

I. Problem statement

The problem is low female participation and completion in programs which lead to employment in nontraditional fields. Females remain underrepresented in CTE programs that are nontraditional for their gender (Wider Opportunities for Women [WOW], 2008). Perkins Law Core Indicator 6S1 requires the metropolitan school district to show improvement in the enrollment of students of students of the opposite gender for career pathways which have, by tradition, lead to employment for the customary gender (Shapow, 2010). The consequence for failure to meet the benchmarks is loss of Perkins Grant funds to the county school district.

II. Purpose statement

The purpose of this applied dissertation is to determine what barriers females face in pursuit of nontraditional fields of employment. A girl's or woman's self-efficacy, such as the belief which one can be successful with a certain skill or behavior, is directly related to the pursuit and achievement of a career that is compatible with their abilities (Lufkin, Sheets, & Stevens, 2003). Personal self-efficacy can bring about behavior or behavior change. The stronger the belief, the more likely a woman copes with and manages internal and external career-related barriers (2003). The belief in a person's own effectiveness determines whether they will even try to cope with difficult situations (Bandura, 1977). A study by Betsworth (as cited in Lufkin, et al., 2003) also indicates how adult working women with high-ability could underestimate their own potential. Whereas, low self-efficacy can affect an individual from attempting to perform a task, knowing that it can lead to a desired result (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Increasing occupational choices about high-wage, high-skill occupations nontraditional occupations needs to be effectively conveyed. Girls prefer jobs that they believe are traditionally for females. However, they will consider traditional male jobs or careers because of their high status and salary (Miller & Hayward, 2006).

III. Theoretical basis

Career Development Theories will be used as the theoretical basis for this study and how it relates/justifies research. Theories included are (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.):

- 1) Trait factor – Matching personal traits to occupations-Frank Parson's (1920s)
- 2) Psychological – Personality types matching work environment – Holland (1980s)
- 3) Decision – Situational or Social – Bandura (Self-Efficacy – 1970s)
- 4) Developmental – Self Concept over life span-super (1950s)

The theoretical basis for this study will mainly draw from Bandura's and Holland's theories.

IV. Research Questions

- 1) What are the barriers females face in pursuit of nontraditional occupations?
- 2) What decisions influence females regarding career development theory to pursue nontraditional occupations?

V. Methodology

- a. Participants will include 10-15 Post secondary and professional adult women in nontraditional occupational fields.
- b. Steps involved in carrying out the actual research will begin with identifying and informing 10-15 participants of research project and seek permission to include in study. Next, schedule one-on-one interviews and meet participants, either record or hire a transcriber to document responses. After all interviews are conducted, follow qualitative research methods to develop the data needed for the study. Review and summarize report. If necessary, include additional participants and follow previous steps again.
- c. Instruments/methods to gather data will be the use of questionnaires
- d. Data to be collected will be from 10-15 one-on-one interviews.
- e. Analyzing the data as guided by Bodgan and Biklin (1998) includes refining focus, reassessing central questions, transcribing the interview, the planning of future interviews based on early interviews, and record the incites and summarize the reflections from interviews, while gathering data. After data is collected, developing coding categories, use visual devises to organize and guide the study and share results before completing analysis
- f. I anticipate for common themes to be congruent with career development theory generated from the responses of the participant interviews.

VI. Timeline

The estimated timeline for completion is to conclude by the summer of 2013.

Title:

Decisions Influencing Females' Choice for Nontraditional Occupations

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