women's advancement into senior management positions also include isolation by male colleagues, lack of access to information, and lack of career advice and strategic career planning. Many successful women, however, suggest that the single most important factor that inhibits their career progress within management is the unwritten rules and practices within this male culture. Negative stereotypes of women, such as their perceived lack of political savvy and poor career planning, also contribute to their lack of career progress. A management culture that is closed rather than open and communicative, where competition rather than

teamwork is stressed, adds to their lack of advancement (Hau-Siu Chow, 1995; Martin, 1993; Okanlawon, 1994; Still, 1994; White, 1995).

Educational programs

Despite the inroads that women in management have made over the past few decades their disadvantages continue. Strategies to promote women into management are, therefore, critical. It is important, nevertheless, to determine the efficacy of these strategies, including women only and mixed management development programs in facilitating or inhibiting women into management levels (Herbert & Yost, 1978; Hite & McDonald, 1995; Larwood, & Wood, 1995; Macalpine, 1995; Northcraft & Gutek, 1993; Simpson, 1995).

The major advantage of women only Programs is that they address the role of management in creating gender outcomes, the role of gender in structuring power and opportunity within management, and the connections between these two processes. This allows women to move from complicity in their own oppression to the legitimization of their new perspectives on their experience. They realize that they are not alone in their experience, and that their experience is due to the structuring of power by gender within organizations. This knowledge has an immediate, dynamic, and positive impact on their confidence, self-image, management knowledge, and ability to act (Fagenson, 1993; Gallos, 1993; Goetz, 1992; Langrish, 1980; Macalpine, 1995).

A significant disadvantage of these Programs is that they stress differences between men and women and thus may have a negative effect in the long run. They also exclude and isolate women even further from the male-dominated management ranks, decrease the likelihood of gender integration in management and the workplace, and reinforce workforce segregation. Women may be viewed as getting preferential treatment and this may cause resentment, alienation, and tension. Women's isolation diminishes their ability to make strategic decisions because of lack of information, cooperation, and feedback. In addition, women are seen as deficient, and their male colleagues will challenge their competence as managers (Harlan & Weiss, 1980; Veale & Gold, 1998).

Participation in mixed programs enhances their management knowledge and leadership abilities without the disadvantage of isolation or ascribing a deficiency relative to men. These programs may allow prejudice and bias against women managers to be discussed, increase women's qualifications for management positions, and encourage them to stay with their companies for longer periods of time (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995).

In contrast, increased participation of women in mixed programs may lead to the incorrect assumption that women will achieve equal representation in senior management positions; increased participation does not guarantee equal outcomes. Equal representation in management positions is influenced by complex factors, including the individuals' decisions and choice to enter management, structural factors, and selection and hiring practices.

The Management Development for Women Certificate Program (MDW)

In recent years, a number of programs—including a university Continuing Education Division, Management Development for Women Program (MDW), inaugurated in 1993-94—have been developed that have been successful in providing post-secondary education to women. The Program is based on the assumption that by providing a supportive learning environment (through a residential component, peer learning support teams, mentors, learning and life styles inventories, women instructors, integrated content that incorporates issues on diversity, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, child care, and balancing work and family, and employers' sponsorship of the women) women will voice their concerns, challenge existing structures, grow and develop personally and professionally, acquire the requirement management and leadership skills, enhance their self-confidence, succeed at the Program, and advance into senior management.

The Program is an intensive, integrated series of three-day modules (Thursday, Friday, Saturday) of instruction once a month for ten-months. Participants must successfully complete all modules for a total of 256 contact hours of classroom instruction with a minimum grade point average of "C" to receive the Certificate. Assessments are relevant and useful workplace-based projects, assignments, presentations, and group and individual work. The Program provides instruction in subjects relevant to building a sound base of management knowledge in the areas of Introduction to Management, Organizational Behaviour and Leadership, Human Resource Management, Marketing and its Role in the Organization, Accounting Budgeting and Finance, Communication and Assertion for Managers, Business Strategy, Project Planning and Management, Information Management, Creative Problem solving, Program Evaluation, and Program Wrap-up. The Program begins with a four-day residential component that is used to establish group norms and build group cohesiveness. Learning and life styles inventories are used at this point to identify strengths and gaps, and determine peer learning support teams. Women are encouraged to participate in the structured

mentorship program that is designed around the Program. Mentors assume a number of roles, including role models, advisors, teachers, friends, and supports. The majority of women participate in the mentorship program.

The Program operates as a cohort; therefore, the completion and graduation rate is approximately 98 per cent yearly. Those who participate in the Program are employed full-time from a variety of private, public, and non-for-profit sectors, and are normally sponsored by their employers. To date, however, no studies have documented the career progress of the women who completed the Program to determine if they have advanced into higher levels of management, and if not, why not?

The Study

The objectives of this study are threefold to: investigate the relationship between the education and employment experiences of students who completed the MDW Certificate Program; develop a better understanding of the factors and barriers that influence the career progress of these students; and gather information that may help educators and employers understand how to act more effectively in developing opportunities for training and employment outcomes.

Population and sample

The population of women adult students was defined as former applicants of the MDW Program. Given that the purpose of the Program is to assist women to achieve management and leadership knowledge to advance into higher levels of management, the admission criteria serve to attract this population. The respondents for the study were drawn from all students who applied to the Program since its inception in 1993, excluding 2001. All 104 applicants for those years were invited to participate in the study.

Method

Survey methodology as well as documents such as formal course evaluations, including informal feedback from students, instructors, and mentors formed part of the data collection and contextual findings of the study (deLeeuw, 1992). The survey instrument contained structured and open-ended questions designed to gather demographic data, information related to education, work and program experience. The survey instrument was designed and pre-tested with a sample of four persons comparable to the population, and a number of questions were modified as a result of the feedback received. A letter containing the purpose of the study, the survey instrument, and a self-

addressed stamped envelope was mailed to the respondents. Data were collected over a four-month period.

Data analysis

The data set from the survey responses from 73 respondents, representing a response rate of 70 per cent, forms the basis for the findings reported in this study. The response rate allows for meaningful data analysis, reporting, and observations (Babbie, 1995). The data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive data and simple frequencies are reported for the structured items while categories and themes developed from the open-ended items expanded on structured items. The formal course evaluations and informal discussions with respondents, instructors, and mentors provide a context for the various design elements, including the residential component, the peer learning support teams, the learning and life styles inventories, and mentorship.

Findings

The data from the surveys are reported at the aggregate level and are discussed in sections corresponding to the purpose of the study: demographics, education and training experience, work experience, and relationships among the variables. Information on the various components of the Program gathered overtime through the informal discussions and formal evaluative documents are also used to inform the findings.

Demographics

Demographic data provide a profile of the women learners in this study. Data include information on age, family status, and education of respondents and parents.

Age

The majority of the respondents were between 32 and 51 years of age. Six percent were 31 years and under; 49 per cent were 32-41 years; 42 per cent were 42-51 years; and 3 per cent were 52 years and over.

Family status

The majority (72 per cent) of the respondents were married with dependent children (69 per cent); 16 per cent were separated, divorced, or widowed; and 11 per cent were single. While 96 per cent reported that they did not have dependents other than children, 4 per cent indicated that they had dependents that were not children (i.e., aging parents). While the majority of the respondents (89 per cent) did not identify themselves as members of a visible

minority, 7 per cent were Aboriginal, 3 per cent were Asian, and 1 per cent was Black.

Educational level of respondents and parents

In the year in which they were admitted to the Program, 97 per cent of the respondents had education beyond the secondary level: 39 per cent had completed a trade/vocational—diploma or certificate program; 27 per cent had completed some college or university; 27 per cent had completed a bachelor's degree; 3 per cent had completed a master's degree; and 1 per cent had completed a doctoral degree. Only a small number of respondents (3 per cent) had not gone beyond high school. In comparison, only 33 per cent of respondents' fathers, and 35 per cent of their mothers had education beyond the secondary level.

Education and training experience

The survey collected information related to the education and training experiences of respondents while in the Program. Questions included completion rates and satisfaction with Program, motivations for and benefits of taking the Program, position before and after completion of the Program, barriers experienced, and supports used while in the Program.

Completion rates and satisfaction with program

The majority of respondents (96 per cent) completed the Program, 88 per cent reported that they would recommend the Program, and 86 per cent would take another course or Program with the university. Thirty seven percent indicated that a same-sex Program would meet the changing needs of today's managers, while 46 per cent recommended a mixed program. Seventeen percent, who checked the other category, supported a program that included gender issues and build participants' self-confidence.

Motivation and benefits for taking program

Respondents were asked to check all the items that applied for their reasons for taking the Program. The major motivation was goal oriented; the majority of respondents reported that their reasons were job related (i.e., improve chances for promotion—68 per cent, prepare for job change/loss or retention—38 per cent, and develop different skill set—25 per cent), and professional development (85 per cent). Using the open-ended category, 14 per cent further elaborated that developing self-confidence (i.e., personal development) was an important motivation.

Using an open-ended question, respondents were asked to identify the benefits they derived from taking the Program. The major benefits that emerged from their responses were: to acquire management and leadership knowledge (i.e., learn new knowledge—31 per cent, gain skill sets—11 per cent, and refresh/update knowledge—10 per cent), and self-empowerment (i.e., personal development—19 per cent, network—17 per cent, gain self-confidence—11 per cent, and increase political awareness—3 per cent). These benefits were consistent with their motivation for taking the Program.

Position upon entering and completing the program

Respondents self-described their position upon entering the Program.

Positions	Before	After
Senior Mgmt	—	18%
Mid-Lower Mgmt	29%	57%
Entry Level-Mgmt	71%	9%
Left company	—	16%

At least 29 per cent were in middle to lower management positions: 8 per cent were in mid-management positions (i.e., manager, and senior type position); 21 per cent were in lower management positions (i.e., engineer, and architect); and 71 per cent were in entry-level management positions (i.e., credit advisors, instructors, constable/sergeant, technical, sales representatives, clerical and/or administrative, and supervisor/leader).

At the time of the survey, 76 per cent of the respondents reported that their jobs had changed upon completion of the Program. They were asked to check all the items that applied for the change in their positions. Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that they had expanded roles, and 35 per cent stated that they were assigned more projects. Three-quarters of the respondents reported that they were promoted: 18 per cent reported that they were promoted to senior management positions; and 57 per cent indicated that they were promoted to a higher level (i.e., mid-management). At least 9 per cent had lateral moves with the organization, and 16 per cent indicated that they left the company and/or started their own business.

Barriers and supports while in program

To the open-ended questions on barriers encountered and supports used to overcome barriers, a number of categories were developed from the responses. Time management (64 per cent) (i.e., balancing work, family, and Program responsibilities) was the major difficulty respondents experienced while in the Program. Other difficulties cited were: instructional difficulty

(15 per cent), lack of recognition of Program in the workplace (10 per cent), and administration of Program (2 per cent). A small number (9 per cent) indicated that they experienced no difficulty.

To resolve the difficulties that they experienced while in the Program, the majority of respondents reported that they used their own abilities: strategic planning (32 per cent), negotiate with instructor (30 per cent), negotiate with partner (17 per cent), request input from peer learning support group, including administrative staff (8 per cent), and use hard work (2 per cent). Eleven percent, however, reported that they did not address the difficulties.

A number of categories were developed in response to the open-ended question on supports used while in the Program. The majority of respondents (74 per cent) reported that they relied on informal, internal forms of supports (i.e., personal, family, and friends), while the others used formal, external forms of support (i.e., peer learning support teams, mentors, and colleagues in the workplace).

Work experience

The survey gathered data regarding the work experience of respondents before and after completion of the Program. Questions included level of income before and after the Program, satisfaction with job and income, challenges experienced in moving into management positions, and strategies used to overcome these challenges.

Level of income

All the respondents were employed in full-time positions upon entry into the Program. After taking the Program, there were marked shifts in their income categories (see Table 1 below).

Income	Before	After
Under \$24,000	2%	3%
\$25,000-\$39,000	46%	12%
\$40,000-\$54,999	31%	35%
\$55,000-\$69,999	21%	30%
\$70,000-\$84,999	—	15%
\$85,000-\$100,000	—	5%

Table 1: Level in Income

Job and income satisfaction

While job satisfaction was overall very high, satisfaction with level of pay was lower. The majority (85 per cent) of the respondents reported that based on their experience and education and training, they were qualified for their jobs, and were either very satisfied (42 per cent) or satisfied (50 per cent) with their jobs. In contrast, 25 per cent were very satisfied, and 57 per cent were satisfied with their pay. Twice as many respondents (18 per cent versus 8 per cent), however, reported that they were dissatisfied with their pay rather than their jobs.

Challenges faced and strategies used on the job

Categories were generated from respondents' responses to the open-ended question on challenges to promotion. Systemic or a male management culture was the dominant challenge respondents identified: a closed management culture (46 per cent), the old boys' club (11 per cent), systemic policies and practices such as promotion based on seniority and rank and a chronological career timetable (9 per cent), and ageism (3 per cent). Nineteen per cent reported that they experienced no challenges, 9 per cent felt that their work was not valued, and 3% reported that they did not have the education qualification.

Categories were generated from respondents' responses to the open-ended question on strategies used to overcome barriers on the job. A proactive strategy was the dominant strategy that respondents cited: actively challenge the system (53 per cent); seek recognition by self-promoting (14 per cent); and take more education (14 per cent). A small number (19 per cent) took a reactive position (i.e., being patient).

Discussion

There is little research regarding same-gender Management Development Programs and women's career progress. Although conclusions cannot be drawn from this study, a number of observations can be made regarding the fit between the data and the picture presented in the literature.

Demographics

Since there were not enough participants who identified themselves as visible minority, meaningful analyses for these demographic characteristics were not conducted. Further research must be done to make any meaningful conclusions about the experiences of these students. Nevertheless, a picture was constructed of the typical respondent in this study. She was a highly goal-oriented, motivated white woman between 32 and 51 years old, married,

and with dependent children. Before taking the Program, she was employed full-time in an entry-level management position, and earned a salary of \$25,000 to \$39,999 per year. Upon completion of the Program, she moves to a middle-level management position, earns an average salary of \$47,499 to \$62,499, is satisfied with her job but less so with her income, and has acquired the management education and self-confidence to advance in her job.

Her parents are likely to have completed high school, and have taken some post-secondary education. She, however, is likely to be more educated than her parents, having completed high school, post-secondary education, including some college or university, diploma or certificate, and a bachelor or master's degree.

These data are consistent with the literature that suggests that children of white middle-class parents, on average, tend to be more educated than their parents, and that increased education and training leads to improvements in income and economic well-being. The data further reflect the common observation that over the past 20 years, women in general are likely to pursue upgrading and post-secondary education and training opportunities. These respondents have improved their careers through participation in the Program; they have moved into higher levels of management, and are earning more money (Grayson, 1997).

Education and training experience

The high completion rate and stable employment may reflect respondents' high need for achievement, attitudes, and experiences that were not explored in this study. Respondents appeared to have placed a high value on the Program for helping them to increase their career and socio-economic prospects—improve chances of promotion and consequently earn a higher income, prepare for job change/loss or retention, and develop skill set—not to achieve social goals or for the joy of learning, in and of itself. They are, therefore, goal-oriented (Houle, 1961). Their two main interrelated benefits (i.e., professional and personal development) are consistent with their motivation for taking the Program (i.e., to achieve the necessary management and leadership knowledge for advancement, and self-empowerment). It is clear that economic motivation is a compelling factor that contributed to the women's achievement. This finding is consistent with the literature (Gerardi, 1996).

Nevertheless, motivation, in and of itself, does not remove barriers to advancement into management. The Program also contributed to their improved outcomes. At least half of the women gained self-empowerment

(i.e., personal development, network, self-confidence, and political awareness), and appeared to believe in their ability (i.e., they acquired management and leadership knowledge). They were able to identify and actively challenge the systemic policies and practices within the male management culture that were barriers to their career progress. Although the problems that the women faced were external to the Program; they were within attitudes, and practices of organizations that discriminated against them, the Program helped them challenge these barriers, validate their experiences, and gain more confidence. This finding is consistent with the literature (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Macalpine, 1995; Simpson, 1995).

A small number, however, appeared to remain complicit in their oppression. Their deeply held beliefs, perceptions, and realities about their place and capacities in the workplace and society as a whole, may have influenced their decisions and career advancement—they may have opted for the best possible course of action given their circumstances or may have felt powerless to act to overcome the barriers they encountered; they, however, decided to be patient. This finding is consistent with the literature (Hayes, Flannery, Brooks, Tisdell & Hugo, 2000; Tanton, 1994; Weedon, 1997).

Formal and informal program evaluations provided the contextual findings of the study. Respondents spoke of the positive, supportive, collaborative, and responsive learning environment of the Program that was facilitated through the residential component, peer learning support teams, the mentorship program, supportive women instructors, and classmates. The women gained insight into their strengths and developmental areas through the use of the learning and life styles inventories (LSIs). Through discussions with peers, instructors, and mentors about the results of their LSIs, and workplace and family issues, they indicated that they took responsibility for their hard work, effort, abilities, and successes as well as their shortcomings. The women reported that the supportive learning environment, and the knowledge they gained in the Program (i.e., gender discrimination, sexual harassment, child-care, and balancing work and family) also had a positive impact on their self-confidence, self-image, and ability to act. These findings are consistent with the literature and supported by the survey data (Goetz, 1992; Macalpine, 1995; Rosener, 1990; Rosenthal, 1995; Veale & Gold, 1998).

Respondents experienced a number of obstacles while in the Program. The major barrier was balancing work, family and Program responsibilities. This is consistent with the literature that states that women have less time because they are still the primary caregivers and managers of the family

responsibilities (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Macalpine, 1995; Melamed, 1995). These women developed problem-solving and help-seeking abilities to overcome some of the barriers. They used the strategic planning and negotiation knowledge and skills gained in the Program with partners, instructors, administrative staff, and peers. The majority of the respondents also used their informal, personal support networks, including family and friends, while some used formal supports such as peer learning support teams, mentors, and colleagues.

Work experience

For these women, the findings suggest that the Program may be one very successful avenue to improved socioeconomic status. The majority of women have moved up in the organization, and have increased their income; discrepancies in jobs and income (that is, labor market outcomes) are being reduced (Statistics Canada, 1993), as well as the numbers of women in management are being increased. This finding also supports aspects of socialization theory in that human capital is increased as learners gain more knowledge they would not otherwise have. They, therefore, may move up into higher levels with the organization and earn more income than high school graduates or other women in their organization because they have the knowledge employers appear to support and value (Grayson, 1997). Since employers' sponsorship of the women into the Program was a key component of the Program, employers may be recognizing and valuing the knowledge that the women gained upon completion of the Program by offering promotions, expanding job responsibilities, and providing project-based opportunities.

There appears to be a positive relationship between the knowledge the women gained in the Program and full-time employment. This suggests that having more education, including a post-secondary certificate, enhance the women's employment and income opportunities. The Program, therefore, appears to have assisted these women in moving into and through the management ranks as well as improving their socioeconomic status (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). The women also appeared to have gained more job-relevant attributes (i.e., educational attainment, ability, and confidence) that facilitated their success (Melamed, 1995). A small number, however, felt that they had to leave the organization to start their own company. This finding is consistent with the literature that suggests that in order to advance women have to move to another company, or leave the company and start their own business because the closed, male management culture continues to be a

barrier to women's advancement (Haberfeld, 1992; Melamed, 1995, 1996; Still, 1994).

The women experienced many challenges to advancing into higher levels within the organization. The major barrier was systemic, including a male management culture that was closed, the old boys' club, and policies and practices that discriminated against them such as promotion based on seniority, rank, or linear rather than spiral career paths. Within some sectors, adherence to career development models based on traditional male career paths, such as chronological career timetables and separation of work from family responsibilities, may have had a negative impact on some of these women's career paths. These findings are consistent with the literature with respect to the women's abilities to overcome the glass ceiling (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Simon, 1995; Still, 1992; Veale & Gold, 1998). Upon completion of the Program, and contrary to the literature, the majority of these women did not attribute personal challenges such as self-confidence, ability, or devaluation of achievement and success as barriers to their career advancement; systemic and cultural rather than personal factors appeared to be the major barriers to these women's advancement.

Conclusion

This initial analysis of the data on the women who have taken the Program reinforces a number of themes found in the literature. It suggests that completion of a same-gender post-secondary Management Development Certificate Program appears to be associated with improvements in economic outcomes such as advancement into higher levels of management and higher income. To this extent, the data support a human capital model.

With respect to the relationship between post-secondary education and job skills, the data suggest that the Program developed the needed management knowledge. The data also suggest that there is a close fit between work place-based knowledge, skills, and abilities and the formal curriculum and delivery methods of the Program. While there remains much to be learned about skill acquisition and use in the workplace, the data support the fit of a formal, same-gender post-secondary Management Development Certificate Program as a vehicle for obtaining the job-relevant attributes and work skills that women need to advance into and through management.

With respect to motivation for participating in the Program, the majority of the women demonstrated a high need to achieve and saw in the Program an opportunity to attain their concrete goals. They achieved insight into their

strengths and weakness, and took responsibility for their hard work, effort, and abilities, and successes as well as their shortcomings. They demonstrated considerable confidence in their ability, personal growth, and development by their willingness and awareness to confront the systems of privilege and patriarchy to their advancement. They used strategic planning, problem-solving and help seeking behaviors as well as formal and informal supports, including family, friends, peers, mentors, and colleagues to assist them.

A lack of self-confidence was a dispositional barrier that a small number of respondents may have displayed in their failure to advance in their career; these women remaining complicit in their oppression were unable or unwilling to challenge the systemic obstacles that they faced. Alternatively, they might not lack self-confidence, but might believe that they had achieved their maximum potential by attaining access to men's knowledge and management roles. As a result, they were not prepared to act to change the status quo; they remained silent. It is clear, however, that motivation to succeed and the willingness and confidence to challenge gender issues, and power relationships in the larger social structure, including family and workplaces that they gained from the Program are compelling factors that contributed to the achievements of the women in penetrating the glass ceiling.

With respect to the women's orientation to learning, it appears that, almost without exception, they were goal-oriented. They saw the Program as an opportunity to achieve the knowledge to advance into higher levels of management and earn more income. They took the Program in order to increase their career and socioeconomic prospects, not to achieve social goals or for the joy of learning, in and of itself. The findings of this study are consistent with the literature with regard to the observation that post-secondary education can shrink the gap in employment and income and provide a means for social mobility (Gerardi, 1996; and Statistics Canada, 1993). While the impacts of career interruptions and socially produced and historically constructed perceptions of women's role in the workplace and society cannot be overcome entirely by any one aspect of the social structure, undoubtedly this Program facilitated discourse on systemic causes of women's oppression, and significantly improved these women's employment outcomes.

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