

Management Development Programs: Impacts of Same-Gender and Mixed Models

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the career progress of women who took a same-gender or mixed-gender, post-secondary Management Development Certificate program. It includes the challenges they faced and the strategies they used to advance into, and through, management. Survey methodology and documents (i.e., formal course evaluations, informal feedback from respondents, and instructors) were used to collect data for the study. Analysis indicated that completion of a same-gender program appeared to be associated with greater gains into higher levels of management, higher income, and greater critical awareness of gendered organizational structures.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article compare l'avancement professionnel de femmes ayant suivi un programme de certificat homo et hétérosexuel d'enseignement post-secondaire en formation et en perfectionnement administratifs. Aussi a-t-on inclus les défis auxquels elles ont été confrontées ainsi que les stratégies qu'elles ont utilisées pour avancer aux postes de gestion. Pour générer les données de l'étude on a utilisé une méthodologie des levés ainsi que des documents (i.e., des évaluations formelles de cours, de la rétroaction informelle de répondants et d'instructeurs). L'analyse indique que l'achèvement d'un programme homosexuel semble s'associer à de plus grands gains dans l'accès aux niveaux supérieurs de gestion, à un revenu plus élevé, et à une plus grande sensibilisation discriminatoire des structures organisationnelles étant divisées selon le sexe.

INTRODUCTION

Women have gained access to management and administrative positions in increasing numbers over the past two decades, yet although they hold 42% of management, administrative, and executive positions, they hold only 5% of senior management positions. If the competitive edge of the future lies in developing human resources, then a primary goal of management development activities should be to develop and promote skilled senior women managers (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995; Hite & McDonald, 1995; Statistics Canada, 2000). This paper reports on the second phase of a study of women graduates of management development programs. It describes the effects of a same-gender and a mixed-gender program, as reported by graduates of these programs.

RELATED LITERATURE

Few longitudinal studies describe the links between the barriers to full participation in senior management positions faced by women managers and program development activities. Some studies describe barriers to career progress within organizations and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of programs, including women-only and mixed programs. The available literature, however, has little on how these women's careers unfold over time. This literature review examines organizational and educational factors that influence women's career progress.

Organizational Factors

The metaphor of the glass ceiling explains women's lack of career progress and identifies "what" and "how," but it fails to explain "why" (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Simon, 1995; Veale & Gold, 1998). Barriers are multi-faceted and exist at many levels of women's career paths. Some women, no doubt, lack the necessary knowledge to pursue managerial positions, but current organizational cultures, including the old boys' network and formal and informal policies and practices, act as barriers to women's access to and equal participation in senior management. They also inhibit their career progress and impede their ability to be effective strategic decision-makers (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995; Melamed, 1996; Still, 1994; White, 1995).

The old boys' network implies that men in senior positions are more comfortable sharing relevant organizational knowledge and experiences with other men (Veale & Gold, 1998); it is a culture based on mateship rather than merit. There is also a clear pattern of adherence to career-development models designed on traditional male career paths (i.e., chronological career timetables and separation of work from family). Selection-process criteria of rank

and specialization are problematic for women because they are unable to follow progressive, linear career models due to interrupted career patterns. Women managers also concede that male managers' attitudes and prejudices have had a negative impact on their career paths (Alimo-Metcalf, 1993; Veale & Gold, 1998).

Other organizational barriers include isolation by male colleagues, lack of access to information, and lack of career advice and strategic career planning (Martin, 1993; Okanlawon, 1994). Many successful women, however, suggest that the most significant barrier is the acceptance of unwritten rules and practices within this male culture (White, 1995). Negative stereotypes of women, such as their perceived lack of political savvy and poor career planning, also impede their career progress. A management culture that is closed rather than open and communicative, where competition rather than teamwork is stressed, adds to their lack of advancement (Still, 1994).

Educational Factors

Because women continue to be disadvantaged, strategies to promote women into management are critical. Thus, determining the efficacy of these strategies, including the effect of women-only and mixed-management development programs in facilitating or inhibiting women's advancement into management levels, is crucial (Hite & McDonald, 1995; Larwood & Wood, 1995; Macalpine, 1995; Northcraft & Gutek, 1993; Simpson, 1995).

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

A significant disadvantage of these programs is that they stress differences between men and women, which may have a negative effect in the long run. They also exclude and isolate women even further from the male-dominated management ranks, decrease the likelihood of gender integration in management and the workplace, and reinforce workforce segregation. If women are viewed as getting preferential treatment, it may result in resentment, further alienation, and tension in the workplace. Isolation diminishes women's ability to make strategic decisions due to lack of information, co-operation, and feedback. Finally, when male colleagues consider women to be deficient, they will challenge women's competence as managers (Veale & Gold, 1998).

Participation in mixed programs enhances women's management knowledge and leadership abilities without isolating them from male colleagues or attributing a lack of skill to them relative to men (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). Mixed programs allow for a discussion of prejudice and bias against women managers, increase women's qualifications for management positions, and encourage them to stay with their organizations for longer periods of time.

Although increased participation of women in mixed programs may lead to the incorrect assumption that women will achieve equal representation in senior management positions, it does not guarantee equal outcomes (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). Equal representation is influenced by complex factors, including the individual's decisions and choice to enter management, structural factors, and selection and hiring practices.

To understand why adult learners participate, or do not participate, in learning activities, their orientations to learning must be considered. Houle's (1961) model of goal, activity, and knowledge orientations provides such a framework. Goal-oriented learners want to achieve specific objectives, such as learning to make presentations or understand business practices. Activity-oriented learners participate for the sake of the activity itself, rather than to develop a skill or learn content (e.g., to find a partner or escape boredom). Knowledge-oriented learners pursue learning for its own sake. Note that Houle's categories are not mutually exclusive and that the examples do not capture the full range of reasons for each category.

In summary, although women's motivation to advance may be a factor, their career progress is hindered by the culture of the organization, including an anti-female ethos, and a management style and working environment that negate their achievement and success. The scarcity of management development programs for women, a lack of career planning and counseling, and conflicts between women's personal and work lives also act as barriers. Their under-representation in management positions goes beyond the individual and employment spheres to their positions in society. Facilitating their career paths calls for a major paradigm shift in thinking, new metaphors, and new discourses (Burr, 1995; Hayes, Flannery, Brooks, Tisdell, & Hugo, 2000; Tanton, 1994; Veale & Gold, 1998; Weedon, 1997; Wiesenber, 2001).

Same-gender and Mixed-gender Programs

At the University of Manitoba, several programs—in particular, the Continuing Education Division, Management Development for Women (MDW) program (begun in 1993) and the Certificate in Management (CIM), a nationally recognized, mixed-gender program (1963)—successfully provide post-secondary education to women.

Based on the principles of equality of opportunity and of condition, the MDW program is designed to increase opportunities for women and to increase their conditions of access by offering them the opportunity of integrated financial, academic, and social supports. [Is this correct?] Those who are admitted to the program must have worked for three or more years in supervisory or professional positions or in positions that provide management preparation skills.

The MDW program provides a supportive learning environment through a residential component, peer-learning support teams, mentors, workplace-based projects, lifestyle and learning-style inventories, women instructors, intensive format and integrated content, and employers' recognition and support. It is assumed that, given this support, women will voice their concerns, challenge existing structures, grow and develop personally and professionally, obtain the required management and leadership skills, enhance their self-confidence, succeed at the program, and advance into senior management. The program operates as a cohort and is offered for a 3-day period once a month for 10 months. The completion and graduation rate is approximately 98%.

In contrast, the CIM program is delivered in an extended format; two courses are normally offered in the evenings during the academic year. Those who are admitted must have at least two years of supervisory experience or four years of work experience in a management environment. Students—men and women—normally take four years to complete the program, and the completion rate is approximately 45%. MDW and CIM students are evaluated using the University's letter grade system. They must successfully complete the required program and achieve a specific grade point average to receive their certificates.

Program participants come from a variety of private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. To date, no studies have documented the career progress of the women who have completed these programs to determine if they have advanced to higher levels of management, and if not, why not?

THE STUDY

This study builds on an earlier study that reported only on MDW students. The objectives of this study are to:

- compare the education and employment experiences of women who completed the MDW and CIM programs
- better understand the factors and barriers that influence their career progress
- gather information that may help educators and employers develop more effective training and employment opportunities for women.

Population and Sample

The population was defined as former women students of the MDW and CIM programs from 1994 to 2000. The admission criteria focus on attracting women who want to gain management and leadership knowledge in order to advance into management. For this study, 104 MDW students and 61 CIM students from those years were invited to participate.

Method

Survey methodology, documents such as formal course evaluations, and informal feedback from students and instructors formed the data collection process. The survey instrument contained structured and open-ended questions designed to gather demographic data related to education, work, and program experience. It was pre-tested with a sample of four persons from each group (i.e., MDW and CIM populations), and a number of questions were modified as a result of the feedback received. Participants were mailed a package containing a letter outlining the purpose of the study, the survey instrument, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Data were collected over a four-month period.

Data Analysis

The data from the surveys are based on a MDW participant response rate of 70% (i.e., 73 respondents) and a CIM participant response rate of 44% (i.e., 27 respondents). The response rates allowed for data analysis (using SPSS), reporting, and observations (Babbie, 1995; deLeeuw, 1992). Descriptive data and simple frequencies were reported for the structured items; categories and themes developed from the open-ended items expanded on these structured items. The formal course evaluations and informal discussions with students and instructors provided feedback on both programs and on the residential component, peer-learning support teams, learning-style and life-style inventories, and mentorship element of the MDW program.

FINDINGS

For the second phase of the study, comparative data for both groups were collected. Survey data are reported at the aggregate level and are discussed below in sections corresponding to the purpose of the study.

Demographics

Demographic data from both groups provided a profile of the women learners in this study. Information on age, marital/family status, and the education of respondents and their parents was gathered.

Table 1: *Age*

Age	MDW	CIM
31 and under	6%	-
32–41	49%	54%
42–51	42%	42%
52+	3%	4%

The majority of the respondents in both programs were between 32 and 51 years of age.

Table 2: *Marital Status*

Marital Status	MDW	CIM
Married or living common law	72%	74%
Separated, divorced, or widowed	17%	8%
Single/never married	11%	18%

Most respondents were married with dependent children (69% of MDW students and 56% of CIM students) and had no dependents other than children (96%, MDW; 100%, CIM). Of the MDW respondents, 4% had dependents who were not children (i.e., aging parents). Finally, 89% of the MDW and 81% of the CIM respondents did not identify themselves as being members of a visible minority.

Table 3: *Respondents' Level of Education*

Level of Education	MDW	CIM
Completed secondary	3%	26%
Trade/vocation-diploma/certificate	39%	37%
Some college/university	27%	22%
Bachelor's degree	27%	15%
Master's degree	3%	-
Doctoral degree	1%	-

In the year in which they were admitted to the program, more MDW (97%) than CIM (74%) respondents had education beyond the secondary level. In comparison, 33% of MDW and 18% of CIM respondents' fathers and 35% (MDW) and 30% (CIM) of their mothers had education beyond the secondary level.

Education and Training Experience

The survey collected comparative data on respondents' education and training experience while in the program. Questions on completion rates and program satisfaction, motivation for and benefits of taking the program, position before and after completing the program, and barriers experienced and supports used while in the program were included.

Completion Rates and Program Satisfaction

The majority of respondents (96%) completed their program and indicated they would recommend it (88%, MDW; 96%, CIM) and take another course or program with the university (86%, MDW; 79%, CIM).

Only 37% of MDW respondents indicated that a same-sex program would meet the changing needs of today's managers; a mixed program was recommended by more CIM (86%) than MDW (46%) students. As well, 17% of MDW and 14% of CIM respondents who checked the "other" category indicated support for a program that included gender issues and building participants' self-confidence.

Motivation for and Benefits of Taking the Program

Respondents were asked to check all items that applied to their reasons for taking the program. The first major cluster of reasons was job related: to improve their chances of promotion (68% of MDW students; 70% of CIM students); to prepare for job change/loss or retention (38%, MDW; 67%, CIM); and to develop different skill sets (25%, MDW; 22%, CIM). The second major cluster related to professional and personal development: 85% of MDW and 63% of CIM students wanted to take post-secondary or higher education and to learn the management perspective. Using the open-ended category, 14% of MDW and 4% of CIM students indicated that developing self-confidence was an important motivation for them.

Those responding to an open-ended question revealed that the greatest benefit of taking the program was acquiring management and leadership knowledge. This included learning new knowledge (31%, MDW; 45%, CIM); gaining skill sets (11%, MDW; 14%, CIM); and refreshing/updating their knowledge (10%, MDW). Other equally important benefits related to self-empowerment, such as personal development (19%, MDW; 14%, CIM); networking with others (17%, MDW; 9%, CIM); gaining self-confidence (11%, MDW; 9%, CIM); and increasing political awareness (3%, MDW). All of these benefits are consistent with their motivation for taking the programs.

Position Before and After Completing the Program

Table 4 describes respondents' positions when they entered and when they completed the program.

Table 4: Employment Positions

Positions	Before		After	
	MDW	CIM	MDW	CIM
Senior Mgmt	0%	5%	18%	16%
Mid-Lower Mgmt	29%	14%	57%	58%
Entry Level-Mgmt	71%	81%	9%	21%
Left company	-	-	16%	5%

The majority of respondents were in entry-level management positions, including credit adviser, instructor, constable/sergeant, technical, sales representative, clerical and/or administrative, and supervisor/leader. Middle- to lower-management positions included engineers, analysts, and architects.

At the time of the survey, 76% of the MDW students and 85% of the CIM students reported that their jobs changed when they completed their program. They were asked to check all items that applied to this change. The changes included: expanded roles in the organization (65%, MDW; 53%, CIM); being assigned more projects (35%, MDW; 47%, CIM); and getting lateral moves (8%, MDW; 16%, CIM).

Barriers and Supports While in the Program

A number of categories were developed from the open-ended question on barriers and strategies to overcome barriers while in the program. They are described in Table 5.

Table 5: Barriers Experienced

Barriers	MDW	CIM
Time management	64%	50%
Instructional issues	15%	14%
Lack of recognition of program in workplace	10%	-
Poor program administration	2%	-
No difficulty	9%	36%

The dominant difficulty experienced by respondents related to time management, that is, balancing work, family, and program responsibilities. To resolve their difficulties, they used their abilities, knowledge, and skills, as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: *Strategies Used*

Strategies	MDW	CIM
Strategic planning	32%	37%
Consult instructors	30%	-
Negotiate with partners	17%	38%
Request information from staff & peers	8%	25%
Work hard	2%	-
Did not address difficulty	11%	-

A number of categories were developed in response to the open-ended question on supports used while in the program. The majority of respondents reported they relied on informal and formal supports, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: *Supports Used*

Supports	MDW	CIM
Informal (family & friends)	74%	54%
Formal (peers, mentors, & colleagues)	24%	46%
Did not use any supports	2%	-

Work Experience

The survey was used to gather comparative data on respondents' work experience before and after they completed their program. Questions on level of income before and after the program, satisfaction with job and income, challenges experienced moving into management positions, and strategies used to overcome these challenges were included.

Level of Income

All respondents were employed in full-time positions when they entered the program. After taking the program, they reported shifts in their income categories.

Table 8: Income Level

Income	Before		After	
	MDW	CIM	MDW	CIM
Under \$24,999	2%	20%	3%	1%
25,000-39,999	46%	48%	12%	29%
40,000-54,999	31%	24%	35%	33%
55,000-69,999	21%	8%	30%	29%
70,000-84,999	-	-	15%	8%
85,000-100,000	-	-	5%	-

Job and Income Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was very high overall, but satisfaction with level of pay was lower. The majority of MDW (85%) and CIM (77%) respondents reported that, based on their experience, education, and training, they felt qualified for their jobs and were either “very satisfied” (42%, MDW; 38%, CIM) or “satisfied” (50%, MDW; 62%, CIM) with their jobs.

In contrast, respondents were less satisfied with salaries: 25% of MDW and 27% of CIM students were “very satisfied”; 57% (MDW) and 65% (CIM) were “satisfied”; 14% (MDW) and 4% (CIM) were “dissatisfied”; and 4% (MDW) and 4% (CIM) were “very dissatisfied” with their pay.

Challenges Experienced and Strategies Used for Promotion

Categories were generated from responses to open-ended questions on the challenges experienced by respondents and the strategies they used for promotion. More MDW than CIM respondents identified systemic and male management cultures as barriers. Systemic policies and practices, such as promotion based on seniority, rank, and chronological career timetables, and the devaluing of work were identified as barriers.

Table 9: Challenges Faced

Challenges	MDW	CIM
Closed culture	46%	25%
Systemic issues	18%	5%
Old boys’ club	11%	11%
Ageism	3%	5%
Lack of education	3%	-
Size of organization & relocation	-	39%
No barriers	19%	15%

The majority of MDW students reported that they used a proactive strategy to overcome challenges to promotion. They actively challenged the system and sought recognition through self-promotion. More CIM respondents indicated that they did nothing; they tried to be patient.

Table 10: *Strategies Used*

Strategies	MDW	CIM
Challenge system	53%	10%
Self-promotion	14%	-
Take more education	14%	40%
Be patient	19%	50%

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Although conclusions cannot be drawn from this study, a number of observations can be made to connect the data to the literature.

Demographics

The typical respondent was a highly goal-oriented, motivated, white woman between 32 and 51 years old, married, and with dependent children. Her parents likely had some high school and some post-secondary education. The respondent was likely to be more educated than her parents, having completed high school and some post-secondary education, including some college or university classes, a diploma or certificate, or a bachelor's degree. MDW respondents reported higher levels of education, having completed more degrees than CIM students.

The typical respondent was employed full time in an entry-level management position and, before taking the program, earned a salary of \$25,000 to \$39,499 per year. Upon program completion, she moved to a mid-level management position, earned a salary of \$47,499 to \$62,499, was satisfied with her job but less so with her income, and depended on her management education and training to advance in her work. MDW respondents appeared to have made greater gains than CIM respondents in terms of higher-level management positions and income. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that adults with more education participate more in education (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

These data are consistent with the literature that suggests that children of white, middle-class parents, on average, tend to be more educated than their parents and that increased education leads to improvements in income

and economic well-being (Grayson, 1997). The data further reflect the common observation that over the past 20 years, women in general are likely to pursue upgrading and post-secondary education and training opportunities. The study respondents have improved their careers through participation in the program; the MDW women moved into higher levels of management and are earning more than the CIM women.

Education and Training Experience

Respondents' high completion rate, satisfaction with their program, and stable employment may reflect their high need for achievement, their attitudes, and their experience—factors not explored in this study. Although a small number of both groups reported that dealing with gender issues in the curriculum and building self-confidence were important, only MDW respondents (albeit a smaller number than expected) reported that a same-sex program would meet the changing needs of today's managers.

Respondents placed a high value on their program for helping them increase their career prospects, which is consistent with the literature (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Statistics Canada, 2000). Although more CIM respondents took the program to prepare for job change/loss or retention, both groups wanted to improve their chances of promotion (and consequently earn a higher income) and develop skill sets, rather than to achieve social goals or for the joy of learning. Thus, they are goal oriented (Houle, 1961). Although motivation does not remove barriers to advancement, clearly, economic motivation contributed to these women's achievement. This finding is also consistent with the literature (Gerardi, 1996).

The programs contributed to both groups' improved outcomes. The dominant benefits (i.e., professional and personal development) are consistent with their motivation for taking the program. More MDW respondents, however, identified self-empowerment (i.e., build self-confidence, refresh/update knowledge, network, and political awareness) as an important benefit of the program. Clearly, taking the MDW program made participants aware of the value of personal power in career advancement.

The positive, supportive, collaborative, and responsive learning environment of the MDW program was facilitated through the residential component, peer-learning support teams, learning-style and lifestyle inventories (LSI), mentorship program, supportive women instructors, and classmates. The MDW women demonstrated insight into their strengths and developmental areas, taking responsibility for their hard work, effort, abilities, and successes, as well as for their shortcomings (Rosener, 1990; Veale & Gold, 1998), through open discussions with peers, instructors, mentors, and colleagues about their LSI results and workplace and family issues. The gender-related issues discussed in the MDW program (i.e., gender discrimination,

sexual harassment, child care, and balancing work and family) had a positive impact on their confidence, self-image, and ability to act (Gallos, 1993).

A greater number of the MDW women felt self-confident, believed in their abilities, and were able to identify anti-female ethos and male cultures within their organizations, as represented by closed cultures, systemic issues, and old boys' clubs. They actively challenged the systemic policies and practices within this culture that were barriers to their career progress. A greater number of CIM women (albeit a small number in both groups) may have remained complicit in their oppression. Their deeply held beliefs, perceptions, and realities about their place and capacities in the workplace and society as a whole may have influenced their decisions and career advancement—they may have felt powerless to overcome the barriers so decided to be patient (Hayes et al., 2000; Tanton, 1994; Weedon, 1997).

Respondents experienced a number of obstacles while in the program; the major barrier was balancing work, family, and program responsibilities. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that women are still the primary caregivers and managers of family responsibilities (Statistics Canada, 2000). Although these problems were external to the program, they fell within the attitudes and practices of organizations that discriminated against women (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Macalpine, 1995; Simpson, 1995). The MDW program helped women challenge these barriers, validate their experiences, and gain more confidence. They developed problem-solving and help-seeking abilities to overcome some of the barriers and used strategic planning and negotiation knowledge and skills they gained in the program with partners, instructors, administrative staff, and peers. The program also provided the opportunity to develop support groups and networks through peer-learning support teams. Not surprisingly, more MDW women relied on informal, personal support networks, including family and friends, while more CIM women used formal supports such as peers, mentors, and colleagues.

Work Experience

For these women, the findings suggest that the program may be a very successful avenue to improved socio-economic status. A majority of them moved up in their organization and increased their income. Discrepancies in jobs and income (i.e., labour market outcomes) are reduced (Statistics Canada, 2000) as the number of women in management increase. This finding also supports aspects of socialization theory which state that human capital is increased as learners gain more knowledge. Consequently, they may move into higher levels within their organization and earn more than high school graduates or other women in their organization because they have the knowledge that employers support and value (Grayson, 1997). MDW stu-

dents, however, had stronger employment and income outcomes than CIM students. Since employer sponsorship of the MDW women is a key component of the program, employers may be recognizing and valuing the knowledge these women gained in the program by offering promotions, expanding job responsibilities, and providing project-based opportunities.

A positive relationship between full-time employment and the knowledge gained in the program appears to exist. This suggests that having more education, including a post-secondary certificate, enhanced women's employment and income opportunities. Thus, the program appears to have helped these women improve their socio-economic status. Many of the respondents continued to be employed in positions that required them to use the knowledge, skills, and abilities they gained in the program. Greater awareness of the systemic barriers may have caused more MDW than CIM women to feel that, in order to advance, they had to leave their organization or start their own company. This finding is consistent with the literature that suggests that, to advance, women have to move to another company, leave their company, or start their own business because closed, male management cultures continue to be barriers to women's advancement (Melamed, 1996; Still, 1994).

The women identified many challenges to advancement. More MDW than CIM women experienced and challenged systemic barriers, including male management cultures and discriminatory policies and practices such as promotion based on seniority, rank, or linear rather than spiral career paths. Career development models based on traditional male career paths, such as chronological career timetables and separation of work and family responsibilities, may have had a negative impact on some of these women's careers paths. These findings are consistent with the literature on women's abilities to overcome the glass ceiling (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Simon, 1995; Veale & Gold, 1998). Upon completion of their program, and contrary to the literature, more MDW than CIM women did not attribute personal challenges such as self-confidence, ability, or devaluation of achievement and success as barriers to their career advancement.

CONCLUSION

This initial data analysis reinforced a number of themes found in the literature. It suggests that completion of a post-secondary, same-gender or mixed-gender Management Development Certificate program enhances women's knowledge, skills, income, job responsibilities, and career advancement. MDW students, however, reported greater increases than CIM students in advancement, income, and critical awareness of the gendered structure of organizations.

In terms of the relationship between post-secondary education and job skills, the data indicated that the programs helped develop the needed management knowledge. The MDW program used workplace-based projects and assignments, and the data suggest a close fit between workplace-based knowledge, skills, and abilities and the formal curriculum and delivery methods of the MDW program. In general, the data support a formal post-secondary, same-sex certificate program as a way for women to obtain management knowledge, move into higher levels of management, improve income, increase their numbers in management, and become aware of and challenge gendered structures.

The majority of the women demonstrated a high level of need to achieve and saw the program as an opportunity to attain their concrete goals. The MDW women appear to have achieved insight into their strengths and weaknesses and taken responsibility for their hard work, effort, abilities, and successes, as well as for their shortcomings. To a greater extent than their CIM counterparts, they demonstrated considerable confidence in their abilities, personal growth, and development by their awareness of and willingness to confront systems of privilege and patriarchy. Both groups of women also used strategic planning and problem-solving and help-seeking behaviours to identify formal and informal supports, including family, friends, peers, mentors, and colleagues.

Lack of self-confidence was a dispositional barrier that may have contributed to the failure of a small number of respondents to advance in their careers; these women may have been unable or unwilling to challenge the systemic obstacles they faced. Alternatively, although perhaps not lacking self-confidence, they may have believed that they had achieved their maximum potential by attaining access to men's knowledge and management roles and, as a result, were not prepared to act to change the status quo. Clearly, the motivation to succeed and the willingness to challenge gender issues and power relationships in the larger social structure, including family and workplaces, were compelling factors that contributed to the MDW women's penetration of the glass ceiling.

Almost without exception, the women's orientation to learning appears to have been goal oriented. They saw the program as an opportunity to achieve the knowledge they needed to advance into higher levels of management and to earn more income, rather than to achieve social goals or for the joy of learning. The study findings are consistent with the literature that concludes that post-secondary education can shrink the gap in employment and income and provide a means for social mobility (Gerardi, 1996; Statistics Canada, 2000). Clearly, the impact of career interruptions and socially produced and historically constructed perceptions of women's role in the workplace and society cannot be overcome entirely by any one aspect of the social

structure. However, in this study, additional education that facilitated discourse on systemic causes of women's oppression significantly improved the MDW women's employment and income outcomes. This topic would benefit from further research.

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