Advancing Women in the Public Relations Industry through Mentorship, Male Allyship, and Overcoming Gender Biases

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Advancing Women in the Public Relations Industry through Mentorship, Male Allyship, and Overcoming Gender Biases

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Public Relations
Seton Hall University
South Orange, NJ 07079
2021
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION AND THE ARTS
GRADUATE STUDIES

APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION

Master's Candidate, Emily High, has successfully presented and made the required modifications to the text of the master's project for the Master of Arts degree during this Spring 2021.

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ADVANCING WOMEN IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Abstract

Women make up a majority of the public relations industry, but they are less likely to hold leadership positions. This study examined best practices to advance women in public relations. Through a cross-case analysis of two male allyship programs in the workplace, four themes were found: Listening to Women, Leaders Working Together, Not Just a Women’s Issue, and how Overcoming Gender Biases Leads to Unbiased Training. Then, a best practice guide and training plan were developed for how to promote an environment of gender equality in the public relations industry.

Keywords: women in public relations, public relations, feminist theory, gender equity, male allyship, mentorship, gender biases, cross-case analysis
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Chapter 1:
Introduction

Background of Study

Beginning in the 20th century, women began to play an integral role in the public relations field. However, since women’s role in public relations came into fruition, women soon saw themselves facing gender-related challenges. For around the past five decades, the public relations industry has been dominated by women, but women still do not hold the majority of leadership positions (Aldoory & Toth, 2002; Dettman, 2019; Toth & Grunig, 1993; Toth, 1988). Research and discussion on a woman’s role in the public relations industry began largely in the 1980s and was centered around the term feminization. Feminization, regarding public relations, refers to when the industry became a female-dominated field (Aldoory, 1998; Hon, 1995; Horsley, 2009; Pompper, 2012; Pompper & Jung, 2013; Topić, 2020). This was portrayed as an issue at the time because conflicts tend to arise when gender role norms are flipped as further discussed in Chapter 2 (Pompper & Jung, 2013). A catalyst text on feminization in the public relations industry was The velvet ghetto: The impact of the increasing percentage of women in public relations and business communication study by Carolyn Garrett Cline (1986). The study addressed how the feminization of the public relations industry caused the industry to become more devalued than before and how women found themselves stuck in lower-level roles in the public relations industry (Toth, 1988; Toth & Grunig, 1993).

While there was research in academic journals and conferences on the woman’s role in public relations, it was not until the late 1980s - early 1990s where the leading professional public relations organizations, Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), addressed feminization and a woman’s role in public relations (Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001). In 1989,
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PRSA created a Task Force on Women to address issues women faced in the industry, which has now transitioned to the National Committee on Work, Life and Gender (Sha & Toth, 2010). In 1990, PRSA published a Statement of Equality of Opportunity. This statement acknowledged treating women equally in the workplace would benefit organizations as the organizations need to seek out the best talent and be able to compete and excel in a growing economy. (Grunig et al., 2001).

Statement of the Problem

While addressing feminization in the public relations field has brought more attention to a woman’s role in the public relations industry, women are still not represented equally in leadership. According to a study by PRWeek, women make up 63% of the public relations industry, yet only 13% of them hold C-level or board director positions (Dettman, 2019). In 2017, the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations and Heyman Associates conducted a survey called “Report Card on PR Leaders,” with the first survey being conducted in 2015. A common theme revealed in the survey was women did not feel as if they were being treated equally regarding pay, decision-making, and value of opinion and voice at their organization. The survey further revealed progress for gender equity in the workplace remains slow and leaders need to proactively promote a culture of two-way communication (Berger, 2017). The latest survey by the Plank Center and Heyman Associates in 2019, showed the gender gap had further widened, and scores given to leadership did not increase (Meng, Berger, Heyman & Reber, 2019).

The issue women face in leadership in the public relations industry is reflective of findings in the Lean In and McKinsey & Company’s Women in the Workplace 2019 report that represent women in all workplaces. The report stated women across all industries make up only
21% of C-suite level positions. The report also mentioned the real issue lies within manager-level positions. Within the past five years, the percentage of women in manager-level roles only increased by 1% (37% to 38%) but women increased C-suite level representation by 4% (17% to 21%) (Lean In and McKinsey & Company 2019). The Women in the Workplace 2016 report also shared that in the early stages of their career, men are promoted at a 30% higher rate than women are in corporate America (Lean In and McKinsey & Company, 2016). The Women in the Workplace reports are supported by a PRovke Media (formerly the Holmes Report) study where a chart showed all top 10 public relations agencies in the United States showed an increase of women in leadership positions in 2017 compared to 2015. The largest jump was Ogilvy, with a 50% increase of women sitting in senior-level positions (Shah, 2017). However, as of 2019, only two of the top 10 agencies (BCW and Ketchum) had women in CEO roles (Shah, 2019). In 2011, all public relations agencies that made “over $400 million in annual revenue” all had male CEOs (Lee, 2011). Only one of those companies now has a female CEO - Ketchum.

While there is a slight increase in female representation in leadership, research showed advancement has stalled and is slow (Barton, Devillard, Hazelwood, 2015; England, Levine, & Misehel, 2020; Warner & Corley, 2017). According to the Center for American Progress, there was an accelerated increase of women in leadership positions during the peak of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and steadily increased up until the last decade. From 1997 - 2007, “women’s share of board seats in S&P 1500 companies increased 94% … and share of companies with female CEOs increased more than sixfold,” but in 2011, “women’s presence in top management positions in S&P 1500 companies was less than 9%” (Warner & Corley, 2017). Not only has leadership stalled, but employment has as well. According to an article published by the National Academy of Sciences, the percentage of women employed as of 2018 is not any
higher than the percentage of women employed in 1996. This is also after women have surpassed men in receiving doctoral degrees, beginning in the 2000s (England et al., 2020).

While there is unanimity among executives across industries that gender equality in the workplace is important, it is not always shown to be a top priority. In 2010, *A Women Matter* study showed only 28% of companies describe gender equality and diversity as a top ten “strategic priority, and about 33% did not include it as a business priority at all (Barton et al., 2015). These statistics require further analysis as to why women are still underrepresented in the workplace, specifically in the public relations industry. Research has shown gender inequality and inequity is many times pervasive in the workplace. Many researchers suggested an organization- and industry-wide cultural change is one of the only ways to create proactive change and how leaders need to create a culture where gender equity is embraced (Chang & Milkman, 2020; de Vries, 2015; Ferguson, 2017). This study aimed to:

1.) Tackle the issue of gender inequality in the workplace caused by social inequities that have created biased gendered norms.

2.) Seek out effective, successful practices to help women advance in the public relations field.

It is important to note the difference between *gender equality* vs. *gender equity* as both terms are used in this study, but the terms are not interchangeable. When organizations and scholars advocate for reaching gender equality, gender equity is the ways and means to reach gender equality (Pipeline Equity, 2018; Roy, 2017). Therefore, throughout this study *gender equality* is used when talking about equalizing the pay and leadership gap as well, as when quoted directly from a source, and *gender equity* is when talking about how to bridge these gaps.
Formally, gender equity refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities” (ILO, 2007, p. 92).

Gender equality “implies that all men and women are free to develop their personal abilities and make life choices without the limitations set by stereotypes or prejudices about gender roles or the characteristics of men and women” (ILO, 2007, p. 91). The primary difference is, gender equality is about treating every gender the same, whereas gender equity is giving all genders the resources they need to succeed. As discussed throughout this study, there are many gender stereotypes and biases women face that inhibit them from having the resources they need to advance in the workplace. In an article, Frequently asked questions about gender equality, the United Nations Population Fund stated, “Equity leads to equality” (2005, para. 2). Therefore, this study sought out best practices that help women overcome these obstacles.

**Purpose and Organization of Study**

As women are still underrepresented in leadership in the public relations industry, the purpose of this study was to identify practices that have been and are currently being used to advance women in the workplace. Therefore, to discuss how to prioritize gender equity in the public relations industry, this study consisted of five chapters: Chapter 1: Statement of the Problem; Chapter 2: Literature Review; Chapter 3, Methods; Chapter 4: Findings; and Chapter 5: Conclusion.

While Chapter 1 discussed an overview and purpose of the study, Chapter 2 examines research related to advancing women in the workplace. It also explores how the issues women face in public relations are rooted in feminist theory. While gathering research for Chapter 2, the
gap in the literature showed the research related specifically to women in public relations, explained the problem of gender inequity and inequality in the workplace but did not provide an extensive and thorough solution of how to advance women in the field. Therefore, much of the research encompassed academic and professional literature discussing practices to advance women in the workplace across all industries. As further discussed in Chapter 2, the two best practices found were mentorship and male allyship. Since men typically hold a larger percentage of leadership positions than women, research showed men’s involvement in gender initiatives are imperative to create positive change in the organization (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; see also de Vries, 2015; Sherf et al., 2017). This led to the following research questions:

**RQ 1:** How does male allyship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

**RQ 2:** How does mentorship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

To close the gap in the literature, Chapter 3 discussed a content analysis method approach of examining male allyship training programs incorporated at organizations, as well as a training and development handbook. The two male allyship training programs chosen were an investment firm and a university that have elements or departments of public relations within them. The cross-case analysis allowed for the researcher to examine similarities in the training programs that can be applied to the public relations industry. Following, Chapter 4 discussed the findings in each of the male allyship training programs and training and development text to determine
the best practices and similarities and differences between the programs. The data analyzed from the male allyship programs included qualitative and quantitative data. Chapter 4 also included limitations found within the training programs and the answer to the research question. Finally, Chapter 5 discussed how the findings in Chapter 4 led to the creation of a best practices guide for a male allyship program and a training program targeted toward PR agencies, as well as direction for future research.

While examining the best practices and the research behind them, the study also explores underlying gender discrimination and stereotypes that have led to the need for programs to be implemented to create a gender-inclusive work environment. It also assesses how the research question is grounded in feminist theory. The following chapter, Chapter 2, examines the background and key research and literature that guided the study’s purpose and findings.
Chapter 2:

Literature Review

The following literature review explored two major criteria identified in the public relations and organizational culture academic fields, as well as gender-related case studies/reports, that explain how workplaces can help women advance within the field. The two major criteria identified are mentorship and male allyship. Research showed mentorship and male allyship both encourage men to be change agents and to enforce gender equity within the workplace. Both practices also help to break the stigma that men don’t have to be involved in gender equity initiatives (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; see also Carter & Silva, 2010, 2019; Cheng et al., 2019; Dashper, 2018; Durbin, 2016; Durbin & Tomilson, 2014).

First, the literature review examined how the information and research was collected. Then, the literature review explored existing gender stereotypes in the public relations industry and a historical, feminist theory-grounded analysis of women in the workplace. After the framework was laid out, the literature review examined how mentorship and male allyship have become best practices to advance women in the workplace.

This literature review analyzed academic journals and reports to determine what barriers women face in the workplace, specifically in the public relations field, and what can help them overcome these barriers. Information contained in this chapter was found through the Seton Hall University Library database, consulting group/NGO reports, and Google Scholar. The literature reviewed was grounded in a feminist standpoint, for feminist theories in the communications and public relations sphere “offer explanations and speculations about the communicative strategies used to oppress women as well as those used by women to overcome that oppression” (Griffin,
According to Toth and Cline (2007), feminist theory examines gender issues in the public relations industry in three ways. First, feminist public relations scholars discuss the double standard women face in the industry and are still viewed “according to the masculine norms of society” (p. 88). Second, the scholars study the differences in gender within the industry concerning social sciences. Third, the scholars advocated for empowering and lifting women up through challenging the societal gender norms and barriers of advancement women face in the workplace. Much of the research in this literature review focused on the third component in seeking ways of how women can challenge the status quo to advance in the workplace. It also revisited what was studied and advocated for in the second wave of feminism in the 1960s - 1980s: The ending and addressing discrimination against women and challenging the patriarchal status quo in the workplace (Crapanzano, 2012). The following section discussed and analyzed the need for gender equity as well as how a gender-inclusive environment is beneficial for an organization.

**Overcoming Gender Stereotypes, Discrimination, and Biases**

There are numerous studies and research completed on why having a more diverse leadership team in the workplace is healthy for a company’s growth (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Chang & Milkman, 2020; Ellingrud et. al, 2016; Madsen et al., 2020, Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018, Woetzel, Madgavkar, Ellingrud, Labaye, Devillard,...Krishnan, et al., 2015). In 2015, McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) wrote a report titled *How advancing women’s equality can add $12 trillion to global growth* (Woetzel et al., 2015). In a similar MGI study, in the United States alone, authors explained how the gross domestic product (GDP) can increase 5% by advancing women in the workplace, and that if gender equality is entirely reached by 2025, the annual GDP could increase by $4.3 trillion.
However, the study showed that no state within the U.S. was on track to achieve this. The authors ranked states zero to one, with one meaning gender equality was met, and only two states scored above 0.70 (Maine and Vermont) (Ellingrud et. al, 2016).

While reaching toward gender equality, if acted upon, can increase GDP and economic development, it also allows a company to outperform other companies where it is not as enforced or as integral of a part of the work culture. Promoting gender equity also enhances employee retention and prospective client relationships (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Place & Vardemann-Winter, 2018). Specifically, in leadership, a diverse and inclusive representation results in “better strategic decisions, increased capacity for problem-solving, more resilience and innovation, and increased ability to adapt to change” (Madsen et al, 2020, p. 242). According to a 2017 Boston Consulting Group study (BCG), “… companies where men are actively involved in gender diversity, 96% report progress. Conversely, among companies where men are not involved, only 30% show progress” (Krentz, Wierzba, Abouzahr, Garcia-Alonso, Taplett, para. 3).

For organizations to have a gender-balanced leadership team and work culture that celebrates and embraces gender equality, gender biases and stereotypes need to be called out and recognized (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Chang & Milkman, 2020; Heilman, 2012; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). In Prime and Moss-Racuisin’s study, *Engaging men in gender initiatives: What change agents need to know*, it was reported that the more awareness men have of gender bias and stereotypes, the more likely men were to believe that “it was important to achieve gender equality” (2009, p. 5). Awareness of gender biases begins with recognizing one’s own unconscious biases and society’s gender norms (Chang & Milkman, 2020; Prime & Moss-Racuisin, 2009). Typical gender norms of a male that prohibit
them from participating in initiatives to promote gender equity and equality and advance women in the workplace are being a “man’s man,” avoiding “conforming to any feminine norms,” and the notion of always having to “be a winner” (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, p. 3).

However, historically in public relations, gender biases and stereotypes have not been called out. During World War II, the public relations industry began to see a large increase of women join the field due to men serving in the military. During this time, women were largely welcomed to the industry due to the necessity of workers. However, when men returned from the war, perceptions of women in public relations began to change (Horsley, 2009). In the 1950s - 1960s, women in public relations were stereotyped as secretaries and expected to play the traditional gender role of the domestic housewife (Crapanzano, 2012, p. 103), and in PRSA trade journals, people in the public relations industry were just referred to as the “PR Man.” While this phrase discounts women who work in public relations, it had a positive connotation and perception in the journal (Horsley, 2009, p. 103). However, in Linda Childers Hon’s *Toward a Feminist Theory in Public Relations* (1995), a participant in her study explained how she felt as if her role in public relations was less valued than other roles in the company and deemed as a lower-level position. The participant would hear phrases directed toward her such as, “Give it to the PR girl” (p. 44). These two examples demonstrate the theorists' argument that language has traditionally been represented in a way that favors men over women.

Following the history of women in public relations, Crapanzano (2012) cited second-wave feminist literature, stating women were “symbolically annihilated” during this period and were hardly represented in the media if they did not pertain to traditional housewife roles. The term *symbolic annihilation* refers to how the media portrayed women in the second wave of feminism as being forced to uphold an idealistic image that prohibited them from striving in their
careers and instead painted them in a more traditional gender role (Tuchman, 2000). This reflects Jill Armstrong and Jason Ghaboos’s *Collaborating with Men: Everyday Workplace Inclusion* report that cited the Diversity Council of Australia when calling out antiquated biases women still face in the workplace. Armstrong and Ghaboos included judging women differently and by a different standard for the same behavior or action as men, giving “office housework” to women, and not crediting women for their contributions to the organization (2019, p. 25). This shows how although sometimes unintentional, these biases can further engrain gender stereotypes if not called out.

Chang and Milkman (2020), define a *stereotype* as a “mental shortcut.” The authors also explained how stereotypes “are built on years of exposure to stereotypical portrayals of groups in society” and how these portrayals allow them to view their beliefs as objective when in reality the stereotypes are “reconstructed definitions of merit” (p. 2). While Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2000) recognized gender “involves predetermined physical traits” the authors also recognized that gender “also develops a cultural identity” (p. 51). When a gender forms a cultural identity ingrained in society that is arguably subjective, gender stereotyping is revealed. The danger with stereotypes, specifically gender stereotypes, is that how society traditionally perceives women in the workplace, can also become how women perceive themselves (Heilman, 2020, p. 120). This can lead to women having a lack of confidence in the workplace (Sawyer & Valerio, 2018, p. 2).

In the *Women in the Workplace 2019* report, one in four women think “that their gender has played a role in missing out on a raise, promotion, or chance to get ahead” (Lean In, Mckinsey & Company, 2019). When making their mark in the workplace, Former CEO of Ketchum, Barri Rafferty, advises women to “...have swagger. By swagger, I mean demonstrated confidence.
ADVANCING WOMEN IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Walk into a room with confidence and be proud of the ideas you are presenting to establish credibility as not only a good communicator, but also as a leader” (Rafferty, 2014, para. 3).

While Rafferty’s advice is positive and forward-thinking, women oftentimes face a double standard in how they should act in the workplace. To advance in the workplace, women need to be assertive, decisive, proactive, and independent (Heilman, 2020). When men act this way, this is perceived as a positive, but when women act this way they come off as cold, bossy, and snarky (Dashper, 2018). This is supported by Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2000) when the authors explained how “Stereotypes that speak to masculinity and femininity [assertive, decisive, proactive, and independent] have assigned power and dominance to men and subordination to women” (p. 54). Therefore, women feel in a constant limbo of choosing between assertiveness or “making decisions through collaboration” with the chance they will not have a strong voice in the matter (Madsen & Scribner, 2016, p. 233). This research is supported by Elizabeth Krugler’s dissertation at Iowa State University, Women in public relations: The influence of gender on women leaders in public relations, where she speaks about the double standard women are held to in the public relations industry. The first female participant she interviewed said, “In my twenties, I would’ve been called brash, where a guy in his twenties may have been called ambitious. In my thirties I may have been called a bitch, when a guy in the same position would have been defined as strong,” when asked if people would respond to them the same as they would to a male leader (p. 29 – 30). In a different report, Collaborating with Men: Changing workplace culture to be more inclusive for women, it was shown that the double standard women face is one of the factors that are the least recognized when it comes to gender biases (University of Cambridge, 2016). Therefore, researchers suggest it needs to be both men and women
collaboratively involved in promoting gender equity in order for women to advance in the field (de Vries, 2015; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Sherf et. al., 2017).

Another gender issue in public relations that has been called out since the 1970s is equal pay (Horsley, 2009, p. 104). The fight for equal pay was a major issue advocated for in the second wave of feminism, and it was not just an issue for women in PR, but for women in nearly all career roles (Crapanzano, 2012). In partnership with The Ketchum Group, PRovoke Media, conducted research that showed white females make $6,000 less than white males in public relations as a baseline salary. The discrepancy goes even further when the research shows white males make $9,000 more than non-white males and $14,000 more than non-white females (Shah, 2017). This statistic is not drastically different from a study completed 14 years ago where men made an average of $13,000 more than all women (Dozier et al., 2006).

The stall in progress shown in the pay gap statistics (Shah, 2017; Dozier et al., 2006) calls for what feminist theorists refer to as the *continuity approach* and how social movements create *spillover effects* (Finneman & Volz, 2020; Geletkanyzs, 2020, Meyer & Whittier, 1994). Spillover effects refer to how current social movements are a resurgence and draw from ideas that are rooted in an earlier social movement. Therefore, social movements are a “continuity” of previous movements, specifically, waves of feminist movements (Finneman & Volz, 2020; Geletkanyzs, 2020, Meyer & Whittier, 1994). The continuity approach and spillover effects theory also suggest that “movements have high and low points, but they simply do not die” (Finneman & Volz, 2020, p. 865). The theory of the continuity approach provides an understanding as to why the pay gap still exists. Whether it is through stereotypes, double standards, or unequal play, research has shown that there are still evident gender-related barriers
and stereotypes women face in the workplace, and how overall issues women face in the workplace are reflective of women’s experiences in the public relations industry as well.

**Mentorship**

*Mentoring* is defined as “relationships in organizations that enhance individuals’ development in the early, middle and later career years and pointed to a clear association between the mentor relationship and career development” (Durbin, 2016, p. 77). Mentorship in the workplace is considered to be one of the most effective initiatives to increase diversity and inclusion (Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). Mentorship ranks higher than diversity and inclusion workshops/training development programs because it is found that too many training/leadership development programs focus too much on “fixing” the women’s behavior rather than embracing it (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). Training and leadership development programs that focus on changing the women turn gender inclusion into a women’s issue instead of an industry- or organizational-wide issue. Having these programs appear as a women’s issue makes it appear as if men do not have to be involved in creating gender equality in the workplace (de Vries, 2015; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Madsen et al., 2020, Sherf, et al, 2017).

*A Harvard Business Review’s* (HBR) study about diversity and inclusion programs showed that in their experiment, the diversity training program conducted had little to no effect on male and white employees. The authors stated how “the two groups who typically hold the most power in organizations and are often the primary targets of these interventions.” (Chang et al., 2019, para. 12). Three weeks after the initial study, HBR emailed participants in the study about a new initiative:

“nominate up to five coworkers they would like to meet for a casual coffee chat to help create a more inclusive culture….Contrary to our expectations, the training didn’t prompt
men to nominate more women, nor did it lead senior women to nominate more junior women” (Chang et al., 2019, para. 12).

Furthermore, many leadership frameworks and models were created by men in business designed for male gender-norms and expectations (Jogulu & Wood, 2006).

Even when men have good intentions when trying to engage in promoting gender equity, it is often revealed there are underlying, unconscious gender biases that prevent them from fully making an impact (Anicha et al., 2020). More research on why diversity and training development programs cause dominant groups to remain complacent is needed, although it has been shown they do not directly help women to advance in the workplace. Therefore, mentorship in helping women advance in the field is important because mentorship focuses on what the women can become rather than fixing what they are (Dashper, 2018). It not only helps women embrace their own capabilities, but it also helps them build confidence and feel supported in the workplace. Mentorship also benefits the organization by maintaining employee retention and by building commitment and loyalty to the company (Durbin, 2016).

One of the most recognizable benefits of mentorship is its link to a promotion, specifically with a mentor in a senior leadership role. However, many times, women do not have the same access to senior leadership as men do and/or face barriers in seeking mentorship (Carter & Silva, 2010, 2019; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Cheng et al., 2019; Dashper, 2018; Durbin, 2016, Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; O’Neil, 2003; O’Neill & Blake-Beard, 2002). In a Center for Women in Business study (2017), the report showed from a 2016 Fairygodboss and Artemis Connection survey how men reported mentorship ranked fourth out of nine when asked “What challenges do women face more than
men at your workplace, if any?” Ahead of mentorship was overall feelings of inclusion, work/life balance, and childcare (2016, p. 32).

When women struggle to find or obtain a mentorship with a senior leader, they are “denied access to important information” from a mentor in a senior role, that could be pertinent in helping them receive a promotion (Durbin, 2016, p. 79). Reasons for this are attributed to the fact that men are typically the ones in power/hold the highest roles at a company (Carter & Silva, 2010, 2019; Durbin, 2016; Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Place & Vardemann-Winter, 2018; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). A mentee who is searching for a mentor is more likely to approach someone who looks like them, and a mentor is more likely to seek a mentee that reminds them of themselves. Therefore, since there are more males in senior leadership positions, they are more likely to get a promotion from a mentor (O’Neill & Blake-Beard, 2002; Carter & Silva, 2019).

Further, Carter and Silva’s 2019 report, \textit{Mentoring: Necessary but Insufficient for Advancement}, showed in their study 62\% of men had CEO-level mentors, while only 52\% of women had CEO-level mentors. The report further explored the barriers women face in mentorship by reporting that even when men and women see a promotion from a mentor, a man sees a 21\% increase in compensation, while a woman only sees a 2\% increase in compensation. The difference in pay increases can further emphasize the barriers women face in advancing in the workplace.

To create mentorships that lead to a woman’s advancement in the field, research suggested cross-gender mentorship can benefit both men and women (Center for Women in Business, 2017; LeanIn, 2021; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). LeanIn’s Mentor Her webpage, an initiative to promote men mentoring women, argues that since women are still underrepresented in leadership, men mentoring women is imperative for the leadership gap to close (LeanIn, 2021). While a mentee having a mentor the same gender as them
might make them feel more comfortable and be able to build their confidence more quickly, it may not necessarily bring action to gender equality in the workplace culture (Elliott, 2006). Specifically, it can cause men to not view gender equality as an issue they need to part in changing, reinforcing the misconception that gender inequality is just a “women’s issue” (Johnson & Smith, 2018; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). Prime and Moss-Racusin suggest that a male having a female mentor can help challenge men about their own gender bias (2009, p. 19). In most scenarios, cross-gender mentorships happen through formal mentoring. Sometimes, formal mentoring can be described as not as effective or beneficial because they are too “forced,” but Durbin (2016) explains formal mentoring can help push the gender equality agenda through “providing better access to mentors for women” and “increasing the pool of diverse mentors” (p. 81).

While research has shown cross-gendering mentorship can be complex, similar research shows that the way mentorship can breakthrough in closing the gender gap is through sponsorship (Ibarra et. al., 2010; University of Cambridge, 2016). Sponsorship intentionally pairs a mentee with a senior leader. In return, the senior leader directly advocates for the mentee to receive a promotion and monitors their performance to help them reach the next position (Ibarra, et. al., 2010). While mentorship and sponsorship have similarities, the main difference is that “A mentor will talk with you, but a sponsor will talk about you.” Sponsorship also allows for more access to important projects and information within the company, such as,” high-visibility projects, international assignments, and mission-critical roles” (Beninger, 2015). In return, this access to important projects provides access to more “visibility and interaction” with senior leadership (Madsen et al., 2020, p. 48).
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Although research has shown mentorship is the most effective way to advance women in the workplace, it is still not fully clear what types of mentorship relationships are the most effective (Durbin, 2016; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). More research needs to be done on the effects of mentorship and sponsorship in the advancement of women in the workplace and in creating a gender-inclusive environment. The next section of this literature review analyzed the larger initiative mentorship is part of when helping to advance women in the workplace: male allyship.

Male Allyship

There has been a recent increase of publications within workplace organizational culture suggesting that male allyship can help advance women within the workplace (Anicha, Bilen-Green, Green, 2020; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Dashper, 2018; IPR & KPMG, 2019; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). Since men typically hold a large portion in the C-suite and in the organization’s board, they are a key stakeholder in helping women advance in the field. Accordingly, it is often imperative men are involved in gender equity initiatives in their respective companies and become an ally (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; see also de Vries, 2015; Sherf et al., 2017). However, a study cited in a Time article by President and Founder of Ogilvy’s Center for Behavioral Science and former Ogilvy CEO, Chris Graves, stated that “72% [of CEOs] agree there is a direct connection between gender diversity and business success. Yet only 28% say it is a top 10 priority for senior leadership (2014). This statistic highlights how initiatives like mentorship and male allyship are the ways and means to reach gender equality.

Male allyship is closely related to mentorship because both encourage men to take part in creating a work environment where the need for gender equity is encouraged and enforced.
However, what differentiates the two is that male allyship goes a step further and is more encompassing than mentorship. It is intentional action to create and promote gender equity and focuses on the entire organization work culture (Madsen et al., 2020), whereas in mentorship, research has shown that some mentor/mentee relationships can sometimes feel forced and inorganic (Durbin, 2016). In addition, not all mentorship is required to “have an active focus on inclusivity and diversity (Sawyer & Valerio, 2018, p. 2). It is key that when males are allies, they are active in their efforts and are not passive or half-hearted in their intentions (de Vries, 2015).

With any allyship, especially male allyship in the workplace, it calls for commitment from men and women to work together and to follow through in efforts for implementing gender equity (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Chang & Milkman, 2020; Dashper, 2018; IPR & KPMG, 2019; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). This includes calling out injustices or sexist comments. “Being an ally means noticing [and calling out] injustices you don’t feel or experience” (Center for Women in Business, 2017, p. 18). In one study on the effectiveness of male allyship, Helping or Hurting?: Understanding Women’s Perception of Male Allies, women said that while a “single action” or instance of male allyship was the most impactful, continuous actions of male allyship were the most effective in the long term (Cheng et. al., 2019, p. 47).

A male ally has multiple definitions. However, simply put, a male ally is “… a man who will advocate for women even when there are no women in the room” (Cavanaugh, 2016). This quote emphasizes that a male is not a male ally for themselves but for the organization as a whole. In fact, in a study on male allies, the top way males have advocated for gender equity and equality is in private (Fairygodboss & Artemis Connection, 2016). Another study of male and female executives on championing gender equality (de Vries, 2015) echoes male allies advocate
in private. One male executive interviewee explained his role as a male ally was to do “‘behind the scenes work to secure funding’ [for gender equality initiatives] and by “‘putting key pressure on decision-makers.’” The interviewee also echoes the amount of commitment it takes to champion gender equality by saying how it is important to “‘walk the walk not just talk the talk’” (p. 25). When a male ally advocates for gender equality, he is doing it not only because of the awareness of gender bias and discrimination but also because they have a strong sense of fair play. “... Men must have a commitment to the ideal of fairness - a strong personal conviction that bias is wrong, and they should stand up” (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, p. 12). The act of emphasizing fair play gives male allies “freedom to define oneself according to one’s own values rather than traditional gender norms” (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, p. 21). A strong sense of fairness ultimately shows that a male ally, above all else, should act with a strong moral compass and character (Armstrong & Ghaboos, 2019; Cheng et. al, 2019).

To understand more in-depth of how male allyship promotes gender equity, it is important to first understand what male allyship in the workplace is not and the struggles and obstacles men face when engaging in gender equity initiatives. An example is when women have the authority in a meeting and speak more than their colleagues, “...both men and women give them 14% lower rankings” (Brescoll, 2012). This is an example of how creating a male ally work culture can help challenge gender norms. Male allyship is also not about putting men on a pedestal for being an ally to women (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Johnson & Smith, 2018). Johnson and Smith go on to explain how the “Pedestal Effect” ... “may ultimately strengthen rather than dismantle the gender hierarchy status quo” if “men are given special treatment and shoutouts for even small acts of gender equality” (2018). A term that can be misconstrued as indulging in the “Pedestal Effect” is male champion. The term
male champion can be found in literature about allyship. However, the term does not mean to imply men are superior. Instead, it translates to “high-ranking males at work who support female leaders by combining best practices in mentoring with an ally mentality” (Sawyer & Valerio, 2018, p. 3). This supports to show how an ally mentality should always be present when promoting gender equity to help women to advance in the workplace.

The role of leadership within a company (male or female) is to encourage other males to see the importance of a diverse and inclusive work environment and be a “male champion” or catalyst in doing so (Chang & Milkman, 2020, p.5; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018, p. 3). A male leader in a leadership position can act as a role model to “champion gender inclusion and challenge the status quo” (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2008, p. 20). Male leaders engaging in gender initiatives further emphasize that it is not only a women’s issue, and that it is up to them to use their position in power to be held accountable to create positive change (de Vries, 2015). In another study on male allyship, women also said when a male ally was their boss, “81% of the incidents were effective; in contrast, when the ally was a coworker, only 56% of the incidents were effective” (Cheng et al., 2019, p. 47). This is because the power in the workplace an ally has, the more likely they are “to have the means to most effectively create positive change for marginalized groups” (p. 50). In the Women in the Workplace 2019 report, women reported they were two times more likely to stay at the company “...when senior leaders are held accountable for performance on gender diversity” (p. 42). This statistic further emphasizes that a cultural shift to gender parity should come from the top-down in management and is most effective when it comes from senior leaders (Chang & Milkman, 2020, de Vries, 2015). However, creating a cultural shift can be a complex task to achieve, for traditionally conflicts tend to arise when the status quo changes and gendered norms are challenged (Pompper & Jung, 2013). In some
instances, men do not see it as their place to engage in male allyship (Armstrong & Ghaboos, 2019; Graves, 2014). Other times, men do not have the same personal experiences women have in the workplace. Therefore, they lack emotional support and empathy to take action (Sherf et. al, 2017).

Prime and Moss-Racusin (2009) mention the top three barriers that prevent men from becoming allies: “fear, apathy and real and perceived ignorance” (p. 14). The results go on to show that men are fearful they will make mistakes. One participant in the study shared, “Sometimes [white men] don’t really have a voice. Basically, every diversity training they’ve experienced has been really negative and they just go away … frustrated and blamed” (p. 15). A different study showed that men worry they will “say the wrong thing” or be “accused of mansplaining (Armstrong & Ghaboos, 2019, p. 19). Another fear revolves around disapproval from male colleagues and fear of “what is going to happen if I stand up and support this and start challenging my white manhood” (p. 15). This fear inhibits the men participating in the training from having candid and straightforward conversations with one another (Anicha et al., 2020). Not only do men feel fear, but they see gender equality and equity as a threat of losing their positions to women (Sherf et al., 2017). This reflects previous research that it is not about themselves (the men) when becoming a male ally. However, if promoting gender equity is an imperative value in the company reiterated from senior leadership, the less likely men are to feel “rejected by other men or judged as less manly for challenging gender norms and biases” (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, p. 19).

To achieve true gender equality to help women advance in the workplace, “a leaders-teaching-leaders” approach in encouraging men to be allies could be the key solution (Sawyer & Valerio, 2018, p. 4). Sawyer and Valerio suggest that having “high-ranking” female leaders in
Discussions with male ally leaders can help both sides learn from one another. A “leaders-teaching-leaders” approach is also important because gender equity initiatives that only focus on involving one gender can be seen as “isolated” and can inadvertently strengthen the hierarchical disparity (Johnson & Smith, 2018; Sherf et al., 2017). If suggestions on gender equity come from both males and females, the efforts are going to be more effective rather than if they just came from one gender. When both genders are involved, it creates an “other-focused leadership, not self-focused leadership” style (Valerio & Sawyer, 2016). Ultimately, this approach and style should show championing gender equity is not a choice, but rather a mandate to the organization’s values and mission (de Vries, 2015).

When becoming an effective male ally, one of the most pertinent qualities is to be present, have an open mind, and to listen (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Cheng et al., 2019; Prime & Moss Racusin, 2009). Sheila Murphy, a business development and career coach for lawyers, spoke on this matter in the article *Transforming Women’s Leadership: How listening and asking questions improve influencing skills*. Murphy stated how active listening and giving one’s full attention is key. She suggested using a tool called *WAIT - Why Am I Talking* (Legal Executive Institute, 2020). This tool can be applied to all workplace setting and includes not interrupting or talking over women. Furthermore, the act of listening helps women validate their place and worth in the workplace (Madsen et al., 2020). From a female’s perspective, an ally is most effective when they have a “social justice orientation” when at work. An effective male ally also allows women to feel more “confident, empowered, supported, and more comfortable in the workplace” (Cheng et al., 2019, p. 46). According to a consultant in the Center for Women in Business’s Men as allies: Engaging men to advance women in the workplace report, “Allies listen, co-create opportunity and build a personal brand for accountability and trust” (2017, p. 2).
As cited previously in this study, the Center for Women in Business’s *Men as allies: Engaging men to advance women in the workplace* report, along with Prime and Moss-Racusin’s *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know* (2009), act as key guides for companies to use to engage men to help advance women in the workplace and provides practical ways to implement allyship in the day-to-day work life. The Center for Women in Business lists out a guide to start a male ally initiative in the workplace, and they also mention listening as key. However, in this case, it is listening to the men in order to feel out any hesitations or questions when implementing the initiative. These initial listening sessions will help to identify what men will champion the allyship initiative and which males will need encouragement (Center for Women in Business, 2017). The third step in the initiative is to “educate to create awareness” (p. 12). This step includes involving both men and women in the efforts, highlighting the effectiveness and importance of Sawyer and Valerio’s (2018) “leaders teaching leaders” approach.

Once a male allyship and gender equity initiative are in place, the next task is to make sure these initiatives are continuous, and actions are held accountable. An excerpt from AB Volvo’s *Walk the Talk* 2010 gender initiative was included in Prime & Moss-Racusin’s 2009 report, where AB Volvo encouraged their male employees to break out of their comfort zones. Suggestions included males to host a workshop on the organization’s mission and values or “to interview women managers” to learn from a different perspective (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, p. 18). The Center for Women in Business suggested setting “accountability metrics” such as establishing “personal diversity and inclusion goals” as part of employee performance reviews. One company who participated in the study saw that “turnover decreased from 24 to 15 percent after establishing an intentional, accountable culture of inclusivity” (p. 17). This report showed
how accountability and following through on commitments toward a gender-inclusive environment is the only way where bridging the gender gap can be achieved.

Conclusion

Overall, creating a workplace culture where gender equity is encouraged and enforced, requires complete transparency within and throughout the entire company. Further, research has shown it requires both males and females at the top of the organization to successfully create a workplace where women are able to advance within the field (Center for Women in Business, 2017; de Vries, 2015; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2016, 2018). The research in this literature review sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: How does male allyship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

RQ 2: How does mentorship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

While research in this literature review (Carter & Silva, 2010, 2019; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Cheng et al., 2019; Dashper, 2018; Durbin, 2016, Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; O’Neil, 2003; O’Neill & Blake-Beard, 2002) has shown mentorship is effective in advancing women in the workplace, it has also been shown mentorship cannot champion gender equity alone because it focuses on an individual, rather than the organization as a whole. It was also unclear as to what type of mentorship was the most effective (Carter & Silva, 2019; Durbin, 2016). This is where male allyship is effective since it is an intentional action to create an environment of gender equity across the organization (Madsen
et al., 2020). However, it is of high importance that male allyship and gender equity initiatives are held accountable, and action is followed through during the entire process (Center for Women in Business, 2017). This was shown in how the literature review covered the barriers and gender biases women face in the public relations industry that make mentorship and male allyship crucial to achieving gender parity in the workplace. The research reviewed acts as a guided analysis that is a foundation for a case study approach that aims to close the gender gap for women in public relations. This is outlined in the next chapter, titled “Methods.”
Chapter 3:

Methods

To understand the effectiveness mentorship and male allyship programs and initiatives have on women in the workplace, specifically the public relations industry, this research project examined current male allyship programs at businesses and universities, NGO consulting reports on gender equity, and journal articles on male allyship. As discovered in the literature review, male allyship initiatives can include mentoring, but a mentorship program on its own is not enough to act as a company-wide effort to champion gender equity (Madsen et al., 2020; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). This methods section explored the following research questions:

**RQ 1:** How does male allyship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

**RQ 2:** How does mentorship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

A case study approach guided by a cross-case analysis was chosen for the methodology due to its capacity to analyze themes across case studies, as well as to identify what the best practices are for male allyship programs from practical experience in the workplace. This chapter articulates the methods used, provides a comprehensive explanation of the rationale of the project and how it developed, as well as explains the limitations of the study.

**Methods Description and Rationale**

Contributing to the research questions on the impact male allyship programs have on women in the workplace, a case study and cross-case analysis were enforced to collect data. A
case study is research that involves the study of a case “within a real-life, context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Within a case study, there are specific analysis methods. A cross-case analysis was the method chosen to analyze the case study research because of its ability to make connections and commonalities amongst multiple texts (Khan & VanWyksbergh, 2008). Cross-case analysis within a case study research is an analysis approach that “examines more than one case [and] involves examining themes across cases to discern themes that are common and different to all cases” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 321). The goal of a cross-case analysis approach is to examine “existing case studies so that knowledge from cases can be put into service for broader purposes” (Khan & VanWyksbergh, 2008, p. 2). Khan and Wynsbergh (2008) classify a cross-case analysis as knowledge mobilization, explaining how a cross-case analysis allows the researchers to further mobilize their knowledge into identifying new themes and trends. As the two research questions sought to explore the role and impact male allyship has on women advancing in the workplace, a cross-case analysis was applicable to use to establish what the most effective characteristics were in male allyship initiatives that helped women advance within the workplace and how it can be transferred to the public relations industry.

After the case study and cross-case analysis was completed, a best practice list was created (see Appendix A) that identified the top methods for implementing and creating a male allyship program, specifically for public agencies. Following the best practices guide, a training development guide template was also created for public relations agencies to have step-by-step directions in creating a male allyship program. A progression of the methods used can be seen in the figure below:

**Figure 1: Progression of Methods**
Data Collection

The focus of the research project was to identify the impact male allyship had on women in the workplace. While the literature review provided an overview of male allyship and explained briefly how to implement initiatives in the workplace, the method section sought out specific male allyship programs currently operating at a university and/or corporation. Male allyship programs were chosen as the focus of the study rather than mentorship programs due to findings in the literature review that showed how it is still not fully clear what types of mentorship relationships are the most effective for women in order to advance within the workplace (Durbin, 2016; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). University and corporate male allyship programs were used because it was found there is little research and/or reports on mentorship and male allyship programs specific to public relations. Universities and corporate workplaces also typically have public relations department and roles within them. The two male allyship programs were found through Google Search and the Seton Hall Library database using terms “male allyship training programs in education,” “male allyship programs,” and through analyzing articles reviewed in Chapter 2.

The cases chosen represented industries where women are underrepresented and not equally paid, as was also found in the public relations industry in the literature review.

Similarities between the programs chosen are programs occurred in the past thirteen years, the programs have public relations departments within the respective organizations, and
the programs focused on empowering male allies and advocates for gender equality in the workplace. The findings of the two chosen programs for this study show they can be transferable to most workplace environments. They were selected through purposeful sampling. *Purposeful sampling* is a “technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources” (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2013, p. 534). Concerning case study research, purposeful sampling involves identifying groups and organizations and/or qualitative research that specializes in the selected research topic. When choosing purposeful sampling as a method, it is important to look at similarities and differences within the cases as well. The authors also referenced Morse and Niehaus (2009) explaining how “sampling methods are intended to maximize efficiency and validity” (Palinkas et al., 2013, p. 534). Most literature and reports published on male allyship and gender equity initiatives were created by consulting groups and/or nonprofits, such as the Center for Women in Business’s *Men as allies: Engaging men to advance women in the workplace* and Catalyst’s *Engaging men in gender initiatives: What change agents need to know* by Prime and Moss-Racusin. While these reports were able to provide an overview and introduction of male allyship in Chapter 2, reports specific to gender equity initiatives and male allyship programs implemented at a singular institution were sought out to discover and examine best practices for a male allyship program in the workplace.

**North Dakota State University’s (NDSU) ADVANCE FORWARD**

The first male allyship program selected was North Dakota State University’s (NDSU) ADVANCE FORWARD program (NDSU, 2020). This program was chosen because of its credibility and specificity to female advancement and gender equity in the workplace. The primary source for the identification of this program was the ADVANCE FORWARD project.
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Webpage (NDSU, 2017). Within the ADVANCE FORWARD program, two grant initiatives were examined: *ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Award: NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD - Transforming a Gendered Institution* (Bilen-Green, 2008 – 2015) and *Engaging Male Colleagues as Advocates and Allies for the Advancement of Women Faculty* (Bilen-Green, 2015 – 2020).

**Barclays’ Male Allies Program**

Barclays is an investment bank and financial services company headquartered in England (Barclays, n.d.). Barclays is a partner with the UN Women and HeForShe initiative as a Global IMPACT Champion where the company works to prioritize championing gender equality in the workplace (Barclays, 2019; HeForShe, 2020). Within this program, Barclays published a report, *Male Allies and our journey toward gender parity: Engaging men to drive change in our organization*. The report highlighted Barclays’ Male Allies program, which stemmed from the Women’s Initiative Network (Win) at the company, as discussed further in Chapter 4 (Barclays, 2019). The program was chosen because of its ability to be successful across a large, global employee base.

**Training and Development Handbook**

The third article of research used was not a case study, but a training and development handbook: *Training and Development: Communicating for Success* (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2019). The purpose of a handbook in the study was to provide an academic understanding of training and development and how it could be applicable to a male allyship program. Its resources can be found in Chapter 5 of this study where the training plan is implemented and presented. The book was chosen due its materials’ adaptability to be used in a cross-industry/cross-topic training development program, foundational resources of what a training and
development program consists of, and its use in communication graduate-level courses for training and development. The use of a training and development guide is not to be contradictory toward literature reviewed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 2 it was stated that training and development programs are not as effective because they focus on changing the women, rather than embracing their existing qualities (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). Training and leadership development programs that focus on “changing” the women turn gender inclusion into a “women’s issue” instead of an industry- or organizational-wide issue. Having these programs appear as a women’s issue makes it appear as if men do not have to be involved in creating gender equality in the workplace (de Vries, 2015; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Madsen, Townsend & Scribner, 2020; Sherf et al, 2017). However, the use of this training development guide served toward a foundational guide for how to create a male allyship training program not toward a training and development workshop for what women can do to help themselves to promote gender equality.

The primary chapters used from the book included Chapter 6 and Chapter 9 and provided guidance for how to create a training plan and how to choose a training method. The authors define a training method as “the procedure you use to present the training content in order to demonstrate the behaviors you want trainees to learn” (2019, p. 126). The text offers three main training methods for organizations to use: lecturing, conducting experiential activities, and facilitating group discussion. As discussed later in Chapter 4, NDSU and Barclays, both incorporated all three training methods. According to survey results of the Advocate and Ally training sessions from the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD program, also discussed in Chapter 4, many participants enjoyed and learned the most from group discussions and even wished for more time for group discussions during the session. As supported in Chapter 2, group discussion allows for candid and honest conversation to occur (Anicha et al., 2020). Therefore, a group
discussion was chosen as the primary activity for the training plan. Further details of the training plan can be found in Chapter 5 of this study. An outline format was chosen for the training session instruction because it is adaptable to the trainer/trainee needs and information can be more easily found (Beebe et al., 2019). As following Sawyer & Valerio’s (2018) “leaders-teaching-leaders” approach, the ideal trainers for the session would be a senior-level women and man at the company.

**Limitations of the Study**

Within communications and public relations, qualitative research has its disadvantages. In case study research, a challenge faced is identifying the best-suited case for the study, as well as determining the boundaries of the study. Boundaries within a case study include “how it might be constrained in terms of time, events, and processes…” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 102). Within the cross-case analysis approach, a challenge that can arise is not specifically stating the methodology behind the purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2013). Secondly, another disadvantage in a cross-case analysis and case study research is generalization. Critics argue case studies and cross-cases analyses “provide little basis for scientific generalization” (Yin, 2009, p. 15). However, in the book, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Fourth Edition)*, author Yin explained how case studies are not meant to make generalizations and assumptions on certain populations, but rather to make generalizations on “theoretical propositions” and to be able to expand on a theory (2009, p. 15).

Within case studies, there are six commonly used practices for collecting evidence for the research: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. For this study documentation was used in evaluating “formal studies” of the cases. While documentation can provide stability in a project with easy
retrievability of the reports on the internet, a weakness is “biased selectivity” in the documentation chosen (Yin, 2009, p.102 - 103). However, as mentioned, purposeful sampling provides validity and maximizes the efficiency of the case study, as was shown through the positive correlation of the literature review findings and the NDSU and Barclays programs.

Summary

Overall, the case study and cross-case analysis approach allowed the researcher to make inferences and document similarities and differences between the two allyship and advocate programs chosen. The findings showed similar themes in the goals of the programs, including increasing representation of women in the respective institutions, and composing the need for gender equity to be evident in the company culture. After reviewing and examining the two programs, the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD program acted as the primary report of research for Chapter 4 due to the number of additional sources/case studies on the program and because it has been ingrained in the campus culture for over 10 years. While the Barclays’ HeForShe initiative provided valuable insight for how a corporate business could implement initiatives at work to achieve gender equality, the enormity of the company and newness of the program made it more difficult to find detailed evidence of the effectiveness of the program. Finally, the Training and Development: Communicating for Success text by Beebe et al., provided a foundational framework and guide for implementation of a male allyship training program.

The next chapter, “Findings,” seeks to analyze the findings from the case studies mentioned in Chapter 3 to effectively create a male allyship program catered specifically toward public relations agencies. The implementation and guidelines for the male allyship program can be find in the appendices.
Chapter 4:

Findings

Introduction

Throughout this study, chapters revealed the issues women face in the public relations industry and what best practices are being put in place to create a gender-inclusive workplace where men and women are treated equally. In Chapter 2, male allyship emerged as the primary action to support women in the workplace. However, the research displayed how the public relations industry has not published an in-depth analysis or implementation of how male allyship could help advance women in the field. The literature also showed how the advancement of women in public relations, as well as women across all industries, has stalled and slowed down in recent years (Barton et al., 2015; England et al., 2020; Lee, 2011; Warner & Corley, 2017). Following the gaps in the literature where there was no clear evidence of a thorough and in-depth company-wide initiative of advancing women in the public relations industry, the following research questions emerged:

**RQ 1:** How does male allyship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

**RQ 2:** How does mentorship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

This chapter sought to answer these questions through analyzing and assessing the case studies used in the cross-case analyses methodology discussed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the three cases are introduced, then the researcher discusses the findings in each one, provides a
cross-case analysis, and then the research question is answered. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

**NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD**

The NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD (Focus on Resources for Women’s Advancement, Recruitment/Retention, and Development) project began in 2008, and it served the university with a variety of resources and initiatives to promote gender equality and inclusivity on campus. The project was awarded to the university through a grant provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF) (NSF, n.d.). NDSU is a public land-grant, research institution in Fargo, North Dakota, and has an enrollment of 12,499 students (NDSU, 2021). Within the ADVANCE FORWARD project, are four supporting and collaborative initiatives at the university:

- **Transforming a Gendered Institution**, the campus-wide initiative to promote gender equality;
- **Advocates and Allies Project**, an initiative to engage male faculty as male allies and advocates for gender equality;
- **Partnership Project**, a program where NDSU partnered with other universities to implement the NSF ADVANCE FORWARD program; and the **Aspire Alliance**, a nonprofit to increase diversity and inclusion in the STEM field (NDSU, 2020a). For the purpose of this study, Transforming a Gendered Institution was analyzed first, as it was the university’s pilot program within the ADVANCE FORWARD initiative. Then, the Advocates and Allies Project was analyzed most prominently as it examined the role of male allies in a workplace environment.

**Transforming a Gendered Institution**

The ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Award: NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD - Transforming a Gendered Institution was awarded in 2008 and continued through 2016. It served as the catalyst and all-encompassing initiative that sparked the subsequent initiatives, specifically...
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The Advocates and Allies Project. The principal investigator of the project was Canan Bilen-Green, Vice Provost of Faculty and Equity at NDSU, and the program was awarded $3,867,120 (Bilen-Green, 2008 - 2015). The purpose and goals of the project are to

1. Improve the climate across the campus;
2. Enhance recruitment of women faculty in science and engineering disciplines;
3. Increase retention of women faculty;
4. Promote/advance women associate professors; and
5. Create leadership opportunities by promoting and hiring women faculty into academic leadership positions” (NDSU, 2020c).

To obtain these goals, five focus areas were created:

1. Research/Evaluation; 2.) Faculty Support; 3.) Education, 4.) Advisory; 5.) Policy Change” (NDSU, 2020d). These focus areas were disseminated across the university and within the other initiatives that stemmed from the original ADVANCE FORWARD Institutional Transformation Award. As of 2016, when the grant project was completed, over 100 training and workshops were completed and 80% of faculty members (76% of male faculty and 90% of female faculty) at NDSU attended an ADVANCE FORWARD event (NDSU, 2020c).

At the beginning of the ADVANCE FORWARD program at NDSU in 2008, women only made up 7% of tenured faculty. As of 2019, women make up 22% of the tenured faculty (NDSU, 2020c). The ADVANCE FORWARD program is still active at NDSU and continues to implement gender equity on its campus.

Advisors and Allies Project

The Advocates and Allies project was granted to NDSU through the NSF grant, Engaging Male Colleagues as Advocates and Allies for the Advancement of Women.
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Faculty, in 2015 and followed the Transforming a Gendered Institution grant. The program is projected to continue through June 30, 2021 (Bilen-Green, 2015 - 2020). NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD Advocates and Allies Project defines advocates as “senior men faculty who educate themselves about issues of gender [in]equity;” and allies as “men faculty whom the Advocates train as proponents for gender equity in their departments” (NDSU, 2017a). This definition can be transferable to any industry i.e., an advocate is a man on the leadership team at public relations agencies who educates themselves about issues of gender equity. In the beginning years of the initiative, the Advocates and Allies Project sought out male faculty members to serve as advocates to promote gender equity (Anicha et al., 2015). The male faculty members were chosen through an application process and had to read and practice self-reflection on topics “such as male privilege, unconscious bias, and bias in the faculty search process” (Anicha et al., 2015, p. 22). The self-reflection and self-education on topics that are not traditionally spoken about for men in the workplace, allowed the advocates to confidently educate others, the allies, on the importance of gender equality (Anicha et al., 2015). The Advocates then provided training to allies through workshops and seminars on campus, as well as at national conferences.

To determine the success of the training sessions, all participants were given surveys to complete that included close-ended and open-ended questions. Permission to analyze and interpret the surveys was given by the Engaging Male Colleagues as Advocates and Allies for the Advancement of Women Faculty grant Principal Investigator, Canan Bilen-Green. Evaluation reports and pretests from each workshop were documented on the NDSU Advocates and Allies Project webpage under the tab, Evaluation Data and can also be found at the reference list of this study (NDSU, 2017b). The survey questions given to each participant at the end of each session were asked in the spectrum of strongly disagree - strongly agree. This is referred as the Likert
scale, which is a common survey method to analyze participants’ attitudes and opinions (Cooper & Johnson, 2016). Some reports collected included missing data where a participant did not answer the question. However, it only accounted for one participant and did not skew results. The questions asked were:

1. I feel that my knowledge of unconscious gender bias and its impact on the campus climate has increased after today’s workshop,
2. I will be able to use the information that I learned today in my work,
3. I will be able to implement new strategies to promote a more equitable climate for women faculty at my institution as a result of my participation in this workshop,
4. The training was clear and well organized,
5. I would recommend this training to others,
6. I am personally committed to addressing issues of gender bias and discrimination experienced by women faculty at my institution,
7. How would you rate the overall quality of this training? (Bilen-Green, 2016b-n, 2017a-h).

The next sections analyze and interpret the survey results from the following sessions provided: American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Ally Training Sessions and session provided at four universities across the United States.

**ASEE Ally Training Sessions**

In 2016 and 2017, Advocates hosted training sessions at the annual ASEE conference. The sessions were called “Men Allies for Gender Equity” and had mixed-gender sessions and male-only sessions. According to the program description, this was because each session would bring different but invaluable insights and perspectives regarding male allyship (NDSU, 2020c).
Findings showed that the male and mixed-gender workshops were overwhelmingly successful with positive survey results. The mixed-gender workshops showed slightly more positive results than the male-only workshops except for the second question: “I will be able to use the information that I learned today in my work.” An average of 57.63% of participants in male-only workshops “strongly agreed” with this statement whereas only 54.4% of participants in mixed-gender workshops “strongly agreed” with this statement. The only outlier from the data was that one participant in a mixed-gender workshop listed that they “strongly disagreed with question six: “I am personally committed to addressing issues of gender bias and discrimination experienced by women faculty at my institution” (Bilen-Green, 2017e, p. 1).

The qualitative portion of the survey asked four questions:

1. What questions do you still have about being an ally for gender equity after attending this workshop?

2. What do you think were the most helpful or valuable aspects of the workshop you attended today?

3. What is one strategy you have learned today that you will be able to implement to promote a more equitable campus climate for women faculty?

4. How could this workshop be improved to be more beneficial to you?” (Bilen-Green, 2016m-n, 2017e-h).

The themes that emerged from the feedback on what participants learned is to speak up in situations of gender bias and to listen carefully to other faculty member’s experiences in their respective work. Areas where the workshop could improve on was to have more discussion time and more detailed examples and strategies of how to be a male ally. The main difference between the mixed-gender and men-only groups was that the mixed-gender groups provided
greater detail of feedback. Specifically, participants in the June 25, 2017 session learned a strategy to say ‘‘Can you say that again?’’ when contentious comments are made in order to curtail gender bias and call it out (Bilen-Green, 2017f, p. 3). Another detailed and specific comment was made in the June 2016 session when a participant asked ‘‘How to advocate yet still mentor women to continue to advocate for themselves?’’. This comment correlates to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 in which Sawyer and Valerio (2018) suggest that having “high-ranking” female leaders in discussions with male ally leaders can help both sides learn from one another. This style is called a “leaders-teaching-leaders” approach in gender equity initiatives (p. 3).

**University Training Sessions**

The Advocate and Allies program also had four partner institutions where the workshops were implemented including Ohio State University (OSU), Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), University of North Texas (UNT), and the University of Wyoming. The additional institutions also received ADVANCE grants from NSF to carry out the training (NDSU, 2017a). Evaluation reports were taken from each session and included the same survey questions as in the ASEE workshops using the five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree (NDSU, 2017b). There were a few differences between the training sessions at the ASEE conferences and the training sessions at the partner universities. The university training programs had separate ally and advocate sessions, and all participants were men. NDSU sent out a pretest report to the four partnering institutions for the male allies and advocates who agreed to participate in the program.
University Training Session: Pretest Analysis and Results

The pretest survey asked open-ended questions and also collected details of how participants have specifically shown action in promoting gender equity and was given to the four participating schools. Then, NDSU compiled a report of the answers, titled *Overall Ally and Advocate Pretest Report*, where it was found 78.2% of participants responded to the survey given (Bilen-Green, 2016a, p. 1). The report can be found under the *Evaluation Data* tab within the Advocates and Allies webpage (NDSU, 2017b). While most questions are specific to academia, the questions can be altered to be applicable to most industries. There was also a pretest sent to all faculty members of the four university institutions about workplace climate but were not included because the focus of the study was to analyze male allyship training programs. The list of questions used in the advocate and ally pretest can be found below (Bilen-Green, 2016a, p. 2-12).

**Ally Actions**

1. I am personally committed to addressing issues of gender bias and discrimination experienced by women faculty at my institution.
2. I regularly share with my colleagues my commitment to creating a more equitable climate for women faculty.
3. I have read about gender bias and discrimination in academia.
4. I have spoken up when I notice a woman colleague being interrupted.
5. I regularly ask my women colleagues about their experiences of the climate within their department.
6. I regularly invite my women colleagues to informal gatherings where work-related discussions are likely to occur.
7. I regularly talk to my women colleagues about their research.

8. I nominate my women colleagues for university awards.

9. I volunteer to serve on departmental and college committees with the specific purpose of being an ally for gender equity.

Beliefs

10. I would be more comfortable having a man as a department head than a woman.

11. Women are just as capable of thinking logically as men.

12. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States.

13. Women experience gender discrimination when applying for academic jobs.

14. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.

15. Women are less capable of being effective academic leaders.

16. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

17. Women should be given equal opportunity as men for training in the various professions.

18. Evaluations of teaching are negatively biased against women faculty.

19. When evaluating excellence in teaching, students evaluate men professors more favorably.

20. Women faculty need substantially more publications to receive the same evaluation as men faculty.

21. Articles are evaluated more favorably when attributed to men faculty.

22. Letters of recommendations under-value the competence and accomplishments of
When analyzing the results, I discovered mixed results where only a few questions showed a large majority of agreement. A constant outlier from the questions was a participant from the University of Northern Texas. For nearly all questions asked, the participant did not respond or chose the opposite of the majority of the participants. For example, in question 14, a University of Northern Texas participant listed that they strongly agree that women are less capable of being effective academic leaders. While this only accounted for 1.3% of the participants, it still accounts that gender discrimination does exist in the workplace (Bilen-Green, 2016a, p. 8).

Questions that received mixed results, where a clear majority was not found included questions 4-5, 13, 14, 18 -22. Two questions that specifically raised red flags were questions four and five, relating to communication with women in the workplace, which were 4.) I have spoken up when I notice a woman colleague being interrupted and 5.) I regularly ask my women colleagues about their experiences of the climate within their department. The sections with the highest percentages (but still not the majority) were either somewhat agree (32.9% for question four and 22.8% for question five) or somewhat disagree (19% for question five) showing that participants were uncertain or slightly sure they have or have not spoken up when a woman colleague was interrupted or have asked them about their workplace climate (Bilen-Green, 2016a, p. 3). Somewhat agree and somewhat disagree are the two intervals on a Likert scale that are the closest to neutral. The scales in the pretest do not include a neutral option, which could possibly have caused participants to not choose the most accurate reflection of their opinion. Also, the intensities of each interval could not have the same effect on every individual taking the survey (Cooper & Johnson, 2016).
The results from questions four and five reflect discussion in the literature review when examining qualities of an effective male ally. Women in the workplace find a male ally most effective when they listen to them, allow them to speak up for themselves, and empower them (Cheng et al, 2017; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Legal Executive Institute, 2020). This research shows that there is still room to improve for the men faculty members participating in the ADVANCE FORWARD Advocate and Ally training.

In the open-ended section of the survey, similarities between an academic setting and a public relations setting arose. In the open-ended section, men faculty members were asked to describe how they have been an ally so far and what they want to see/learn in the future. One participant described a situation in an academic senate discussion “in which a male Senator attempted to cut off a female Senator (even though she had the floor), and he made a comment accusing her of ‘being emotional’” (Bilen-Green, 2016a, p. 12). The participant then reached out to the chair to express their concern that “this has occurred without being called out…. We should be doing more to show people that this is not an ‘Old Boys’ Club.’” In the end, there was eventually a presentation to the Faculty Senate about unconscious bias. The term “old boys’ club” was also mentioned in an article discussed in the literature review, Women in public relations: The influence of gender on women leaders in public relations (Krugler, 2017). Krugler interviewed women in the public relations industry about their experience in the field. A theme that evolved among the interviewees was the “old boys club.” Participant three said “I’m not sure if it’s the old boys’ club mentality or if it’s the—who gets that invitation to the inner office. I think many times males are asked in and females have to ask to get in” (p. 26). Another similarity between the NDSU pretest and Krugler’s study is that both sets of participants mentioned the double standard women face when trying to work and have a family. A participant
in the NDSU pre-test wrote “If I could do one thing, I would like to address childcare support and paid maternity leave. Our broader culture places disproportionate burdens on women in this regard, and this can in turn impact performance” (Bilen-Green, 2016a, p. 18). This reflects multiple participants in Krugler’s study where they felt that they faced a double standard of being a mother and a full-time employee and many times felt they had to work harder than their male colleagues to feel equally respected.

**University Training Sessions: Advocate and Ally Training Program Survey Results**

The quantitative and qualitative survey results from the Advocate and Ally training programs were analyzed, respectively. The evaluations from the university sessions were more extensive than the ASEE evaluations since there were more sessions. However, two main themes emerged from both sessions: to learn to be a more effective listener and to call out gender biases in the moment. The same procedure for evaluating the ASEE workshops was used for the university advocate and ally training sessions. The average percentages of each question from every university were calculated and then compiled for a total average from all sessions. The results were relatively positive where participants gained valuable insight from the ally training. However, the statistic that stood out among the universities was question seven - *How would you rate the overall quality of the training?* Overall, 26.51% of participants said the quality was average, 54.35% of participants said the quality was above average, and 21.76% of participants said the quality was excellent (Appendix D). These results show there is room for improvement within the ally training sessions. An ally training session on November 2, 2016, at Rochester Institute of Technology received significantly more negative results than any other ally training session across all universities. A concise and concrete conclusion as to why this was cannot be formed with the available data. However, the comments from the qualitative portion from this
session suggest that the timing of the training was not used wisely, and participants wanted more discussion time (Bilen-Green, 2016j). There was also no direct correlation in the survey to pinpoint the UNT participant who was an outlier in the pretest report. (Bilen-Green, 2016a).

The purpose of the advocate sessions was to train men faculty and administrators how to train the allies about the issues of gender inequity at universities. In the data from the advocate training sessions, most revolved around the probability of the success of implementing the Advocate and Ally Project in the respective universities. However, one question asked in all surveys in the program that supported the purpose of this study was question five: “I feel that my knowledge of male privilege and its impact on university climate has increased after this training” (Bilen-Green, 2016b-n, 2017a-h). Therefore, this question was included in the evaluation. Overall, there were eight themes found in the qualitative data section of the surveys, and comments were separated into three sections: what was learned/liked in the session and what could be improved upon in the session. A table for each section can be found in the tables below.

**Table 1: Themes from NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD Training Sessions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was Learned/Liked</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening Carefully</strong></td>
<td>Acknowledging the importance of listening to their women colleague members and not interrupting them when in meetings or having a discussion with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calling Out Instances of Gender Discrimination Immediately</strong></td>
<td>To be aware the act of gender bias or discrimination in the moment and not after the incident and to be able to speak out against it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Including Women in All Discussions/Meetings</th>
<th>To recognize that men should not exclude women (in junior or senior positions) in any open meetings or discussions they may have with colleagues.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Communication</td>
<td>To be able to have candid, respectful, and honest two-way communication with women colleagues about each other’s experiences at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Bias in Language</td>
<td>To be cognizant of gender bias that exists in writing letter of recommendations and evaluations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What Can Be Improved**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More Specific Examples of How to Be an Ally</th>
<th>Many participants felt as if the session did not provide enough concrete situations of where they could act as an ally.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include More Time in Session for Discussion Groups</td>
<td>While participants liked the open discussion portions of the session, many felt as if there was not enough time left for open discussion and that the sessions could have been longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Implicit Bias is Everywhere</td>
<td>Throughout the survey, participants wished the session would have recognized that everyone has implicit bias, regardless of gender.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact on Gender Allyship in Universities Nationwide**

The NSF’s ADVANCE Program has so far been implemented in some capacity at over 200 universities. The NSF granted over $270 million to ADVANCE programs, and the success of NDSU’s ADVANCE FORWARD program recognized throughout higher education (Anicha et al., 2020; NSF, n.d.). The ASEE endorsed the Advocates and Allies project as a “model program,” and NDSU is currently working to grow the Advocates and Ally project into a national model (NDSU, 2020).

**Barclays’ Male Allies Program**

The Barclays’ male allyship program came into fruition from inspiration and call to action from the HeForShe campaign. HeForShe is an initiative by UN Women promoting global
solidarity for gender equality (HeForShe, 2019). Barclays is a partner with the UN Women and HeForShe initiative as a Global IMPACT Champion and claims achieving gender equality in the workplace is “not a women’s issue, it is a human rights issue” (Barclays, 2019, p. 4). This quote supports literature in Chapter 2 where researchers explain how championing gender equality and equity makes it an organizational-wide issue, not just a women’s issue (de Vries, 2015; IPR & KPMG, 2019; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Madsen et al., 2020; Sherf et al, 2017). The title of a Corporate Impact Champion holds Barclays accountable for achieving gender equality in the workplace. Another institution mentioned in this research study that is also a HeForShe Global Impact Champion is McKinsey & Company, author of the Women in the Workplace reports. (HeForShe, 2019). As a Corporate Impact Champion, Barclays was also profiled in the HeForShe Emerging Solutions Report – 2018.

In the Barclays’ report, Male Allies and our journey toward gender parity: Engaging men to drive change in our organization, Barclays’ outlines the steps taken to achieve a goal of gender equality in its workplace and challenging its male employees to take a stand as an ally to the advancement of women in the workplace. The three main goals are “1.) Reach 2.5 million women around the world with financial inclusion programs; 2.) Increase the representation of women in senior leadership, by one percentage point a year; 3.) Embed gender equality in the culture, processes and policies of Barclays” (Barclays, 2019). The focus of this report was the Barclays’ Male Allies program, which stemmed from the Women’s Initiative Network (Win) at the company. Win is the overarching and catalyst HeForShe initiative at Barclays that spearheads gender initiatives, like the Male Allies program (Barclays, 2018). Male Allies emerged because the company believed that there needed to be more of an emphasis on men being a part of driving change toward gender equality.
Barclays’ definition of male allyship is similar to the definition provided in Chapter 2 (Durbin, 2016) in that male allyship requires intentional action: “By taking positive action and leading by example, they can help transform environments from places of male privilege to a more equal playing field where all voices can be heard, irrespective of gender” (p. 7). The Male Allies program began from Barclays creating an online portal for employees to sign up and become a HeForShe partner. As part of signing up, they were asked to pledge to one or more of the following: “1.) Mentor a female colleague or be mentored by one; 2.) Develop and engage talent, 3.) Invest in the community; 4.) Become a part of Win, the gender network, 5.) Become a Dynamic Working Champion [a work-life balance initiative]” (Barclay’s, 2019, p. 8). Similar to NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD’s Advocates and Allies Project, Barclays sought a group of men early on in the program to be advocates for supporting the cause of gender equity in the company.

The Barclays report also supported articles examined in the literature review by acknowledging the importance of mentorship and sponsorship (Beninger, 2015; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Ibarra et. al., 2010; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; University of Cambridge, 2016). The report stated how seeing a man mentoring a woman or vice versa, lets others see cross-gender mentoring as the norm, specifically, “…male and female senior leaders should mentor female talent to help develop a leadership pipeline in your company. Leaders succeed when they have the chance to connect with others and learn” (p. 21). This approach further also supports Sawyer & Valerio’s (2018) leaders-teaching-leaders method to advancing women in the workplace. In the HeForShe Emerging Solutions Report 2018 Barclays recognized all employees from top level to entry level need to be committed to creating gender equality, further explaining how the initiative should take place over multiple years and
should always be evolving. The company stated, “We must recognize that this aim [of creating a male ally initiative] is not about women winning at the expense of men but ensuring all colleagues can achieve their potential” (2018, p. 26).

One former Barclays employee, Vinod Krishnadas (now an employee at Reuters), spoke on the significance of being a HeForShe partner at Barclays and how it impacted him to implement his knowledge and training on gender allyship in his future work. Krishnadas explained how participating in the HeForShe program at Barclays allowed him to identify and become aware of challenges women faced in the workplace that he was not aware of before (Legal Executive Institute, 2018). These challenges “included getting back into the workplace after maternity leave and misconceptions on what “pulling your weight” meant in the context of meeting a deadline — a problem that is exacerbated in the case of women who are unable to work late hours” (para. 4). This issue was also mentioned in Krugler’s study, Women in public relations: The influence of gender on women leaders in public relations (2017) where participants (who were mothers) felt as if they had to work harder while working from home with children. One participant mentioned “I worked more hours, because I didn’t want anyone to perceive that I wasn’t working as much or enough because it was important to me that I was still holding my own…” (p. 31).

As of 2019, 67% of mentors at Barclays were men, over 12,000 employees at Barclays pledged to be a HeForShe partner (57% of this group are men), and 14,000 employees attended unconscious bias training (Barclays, 2019). The Barclays program emphasized the importance of unconscious bias training, specifically in performance reviews. Barclays cited a 2018 Lean In and Survey Monkey “Mentor Her” survey results (Lean In, 2021) where data revealed 66% of women received negative feedback on performance reviews, whereas only 1% of men did. To
combat this, Barclays explains “championing achievements of female colleagues” is key when trying to empower colleagues and create a gender-inclusive work environment (p. 21). The unconscious bias training at Barclay was also meant to combat the “stigma” men face when signing up for gender-equity initiatives (p. 11) as also discussed in Chapter 2, Stephanie Melrose, a founding member of a Win chapter at Barclays stated, “We need to create an environment where women feel safe and encouraged to take risks” (p. 11). To monitor the Male Allies program when colleagues sign up through the HeForShe online portal, Barclays tracks everyone’s registrations to identify what employees are following through with the commitments of the program and what employees/areas of the company need a push or guidance in fulfilling the Male Allies program.

Cross-Case Analysis

While North Dakota State University and Barclays represent two different industries, both organizations’ programs exemplified successful methods of achieving and prioritizing gender equality and inclusion in the workplace. Four themes emerged from the two institutions: *Listen to Women*, “Leaders-Teaching-Leaders” (Sawyer & Valerio, 2018), *Not Just a Women’s Issue*, and *Overcoming Gender Biases Leads to Unbiased Training*. Table 2, presented below, provides examples of how each theme is represented in both programs.

**Table 2: NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD vs. Barclays’ Male Allies Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD Advocates and Allies Program</th>
<th>Barclays’ Male Allies Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to Women</strong></td>
<td>Barclays emphasized validating women’s opinions and experiences: “When you hear a woman at work being talked over, interrupted, or having her ideas co-opted by someone else, speak up to help pass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advocates and Allies university pretest report, only 32.9% of the male participants said they somewhat agreed with the statement, “I have spoken up when I notice a woman colleague being interrupted” (Bilen-Green, 2016, p. 3).

The Advocates and Allies project was led by men and women at each respective institution, and NDSU sought out Advocates to each other faculty members. (NDSU, 2017a).

Supporting Sawyer & Valerio’s “leaders-teaching-leaders approach, Barclays stated, “Leaders succeed when they have the chance to connect with others and learn” (Barclays, 2019, p. 21). Barclays also identified advocates to lead the Male Ally training workshops.

The main purpose of the Advocates and Allies project was to have men act as change agents to promote gender equity in the school, as women only made up 7% of the tenure positions in 2008 before the ADVANCE FORWARD program began (NDSU, 2020).

Barclays claims achieving gender equality in the workplace is “not a women’s issue, it is a human rights issue” (p. 4)

In the post-session surveys given to participants, the first question asked was, “I feel that my knowledge of unconscious gender bias and its impact on the campus climate has increased after today’s workshop.” Overall, 54.91% of participants agreed and 39.45% participants agreed with this statement for the university ally training sessions (Appendix D).

Barclays advocates for unconscious bias training as it helps break the stigma of men not having to play a role in gender equality initiatives. As of 2019, 14,000 Barclays employees attended unconscious bias training (Barclays, 2019).

Additionally, Barclays’ Male Allies program and NDSU’s Advocates and Allies program had similarities within the program frameworks. Both programs stemmed from larger gender initiatives with the parent organizations: Male Allies stemmed from Win and Advocates and Allies stemmed from ADVANCE FORWARD. The main differences between the two programs
are the sizes of the organizations and the geographical location. As of 2018, Barclays has 126, 287 employees globally (Barclays, 2018), while NDSU has 6,175 employees (NDSU, 2021). For location, the Advocates and Allies project focused on universities and professional organizations in the United States-only, whereas Barclays is a global company. Another major difference is uses of the term gender equity vs. gender equality. NDSU used gender equity while Barclays used gender equality. While Barlays Male Allies program provided initiatives centered on the fair treatment of men and women (a component of the definition of gender equity), the organization could have used gender equality because Barclays is largely global company and gender equality is more widely used (Sida, 2016).

Answer to Research Question

The purpose of this project was to identify what best practices help promote and create a culture of gender equity in the workplace where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men. The research in the literature review explored how mentorship and male allyship help promote women in the public relations industry and in the workplace. In the conclusion of the literature review, it was determined male allyship provided a more holistic and all-encompassing approach to advancing women in the workplace. While mentorship was incorporated in the Barclays’ program, the focus was on engaging male allies. Therefore, Chapter 4 discussed the findings of the two case studies used to seek the answer to the following research questions:

RQ 1: How does male allyship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?
RQ 2: How does mentorship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

The research question was answered through analyzing the results of the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD program and was supported by the Barclays initiative as well. Through Table 1 and Table 2, the research question was answered and showed mentorship and male allyship can help promote and create a culture of gender equity in the workplace where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men by 1.) listening carefully to women colleagues 2.) calling out instances of gender bias and discrimination immediately 3.) including women in all discussions/meetings 4.) having candid and open communication about each other’s experiences in the workplace and 5.) recognizing where gender bias exists in the workplace. Although these five examples lean more toward promoting a culture of gender inclusion, they set the foundation and pathways for women to advance in the respective fields. As mentioned previously in Chapter 4, at the beginning of the ADVANCE FORWARD program at NDSU in 2008, women only made up 7% of tenured faculty. As of 2019, women make up 22% of the tenured faculty (NDSU, 2020c). It was through the Transforming a Gender Institution grant and the Advocates and Allies project where advocates and allies from the training sessions advocated for more fair hiring policies at the institution. The study showed that the first step in advancing women in the workplace is to first create an environment where gender equality is a priority.

Summary

Chapter 4 explored male allyship programs and initiatives in the workplace as a precursor guide of what a similar program could look like in a public relations agency. The findings
revealed that many experiences women face in the corporate finance and education fields are similar to what women in the public relations field face. Chapter 5 “Conclusion” provides a layout of best practices and the development for a male allyship training program to be implemented at public relations agencies. In this chapter, the book, *Training and Development: Communicating for Success - 3rd Edition* (Beebe et al., 2019), was used as the primary text. The following chapter also provides opportunity for future research about male allyship and gender equality in the public relations workspace.
Chapter 5:

Conclusion

Women have been dominating the public relations industry since the 1980s. However, they still do not hold the majority of leadership positions (Aldoory & Toth, 2002; Dettman, 2019; Toth & Grunig, 1993; Toth, 1988). Research of women in the public relations industry has centered around feminization, referring to when the industry became a female-dominated field (Aldoory, 1998; Hon, 1995; Horsley, 2009; Pompper, 2012; Pompper & Jung, 2013; Topić, 2020). While this research provides insight into women’s experiences in the public relations industry, it did not provide specific, proactive action that could be taken to improve these women’s experiences and help them advance in the industry. Broader studies of women in the workplace were sought out, and it was discovered that men play an imperative role in helping women advance in the workplace since men typically hold C-suite- and leadership-level positions. Therefore, they have the power to create the change within the organization to prioritize gender equality (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; see also de Vries, 2015; Sherf et al., 2017). This led to two research questions:

**RQ 1:** How does male allyship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?

**RQ 2:** How does mentorship promote a culture of gender equity in the public relations industry where women have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men?
Summary of Study

Chapter 2 analyzed the efficacy of the two best practices by reviewing research grounded in keywords, including women in the workplace, feminization in public relations, and women in public relations. The chapter first explored how research shows that a more diverse leadership team and an overall gender-balanced workplace is healthy for a company’s growth because it increases the company’s GDP, increases employee retention and client relationships, and allows the company to be more adaptable to change (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Elligrud et al., 2016; Madsen et al., 2020; Place & Vardemann-Winter, 2018; Woetzel et al., 2015).

After examining why a more gender-diverse leadership is beneficial for the company, the literature reviewed NGO reports and academic articles involving mentorship and male allyship in relation to women in the workplace. It was found that although mentorship is linked to promotions in the workplace, it was unclear whether what type of mentorship was the most helpful: informal vs informal or having mixed-gender mentee/mentor relationships or same-gender mentee/mentor relationships (Durbin, 2016; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). It was also discovered that often, women do not have the same access to senior leadership as men do when seeking a mentorship (Carter & Silva, 2010, 2019; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Cheng et al., 2019; Dashper, 2018; Durbin, 2016, Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009; O’Neil, 2003; O’Neill & Blake-Beard, 2002). The literature review then explored how male allyship is a more holistic and all-encompassing approach to advancing women in the workplace because it is intentional action to promote gender equality across the organization through male allyship training programs (Madsen et al., 2020). After the literature review was conducted, it was determined that a cross-case analysis of two specific male allyship and mentoring programs was to be conducted.
In Chapter 3, the methodology of choosing the programs was discussed. A case study approach guided by a cross-case analysis was chosen for the methodology due to its capacity to analyze themes across case studies, as well as to identify what the best practices are for male allyship programs from practical experience in the workplace. The two programs, the ADVANCE FORWARD program at North Dakota State University (NDSU) and the Male Allies program at Barclays, were chosen because they showed long-term growth and success for advancing women in the workplace at the respective institutions, and the findings were supported from literature from Chapter 2 of the experiences of women in the public relations industry.

Summary of Key Findings

In both programs analyzed in Chapter 4, significant goals were achieved. In the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD Transforming a Gendered Institution grant, 80% of faculty members (76% of male faculty and 90% of female faculty) attended an ADVANCE FORWARD event (NDSU, 2020). At the beginning of the ADVANCE FORWARD program at NDSU in 2008, women only made up 7% of tenured faculty. As of 2019, women make up 22% of the tenured faculty (NDSU FORWARD, 2020). While the Transforming a Gendered Institution grant program was completed in 2016, the Advocates and Allies Project is projected to last until 2021, although presumably due to COVID-19, the last listed Advocates and Allies session was scheduled for April 7, 2020 (NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD, 2020).

For the Barclays Male Allies program, as of 2019, 67% of mentors at Barclays were men, over 12,000 employees at Barclays pledged to be a HeForShe partner (57% of this group are men), and 14,000 employees attended unconscious bias training (Barclays, 2019). The Male Allies program at Barclays has become an integral part of the company’s culture and is still ongoing. Within the analyses of the programs at NDSU and Barclays, four themes were
identified that were supposed by research in Ch 2. The themes were *Listen to Women*, ‘Leaders-Teaching-Leaders’, *Not Just a Women’s Issue*, and *Overcoming Gender Biases Leads to Unbiased Training*. A description of each can be found below.

**Listen to Women**

This theme was the most recurring theme among the two male allyship programs and the literature in Chapter 2. Listening to women in the workplace makes them feel validated and supported (Barclays, 2019; Cheng et al., 2019; Madsen et al., 2018). Once mutual respect of listening to one another, the organization can move forward with the male ally initiatives. Shown through Chapter 2 (Brescoll, 2017; Cheng et al., 2017; Center for Women in Business, 2017; Legal Executive Institute, 2020) and in the Advocates and Allies survey, listening to women was a prominent theme because women can often find themselves being interrupted in meetings by men or not getting as much speaking time as men. Also, in the results from the pretest given to the participants of the university training sessions in the Advocates and Allies Project, the majority of men did not say they have spoken up for a woman when she was being interrupted, the highest percentage from the question was 32.9% where the participants only somewhat agreed they have spoken up for a woman who was interrupted (Bilen-Green, 2016a).

**“Leaders-Teaching-Leaders”**

The “leaders-teaching-leaders” coined by Sawyer and Valerio (2018) is when high-level females at the company or organization are in discussions and meetings with male ally leaders when planning gender-equity initiatives. In the *Women in the Workplace 2019* report, women reported they were two times more likely to stay at the company “...when senior leaders are held accountable for performance on gender diversity” (Lean In and McKinsey & Company, 2019, p. 42). When male and female leaders work together, the values of teamwork and inclusion trickle
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down throughout the entire organization (Chang & Milkman, 2020, de Vries, 2015; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). This was echoed in the Barclays report as it stated, “…male and female senior leaders should mentor female talent to help develop a leadership pipeline in your company. Leaders succeed when they have the chance to connect with others and learn” (p. 21). When leaders at a company make gender equality and inclusivity a priority at the senior-level, it reflects across the entire company leaders (Chang & Milkman, 2020, de Vries, 2015).

Not Just a Women’s Issue

In the Barclays’ report, the company states championing gender equality is “not a women’s issue, it’s a human rights issue” (2019, p. 4). However, as discussed in Chapter 2, it can sometimes be difficult to get men involved in gender equity initiatives because they do not see it as their issue, only a women’s issue. This is because, in the past, gender-equity initiatives have been masked as training and development programs that many times focus solely on women and what they can do to create change on their own (Dashper, 2018; de Vries, 2015; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Madsen et al., 2020; Sherf et al., 2017). Whereas male ally initiatives incorporate both men and women and are focused on how to better support women in their work experiences and to make them feel like their voice is heard (Center for Women in Business, 2017; de Vries, 2015; Madsen et al., 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2019; Sherf et al, 2017).

Overcoming Gender Biases → Unbiased Training

The beginning of Chapter 2 examined gender biases and stereotypes women face in the workplace, specifically focusing on the public relations industry. In the second wave of feminism (the late 1960s - late 1980s) many women found themselves symbolically annihilated, referring to how the media portrayed women as being forced to uphold an idealistic image that prohibited them from striving in their careers and instead painted them in a more traditional gender role [ a
housewife] (Tuchman, 2000). Today, gender stereotypes women still face in the public relations industry are seen as being too bossy or assertive, whereas when a man is assertive it is seen as a positive leadership quality (Dashper, 2018; Heilman, 2012; Krugler, 2017). Another gender stereotype women face that was discussed by a former Barclays employee was being a mother and a full-time employee, which relates to symbolic annihilation, that if they are a mother they cannot put 100% to their job. The Barclays’ mentioned how he was not aware of this challenge until he became a HeForShe partner at Barclays (Legal Institute, 2018).

In Prime and Moss-Racusin’s study, Engaging men in gender initiatives: What change agents need to know, it was reported the more awareness men have of gender bias and stereotypes, the more likely men were to believe that “it was important to achieve gender equality” (2009, p. 5). From the programs analyzed in Chapter 4, one of the main goals of both programs was to show participants instances where unconscious gender bias can create inequalities for female colleagues. Therefore, Barclays included unconscious bias training that focused on combating the stigma men face when signing up for gender equity initiatives and for the gender biases women face in the workplace. NDSU ADVANCE also asked participants in the Advocates and Allies program to challenge their unconscious bias by asking Likert scale questions in the pretest surveys, such as “Women experience gender discrimination when applying for academic jobs” (Bilen-Green, 2016, p. 7). After including presentations and group discussions during the university ally training sessions, an average of 54.91% of participants agreed and 39.45% participants strongly agreed their “knowledge of unconscious gender bias and its impact on the campus climate has increased after today's workshop” (Appendix D). A full report titled University Ally Training Survey Result Averages can be found in Appendix D.
Strengths and Limitations of Study

Strengths of the study included the discovery of gaps of research in the literature review and lack of diversity and variation of detail between the two programs analyzed in Chapter 4. While it was discovered male allyship and mentorship were the two best practices, most of the research on the topics came from outside the public relations industry. It instead came from NGO consulting groups, the education industry, and the corporate finance industry, while the word “public relations” mostly came from academic journals. However, the hypotheses of how male allyship and mentorship could be implemented to achieve gender equity in the public relations workplace were supported with evidence from the literature in Chapter 2 and the programs analyzed in Chapter 4. The evidence included women often face the same obstacles in the workplace across industries (public relations, education, and corporate finance), such as being talked over in meetings, unequal access to senior leadership, and facing symbolic annihilation.

Another strength within the study was the creation of a best practices guide and a training plan for promoting gender inclusivity and equity in public relations. These documents are unique because they are new contributions specific to the public relations industry.

Regarding limitations within the cross-case analysis, Barclays is a larger organization than NDSU, its program outline was broader than the programs at NDSU. Therefore, it did not provide as specific details of what occurred during each training session or at each conference as the programs at NDSU did. However, Barclays noted the company is aware change happens in time and attitudes will not change immediately (2019). The purpose of the inclusion of the Barclays program was to highlight contrast and similarities between the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD program and to showcase that male allyship training programs can be implemented at any sized institution and at a global level.
Another limitation that arose when examining the case studies was the lack of diversity of participants in the ADVANCE FORWARD program. In a survey evaluation from an ally training at a university, a participant questioned the incorporation of diversity in ADVANCE FORWARD. The principal investigators and steering committee at each university (NDSU, OSU, UW, and UNT) are all white. This finding relates to the theme in the university survey results when participants mentioned that implicit bias is everywhere and that racial bias needs to be given the same priority as gender bias. In the Overall Advocate and Ally Pretest Report for NDSU’s university partners, 72.2% of participants were white, exemplifying a large majority (57 participants), and only 2.5% of participants were Black. In the future, there should be Advocate and Ally training sessions at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as results from pretests, training sessions, and survey results could incorporate a multi-perspective and holistic view of what it means to be an ally.

**Direction for Future Research**

As mentioned in the limitations of the cross-case findings, there was a lack of diversity in program coordinators and session participants in the ADVANCE FORWARD Advocate and Allies training sessions, which included faculty and administrators across four different universities. The purpose of this study was to specifically discuss the advancement of all women in public relations, regardless of race. However, future research should include the different experiences of women based on sexual orientation, race, and/or age. The inclusiveness of these studies would help propel the public relations industry to create progressive change. The research does not have to be found solely in academic research, but in blogs, webinars hosted by public relations organizations, and at public relations conferences.
Further, although the feminist public relations scholars, Elizabeth Toth, Linda Aldoory, Carolyn Garret Cline, Larissa A. Grunig, and Linda Childers Hon, were the early scholars to begin writing about women in public relations, there is no direct correlation their research has led to the advancement of women in public relations. In the future, public relations agencies should take a blended approach to feminist public relations research and advice from other industries. This approach can position the public relations industry to be a leader in gender equity in that where women represent the majority of the industry, can also hold the majority of the leadership positions as well.

**Presentation of Artifacts**

**Best Practices Guide**

The best practices guide is divided into three sequential steps based on key findings in the study. The first step is to recognize gender biases and discrimination in the workplace, the second step is to listen to people’s experiences within the workplace, and the third step is to act on the gender biases and discrimination found in the workplace. The title of the best practice guide is Best Practices for Promoting a Culture of Gender Inclusivity in Public Relations Agencies. The guide consists of three key components: Recognize, Listen, and Act. The full guide can be found in Appendix A.

**Recognize**

Recognizing that unconscious and implicit bias exists in everyone is the first step in creating a gender equity initiative in the workplace (Center for Women in Business, 2017; Chang & Milkman, 2020; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009, see also, Heilman, 2012; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). Implicit biases to think about, included in Table 1 in Chapter 4, is gendered language used in meetings, letters of recommendations, and performance reviews. Recognizing that
unconscious biases exist can be difficult, but group discussions and self-reflections in male allyship initiatives, as seen in the NDSU and Barclays programs in Chapter 4 can help mitigate the obstacles.

**Listen**

This next step comes directly from the themes in Table 1 and Table 2 of the importance of listening to women and valuing all voices located in Chapter 4. Listening includes prioritizing open and candid communication and encouraging informal mentoring. An example of this could include an entry-level male employee being mentored by a senior-level female or an entry-level female employee being mentored by a senior-level male employee. This was seen in the Barclays’ Male Allies program (2019). Prime & Moss-Racusin’s study shows that cross-gender mentoring can help challenge both the mentor and the mentee’s own gender biases (2009).

**Act**

The last step in the best practices guides is to act. This step stems from Table 1 where employees at the NDSU university ally training sessions were encouraged to act in the moment when they see gender discrimination occur, such as when a woman is talked over, interrupted, or ignored at a meeting. This can include calling out the colleague who was interrupting the woman or when a discriminatory comment is made, a technique taught in the ASEE Advocate and Ally training sessions was to ask the person “Can you say that again?” in an attempt to make them recognize that the comment was discriminatory or aggressive toward a woman.

**Presentation of Training Plan**

The study’s findings combined with the best practices guide contributed to the creation of the training plan. The *Training and Development Communicating for Success - 2nd edition*
(Beebee et al., 2019), discussed in Chapter 3, laid the framework for the training plan. As discussed in Chapter 3 under the *Training and Development Handbook* heading, a discussion-style training session was implemented using the outline format, and the ideal employees spearheading the session would be a senior-level woman and man at the company. An outline format was chosen for the training session instruction because it is adaptable to the trainer/trainee needs and information can be more easily found (Beebe et al., 2019). The training plan is titled Initiating Male Allyship in the Public Relations Industry in an Agency Setting and the full training plan can be found in Appendix B. The training plan consists of four sections: a lecture, a self-reflection, a group activity, and discussion.

**Lecture [7 - 10 minutes]**

The lecture introduces the session. In this time, the trainers should outline what the session looks like and explain the purpose/objectives of the session. This portion of the session also includes a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation providing statistics of women in public relations and providing a small background of the effectiveness of male allyship. The training plan guide includes suggested sources to use to help build the PowerPoint. The lecture should also express that the conversations of the session are confidential and not to be shared or talked about in the office.

**Self-Reflection [10 minutes]**

A 10-minute portion is dedicated to recognizing one’s own unconscious biases. Participants are asked to write down the first five words that come to mind when they hear the words “gender biases.” Then, ask them to write down the first five words that come to mind when they hear the words “feminization in public relations.” Before the session begins, the trainers should tell the participants that gender biases and unconscious biases exist in everyone.
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This is in order to avoid shaming men or making them feel that it is not their place to be at the session, which they can sometimes feel when participating in male allyship training sessions (Armstrong & Ghaboos, 2019; Graves, 2014; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009).

**Group Activity (Discussion-Based) [30 minutes]**

The group activity is split into two sessions, each 15 minutes each. In the first session, the group will be separated between men and women. The second session will be mixed gender. The idea of two sessions was inspired by the ASEE Advocate and Ally training sessions in the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD program. According to the program description, this was because each session would bring different but invaluable insights and perspectives regarding male allyship (Bilen-Green, 2016m-n, 2017e-h). During both sessions, participants will be asked to share their answers from the self-reflection activity. Both sessions will also be given a set of five example questions to help guide the conversation, but the two sessions will consist of slightly different questions. The list of questions includes:

1. Has anyone ever been talked over or ignored in a client or brainstorming meeting?
2. Have you ever stood up for a woman when they were interrupted or talked over in a meeting? (Men only)
3. What is one change you would like to see in the public relations industry in relation to gender?
4. Has there been a time when faced gender discrimination in the workplace?
5. What can male colleagues do to support their female colleagues to advance in the workplace? (Women only)

**Discussion [10 minutes]**
The last portion of the session should include an open discussion between the trainers and the participants. The trainers also should let employees know that a feedback form will be sent to them after the session via email, and that the form is anonymous.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine what best practices help promote and create a culture of gender equity in the workplace where women where have equal resources and opportunities to advance in their careers as men. To reach this answer, the study also explored topics on women in the workplace, specifically, women in public relations and the feminization of the industry, and gender inequality in the workplace. The best practices discovered were male allyship and mentorship as they are two methods that make promoting gender equality the entire organization’s issue, not just a women’s issue. Male allyship and mentoring were found successful because they break the stigma of men not having to be involved in gender initiatives by showing that the best results for the company happen when men and women work together with open communication and respect for one another.

The fight for gender equality in the public relations industry began in the 1980s and has continued ever since. Women dominate the public relations industry, but they still do not hold the majority of leadership positions (Dettman, 2019). Therefore, the public relations industry has the opportunity to implement male allyship and mentorship to shift the goal toward reaching gender equality from being a continuing trend, toward being proactive change within the industry.
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Appendix A: Best Practices Guide

Best Practices For Promoting a Culture of Gender Inclusivity in Public Relations Agencies

**Recognize**
Ask employees to reflect upon their own unconscious biases.

- Do employees speak to and respect all colleagues equally?
- Are there times when women colleagues are not included in a meeting for no specific reason?
- This can include gendered-language in writing pitches, emailing clients, in interviews, and writing performance reviews.
- Prioritize having open brainstorming meetings in the office or an open-door policy when it comes to the leadership team.

**Listen**
Prioritize open communication and candid conversations in the workplace.

- Prioritize open communication and let employees know that all voices matter.
- Has there been an instance when a male colleague has interrupted or disregarded a female colleague’s opinion or input in a meeting?
- Encourage informal mentoring at the office where junior employees have the opportunity to speak to senior employees on a professional and personal level.
- “Well I think we could best serve the client with a mixed-media approach for the campaign,” - “Lisa. Okay, moving on to to the next topic on this meeting’s agenda.” - “John.”

**Act**
Encourage employees to stand up against gender discrimination and biases.

- Speak out against gender discrimination in the moment. Do not wait until after the incident to acknowledge the act.
- Engage in conversations about each other’s experiences in the workplace.
- “Lisa was speaking first,” “Mike to “John. “Lisa, go ahead with your ideas for the client.”
- Attend a male allyship training session.
Appendix B: Training Plan

Initiating Male Allyship in the Public Relations Industry in an Agency Setting

Objective: At the end of this training session, trainees should be able to recognize and become more aware of unconscious biases that exist in the company and explain what a male ally is.

Lecture [7 – 10 minutes]

I. Introduce the purpose of the session, the objectives, and materials given.
   A. Prioritize that the conversations held in this session are highly confidential.

II. Provide a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation including statistics of women’s experiences in public relations and the effectiveness of male ally initiatives, emphasizing that everyone has unconscious biases toward gender.
   A. Suggested resources to cite:
      1. Mind the Gap: Women’s Leadership in Public Relations
      2. Women in the Workplace 2019
      3. Men as allies: Engaging men to advance women in the workplace
      4. The Relevance Report 2019

III. Ask participants if they have any questions so far.

Self-Reflection [10 minutes]

I. Ask participants to self-reflect on their own unconscious biases.
   A. Tell them to write the first five words that come to mind when they think of the words “gender biases” with the provided pen and paper.
   B. Pause, and ask if anyone wants to share their answers.
   C. Tell them to write the first five words that come to mind when thinking of the “words feminization in public relations” with the provided pen and paper.
   D. Pause, and ask them to share their answers.

Break Out Group Activity: Men-only (M)/Women-Only (W) [10-15 minutes]

I. Break out participants into groups of 3-7 depending on the size of the company.
   A. Space out the groups in a room so the conversations are private.
   B. Ask participants in the group to explain their answers from the self-reflection in the group and discuss.
   C. Give them a set of example questions to discuss:
      1. Has anyone ever been talked over or ignored in a client or brainstorming meeting?
      2. Have you ever stood up for a woman when they were interrupted or talked over in a meeting? (M)
      3. What is one change you would like to see in the public relations industry in relation to gender?
      4. Has there been a time when faced gender discrimination in the workplace?
5. What can male colleagues do to support their female colleagues to advance in the workplace? (W)

Break Out Group Activity: Mixed-Gender [10-15 minutes]
I. Break out participants into groups of 3-7 depending on the size of the company.
   A. Repeat steps A and B from the previous group activity.
   B. Give them a set of example questions to discuss:
      1. Has anyone ever been talked over or ignored in a client or brainstorming meeting?
      2. What is one change you would like to see in the public relations industry in relation to gender?
      3. Has there been a time when faced gender discrimination in the workplace?

Discussion [10 minutes]
I. Ask participants to share their thoughts on the session and what they learned.
   A. Notify participants that a feedback form will be given to them after the session.
   B. Explain that the feedback form will be anonymous.
   C. State the questions that will be asked.
      1. Did you learn anything new from this session?
      2. What could the session improve on?
      3. Have you attended a session on male allyship before at a conference or at a previous company? If yes, was the conference or company in public relations?
Appendix C: ASEE Ally Training Survey Result Averages (Quantitative Data Section)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Male-Only</th>
<th>Mixed-Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #1: I feel that my knowledge of unconscious gender bias and its impact on the campus climate has increased after today's workshop.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10.70%</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>69.50%</td>
<td>30.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>49.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question #2: I will be able to use the information I learned today in my work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>42.36%</td>
<td>45.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>57.63%</td>
<td>54.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3: I will be able to implement new strategies to promote a more equitable climate for women faculty at my institution as a result of my participation in this workshop.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44.30%</td>
<td>52.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>16.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4: The training was clear and well-organized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>57.13%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 5:** I would recommend this training to others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>25.23%</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>11.30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>74.43%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Strongly Disagree | 3.40% | Strongly Disagree | 3.40% |
| Agree             | 29.10%| Agree             | 19.20%|
| Strongly Agree    | 67.60%| Strongly Agree    | 77.40%|
| N/A               |       | N/A               | 6.90% |

**Question 6:** I am personally committed to addressing issues of gender bias and discrimination experienced by women faculty at my institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average (%)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>67.60%</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>77.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>29.10%</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7:** How would you rate the overall quality of this training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Average (%)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>65.10%</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>65.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>45.20%</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>13.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>39.50%</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>65.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>12.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D: University Ally Training Survey Result Averages (Quantitative Data Section)

**Question #1:** I feel that my knowledge of unconscious gender bias and its impact on the campus climate has increased after today's workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question #2:** I will be able to use the information I learned today in my work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question #3:** I will be able to implement new strategies to promote a more equitable climate for women faculty at my institution as a result of my participation in this workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 4:** The training was clear and well-organized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 5:** I would recommend this training to others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Missing Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.90%</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.88%</td>
<td>52.06%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 6:** I am personally committed to addressing issues of gender bias and discrimination experienced by women faculty at my institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average (%)</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.70%</td>
<td></td>
<td>78.95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7:** How would you rate the overall quality of this training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>26.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>54.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>21.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
<td>9.93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>