

WOMEN IN THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS SECTOR

What are the experiences of women navigating career paths in the Australian Museum Sector?

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1. Introduction

Existing industry reports within Australia and the United States of America have demonstrated that there is a gender imbalance within the museum sector at the senior levels (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019; Gan *et al.*, 2015). In addition, the level of pay for the museum sector is significantly below the median pay for people who hold bachelor's degrees, with museum workers being paid \$48,000 per year compared to \$60,996 in other industries (Baldwin, 2019).¹ A likely consequence for the continued low wage in the industry is that the museum sector has become a pink-collar profession (Baldwin, 2019). While being a pink-collar profession, the glass ceiling for women is still well and truly intact in the museum sector, especially amongst larger galleries and museums (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019; Gan *et al.*, 2015). In response to the lack of women in senior positions across industries, scholars have highlighted the various ways in which women continue to be excluded from the top roles. These include women having poor access to mentors, limited training, and development opportunities, gendered and cultural stereotypes around women's roles in the workplace, strong "old boys" networks and masculine leadership structures and models of working (Benschop, 2009; Billing, 2011; Friedman, 2015; Heilman, 2001; Miller, 2016; Weyer, 2007; Wood & Newton, 2006).

Positively, there has been a significant stream of research on women in leadership and their pathway to achieve leadership positions in the corporate sector to try and buck this trend (Benschop, 2009; Billing, 2011; Friedman, 2015; Heilman, 2001; Weyer, 2007; Wood & Newton, 2006). However, despite this research and an increase in international and organisational awareness around gender inequality (Dashper, 2018), women still hold under a quarter of all senior management positions, and a quarter of all companies do not have a woman in a senior role (Catalyst, 2019). This under representation of women in leadership is also evident within the museum sector, especially within the state galleries. One third of board members are female and just 12.5% of women are represented at the Director/CEO level of (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019).

To examine the reasons for the current underrepresentation of women in senior roles in the museum sector, this paper uses a qualitative research design, conducting interviews with eight women who hold senior positions at museums² across Australia to investigate two research

¹ Figures are in USD as the data comes from the United States of America.

² The term museum is defined by the International Council of Museums as a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches,

questions. The first question is what are the experiences of women in leadership in the museum sector? This will look at the existing gender biases that have played out in the women's careers, and the ingrained patriarchal ideals within the museum sector that the women have come up against. The second question is how can women be developed into leadership roles in the museum sector? This will be analysed utilising Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory. All the women interviewed either manage a museum, a department, or sit on a museum board. Success for this paper has been defined as a person having reached a senior managerial position and has direct reports. The roles that these women hold are predominantly held by men in the museum sector.

I present four key findings in this paper. First, that engrained gender biases and masculine models for working continue to be a challenge for women on their career pathways. Second, it is a challenge for women to find mentors due to the limited number of women in senior positions, and that opposite gender mentoring is uncommon. Third, women struggle to move into leadership positions because budget constraints within museums reduce opportunities for necessary training and development. Fourth, the working culture, policies and procedures are established according to ideal masculine models that reward continuous careers and assume one is free to dedicate themselves entirely to work above all else.

2. Literature Review

This report builds on the recent history of writing on women in leadership positions and takes a specific focus on the museum sector. The theory that will underpin the analysis is Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory. Bussey and Bandura (1999) put forward four components that are essential to a person's development: social modelling, mastery experiences, social persuasion, and physical and emotional state. These four components build up one's self-efficacy and therefore determine the level of success or failure they will experience within their career. Efficacy beliefs impact cognitive, motivational, affective processes and one's choice of activities and environments (Bandura, 1997). The objective of this literature review is to first review the literature on women in leadership, before examining the first three components of Bussey and Bandura's (1999) work on social cognitive theory to understand the existing literature on women's career pathways. The fourth component 'physical and emotional state' is not considered within the scope of this report.

2.1 Women in leadership

Gender discrimination is often so entrenched and subtle that people may not even recognise the inequality in their workplace (Kelan, 2009). This subtle and entrenched gender discrimination contributes to keeping women out of leadership positions. Within society there is a persistent idea that the term 'leader' is synonymous with the word 'man'. This idea comes from earlier research on leadership that focused inherent traits and the concept that people were born to either be leaders or not (Brown, 2013; Popper, 2004). Modern research on leadership is incredibly diverse and encompasses a wide range of leadership theories that state they are gender-neutral and are applicable to all genders, however, in closer examination, each of these well-constructed theories is subject to the follower gender biases (Liu, 2019; Liu et al., 2015). Specifically, implicitly, individuals have their own prototypical views of leaders which are often not congruent with women (Lord et al., 2020).

Museums face a unique challenge in that the museum institution has historically been the domain of the male academic (Porter, 1995). Museums tell the history of people through objects, artefacts literature and artwork. History is historically told through a White male, linear perspective, which is not inclusive of diverse groups of people (Rosen, 1971). The version of history that we are exposed to is chosen by the dominant culture, and gender in society (Rosen, 1971). This is evident through the gender breakdown in art galleries where male artists have been prioritised for centuries (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019). At state art galleries and museums within Australia the representation of women is only 33.98% and women's representation at the National Gallery of Australia is only 25.48% (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019). Within Australia, a large portion of history is provided through the White colonist male perspective. In the United States, Kahn and Onion (2016) examined 614 works of popular history and discovered that 75.8% of the total titles were written by male authors. Biographies represented 21% of the total number of books published in the United States, and 71.7% were about men, leaving only 28.3% about women. While strides have been made over the last few decades to present alternative perspectives of history, the current narrative and perspective has persisted for centuries and is challenging to change (Marion Löffler, 2021). This culture of male stories and perspectives in museums penetrates the workplace at all levels. Men's voices are continuing to be elevated above women's voices (Hancock & Rubin, 2015; Zimmerman, 1975). It is common for women to be considered 'bossy', and to be 'contributing too much' in meetings by their managers, but in reality, they are not contributing more than their male colleagues, it is just that women are expected to take up less space and time, and when they command their share it is viewed as 'too much' (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

2.2 Social Modelling

The first element of Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory is social modelling. Social modelling relies on people sharing skills, knowledge, and strategies with another person for managing the environment around them (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Social modelling can be considered by the more common knowledge term – mentoring. It relies on a person with advanced experience who is a 'mentor' to support a 'mentee' (person) who is interested in gaining new skills, knowledge, and strategies (Fowler et al., 2007). The importance of social modelling has been highlighted through numerous studies (Anderson, 2005; Burke & McKeen, 1990; Levesque et al., 2005; Searby & Tripses, 2006; Thomas et al., 2015). There are three main benefits of a mentor and mentee relationship, for the people directly involved and for the organisation. First, mentoring directly impacts the mentee's career success (Ragins, 1989). Second, mentoring increases employees' motivation at work (Levesque et al., 2005). Third, mentoring can assist in created widespread organisational culture changes (Thomas et al., 2015).

While mentoring theoretically should not take gender into account, the reality is different. Male senior leaders are more likely to mentor junior men, than women, especially in the wake of the #metoo movement (Roepe, 2019). This has continued a vicious cycle of junior men receiving more mentorship than junior women as there are more men in leadership positions than women, meaning there are fewer senior women available to mentor junior women (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019; Dashper, 2018). Due to the gender imbalance research has shown that women in senior positions are required to take on a higher workload to support the junior women in their industry (Searby & Tripses, 2006). As of 2019 only 12.5% of museum directors are female in Australia (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019). If the museum sector is to achieve a greater gender balance of 50/50, then the junior women in the sector are going to need access to mentors, but with so few women in director positions, each woman will have to take on significantly more mentors than their male colleagues. This burden of developing other women adds to the workload of the female director ensuring she has more work to carry out than her male counterparts (Searby & Tripses, 2006). In addition to this higher mentorship burden, research demonstrates that women are still carrying out a larger percentage of the household management than men (Hass *et al.*, 2002), demonstrates that there is a need for men to make steps to mentor women to assist their female colleagues.

Opposite gender mentoring is not a common occurrence in organisations. Levesque et al., (2005) investigated the challenged associated with cross-sex mentoring relationships and

concluded that there are three main reasons for opposite gender mentorship occurred less. First, there is a potential for people looking in to come to the wrong conclusions about the nature of the relationship. Second, the genders differ in their preferred mentoring behaviours which could create problems for the mentor relationship (Levesque et al., 2005). Third, opposite-gender mentoring might face cultural barriers where there is a higher power distance between senior members, and between males and females (Levesque et al., 2005). Levesque et al., (2005) concluded that further research needs to be conducted to develop strategies to overcome these barriers between male and female mentorship difficulties.

2.3 Mastery Experience

The second element of Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory is mastery experiences. Mastery experiences are considered opportunities for a person to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy. Training and development courses are mastery experiences where a person can develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy. When a person develops a stronger sense of self-efficacy, they are more likely to achieve success in their endeavours. When a person does not have a positive mastery experience, they are more likely to experience a reduced sense of self-efficacy and ultimately come across more failures (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Research has demonstrated that training and development programs are essential for leaders to be successful and confident in their careers (Day, 2001; Reichard & Avolio, 2005; Vogel et al., 2021). Liu et al., (2021) reported that education and development was cited as one of the greatest contributors to successful leadership development. Despite its importance, research has demonstrated that men were typically provided training and development opportunities more often than women (Saleem et al., 2017). Chuang (2019) stipulates that to reduce gender imbalance in an organisation, they can look to implement customised gender-specific training programs. These programs do not aim to disadvantage men, but rather they provide an opportunity for women to reach their full potential (Chuang, 2019).

Within the museum sector training and development opportunities are limited due to the limited budgets of museums. The museum sector is chronically underfunded which means that providing interesting and useful training and development opportunities is difficult (Fuller & Hastings, 1993; Holmes & Hatton, 2008). This adds to the challenge women face in breaking the glass ceiling in the sector. Without training women are less likely to have mastery experiences that are essential for developing one's belief in their self-efficacy. Without high

self-efficacy the women are less likely to experience successes (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). These success in this context are promotion opportunities. Therefore, continuing the long-standing tradition of men at the top of the museum sector.

2.4 Social Persuasion

The third element of Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory is social persuasion. Social persuasion is achieved through the organisation structuring activities in a fashion that leads to success and reduces the likelihood of failures. This can be achieved through policies, procedures, and organisational culture.

Organisations are still structured in a way that rewards continuous career paths. Taking a career break for any reason negatively impacts on a person's career (Corekcioglu et al., 2020; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011). Women are more likely to take a career break since they can fall pregnant, and if they choose to have children, they will likely wish to take some time off to care for their newborn. In addition, parental leave policies in Australia favour the birthing parent when it comes to taking leave to care for the child. Sweden and Norway, who were among the first nations to implement maternity leave, still find that a woman taking up maternity leave will notice a negative effect on her career progression (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011). While there are policies and procedures in place to support women who choose to have a family, organisations are still structured in a way that is designed to disadvantage career breaks.

Organisations continue to assume that a person can dedicate themselves entirely to their job, and that it takes precedence in their life. This has resulted in many jobs requiring longer working weeks than the standard forty hours (Ruderman et al., 2017). This norm within organisations adds further strain to women's already full schedules, with women taking on most of the household responsibilities even though they are participating in the paid labour force (Negraia et al., 2018). The commonly held perception within the workforce is that if people are not able to contribute above and beyond the standard requirements and dispense with career breaks and flexible working arrangements that they will face a career penalty (Corekcioglu et al., 2020; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; Schwartz, 1996). Company representatives and researchers agree that the elements that form company culture must evolve to reduce the fears people have around using work-life-balance and family-friendly policies (Schwartz, 1996).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative case study approach was used to answer the research question for two reasons. First, research on women in leadership roles in museums as explored in the literature review is nascent. Thus, a qualitative approach using open-ended questions is well suited to address the question (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). Second, using multiple case study design is useful as it allows analysis of the similarities and differences between the women's pathways to provide insights into how women have been able to break the glass ceiling in the museum sector (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

3.2 Data Collection

Semi-structure interviews were used as the data collection method. I interviewed eight women in leadership positions across five museums in Australia. The surveys were conducted via Zoom because of COVID-19 restrictions in person interviews were not possible. The women were asked eight questions designed to understand how they have navigated their careers in the museum sector. The questions can be found in Appendix 1.

3.3 Sample

The women who were interviewed for this report come from three small, two medium, and three large museums. To be included in the study, the participants had to be women, in a leadership position at their museum (e.g., director, senior curator), and have direct reports. They are deemed to have found success because they have reached the more senior positions in the hierarchy at their museum or have been appointed a senior board position in the case of the small and medium museums. In the large museums they have reached the top of their department.

A convenience sampling method was utilised for this study (Tharenou et al., 2007) as all the women were from my own professional network. All eight women were emailed and invited to participate in the study. The women have chosen to remain anonymous, and the names used within the report have all been changed to keep their identities secret, see Table 1.

Table 1. – False names attached to the position title and size of the museum

Name	Position Title	Size of the Museum
<i>Hermione</i>	Director	Small (> 50 employees)
<i>Ruth</i>	Senior Curator and Collections Manager	Small (> 50)
<i>Madeline</i>	Board Director	Small (> 50)
<i>Scarlett</i>	Head Curator	Medium (51 – 500)
<i>Eleanor</i>	Director	Medium (51 – 500)
<i>Greta</i>	Deputy Head	Large (501+)
<i>Alicia</i>	Senior Curator	Large (501+)
<i>Jessica</i>	Head of Department	Large (501+)

3.4 Data Analysis

The interviews will be analysed to understand what the experiences are of women in leadership in the museum sector and it will utilise Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory to understand women's career development.

4. Results

The results are presented in two sections: research question one and research question two. The results for research question two are broken down into three sections, social modelling, mastery experiences and social persuasion as per the components of Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory.

4.1 Research Question 1: What are the experiences of women in leadership in the museum sector?

The women shared their experiences as women in leadership positions in the museum sector. It was consistently reported across all the women that they were working in an environment that see the world from a male lens.

Greta and Jessica, who work at the same museum, both commented on the engrained sexist nature of museums. Stating "there was a cartoon-based course a few years ago, it was mainly

on bullying, the female characters were just appalling. They had humungous breasts, tiny waists and were cutesy, we all complained but they ran the course again” – Greta. Jessica also made a passing comment “there were some questionable cartoon courses at one stage”.

In addition to this course, Greta noted the engrained gendered nature of museums:

There are a few systemic issues around language... we should be able to not call ships ‘she’ in an exhibition, but I could not get that approved... there is a gender policy in AMaGA [Australian Museums and Galleries Association] stating that inanimate objects must not be called ‘she’ as they are inanimate objects.

Greta, Hermione, and Jessica all stated that they had attended training for how to better deal with men. Jessica came upon this type of training because:

My boss, a man, said ‘you need to more gravitas’ so I looked at some options, paid for it myself and I learned things like if you’re in a meeting and you’ve got the kind of guy that keeps interrupting and ‘mansplaining’, you know some tools and techniques to shut this down.

Hermione attended a leadership course at a Group of Eight University, and she:

Learned some really great skills about how to enhance leadership with other women, so that when you’re sitting around a table and instead of having men talk over them [the other women], you have strategies to deal with this, and make what they said be heard.

Many of the women shared their concerns for the gender imbalance at the senior levels of museums, particularly within large state museums and on the boards:

“Women are coming through, but they’re often in the middle and lower sort of ranks and can’t make it to the higher ranks”. - Madeline

“Women tend to dominate the industry, but they don’t get the top roles, they are held by men” “It is at a board level as well, there aren’t enough women on boards and not enough women in senior board roles”. - Scarlett

4.2 Research Question 2: How can women be developed into leadership roles in the museum sector?

4.2.1 Social Modelling

All the women highlighted the importance of social modelling through mentorship, with one woman highlighting:

“There have been some really strong women who’ve helped shape me and have pushed me and helped me become a better leader” – Hermione.

All except one woman had or currently has a mentor. Table 2 demonstrates the number of mentors each woman has had over her career, and the gender of these mentors. Most of the mentors were their current or previous managers.

Two themes emerged from the analysis. First, that women were engaging in most of the mentorship work of other women, with the sample having 15 female mentors compared to 4 male mentors. Second, while all are still connected to their female mentors, the male mentorship ended once they left that position. “The [male] CEO of [redacted museum name] encouraged me to start a PhD and was a mentor figure to me, but we didn’t keep in touch once I left my job there” – Eleanor.

Madeline shared her experiences with men and their willingness to engage in positive social modelling behaviours in the museum sector:

Interestingly, when I sought help from males in the sector, they were pretty much a closed shop. Men are not as generous as women when it comes to information sharing. I don’t know if it is just the men that I knew, but they wouldn’t share information. It was their intellectual property... if you asked women, it would be completely the opposite.

Jessica, Ruth, and Greta mentioned that seeing women in leadership positions helped them to feel that there were opportunities for advancements in their careers. Seeing women in positions of power encouraged them to pursue promotions in their workplace, it gave them the confidence, as indicated in the following quote: “looking at the two female mentors and their careers it really made me want to pursue management... I am going as far as I can go with this” – Jessica.

Table 2. – Number of past and present mentors by gender

Name	Female mentors	Male mentors
<i>Hermione</i>	2	1
<i>Ruth</i>	2	0
<i>Madeline</i>	2	1
<i>Scarlett</i>	3	0
<i>Eleanor</i>	2	1
<i>Greta</i>	2	0
<i>Alicia</i>	0	0
<i>Jessica</i>	2	1

4.2.2 Mastery Experiences

The results around mastery experience were widely varied. One common thread from all women except Hermione was that most of the training and development they had received was self-sourced, and often self-funded. The women stated that they were supported to do training, through being given time to complete the training or further education (PhD) but they had to seek it out themselves and then ask to be able to attend. Some quotes demonstrating the support offered: “I would have been supported to do a PhD if I had wanted to” – Alicia. “I was told I could have one day of study per fortnight” – Jessica. “Many opportunities have been more self-initiated; you have to find opportunities for yourself in this industry” – Scarlett.

All the women noted that the museum sector is underfunded which results in limited training and development opportunities. Ruth, Scarlett, and Eleanor all received high levels of training when working at larger public institutions overseas or in Victoria, Australia. This is evident in this quote “one organisation I worked at in the UK had a hefty training budget for staff” – Ruth.

Alicia and Greta work at two different museums and both stated that the current leadership above them is poor and there needs to be better leadership training across the board. Greta stated, “the quality of leadership is a big problem in our organisation and possibly in the industry”. Greta believes that “there needs to be more emphasis here on training”.

Greta, Scarlet, Jessica and Eleanor mentioned that the senior members of the staff get to enjoy the mastery experiences. Greta stated:

The organisation is very hierarchical, senior staff are being sent overseas to expensive training courses and conferences, and the lower-level staff are losing opportunities that were once had for that type of critical training.

4.2.3 Social Persuasion

The social persuasion results will be separated into two sections. Policies and procedures and organisational culture.

Policies and Procedures

Overall, there were mixed reactions to the policies and procedures in place within the museum sector, especially around parental leave.

Even the four women who did not have children commented on parental leave without prompting, one example is from Hermione:

I think I've been very lucky in my generation, that the kind of more formal, federal government and state government policies and procedures about equal opportunity and maternity leave and all those things have existed and have been policies that have been followed through on, so I feel very fortunate.

Organisational Culture – norms and rituals

The norms form part of the organisational cultures within museums were less satisfactory to the women. None of the women could identify any rituals within their museums.

Seven of the participants shared similar sentiments around the norms of the museum sector. One major point across seven of the participants was that the job was impossible to complete in a 9 to 5 setting.

Scarlett - “another challenge for women is the demands of curatorial work, because it is a vocation it isn't something you just drop at 5:30, you will go home, it takes over your whole life”.

This is in stark contrast to Ruth who was an outlier in the interview: “the sector is flexible, we don't have crazy hours”.

The women also noted that there was a norm within the industry of needing to attend exhibition openings and networking events to develop inter-museum relationships. Alicia's take on these norms:

We have so many evening events like exhibition opening, talks, lectures, all that kind of stuff. There was a sense of feeling like you can't ask the person with kids to help out, and then they feel like they aren't pulling their weight, and then some

others without kids felt like they always had to do the night events which was also unfair.

Scarlett's reflections on the norms of having to work beyond 40 hours per week:

The fact that you have to go to floor talks and on the weekend or attend events and you need to be at an opening too, you need to be at commercial galleries, and you need to be at other institutions' events, you need to be out there networking and so forth. It does limit your career progression if you can't do all those things.

5. Discussion

The questions asked in the interviews were designed to develop an understanding of the experiences of women navigating career paths in the Australian museum sector. This section provides a discussion surrounding the two research questions before an overview of recommendations for organisations arising from this research.

5.1 Question 1: What are the experiences of women in leadership in the museum sector?

There is a persistent acceptance of gender stereotypes within the museum sector as these spaces have historically been the domain of the male academic (Brown, 2013; Heilman, 2001; Popper, 2004; Porter, 1995; Rosen, 1971). The results found that sexism was still embedded in training programs. The language used in exhibitions is still gendered, even though policies exist stating that inanimate objects should not be given a gender. These continuous sexist and masculine thought processes leave the women in leadership positions with negative feelings about their role and the level of respect given to them in their museums.

Gender discrimination is often so entrenched and subtle that people may not even recognise the inequality in their place of work (Kelan, 2009). The results showed that women felt there was a persistent belief within their museum that men are leaders. Often it does not cross men's minds that the woman in the room could be the director of the museum. One of the women was told she needed more 'gravitas' by her male manager. The woman sought out and paid for training to achieve more 'gravitas' as she was concerned that if she did not develop 'gravitas' she would not be considered suitable for leadership positions. This is a type of training that she believes she would not have had to attend had she been a man. Women are having to attend training and development to emulate the male preference for what it means

to be a leader. The persistent attachment of leadership and male traits continues to limit women's ability to move up within their organisations.

5.2 Question 2: How can women be developed into leadership roles in the museum sector?

5.2.1 Social Modelling

The results showed that seven of the eight women interviewed, have been, and continue to be mentored by senior people in their industry. However, only three of the seven women had male mentors (as well as female mentors). The quotes from the interviewees indicated that opposite gender mentorships need to become more commonplace within the museum sector, even though there are barriers to opposite gender mentoring (Levesque et al., 2005). If men can take on the role of mentoring women more regularly, they will be able to have a direct impact in reducing the gender imbalance, while also ensuring that female leaders are not overburdened by mentorship demands. Within the interviews themselves, the women reported that the male-to-female mentorships ended at the time each of the women moved jobs, whereas the female relationships continued. In all three cases the women moved museums within the same state, therefore demonstrating that the relationship could have potentially continued due to geographical proximity. This is in comparison to the same gendered mentor relationships where all seven women reported that these relationships continue to this day, with some mentor relationships lasting over 30 years and some maintaining through a country relocation (UK to Australia). While opposite gender mentor relationships may not last as long as same gender mentorships seem, they are important as there are significantly more men in leadership positions (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019; Elliott, Leck, Orser & Mossop, 2011). Therefore, more male mentors are available from the senior leadership talent pool than the female talent pool to develop women into leadership positions in the sector.

Women leaders may become overwhelmed with the number of junior women seeking mentorship and the time commitment involved in mentoring (Hansman, 1998; Searby & Tripses, 2006). The interviews from seven of the women revealed that the museum sector was already time consuming and managing numerous mentor relationships could lead to being over committed. Given the high demands of these workplaces as outlined in the results, it would be a challenge for the senior women to mentor enough junior women to make a major shift in the current gender imbalance. Mentorship has been proven to create a successful shift in organisational culture and can help to reduce gender imbalance in organisations (Thomas

et al., 2015). In addition, women continue to take on a larger percentage of the home duties as well, further adding to the challenge of carving out time to mentor junior colleagues (Friedman, 2015; Schwartz, 1996). This furthers the evidence that men need to take up a greater role in mentoring junior women to reduce the challenge women face in finding suitable mentors. Through these mentor relationships women can develop into leaders within the museum sector.

In addition to mentoring, Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory of social modelling considers that seeing people like oneself succeeding plays an important role in a person's development. The results of the interview demonstrated that seeing women being successful in the sector inspired them to pursue management and have the confidence that they would be able to achieve a similar level of success. Bussey and Bandura's (1999) research demonstrates that if a person witnesses' people who they see themselves in succeed they will develop greater belief in their self-efficacy, leading to improved developmental success (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). It is essential for museums to continue to encourage mentoring, and to promote more women into senior positions. Dashper's (2018) research confirms that one of the major reasons the glass ceiling persists for women is the shortage of female role models. Therefore, the more women who make it to the senior roles, the more women that will believe they too can reach that level.

5.2.2 Mastery Experiences

Mastery experiences are essential for developing women into leadership roles in the museum sector. One major issue with this is that opportunities for training and development are limited in the museum sector due tight budgets (Fuller & Hastings, 1993; Holmes & Hatton, 2008). All the women except for Hermione reported that they had to source their own training and development opportunities, as well, in most cases provide their own funding. The women reported feeling supported to take on these opportunities for development, through being granted time off to complete the training. Mastery experiences are essential for people to develop belief in themselves, without access to this there is an increased risk of failure and stalled successes (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). While the results showed that smaller museums were unable to provide many training opportunities, it is good that the women were provided with support if they were willing to self-source and self-fund these mastery experiences. Having the opportunity to attend these training and development programs is one way museums can develop women's leadership in the sector.

Training and development opportunities were reported to be provided at the more senior levels of the organisation. Due to the museum sector having more men in senior positions a training and development program reserved for the top tiers of the leadership continues to support men's development over women's development (Prcevich *et al.*, 2019; Saleem *et al.*, 2017). Four of the women noted that due to budgets increasingly shrinking the mastery experiences are not making their way down the hierarchy. Senior management are being given opportunities to travel overseas for training, which is a big expense for museums. Lindsey *et al.* (1991) report that education and development is cited as one of the greatest contributors to successful leadership development in an organisation. Therefore, offering more training to senior managers ensures that men continue to develop at a faster rate than women.

Women are dedicating their time to training and development courses to help them work better, and more successfully in a patriarchal society. Half of the women interviewed have taken up this form of training. The women reported that training on how to navigate interactions with men in meetings has allowed them to have their own voices heard more often. For example, men interrupt women 260% more than women interrupt each other during a conversation (Hancock & Rubin, 2015). The women have also used their knowledge of men's penchant for interrupting to return conversations back to their junior female colleagues, to ensure that they are being adequately supported in the museum. These development programs provide an increased sense of self-efficacy. When a person develops a stronger sense of self-efficacy they are more likely to achieve success in their endeavours towards career advancement (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

5.2.3 Social Persuasion

Policies and Procedures

Australia has over the last 40 years implemented policies and procedures that have helped women to have better rights within the workplace, but the career progression model continues to reward uninterrupted careers (Corekcioglu *et al.*, 2020; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011; FairWork Ombudsman, 2021). The four women who have children were not interested in staying at home with their children longer than the provided maternity leave time. The experiences of returning to work after maternity leave were varied. The women who worked for large museums returned to their original position. The women who worked in smaller museums returned in a part-time capacity and felt that they came back in a position behind where they had left. One woman who would like to have children and works at a large museum

expressed concern for how maternity leave would impact her career progression. This demonstrates that there is awareness around the potential impacts of becoming a mother and wanting to have a successful career. While policies and procedures have been implemented to deal with parental leave, it is evident in the interviews and in the literature that parental leave negatively impacts a woman's career (Corekcioglu et al., 2020; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011), therefore slowing her rise to a leadership position. These outcomes of taking a career break constitute social persuasion by signalling that career breaks do not serve a positive benefit to the organisation and as such one will be penalised with a stagnating career (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This signalling undermines one's belief in their self-efficacy and will reduce women's ability to develop into leadership positions in the museum (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Organisational Culture – norms and rituals

The culture within the museum sector is one that perpetuates the traditional view of work being the number one priority in a person's life and everything is secondary to work (Billing, 2011; Wood & Newton, 2006). The results highlighted that seven out of the eight women did not feel that the museum sector was an environment where you could work nine-to-five and achieve career success. This is a cultural norm across five different museums. Expectations on women to attend numerous events after work hours further adds to their already overburdened calendar (Searby & Tripses, 2006). These norms within the museum sector were not disliked by the women, but they did feel that at times being able to commit to all these norms negatively impacted their careers. People rely on the feedback from peers to help them understand their level of success and to build belief in their self-efficacy (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Attending these networking events helps to provide, this, but having to juggle so many elements to achieve success does position the person at risk of failure, which leads to decreased belief in oneself (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). The balance between these two elements could play a role in how a woman is able to be developed into a leader within the museum sector.

5.3 Implications for Arts Organizations

From this study there were five implications for organisations. First, museums need to begin removing gendered language and work to be more inclusive of alternate viewpoints in history. Second, mentorship programs that encourage men to get involved in mentoring women will reduce the burden on women in leadership positions and open up more mentors for women. This could be included in role description and performance metrics. Third, training and development budgets will continue to be small for museums, which means that museums

need to get creative in how they provide training and development. This could be done through seeking access to training and development within the large firms that sponsor them or develop training partnerships with universities. Fourth, policies and procedures need to be developed to better deal with career breaks and parental leave. This is an area that needs more government support. Fifth, museums need to change the cultural norms of people having to work and attend activities outside of their 40-hour work week to be able to gain promotions.

5.4 Limitations of the study

One significant limitation of this study was the sample chosen. The women were predominately White, and were sampled based on my pre-existing network. While the short-term nature of semester required this, a larger group of women from a wider array of museum types would have enhanced this research paper. Second, the study only focused on one type of diversity – gender. Future studies should examine intersections of diversity, such as sexuality, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and race.

6. Conclusion

This research sought to answer two key research questions: What are the key experiences of women in leadership in the museum sector?; and How can women be developed into leadership roles in the museum sector? Through eight interviews with senior women in the Australian museum sector, it was clear that there were still significant gender barriers in the industry. While there were practices in place to counter the negative effects such as mentorship, training programs, and policies and procedures, these still had engrained gendered roles. First, mentorship of junior women was primarily completed by the small amount of senior men. Second, women had to self-fund their training and development due to tight budgets. Finally, while there were policies in place to address gendered career progression, the promotion structure is still heavily tied to the masculine model of continued career paths, where career breaks do not occur. In response, this report identified five practical steps that organisations can take to better support the development of women in their career paths within the museum sector.

6. References

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