

Reputation and social capital: A hammer for the glass ceiling

Kristine Leadbetter*

Leadbetter Consulting, Hamilton (Canada)

ARTICLE INFO

Article Type:
Research Article

Article History:
Received: 2019-01-09
Revised: 2020-03-07
Accepted: 2020-06-01

Keywords:
Women's network
Reputation
Social capital
Mentorship
Role model
Glass ceiling
Women in leadership

ABSTRACT

Through a case study of the DeGroote Women's Professional Network of the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University, this article investigates how and to what extent women's networks can contribute to building the female leadership pipeline by combating women's barriers to obtaining leadership roles. Supported by a thorough review of literature, the study examines the perceived and potential value members acquired from the Network. The results reveals while the DWPN may have the structure to support these elements, both network facilitators and members must consciously use the network strategically to support their advancement. Further study insights included seven recommendations on how networks can build members social capital and five pillars a network must incorporate to be positioned to support the advancement of women.

©Journal of Professional Communication, all rights reserved.

Studies have demonstrated the benefits of diversity in leadership and the importance of including women at decision-making tables (Catalyst, 2013). While women account for nearly half of the Canadian labour force (Catalyst, 2017b) they comprise a mere 8% of the executive positions in the Top 100 largest publicly-traded companies in Canada (Catalyst, 2017a). Looking specifically in the Greater Toronto Area, women account for a quarter of leadership positions in the corporate sector and average out to 42% across leadership positions in the public, education, government, and voluntary sectors (Cukier, 2017). These numbers demonstrate the gender diversity gap in Canada. While the Government of Canada has given a comply or explain rule for corporate boards (either comply with meeting a 30% female board presence, or explain why not) (Jaeger, 2019), more must be done to increase the pipeline of women available for leadership positions.

*Corresponding author (Kristine Leadbetter)

Email: krisleadbetter@outlook.com, LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/kristineleadbetter](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristineleadbetter), Twitter: @krisleadbetter
©Journal of Professional Communication, ISSN: 1920-6852. All rights reserved. See front matter.

Researchers believe the main reason women are not achieving parity in leadership roles is they are less likely to have extensive networks to support and promote them as potential leaders (Vongalis-Macrow, 2012). McDonald (2011) explains that for many years the “old boys club” was responsible for filling senior roles by way of informal conversations through social activities that effectively isolated women from access to these conversations. It is the popular opinion that affiliation with social networks can provide key job opportunities through valuable sources of social capital, (information, influence, and status) embedded in social network relationships (Lin, 2001). In the Canadian Board Diversity Council’s Annual Report Card (2016), research showed nine out of ten directors tap into their personal networks to recruit new members to boards – demonstrating the importance of networks.

No longer is it socially acceptable to have a non-gender-diverse workforce, nor is it good business. In Canada, a study by Catalyst, (a non-profit organization that promotes inclusive workplaces for women) suggested a correlation between having more females in leadership and increasing profits (Joy, Carter, Wagner, & Narayanan, 2007). Another study of Fortune 500 companies conducted by Pepperdine University showed a strong correlation between promoting women into executive roles and high profitability (Adler, 2001); firms with high female representation in leadership were 18 to 69 percent more profitable than their medians (Adler, 2001). A recent report by McKinsey & Company (2018) showed companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were 21 percent more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. In addition, there is a growing body of research that highlights the benefits of diversity in leadership, including better decision making, increased creativity and innovation, better connected domestic and global markets, recruitment from global and domestic labour pools, enhanced social inclusion, and improving overall organizational performance (Bird & Jackson, 2017; Cukier, Bindhani, Amato, Smarz, & Saekang, 2012). A 2017 report suggested decreasing gender inequality in the workplace may benefit Canada’s economy by as much as \$150 billion by 2026 and if eliminated, that number could rise to \$420 billion (McKinsey & Company, 2017).

A critical step in creating gender equity in the executive ranks is creating a healthy pipeline of females set for a leadership track. Despite spending equivalent time in a role, women are 30% less likely than men to get promoted out of an entry-level position, and 60% less likely to promote from middle management to executive ranks (McKinsey & Company, 2015). Further research conducted has found several barriers to women achieving senior positions. This study examines the following three barriers:

- perceptions about women's potential (lack of reputation);
- an absence of role models or mentoring; and
- connections (social capital) (Brown et al., 2015; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2016).

To support women, companies need to increase women's exposure to female senior leaders and create role models (Catalyst, 2013; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Yates et al., 2014). A KPMG study (2015) on women's leadership found "82% of professional working women believe access to and networking with female leaders will help them advance in their career" (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2017, p. 4) and "86% of women report that when they see more women in leadership, they are encouraged they can get there themselves" (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2017, p. 4). The same KPMG study (2015) found the most important pieces to supporting and grooming women for senior leadership is leadership training, confidence-building, decision-making, networking, and critical-thinking.

In efforts to address the gender gap in senior leadership, many corporations and outside organizations have formed women's networks to boost the advancement of women in business by providing networking, role models, support, and professional development opportunities (Di Meglio, 2016).

In January, 2016, the DeGroote School of Business launched the DeGroote Women's Professional Network (DWPN) with the mission to "support the advancement of women in business and society" by providing networking and professional development events for alumni and members of the business community (DeGroote School of Business, 2016). The DWPN is the subject of this study.

Review of literature

Women in Leadership

Recent scholarship suggests female leaders are associated with "greater innovation and profitability, broader consumer outreach, and stronger records on corporate social responsibility" (Glass & Cook, 2016, p. 51) which can bring a unique and important perspective to an organization (Eagly, Gartzia, & Carli, 2014; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Contemporary views of good leadership embolden collaboration and cooperation and emphasize the ability to "empower, support, and engage workers" (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p. 809), consistent with the female gender role (Book, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Helgesen,

1990; Rosener, 1995). Despite the evidence, women remain unequally represented at executive levels and concerns remain over the quality of positions into which women are promoted (Lemoine, Aggarwal, & Steed, 2016). (Research indicates women are more likely than men to be appointed as CEOs in high-risk situations or struggling firms likely caused by women being more amendable to accept these “rare opportunities” over men who view these positions as undesirable (Cook & Glass, 2014; Glass & Cook, 2016; Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Challenges facing women in or aspiring to leadership roles

Women face several challenges in attempting to break the glass ceiling (a term used to express women ascending into leadership roles), and most of the barriers are invisible (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016; Ellemers, Rink, Derks, & Ryan, 2012). Schein’s (1978) “think manager, think male” study found that the most predominate barrier is likely perception. Research has demonstrated the characteristics of a stereotypical leader are generally perceived consistent with the male stereotype (assertive, dominant, and agentic) (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Lemoine et al., 2016; Wood & Eagly, 2012), and the two social identities commonly associated with leadership include being white and being male. (Hoyt & Chemers, 2008; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

Leadership researchers have argued gender has little relation to leadership effectiveness (Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Powell, 1990). Several factors positioning women at a disadvantage to achieve leadership positions are: stereotypes (e.g. perceptions of women’s work and men’s work or women being too emotional), in-group favoritism or “homosocial reproduction” (where men promote other men), and doubts of women’s ability to lead (Arvate, Galilea, & Todescat, 2018; Derks et al., 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Glass & Cook, 2016; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Kanter, 1977).

Female leaders often find themselves in a double bind: highly communal women are criticized for being deficient leaders, and highly agentic women experience backlash for not being female enough (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016, p. 388)

Women are not regarded as “leader-like”, possessing strong networks, and able to obtain support and resources. There is a natural resistance to women’s authority, and both token (Kanter, 1977) and role incongruity (Eagly & Karau, 2002) theories suggest female leaders experience excessive perfor-

mance scrutiny. Then, there is their own lack of confidence or self-doubt. That is, women who believe they have tricked others into viewing them as capable, a phenomenon known as the “impostor syndrome” (Glass & Cook, 2016; Lemoine et al., 2016; Meister, Sinclair, & Jehn, 2017).

The queen bee phenomenon

Worth mentioning is Derks et al. (2016) research on the queen bee phenomenon. The theory suggests women in leadership positions who continue to experience social identity threat in the workplace, react by “adjusting to the masculine culture and by distancing themselves from other women” (Derks et al., 2016, p. 457). Essentially, they behave in a manner that will improve their personal outcomes, “individual mobility,” as opposed to social change (Derks et al., 2016, Wright & Taylor, 1999). This behaviour has cannibalizing effects towards progress for women in leadership roles. Rather than looking out for other women, queen bees legitimize current gender differences, distance themselves from female (not male) subordinates, and have been found to oppose gender equality policies for junior women (Derks et al., 2016; Ellemers et al., 2012). Further, the queen bee phenomenon can diminish outcomes for organizations as queen bees, who have moulded themselves to the masculine culture, are: a) unlikely to provide a diverse perspective; and b) likely to limit opportunities for other women (Derks et al., 2016; Ellemers et al., 2012).

Reputation of female leaders

Considering these factors, women have a reputation issue as leaders. Because of women’s status as a minority in leadership positions, they are often categorized as women first and leaders second (Glass & Cook, 2016; Kanter, 1977). Women face heightened visibility and scrutiny of their bodies, appearance, identity, and performance (Bell et al., 2016; Hall & Donaghue, 2013; Meister et al., 2017). Even when performance and behavior is similar to men, women still tend to be perceived less favorably as leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ragins & Winkel, 2011).

Research continues to uncover the importance of leader’s perception amongst others (e.g., George, 2003; Goffee & Jones, 2005; Irvine & Reger, 2006; Sinclair, 2005). Unsurprisingly, women, unlike men, are also more likely to be penalized for engaging in self-promotion or diversity-advancing behavior

(Glass & Cook, 2016).

When women engage in self-promotion at work (an agentic behavior and a violation of feminine norms of modesty and self-effacement), others view them as too dominant which, ironically, results in them being less likely to be chosen for leadership roles than women who fail to self-promote (Brescoll, 2016, p. 416).

Solutions to increase the female leadership pipeline

Given these challenges and barriers there is also subsequent research demonstrating organizations have become “less hierarchical and more driven by results than old boy networks, they reward talent over gender and present a more level playing field than do traditional organizations” (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p. 827). Hoyt & Murphy (2016) found exposing women to media images depicting women in leadership and non-traditional gender roles, increase leadership aspirations in females – demonstrating the importance of the role of media and role models in breaking the glass ceiling. Brown et al. (2015) suggest social capital and reputation building efforts will also remove barriers to women obtaining leadership positions. Lastly, Hall, Blass, Ferris, and Massengale (2014) suggest human capital (e.g. intellectual and education), social capital, and leader style are the three most important qualities for leadership. Considering women are earning more degrees than men in Canada (Ferguson, 2016; Randstad Interim Inc, 2019), and the sought-after transformational leadership style is most prevalently found in women, women are positioned to add significantly to this advantage by increasing their social capital.

Women’s Networks

In efforts to address gender inequality in leadership, many corporations and outside organizations have formed women’s networks. Corporations are developing these networks to appear more “female-friendlier” in the war for talent and to encourage women to aspire to leadership roles (Brady & McGregor, 2007; Cukier et al., 2012). Being viewed as a company that supports the advancement of women increases a company’s bottom line through creating goodwill and social capital (Cukier et al., 2012; Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009). Networks can support career advancement through powerful connections made outside the c-suites and private clubs (Bierema, 2005; Krawcheck, 2013).

Research shows it is an unwritten rule of business that “it’s all in who you know” to advance (Krawcheck, 2013; O’Neil, Hopkins, & Sullivan, 2011). Women’s networks are flourishing in order to provide professional development, role models, and networking opportunities (Di Meglio, 2016). These groups provide a safe space that feels comfortable to women to nurture relationships, pad their resume, empower and inspire one another, and discuss female-relevant issues (Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009; Krawcheck, 2013). Women’s networks can benefit their members by providing platforms for the “exchange and promotion of information and ideas, accelerating one’s acquisition of skills and knowledge, exposing one to different thinking, and providing access to key people” (Krawcheck, 2013, para. 7). However, women’s networks also come with a lot of scrutiny and challenges about their ability to make change:

The groups frequently toil on the fringes, hosting “lunch and learns” and book clubs that rarely provide the skills or exposure women need to rise in the ranks... the groups may become little more than social gatherings, and have trouble attracting heavy hitters. (Brady & McGregor, 2007, para. 1)

Other research has found women’s networks may further isolate women from networks of influence, which remain to be male-dominated networks (Brass, 1985; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; O’Neil, Hopkins, & Sullivan, 2011; Schein, 2007; Schein, 1978).

Therefore, when developing or joining a women’s network, one must consider what doors it will open, and what doors it will not. A women’s network is not a one size fits all solution, but research supports networks as a tool for individual development, enhancing business opportunities, and winning talent for companies (Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009). Ibarra’s (1993) research suggests women straddle male-dominated networks for access to professional opportunities and women’s networks to find social support. Donnellon and Langowitz (2009) suggest a pyramid framework (Figure 1) to help networks identify and assess their effectiveness.

Figure 1
Mission pyramid for women's networks



Mentorship

Research supports mentorship as a key component of women's networks. Mentors are defined as people that provide guidance, information, and encouragement to their protégés, and help their protégés gain access to powerful networks through sponsorship (facilitating connections) (Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, & Feren, 1988). While women naturally excel at developing friendships – which supports their social and personal development – they lack developing mentor relationships to advance them professionally (Kalbfleisch & Cody, 2012). “Mentoring is known to play a valuable role for both women and men in supporting them towards career success, including taking on senior leadership roles” (Yates et al., 2014, 19).

A growing body of research supports the value of mentorship. When it comes to women there are two major road blocks: (1) the lack of women in senior leadership positions that can provide mentorship, and (2) the potential sexual problems (either assumed or realized) in male to female protégé relationships (Merriam, 1983). While driving important awareness and change, the #MeToo movement (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2018) is also adding strain to male-female mentorship relationships.

The number of men who are uncomfortable mentoring women has tripled from 5% to 16%... and almost half of male managers are uncomfortable participating in a common work activity with a woman, such as mentoring, working alone, or socializing together. (Lean In, 2018)

Researchers maintain the credibility of mentors in the pursuit of success (Brass et al., 2004; Merriam, 1983). Kanter's (1977) research indicated the majority of those who achieved corporate successes were guided by mentors and "who they know" to their career success (Sheridan, 2002). Sheehy (1976) found "almost without exception, the women I studied who did gain recognition in their careers were at some point nurtured by a mentor" (p. 34).

While some organizations or educational institutions offer mentor-matching programs, typically obtaining a mentor is not a prescription-filling process. Phillips-Jones (1983) indicates most mentoring relationships are informal, meaning the relationships develop out of shared interests or admiration. This research supports the idea of peer-to-peer mentorship relationships which can organically develop out of women's networks.

Social Capital

Social capital is the social identity, benefits, and resources individuals obtain from knowing others, or alternatively, the social influence one possesses based on the availability of personal resources (Baron & Markman, 2000; Burt, 1997; Ferris, Blass, Douglas, Kolodinsky, & Treadway, 2003). Burt (2000) explains that the function of social capital is to connect people to one another, ability to trust certain others, and dependency and obligations to others. The individual's position in the structure of these exchanges is the essence of social capital (Burt, 2000).

Putnam's research (2000) identified two types of social capital, bridging and bonding. Bridging social capital is viewed as inclusive with the focus on bringing together people from diverse groups in order to expand one's perspectives and broader affiliations. Bridging networks are "better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion" (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Bonding social capital is an exclusive approach which bolsters our narrower selves by creating strong in-group loyalty (Putnam, 2000). Both are valuable.

According to studies measuring social capital, this valuable resource is on the decline (Putnam, 2000). The reduction in face-to-face interaction in the digital age has meant that face-to-face may not be the primary driver going forward. However, studies have shown, like in person interactions, online

networks can have positive effects on social capital and creating connections (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

Seibert et al. (2001) found social capital is a key variable for career success by because it provides greater access to information, resources, visibility, legitimacy, mentorship, and sponsorship. The same study also highlighted the link of greater career benefits to an individual having multiple mentors. These connections – and the access to information and resources they provide – increase an individual’s organizational reputation (Hall et al., 2004; Seibert et al, 2001; Tsui, 1984). This in turn enables the individual to secure valuable organizational rewards independent of their performance and create the perception as a powerful or influential individual (Brass, 1985; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Seibert et al., 2001).

Reputation

The call for women to build their professional reputation is compelling as research shows the main reason women are not getting into leadership roles is the perception they are incapable (Anderson et al., 2015; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Studies have also demonstrated the success of companies who have instituted a woman in a senior leadership role so the “capability” aspect in question has been debunked (Hefferman, 2002). Yukl (1994) stated “influence is the essence of leadership” (p. 141), and for one to have influence, one must have a strong reputation (Llopis, 2014).

Hall et al. (2004) suggests a leader’s reputation is “a product of, and is defined by, social networks” (p. 519), is created from consistency and removing uncertainty of expected future behaviour, and formed from building human capital, social capital, and leadership style.

The curation of reputation is rapidly changing as technology, and specifically, social media channels, continue to disrupt communication channels. Digital channels provide two-way communication opportunities to build communities (Vitberg, 2010) and bring about “changes in ideas, attitudes, and behaviors” (Grunig, 2001, p.12). By participating in these conversations, one builds reputation and thought leadership (Vitberg, 2010). Social networks are identified as a powerful tool to assist individuals in building reputation (Bromley, 1993; Schawbel, 2009). Those who are actively curating their online narrative (primarily through social media channels) to develop strong reputations are delivering returns, and those who are not, are soon to be left behind.

The “digital divide” between the “haves” and the “have nots” in the developed world is now less about access to the web than it is about understanding how to actively participate in the networked society... people with the skills, time and confidence to navigate and manage the online chaos will gain access to new career opportunities, find audiences for their work and enrich the lives of others. Those without such initiative risk being marginalized or left behind. (Harris & Rae, 2011, p. 1)

As personal reputation theories remain sparse, it’s beneficial to consult organizational reputation theorists such as Fombrun and van Riel whose corporate reputation recommendations can be applied to individuals. Reputation matters because it acts like a magnet: “a good reputation is an excellent calling card: It opens doors, attracts followers, brings in customers and investors – it commands our respect” (Fombrun & van Riel, 2003, p. 4). Theorists Fombrun & van Riel (2003) denote a positive reputation creates differentiation and therefore a competitive advantage to companies as it affects customer purchase decisions, employee attraction and retention, investors, and media coverage. “If stakeholders like what they hear and see, they support the company—and an upward spiral results that attracts more resources to the company. If stakeholders withdraw their support, a downward spiral results that can lead to bankruptcy.” (Fombrun & van Riel, 2003, p. 20). Applying this theory to professional reputation management it can be inferred that a good reputation will attract additional support and resources from others, thus aiding one’s journey into senior leadership.

Research Questions

To understand why women have yet to achieve parity in leadership positions, this case study investigated how and to what extent women’s networks can contribute to building the women’s leadership pipeline. Building off previous research which defined barriers for women as lack of reputation, role models, mentoring, and social capital (Brown et al., 2015; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2016), this case study examined the perceived and potential value the DWPN could provide in combating these barriers.

The research questions intended to explore the current needs and value exchanged between the DWPN and its members with a secondary goal of providing a grounded theory of how and to what extent women’s networks can contribute to building the women’s leadership pipeline through combating the barriers women face.

- **RQ1:** How and to what extent does the DWPN improve social capital for its members and speakers?
- **RQ2:** How and to what extent is the DWPN improving the professional reputation of its members and speakers?

Research Methodology

The study was conducted using the exploratory single-case study approach (Yin, 2014) of the DWPN (Stacks, 2017) in efforts to create a model that can be applied to more women's networks for exploration. The study used the secondary research methodology by examining DWPN member survey data obtained through the DeGroot School of Business in August 2018. The survey had 168 (18%) responses deemed eligible for the study, providing a 6.86% margin of error and a 93% sampling confidence. The cross-sectional survey methodology provided data to sample DWPN member's current opinions and attitudes (Stacks, 2017). The disadvantages of a quantitative research style in a survey format is its "ability to investigate the context is extremely limited" (Yin, 2014, p. 16).

Results

Participant Demographics

Members were asked to share their current career level and industry, as well as perceived participation level and goals for being involved in the Network. Participation level was measured as the extent to which the members felt they interacted with other attendees at the events or afterwards through in-person or online conversations. Almost half of the respondents reported they participated moderately (46% or $n=72$), with the remaining split between active and passive participation. The top five reasons respondents identified why they wanted to participate in the Network (Table 1) were to:

1. develop professionally,
2. build their network,
3. be affiliated with a women's professional network,

4. attend events, and
5. find female role models.

Also of equal weight but lower in respondent's goals was to position themselves as a thought leader, increase self-confidence, and be inspired to seek a leadership role.

The majority of members held non-executive positions between non-management to senior-management, and founders and owners (such as consultants), with 15% indicating they are in executive level roles (Table 2). A range of industries were represented within the Network apart from law and media which had no representation reported from respondents. Leading industry representation was from financial or insurance services, followed by healthcare and public service, and education (Table 3).

Table 1
We would like to know why you personally participate in the DeGroote Women's Professional Network. Please select all statements that apply.

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (N=156)
For my professional development	85%	132
To build my network	68%	106
To be affiliated with a women's professional network	61%	95
To attend events	47%	73
To find female role models	36%	56
To position myself as a thought leader	31%	48
To increase my self-confidence	30%	47
To inspire me to seek a leadership role	29%	46
To be affiliated with the DeGroote School of Business	23%	36
To find new clients	15%	24
To find a mentor	14%	22
To become a mentor	10%	15
Other (please specify)	10%	15
To connect with students	5%	8

Table 2

What is your current career level?

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (n=165)
Non-management	20%	33
Manager	19%	31
Senior Manager	13%	22
Founder/Owner	13%	22
Other (please specify)	10%	17
Director	9%	15
C-level	6%	10
Student	5%	9
Retired	4%	6

Table 3

Which of the following responses best describes the industry you work in?

Industry category	Response percent	Response count (n=165)
Advertising, or Marketing, or Communications	8%	14
Education	12%	19
Consulting	4%	6
Consumer Goods and Services	2%	4
Energy or Utilities	2%	3
Financial Services or Insurance	18%	30
Healthcare and Public Service	16%	27
Human Resources (HR)	2%	3
Law	0%	0
Manufacturing or Engineering	7%	12
Media or Entertainment	0%	0
Real Estate, Property, or Construction	2%	4
Retail or Food Industry	2%	3
Technology or Information Technology (IT)	4%	7
Government or Public Sector	7%	12
Other (please specify)	13%	21

Research Questions

RQ1: How and to what extent does the DWPN improve social capital for its members and speakers?

In efforts to explore how the DWPN improved women's viability for senior leadership, the survey sought to unpack the role of the Network in creating social capital for its members and speakers. About half of the respondents stated they felt their connections increased with 20% (n=31) unsure, and 33% (n=51) feeling they had not. Of those, the majority indicated they gained between one to four contacts (Table 4). Further questions examined if these connections were beneficial to the members' careers and attempted to measure the strength of these connections. The results showed 38% (n=58) of respondents felt their connections were beneficial with 42% (n=64) being unsure. With respect to the quality of these connections, just under half of respondents felt their connections were weak or slightly weak, compared to 19% who felt they were slightly strong or strong (Table 5). This indicated most of the interactions between members and their connections took place during a DWPN event.

Table 4
How many connections do you feel you have gained through the DWPN?

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (n=153)
None	29%	45
1-4	46%	71
5-9	13%	20
10-15	5%	8
16-20	1%	1
More than 20	1%	2
I prefer not to disclose	4%	6

Table 5
On average, how would you rate the quality of these connections?

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (n=153)
Weak (Say hello to connection(s) at the network with small-talk only.)	25%	38
Slightly weak	20%	30
Medium (Engage or follow connection(s) through social media)	22%	34
Slightly strong	9%	14
Strong (Speak to connection(s) outside of the network through meaningful touch points)	10%	15
Not sure	14%	22

When asked for suggestions on ways the DWPN could support members in building their networks, respondents offered suggestions surrounding networking exercises, mentorship programs, and small group environments (Table 6).

Table 6
Do you have any suggestions for ways that the DWPN could support members in building their networks?

Participant responses
Networking exercises especially for those that have difficulty or to break out those that come in groups.
More activities during the event to encourage participants to meet and interact (ice breakers/breakout session)
Encourage group exercises at tables and sharing of names, etc. It is difficult for someone attending on their own to mingle with others that are attending with another person.
I think offering other types of programs such as mastermind groups, mentorship opportunities, etc. may be beneficial in building networks as well as increasing leadership potential, confidence, positioning of reputation, etc.
Let the women spend time getting to know one another prior to the talk and inviting all of the Faculties. Ensure diversity of backgrounds amongst the group.
Ambassadors who can introduce people and help break the ice.
Having more frequent events.
Is there a mentorship program, or smaller groups for women empowerment that we could perhaps meet virtually once a month to discuss our goals and garner suggestions from the group?
Create some opportunities for actual networking and using mixing exercises.

Matching people up at tables with similar interests/backgrounds/roles
People are naturally shy. If you want to build networks, you have to facilitate small groups that share backgrounds stories etc. The small groups should include mixture of career levels.
Rather than just open networking, table discussions provide more opportunities for valuable interaction, especially for those who are introverts.
Ambassadors who can introduce people and help break the ice.

Almost all respondents agreed (90% or n=138) the DWPN exposed them to positive role models with 45% (n=69) indicating they have a mentor and 54% (n=83) indicated they mentored someone formally or informally. In attempt to understand what kind of role models the members would prefer to be exposed to, respondents were asked what type of speakers they felt they most benefit from. Most respondents indicated they preferred female speakers to male (Table 7).

Table 7
What type of speakers do you feel you benefit most from? (Please check all that apply)

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (n=153)
Women with interesting career or personal stories	85%	130
Women who share personal or professional development advice (i.e. how to be more confident, how to achieve work-life balance, how to negotiate)	78%	119
Female executives	76%	116
Female entrepreneurs	70%	107
Men with interesting career or personal stories	44%	68
Men who share personal or professional development advice (i.e. how to be more confident, how to achieve work-life balance, how to negotiate)	37%	57
Male entrepreneurs	32%	49
Male executives	27%	42
Other (please specify)	7%	11

To determine if the DWPN, a network designed exclusively for women, provided exclusive benefits, participants were asked if they also participated in mixed-gender networks. The majority did (74% or n=114) with 20% (n=31) indicating they did not. Of those who participated in mixed-gender networks, 57% (n=89) indicated the benefits were similar with only 15% (n=24) indicating they felt they were not similar to an exclusive women’s only network.

When asked if respondents' organizations had specific programs to support the training of women for leadership or support gender equality 54% (n=82) indicated they did not, with 18% (n=28) being unsure. Only 28% (n=43) of respondents felt their organization had female-specific support programs.

RQ2: How and to what extent is the DWPN improving the professional reputation of its members and speakers?

Respondents shared they predominately communicate about their attendance at the event and insights gained from the presentation and other attendees. Scoring lower on the minds of respondents as things to communicate about were connections made at the events and acknowledgement of their DWPN membership (Table 8).

Table 8
Do you communicate any of the following about DWPN on social media or in person?
Check all that apply.

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (n=155)
Your attendance at the event(s)	60%	93
Insights gained from the speaker(s)/presentation(s)	54%	85
Insights gained from other attendees/audience	26%	41
Information about the event details, food, or venue information	26%	40
Connections made	23%	36
Acknowledgement that you are a member of DWPN in at least one professional location (LinkedIn, resume, social media, bio, etc)	19%	29
Not sure	17%	26
Other (please specify)	9%	14

Respondents were asked to evaluate the effect participating in the Network has on their reputation. Most respondents felt it had a positive (64% or n=100) effect, with 21% (n=33) feeling neutral. No respondents felt it had a negative effect on their professional reputation. There was little variation for the reasons how respondents felt the DWPN has helped to build their reputation. Of the suggested survey responses listed in Table 9, approximately half of those surveyed felt these metrics were applicable, except for "positively shifting others perception of you" which only received a 24% endorsement.

Table 9

Do you feel the DWPN has helped to build your professional reputation by any of the following metrics? (Please check all that apply)

Statement choices	Response percent	Response count (n=155)
Empowering you to engage in self-promotion	54%	85
Building your confidence	53%	83
Supporting your capacity as a leader	44%	69
Supporting your reputation as a well socially-connected individual	40%	62
Positively shifting others perception of you	24%	37

The survey asked respondents to share how they felt participating in the DWPN effects their reputation. Of the 163 responses received, the following themes emerged:

1. perceived value of obtaining social capital and feeling connected to others,
2. being affiliated with a reputable professional network,
3. regarded as active in the business community,
4. being viewed as someone who supports female initiatives, and
5. increasing visibility as someone who continues to develop professionally.

Discussion

Participant Demographics

The DWPN membership represents a wide-range of industries and career levels therefore offering its members both bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000). Most respondents felt they were moderate participants and 23% felt they were active participants – which indicates they engage with each other beyond the events. This continued engagement is essential for cultivating relationships that build social resources and capital – key variables for career success (Seibert et al., 2001).

Of the reasons respondents gave for participating in the Network, professional development (in terms of leadership training, decision-making, and critical-thinking), network building, and role models are areas in which research verifies women need support to progress to the leadership track (Catalyst, 2013; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; KPMG, 2015). Research also confirms women's networks, when structured purposefully, can be the appropriate channel for providing this support (Brass et al., 2014; Di Meglio, 2016; Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009; Glass & Cook, 2016; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). In addition, members equally rated the following goals of lower importance: positioning themselves as a thought leader, increasing self-confidence, and being inspired to seek a leadership role. According to the KPMG study (2015) all three of these factors are necessary for grooming women for senior leadership. Therefore, while member's may not immediately recognize their importance, it is of value of women's networks to intentionally design their activities to include more development in these areas to support the women's leadership pipeline.

RQ1: How and to what extent does the DWPN improve social capital for its members and speakers?

The career-level data revealed the majority of DWPN members were in growth positions with 15% in director or c-level positions. (Considering the limited roles available in leadership positions, this is a strong executive presence within the Network's membership.) Research reveals keys to success for women are female role models, connection to powerful contacts, and development of mentor relationships with people who can advance them professionally (Brass, 1985; Kalbfleisch & Cody, 2012; Olian et al., 1988; Schein, 1978). Therefore, it is essential to the network's efficacy to have executive-level members to provide these keys to success. Further, without these executive women present, the kind of social capital available to most members is limited to bonding – which bolsters their narrower selves as opposed to bridging, which connects them to more influential networks (Putnam, 2000). Bonding or lateral connections can be beneficial to one's career if they provide loyalty, peer reference, support, and act as a bridge between social groups or industries with abilities to offer different resources (Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009; Putnam, 2000). These results also provide evidence to bolster the theory that the primary value of generic women's networks is to provide support and a safe space for members (Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009; Krawcheck, 2013).

In addition to building strategic connection types, research supports in-

creasing connections benefits members by providing social influence that can be leveraged to improve their organizational reputation (Hall et al., 2004; Seibert et al., 2001; Tsui, 1984). Qualitative responses provided suggestions on how the Network could support members in building their connections. Congruent with academic research suggestions, for the Network to create value in this capacity respondents asked for: a higher frequency of events, networking exercises, recommended connections of interest (both similar and diverse), and creation of intimate environments to allow participants to open-up.

Survey results revealed nearly unanimous support in favor of the DWPN's ability to expose women to positive role models which research indicates is pivotal to breaking the glass ceiling (Brown et al., 2015; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). However, comparing responses from creating useful connections, the researcher assumes this was meant in term of exposing members to positive role model speakers rather than other members in attendance. This is supported by the results of the speaker gender preference, where 70–85% of respondents selected preference for speakers who were female executives or females with interesting careers or stories as opposed to 27–44% selecting males with these same characteristics. These results corroborate the research on the necessity of exposing women to other successful women and maintain exposure and connection to male leaders (Brady & McGregor, 2007; Brass, 1985; Brown et al., 2015; Cukier et al., 2012; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Ibarra, 1993; Schein, 1978).

Finally, half of the respondents had mentors and were interested in mentoring which research presents as essential for advancing to senior leadership roles (Kanter, 1977; Seibert et al., 2001; Sheehy, 1976; Yates et al., 2014). Yet a lacuna exists with the respondent's reasons for participating in the DWPN. Here, only 10% indicated they were interested in becoming a mentor and only 14% were interested in finding a mentor. It's worth restating research shows "almost without exception" (Sheehy, 1976, p.34) women who advance in their careers are guided by mentors (Brass et al., 2004; Kanter, 1977; O'Neil, Hopkins, & Sullivan, 2011; Sheehy, 1976).

Although research supports the theory peer-to-peer mentorship relationships have a high probability of developing from women's networks (Phillips-Jones, 1983), this study alluded to the problems Kalbfleisch & Cody (2012) pointed out, which is women naturally excel at developing social friendships yet struggle to develop mentor relationships to advance themselves professionally. (This point can be supported by the lack of women who believe their connections will help to advance them professionally.) This study further contributes to this theory by suggesting women may lack the understanding of

the importance of procuring a mentor in the first place. This presents an opportunity for women's networks to provide this valuable instruction.

RQ2: How and to what extent is the DWPN improving the professional reputation of its members and speakers?

While two thirds of respondents felt participating in the Network had a positive effect on their reputation, they seemed to struggle with evaluating how or to what extent. Participants also seemed unsure of how to create communication opportunities from the events to build their reputation. From the qualitative responses, 22 felt they were unsure with how the Network affects their reputation with two respondents admitting they had never thought about the "impact on my reputation." This is concerning as Hall et al. (2004) suggested reputation is developed from social networks, and based on this survey, the respondents hadn't thought about its significance. In addition, there is an abundance of research that speaks to the importance of cultivating and managing one's leadership identity, yet it appears this message has not been understood by the publics (George, 2003; Goffee & Jones, 2005; Irvine & Reger, 2006; Sinclair, 2005). Further, a good reputation is important for attracting resources and attention from those who matter (Brosseau, 2018; Fombrun & van Riel, 2003). This study may also act as support for the public opinion that networks are viewed by members as simply "social gatherings" as opposed to a strategic career advancing function (Brady & McGregor, 2007).

Half of respondents felt the DWPN improved their reputation by empowering them to engage in self-promotion and build their confidence. This is consistent with the results of the KPMG (2015) study of the most important ways to groom women for senior leadership. Just under half of respondents felt the DWPN supported their capacity as a leader and reputation as a well-connected individual, which again, is backed by research as key variables in relation to career success (Seibert et al., 2001). Most concerning is the minimal number of respondents who felt the DWPN positively shifted other's perceptions of themselves. Research indicates the primary barriers for women obtaining leadership roles is the perception they are incapable and their lack of reputation building efforts (Anderson et al., 2015; Brown et al., 2015; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002). This identifies a need for the DWPN to build awareness with its members regarding the importance of perception and reputation.

Through qualitative responses, respondents shared that they valued

the Network's ability to build their reputation by helping to position them as someone who is (1) connected to a reputable women's network (prestige with being affiliated with a University), (2) obtaining ongoing professional development, (3) making new connections, and (4) engaged in the business community. The study suggest that affiliation with a women's network leads to a positive reputation effect, but further research is needed to measure the extent of this claim. A few select qualitative responses from members demonstrating the Network's reputational effect are listed in Table 10.

Table 10
Share with us how you feel that participating in the DWPN affects your reputation.

Participant response
It positions me as someone who is highly connected, engaged in the business community, per using professional development, and who supports women in business and leadership.
Building and nurturing a quality intellectual network of women.
People view me as part of a reputable and organized professional group.
People are more aware of my interest in learning from others about leadership and therefore, their perceptions of me are shifting.
I think the DWPN is highly regarded in the business community, and it helps my professional reputation to be present at the events.

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings from this case study suggests women's networks – when structured strategically – can contribute to the female leadership pipeline by providing opportunities and instruction in the areas of social capital (including role models and mentoring) and reputation.

Social Capital

Research demonstrates the value of building social capital and its importance for advancing women onto the leadership track. The study supports the DWPN's ability to provide both bridging and bonding connections through the wide range of industry and career-level representation. While the case study revealed DWPN members were successful in increasing their connections and moderately successful at continuing to build their relationships outside of the

events, the study also alluded to women's need for additional structure and encouragement to cultivate these relationships. As a deliverable, the study's findings suggest the following seven recommendations for the Network to improve member's effectiveness in creating richer connections:

1. Networking exercises. Providing networking ice breakers, staff to introduce members to others of similar or diverse backgrounds, attendance lists or lists of recommended contacts.
2. Offering small "in-event" experiences such as breakout sessions, table discussions, and audience participation exercises.
3. Offering additional small group environments so participants could feel comfortable opening up to others such as dinner parties, salon events, show & tell opportunities, and mastermind sessions.
4. Offering mentorship programs.
5. Offering events regularly.
6. Creating an online member group.
7. Creating a newsletter to highlight members.

Role Models

The Network rated high on its ability to produce positive speaker role models which supports the research findings of the need to continue to expose women to successful females over males. The findings from this study also suggest the Network should focus on the following presentation themes to support women's leadership aspirations:

- building reputation and thought leadership,
- importance of mentorship and sponsorship,
- increasing self-confidence, and
- role models to inspire women to seek a leadership position.

Mentorship

The study supports the theory women struggle at developing professional mentorship relationships despite their willingness to participate in such an arrangement. Specifically, the study infers a possible disconnect between a member's willingness to participate in a mentorship arrangement and pro-

actively procuring a mentor or mentee. Since research indicates mentorship is critical for advancing to leadership roles (Kanter, 1977; Seibert et al., 2001; Sheehy, 1976; Yates et al., 2014), this research suggests that women's networks provide this service and educate its members on its importance and value.

Reputation

This study suggests affiliation with a women's network on its own does not elevate a women's standing in the same way as being a part of an elite or exclusive club or group. (Although, since the DWPN is affiliated with a reputable University, there was an additional positive reputation factor that may not be applicable to other women's networks.)

From a member's perspective, the study found the DWPN offered value for a member's reputation by creating opportunities for visibility for members as who continue to professionally develop, seek new connections, and engage in the business community. Consistent with research on the function of women's networks, the study supported the DWPN's ability to act as a safe space for women to self-promote and build confidence. The study also suggested the Network's speakers accrued a positive reputational effect for their engagement. Further research is necessary to understand if this is unique in comparison to other speaking opportunities.

Conversely, the study revealed members were unsure of how to build their professional reputation with qualitative responses suggesting many are not actively building their own reputation. As research addresses the importance of cultivating one's leadership identity (George, 2003; Goffee & Jones, 2005; Irvine & Reger, 2006; Sinclair, 2005), the study suggests that women's networks can be of value to members by providing coaching in this area.

Overall, this study supported the literature review's alarm that women are not actively cultivating their reputation to their detriment. The study's findings suggest women's networks need to actively pay attention to how they are supporting their members reputationally to strategically provide reputation development training to increase their member's leadership potential.

Suggested model for a women's professional network

For a network to support the advancement of women to leadership roles, the findings of this study (in conjunction with the literature review) suggested

the following five elements that need to be in place:

1. Networking and relationship building activities.
2. Mentorship programs.
3. Female senior leader role models.
4. Confidence-building activities or training.
5. Reputation-building platforms.

Harris & Rae (2011) state that those who are unable to understand how to actively participate in the networked society risk being left behind. Therefore, the study also suggests members need to be proactive in utilizing the Network's five elements to gain more value and support their leadership goals.

Further Research

Further research is needed on women's awareness of these five elements in helping them to obtain leadership positions, as well as, research on how successful women have cultivated their professional reputation. The researcher would have liked to have asked how many participants actively cultivated and managed their professional identities, which is suggested by academic researchers as important for leaders (e.g., George, 2003; Goffee & Jones, 2005; Irvine & Reger, 2006; Sinclair, 2005). Interviewing other women's network coordinators and surveying members of other women's networks is necessary to strengthen the findings of this study.

Limitations

The researcher was a five-year employee in the Marketing and Community Engagement department of the DeGroote School of Business and the founder and coordinator of the DWPN. While every effort was made to avoid bias, the researcher's employment with the organization and relationship with the Network has the potential to affect the perspective and interpretation of data by the researcher. Other limitations include the sample size of respondents, the time allotted to complete the survey (five days), and finally, as with any survey, it was impossible to tell if people had lied and / or if they had different understandings of phrases or terms. Despite these limitations, however,

the research does provide the reader with some preliminary insights into the value the DWPN can provide to members in terms of social capital and reputation. This study is helpful in providing the first benchmark of the DWPN in this capacity. Further research comparing other women's networks structures to support these areas, and feedback from their members may strengthen the researcher's ability to create recommendations for building better women's networks to increasing the female leadership pipeline.

Acknowledgement

I dedicate this work to all the women and men who have taken me under their wing, championed me, and encouraged me to achieve more. Special thanks to my supervisor Jacquie Hoornweg, who's guidance throughout this process was invaluable, and the Master of Communications Management (MCM) program at McMaster-Syracuse University - this program and the experience gained has changed my life.

References

- Adler, R. D. (2001). *Women in the Executive Suite Correlate to High Profits*. Pepperdine University.
- Anderson, A. J., Ahmad, A. S., King, E. B., Lindsey, A. P., Feyre, R. P., Ragone, S., & Kim, S. (2015). The effectiveness of three strategies to reduce the influence of bias in evaluations of female leaders. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45*(9), 522-539.
- Arvate, P. R., Galilea, G. W., & Todescat, I. (2018). The queen bee: A myth? The effect of top-level female leadership on subordinate females. *The Leadership Quarterly, 29*(5), 533-548.
- Baron, R. A., & Markman, G. D. (2000). Beyond social capital: How social skills can enhance entrepreneurs' success. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 14*(1), 106-116.

- Bell, E., & Sinclair, A. (2016). Bodies, sexualities and women leaders in popular culture: from spectacle to metapicture. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 31(5/6), 322–338.
- Bierema, L. (2005). Women's networks: a career development intervention or impediment? *Human Resource Development International*, 8(2), 207–224.
- Bird, K., & Jackson, S. (2017). *EXCLerator Project: Women & Diversity in Executive and Community Leadership* Hamilton: YWCA Hamilton. Retrieved from: https://www.ywcahamilton.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Full_EXCLERATOR-report_FINAL.pdf
- Book, E. W. (2000). *Why the best man for the job is a woman: The unique female qualities of leadership*. New York: Harper Business.
- Bouty, I. (2000). Interpersonal and interaction influences on informal resource exchanges between R&D researchers across organizational boundaries. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(1), 50–65.
- Brady, D., & McGregor, J. (2007, June 18). What works in women's networks: How three corporations crafted organizations for female employees that have an actual impact. *Bloomberg Business Week*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2007-06-17/what-works-in-womens-networks>
- Brass, D.J., Galaskiewicz, J., Greve, H.R. and Tsai, W. (2004). Taking stock of networks and organizations: A multilevel perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(6), 795-817.
- Brass, D. (1985). Men's and women's networks: A study of interaction patterns and influence in an organization. *Academy of Management Journal*, 28(2), 327–343.
- Brescoll, V. L. (2016). Leading with their hearts? How gender stereotypes of emotion lead to biased evaluations of female leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 415–428.
- Bromley, D. B. (1993). *Reputation, image and impression management*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Brosseau, D. (2018). *What is a thought leader?* Thought leadership Lab. Retrieved from <http://www.thoughtleadershiplab.com/Resources/WhatIsaThoughtLeader>

- Brown, A., Menasce Horowitz, J., Parker, K., Patten, E., & Wang, W. (2015, January 14). *Women and leadership. public says women are equally qualified, but barriers persist*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/01/2015-01-14-women-and-leadership.pdf>
- Burt, R. S. (1997). The contingent value of social capital. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42, 339–365.
- Burt, R. S. (2000). The contingent value of social capital. In E. L. Lesser (ed.), *Knowledge and social capital* (pp. 255–286). Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Canadian Board Diversity Council. (2016). *2016 Annual Report Card*. Toronto: Canadian Board Diversity Council.
- Canadian Women's Foundation. (2018). *The facts: The #MeToo Movement and its impact in Canada*. Canadian Women's Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.canadianwomen.org/the-facts/the-metoo-movement-in-canada/>
- Canadian Women's Foundation. (2017, August). *Fact sheet: Moving women into leadership*. Canadian Women's Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.canadianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Facts-About-Women-and-Leadership.pdf>
- Catalyst. (2013, December 10). *First step: Gender diversity at the top pays off from the boardroom to the c-suite*. Catalyst. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/first-step-gender-diversity-top-pays-boardroom-c-suite>
- Catalyst. (2017a, February 7). *Women in management. Quick take*. Catalyst. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-management>
- Catalyst. (2017b, August 18). *Statistical overview of women in the workforce*. Catalyst. Retrieved from <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/statistical-overview-women-workforce>
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2016, April). *Why are there so few women at the top?* Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). Retrieved from https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/why-are-there-so-many-women-at-the-top_2016-april_tcm18-14006.pdf
- Cook, A., & Glass, C. (2014). Above the glass ceiling: When are women and racial/ethnic minorities promoted to CEO?. *Strategic Management Journal*, 35(7), 1080–1089.

- Cukier, W. (2017, October 4). *Diversity leads: C25 presentation for senior leadership*. Retrieved from Ryerson University, Diversity Institute website: <https://www.ryerson.ca/diversity/leads/>
- Cukier, W., Bindhani, P., Amato, S., Smarz, S., & Saekang, A. (2012). *Diversity leads: Women in senior leadership positions: A profile of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)*. Ryerson University, Diversity Institute in Management and Technology. Retrieved from: http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/diversity/reports/DiversityLeads_Gender_2012.pdf
- DeGroot School of Business. (2016). *DeGroot Women's Professional Network*. McMaster University, DeGroot School of Business. Retrieved from <http://www.degroot.mcmaster.ca/dwpn>
- DeGroot School of Business. (2017). *DeGroot Women's Professional Network (DWPN) Survey*. Internal data set, DeGroot School of Business, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
- Derks, B., Van Laar, C., & Ellemers, N. (2016). The queen bee phenomenon: Why women leaders distance themselves from junior women. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 456–469.
- Di Meglio, M. (2016). *Starting a women's network at your company*. Monster Worldwide. Retrieved from <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/Company-Networks-for-Women>
- Dobbins, G. H., & Platz, S. J. (1986). Sex differences in leadership: How real are they? *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 118–127.
- Donnellon, A., & Langowitz, N. (2009). Leveraging women's networks for strategic value. *Strategy & Leadership*, 37(3), 29–36.
- Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2003). The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6), 807–834.
- Eagly, A. H., Gartzia, L., & Carli, L. L. (2014). Female advantage: revisited. In S. Kumra, R. Simpson, & R. Burke (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of gender in organizations*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Eagly, A. H., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. (2001). The leadership styles of women and men. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 781. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00241>.

- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological review*, 109(3), 573.
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook “friends:” Social capital and college students’ use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1143–1168.
- Ellemers, N., Rink, F., Derks, B., & Ryan, M. K. (2012). Women in high places: When and why promoting women into top positions can harm them individually or as a group (and how to prevent this). In A. P. Brief, & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews*, 32, 163–187, doi: 10.1016/j.riob.2012.10.003.
- Ferguson, S. (2016, July 5). *Women and education: Qualifications, skills and technology*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14640-eng.htm>
- Ferris, G. R., Blass, F. R., Douglas, C., Kolodinsky, R. W., & Treadway, D. C. (2003). Personal reputation in organizations. In J. Greenberg (Ed.), *Organizational behavior: The state of the science (2nd ed.)* (pp. 211–246). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ferris, G. R., & Judge, T. A. (1991). Personnel/human resources management: A political influence perspective. *Journal of management*, 17(2), 447–488.
- Fombrun, C., & van Riel, C. (2003). *Fame and fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations*. New York: FT/Prentice Hall.
- Forret, M.L. and Dougherty, T.W. (2004). Networking behaviors and career outcomes: Differences for men and women? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 419-37.
- George, B. (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Glass, C., & Cook, A. (2016). Leading at the top: Understanding women’s challenges above the glass ceiling. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(1), 51–63.
- Goffee, R., & Jones, G. (2005). Managing authenticity. *Harvard business review*, 83(12), 85-94.

- Grunig, J. (2001). Two-way symmetrical public relations: Past, present, and future. In Heath, R. L., Vasquez, G. (Eds.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 11-30). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hall, L. J., & Donaghue, N. (2013). 'Nice girls don't carry knives': Constructions of ambition in media coverage of Australia's first female prime minister. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 52*(4), 631-647.
- Hall, A. T., Blass, F. R., Ferris, G. R., & Massengale, R. (2004). Leader reputation and accountability in organizations: Implications for dysfunctional leader behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly, 15*(4), 515-536.
- Harris, L., & Rae, A. (2011). Building a personal brand through social networking. *Journal of Business Strategy, 32*(5), 14-21. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02756661111165435>
- Hefferman, M. (2002, August). The female CEO. *Fast Company, 61*, pp. 5, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66.
- Helgesen, S. (1990). *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*. New York: Doubleday Currency.
- Hoyt, C. L., & Chemers, M. M. (2008). Social stigma and leadership: a long climb up a slippery ladder. In C. L. Hoyt, G. R. Goethals, & D. R. Forsyth (Eds.), *Leadership at the crossroads: leadership and psychology*. (Vol. 1, pp. 165-180). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Hoyt, C. L., & Murphy, S. E. (2016). Managing to clear the air: Stereotype threat, women, and leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 27*(3), 387-399.
- Ibarra, H. (1993). Personal networks of women and minorities in management: A conceptual framework. *Academy of Management Review, 18*(1), 56-87.
- Irvine, D., & Reger, J. (2006). *The authentic leader: It's about presence, not position*. Washington, DC: DC Press.
- Jaeger, J. (2019, September 30). *Understanding Canada's new diversity disclosure requirements*. Compliance Week. Retrieved from: <https://www.complianceweek.com/boards-and-shareholders/understanding-canadas-new-diversity-disclosure-requirements/27805.article>

- Joy, L., Carter, N., Wagner, H., & Narayanan, S. (2007). *The bottom line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards*. Catalyst. Retrieved from: http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/The_Bottom_Line_Corporate_Performance_and_Womens_Representation_on_Boards.pdf
- Kalbfleisch, P., & Cody, M. (2012). *Gender, power, and communication in human relationships*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). Some effects of proportions on group life: Skewed sex ratios and responses to token women. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 82(5), 965-990.
- KPMG. (2015). *KPMG women's leadership study*. KPMG. Retrieved from <https://womensleadership.kpmg.us/content/dam/kpmg-womens-leadership-golf/womensleadershippressrelease/FINAL%20Womens%20Leadership%20v19.pdf>
- Krawcheck, S. (2013, May 16). *Why a woman's network? Why now?* Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/85broads/2013/05/16/why-a-womans-network-why-now/#35904cb04172>
- Lean In. (2018). *Sexual harassment backlash survey results*. Lean In. Retrieved from <https://leanin.org/sexual-harassment-backlash-survey-results>
- Lemoine, G. J., Aggarwal, I., & Steed, L. B. (2016). When women emerge as leaders: Effects of extraversion and gender composition in groups. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(3), 470-486.
- Lin, N. (2001). *Social capital. A theory of social structure and action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Llopis, G. (2014, April 14). *One powerful way to control your leadership reputation*. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennllopis/2014/04/14/one-powerful-way-to-control-your-leadership-reputation/#173fad9e3931>
- McDonald, S. (2011). What's in the "old boys" network? Accessing social capital in gendered and racialized networks. *Social Networks*, 33(4), 317-330.
- McKinsey & Company. (2015). *Why diversity matters*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>

- McKinsey & Company. (2017, June). *The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Canada*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Women%20matter/The%20power%20of%20parity%20Advancing%20womens%20equality%20in%20Canada/MGI-The-power-of-parity-Advancing-womens-equality-in-Canada-Full-report.ashx>
- McKinsey & Company. (2018, January). *Delivering through diversity*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Delivering%20through%20diversity/Delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx
- Merriam, S. (1983). Mentors and protégés: A critical review of the literature. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 33(3), 161-173.
- Meister, A., Sinclair, A., & Jehn, K. A. (2017). Identities under scrutiny: How women leaders navigate feeling misidentified at work. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 28(5), 672-690.
- Olian, J., Carroll, S., Giannantonio, C., & Feren, D. (1988). What do protégés look for in a mentor? Results of three experimental studies. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 33(1), 15-37.
- O'Neil, D., Hopkins, M., & Sullivan, S. (2011). Do women's networks help advance women's careers? Differences in perceptions of female workers and top leadership. *Career Development International*, 16(7), 733-754.
- Phillips-Jones, L. (1983). Establishing a formalized mentoring program. *Training Development Journal*, 2, 38-42.
- Powell, G. N. (1990). One more time: Do male and female managers differ? *Academy of Management Executive*, 12, 731-743.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Randstad Interim Inc. (2019). *More women are graduating with STEM degrees than ever before*. Randstad Interim Inc. Retrieved from <https://www.randstad.ca/employers/workplace-insights/women-in-the-workplace/more-women-are-graduating-with-stem-degrees-than-ever-before/>
- Ragins, B. R., & Winkel, D. E. (2011). Gender, emotion and power in work relationships. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21(4), 377-393.

- Rosener, J. B. (1995). *America's competitive secret: Utilizing women as management strategy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2007). The glass cliff: Exploring the dynamics surrounding the appointment of women to precarious leadership positions. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 549-572. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.24351856>.
- Schawbel, D. (2009). *Me 2.0: Build a powerful brand to achieve career success*. Kaplan Books.
- Schein, V.E. (2007). Women in management: reflections and projections. *Women in Management Review*, 22(1), 6-18.
- Schein, V. (1978). Sex role stereotyping, ability and performance: Prior research and new directions. *Personnel Psychology*, 31(2), 259-268.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(2), 219-237.
- Sheehy, G. (1976). The mentor connection: The secret link in the successful woman's life. *New York Magazine*, 37, 33-39.
- Sheridan, A. (2002). What you know and who you know: 'Successful' women's experiences of accessing board positions". *Career Development International*, 7(4), 203-10.
- Sinclair, A. (2005). Body possibilities in leadership. *Leadership*, 1(4), 387-406.
- Stacks, D.W. (2017). *Primer of public relations research* (3rd ed). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Tsui, A. S. (1984). A role set analysis of managerial reputation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 34, 64-96.
- Vitberg, A. (2010). Developing your personal brand equity. *Journal of Accountancy*, 210(1), 42.
- Vongalis-Macrow, A. (2012, June 29). *Assess the value of your networks*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2012/06/assess-the-value-of-your-network>

- Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2012). Biosocial construction of sex differences and similarities in behavior. In J. M. Olson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*. (Vol. 46, pp.55-123). London, UK: Elsevier.
- Wright, S. C., & Taylor, D. M. (1999). Success under tokenism: Co-option of the newcomer and the prevention of collective protest. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 38(4), 369-396.
- Yates, C., Atkinson, S., Balshine, S., Baetz, B., Coles, A., Daniel, J., Fast, S., Hupfer, M., Lawford, M., & Rothenberg, C. (2014, January). *Women faculty, now and in the future: Building excellence at McMaster University*. Toronto: McMaster University. Retrieved from http://www.mcmaster.ca/vpacademic/documents/Yates_Report_on_Gender_Equity_January_2014.pdf
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Yukl, G. (1994). *Leadership in organizations* (5th Ed.). Upper Saddle Creek, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.