FRAMING LEADERSHIP RHETORIC: EXPLORING GENDER (IN) EQUALITY

IN CORPORATE TRAINING MATERIAL

By

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Framing Leadership Rhetoric: Exploring Gender (In) equality in Corporate Training Material

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This study explores gender equality in the workplace using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Two sets of data were analyzed: leadership training and development materials and in-depth interviews. This two-fold method allowed for a holistic approach to analyzing data and made it possible to compare findings from the textual analysis with insights gained from the interviews. This study revealed a lack of attention being devoted to developing and promoting leadership training materials and experiences that acknowledge gender differences and encourage gender equality.

It was determined that overall, gender associated rhetoric used in the course titles and descriptions made up barely 6% of the total word count. However, the focus of leadership development materials were nine times more likely to support the leadership development of men based on the topics of the courses offered. Only four courses focused on topics supporting the development of business and financial strategic acumen.

Interviews exposed the belief that many of the most important leadership skills that women possess are not learned, but rather they are innate. Women also believed that their most beneficial development experiences came from collaborative interactive encounters where they had the opportunity for discussion, particularly mentorships.

Keywords: Gender bias, workplace inequality, Leadership development

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DEDICATION

To those who see the value of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and are fighting every day to help us achieve a more equitable society. In the words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed sitizen can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

And to those yet to understand the benefits of a more equitable workforce or are perhaps uncertain of the role you play, this work is for you. Inspired by Madam C.J. Walker's quote: "I am not satisfied in making money for myself. I endeavor to provide employment to hundreds of women of my race." Likewise, I will not be satisfied merely making it into a top leadership position myself. I endeavor to use the finding of this study as a way to equip and empower both individuals and organizations alike.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Why Gender Equality?

The concept of gender equality affects every aspect of our individual lives, interpersonal relationships, corporations, communities, and countries. Gender equality is not a "female" issue; it affects both men and women. Taking action toward gender equality in organizations is not simply about doing what is just or fair. Author Michael Kimmel makes a compelling argument in his 2015 Ted Talk that gender equality not only benefits women, but men, couples, corporations, and countries alike. Beginning his talk with some implications of gender equality at the micro-level, Kimmel argues that the most satisfied married couples are those who share housework and childcare duties (Galovan, 2013). The more egalitarian our interpersonal relationships, the happier both partners are. At the macro-level, Kimmel explains that countries that score highest on the equality scale, such as Sweden, Denmark, and Canada, also score high on the happiness scale (Kimmel, 2013, 2015; Wright, 2016).

This introductory chapter covers three main topics. The first section argues for gender equality in the workplace, focusing on the importance of and benefits to both the organization and the individual. The second section explains the role that corporations themselves play in ameliorating gender bias in the workplace and addresses the significance of corporate leadership training and development programs. The third and final section of this introductory chapter builds a framework for readers, which serves as a way to develop their understanding of why language matters.

The argument that gender equality is in the best interest of all parties is clear, but there are still many challenges facing women in the workplace keeping women out of top leadership positions. These challenges can be refigured as questions for exploration: What does gender equality mean for the workplace? What are its costs and potential benefits to men, women, and companies? What is the role of organizations in achieving gender equality in the workplace? How can organizations effectively teach and convey leadership skills in a way that promotes gender equality? Such questions highlight the problem in our modern workplace and are particularly relevant in light of recent literature that points us toward what I term as *the false hope of the decreasing wage gap* and is addressed in greater detail in chapter two.

Much research supports Kimmel's argument. In organizational communication research findings suggest that the more equitable companies are in the way of pay, promotions, and opportunities, the happier their workers are (Morgan Stanley, 2016a: Yee, et al., 2016: Saad, 2015). These organizations report to have lower turnover and attrition rates, greater retention, higher job satisfaction, and higher productivity. In general, organizational and managerial communication research supports the notion that gender inequality harms not only its victims but also the very corporations that unwittingly reinforce it through their day-to-day communication practices. The benefits seem clear, so what is stopping companies in the United States from achieving a gender equitable workplace? This research addresses the role that corporations might play in promoting gender (in) equality through corporate leadership development. Thus, this thesis critically investigates corporate training materials with the goal of discovering some practical measures that can be taken to create fairer, more gender-equitable organizations.

Why Corporate Training and Development?

Learning and development doesn't stop after high school or college, the learning structure simply changes drastically. Corporate training materials can be found in a variety of formats including: computer based, seminars, conferences, classroom training, and mentorships. Corporate leadership development contains content that helps assimilate employees and helps employees better understand the culture and the brand of the organization. Further, corporate training aids in the socialization process, sets expectations, and is one of the ways in which companies prepare employees for advancement. Through formal leadership development and training, employees discover the expectations of their corporate cultures (Ely et al., 2011; Sugiyama et al., 2016). Socialization, or the process through which people learn the rules, norms, and expectations over time (Van Maanen, J. & Schein, 1979), begins with orientation, assimilation, and training. These training and development rituals also teach employees what attributes an organization values and will reward (and, by contrast, de-values and will punish).

The purpose and desired outcome of corporate training varies from organization to organization. Corporations today claim that training and leadership development helps organizational members to think creatively, find the greatness from within, and perform extraordinarily (Colantuono, 2013). They provide mentoring opportunities, management training, and development courses. In general, the aim can be summarized as initiatives to: increase retention and productivity, engage employees, cultivate creativity, instill culture, and develop future leaders (Masalimova, 2016; Van der Merwe et al., 2016; Wallis, 2013).

Trends show a move among corporations toward specialized and focused women's leadership development programs (WLDPs) while others still employ general leadership development programs (GLDPs) (Sugiyama et al., 2016; Geary, D., 2016). This study explores a large U.S. based corporation using a mixed-method approach of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative work provides a baseline understanding of the data and lays the foundation for the remainder and the majority of the analysis work to take place. This study then uses two qualitative methods – textual analysis and interviews – to better understand how women learn and develop their leadership skills.

To grasp the extent to which the GLDPs are gendered and might be harmful, rather than helpful for women's career advancement, a quantitative analysis is applied to several training modules offered as development courses at a large U.S. based corporation. The second part of the study employs the use of in-depth interviews with women in senior leadership positions at the same corporation from which the leadership training modules were analyzed. Interviews sought to understand their experiences in and progression as a result of these courses. These interviews were then qualitatively analyzed. Since education should aid in career progression, not reinforce its stagnation, education is a focal point of this study.

Why Rhetoric Matters?

Based on the topics or courses offered for leadership development at an organization, organizations (knowingly or unknowingly) highlight desired leadership qualities and link success in the minds of employees to certain traits and behaviors. However, by omitting (or perhaps completely overlooking) other desired key leadership qualities they hinder the ability of certain members, namely women, to move from middle management to executive leadership roles.

Because just as "one cannot, not communicate" (Watzlawick, 2007) we are also incapable of being bias free. The language we use to communicate, the labels we assign, descriptions and definitions we hear influence our perceptions.

Every word, whether carefully chosen or not, possesses implicit connotations, suggestions, or inferences. As explained by the "Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis" our words shape our reality by highlighting or omitting, exaggerating or downplaying, linking or contrasting cultural ideologies to the words we use to express beliefs, values, and facts. The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis, better known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, explains how language creates ways of thinking and perceiving. Though Sapir and Whorf never co-authored any works, nor stated their ideas in terms of a hypothesis, this hypothesis is known as the "Sapir–Whorf Hypothesis" because it draws on the work of both Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. However, it was Harry Hoijer (1954), one of Sapir's students, who actually introduced the term "Sapir–Whorf Hypothesis." Hoijer explains how language not only reflects thoughts and perceptions but that it actually shapes the way people think and perceive the world. Because our perception of reality is determined by our thought processes and our thought processes are limited by our language, language shapes our reality.

Building on these ideals, in *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, Weaver (1995) coined the phrases "god terms" and "devil terms." "God terms" are words or phrases that have inherent potency in their meanings. They are expressions of power and evoke positive associations. In contrast, "devil terms" are the counter opposites and can be seen as terms of repulsion, or "un-American." As illustrated below in the "God Terms" and "Devil Terms" chart one can see how two different

words, with the same or similar meaning can poses the capability to at the very least to evoke

vastly different emotions and associations.

God Terms	Devil Terms
Democracy	Propaganda
Educate	Indoctrinate
Orient/ Train	Brainwash
Persuasion	Coercion/ force/ power
Facts/Honesty /Truth	Persuasion

The works of Sapir, Whorf, Hoijer and Weaver demonstrate why rhetoric is so important. By

analyzing a comprehensive list of corporate leadership training courses, we gain insight into

what organizations truly value and how (well) they are communicating those values. While

exploring GLDPs it will become evident what an organization deems important "leadership

criteria" and how an organization may be perpetuating gender norms by omitting other

leadership content.

       To make this case, I build upon extant literature, hoping to contribute to the growing

body of communication research. This study illuminates the learning process and draws out the

tensions resulting from gender biases that still exist in the workplace. In addition, I demonstrate

support to the literature claiming educational discrepancies and biases existing in leadership

development materials are perpetuating the problem. From a feminist perspective, the blame can

be attributed to the institutions themselves, which aim to advance the interests of those in power

(men), rather than to help develop more inclusive political systems.

The following chapters of this thesis provide a review of literature, description of methods employed, an analysis of findings, and lastly a conclusion chapter. Readers are presented with a review of literature in the second chapter. Then, in the third chapter, the methodological approach taken in this study is described, detailing the processes, procedures, and steps taken to gather and analyze data. Next the findings and analysis are presented in the fourth chapter. The fifth and final chapter of this study concludes this thesis first with an evaluation and interpretation of the findings and then discusses future directions for research.

In the next chapter, I argue that the key finding will be, not in the content that is present, but identifying what is missing: the courses that organizations fail to offer in the way of leadership development. Reviewing organizational, communication, and gender research I explore the history of gender bias in the U.S. workplace. In the subsequent chapters, I first explain the methods used to analyze materials, including the theoretical underpinnings which guided the methods of research employed in this study. Then, I go on to share the findings of my analysis. Finally, in conclusion, I reflect on the process, perceptions, and outcome and discuss possibilities for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter begins a review of extant research, covering a brief history and explanation of gender bias in the U.S. American workplace, then moves on to the vast and important existing theories surrounding this topic and guiding this case study. Continuing on, this chapter addresses the strengths and weaknesses of previous research and argues it leaves much to be offered in the way of practical application and then delineates how this thesis adds to the existing body of literature. It is important to understand the benefits that result from achieving gender equality in the workplace, but furthermore is imperative to acknowledge the role gendered rhetoric plays in finding the solutions to achieving that equality in the workplace. I conclude this chapter by introducing readers to the problematics that structure this research and present opportunities for discovery.

First through a critical lens, this chapter investigates and explains the ways in which women have been, and in some cases, continue to be devalued in the workplace starting with the wage gap (e.g. the creation of the Equal Pay Act). This chapter details the progress made in the United States of America in correcting for gender discrimination at work as well as the remaining obstacles to gender equality. Building on this, the study moves on to the benefits of attaining a more gender-equitable workplace, highlighting how gender equality is good for all parties, including men and corporations. This thesis will contribute key ideas for addressing those obstacles.

How We Got Here: The Development of a Gender Biased Workplace

Though the United States emerged a global leader at the end of World War II, a new struggle for power emerged in 1945, this time on our home front. That year, the U.S. workplace saw unprecedented change, when men returned home to their families and reentered the workforce. It was assumed that the women, who had picked up the slack while men were away, would return to domestic life (Harp, 2007). However, numerous surveys and polls of female workers found that most wanted to remain in the work force rather than return to their prewar employment conditions (McEuen, 2011).

Jürgen Habermas's (1962) renowned theory of the public sphere illustrates how, in the Western world, "real work" was conceived of as work done *by men* in the public sphere. Conversely, housework and child-rearing, done until that point predominately by women, occurred in the private sphere and was considered less worthy of compensation and respect. Today, the lingering consequences of the public-private divide include lower status and less pay for working women (Eisenberg, 2016). The public-private divide is a rhetorical construct that continues to frame gender roles in U.S. organizations and larger society.

McCornack (2007) observed that Americans are socialized to perceive differences between men and women, and our social observations often lead us to exaggerate and amplify what real differences exist. For example, in the 1950s, exaggerated and amplified differences manifested themselves in sex-specific "help wanted" ads. Back then, it was commonplace to find different job calls and separately listed pay scales for men and women. One could expect that mid and upper-level positions would be found almost exclusively in the "Help Wanted – Male"

section. Women with full-time jobs typically earned about 59 cents for every dollar their male counterparts made (Hill, 2015; Rowen, 2015).

Historical First Steps: Equal Pay Act

To correct this injustice, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act on June 10, 1963. The act aimed at abolishing wage discrepancy based on sex. Then, just over a year later the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed, which made it illegal for employers to discriminate against any employee, or applicant for employment because of his or her sex (The Equal Pay Act of 1963; the Civil Rights Act of 1964). These laws were our first steps as a nation toward ameliorating gender bias in the United States. However, these acts alone did not ensure gender equality in the workplace. Progress has been slow, the new laws brought resistance, and the struggle for power continued. In fact, it took an entire decade after passing these two new laws for the U.S. Supreme Court to finally ban sex-segregated "help wanted" advertising (Pittsburg Press v. Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations, 1973).

Initially, some organizations simply ignored the new laws, while others actively fought to continue with business as usual. Restrictive labor laws and company regulations continued to hold women back from achieving the jobs they wanted. But corporations attempting to circumvent the law, found themselves arguing losing battles. The courts were flooded with cases as women began to fight for their rights in the workplace and won. Companies were banned from posting positions "for men" with astringent and rigorous job functions, such as the hours and physical requirements, which kept women who met the physical requirements from applying (Weeks v. Southern Bell, 1969; Bowe v. Colgate-Palmolive Company, 1969). Other tactics organizations used to keep women from applying for and obtaining positions of power were the

conditions of employment, like not having children or not being pregnant. These were soon found unconstitutional too (Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corporation, 1971; The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978).

The obstacles to women's advancement were and continue to be far more complex and elusive than deliberate forms of sex discrimination (Strum, 2001). Non-deliberate gender bias, often referred to as *second-generation bias,* stems from cultural beliefs about gender, organizational structures, practices, and established patterns or norms both in organizations and broadly within the culture. Second generation bias often goes unseen or recognized, though it is a significant barrier to women's advancement and inadvertently favors men (Calas & Smircich, 2009; Ely & Myerson, 2000; Kolb & McGinn, 2009; Strum, 2001). Second-generation bias can impact the judgments of male and female managers as well as applicants (Heilman 2001; Rudman & Glick 1999, 2001). These implicit biases, could have little correlation to one's consciously held attitudes and beliefs, but rather reflect an individual's upbringing or exposure to cultural messages. Unfortunately, they can still have detrimental effects to egalitarianism as these biases tend to be elicited automatically and can manifest themselves in nonverbal behaviors, social judgments, and behavioral choices (Poehlman, Uhlmann, Greenwald & Banaji,. 2007).

Research & the Changing Workplace

The historical norm of the U.S. workplace, in which men lead organizations and hold management and leadership positions, enabled companies to circumvent the Equal Pay and Civil Rights acts. Scholars soon took interest in the lack of tangible results and began working to learn more about the issue and how it affects corporations (Mishel, Bernstein, & Boushey 2003;

Browne, 2004; Acker, 2006; Pew Research Center 2013; McKinsey & Co., 2017). Authors published books and articles for public consumption, acknowledging the issue of gender inequality in the workplace and seeking to explain the host of reasons why the problem existed (O'leary, 1974; Acker, 1990; Alvesson & Billing, 2009). A surge in feminist activism that correlated with these cultural and legal changes brought works like *Breakthrough: Women in Management* (Loring & Wells, 1972), *Bringing Women into Management* (Gordon and Strober, 1975) and *Men and Women of the Corporation* (Kanter, 1977) in which authors prescribed action women should take to overcome workplace obstacles and achieve top leadership roles.

The mid-1980s saw the development of research that addressed some of the issues and obstacles related to women's socialization and leadership development (Baraka-Love, 1986), such as second-generation gender bias at work. The scholarly turn toward leadership is especially important for this study because these works focus not only on the problem, but on what solutions might be implemented to address it. In other words, if and when women are integrated into the workplace, what can be done for them to succeed and what can they do to succeed? This solutions-oriented focus produced titles like *Management Strategies for Women: Now that I'm the boss, how do I run this place?* (Thompson & Wood, 1981), *Feminine Leadership* (Loden, 1985), and *Women Managers - Travelers in a Male World* (Marshall, 1984). Research findings during this time period (Browns, 1987; Abrams, 1989; Guy, 1993) are particularly important because of the impact they had in pushing Congress to adopt the Gender Equity in Education Act in 1993, which established gender equity requirements for teachers and educational professionals. For example, in his study of women in management, Vinnicombe (1987)

discovered that women managers are diverse in their working styles and may have difficulty with colleagues who share similar personality characteristics.

Gender Equity in Education Act

The Gender Equity in Education Act established equity requirements for teachers and education professionals. Elementary and Secondary teachers would receive training in gender equality. The Act was also symbolically important because U.S. law now officially acknowledged the need for equality when educating the nation's youth (and when training adults too). For the first time in U.S. history, educational systems would be tasked with ensuring that every single aspect of the educational journey was equal for males and females alike. Innovation projects, school-wide projects, after school programs, initiatives for gifted and talented students, and those in need of basic skill improvements, dropout prevention programs, and even parental involvement opportunities would be approached through a new lens, one with all United States citizens in mind.

The Act also promoted math and science learning by girls, which addressed two issues contributing to gender biases in the workplace: "gendered work" and "gendered education." This important first step attempted to correct the tendency of Americans to engage in "gendered education" (Simpson, 1996) and "gendered work" (Kirkham & Loft, 1993), following those gender-biased prescriptions when choosing what to study and what to do for a living, respectively.

World Happiness Index

Countries scoring highest on the equality scale, such as Sweden, Denmark, and Canada, also score high on the happiness scale (Kimmel, 2013, 2015; Wright, 2016), but theoretically, the happiness measure could also be high in countries without gender equality. So, how can we know that gender equality plays an important role in happiness? The World Happiness Index gauges the readiness of different countries to undertake the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, such as: ending poverty and hunger, increasing healthcare and the quality of education, and reaching worldwide gender equality. The World Happiness Index considers happiness an important measure of a country's social progress and a goal of public policy (Helliwell, 2017).

Every year the World Happiness Index surveys numerous people from 157 countries around the world in search of the country with the happiest population. The World Happiness Index asks people to rate their own happiness. Then those answers are weighed considering six other factors: GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom and perceptions of corruption. Then those results are compared to Dystopia, a fictional place created by the research team, where everyone is miserable, which is used as a benchmark. The UN World Happiness Day is on March 20th and the World Happiness Index capitalizes on the widespread interest and celebrations of that day with a timely release their findings each year. Over the past three years the United States happiness score has moved from 15 (in 2014), to 14 (in 2015) up to 13 (in 2016). (See Appendix item 14, 15 & 16 for detailed list.)

Global Gender Gap Index

The Global Gender Gap Index (Bekhouche, 2015: 2016: 2017) is designed to help countries see where the gap exists in the way of gender equality in hopes that the knowledge will specifically help them to close the gap. The main basic concepts used in measuring the Global Gender Gap Index are: economic participation and opportunity (ratio of female labor force, wage equality, female legislators, and senior officials), educational attainment (literacy rate and education levels) and political empowerment (seats in parliament, ministerial, and number of years with female head of state).

The highest possible score a country could achieve is a "1" identifying equality and the lowest a "0" identifying inequality. (See appendix item 17, 18 & 19 for detailed ranking information.) The Index focuses on measuring gaps rather than levels and it ranks countries according to gender equality rather than women's empowerment. The U.S. only made it into the top 20 in 2014 with a score of 0.7463 (and the country scoring the highest that year, Iceland, receiving a ranking of 0.8594). At a global level, only two regions—Western Europe and North America—have a remaining gender gap of less than 30%, at 25% and 28%, respectively.

Cultural Dimensions

The Cultural Dimensions model is based on the research of Geert Hofstede (1984). Hofstede analyzed a large database of employee scores, from over 70 countries, collected from IBM between 1967 and 1973. To this day, this is one of the most comprehensive studies of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. The model of national culture consists of six dimensions. According to Hofstede's website:

The cultural dimensions represent a county's (rather than individuals) ranking or standing when compared to another country. The country scores on the dimensions are relative, as we are all human and simultaneously we are all unique. In other words, culture can be only used meaningfully by comparison.

The Masculinity dimension represents a "preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success." A masculine society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life and at large is more consensus-oriented. In the business context masculinity versus femininity is sometimes also related to as "tough versus tender" cultures (Hofstede, 2005.).

This section of the literature review outlines and addresses the recent history and development of gender equality in the United States of America in regards to: The Global Gender Gap, World Happiness Index, and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Masculinity Scoring. Much of this information, however, is only useful and relevant in comparison to other countries. The graph below, created as part of an earlier study (Prieto, 2017) shows a comparison of: world happiness, global gender gap, and the cultural dimension of masculinity. (Graphs in greater detail are in appendix item 22.)
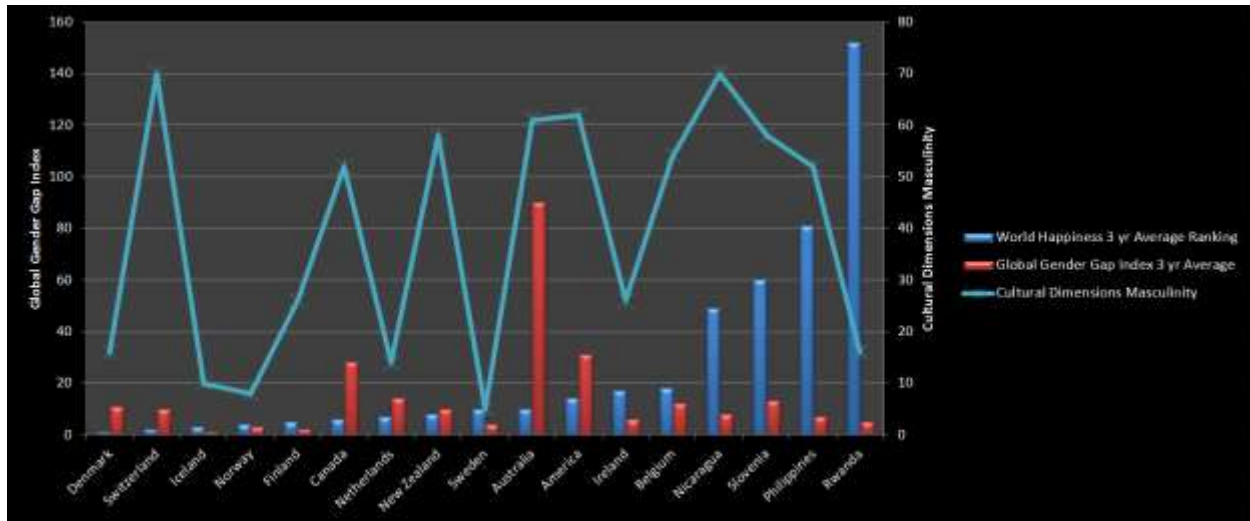
In many cases, research does support the claim that countries with the highest score on the equality scale also score the highest on the happiness scale. However, it is important to take into consideration the historical background for each individual country. For example, over a three-year period, Rwanda consistently remains near the bottom of the happiness scale (Helliwell, 2017). However, during the same time period, Rwanda beats the United States in gender equality on the Global Gender Gap (Bekhouche, 2015; 2016; 2017). Ashcraft (2013) proposes that separation of work and diversity creates a blind spot with major consequences.

To discover and explain why this discrepancy exists, it is important to take into consideration the historical background of the nation. Rwanda was torn apart when they suffered genocide of approximately 800,000 of their population. After the tragedy ended, in 1944 the women of Rwanda came together to change the country's constitution. They now have the right to inherit land, share the assets of a marriage and obtain credit. But the most significant change is that the country's law now requires that at least 30 percent of top political roles be held by women (Paquette, 2105). While this particular example of forced gender equality is extreme, it

helps readers to understand the similar problems that corporations face when attempting to tackle the gender equality issue.

Arat (2006, p. 647-648) supports this argument in the introduction of her article: Feminisms, Women's Rights, and the UN: Would Achieving Gender Equality Empower Women?

> In the last fifty years, feminist theorizing has become increasingly sophisticated and a range of feminisms have emerged and elucidated the diversity of women's experiences and complexities of oppression. These theories have informed the transnational advocacy of women's rights and compelled the UN to address women's concerns, which could not be explained or redressed by simplistic notions of gender oppression. However, I contend that despite the incorporation of some of these feminist concerns into the documents that offer plans for action, the overall women's rights approach of the UN is still informed by the demands and expectations of liberal feminism, which seeks integrating women into male dominant domains and structures, without contesting the foundation and function of those structures.

Many corporations have gleaned from feminist organizational theory that they can "add women and stir" (Martin & Meyerson, 1998) or "fix the women" (Ely & Myerson, 2002) to achieve more equitable organizations. For example, in his study of women in management, Vinnicombe (1987) discovered that women managers are diverse in their working styles and may have difficulty with colleagues who share similar personality characteristics. Organizations addressed the issue through WLDPs, the aim of which is mostly to address the social-psychological issues

facing women at work (Sugiyama et al., 2016; Geary, D., 2016). Such solutions assume a

women's deficiencies model and can contribute to the continued subordination of women (Calas

& Smircich, 1995). This research will focus on general leadership development programs

(GLDPs).

The False Hope of the Decreasing Wage Gap

Current findings reporting improvements from the wage discrepancies of the 1950s can

create a false sense of hope for the present and future workplace. According to the U.S. Census

Bureau and Population Surveys, the Pew Research Center (2013), and the American Association

of University Women (2015; 2016), the wage gap between American men and women in the

United States is decreasing. In 2012, women ages 25-34 earned 93% of what men their age

earned (Pew Research Study, 2013). At first blush, Americans might be tempted to rest on their

laurels. The nation is heading in the right direction, but it is important to close what remains in

the wage gap in a timely manner. From 1960 to 2003, the rate at which the pay gap decreased

projected that women would reach pay equity in 2058. But the trend changed in 2003. The

American Association of University Women reported that from 2003 to 2013, progress slowed

significantly and the nation is now not expected to reach pay equality until 2139 (Hill, 2015).

Based on this prediction, it will take 176 years from when the Equal Pay Act was signed for

women to earn equal pay.

Of course, equal pay for equal work is not the only measure of gender equality in the

workplace. Other forms of bias, such as advancement opportunities and promotions, still impede

the development of a gender-equitable workplace. While critical scholars celebrate that women

today are making more per hour than their mothers and grandmothers did, they argue that

working women continue to face unique challenges their male counterparts do not.

Continued Efforts: Educated but Alone at the Top

Women now enter the workforce more educated than their male counterparts (Pew

Research Study, 2013). However, when it comes to the business world and its relative education,

women typically do not pursue graduate degrees (Simpson, 1996). Access to the Masters of

Business Administration (MBA) degree is likely not to blame, but a different set of reasons,

regarding the design and delivery of the MBA education. Additionally, women may not see the

importance of obtaining an MBA education to the extent that their male counterparts do

(Sinclair, 1995; 1997). This leads to the discussion of gendered education and supports

Colantuono's (2013) argument that women are missing a key leadership quality: possessing

business and financial strategic acumen. Marxist feminism attributes these educational

discrepancies to the institutions themselves, which, from this perspective, aim to advance the

interests of those in power, rather than to help develop more inclusive political systems.

Despite entering the work force prepared and ready for advancement, women are

underrepresented in top leadership positions (Acker, 2006). Only 24% of top leadership positions

are held by women (Forbes 2016). Furthermore, 33% of companies worldwide have no women

in senior management positions whatsoever (Medland, 2016). At its best, this invisible barrier,

often referred to as *the glass ceiling* (Cotter, 2001), functions rhetorically to draw attention to

how women fail to ascend to top leadership positions. However, at its worst, this and other

gendered terms normalize sexism in corporate America. The current male-dominated

organizational structure (Mckinsey, 2017) upholds the interests of the powerful. Unless women

are empowered, they are unlikely to climb the corporate hierarchy. According to scholar Michael O'Loughlin (1992, p.336):

> To claim that learning is an active process of construction on the part of learners is hardly remarkable. All of us have experienced this process in some form, and, intuitively, we can sense the truth of this claim. The commonsense nature of the claim and the apparent neutrality with which it is stated, has contributed to the burgeoning popularity of constructivism as a topic of succession in teacher education. Emancipatory constructivism is best viewed as a reaction against the positivist doctrine that objective truth exists and that by using certain rational modes of thinking we can arrive at authoritative knowledge that can then be imparted to others.

So, in keeping with a feminist standpoint, "emancipatory language" must do more than name and describe phenomena; it must transform their root causes. To ignite organizational change, scholars cannot simply investigate, identify, and explain gendered rhetoric in texts. Rather, communication scholarship on gendered organizations should lead to real-life consequences that advance our workplaces and larger society (ies).

Following Agger (1997), this research draws on feminist theory grounded in lived experience, "interacting in both dialectical and reflexive ways to provoke us to live better lives in the here and now, not postponing liberation" (p.102). Similarly, Darder and Miron (2006, p. 11) call upon scholars to:

> Stretch the boundaries of critical educational principles to infuse social and institutional contexts with its revolutionary potential. It is a moment when our emancipatory theories

must be put into action in our efforts to counter hegemonic fear-mongering

configurations of a national rhetoric that would render teachers, students, parents, and

communities voiceless and devoid of social agency.

Summarizing, women are not only entering the workforce more educated than men, (Pew

Research Study, 2013), but they are putting forth more effort to even get in the door. Schmader,

Whitehead and Wysocki's (2007) found that female applicants for tenure track faculty position

received more recommendation letters than male candidates. In spite of their extra credentials

and furthered efforts, women are still not advancing at the same rate as men and are

underrepresented in top leadership positions (Acker, 2006; Cook, 2012; Wolper, 2016). This

leads to the discussion of gendered education and focuses our attention toward the necessity of

emancipatory language.

Ideology and the Process of Gendering Work

Renowned rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke (1950, p. 172) argues, "Something of the

rhetorical motive comes to lurk in every meaning, however purely scientific its pretensions.

Wherever there is persuasion there is rhetoric. And wherever there is meaning, there is

persuasion." What Burke means is that language is always political and value-laden. Every word,

whether carefully chosen or not, possesses implicit connotations, suggestions, or inferences.

Burke (1969a, 1969b) and Weaver (1995) identify how the precision of language used to

describe perceived differences, the labels assigned, and the ways in which the social world is

defined is influenced by our ideologies. Ideology, a pattern of beliefs through which a group of

people sees the world, shapes what seems "natural" or "right" (Deetz & Kersten, 1983). It

evaluates issues, interprets reality, and encourages and discourages certain values, ideas, and

behaviors. Ideology tells us what is good and what is possible in organizational life (Therborn, 1980), and because some ideologies are privileged over others, ideology often results in "hegemony," or a dominant frame in which to see the world.

Seemingly "natural" and "normal" assumptions about gender and how one's sex and gender informs their career paths are often grounded in ideologies that support the interest of the powerful. Western ideology influences citizens to associate men and masculinity with power and *masculine professions*, like those in business and finance, and with prestige (Eisenberg, 2016). For example, Kirkham and Loft's (1993) study of accounting shows how gendered rhetoric is used to distinguish social identities. The authors discuss how language privileges masculine theories of organizing and tends to subordinate employees in traditionally "feminized" work. For example, the way the task of "accounting" is framed makes it sound technical and skillful while "bookkeeping" as a rhetorical frame, is less powerful. The difference in framing functions rhetorically to elevate the act of accounting, subordinate the act of bookkeeping, and even to feminize men in occupations such as nursing and teaching. Kirkham and Loft observe that "occupations and activities, as well as people, have gender identities" (p. 511). If ideological framing shapes organizational life, it also privileges some actions, ideals, and employees over others.

Consider another workplace example: the language used to describe a woman whose communication style is direct might be *bossy,* but a man who exemplifies similar behavior may be described as *assertive.* Likewise, leadership traits in the West include *independence, aggression,* and *competitiveness*. These traits are stereotypically associated with men. Alternatively, women in the workplace are expected to be *nurturing, nice,* and *altruistic.* The dilemma for women who fit in this mold is that they are usually considered to be lacking in

leadership qualities, while those women who are independent, confident, and competitive are seen as *mean* and *unlikable* (Eagly & Karau, 2002: Jamieson, 1995).

These examples show how language is ideological and influences our perceptions of a woman's role in the public (organizational) sphere. From what type of jobs are "normal" and a "natural" fit for women to how women should behave in their organizational roles, rhetoric creates what critical organizational communication scholars call "gendered organizations." This concept assumes that organizations "guide interaction, pre-dispositioning and rewarding members to practice in particular ways" (Ashcraft, 2004). A gendered organization is one in which "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Acker, 1990, p. 139). This study incorporates the framework of gendered organizations to demonstrate how positions within the organization are also gendered (as well as raced and classed). Leadership roles in corporate America, for instance, continue to be dominated by men.

Corporate Leadership Development

How, if at all, does corporate leadership development reproduce gendered organizational rhetoric? How might training and development materials be of more use to working women? I explore these issues by building on the argument presented in author Susan L. Colantuono's 2010 TED talk that says there are three essential behaviors for leaders in executive positions: (1) achieve and sustain extraordinary outcomes, (2) use the greatness in you and engage others in greatness, and (3) possess business and financial strategic acumen. That means, "you have to use

your skills and talents and abilities to help the organization achieve its strategic financial goals"
(Colantuono, 2013).

The third component, possessing business and financial strategic acumen, is the one that
women consistently fail to learn, understand, and exhibit in the workplace (Charan, 2001;
Colantuono, 2010). Extant scholarship overwhelmingly supports this claim, and is mostly
focused on explaining why women are not better represented in top leadership positions. This
body of literature draws one main conclusion: women's success or failure is based on *individual*
factors. While this assertion holds some value, the conclusion largely overlooks the ideological
nature of language and the ways in which gendered organizations and roles impede women's
advancement in corporate leadership roles. In other words, it ignores how gender ideologies
operate broadly in our culture and within the culture of organizations.

Generally, women who make it to the top are thought to be exceptional because they
spend more time than others: (1) developing their own greatness and understanding of the
business strategy and financials through training or obtaining additional credentials (Ward et al.,
1992*)* and (2) developing hobbies and habits of speech or interaction that helps them to better
navigate through and engage with their male peers in the male dominated workplace (Davies-
Netzley, 1998; Gutek, 1985; Kanter, 1977). Women at the top may have more time to focus on
developing these qualities because they are less likely than other women to be married or have
children (Alessio & Andrzejewski, 2000; Ferree & Risman, 1995).

Likewise, a second body of research suggests that those women struggling to make it into
top leadership can blame their own shortcomings, such as a lack of drive, assertiveness, or

confidence, for their failure to ascend to upper-management (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Sandberg, 2011). The problem with these schools of thought is that they not only ignore the influence of second-generation gender bias but also do not take into consideration that when leaders become overly focused on presenting themselves or being seen in a certain way, to advance their careers, they become too concerned with meeting others' expectations, they lose focus and disconnect with their core values (Quinn, 2004).

In any case, organizations, like individuals, can work toward fairer, more equitable work environments. Responsive organizations can re-frame oppressive gendered discourses that function to keep women "stuck in the middle." First, as evidenced by the material consequence of the wage gap, organizations reinforce ideologies and cultures in which it is the "norm" for men, rather than women, to be in top leadership positions. Second, many organizations assimilate men and women into the workplace differently and perhaps unequally, regardless of the approach they take (Hood, et al., 1994). For women, the success of adaptation may also include the management of their own gender (Bennett *et al.*, 1999).

In light of this existing literature, this thesis is guided by two overarching research questions: (1) How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development course materials? and (2) How do women in middle and upper management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training? This sparks a number of other related questions: What are the rhetorical practices women leaders have engaged in that have influenced their concept of leadership? What role does corporate leadership training and development play in achieving gender equality in leadership? And, how do women navigate and manage the leadership development process?

This thesis explores these questions, demonstrates how gendered rhetoric impacts leadership development, yields insights into how women are learning to navigate and overcome barriers, and identifies opportunities for both men and women to take accountability and make an impact on a more gender equal workplace. Fischer (2002) explains that while many social problems originate in a local context, individuals' understandings of the problems are crucial if they are to be effectively identified and defined. Accurately identifying and defining the problem is the necessary pre-requisite to attempting to find solutions. Without input from the individuals who have an understanding of the issue and experience in dealing with it, attempts toward rectifying the problem will be unsuccessful. The next chapter describes the method of analysis used for this study.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this thesis was to explore corporate leadership development and the role it plays in gender equality. There were two basic goals for this study. First, the aim was to uncover any gendered ideologies that might exist in the corporate materials. The second intention was to reveal how women in management make sense of their training, and most importantly, identify the gaps in materials that can be filled and improved in terms of gender equity. Thus, this ultimate objective of the study was to contribute practical and implementable solutions to problems that might affect women as well as employees, corporations, and society as a whole. I quantitatively and qualitatively addressed this study, which is guided by two research questions: (1) How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development course materials? and (2) How do women in middle and upper management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training?

This chapter begins with a review of the classical rhetorical analysis approach used as the theoretical basis from which the methods were derived. I explicate the theoretical perspectives and ideals influencing the methods employed in this study. Then, I outline the types of data collected, how it was analyzed, and reference other studies that used similar methods, setting the precedence and laying the groundwork for the pedagogical procedures in this rhetorical analysis.

Overview of Methodological Approach

Research questions were examined using two sets of data: leadership training and development materials and in-depth interviews. By adopting an organizational rhetorical perspective conducting a textual analysis of course titles and descriptions, I explored the first

question: How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development

course materials? through a critical, gendered organization lens to determine the extent to which

educational materials at a large Midwestern corporation reinforce a gendered organizational

ideology. Doing so yielded insights about how more equitable material can be developed. To

explore the second question: How do women in middle and upper management make sense of

their experiences with leadership and development training? I conducted in-depth interviews

with women in senior leadership positions at the same corporation to understand their

experiences in and progression after these courses. This two-fold method allowed for a holistic

approach to analyzing data and made it possible to compare findings from the textual analysis

with insights gained from the interviews. This approach blended rhetorical analysis and thematic

analysis as forms of intensive textual analysis to analyze the training materials and the transcripts

from the open-ended interviews.

To some the word "rhetoric" has negative connotations. It is seen as a public relations

tactic to spin a problem or as a synonym for trickery. The reason for this skepticism is because

some believe it to be a substitute for real critical thought and analysis (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1991;

Heath, 2009). However, rhetoric scholars "assume that better ideas can defeat inferior ones" and

that the "best corrective for deception is public debate" (Heath, 2009, p. 22 - 23). Aristotle

strongly believed that rhetoric played an important role in society to serve as the "ethical branch

of politics" in attempts to help citizens reach informed decisions (Aristotle, 1962). This

perspective welcomes diverse and competing views, allowing a platform for "invitational

rhetoric" wherein participants remain open to the possibility of being changed (Foss & Griffin,

1995).

Charles Conrad (2011) ascertains two central notions from the classical era ideas about rhetoric: (1) rhetoric and its use inherently include matters of power and social control, and (2) rhetoric inherently includes matters of truth and claims to knowledge. Best explained in a dissertation exploring public sphere theory, organizational communication, and feminist rhetoric by Stohr (2013), which employs similar rhetorical analysis methods used in this thesis:

> Certainly, rhetoric was and can be used to dominate people, ensuring that social elites maintain their power over citizens. At the same time, though, rhetoric can serve as a means to articulate multiple voices. For rhetoric to reflect the interests of multiple stakeholders in a global organizational public sphere, we must rethink traditional rhetoric as the basis for rhetorical theory. Traditional rhetorical theory is too limiting because it privileges the individualistic, the agonistic, and the local. Without modification, it has limited utility in a world where global, collaborative organizations are key actors.

Stohr delineates Jürgen Habermas's (1989) public sphere theory and reconfigures it for modern society in which organizations are key actors. Stohr and many other critical interpretive researchers adhere to the "globalized view" of persuasion (Leff, 1987; Schiappa, 2001; Simmons, 1990), which sees rhetoric as ubiquitous. This study is comprised of a rhetorical textual analysis and in-depth open-ended interviews which are interpreted through a critical feminist and rhetorical lens. This two-step approach: (1) a textual analysis of corporate leadership texts and (2) interviews with women in management and a subsequent textual analysis of these conversations are detailed in the following sections of this chapter.

Data for the Rhetorical Textual Analysis

The first step in this study was to conduct an analysis of leadership training and development course titles and descriptions. This form of intensive textual analysis continues to support Foss and Griffin's (1995) notion of invitational rhetoric by illuminating how language is socially constructed. According to McGee (1990), rhetorical criticism involves the critic collecting textual fragments that make up "finished" discourses. The Sage Handbook of Rhetorical Studies (2009) explains rhetorical analysis as an understanding of the relationship between resources, methodological tools, and basic research methods. Rhetorical analysis takes into consideration each component that makes up the total sum and the meaning derived as well as the meaning of each individual piece that makes up a structure or construct.

There are over 1,500 learning activities offered at the corporation under study, in a variety of formats such as: (1) computer based/ self-paced training, (2) seminars / conferences / workshops, (3) assessments, (4) on the job training and (5) interactive live classroom training. The employee's level and department will determine which courses are available for them to participate in. For example, certain leadership courses are only offered to current managers and other courses are only available to employees in a particular department. The process in which I analyze the title and course descriptions required that I first read through the content critically.

Owen's (1984) thematic analysis method for interpreting themes via recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness was used as a methodological framework in which to analyze the content. To begin, I searched for reoccurring themes, things that stood out, similarities, and differences. Owen defines a theme as a "patterned semantic issue with a limited range of

interpretations used to conceive and constitute relationships" (p. 274). Owen's thematic analysis

calls for the researcher to identify or discover themes with in the content by observing:

recurrence (similar meanings, though language may vary), *repetition* (relatively similar

language), and *forcefulness* (strong emphasis) of language.

Process for Identifying Courses

I started the process by identifying which of the 1,500 courses would be analyzed. The

first step was to filter by delivery method, then by content category, and finally with a leadership

development lens. Only courses offered as interactive live classroom training were analyzed, this

first filter resulted in 247 courses spanning over 29 content categories (identified by the

organization). The 29 content categories ranged from Finance to Security to Safety (see

Appendix 3 for a complete list of categories), but typically the courses that were analyzed were

found within the categories of: Leadership Development, Personal Development, Professional

Development, or People, Human Relations, and Communications.

The second filtration process would exclude courses with content solely meant for a

particular work group or job function. This part of the process was manual and required that each

of the 247 course titles and descriptions be reviewed. In order for a course to be included and

make it through the second filtration phase it had to be relevant to all work groups. For example,

courses such as *Radioactive Materials Training, Forklift Safety,* and *Complaint Resolution* were

excluded as those courses are specific to new hires in particular departments. However, some

courses that were categorized under a certain department or work group were included because

they were deemed relevant based on the title and description and open to all individuals across

the organization. For example, the course: *Put the TEAM in the driver's seat!* was located within

the Information Technology (IT) content category, and thus intended for individuals in the IT

department, but it was included in the second filtration phase because the course description

indicated that the focus of the course was on team development for project managers. The result

brought the number of potential courses to analyze down to 173.

The third and final step in the selection process was to again review each of the course

titles and descriptions, but this time with a leadership development lens. Particularly, keeping in

mind Colantuono's (2010) three essential behaviors for leaders in executive positions: (1)

achieve and sustain extraordinary outcomes, (2) use the greatness in you and engage others in

greatness, and (3) possess business and financial strategic acumen. The result was 36 courses that

would be part of the rhetorical textual analysis.

After determining the 36 courses which would be analyzed and before beginning the

rhetorical textual analysis process I first used the Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator. The

calculator was inspired by a blog post on the Association for Women in Science Word Press on

gender biases. Most influential in the conceptualization of the calculator was the research of

Schmader, et al. (2007) that compared linguistics in employment recommendation letters and

was created using Pennebaker, Francis, and Booth's (2001) Linguistic Inquiry Word Count

(LIWC) software.

Quantitative Baseline

The Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator assisted in providing a quantitative baseline,

which served as a way to organize and understand the data which would then be qualitatively

analyzed. LIWC measures a psychological dimension (e.g. power, gender, etc.) by looking for certain associated words. LIWC does this using a separate list or dictionary made up of relevant words for each psychological dimension. For example, using the Power dictionary, it measures the degree to which texts reveal interests in power, status, and dominance. According to the example given in the user manual for the software, "By definition, someone who is concerned with power is more likely to be sizing other people up in terms of their relative status. Such a person will be more likely to use words such as boss, underling, president, Dr., strong, and poor when compared with someone who simply doesn't care about power and status" (Pennebaker, 2001b).

In the 2007 study: A Linguistic Comparison of Letters of Recommendation for Male and Female Chemistry and Biochemistry Job Applicants, Schmader et al. obtained access to the complete set of recommendation letters written on behalf of job applicants for a tenure track faculty position in chemistry at a large research university. No significant qualification variable differences between male and female candidates in the number of publications, presentations, fellowships, years in Ph.D., or post-doctoral positions existed.

Several hypotheses guided Schmader et al. (2007) research, those supported (or partially so) by their findings were: (1) Recommendation letters written for female as compared to male applicants would make fewer references to achievement and more references to communication skills and (2) Recommendation letters written for female as compared to male applicants would contain fewer standout adjectives.

Schmader et al. set out to find the answers to their hypothesis using the LIWC software. The software operates by comparing all the words in a given text either to an existing dictionary of categories or to user-defined dictionary categories. There are 74 default word categories in the LIWC2001 dictionary. The software is designed to count the number of words from the default dictionary of categories that appear, and then divides that number by the total number of words used in the text. This tool helps create word categories of particular interest to different researchers and different research goals. Terms of particular interest to Schmader et al. were: achievement, communication, positive emotions, negative emotions, tentative words, certainty words, grindstone traits, ability traits, standout adjectives, research terms, and teaching terms.

Schmader's findings determined that letters for female candidates included marginally more words related to communication than letters for male candidates, but did not make fewer references to achievement words. However, the hypothesis that letters written for female applicants would contain fewer standout adjectives was supported and revealed significant gender differences in the number of standout adjectives (e.g. outstanding, unique, and exceptional) used.

The LIWC software has been widely used and extensively validated as a word-count based text analysis program (Mehl 2005) and was the inspiration for the Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator. The calculator was created by Tom Forth, the Head of Data at the Open Data Institute (ODI). According to the organization's website, "ODI was created to explore and deliver the potential of open innovation with data at city scale. We work to improve lives, help people and create value." The Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator assists the user in determining bias within a body of text. Users can input text and with the help of the LIWC categories the Tom Forth

Gender Bias Calculator generates a list of words, categorizing them as either female or male associated.

Some of those categories are: achievement words (e.g., goal), communication words (e.g., talk), positive emotions (e.g., happy), negative emotions (e.g., worthless), tentative words (e.g., perhaps), certainty words (e.g., always), grindstone traits (e.g., hardworking), ability traits (e.g., capacity), standout adjectives (e.g., remarkable), research terms (e.g., study), and teaching terms (e.g., course). The default LIWC2001 Dictionary is composed of 2,300 words and word stems. Each word or word stem defines one or more word categories. For example, the word cried is part of five word categories: sadness, negative emotion, overall affect, verb, and past tense verb. (See Appendix 13 for greater detail.)

The course titles and descriptions totaled a word count of 2,672 that would be input to determine the existing male or female associated words in the text. Next, preparing to dig deeper into a thematic analysis, I organized the course titles based on the categories identified by the organization. The breakdown of courses within each category was as follows: Legal (1), Leadership Development (14), People, HR & Communication (1), Professional Development (10) and Technology (10). (See Appendix 6 for a complete list of organization defined course content categories.) Though the organization offering the courses has not placed all of the courses under the "Leadership Development" umbrella, I believe that each of the courses covers an important leadership skill or aspect.

Thematic Analysis

I then printed four copies of the text being analyzed. On the first copy, I read through the text searching for recurrence, attempting to identify words and phrases with similar meanings. With the second copy in hand and a different color highlighter, I began to search for repetition in the text. Adhering to Owen's (1984) thematic analysis, the third pass through the text, I searched for forcefulness of language. For example, ideas strongly stressed, expressed through a strong emphasis of language. Taking all of these observations and findings into consideration, with the fourth copy of text, I made notes in an attempt to re-categorize the courses as I searched for reoccurring themes.

Finally, based on Colantuono's (2010) three essential behaviors for leaders in executive positions: (1) achieve and sustain extraordinary outcomes, (2) use the greatness in you and engage others in greatness, and (3) possess business and financial strategic acumen, I looked for a trend in the topics of the courses offered that aligned within these content categories.

In-Depth, In Person Interviews

The final step in this study was to conduct in-depth in person interviews at the same organization from which the training materials were analyzed. The interviews sought to further understand how women at different levels of the organization make sense of their training and development experiences. Specifically, interview questions (attached: Appendix item 1) were used to gain a better understanding of what the women consider to be must-have characteristics to obtain leadership positions. The interviews employed a conversational approach and most questions were open ended in nature. Participants shared their stories about their personal

leadership development journey, explaining what leadership qualities they believe are important

for women to possess in order to succeed in business. In order to protect the identity of the

women, aliases were assigned.

One of the main goals of these interviews was to understand what the women gained

from the leadership courses they took, how they interpreted the materials and whether or not they

found them beneficial. The analysis focused on identifying common themes and major

differences in how women recall, make sense of, and find value in their corporate based

educational experiences. Additionally, I solicited their opinions on what is missing in current

leadership development training, hoping to uncover valuable information, so as to offer practical

tips for improving training for future women leaders.

Recruiting Participants

Interviews were conducted with women who were considered to be in senior or top

leadership positions (i.e. women in supervisory, manager, or senior manager roles were not

interviewed, only those at the Director level and above.). The interviewees were contacted via

email to ask for their participation in this study. They were sent a private Outlook calendar

appointment to confirm a date and time. Using Outlook to schedule the interviews, I was able to

see when each of the individuals had free time available on their calendar and scheduled the

interviews accordingly.

In the first paragraph of the email, it very briefly informed the potential interviewees

about the thesis study and topic of research, shared the reason for my email, and then simply

asked if they would be willing to participate. The women being solicited to participate have

incredibly busy schedules, get hundreds of emails each day, travel often, and are in high demand.

Thus, the aim of the first paragraph was to provide enough information in a succinct way, so that

they felt comfortable to quickly make a decision and respond, even without reading the email in

its entirety first, while understanding what they were agreeing to, should they say yes. Then,

should they be interested, they could then read on in more detail. The first paragraph reads:

> I am working to complete my thesis this semester on the topic of leadership development
>
> and gender equality and I am emailing to ask you to be a part of it! Will you take the time
>
> to let me interview you and ask you some questions about your personal leadership
>
> development journey?

The email very closely mirrored the verbiage and content of the informed consent document,

which they would later be asked to sign before beginning the interview. The following

paragraphs went on to explain the purpose of the research, the goal of the interviews, what I was

hoping to gain from them, how their answers could help, and finally it outlined the interview

process and measures that would be taken to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality and

anonymity, including using pseudonyms to identify them in the thesis. (See Appendix item 9 for

the full email template.)

Seven women were asked to participate and each one of them responded saying that they

were happy to help, most also included in their response a statement about how busy they are. I

did not anticipate that scheduling the interviews would prove to be one of the more challenging

tasks in this study. The date and times proposed for each of the appointments were based on the

potential interviewee's free time according to their availability as shown in their Outlook

calendar. While four of the women accepted the original calendar appointments, only one was able to keep the appointment date and time, not needing to reschedule or cut it short to run to another meeting.

One interviewee rescheduled three times due to crisis situations that arose requiring her attention. I worked to find a time with the assistant of another interviewee, who proposed a new date nearly three weeks in the future. This trend was consistent with most of the interviewees, they had demanding schedules and it proved incredibly difficult for many of them to find time to participate. Whether it was asking to push the interview time back by 30 minutes because something unexpected came up, or needing to cut the interview short to leave for a meeting that was scheduled at the last minute, it required extreme flexibility and availability on my part in order to make these happen. Ultimately six women were interviewed, four in person and two interviews were conducted on the phone.

Interview Procedures and Process

Each interview began by going over the informed consent form. I described the purpose of the interviews, reminded them that the interview would be recorded, explained how the audio recordings would be used, and detailed the steps that would be taken to protect their identity and ensure confidentiality, including using pseudonyms in the write up of the thesis. Then the participants were asked to review and sign the informed consent document (Appendix item 10) before I began recording. I used the voice memo app on my password protected iPhone to record the interviews.

Over the span of three days, I conducted the six interviews. On average, they lasted between 23 and 24 minutes. I did not wait to complete the interviews to begin transcribing. I used an online dictation tool to assist me in transcribing the interviews. It is an application built for Google Chrome, called speechnotes.co.

I took my time transcribing the interviews, allowing the process to be more than just rote listening and typing. This is where the analysis phase began: I listened to most of the interviews at least three times. I opened a second word document and as concepts, phrases, or ideas stood out, I made note of them and pasted quotes that supported emerging themes or quotes that intrigued me. This document was purely meant to be a way to collect my thoughts, take notes, and brainstorm. Several themes were almost immediately evident and by the third interview I noticed many participants had similar answers to many of the questions.

Analyzing the Interview Transcripts

After conducting and transcribing all of the interviews I was left with seven separate documents: one document for each of the interviews, totaling 55 pages of transcribed conversations for the six interviews, and the seventh document a simple collection of thoughts, quotes, and emerging themes. Reviewing my notes, I identified the question asked that were associated with some of the emerging themes. Next, I collected quotes and phrases from each of the interviews where answers aligned with the questions. I then dove deeper into the analysis. I printed a copy of each interview transcript and carefully read through each one again, continuing to pay close attention to similar answers, phrases, and themes.

To summarize, in this chapter, I introduced the purpose and basic goals of this study as well as the methodological conventions that guided my analysis. To critically investigate the role that rhetoric plays in promoting gender (in) equality through corporate leadership training and development materials and to gain greater insight as to how women make sense of their leadership training and development experiences, I drew on a blended approach. A two-fold method, focused primarily on intensive textual analysis followed by in-depth interviews, all of which were interpreted through a critical feminist lens, was employed. The following chapter presents the primary findings, insights gleaned, and knowledge created.

Chapter 4: Findings & Analysis

There were two main goals for this thesis. First, to uncover any gendered ideologies that might exist in the corporate materials by critically investigating the role that rhetoric plays in promoting gender (in) equality through corporate leadership training and development materials. The second was to gain greater insight as to how women in management make sense of their leadership training and development experiences. The most important aim was to discover if there was something missing in the way of corporate leadership development, and if there was, identify what that missing element was in order for it to be addressed and improved in terms of gender equity. Thus, the ultimate objective of the study was to contribute practical and implementable solutions to problems that might affect women as well as employees, corporations, and society as a whole.

This study explores two main questions: (1) How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development course materials? and (2) How do women in middle and upper management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training? Using a mixed-method approach of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, research questions were examined using two sets of data: leadership training and development materials and in-depth interviews. The first part of the study employed quantitative methods and helped to provide a better understanding of the data. It served as the foundation for the remainder and the majority of the analysis work, which was qualitative in nature, to take place. This analysis chapter presents findings generated from my investigation of gender in the workplace, "Framing Leadership Rhetoric: Exploring Gender (in) equality in corporate training material."

The findings and analysis chapter first provides a high-level overview of the overall findings in the following section. Next, the two research questions guiding this study are addressed, devoting a section to each before moving on. Then, the final two sections of this chapter are dedicated to detailing the two significant key findings and their emerging subthemes.

Overview of Findings

There are two key findings resulting from this study that are significant within the context of gender. The first, put simply, is a lack of gender. The second focuses on the topic of understanding the cognitive process and having an awareness of how leadership is learned. This case study demonstrates a lack of attention being devoted to developing and promoting leadership training materials and experiences that acknowledge gender differences and encourage gender equality. It also provides insight into mindfulness in regards to the process of learning and developing leadership skills and one's own leadership development journey.

In attempts to answer the first research question, "How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development course materials?" course titles and descriptions were analyzed. Both the quantitative and qualitative analysis found one key theme, a lack of gender. Overall, the gender associated rhetoric used in the course titles and descriptions makes up a very small percentage, barely 6% of the total word count. The qualitative analysis of course titles and descriptions provided further insight. Only four of the 36 courses addressed topics concerning what Colantuono (2013) claims is the missing link for women in business, to possess business and financial strategic acumen. Additionally, with an absence of gender specialized

courses targeted to developing women leaders, instead of acknowledging gender differences and inequality, its being ignored.

The second research question, "How do women in middle and upper management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training?" revealed several subthemes all under the umbrella topic of understanding how leadership is learned. While some of the interviewees simply attributed their career success to "luck" others identified a mentorship relationship that played a significant role. Overall, however, there was a belief echoed throughout the interviews that many of the most important leadership skills that women leaders possess are not learned, but rather, they are innate. Many of the interviewees claimed that the skills they possessed were something they were born with.

How Does Gender Function in Rhetoric?

The research question "How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development course materials?" was addressed during the first step of data analysis. Using the Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator 2,672 words were input. The analysis revealed a total of 29 different female associated words and 34 male associated words in the title and course description text. Of the 29 female associated words discovered, they appeared a total of 94 times. Female associated words made up only 3.5% of the text. Some of the female associated words found were: class, student, teach, training, trust, and work. A total of 34 male associated words were found, appearing a total of 70 times, representing 2.6% of the text. Some of the male associated words found were: amazing, excellence, intelligence, results, and skills. Only a

slightly higher number of male associated words were found in the text. (See Appendix 4 and 5 for a complete list of male and female associated words.)

Overall, the gender associated rhetoric used in the course titles and descriptions only makes up a very small percentage, barely 6% of the total word count. There is not a significant bias in the rhetoric. These findings were consistent with the results from the pilot study conducted as a part of the thesis proposal for this research.

The preliminary pilot study was conducted using one of the interactive online training courses in the Leadership and Professional Development training category. I first registered for the online course, "Embracing Organizational Change." This course was comprised of three parts, but only the first module was analyzed in this preliminary study. This highly interactive course required participants to listen, read onscreen text, and enter information. While working my way through the first part of the course, I transcribed all the audio and then entered it into the Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator. Of the 639 words transcribed, overall more were female associated words (3%) because of the frequency of the word "work." But combined the total of gender biased words was only 4%. At first it may seem that a lack of gender biased rhetoric in both the pilot study and in this study is a call for celebration. But through further investigation, we are able to see the evolution of gender bias.

One of the female associated words, according to the Tom Forth Gender Bias Calculator is "course." Based on research by Trix and Psenka (2003), which explores the rhetoric in recommendation letters for male and female faculty, the teaching term language category was created. Words in the teaching term category are: teach, instruct, educat*, train*, mentor,

supervis*, adviser, counselor, syllabus, syllabus, course*, class, service, colleague, citizen, communicate*, lectur*, student*, present* and rapport. The star symbol (*) indicates that any word containing the letter string that precedes or follows the asterisk is counted. The word "course" appeared a total of 20 times throughout the text. As this word is a core component of the materials, if it is left out of the equation then the frequencies of female and male associated words found in the text are actually quite similar.

Two terms emerged predominantly: (1) skills and (2) project. Both of which are male associated terms. Skill is part of the "Ability" word category and project is in the "Research" word category. Male associated words focus on greater confidence and ability, referencing phrases such as "his ability," or "his career," whereas female associated words emphasize women's strong work ethic and focus on "her teaching," or "her training." Variations of these two male associated terms, such as "technique," "expertise," "ability," "program," "develop," and "plan" all operated synonymously in the texts.

Numerous studies show that even when individuals are motivated to behave in egalitarian ways, they may still show bias at an implicit or unconscious level (Greenwald & Banaji 1995). Nearly ten years later, Schmader and her colleagues (2007) conducted research consistent with previous findings, with the notion that implicit second generation gender bias influences and impacts decisions. Their study revealed a significant positive correlation between using both "standout" words and "ability" words. Recommenders used standout words to describe an applicant and focused on their ability and research skill when describing that candidate. Additionally, recommenders described male candidates with significantly more standout

adjectives (e.g. outstanding, unique, and exceptional) than compared to female candidates.

Schmader explains:

> In other words, recommenders who use superlatives to describe candidates were also
> more likely to focus on a candidate as having intrinsic ability as opposed to being a
> conscientious and hard worker. Thus, even though men were not more likely to be
> described in terms of their inherent abilities in general, the covariation of this language
> with standout words might suggest that men were more likely to be described as having a
> superlative amount of natural ability.

This case study supports the findings of previous research, demonstrating a lack of significant development and change in the last decade in the way of gendered rhetoric.

For a period of time, the evolution of gender bias through the decades of U.S. American history was vast and steady. Looking back to think about where we have come from as a nation, we've seen substantial progress in the way of policy, research and even the wage gap continuously decreased for several years as well. In the 1950s, exaggerated and amplified gender differences in sex-specific "help wanted" ads. But then, in 1963, the Equal Pay Act was signed, which brought about a new wave of feminist activism and popular literature soon followed (Loring & Wells, 1972; O'leary, 1974; Gordon & Strober, 1975; Kanter, 1977). Researchers in the 1980s began to study and address some of the obstacles women leaders face in the workplace (Thompson & Wood, 1981; Marshall, 1984; Loden, 1985; Baraka-Love, 1986; Browns, 1987; Abrams, 1989). This era of research was particularly important because of the impact and influence it had on the Gender Equity in Education Act, which was passed in 1993.

We learned how important rhetoric is in regards to gender and discover "occupations and activities, as well as people, have gender identities" (Kirkham & Loft, 1993, p. 511).

Then in the early 2000s, research tried to "hone" in on the issues at hand, but rather than taking a holistic approach to problem solving, women begin to receive the blame for their own shortcomings in leadership (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Quinn, 2004). The wage gap again exemplifies the stall we see in progress in the more recent years. Recanting, from a previous chapter readers are reminded of the lack of significant development and change in recent years. From 1960 to 2003, the rate at which the pay gap decreased projected that women would reach pay equity in 2058. But the trend changed in 2003. The American Association of University Women reported that from 2003 to 2013, progress slowed significantly and the nation is now not expected to reach pay equality until 2139 (Hill, 2015). Progress seemed to have stalled.

Pushing forward, I employed a word frequency tool to identify the words most frequently used as: management, business, team, project, leadership, and agile. Critical analysis of organizational discourse helps critics discover, interpret, and render judgments (Burke, 1941, 1966, 1969a). During this step while adhering to Owen's (1984) thematic analysis, I noted markers of repetition, recurrence, and forcefulness. With this information in hand, through a critical lens, I explored how rhetoric in leadership training and development content functions in organizational discourse.

After establishing what female and male associated words existed in the course titles and descriptions (see Appendix 4 and 5), exploring word frequency (see Appendix 8), and conducting a thematic analysis to re-categorize courses (see Appendix 7), I identified the top 15 words most frequently used (see Appendix item 8). The following themes were reoccurring and

courses were re-categorized into one of these five themes: Self-Development (18), Developing

Others (3), Building Teams (4), Understanding the Business (4) and Project Management (7).

Through this process, I identified only four courses that fall into what Colantuono (2013) claims

is the missing link for women in business: possess business and financial strategic acumen. So,

while a lack of gender biased rhetoric exists, we are able to identify the evolution of gender bias.

Finding only four courses that may help to develop business and financial strategic acumen are a

clear example of second generation gender bias.

How Do Women Make Sense of Leadership Development Experiences?

The final step in this study was to conduct in-depth in person interviews at the same

organization from which the training materials were analyzed. The interviews sought to further

understand how women make sense of their training and development experiences. This section

provides insight to the second research question, "How do women in middle and upper

management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training?"

exposing beliefs that can be summarized as: leadership isn't always something that is learned in

a traditional instructive course. In fact, many women believed that their most beneficial

development experiences came from more collaborative and interactive settings where they had

the opportunity for discussion.

Women were prompted, "Tell me about your experiences with the leadership

development classes that you have taken at this organization" and the responses overwhelmingly

pointed toward one thing that women find to be the most beneficial in leadership development:

feedback. One interviewee's response is summarized as:

There was one that I did three years ago, that took input from your employees, your peers and your managers. People anonymously wrote about you, reviewed you, your different personality traits and then turned in their responses. Then you had to take a hard look at yourself. On the second day of the course, you got like 30 minutes to council with someone and I thought that was really good because you could dive into your results to see where you needed to work on things (Emily, Interview 2).

Another interviewee simply stated, "I think sometimes what's more valuable than a class is listening to other people and then having discussion time afterwards" (Joann, Interview 1). A third (Heather, Interview 3) response echoed:

I took a new course that was facilitated by an external group. They looked at your "why." Why are you doing what you're doing? Why are you trying to be successful in this area? And then, we did a lot of role playing in groups where folks would look at the things you're doing, look at your experiences and then go ahead and make comments like, 'I think you can do this better, I think you can do that better' and a lot of self-reflection. It was good to learn about myself. So now I know the areas that I'm deficient in and I might not be able to work on them right now, but I need to be aware so later on down the road they will be helpful.

The interviews proved to be a very rich source of data for this study, but combining the quantitative and qualitative results is the most revealing; they complement and corroborate each other quite nicely. For example, of the five male associated words found most frequently in both the leadership materials and the interviews, three of them were the same: skill(s), able, and

question(s). The word "question" shows up in the top five frequency list in both the text of the

leadership training materials and in the transcripts from the interviews. It should come as no

surprise then that this is a male associated term. When the interviewees were asked, "What do

you think is the most important skill or characteristic for women in leadership to possess?"

Simply put, the answers were: to possess curiosity, have confidence, utilize good listening skills,

take the initiative, and network. It takes curiosity, initiative, and confidence to speak up and ask a

question. What these women are describing in their answers is the typically male associated

characteristic of confidence, showing interest, and gaining insight by asking questions.

Key Finding 1: Lack of Gender

In this section readers are provided greater detail to the first main theme and significant

key finding: lack of gender. Overall, the gender associated rhetoric used in the course titles and

descriptions only makes up a very small percentage, barely 6% of the total word count. There is

not a significant bias in the rhetoric. The significant outcomes lie deeper in the construct of

language and are only uncovered through a process of critical synthesis and analysis.

Rather than looking at the courses with such a close lens focused on the semantics, taking

a step back and looking at the themes of the course topics being offered as a whole, or rather

what is not being offered is the significant finding in this portion of the research. The focus of

corporate leadership development materials (or more poignantly what is not being focused on, or

left out) demonstrates a lack of attention being devoted to developing and promoting leadership

training materials and experiences that acknowledge gender differences and encourage gender

equality.

There are no gender specialized courses aimed at developing women leaders and the absence has not gone unnoticed by interviewees (Heather, Interview 3):

> I don't know if they're there yet with achieving cohesive leadership [training] for different genders. I do think, having the opportunity to interact with the other leaders in the organization at that [senior] level, does give you more of an insight as to how others think and what exactly is the role that each person is gonna play and how you're going to interact. But I would love to see more where you do have a specific, you know, women's leadership development, where you have a VP or somebody that is in that strategic role that has developed over the years, that could more mentor women and make sure that they're engaged with what's going on and what they saw as improvements in the process and what they saw as hindrances with the process. So you can overcome. The classes are pretty much level set vanilla leadership and communication where it's not targeted to go ahead and make sure that women have more resources to be successful.

One reason that some organizations may not offer gender specialized courses is that they could be viewed as assuming a women's deficiency model (Calas & Smircich, 1995) and taking the approach of "fix the women" (Ely and Myerson, 2002). This is supported by one interviewees (Emily, Interview 2) statement, "Maybe they should build some type of leadership training just for women…I don't want to sound, like, sexist or whatever."

However, by not acknowledging gender differences, it dismisses the issue of gender inequality in the workplace rather than validating that a problem exists and working toward a

solution. One woman (Katie, Interview 6) describes her experience with the leadership development courses:

> I have not gained anything, from any of the training, regarding how it could help with equality and getting noticed and the gender issues and not dismissing folks. I have not seen any of that at our organization. Our organization doesn't offer any courses, other than this women's leadership [group] that help promote and encourage and give you guidelines on being more out there for a woman and the struggles women have within management.

As Katie goes on to describe these monthly networking events, she supports the claim that we're still missing the mark. These events are exclusive to top leaders at the director level and above. She goes on:

> They really haven't offered classes other than those women's leadership [group] meetings that they have. They are for directors and above. They bring [guest] speakers in and its networking. Some of our senior management comes in and participates and also [senior management] from other companies. At the last one they had members from our board. People from other companies come in and talk about their struggles and they actually invited some of the men Vice Presidents to also attend. And during those meeting you are allowed to bring someone in middle management with you to help expose them to these women leadership meetings and presentations and what they have to offer.

Two additional themes appeared in course topics: change management and team development. The courses falling within these recurring themes seemed to focus on developing interpersonal or relational skills. Six of the classes are specifically devoted to the topic of dealing with change:

Helping Your Team Through Transition, Impact II – Navigating Through Differences, Making the Transition I, Making the Transition II, Appreciating Differences and *Workplace Inclusion.* Some of the words and phrases used to describe change were: merger, integration, redefining, adapt, shift your mindset, conflict management, and differences.

Another recurring theme was the focus on teams, with a variety of phrases throughout the text such as: interactive, engaging, collaboration, inclusion, and common understanding. So, what do these two recurring themes have to do with gender? I reiterate that the significant findings lie deeper in the construct of language.

Poststructuralist and critical theorists (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Culler, 1982; Derrida, 1976; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983; Focault, 1980) feminist theorist (Alcoff, 1988; Anzaldua, 1990; Collins, 1990; Culley & Portuges, 1985; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1987; hooks, 1984: 1990; Lather, 1991), and critical ethnographers and cultural anthropologists (Clifford, 1988; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Van Maanen, 1988) argue that knowledge is inherently partial and positional because it is grounded in an individual's interpretation of the world.

Based on the topics of leadership development courses offered, the organization is able to highlight desired leadership qualities and link success in the minds of employees to certain traits and behaviors. However, by omitting (or perhaps completely overlooking) other desired key leadership qualities they hinder the ability of certain members, namely women, to move from middle management to executive leadership roles. By identifying the themes found in the course topics; we are also able to identify what is not being offered. We see a focus on change

management and developing teams as opposed to a focus on courses on developing business

strategic acumen or business strategy development.

I identified only four courses that fall into what Colantuono (2013) claims is the missing

link for women in business, possess business and financial strategic acumen. *Antitrust Training*

Seminar - Rev MGMT & Alliances, Avoiding Turbulence in the Cloud, Fundamentals of

Enterprise Architecture and *How to Measure Anything* make up only 11% of the leadership

development courses offered. This lack of courses focused on developing business and financial

strategic acumen, or even anything remotely close; support Colantuono's claims that the missing

link in leadership training and development is possessing business and strategic financial

acumen. So, while there are a mere four courses that can even by a stretch be categorized as

focusing on developing business and financial strategic acumen, they are all highly analytical in

nature, not strategic based and certainly not seem designed to help anyone, women or men, make

the jump from middle to senior leadership.

We see a focus on change management and team development. Recall now the re-

categorization of courses (See Appendix 7) and consider the total number of courses in each

category: Self-Development (18), Project Management (7), Building Teams (4), Understanding

the Business (4) and Developing Others (3). Based on the numbers, an employee at this

organization may believe that the key to their success in leadership lies in self-development.

Self-Development courses are on topics such as: *Communicating for Success, Presentation*

Skills, Effective Business Writing and *Personal Branding*. Alternatively, with only three courses

offered falling into the category of Developing-Others this really shifts the focus of a leader

away from the "others" in the leadership dynamic and keeps the focus centered on self. This

imbalance of focus could not only impact the style of how a leader actually leads, but also the value they place on their direct reports.

The same then is argued from a gender standpoint, this time using different categories as examples. There are seven (7) different Project Management courses offered on topics such as: *Project Management in an Agile World, Program Management in an Agile World* and *Advanced Agile Project Manage*ment. In fact, such a high importance is placed on the Project Management category, not only is it the second largest only to Self-Development, but there is even a dedicated course in this category speaking to those who might think that project management isn't an important skill for them, "*Project Management Essentials - for the non-Project Manager.*" Here the organization is not only making the claim, that project management skills are vital to the success of the individual; they are linking project management as a leadership skill or attribute. With that one course title, "*Project Management Essentials - for the non-Project Manager*" it is suggested that this category of classes is actually for every leader. Now compare to the category, Understanding the Business, which only has four courses with topics like: *Antitrust Training Seminar - Rev MGMT & Alliances, Fundamentals of Enterprise Architecture* and *How to Measure Anything*. With Project Management offering seven courses and Understanding the Business only four, it is understood that Project Management is nearly twice as important as Understanding the Business.

With only four courses falling into what Colantuono (2013) claims is the missing link for women in business: possess business and financial strategic acumen, already the odds are stacked against women, as the leadership development courses are nine times more likely to support the leadership development of men.

Key Finding 2: Learning Leadership

Finally, in this last section of chapter four, I present the second main theme and significant key finding that emerged: understanding the cognitive learning process and having an awareness of how leadership is learned. The most significant findings were revealed during the qualitative analysis of the transcripts from the in-depth interviews with women in senior leadership positions. The interviews helped to expose where we are at on the road to resolution. The concepts of confidence, learning how to "be bold," "speak up," "ask questions," and "take the initiative" worked its way into the conversation and was referenced throughout each interview multiple times. Though "confidence" came masked as different issues sometimes, such as "don't worry about what everyone else is doing" or "we're too busy trying to make ourselves relevant in the world and react or impress or influence."

The resounding belief that many of the most important leadership skills that women possess are not learned, but rather they are innate, was overwhelming. Within the overarching topic of learning leadership, one sub theme emerged that can be summarized as: mentorship. As explained in the previous section of this chapter addressing the second research question, it was discovered that many women believe leadership isn't always something that is learned in a traditional instructive classroom style course. In fact, many women believed that their most beneficial development experiences came from more collaborative and interactive settings where they had the opportunity for discussion.

When asked "What one thing can you most attribute your career success to?" some interviewees claimed that it was "luck" while others were able to identify a mentorship

relationship that played a significant role. The thought that luck is to blame, or rather receive the

credit for women obtaining leadership positions is sure to make leadership scholars everywhere

cringe. One woman (Heather, Interview 3) simply claims, "I kind of fell into the right path"

while another shares credit equally with preparation and luck:

> A lot of luck. You know, I'd say a lot of it was just timing and luck. But you know, I'm a
>
> big fan opportunity is where preparedness... what's that saying? Luck is where
>
> opportunity and preparedness intersect. You know, it really is true (Lauren, Interview 4).

Making it into a top leadership position is a challenge and significant achievement. It is highly

unlikely for it to be accidental, but these answers begin to shed light on how easy it is to be

unaware of one's own leadership journey. The curse of knowledge plaguing with a forgetfulness

of what it was like to not know something. We can see how mindfulness is so important in

regards to the process of learning and developing leadership skills.

Some women, however, were much more keenly aware of their leadership development

journey and did not accredit it to luck, but rather their early upbringing. When asked the same

question, "What one thing can you most attribute your career success to?" it yielded very

different answers. By probing, digging deeper, and asking more follow up question many of the

women were able to trace their leadership development back to early childhood memories,

specifically experiences with or advice from their father. This is not surprising because more

men held these positions of power than women during the interviewee's childhoods as well as

still today. The first interviewee, Joann states:

>I've had some really great role models, leaders, and mentors, but I think the thing that
>helps with that is being intuitive to what they're trying to help you with. I would say my
>dad is an excellent role model in terms of really how to lead teams and lead projects and
>get things done. I went down to his office all the time when I was a kid and I remember
>seeing that all the time.

A second interviewee recounted a similar narrative, again naming her father and attributing her upbringing to playing a significant role:

>Well, good advice from my father when I first started working. I think a lot of it is that. I
>saw his work ethic, my mom as well. My mom was the only female. She was like, not
>really a coal miner, but she worked for Alcoa, and she was the only female amongst all
>the men. So that was sorta inspirational. You know my father told me a long time ago,
>'don't worry about what everyone else is doing or getting, just work your hardest and if
>you have to put in extra hours and you don't get paid for it don't worry about it' and
>that's kinda how I started out, just volunteered (Emily, Interview 2).

One woman (Stephanie, Interview 5) mentions the importance of having a mentor, revealing that hers is her father:

>It all started when I reported to somebody a long time ago and I didn't like his style and I
>was fighting it and through that fighting process and venting, having my dad as my
>confidant he said 'this person is brought into your life for a reason and you need to learn
>from it.' So basically, without telling me to 'suck it up buttercup' he was telling me
>there's a reason why he's leading you and you need to figure out what you can learn from

it. Learn from it in a positive way and learn from it in a fact that there may be something

that you go 'okay, I'm not gonna be like that person.'

Whether it was by luck or from their upbringing, women weren't attributing their experiences in

leadership development classes to their success. When asked, "What do you think is the most

important skill or characteristic for women in leadership to possess?" Simply put, the answers

were: to possess curiosity, have confidence, utilize good listening skills, take the initiative, and

network. According to, Stephanie, confidence is the most important characteristic for women to

possess:

> Probably confidence. You have to maintain confidence. If you don't have the confidence
>
> in yourself, in your ability to perform, men can see through that. Even though that can be
>
> a double-edged sword. Because when you exhibit confidence, that also can be displayed
>
> or perceived, or the perception of, I'm going to say a bad word, Bitch. So, it's a balance,
>
> it's a balancing act.

Joann was asked the same question "what do you think is the most important skill or

characteristic for women in leadership to possess?" and her response echoed that of her peer:

> One is curiosity and the initiative to do something about it, right? And I would say that
>
> for all people, not just women. The piece that's harder for women, I think is that initiative
>
> piece, right? Not because they don't have initiative, but because sometimes there's more
>
> barriers in their way or um, they need that confidence in order to really, in order to really
>
> push beyond, to get the answers they need so that they can make change.

Lack of confidence seems to be an issue many women face in the workplace, according to the interviewees, stating: "they [women] need that confidence in order to really push beyond, to get the answers they need so that they can make change." One interviewee shared that if she were to develop a course targeted to women, the most important things to cover would be:

> Confidence, learning to ask for what you want and need. I think women don't do that. Um you know, this is making an assumption that all the business requirements are out of the way, meaning you've got to be able to hold your own with the numbers, with conceptual thinking, critical thinking. I think that the higher you go, connecting the dots, people are very good at taking data and making one, 'yes, it's telling us this' and then they have to look up and think about the world at large. So there's some aspect of philosophy that comes into play. But probably just confidence and learning to ask for, maybe it's not even ask, just learning to tell people what you need in a succinct way.

However, as Stephanie relays, women should proceed with caution when it comes to confidence, because in order to execute effectively, it's requires the proper balance. It's all too simple for the balancing act to become a juggling act though. Emily gives the same warning corroborating the first two responses to the question of "what is the most important characteristic for women to possess?"

> Uh, having passion for the job and the task but not being too emotionally passionate about it, if that makes sense? Sometimes you're so passionate for a great reason, but you don't get your message across. If you sound so passionate, sometimes it can come across as you're aggressive or um, combative, and where if a guy disagrees in a meeting or tries to get their point across that's acceptable.

To summarize, interviewees believe the most important skills for women in leadership to possess are: curiosity, confidence, good listening skills, taking the initiative, and networking. Continuing on with the theme that women believe leadership isn't taught in the classroom, women were asked where or how they learned these skills. In attempts to truly understand the learning and development process of leadership, I followed up and asked, "how do we teach those skills?" or "how can women learn those traits?' the response was almost a resounding "it's not something you learn" but rather "it's something you're born with" or "those things are innate."

While all of the women could spout off the name of some leadership class they had recently attended (that they may or may not have found valuable) they believed their most valuable strength was something "innate" or "intuitive." This is particularly interesting because "innate" is a male associated word in the "ability" category. Other words in the ability term category are: talent*, intell*, smart*, skill*, ability, genius, brilliant*, bright*, brain*, aptitude, gift*, capacity, propensity, innate, flair, knack, clever*, expert*, proficient*, capable, adept*, able, competent, natural*, inherent*, instinct*, adroit*, creative*, insight* and analytical. The star symbol (*) indicates that any word containing the letter string that precedes or follows the asterisk is counted.

The role that mentorship plays is important, because if leadership isn't learned in the traditional classroom setting, women need to figure out where they are going to best learn it. The third section of this chapter that addresses the question, "How do women in middle and upper management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training?" reveals that feedback is an important part of leadership growth and development. Mentorships provide an opportunity from collaborative and interactive settings that lend themselves to discussion and

provide opportunities to receive feedback and facilitate discussion. Stephanie touched on the

importance of having someone to serve in that capacity:

> I think it's also important to have, it's good to have a confidant or a mentor, to be able to
>
> have safe zone discussions, as I call them. Where you can, you know, let your hair down
>
> a little bit and have the ability to vent and voice frustrations and then problem solve
>
> together.

Leadership is not an accident. It is a journey, a process that requires mindfulness. There are

many factors that contribute to one's development of leadership skills. The process doesn't start,

nor does it end with classroom learning. However, that doesn't mean it isn't a skill that can be

taught.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study explored the role that organizations play in perpetuating gender norms and was guided by the theories and works of: Linguistic Relativity (Hoijer, 1954), The Ethics of Rhetoric (Weaver, 1995), and feminist theory. The purpose of this thesis was to explore corporate leadership development materials and the role it plays in shaping women's vertical mobility in the workplace. There were two main goals for this study, which formed the development of research questions: first, to uncover any gendered ideologies that might exist in the corporate materials and second, to reveal how women in management make sense of their training. However, the ultimate objective was to identify what gaps existed, if any, in course materials that could be filled and improved in terms of gender equity.

Using both quantitative and qualitative methods two research questions were addressed: (1) How does gender function in the rhetoric of leadership training and development course materials? and (2) How do women in middle and upper management make sense of their experiences with leadership and development training? Questions were examined using two sets of data: leadership training and development materials and in-depth interviews. This two-fold method allowed for a holistic approach to analyzing data and made it possible to compare findings from the textual analysis with insights gained from the interviews.

There are two key findings resulting from this study that are significant within the context of gender. The first, put simply, is a lack of gender. The second focuses on the topic of understanding the cognitive process and having an awareness of how leadership is learned. This

study revealed a lack of attention being devoted to developing and promoting leadership training materials and experiences that acknowledge gender differences and encourage gender equality.

Overall, the gender associated rhetoric used in the course titles and descriptions makes up only a very small percentage, barely 6% of the total word count. However, the qualitative analysis of course titles and descriptions provided greater insight. Only four of the 36 courses addressed topics concerning what Colantuono (2013) claims is the missing link for women in business, to possess business and financial strategic acumen. Additionally, with an absence of gender specialized courses targeted to developing women leaders, instead of acknowledging gender differences and inequality, its being ignored.

Interviews provided insight into mindfulness in regards to the process of learning and developing leadership skills and one's own leadership development journey. Some of the interviewees simply attributed their career success to "luck." But overall, there was a belief echoed throughout the interviews that many of the most important leadership skills that women leaders possess are not learned, but rather, they are innate. Women also believed that their most beneficial development experiences came from collaborative interactive encounters where they had the opportunity for discussion, particularly mentorships.

Findings support Colantuono's (2013) argument that women are missing a key leadership quality: possessing business and financial strategic acumen, as it simply wasn't a focus of leadership training and development courses. In fact, the focus of leadership development materials were nine times more likely to support the leadership development of men based on the topics of the courses offered. This finding is an example of second generation gender bias.

Additionally, findings support the feminist perspective that attributes blame to the institutions and ideologies themselves, which aim to advance the interests of those in power (men), rather than to help develop more inclusive political systems. By omitting desired key leadership qualities; they hinder the ability of those lacking the leadership qualities not being taught, to move from middle management to executive leadership roles.

Assumptions

Before setting out on this discovery journey to find *"it"* ("it" being the missing link to rectifying gender equality in the workplace) though, it is important to note, that there are two assumptions being made: (1) a belief that something is missing, and that (2) you will know what *"it"* is when you find it. Believing that something is missing, is not simply acknowledging the gender inequalities that exist in the workplace, rather it is supporting the claim that the solution to achieving gender equality in the workplace is either yet to be discovered or that if a solution exists it is not widely known, accepted and has not been disseminated. This means rejecting the notion that organizations can "add women and stir" (Martin & Meyerson, 1998) or "fix the women" (Ely & Myerson, 2002) to achieve more equitable organizations.

The second assumption adheres to the notion that there are core components, qualities and skills that an individual must possess in order to make it into top leadership positions and that those components can be identified, taught, and learned. Leadership is a development process which follows a certain set of guidelines. The way in which individuals acquire the necessary core competencies may greatly vary from person to person. For some it may be a very deliberate and formal process, while for others it may be observed and absorbed in such a way

that they are unaware of the learning and development taking place and believe those qualities

and skills to be innate.

Implications

When it comes to the business world and its relative education, women typically do not

pursue graduate degrees (Simpson, 1996). Access to the Masters of Business Administration

(MBA) degree is likely not to blame, but a different set of reasons, regarding the design and

delivery of the MBA education. Additionally, women may not see the importance of obtaining

an MBA education to the extent that their male counterparts do (Sinclair, 1995; 1997). This leads

to the discussion of gendered education and supports Colantuono's (2013) argument that women

are missing a key leadership quality: possessing business and financial strategic acumen.

I have considered the many angles that affect, influence, and play a role in this complex

issue. While considering the vast body of existing research on the topics of leadership, gender,

and organizational communication and the varying and often opposing theories on organizational

gender issues, the work of Susan Colantuono, an expert in women's leadership development, has

proven to not just be a rich source of information, but also the most thought provoking.

Colantuono (2013) explains the underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions is a

result of women consistently failing to learn, understand and exhibit business and financial

strategic acumen.

Put simply, women need to do a better job helping the organization achieve its strategic

financial goals. Extant scholarship draws one main conclusion as to why women don't possess

this skill set and is mostly focused on arguing that women's successes or failures are based on

individual factors. However, I pose (as many feminists before me) that it is actually a societal failing to educate, equip, and empower women and men in the same way.

Limitations & Future Research

This thesis focused on uncovering gendered ideologies in the corporate materials. I was primarily concerned with understanding how women in management make sense of their training experiences. While the thesis offers rich analysis and fruitful findings, it should be kept in mind that the study has a few limitations:

1. There were no interview questions specifically relating to learning processes, professional self-identity and post-course transitions, which, upon analyzing the data, appear to be concepts of some importance in the study.

2. This study reflects the analysis of courses and interviews women from only one organization. Data could prove to be much richer if multiple organizations were analyzed.

3. The interviews were held within a relatively short time period. More time between interviews to transcribe would have been useful.

I believe that the limitations of this study are inconsequential in regards to the findings. They, however, provide direction as to future research. There are some changes that I would make if I were to conduct this study again. One would be to interview men asking a similar set of questions. The second change is that I would have included an analysis of the organization's leadership attributes or imperatives. This way I could compare what the organization is explicitly

stating are important, must have factors for their leaders to possess to what is implicitly being stated based on course offerings.

Findings support Colantuono's (2013) argument that women are missing a key leadership quality: possessing business and financial strategic acumen as the research revealed a lack of courses offered in this category. Further research could test the outcomes as a result of an organization adding these types of courses to their leadership development courses. Potential research questions include: (1) In what ways does an organization's leadership ideals influence or impact the public sphere at large and our associations with leadership? (2) How can an organization's rhetoric generate significant change? (3) What assumptions are made regarding leadership training and development?

I do not believe that this can be fixed by organizations simply beginning to offer more courses that focus on developing business and financial strategic acumen. Knowing that women are less likely to obtain MBA education, which would likely teach the missing skill set, I theorize that a similar trend would be seen in course enrollment if organizations just added these courses without providing the clear understanding and expectation that individuals must poses business and financial strategic acumen to advance to leadership positions.

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Appendix

1. In Depth Interview Questions
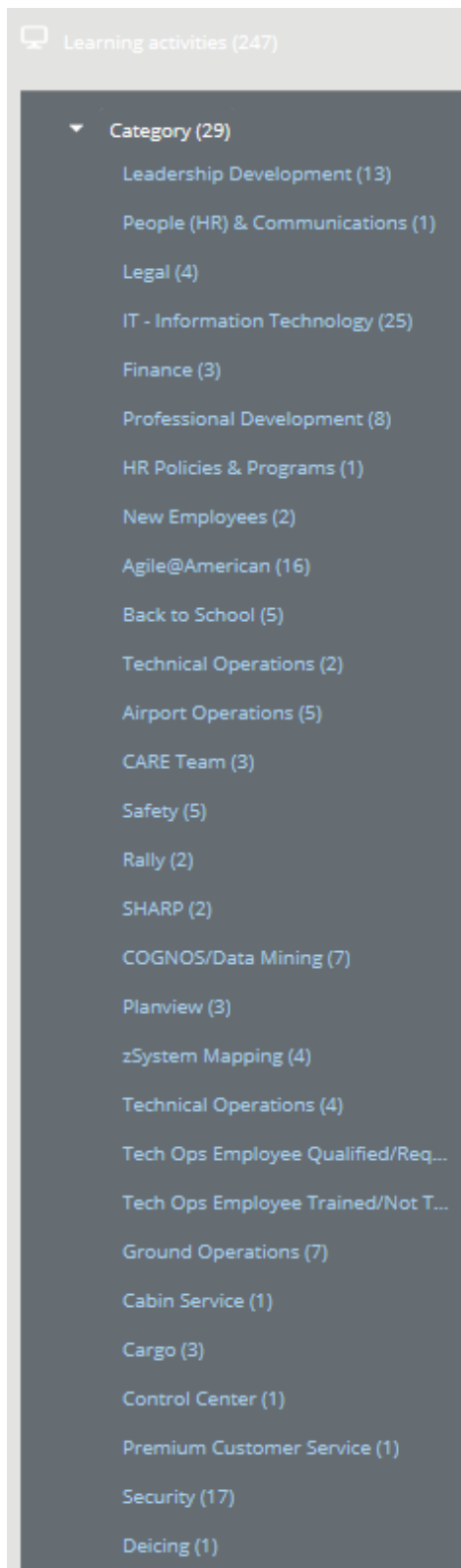
1. What are your ultimate career goals/ where do you see yourself in 5 – 10 years?

2. What do you think is the most important skill or characteristic for women in leadership to possess?

    a. Follow up: Where is the best place/what is the best way to learn that skill?

3. What one thing can you most attribute your career success to?

    a. Follow up: What made you choose that/ what makes you think that?

4. Tell me about your experiences with the leadership development classes that you have taken at this organization.

5. How have you developed as a leader over the course of your time in management?

    a. *or* How has your leadership style changed?

6. What do you consider to be your greatest strength/asset?

    a. Follow up: Where did you learn this skill/ obtain asset?

    b. Follow up: How could this be taught (better)?

7. What role does corporate leadership training and development play in achieving gender equality in leadership?

8. Have you ever felt like being a woman impeded your success to climb the corporate ladder?

    a. Follow up: Can you explain your answer / give me an example?

2. AAUW 124 Year Pay Gap Graph

At the 2003–13 rate, the pay gap won't close for another 124 years.
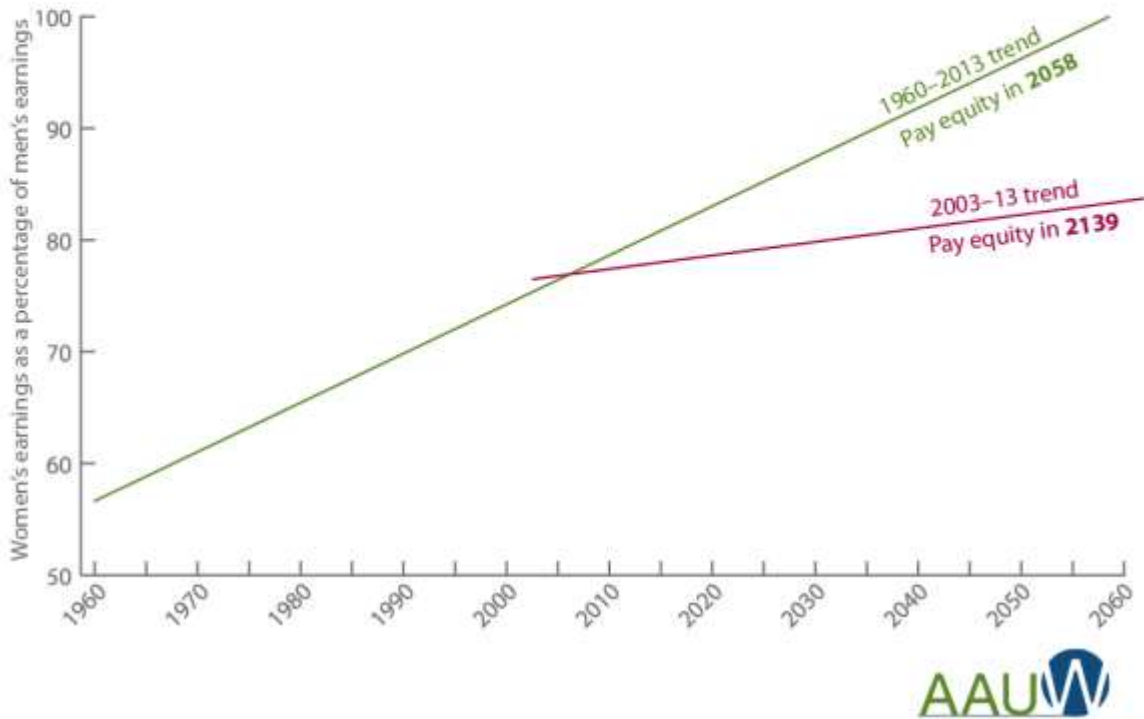
3. Learning Activities: Interactive Live Classroom Training

4. Gendered Words in Course Titles & Descriptions (Alphabetized)

Female Associated	Absolute Frequency	Male Associated	Absolute Frequency
class	5	ability	1
colleagues	2	able	5
communicate	1	amazing	1
course	20	basic	1
depends	1	best	1
efforts	1	brain	1
instructor	1	diagnose	1
instructor-led	1	discover	1
making	1	discovering	1
organization	2	excellence	1
organize	3	expertise	1
organizing	1	extraordinary	1
participants	1	find	1
presentation	2	fundamentals	1
presentations	6	greatest	1
presented	1	highest	2
responsibilities	4	impact	1
responsibility	1	intelligence	2
services	1	latest	1
student	1	methods	4
teaches	1	most	1
training	2	naturally	1
trust	5	pre-requisite	1
work	7	program	1
workforce	2	project	13
workgroups	1	question	1
working	2	questions	3
workplace	9	result	1
workshop	9	results	3
		science	1
		skillfully	1
		skills	12
		smart	1
		talents	1

5. Frequency of Gendered Words in Course Titles & Descriptions

Female Associated	Absolute Frequency		Male Associated	Absolute Frequency
course	20		project	13
workplace	9		skills	12
workshop	9		able	5
work	7		methods	4
presentations	6		questions	3
class	5		results	3
trust	5		highest	2
responsibilities	4		intelligence	2
organize	3		ability	1
colleagues	2		amazing	1
organization	2		basic	1
presentation	2		best	1
training	2		brain	1
workforce	2		diagnose	1
working	2		discover	1
presented	1		discovering	1
communicate	1		excellence	1
depends	1		expertise	1
efforts	1		extraordinary	1
instructor	1		find	1
Instructor-led	1		fundamentals	1
making	1		greatest	1
organizing	1		impact	1
participants	1		latest	1
presented	1		most	1
responsibility	1		naturally	1
services	1		pre-requisite	1
student	1		program	1
workgroups	1		question	1
			result	1
			science	1
			skillfully	1
			smart	1
			talents	1

6. Organization Defined Course Content Categories

Leadership Development
1. Communicating for Success
2. Elevate the Everyday Experience
3. Emergenetics
4. Emergenetics – Beyond the Basics
5. Engaging Your Team
6. Helping your Team Through Transition
7. Impact II - Navigating Through Differences
8. Lead in Action: Collaborative Partnerships
9. Lead in Action: Interactive Communication
10. Lead in Action: Validating the Trust
11. Lead the Experience
12. Leading People
13. Presentation Skills
14. Project Management Essentials - for the non-Project MGR

Legal
1. Antitrust Training Seminar - Rev MGMT & Alliances

People, HR & Communication
1. Workplace Inclusion

Technology
1. Advanced Agile Project Management
2. Agile Fundamentals Overview
3. Agile Requirements and Modeling
4. Avoiding turbulence in the cloud
5. Business Analysis in an Agile World
6. Fundamentals of Enterprise Architecture
7. How to Measure Anything
8. Program Management in an Agile World
9. Project Management in an Agile World
10. Put the TEAM in the driver's seat

Professional Development
1. Appreciating Differences
2. Effective Business Writing
3. Emotional Intelligence
4. Executive Presence
5. Extreme Team Building Challenge
6. Five Choices
7. Making the Transition – Part 1
8. Making the Transition – Part 2
9. Personal Branding
10. Presentation Advantage

7. New Themes & Categories

Self-Development
1. Appreciating Differences
2. Communicating for Success
3. Effective Business Writing
4. Elevate the Everyday Experience
5. Emergenetics
6. Emergenetics – Beyond the Basics
7. Emotional Intelligence
8. Executive Presence
9. Five Choices
10. Impact II - Navigating Through Differences
11. Lead in Action: Collaborative Partnerships
12. Lead in Action: Interactive Communication
13. Lead in Action: Validating the Trust
14. Making the Transition – Part 1
15. Personal Branding
16. Presentation Advantage
17. Presentation Skills
18. Workplace Inclusion

Developing Others
1. Lead the Experience
2. Leading People
3. Making the Transition – Part 2

Building Teams
1. Engaging Your Team
2. Extreme Team Building Challenge
3. Helping your Team Through Transition
4. Put the TEAM in the driver's seat

Understanding the Business
1. Antitrust Training Seminar - Rev MGMT & Alliances
2. Avoiding turbulence in the cloud
3. Fundamentals of Enterprise Architecture
4. How to Measure Anything

Project Management
1. Advanced Agile Project Management
2. Agile Fundamentals Overview
3. Agile Requirements and Modeling
4. Business Analysis in an Agile World
5. Project Management in an Agile World
6. Project Management Essentials - for the non-Project Manager
7. Program Management in an Agile World

8. Word Count from Course Titles & Descriptions

23 management	7 audience
21 business	6 writing
20 team	6 world
19 course	6 transition
17 through	6 tools
17 project	6 role
17 program	6 presentations
16 with	6 people
16 agile	6 needs
15 participants	6 modeling
13 techniques	6 leading
13 leadership	6 interactive
12 skills	6 impact
12 learn	6 hour
11 workplace	6 eq
9 workshop	6 effectively
9 understand	6 customers
9 teams	6 behaviors
9 help	5 trust
9 can	5 they
8 our	5 requirements
8 leaders	5 process
8 identify	5 others
8 have	5 objectives
8 experience	5 new
8 employees	5 make
8 effective	5 inclusion
7 work	5 environment
7 we	5 engaging
7 planning	5 emergenetics
7 lead	5 discussions
7 create	5 difficult
7 communication	5 differences

5 development	4 encourage
5 deliver	4 diversity
5 class	4 designed
5 challenges	4 collaboration
5 analysis	4 change
5 action	4 achieve
5 able	4 about
4 write	3 within
4 understanding	3 while
4 technology	3 which
4 target	3 where
4 such	3 when
4 success	3 way
4 session	3 user
4 responsibilities	3 upon
4 recognize	3 topics
4 quality	3 tips
4 provides	3 time
4 presentation	3 those
4 personal	3 thinking
4 models	3 these
4 methods	3 them
4 managers	3 strategies
4 manager	3 strategic
4 making	3 situations
4 key	3 roadmap
4 information	3 results
4 individual	3 reports
4 includes	3 questions
4 include	3 practice
4 frontline	3 plan
4 from	3 own
4 five	3 organize
4 explain	3 not

3 need	3 awareness
3 must	3 attendees
3 meetings	3 architecture
3 life	3 appropriate
3 levels	3 apply
3 leader	3 any
3 just	3 answer
3 harassment	3 also
3 gives	3 advanced
3 fundamentals	3 activities
3 focus	2 working
3 feedback	2 workforce
3 explore	2 who
3 exercises	2 well
3 everyday	2 ways
3 energy	2 velocity
3 elevate	2 various
3 diverse	2 value
3 define	2 validating
3 critical	2 training
3 creating	2 today's
3 conversations	2 things
3 connect	2 than
3 concepts	2 teambuilding
3 completion	2 tasks
3 common	2 support
3 cloud	2 styles
3 clearly	2 strengths
3 choices	2 story
3 building	2 stories
3 build	2 standards
3 both	2 specific
3 between	2 some
3 basic	2 solutions

2 simple	2 navigating
2 should	2 mtt
2 shift	2 message
2 several	2 measure
2 set	2 maturity
2 sessions	2 manage
2 sense	2 logically
2 seminar	2 listening
2 self	2 list
2 seat	2 letters
2 safe	2 led
2 risk	2 learning
2 right	2 knowledge
2 revenue	2 know
2 release	2 keep
2 real	2 join
2 put	2 itself
2 provide	2 it's
2 productivity	2 intelligence
2 principles	2 integration
2 presence	2 instructor
2 prerequisites	2 increase
2 practical	2 improve
2 positive	2 important
2 place	2 importance
2 persuasive	2 implement
2 perform	2 ideas
2 pdev	2 highly
2 part	2 highest
2 overcoming	2 high
2 outcomes	2 helping
2 other	2 has
2 organization	2 hands
2 none	2 handling

2 had	2 competition
2 group	2 communicating
2 gain	2 colleagues
2 functions	2 collaborative
2 function	2 clear
2 franklin	2 challenge
2 four	2 centers
2 finances	2 branding
2 experiential	2 attitudes
2 executive	2 around
2 everything	2 areas
2 enterprise	2 antitrust
2 engagement	2 alliances
2 end	2 advantage
2 employee	2 adapt
2 empathy	2 actions
2 emotions	2 accomplish
2 emotional	1 zanshin
2 elicit	1 you'll
2 direct	1 wow
2 different	1 workgroups
2 diagrams	1 word
2 develop	1 willingly
2 design	1 widespread
2 department	1 wide
2 demonstrate	1 white
2 delivering	1 week
2 daily	1 weaknesses
2 customer	1 wanders
2 cover	1 vs
2 control	1 visual
2 content	1 visioning
2 consistent	1 virtual
2 concisely	1 violence

1 videotaped	1 though
1 video	1 thing
1 viability	1 there
1 variety	1 then
1 values	1 themselves
1 valued	1 terminology
1 uses	1 tendencies
1 urgency	1 telling
1 upper	1 technological
1 up	1 teamwork
1 unit	1 teaches
1 union	1 taped
1 unified	1 talents
1 unfavorably	1 takes
1 unexpected	1 take
1 uncomfortable	1 tactical
1 uncertain	1 tackled
1 uml	1 system
1 types	1 sustainable
1 two	1 supporting
1 tutorial	1 successfully
1 turbulence	1 successes
1 trying	1 style
1 traits	1 studied
1 tracking	1 student
1 track	1 structuring
1 toward	1 strategy
1 toolkit	1 still
1 tool	1 steward
1 too	1 steer
1 today	1 state
1 three	1 standup
1 threatening	1 stance
1 thought	1 spirit

1 spectrum	1 result
1 smart	1 restoring
1 slides	1 responsive
1 sky	1 responsibility
1 skillfully	1 respect
1 sizing	1 resources
1 single	1 resistance
1 simultaneously	1 resiliency
1 simulations	1 requisite
1 simulating	1 reporting
1 shu	1 report
1 showing	1 remaining
1 sharpen	1 rely
1 sharing	1 relevant
1 shares	1 regarding
1 share	1 refreshing
1 shaping	1 refer
1 setting	1 redefining
1 services	1 recently
1 servant	1 receive
1 sequence	1 realize
1 secure	1 realities
1 second	1 reactions
1 science	1 range
1 schedule	1 quickly
1 scenarios	1 question
1 scaled	1 quantify
1 rules	1 putting
1 roles	1 provoking
1 roadblocks	1 proven
1 ri	1 proposals
1 reward	1 promotional
1 reveals	1 promoted
1 retrospectives	1 profiles

1 professional	1 organizing
1 processes	1 opportunities
1 problems	1 operational
1 problem	1 only
1 prioritizing	1 olympic
1 prior	1 offers
1 prevent	1 occur
1 presented	1 obstacles
1 preparing	1 number
1 premise	1 notation
1 preferences	1 no
1 pre	1 next
1 practices	1 newly
1 powerpoint	1 never
1 potential	1 neutralizing
1 portfolio	1 necessary
1 please	1 nature
1 platform	1 naturally
1 pertinent	1 mysterious
1 persuade	1 mt
1 perspectives	1 motivating
1 period	1 most
1 performance	1 model
1 perceived	1 mock
1 peers	1 mindset
1 peek	1 mind
1 past	1 metrics
1 partnerships	1 messages
1 particular	1 merger
1 paced	1 memorable
1 overload	1 members
1 overcome	1 measurement
1 out	1 measured
1 original	1 matters

1 matter	1 interview
1 map	1 interactions
1 many	1 interaction
1 makes	1 interact
1 makeovers	1 intended
1 main	1 intend
1 machine	1 integrating
1 loyalty	1 inspired
1 looking	1 inspire
1 living	1 inspecting
1 line	1 innovative
1 life's	1 innovation
1 leverages	1 influencing
1 leverage	1 individuals
1 level	1 increasingly
1 lesson	1 increasing
1 length	1 inclusive
1 lend	1 improvement
1 legal	1 improved
1 legacy	1 ill
1 learned	1 if
1 lean	1 identified
1 laws	1 hrs
1 latest	1 hr
1 language	1 hone
1 land	1 historical
1 kind	1 hired
1 judged	1 helps
1 journey	1 heard
1 its	1 healthy
1 items	1 handle
1 iq	1 ha
1 involved	1 guarantee
1 into	1 growth

1 greatest	1 fears
1 greater	1 favorably
1 great	1 fast
1 going	1 failure
1 goals	1 factors
1 goal	1 factor
1 go	1 facing
1 giving	1 facilitator
1 given	1 facilitating
1 get	1 facilitated
1 gestures	1 facilitate
1 geography	1 eye
1 further	1 extreme
1 functional	1 extraordinary
1 fun	1 express
1 fulfills	1 exposed
1 frustrating	1 expertise
1 front	1 experiences
1 foundational	1 expectations
1 fostering	1 expect
1 foster	1 exercising
1 forms	1 execute
1 formal	1 excellence
1 following	1 exceed
1 followed	1 examine
1 focusing	1 evolving
1 fluffy	1 everyone
1 fll	1 ever
1 first	1 events
1 find	1 estimation
1 few	1 estimating
1 features	1 essentials
1 featured	1 equips
1 feature	1 environments

1 entire	1 discover
1 ensure	1 diplomatic
1 enrolled	1 diplomacy
1 enhance	1 difference
1 engage	1 diagnose
1 encouraging	1 developers
1 encounters	1 detours
1 enable	1 details
1 empowering	1 describe
1 employing	1 derailers
1 emphasizes	1 depth
1 emphasize	1 depicted
1 emails	1 depends
1 email	1 demonstrating
1 electronic	1 demonstrates
1 efforts	1 definition
1 easy	1 defining
1 during	1 defined
1 drivers	1 deepen
1 driver	1 decisions
1 dramatically	1 dealing
1 done	1 days
1 domain	1 current
1 documents	1 cultural
1 do	1 cultivate
1 distance	1 credit
1 dispersed	1 creativity
1 disorganized	1 covey's
1 discussion	1 covey
1 discussing	1 courses
1 discrimination	1 could
1 discretionary	1 cornerstone
1 discovery	1 core
1 discovering	1 cooperation

1 contributors

1 contribute

1 continuous

1 context

1 contemporary

1 contact

1 consists

1 considered

1 conflict

1 confident

1 concise

1 component

1 complex

1 completing

1 completed

1 competitive

1 companies

1 communications

1 communicate

1 comes

1 collecting

1 coaching

1 coach

1 clearing

1 changing

1 challenging

1 certain

1 center

1 celebrating

1 celebrates

1 case

1 caring

1 capture

1 capitalizing

1 can't

1 cadence

1 buzz

1 businesses

1 burning

1 broad

1 bring

1 briefing

1 brain

1 bpmn

1 blending

1 big

1 beyond

1 best

1 benefit

1 belief

1 behind

1 behavioral

1 behavior

1 before

1 become

1 basics

1 avoiding

1 avoid

1 authentically

1 attributes

1 attorney

1 attitude

1 attending

1 assessment

1 aspects

1 artifacts

1 articulate

1 art

1 arguments

1 area

1 appropriately

1 approach

1 appreciating

1 appreciated

1 applying

1 application

1 anything

1 analyzing

1 analyze

1 analysts

1 amazing

1 always

1 alp

1 along

1 alone

1 almost

1 allow

1 aligns

1 alignment

1 align

1 after

1 affect

1 administration

1 address

1 additional

1 add

1 adapting

1 acumen

1 activity

1 across

1 acquire

1 accountability

1 accelerate

1 ability

9. Sample Interview Participation Email

Hi _____,

I am working to complete my thesis this semester on the topic of leadership development and gender equality and I am emailing to ask you to be a part of it! Will you take the time to let me to interview you and ask you some questions about your personal leadership development journey?

The purpose of my research is to study corporate leadership development and the role it plays in gender (in) equality in the work place. I plan to conduct interviews with several women in leadership positions to gain insight about what they consider to be must-have characteristics in order to obtain leadership positions and to identify gaps that may exist in leadership development content.

The goal is to gain an understanding of women's experiences with corporate leadership development courses and understand how their personal development and growth as a leader was impacted as a result from participation in said courses. Answers will be used to help better understand how women make sense of and put to use their training and development experiences.

The interview will be audio recorded, but only for transcription purposes, in order to accurately document statements. During the transcription process, interviewees will be assigned fake names to protect their identity and I will adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality within state and federal laws. You will never be identified personally and your name will not be associated with your statements in any way. The interview should last no longer than an hour. Defense of this thesis will take place on November 15th. A final copy will be available, should you request, after December 15th.

I sent you a calendar appointment based on your availability on Monday. (If you are not interested in participating, please decline the appointment or if a different time works better for you, propose a new time.) We can conduct the interview in your office or if another location works better for you, just let me know!

Thanks in advance for your time,
Anna

10. Informed Consent Document

Informed Consent

You have been asked to participate as a subject in the research project titled "Framing Leadership Rhetoric: Exploring Gender (In) equality in Corporate Training Material" under the direction of Anna Prieto. The purpose of this project is to study corporate leadership development and the role it plays in gendered work places.

One-on-one, face-to-face interviews will be conducted with a Communication graduate student serving as the interviewer (Anna Prieto). The interview should last no longer than one hour. Approximately six individuals will be interviewed during the course of the study. Questions asked during the interview will center on your experience in the work place regarding leadership development. Your answers will be used to help better understand how women make sense of and put to use their training and development experiences. Your interview will be audio recorded in order to accurately document your statements. The recording of your interview will not be used to identify you personally but to ensure an accurate record of your statements; your name will not be associated with your statements in any way. The recordings will be kept in a secure place on a password protected cellular device and no audio recording will be used for any other purpose than the completion of this study. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

You have a right to privacy and all information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential as far as possible within state and federal law.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, The University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or court order. The resulting data from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposed not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will not contain your identifying information that could associate you with your information or with your participation in any study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no direct benefits or compensation as a result of your decision to participate. Participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time for any reason with no explanation or expectation of penalty. There are no known risks expected from participating in this study; however, you may decline participation and recording at no consequence.

If you have any questions before, during, or after the study, you may contact Anna Prieto at AnnaEPrieto@mavs.uta.edu
You may contact the Chairperson of the UT Arlington Institution Review Board at 817.272.3723 with any question related to your rights as a research participant.

CONSENT:_____Signatures:_____

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of principal investigator or person obtaining consent   Date
_____

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You are also 18 years of age or older.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER DATE
_____

11. Gendered Words in Interviews (Alphabetized)

Female Associated	Absolute Frequency	Male Associated	Absolute Frequency
busy	2	ability	8
careful	1	able	12
class	8	amazing	3
classes	12	best	18
course	15	biggest	1
courses	14	brain	1
depending	2	brainstorming	1
depends	1	competent	1
education	1	contest	1
educational	1	contribution	1
instructive	1	data	2
instructors	1	discovered	1
mentor	8	excellent	1
mentored	1	finding	1
mentors	1	findings	1
organization	32	forest	1
organizations	2	fundamental	1
presentations	1	fundamentally	4
responsibilities	1	gifted	1
responsibility	1	greatest	10
services	1	hardest	3
teach	21	honest	2
teacher	1	honestly	6
teaching	5	innate	2
training	21	insight	1
trust	4	insightful	1
trusting	1	interested	2
work	53	interesting	12
worked	7	investment	1
working	16	most	18
workplace	4	mostly	2
works	5	natural	2
		naturally	1
		proficient	1
		project	2
		projects	4
		question	17
		questions	6
		result	2
		results	2
		results-driven	1
		science	2
		skill	1
		skills	13
		studies	10
		suggestion	1
		suggestions	2
		talent	1
		testostorone	1
		wildest	1

12. Frequency of Gendered Words in Interviews

Female Associated	Absolute Frequency	Male Associated	Absolute Frequency
work	53	best	18
organization	32	most	18
teach	21	question	17
training	21	skill	13
working	16	able	12
course	15	interesting	12
courses	14	greatest	10
classes	12	skills	10
class	8	ability	8
mentor	8	honestly	6
worked	7	questions	6
teaching	5	fundamentally	4
works	5	projects	4
trust	4	amazing	3
workplace	4	hardest	3
busy	2	data	2
depending	2	honest	2
organizations	2	innate	2
careful	1	interested	2
depends	1	mostly	2
education	1	natural	2
educational	1	project	2
instructive	1	result	2
instructors	1	science	2
mentored	1	biggest	2
mentors	1	brain	1
presentations	1	brainstorming	1
responsibilities	1	competent	1
responsibility	1	contest	1
services	1	contribution	1
teacher	1	discovered	1
trusting	1	excellent	1
		finding	1
		findings	1
		forest	1
		fundamentals	1
		gifted	1
		insight	1
		insightful	1
		investment	1
		naturally	1
		proficient	1
		results-driven	1
		scientific	1
		studies	1
		suggestion	1
		suggestions	1
		talent	1
		testostorone	1
		wildest	1

13. LIWC Study-Defined Dimension Dictionaries

Standout words: excellen*, superb, outstanding, unique, exceptional, unparalleled, *est, most, wonderful, terrific*, fabulous, magnificent, remarkable, estraordinar*, amazing, supreme*, unmatched

Ability words: talent*, intell*, smart*, skill*, ability, genius, brilliant*, bright*, brain*, aptitude, gift*, capacity, propensity, innate, flair, knack, clever*, expert*, proficient*, capable, adept*, able, competent, natural*, inherent*, instinct*, adroit*, creative*, insight*, analytical

Grindstone words: hardworking, conscientious, depend*, meticulous, thorough, diligen*, dedicate, careful, reliab*, effort*, assiduous, trust*, responsib*, methodical, industrious, busy, work*, persist*, organiz*, disciplined

Teaching words: teach, instruct, educat*, train*, mentor, supervis*, adviser, counselor, syllabus, syllabus, course*, class, service, colleague, citizen, communicate*, lectur*, student*, present*, rapport

Research words: research*, data, study, studies, experiment*, scholarship, test*, result*, finding*, publication*, publish*, vita*, method*, scien*, grant*, fund*, manuscript*, project*, journal*,theor*, discover*, contribution*

Note. * indicates that any word containing the letter string that precedes or follows the asterisk should be counted.

14. Image 1 - Overall Happiness 2014

Legend:
- Explained by: GDP per capita
- Explained by: social support
- Explained by: healthy life expectancy
- Explained by: freedom to make life choices
- Explained by: generosity
- Explained by: perceptions of corruption
- Dystopia (2.33) + residual
- 95% confidence interval

1. Switzerland (7.587)
2. Iceland (7.561)
3. Denmark (7.527)
4. Norway (7.522)
5. Canada (7.427)
6. Finland (7.406)
7. Netherlands (7.378)
8. Sweden (7.364)
9. New Zealand (7.286)
10. Australia (7.284)
11. Israel (7.278)
12. Costa Rica (7.226)
13. Austria (7.200)
14. Mexico (7.187)
15. United States (7.119)
16. Brazil (6.983)
17. Luxembourg (6.946)
18. Ireland (6.940)
19. Belgium (6.937)
20. United Arab Emirates (6.901)

15. Image 2 - Overall Happiness 2015
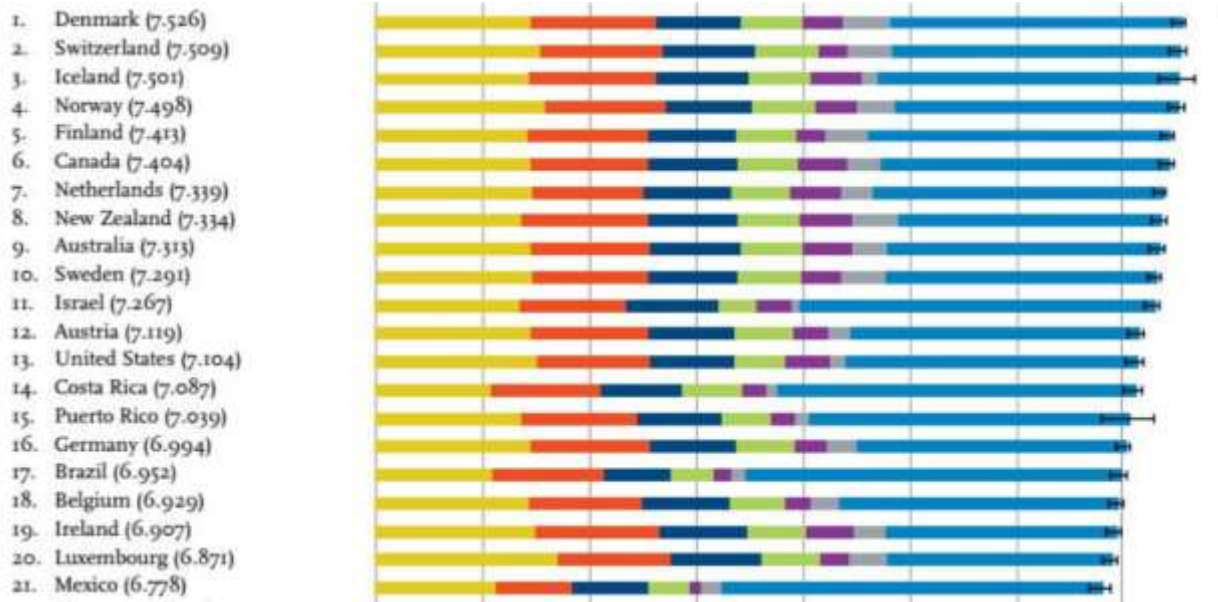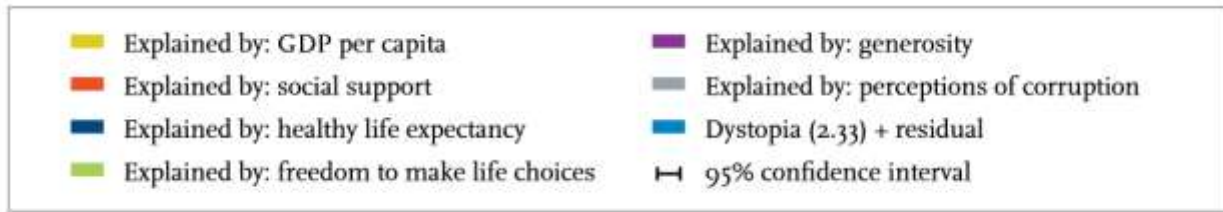
16. Image 3 - Overall Happiness 2016

Legend:
- Explained by: GDP per capita
- Explained by: social support
- Explained by: healthy life expectancy
- Explained by: freedom to make life choices
- Explained by: generosity
- Explained by: perceptions of corruption
- Dystopia (2.33) + residual
- 95% confidence interval

1. Norway (7.537)
2. Denmark (7.522)
3. Iceland (7.504)
4. Switzerland (7.494)
5. Finland (7.469)
6. Netherlands (7.377)
7. Canada (7.316)
8. New Zealand (7.314)
9. Australia (7.284)
10. Sweden (7.284)
11. Israel (7.213)
12. Costa Rica (7.079)
13. Austria (7.006)
14. United States (6.993)
15. Ireland (6.977)
16. Germany (6.951)
17. Belgium (6.891)
18. Luxembourg (6.863)
19. United Kingdom (6.714)
20. Chile (6.652)

17. Image 4 – Global Gender Gap 2014

Global Gender Gap Index 2014. The highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality)

Rank	Economy	Score
1	Iceland	0.8594
2	Finland	0.8453
3	Norway	0.8374
4	Sweden	0.8165
5	Denmark	0.8025
6	Nicaragua	0.7894
7	Rwanda*	0.7854
8	Ireland	0.7850
9	Philippines	0.7814
10	Belgium	0.7809
11	Switzerland	0.7798
12	Germany	0.7780
13	New Zealand	0.7772
14	Netherlands	0.7730
15	Latvia	0.7691
16	France	0.7588
17	Burundi	0.7565
18	South Africa	0.7527
19	Canada	0.7464
20	United States	0.7463

18. Image 5 – Global Gender Gap 2015

Rank	Economy	Score
1	Iceland	0.881
2	Norway	0.850
3	Finland	0.850
4	Sweden	0.823
5	Ireland	0.807
6	Rwanda	0.794
7	Philippines	0.790
8	Switzerland	0.785
9	Slovenia	0.784
10	New Zealand	0.782
11	Germany	0.779
12	Nicaragua	0.776
13	Netherlands	0.776
14	Denmark	0.767
15	France	0.761
16	Namibia	0.760
17	South Africa	0.759
18	United Kingdom	0.758
19	Belgium	0.753
20	Latvia	0.752

19. Image 5 – Global Gender Gap 2016

Global Gender Gap Index 2016

The highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality)

Rank	Economy	Score
1	Iceland	0.874
2	Finland	0.845
3	Norway	0.842
4	Sweden	0.815
5	Rwanda	0.8
6	Ireland	0.797
7	Philippines	0.786
8	Slovenia	0.786
9	New Zealand	0.781
10	Nicaragua	0.78
11	Switzerland	0.776
12	Burundi	0.768
13	Germany	0.766
14	Namibia	0.765
15	South Africa	0.764
16	Netherlands	0.756
17	France	0.755
18	Latvia	0.755
19	Denmark	0.754
20	United Kingdom	0.752

20. Cultural Dimensions & Happiness Rankings

10 Happiest Countries	Cultural Dimensions Masculinity	World Happiness 3 yr Average Ranking	World Happiness Index Ranking 2014	World Happiness Index Ranking 2015	World Happiness Index Ranking 2016
Denmark	**16**	1st 2	3rd	1st	2nd
Switzerland	**70**	2nd 2.3	1st	2nd	4th
Iceland	**10**	3rd 2.6	2nd	3rd	3rd
Norway	**8**	4th 3	4th	4th	1st
Finland	**26**	5th 5.3	6th	5th	5th
Canada	**52**	6th 6	5th	6th	7th
Netherlands	**14**	7th 6.6	7th	7th	6th
New Zealand	**58**	8th 8.6	9th	8th	8th
Sweden	**5**	10th 9.3	8th	10th	10th
Australia	**61**	10th 9.3	10th	9th	9th
America	**62**	14th	15th	13th	14th

Global Gender Gap Index	Cultural Dimensions Masculinity	Global Gender Gap Index Average Ranking	Global Gender Gap Index 2014	Global Gender Gap Index 2015	Global Gender Gap Index 2016
Iceland	**5**	1	1	1	1
Finland	**8**	2	2	3	2
Norway	**10**	3	3	2	3
Sweden	**14**	4	4	4	4
Rwanda	**16**	5	7	6	5
Ireland	**26**	6	8	5	6
Philippines	**52**	7	9	7	7
Nicaragua	**70**	8	6	12	10
Switzerland	**70**	9	11	8	11
New Zealand	**61**	10	13	10	9
Denmark	**16**	11	5	14	19
Belgium	**54**	12	10	19	24
Slovenia	**58**	13	23	9	8

21. Global Gender Gap, Cultural Dimensions & Happiness Rankings

Gender, Happiness & Masculinity Comparison	Cultural Dimensions Masculinity	World Happiness 3 yr Average Ranking	Global Gender Gap Index 3 yr Average
Denmark	**16**	1	11
Switzerland	**70**	2	10
Iceland	**10**	3	1
Norway	**8**	4	3
Finland	**26**	5	2
Canada	**52**	6	28
Netherlands	**14**	7	14
New Zealand	**58**	8	10
Sweden	**5**	10	4
Australia	**61**	10	90
America	**62**	14	31
Ireland	**26**	17	6
Belgium	**54**	18	12
Nicaragua	**70**	49	8
Slovenia	**58**	60	13
Philippines	**52**	81	7
Rwanda	**16**	152	5

22. Graphs: Happiness, Global Gender Gap & Cultural Dimension