Women in Judicial Leadership: Using Personal Power to Overcome Self-Sabotage

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Women in Judicial Leadership: Using Personal Power to Overcome Self-Sabotage

A Dissertation by

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March 2020
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Wow, where do I even begin? This has truly been a life changing experience. I would have to write another dissertation just to thank every individual who had an impact on my journey, so I will dedicate this to all the people who have consistently cheered me on from the side, especially when I needed an extra push. I made it to the finish line. Thanks be unto God!

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I am my ancestors’ wildest dreams...

-tnt
ABSTRACT

Women in Judicial Leadership: Using Personal Power to Overcome Self-Sabotage

by Tiffáni N. Thomas

Purpose: The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female judges to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Methodology: This mixed-method study explored the lived experiences of eight female State trial court judges in California who self-identified that they have experienced self-sabotaging behaviors throughout their career. Convenience and snowball sampling were utilized to identify women who met the delimiting criteria for participation in the study. An electronic survey instrument and interview questions were developed by a team of four thematic peer researchers with the guidance of faculty. The researcher deployed an electronic survey to participants to identify the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors and a follow up face-to-face interview was conducted to gather rich data on the lived experiences of participants. The interviews were transcribed and reviewed for emergent themes to ensure that the data collected were in alignment with answering the research questions.

Findings: The findings were identified in alignment with the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power and the corresponding self-sabotaging behaviors within each domain. 20 key findings were identified based on the frequency of references by study participants who have experienced self-sabotaging behaviors in their leadership careers.
**Conclusions:** The 20 key findings were summarized into nine conclusions that include, women need to recognize their own potential, women must approach fear in productive ways, women must understand themselves and give themselves credit, female leaders need to be authentic, women need to act with confidence, women must engage in daily self-reflection, women need to build a support network, female leaders need to inspire other women, and women should not exploit their sexuality in the workplace.

**Recommendations:** Future research should include replication studies that examine the research topic within a broader population and sample size of female judges. Further research should also be with women from different careers and ethnicities.
PREFACE

Four doctoral students and two faculty members with a common interest in building the leadership capacity of females started a discussion about the opportunity to study self-sabotaging behaviors that females experience. Through their shared interest, a thematic study was conducted by the four doctoral students to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female leaders and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of the study was to identify strategies employed by female leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. An explanatory sequential mix-methods study was developed utilizing a framework adapted from Lerner’s (2012) thesis, coupled with the work of Ryder and Briles (2003), to group female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching domains.

To ensure thematic consistency and reliability, the four doctoral students in collaboration with the two faculty members developed the purpose statement, research questions, survey instrument, interview questions and, study procedure. Each researcher administered an online survey to 10 female leaders to identify the self-sabotaging behaviors they experienced and the impact it had on their career development. Following the survey, the researchers individually interviewed their 10 study participants to explore the impact the self-sabotaging behaviors had on their career development and to identify the strategies they employed to overcome them.

The term *peer researchers* was used throughout the dissertation to refer to the other researchers involved in conducting this research study. The peer researchers studied female leaders in the following fields: Jamie Crews, senior public sector leaders;
Rebecca Pianta, California public school superintendents; Elizabeth Rivas, law enforcement leaders, and this researcher studied state trial court judges.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing demographics of the United States requires a closer look at the impact of the societal identity variable of gender and how that identity interacts with leadership. Historical progress is being made in the United States as more women are represented in senior level business and political leadership, however the broader landscape points to the fact that women continue to be underrepresented in elite leadership roles in the public and private sector (Chin, 2011; Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017). This is especially true in the legal system, where gender bias has created barriers for female jurists seeking to become judges, which is the highest position one can achieve in the legal profession (Fix & Johnson, 2017; George & Yoon, 2018). Although advancements are being made, the evidence of leadership as a gendered construct exists in the presence of external obstacles that hinder women from reaching parity with men in leadership. As such, inhospitable conditions and discrimination based on perceived gender roles or explicit gender bias fail to encourage self-efficacy in women to pursue leadership positions in any industry (Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Schwanke, 2013).

For generations, women were resigned to fashion their lives inside of a patriarchal system that dictated a woman’s future according to her domestic, reproductive and nurturing abilities (Mudau & Ncube, 2017). Because women were left at home to be domestics and raise families, they rarely had opportunities to excel in business, economic, or political roles and often doubted their ability to attain leadership positions outside of the home. Multiple authors assert that generations ago, woman were forced to adapt to a societal context that viewed them solely as domestics and thus did not afford them opportunities to excel in business, economic, legal or political roles (Lyness &
More recently, women in the United States, have continued to make history by progressing to leadership positions in their professional lives (Lyness & Grotto, 2018) but the effect of centuries of lack of autonomy have left professional women with fragments of internal doubt about their ability to lead.

External barriers due to subtle and explicit gender discrimination cause female leaders to take personal responsibility for negatives incidents and internalize the barriers they face. Evidence of this was found in Schwanke (2013) where the author asserts that women perpetuate external barriers to their advancement through internalizing negative incidents inappropriately and rationalizing that the circumstances around them are a result of their own leadership competency. As such, the presence of external obstacles triggers female leaders to engage in behaviors that hinder them from striving for and thriving in leadership positions. In response to external barriers, women in leadership often internalize their negative experiences, begin to doubt their abilities, and engage in self-sabotaging behaviors that must be addressed in order to adequately reduce conflicting ideas about their ability to balance their womanhood with the familial, social, and professional aspects of their lives.

The need for women in leadership to understand how external barriers influence their internal behaviors is evidenced through the consensus of multiple authors. The authors assert that it is essential to explore lived experiences of women in leadership positions who have overcome barriers and attained and maintained leadership positions, as well as examine internalized societal attitudes of women that cause them to avoid pursuing leadership roles (Chin, 2011; Gipson et al., 2017; Lyness & Grotto, 2018;
Ruderman, 2005). As Ruderman (2005) asserts, it is important to further examine the phenomenon of self-sabotage in order to thoroughly understand why, in the age of increased liberation and equality for women, so many women in leadership positions still present with complications stemming from internalizing societal barriers and engage in self-sabotaging behaviors.

**Background**

The following section provides background information on the patriarchal system of leadership, a historical perspective on the gender gap in leadership, and an overview of the progress of women in attaining leadership positions. There will also be a discussion on some of the external barriers to female leaders in general and a more refined discussion of the barriers to women in the legal profession. Examination of these topics will serve to illustrate how rigid social ideas about gender roles can be self-destructive if internalized by women desiring leadership positions in their chosen career path. Exploring external barriers that hinder success in women leaders can increase understanding of how internalizing societal attitudes can lead women to engage in self-sabotaging behaviors.

**The Historical System of Patriarchal Leadership**

To further understand the effect of external and internal barriers to women in the public, private, and legal sectors it is important to first recognize the historical concept of leadership. Leadership is an ancient practice that has continued throughout the generations due to leadership stories, fables, myths, legends and lessons (Harkiolakis, Halkias, & Komodromos, 2017). Zaccaro (2014) extended this perspective by asserting that the intergenerational implications on the traits of good and bad leaders exist as one of
the oldest themes in leadership storytelling. The widespread interest in leadership and subsequent success of organizing for collective action has inspired human social groups to depend on leadership to cultivate strong decision making meant to increase the odds of the group’s survival. Leadership, despite its longevity, was not initially viewed as relevant to organizations and business until evidence suggested that leadership can positively affect social and organizational performance (Day, 2014). In passing down stories about the traits of leaders, a strong foundation was created within civilization on which modern male-centered leadership has become normalized and refined through leadership’s growth and evolution (Day, 2014; Harkiolakis et al., 2017).

The modern workforce was created within a patriarchal system that dictated a woman’s future according to her reproductive and nurturing abilities (Mudau & Ncube, 2017). As Mason, Mason, and Mathews (2016) explain, “patriarchal attitudes refer broadly to the belief that men should hold a more prominent role in society (typically expressed as a traditional leadership role)” (p. 245). This history of male dominated leadership resulted in what Lyness and Grotto (2018) refer to as the gendered construct of leadership, in which women are faced with difficulties in attaining leadership based solely on their gender with no consideration of their leadership ability. Additionally, women had to exist in a context that viewed them exclusively as domestics and this did not afford them opportunities to excel in business, economic, or political roles outside of their home. Lyness and Grotto (2018) emphasize that men have long dominated leadership in both the private, public and political sectors, while Chin (2011) advises that men have been programmed to conform to the patriarchal stereotype that they are inherently more task-oriented, assertive and thus make better leaders. Mudau and Ncube
inform that women have been culturally constrained due to the patriarchal system of values that dates as far back as the prehistoric era. In fact, due to men’s antiquated perception of gender styles, communication preferences and cultural expectations, a friction organically develops between men in power and the women who desire more power in their professional lives (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

The Gender Gap – A Historical Perspective of Women in Leadership

Although women make up 47% of the workforce in America, men continue to occupy the majority of business and political leadership positions (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017). The literature reviewed show that women have historically been excluded from social, political and economic leadership opportunities (Mudau & Ncube, 2017), but they are increasingly gaining ground in attaining leadership positions (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). The literature also acknowledged that over the years women have made significant headway in achieving leadership roles outside of the home, but still face many challenges in attaining and maintaining leadership roles while balancing the demands of their day to day home life and related responsibilities (Chin, 2011).

According to Elmuti, Jia, and H. Davis (2009), the proportion of women in senior level management positions has increased as the migration of women towards leadership roles has become more widely accepted. The changing demographics in the modern workforce has opened the door for more women to emerge as leaders (Lemoine, Aggarwal, & Steed, 2016) and many workplace leadership development programs have taken into consideration the need for women to be mentored and coached toward attaining leadership positions (Surawicz, 2016). The result of increased attention and
support given to women on the job has created an increase in the number of women who feel competent in their leadership abilities, thus removing some of the inhibitions toward going for high level positions (Shahtalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2012).

While women have made progress in ascending to elite leadership positions, there still exists a clear gender gap between women and men and underrepresentation of women leaders is still a prevalent problem (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). Shahtalebi and Yarmohammadian (2012) discuss what they call the diverse and complex barriers that exist for women in career advancement through structured and unstructured barriers that inhibit them from achieving equal representation in the political and economical realm at large. The gender gap does not exist solely in leadership representation but also in the earning capacity of women versus men. While women have increased their presence in the public and private sector and thus their role in the overall economy, they are still earning 20% less than their male counterparts (Roseberry & Roos, 2014; The American Association of University Women, 2018). The literature makes it apparent that the gender gap in leadership creates a disparity between women and men in both their leadership potential and their earning capacity.

**Barriers to Women in Leadership**

The abstract qualities of women and their physiological traits, along with cultural, social, economic and political obstacles, cause women to be viewed as the less favored sex when promotions are available in almost any career path (Elmuti et al., 2009; Shahtalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2012). According to Roseberry and Roos (2014), “despite decades of consciousness-raising and legislation about gender equality, the majority of women throughout the world still live as second-class citizens—or worse” (p.
Over time, the work of civil rights organizations has led to women gaining more equal status with men, and the quest for women’s rights and equality have led to improvements to the welfare of women and girls around the world (Mudau & Ncube, 2017). Women have dramatically changed the workplace over the past 50 years in the United States and are increasingly attending college, finishing graduate school and obtaining doctorate degrees, which casts down the notion that little can be expected from women in education and the work force (Elmuti et al., 2009).

The glass ceiling, an invisible barrier to advancement related to workplace culture, and the leaky pipeline, the loss of women along the path, or pipeline to advancement, are two of the main reasons why women in leadership positions have trouble keeping pace with men in leadership (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Surawicz, 2016). Women in leadership often encounter barriers due to the glass ceiling, which can be attributed to the institutional culture and problems of bias, both conscious and unconscious. Elmuti et al. (2009) assert that the glass ceiling is an organizational barrier to women that shows up in the organizational hiring and promotion process which often prevents women from advancing to leadership positions. The leaky pipeline, where women dropout of the race for leadership positions can be attributed to a number of factors, including women’s work-life integration (Surawicz, 2016), their own internal barriers (Elmuti et al., 2009), and their perceived cultural expectations (Mudau & Ncube, 2017). In the legal profession an additional barrier known as the shrinking door refers to the fact that the doors women walk through toward career advancement gradually shrinks since they make up 51% of the general population, about 50% of law school students,
represent only 36% of the legal profession and are currently only 30% of all state court judges (George & Yoon, 2018).

**The Gavel Gap – Barriers to Leadership for Female Judges**

Judgeship is the highest position one can achieve in the legal career path. In order to become a judge, one must be appointed or elected, which has inherently created barriers to female attorneys who desire to become judges in a profession often referred to as “an old boys club”. Kalantry (2012) advises that women have had to overcome the stiff challenge of breaking into a field largely predicated on male leadership as judges who are appointed have a large political network and are well connected to appointing bodies, a determining factor that many female jurists lack. What results is the Gavel Gap, a term used for the disparity in the number of women represented in the general population and the number of female judges on the bench in the United States Judiciary (George & Yoon, 2018). Furthermore, once on the bench, female judges continue to face gender-specific challenges such as cold receptions from colleagues and disrespect from attorneys and litigants that make it difficult for them to thrive in their role of judicial leadership.

Prior to 1970 women faced significant and explicit barriers to achieving the educational credentials needed to attain judgeship. Since that time, women have reached parity with men in attending law school as they represent 50% of the law school population. Significant progress has been made to close the gender gap on the bench, but more work still needs to be done for female judges to overcome barriers based on their gender and reach parity with male judges (Fricke & Onwuachi-Willig, 2012). The
judicial community has identified the existence of gender bias in the legal system and has made progress in understanding and addressing this issue.

Over the past two decades, the use of gender bias task forces has increased gender diversity on the bench and made the top position in the legal profession more accessible to women (Fix & Johnson, 2017). Even though the top position in the legal profession is now more accessible to women than ever before, the problem arises when female jurists internalize gender-based barriers in the legal profession, subsequently rationalize discriminatory behaviors against them, avoid pursuing advancements in their career, or choose to leave the field altogether. This is evidenced in George and Yoon (2018) when they inform that only 36% of women who attend law school actually remain in the legal profession and as a result, women are grossly underrepresented at the state court level. The effect that outward barriers have on female jurists makes it challenging for them to reach the level of judgeship without experiencing decreased confidence in their abilities or engaging in debilitating self-sabotaging behaviors (Fix & Johnson, 2017; Fricke & Onwuachi-Willig, 2012; Schwanke, 2013).

Statement of the Research Problem

Women have made significant progress in achieving more representation in leadership than ever before, however many female leaders continue to experience external obstacles to career advancement and often engage in self-sabotage once they attain leadership roles (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). More and more women have continued to beat the odds by achieving leadership roles within historically male career paths, but they still deal with complications stemming from internalized gender bias and negative societal attitudes about women as leaders. Closer examination of the individual self-
sabotaging behaviors of female leaders is necessary in order to improve the internal and external leadership climate for all professional women (Mason, Mason, & Mathews, 2016; Ruderman, 2006).

The literature reviewed indicates that modern women are prone to self-sabotage as a result of internalizing, justifying, or accepting external prejudices and historical barriers to their success (Schwanke, 2013). There is a gap in available research that defines and describes specific self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by women in leadership. Research should be conducted to identify specific self-sabotaging behaviors and the effect these behaviors have on the professional lives of female leaders. In-depth exploration is needed to understand the lived experiences of women in power, how they deal with their own self-defeating actions, and what they do to reclaim their authentic power (Briles, 2006; Lerner, 2012).

Multiple authors agree that the number of women in leadership is gradually increasing, but executive women still remain an uncommon occurrence as pervasive prejudices and complex external barriers limit the progress of women desiring positions of power (Chin, 2011; Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017; Ruderman, 2005; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Schwanke, 2013). Through engaging in self-sabotage, many women tend to get in their own way and inhibit their own career advancement. Further research into the phenomenon of self-sabotage is needed to thoroughly understand why women who achieve leadership roles in their careers subject themselves to the internal barrier of self-sabotage and what they do to overcome internal inhibitions.

In-depth research is needed to explore the lived experiences of female judges who have encountered external barriers and subsequently engaged in self-sabotaging
behaviors throughout their legal careers (Fix & Johnson, 2017). Through exploring the lived experiences of female judges the research can identify the impact that self-sabotaging behaviors had on their career aspirations of becoming judges, as well as identify the strategies used by the judges to overcome self-sabotage in their professional lives. The results of the research will broaden the field of understanding on the self-sabotaging behaviors of female judicial leaders due to internalization of negative sociocultural and political attitudes towards women (Lyness & Grotto, 2018).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female state trial court judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female state trial court judges to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

**Research Questions**

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female state trial court judges experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?
3. What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

**Significance of the Problem**

Women make up 50% of the general population and have experienced decades of steady growth in the workforce since the 1950s. Despite strong gains, the number of
women in the United States workforce has recently plateaued at roughly 47% and this number decreases to 15% when it comes to the number of women on corporate boards or in executive leadership positions (Roseberry & Roos, 2014). In the justice system, women make up 50% of law school students, 36% of the legal profession and only 30% of state court judges (American Bar Association, n.d; George & Yoon, 2018). Despite decades of gender equality efforts, women have not reach parity with their representation in the general population in the workforce. This issue is exacerbated when considering the absence of women’s parity with their male counterparts in general and judicial leadership. This lack of gender equality is cause for concern and calls for further research.

Multiple authors assert that all of society benefits when women are empowered in their personal and professional lives (Curry, 2016; Empowering Women Empowers Society, 2017; Kelly, 2015). This study will assist in the effort to empower women through exploring the disempowering issue of self-sabotage that can undermine their ascension to leadership positions. This study will also add to the knowledge base by identifying practical solutions used by female leaders to overcome self-sabotage and empower themselves. Identifying and describing specific self-sabotaging behaviors can help the larger community understand the real impact of self-sabotage on the leadership careers of women. The implications of understanding how to improve the internal resolve of women will increase self-efficacy in them to pursue leadership, advance gender diversity in the professional realm, and improve the lives of their children, families and the collective culture overall (Curry, 2016).
There is a need to explore why women have achieved more equality than ever before yet still engage in the phenomenon of self-sabotage in their professional lives (Ruderman, 2005). This need becomes even more urgent when considering female state court judges, who are arguably among the most powerful decision makers in the United States Judiciary yet still feel disempowered (George & Yoon, 2018). This study will explore the issue of self-sabotage as it relates to the lived experience of women in judicial leadership. It is imperative to explore how self-sabotaging behaviors effect the professional lives of female judges, who are at the top level of the legal career. The data collected from surveying and interviewing female judges are intended to increase the field of understanding on the impact of self-sabotage on the careers of women in judicial leadership. Findings gathered from the research are anticipated to be used to describe self-sabotaging behaviors and identify strategies used by female judges to resolve their patterns of self-sabotage.

**Definitions**

*Barrier.* A circumstance or obstacle that keeps people or things apart or prevents communication or progress (Oxford Dictionary, 2019).

*Commissioner.* A commissioner is a subordinate judicial officer appointed by the judges of the Court.

*External barriers.* Any factor that is present in the environment outside of a person and inhibits them from achieving their goal.

*Gavel gap.* A term used for the disparity in the number of women represented in the general population and the number of female judges on the bench in the United States Judiciary (George & Yoon, 2018).
Gender gap. The discrepancy in opportunities, status and attitudes between men and women.

Glass ceiling. An invisible barrier to advancement related to workplace culture especially affecting women and people of color (Surawicz, 2016).

Internal barriers. Any factor that exists within a person that hinders them from pursuing progress toward a goal.

Judicial Officer. A general term for any person who is authorized to preside over and make decisions in legal cases. Judge, commissioner, and magistrate are common terms used for judicial officers who have power to arbitrate, conduct court and make legal decisions.

Jurist. A general term for lawyers and judges.

Judge. A public official who is either elected or appointed to decide cases in regard to the application of the law.

Leaky pipeline. The loss of women along the path or pipeline to career advancement (Surawicz, 2016).

Officer of the Court. Any person who took an oath to promote justice and operate the justice system, including judges and attorneys.

Self-Sabotage. Any behavior that one engages in that undermines, erodes, or destroys their own credibility (Briles, 2006).

Shrinking door. A term used in the legal profession to refer to the fact that the doors women walk through toward career advancement gradually shrinks as they move through law school (George & Yoon, 2018).
**Delimitations**

This study was delimited to female state trial court judges who work within the California state court system, had at least 10 years of experience in the judicial branch and served in a California state trial court for at least two years. Participant also had to be known for advocating for women in leadership, had to be willing to be interviewed, and had to agree to the informed consent form.

**Organization of the Study**

This mixed-method study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduced the topic, provided background information, highlighted the research problem, explained the purpose of the study, and presented three research questions used to guide the research. Chapter II provides a review of the literature pertaining to external and internal barriers faced by women aspiring to leadership. Chapter III details the methodology and research design. Chapter IV gives an analysis of the result of data collected. Chapter V provides a conclusion to the study and presents the researchers findings and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II provides a review of the literature pertaining to external barriers and internal, or self-sabotaging behaviors, that women face in their pursuit of leadership roles in public, private, and judicial sectors. According to (Roberts, 2010), the literature review is a summary of pertinent literature that is directly related to the researcher’s topic of interest and purpose of the research study. The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of existing research surrounding the topic of women in leadership. This literature review will provide a historical perspective of the variables of leadership within the context of a patriarchal system and where women fit in the scope of achieving leadership positions in their professional lives. A historical perspective of the gender gap in leadership will be also be discussed. Barriers to women in leadership positions will be covered, as well as the Gavel Gap, a concept specific to barriers faced by women in the judiciary. The conceptual framework of nine specific categories of self-sabotaging behavior and the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power as adapted from In her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self (Lerner, 2012) and The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives (Ryder & Briles, 2003) will be discussed.

The researcher located, read, evaluated, interpreted, and synthesized various research articles to define a relationship between existing literature (Pan, 2016) on leadership and the internalized barriers faced by women during various stages of their career advancement. Deeper exploration of the literature will be aimed at describing the societal struggles faced by women striving for leadership positions within a patriarchal system. The literature review will describe and define external barriers, some of which
that women cannot avoid internalizing as a result of their sociocultural and political environment (Ruderman, 2006). An explanation of some of the self-sabotaging behaviors that may impede women’s success in attaining leadership positions will also be provided.

**The Historical System of Patriarchal Leadership**

The historical culture of patriarchal leadership is based on the idea that men should have prominent roles in society because they are naturally forthright and agentic while women should adhere to more traditional gender roles of being nurturing and communal (Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Mason, Mason, & Mathews, 2016; McCullough, 2011). This patriarchal value system dates as far back as the prehistoric era where social, political, organizational, military and economic control was held predominantly by men in most communities around the world (Mudau & Ncube, 2017). Additionally, according to Means (2011), religion and governments in the majority of societies have been constructed under a patriarchy with male leaders elevated to the top and females subservient to their governance. Reverence for the patriarchal culture and value system is built on biased, fear-based, and confrontational individual attitudes that can be perpetuated by both men and women alike (Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Mason et al., 2016; Means, 2011).

In North American and Western culture, the patriarchal model of social leadership extols male leadership as the solitary option for communities to not only survive, but also thrive (Day, 2014; Harkiolakis, Halkias, & Komodromos, 2017). Furthermore, in Mason et al. (2016) the authors explain that patriarchal attitudes maintain the belief that men should occupy traditional leadership roles in society, which can inadvertently or
explicitly discourage the ascension of women to positions of power. The idea that men are naturally inclined to be leaders has led to the gendered construct of leadership where leadership experiences of women differ from the leadership experience of their male colleagues. This prejudice is highlighted in Ryder and Briles (2003) where the authors assert that men’s discomfort with certain female behaviors has a direct impact on their status as leaders in corporate arenas and professional environments. The subconscious bias and categorical uneasiness that men feel about working alongside women makes it difficult for women to reach parity with men in leadership positions (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Masculinized norms of leadership continue to perpetuate cultural assumptions that the only way to ensure the success of an organization is to keep senior leadership positions dominated by men. This is evidenced in Day (2014) where the author asserts that “organizational cultures remain male dominated and do not strive toward gender-equitable work environments, although ethics-based leadership, diversity leadership, collaborative leadership, and transformational leadership styles, which favor the leadership of women, are considered to be important dimensions of leadership today” (p. 11). Mason et al. (2016) state that patriarchal attitudes have a significant effect on leadership aspirations, and this effect differs by gender with men being more inclined to leadership despite their level or lack of competence and women were less inclined to do so unless they felt they had the competence to lead. Similarly, Van Vugt, Hogan, and Kaiser (2008) maintain that this male bias is often difficult to overcome because when men and women work together on tasks, men are more likely to claim leadership roles even when their female counterparts are more qualified. This overall idea of who
should be considered for leadership remains grounded in male centric attitudes and
gender norms that attribute to the lack of upward mobility for women who aspire to lead
(McCullough, 2011; Montgomery, 2019).

**The Gender Gap – A Historical Perspective of Women in Leadership**

Historically, gender discrimination was the norm as women were excluded from
mainstream social, political, organizational, military, and economic leadership
opportunities in the private, public, and religious sectors (Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Means,
2011; Mudau & Ncube, 2017). This is evidenced in Zhu and Chang (2019) where the
authors assert that there are two interrelated phenomena regarding gender norms which
include (1) the traditional division of labor, where men are situated as protectors and
providers and women are positioned as homemakers and nurturers and (2) the historic
power difference between men and women in regards to economic, political, and
reproductive choices. Song (2019) supports this assertion through stating that women’s
“adherence to these norms often leads to their nonparticipation in classroom and social
interactions, and a deeper ambivalence is indicated when they seek social and academic
opportunities through active participation” (p. 405). In fact, women’s ambivalence to
participating in roles outside of the home led to them making up only about one third of
the workforce in the 1940s (Dewalt, 2018). The historical construction of these two
phenomena has assisted in the perpetuation of gender inequality and subsequently created
the current and perpetual gender gap of women who hold leadership positions (Lyness &
Grotto, 2018).

Since the end of World War II, gender gaps in the work force have become
narrower in the United States as more women are pursuing higher levels of education and
rising in the ranks of public and private leadership (Dewalt, 2018; Roseberry & Roos, 2014; "United States Bureau of Labor Statistics," 2018). The changing demographics in today’s labor force can be attributed in part to the effort of civil rights groups that have advocated to achieve equal status for women, and the subsequent transition of women in the labor market to gain equal footing with men (Lemoine, Aggarwal, & Steed, 2016; Mudau & Ncube, 2017). Another factor for the increase of women in the work force is that more women are going to college, pursuing graduate level education, and obtaining doctoral degrees, which breaks the stereotype of low expectations of women in education and increases the rate of women entering the work force (Elmuti, Jia, & H. Davis, 2009).

While women make up 47% of the workforce in the United States, they have yet to reach parity with men in occupying elite social, political, organizational, military and economic leadership positions (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017). Whereas women are now increasingly moving toward gender equity at home and in the workplace, here is still a disparity between the number of women in leadership positions compared to their male counterparts (Chin, 2011).

Years of research on the gender gap uncovered outright discrimination and sexual harassment as the leading cause for the lack of women in leadership roles up until the 20th century (McCullough, 2011). Elmuti et. al (2009) also note that there is still a gap in equal pay for equal work between men and women where male employees get paid more than female employees who do the same job and perform the same duties. A report published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) indicates that:

In 2017, women who worked full time in wage and salary jobs had median usual weekly earnings of $770, which represented 82 percent of men’s median weekly
earnings ($941). Among women, earnings were higher for Asians ($903) and Whites ($795) than for Blacks ($657) and Hispanics ($603). Women’s-to-men’s earnings ratios were higher for Blacks (93 percent) and Hispanics (87 percent) than for Whites (82 percent) and Asians (75 percent). (p. 2)

This gender wage gap that exists between men and women can be a result of a work environment that is inhospitable to women pursuing promotions, discrimination on the side of the employer, or due to the choices made by female employees to not ask for a pay raise even when they feel they deserve it (Davies, 2011). Roseberry and Roos (2014) add to this assertion by stating that women earn far less than men as there are strong forces that pull them back to the home to raise families which causes them to fall behind in pay, tenure, and career development. This anchor to traditional gender roles has led to women leaving and returning to work, which affects the rate at which they are considered for pay raises and confident enough to apply for promotions as compared to men (Albertini-Bennett, 2018; Elmuti et al., 2009).

**Barriers to Women in Leadership**

For the past 50 years, women have been increasingly gaining ground in obtaining graduate level degrees, receiving increases in workplace earnings and attaining leadership positions (Dewalt, 2018; Elmuti et al., 2009; Mudau & Ncube, 2017; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Additionally, Lyness and Grotto (2018) indicate that as of June 2017, nearly 6.5% of the Fortune 500 companies had female CEOs leading some of the largest companies like Pepsi, IBM, and General Motors. However, despite making such historic progress in achieving higher education and occupying leadership roles, women still face gender related obstacles in their leadership experience and men still dominate the ranks of elite
leadership in the United States. (Zheng, Surgevil, & Kark, 2018). Even though laws prohibiting gender discrimination have been passed in the United States, there are still many institutionalized barriers that prohibit women from reaching parity with men in achieving leadership roles in the private, public, legal and religious sector (Roseberry & Roos, 2014). There is general consensus that women encounter more external barriers to attaining leadership than men, and this is particularly true for leadership roles in industries that are and have been historically dominated by males (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

The glass ceiling, which refers to the invisible barrier that women encounter in workplace culture, prevents many women from ascending to leadership positions and supports the notion that there is a lower demand for female leaders (Gipson et al., 2017; Ryder & Briles, 2003). As a result of the glass ceiling, many women are faced with gender bias and discrimination that makes it difficult for them to break through to levels of social and organizational leadership (Elmuti et al., 2009; Shahtalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2012). Another metaphor used to explain barriers that women face in leadership is the glass cliff effect, where females in senior roles are abruptly given leadership duties in times of controversy or crisis due to their “perception as ‘good people managers’ and their willingness to take the blame for the organizational failure” (Randsley de Moura, Leicht, Leite, Crisp, & Gocłowska, 2018, p. 1036) Under the glass cliff theory, Randsley de Moura et al. (2018) assert that women are favored as leaders in times of uncertainty and more likely to be appointed when an organization is already struggling.
The leaky pipeline is another concept that highlights the barrier that women face when they choose not to compete for leadership positions due to their own internal doubts, personal work-life integration standards, and cultural expectations based on gender norms (Elmuti et al., 2009; Mudau & Ncube, 2017; Surawicz, 2016). Additionally, in the legal profession there is a barrier known as the shrinking door, which illustrates that as women enter law school, the number who successfully matriculate and subsequently enter the legal profession gradually shrinks at each juncture (George & Yoon, 2018). Other obstacles that are barriers to women in leadership include societal mistrust toward women, the entanglements that women feel toward having to balance life outside of work as mothers or wives, and their own internalization of the external gender discrimination that they face on the job (Shahtalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2012). The research supports the idea that women face both external and internal barriers to attaining and maintaining leadership.

**The Gavel Gap – Barriers to Leadership for Female Judges**

For many centuries, women were not admitted to the bar and could only practice law incognito because the judicial domain was reserved exclusively for men. This is evidenced in Coffey, Walker, and McLaughlin (2009) where the authors inform that prior to World War I women had to use “a male disguise to practice law, a male persona, or male moniker” (p. 113) in order to be allowed in the courtroom. Between the 20th and 21st century, the number of female attorneys increased rapidly, however the number of women eligible for judgeship remained low because they did not meet the requisite years of experience practicing law in relation to their more experienced male counterparts (Sackett, 2014). In fact, women have historically been excluded from jobs at top law
firms, government agencies, and judicial clerkships which act as professional stepping stones toward judgeship (Sen, 2017). Additionally, Kalantry (2012), asserts that female judges around the globe report that the ‘old boys club’ mentality still presents a solid barrier to their entry into the legal profession, and most significantly access to the bench in America’s courts.

Since becoming a judge requires applicants to have a law degree, bar admission, and experience in practicing law, the history of prejudice toward women entering the legal profession has led to scarcity in the number of women who attain judgeship (Sackett, 2014). The gavel gap refers to the lack of female judges’ parity with male judges and the disparity between the gender composition of state court judges and the communities they serve (George & Yoon, 2018). In George and Yoon (2018) the researchers calculated the gap between the number of women on the bench and the representation of women in the general population and they found that the number of women on the bench is not on par with the number of women in the general population. In Fix and Johnson (2017) the authors advise that there is a crucial need for women to reach parity with men in the judiciary since “enhancing descriptive representation on the bench, at the very least, suggests that judicial institutions are accessible to women seeking to hold office and reflects a degree of openness in the political process” (p. 1846).

As Sackett (2014) advises, it is important to assure fairness in accessibility to the qualified lawyers, whether male or female, to apply for judicial election or appointment. For the past few decades, the judicial community has used gender bias task forces to make progress in addressing the gavel gap and make access to the legal profession more
equitable for women (Fix & Johnson, 2017). According to Dawuni and Kang (2015) increasing the representation of women on the bench is imperative in order to improve “women’s political power, whether on the grounds of fairness, enhancing the legitimacy of state institutions, or improving the representation of women’s interest” (p. 46).

Closing the gavel gap will lead to a more diverse bench, with the potential to shape judicial decision making due to the different perspectives of female judges and the subsequent contagion effect where a female judge’s presence changes the behavior of male judges and the state of the American judiciary as a whole (Gleason, Jones, & McBean, 2019).

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is used to provide the rationale, scholarly perspective and justification for the research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The following section provides a description of each of the nine categories of self-sabotaging behavior as well as the corresponding Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power adapted from Helene Lerner’s (2012) book *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* and *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* by Dr. Marilou Ryder and Judith Briles (2003). The framework utilized in this research study involved exploring nine categories of self-sabotage and the corresponding Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power that can assist women in overcoming self-sabotaging behavior (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Table 1 gives an illustration of the nine self-sabotaging behaviors and the corresponding nine domains of women’s personal power. The body of literature will serve to further explain the specific behaviors of self-sabotage and individual domains of women’s self-empowerment.
Table 1

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<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
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<td>2. Fear and Worrying</td>
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<td>4. Dishonesty</td>
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<td>9. Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace</td>
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Note. Adapted from “The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives” (Ryder & Briles, 2003) and “In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self” (Lerner, 2012).

Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

Modern women are still ambivalent toward achieving success in their careers which can be attributed to the longstanding societal idea that women are better suited for nurturing roles and not for the hard business of leadership. This is evidenced in Ruderman (2006) when she states that “the carrying forth of ingrained attitudes of self-devaluation, even self-dismain, in women continues” (p. 86) and that “women in contemporary American society cannot avoid internalizing the negative attitudes toward women which have been part of the sociocultural and political milieu in which they were raised” (p. 87). Female lawyers who aspire to judicial leadership must overcome many barriers to achieve success in their legal careers, one of which is to reject the self-sabotaging behaviors that come as a result of internalized beliefs created by a male dominated prevailing culture (Mudau & Ncube, 2017). Internal barriers that women face can be considered self-sabotaging behaviors (Briles, 2006) and most women are prone to self-sabotage at critical junctures in their life (Ruderman, 2005; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

In Ryder and Briles (2003), self-sabotage is defined as “the undermining of and resulting
damage or destruction to personal and professional integrity and credibility caused by one’s self” (p. 169). The nine self-sabotaging behaviors that will be discussed in this literature review include: (1) thinking too small, (2) fear and worrying, (3) misunderstanding one’s self, (4) dishonesty, (5) holding back, (6) lack of self-reflection, (7) isolating, (8) disempowering other women, and (9) infusing sex/gender role confusion in the workplace.

**Thinking too small**

Thinking too small happens when a woman lacks confidence in her abilities and professional contributions. As a result of thinking too small, women disempower themselves and undermine their own intelligence, skills, and leadership capabilities. Lerner (2012) acknowledges this through stating that women think too small because they view themselves as having little power, unable to make an impact on their own lives, and not capable of making a difference in the lives of others. This attitude can be caused by women blaming their parents or upbringing for why things do not go well in their life since “women, from time immemorial, carry forth identifications and internalizations derived from their earliest caregivers” (Ruderman, 2006, p. 86) that guide their self-perception and self-representation as adults. Baker and Kelan (2019) further this idea through asserting that women sometimes take positions they do not really want and subsequently individualize and blame others for what they perceive to be structural inequalities in the workplace. While it may be a healthy development for women to blame their upbringing or workplace structure for their lack of upward mobility, it ultimately results in the perpetual scarcity of women in top leadership positions (Chen, 2017).
Women also tend to think small to avoid the potential for rejection should they choose to go after something that is outside of their comfort zone and not obtain it. This fear of rejection keeps women from applying for a job unless they feel 100 percent qualified to contend for the position and also prevents them from asking for a pay raise from a system that they perceive to be unfair to women (Chen, 2017). According to Chen (2017) “women take rejection harder than men. Rather than bouncing back from a botched job interview or a less-than-stellar review, women are more apt to lick their wounds and think twice about placing themselves in the firing line next time” (p. 16). In this instance, thinking too small acts as a defense mechanism whereby women do not open themselves up to new experiences so that they can mitigate their fear of being rejected.

Women who think too small and fear rejection can also experience anxiety due to fear of confirming negative stereotypes about women in the workforce (Freedman, Green, Flanagan, Fitzgerald, & Kaufman, 2018). Smith, Brown, Thoman, and Deemer (2015) advise that “because being outnumbered by men implicitly activates feelings of stereotype threat when women work or learn in male-dominated fields, they often experience feelings of stereotype threat” (p. 445). As women try to avoid confirming negative stereotypes, they often make perfection the standard, which in turn causes more anxiety. In Forbes (2015), the author advises that women who make perfection their goal are often nonstarters and hesitate to innovate or try new things because of their fear of being perceived as imperfect. Striving for perfection may help women get to higher levels of leadership, but it also creates stress to operate on unrealistic expectations that cannot be sustained over time (Helgesen, 2018).
Fear and Worrying

The self-sabotaging behavior of fear can paralyze a woman from taking action and hinder her advancements in professional arenas (Ruderman, 2005; Stoyanova, 2013). Fear is a naturally occurring cognitive process that protects an individual from potentially harmful situations when there is a clearly identifiable threat and fear is an inherent component of stepping out into new territory (Lerner, 2015; Stoyanova, 2013). For women who aspire to leadership, the identifiable threat is the fear of moving outside of their comfort zone and failing in their new position, which can lead to the loss of self-esteem, money, social status, and self-confidence (Lerner, 2015; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Fear holds women back from personal and professional advancement, prevents them from reaching new heights of success, distorts their reality, and confirms false beliefs that are based on historical gender biases (Lerner, 2015).

In the workplace the fear of success and fear of failure are two sides of the same coin, and since women are not generally encouraged to be competitive, they experience worry about whether they will fail or succeed in their new role (Tweed, 2018). Lerner (2012) emphasizes that women who begin to experience personal and professional growth often feel uncertainty and discomfort for which their upbringing, society, culture, and education did not prepare them to deal with. This uncertainty and discomfort can cause the self-sabotaging behavior of worrying, or anxiety. Subsequently, worry and anxiety can lead to a feedback loop that increases worry and anxiety because women ruminate on past decisions and negative experiences that ultimately erode their confidence (Freedman et al., 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003). When women feel uncomfortable and uncertain, they will do everything in their power to resist change,
even though change is inevitable in every aspect of life (Lerner, 2012).

Women who feel fear when undergoing growth can also experience anxiety about embracing change for fear of scrutiny from others (Harris, 2018). This fear of looking stupid causes women to “engage in hypervigilant and ruminative behavior in which they exhibit heightened awareness of their own anxiety. Being more aware of one’s anxiety can in turn, induce more anxiety and serve as a cue that one is not succeeding” (Freedman et al., 2018, p. 180). This feeling affects women on the road to and even after they achieve leadership roles because they believe that they are not perfectly competent and will ultimately be found to have fooled others about their capabilities, otherwise known as ‘imposter syndrome’ (Meister, Sinclair, & Jehn, 2017). When women feel like an imposter on the job, they worry that any mistake or indiscretion will prove to others that they are not qualified and jeopardize their position so in turn, they work even harder to prove that they deserve the position that they hold (Montgomery, 2019; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Misunderstanding One’s Self

The inability to own all of one’s self comes from a woman misunderstanding herself and not accepting either her strengths, weaknesses, or both. Women who only appreciate certain parts of themselves and exclude parts that they are ashamed or embarrassed of expend a lot of energy trying to hide parts of themselves that they should be proud of or areas that need development (Lerner, 2012). The self-sabotaging behavior of misunderstanding one’s self can surface in the form of women not accepting compliments. This happens when women feel that they do not deserve to be praised for their accomplishments and instead turn compliments from others into opportunities to
point out their own flaws (Helgesen, 2018). When women misunderstand themselves, they resist sincere acknowledgement, reject praise, negate other’s appreciation of their talent, and fear taking credit for their own accomplishments (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). According to McKee (2008), women need to have an accurate sense of their real selves, who they are, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they influence others.

When a woman misunderstands or refuses to own parts of herself, she is often left stuck, confused, and unfulfilled in her personal life and professional career (Lerner, 2012). Misunderstanding one’s self can cause women to circumvent any criticism of their work performance. Lyness and Grotto (2018) assert that women tend to underestimate evaluations of their leadership ability and subsequently avoid seeking feedback because it may lead them to doubt themselves and their ability as leaders. Women who do not own all of themselves are often avoidant of criticism and they can become defensive when someone offers honest feedback to them (Lerner, 2015). The lack of external feedback leads to a lack of awareness that can sabotage a woman’s leadership (Gipson et al., 2017).

In avoiding feedback, women are also avoiding uncovering issues within themselves that may need to be confronted and refined. Ryder and Briles (2003) acknowledge that women who are unwilling to confront or acknowledge issues set themselves up for certain failure and thus the cycle of self-sabotage multiplies. This is an issue for women who seek to attain or maintain leadership since they may be viewed as egotistical and out of touch. According to Day (2014) “in the pursuit of self-glory, narcissistic leaders make rash decisions without sufficient objective information, discount
or ignore negative feedback, and surround themselves with loyal supporters who will not
disagree with them” (p. 270). Not acknowledging positive attributes and ignoring the
negative aspects of one’s self does not afford women the clarity they need in order to
grow and thrive as leaders (Lerner, 2012).

**Dishonesty**

When women are dishonest they deny their truth by saying yes when they mean
no, silencing themselves when it is best to speak up, and taking sides when they would
prefer to remain neutral (Briles, 2006; Lerner, 2012). Women who deny their truth are
operating in dishonesty which can easily cause them to lose touch with themselves and
their true feelings. Engaging in dishonesty raises issues of trust in interpersonal
relationships as well as in one’s relationship with self. Dishonesty is a sabotaging
behavior that hides a woman’s authentic power behind an inauthentic façade and leads to
destructive leadership (Day, 2014; Lerner, 2012). Not being willing to express oneself
genuinely can make a woman appear inauthentic and untrustworthy, two traits that are
unbecoming of transformational leaders (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

According to Lerner (2012) women are natural nurturers and often take on too
much responsibility, get involved in things when they do not really want to, are not able
to, or both. In Helgesen (2018) the author refers to this as the ‘disease to please’ where
women routinely say yes to tasks that will monopolize their time but bring them little
benefit. When women are pursuing leadership positions, they often take on too much
responsibility and end up juggling multiple tasks just so that they can be perceived as
team players who work just as hard as their male counterparts (Ryder & Briles, 2003).
This belief system is one that spills over from traditional gender roles that women hold in
the home where they “have been socialized from time immemorial to tend to others and to regard taking good care of themselves as ‘selfish’” (Ruderman, 2006, p. 86).

Women are also dishonest when they engage in false modesty where they hesitate to share their accomplishments for fear of being perceived by others as trumpeting their own ego (Lerner, 2012). Helgesen (2018) acknowledges that people generally “mistrust women who are averse to claiming their achievements. They view such women as inauthentic, falsely humble, or lacking in commitment” (p. 95). Historically, women have been made to believe that downplaying their accomplishments will lead to more positive outcomes since it makes them appear non-threatening even when they really desire to be respected as competent contenders for leadership positions (Budworth & Mann, 2010).

**Holding Back**

This self-sabotaging behavior happens when women hold back from action due to lack of confidence in themselves and negative self-talk. Women who engage in the self-sabotaging behavior of holding back do not reach out for help when support is needed for fear of appearing incompetent (Helgesen, 2018; Lerner, 2012). Many women engage in holding back due to the “sociocultural and political milieu that imposes distinctively negative, ingrained attitudes that still, to this day, label ambition, aggression, active mastery, and success as shameful, unfeminine, and inappropriate for ‘ladies’” (Ruderman, 2006, p. 87). Because prevailing culture discourages women from being competitive with men and other women in the workforce, they are more likely to set their goals lower, often hesitate to apply for top positions, are more likely to engage in self-
doubt, and ultimately hold themselves back from advancement in their career (Briles, 2006; Grimston, 2011).

Negative self-talk is another form of holding back and this kind of negative thinking can cause female leaders to believe that they really do not deserve their position or belong in their job (Briles, 2006; Helgesen, 2018). Women engage in negative internal talk that minimizes their self-confidence, depletes their energy, and exacerbates the false belief that they are not capable of remaining competitive in the constantly changing workplace and workforce (Lerner, 2012, 2015; Ryder & Briles, 2003). As Lerner (2012) asserts, this harsh inner critic bombards a woman’s mind with critical messages integrated from their parental influences, cultural upbringing, religious standards and traditional gender norms. Women who are self-critical are often more judgmental of themselves, take on unnecessary blame, and make unwarranted apologies to their colleagues, even for situations that are outside of their control (Helgesen, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

The unrelenting critical inner voice can also destroy a woman’s confidence and cause them to retreat, hold back relevant personal opinions, and hesitate to speak up in meetings for fear that their contribution would not be well received. This is evidenced in Helgesen (2018) where the author affirms that women, who are often a minority in important meetings, experience dejection when their input is not valued or explicitly ignored. Even though many women feel alienated or disrespected by this experience, they decide to stop contributing to important discussions for fear that they will make an enemy or be viewed as antagonistic (Helgesen, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003). This results in women engaging in indirect communication, which causes confusion and frustration in
the workplace and makes them look less confident, inarticulate, inexperienced, and unqualified for the job (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

**Lack of Self-Reflection**

Lack of self-reflection is a self-sabotaging behavior that occurs when a woman does not afford herself the time or space to engage in intentional reflection for self-acceptance, growth, and authenticity. Lerner (2012) states that women are often acculturated to present a false persona to the world which encourages them to hide from themselves and discourages them from engaging in self-knowledge and self-acceptance. Women who do not engage in self-reflection deprive themselves of access to their true self, their authentic feelings, and unique discernment, intuition, and desires (Dewalt, 2018; Lerner, 2012). Because women do not give themselves time to explore their authentic self, they are not aware of the parts of themselves that need development or transformation (Lerner, 2012). Furthermore, when women do not engage in self-reflection, they are not conscious of how to turn their weaknesses into strengths (Lerner, 2015).

Ryder and Briles (2003) point out that women often do not take time to enjoy life because they are constantly working hard to prove themselves or affirm they can hold down a position, especially in male dominated industries. The disparity between male and female leaders creates “an undesirable scenario for women, who are forced to choose unhealthy work-life balance in order to pursue their careers” (Schwanke, 2013, p. 17). This can easily cause women to become workaholics where they confuse their overworking with competence and do not allow themselves time to enjoy their life (Lerner, 2012, 2015; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Women who lack self-reflection also tend to
stay busy and keep themselves constantly engaged in activities that help them avoid being alone with their thoughts (Arylo, 2012). Eventually, the lack of work-life balance causes women to experience work-life conflict where they prioritize work over other important components of their personal life (Day, 2014; Dewalt, 2018; Harris, 2018; Wells, 2017).

The lack of self-reflection in professional women can also surface in them not making deliberate efforts to recharge and by them refusing to take time off to go on a vacation (Lerner, 2015). To avoid falling behind in work, female leaders often do not schedule down time, do not take time to slow down, and do not know how to totally disengage from work when they are off the clock (Albertini-Bennett, 2018; Matlen, 2014). When women feel like they have to be workaholics to maintain a competitive edge, they do not know how to retreat when they feel stressed, need to decompress, and recharge (Briles, 2006; Matlen, 2014). The absence of self-reflection or self-care depletes women of their energy and leaves them in emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual pieces (Arylo, 2012).

**Isolating**

A woman can sabotage herself if she decides to isolate and refuses to reach out to her network of friends, family, colleagues, or acquaintances for help. Lerner (2012) advises that women find it difficult to reach out for help from important people because they perceive them to be highly evolved or more sophisticated than themselves. This attitude breeds feelings of inferiority and causes women to see themselves as separate from others in the professional realm who may have the ability and desire to catapult them to higher levels of success (Lerner, 2012). As such, any desired movement up the
professional ladder stalls out and women remain in low status, low self-esteem positions (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Issues related to the corporate structure also contribute to women isolating since their work environment often includes “male dominated ‘old boy’s networks,’ increased ambiguity about advancement, and glass cliffs” and the “existing networks in organizations can often be homogenous and longstanding” (Schwanke, 2013, p. 18). Additionally, women find it more challenging to engage in networking because they have to balance their work life with the demands of their home life, and this leads to them being isolated from their professional network when they are off the clock (Harris, 2018). The challenge for women who are marginalized by their role as nurturers and caretakers in the home is that they tend to isolate themselves from engaging in the same networking experiences of their peers and thus have a harder time finding support systems within and outside of their organization (Wagoner, 2017).

Women also engage in the self-sabotaging behavior of isolating when they are unclear about the kind of support they need or do not want to admit when they are not getting the support they desire (Lerner, 2012). According to Ryder and Briles (2003), women are reluctant to let others know when they need help, even though sharing this information “could eliminate problems in a relationship, make one’s work easier, or be the difference between survival and extinction” (p. 148). Women who are not aware of what they need in a support system are at a major disadvantage because they do not engage the input of a trusted advisor who can provide validation and act as a sounding board for their leadership development and career aspirations (Escobedo, 2011; Wagoner, 2017).
Disempowering Other Women

Relationships between women can be extremely powerful assets or powerful sources of pain, therefore the behavior of disempowering other women can serve to sabotage the very network that many women need in order to break down barriers in their personal and professional lives (Brock, 2008). There are a number of situations that can trigger sabotage amongst women such as being jealous, feeling inadequate, or competing for the same position, and these triggers come as a result of social conditioning in workplace culture (Ryder & Briles, 2003). This cultural context is ripe with women who feign support of other women as long as they do not surpass them in the organization, but who will also engage in tearing women down when they feel there is only room for one woman at the top (Harvey, 2018). This sabotaging behavior hinders women from advancing in the workplace and ultimately casts a shadow of doubt in the minds of male colleagues who are frustrated by these traits in the work environment (Harvey, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Both men and women can be saboteurs, however women are more likely to undermine, sabotage, and bully their own gender (Allen & Flood, 2018; Harvey, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Allen and Flood (2018) further this argument by stating that women are highly susceptible to aggression and unconscious bias at the hands of other female colleagues and supervisors. In Harvey (2018) the author defines this phenomenon as the ‘Queen Bee syndrome’ where “a woman who has a dominant or controlling position in a particular group or sphere... treats colleagues in a demoralizing, undermining or bullying manner” (p. 1). In this instance, ‘Queen Bees’ are women who have achieved positions of power, but who in the long run, find that they have done so at
the expense of suffering interpersonal consequences and lack of support for their leadership (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016).

In response to ‘Queen Bees’ many junior women in the organization or group try to equalize the playing field by exhibiting behaviors to disrupt her leadership through “attempts to sabotage professional work, the consistent undermining or challenging of authority, personal verbal attacks, negative and/or overt body language, and ongoing challenges of authority” (Allen & Flood, 2018, p. 22). According to Ryder and Briles (2003) women who feel threatened by the success of another woman will engage in indirect aggression toward the other woman who has irritated them by spreading rumors and gossiping instead of addressing the other woman directly. In Brock (2008) the author asserts that women have historically engaged in covert woman-to-woman betrayal hidden under the guise of collaboration and mentorship. While females in the workplace may not engage in overtly aggressive behaviors, they often use manipulation, social exclusion, and friction to disempower other women (Harvey, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

**Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace**

Infusing sex or gender role confusion in the workplace can be self-defeating to women, therefore it is important for them to be aware of their own sexuality so that it is not used against them in their personal or professional lives (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). In De Vries (2015), the authors advise that “nobody talks about sex in the boardroom. However, the sexual dynamics between men and women are age eternal and hover above like a cloud, motivating individuals at an unconscious level” (p. 1). The literature shows the wide spectrum of this self-sabotaging category. Specific behaviors that women exhibit can range from using sex as a tool to manipulate men in the
workplace through mothering, giggling, playing dumb or dressing too sexy, to squashing natural feminine qualities in exchange for masculine traits so that they can be taken seriously (Harris, 2018; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Women in the workforce are often caught in a double bind where they have to balance their femininity with the stereotype that masculine characteristics are preferred in successful leaders (Derks et al., 2016; Harris, 2018).

Research on female leaders illuminates the tension that women experience when they are expected to be both agentic and communal and are subsequently penalized when they act in either extreme (De Vries, 2015; Harris, 2018; Song, 2019; Zheng et al., 2018). According to Lerner (2015), “the lines between being assertive or being aggressive, taking charge or being overly ambitious, and being nice or being ineffective are so blurred (by both sexes) that hitting the right note can feel impossible” (p. 25-26). When women feel the pressure to conform to or defy stereotypical gender roles in order to achieve leadership positions, it places them at odds with their true self and thus puts them at a disadvantage to men vying for the same position (Derks et al., 2016; Harris, 2018; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

The Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power

The general tone of an organization’s culture is based on a collective of individual beliefs, values, and behaviors (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). Women who aspire to leadership in any profession can continue to make an impact on their organizational culture by improving their individual beliefs about themselves and subsequently operating in their personal power (Gleason et al., 2019; Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018). According to Ruderman (2005), “separating and individuation the self is a
dynamic process that continues throughout life [and] the process of discovering one’s identification as a woman (and as a creative, successful woman acting on her own choices to define her wants and needs and future actions) builds cumulatively” (p. 470) over time.

The ability of women to achieve judicial leadership is contingent upon their ability to overcome their own internalization of prevailing ideas about females in the judiciary through recognizing self-sabotaging behaviors, eliminating internal barriers, and reclaiming their power. Although there are many ways that women can self-sabotage their professional careers, there are also strategies that women can use to break the self-sabotaging cycle and reclaim their personal power. This study will explore the following Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power: (1) recognizing women’s unique destiny, (2) constructive preparation, (3) owning all of one’s self, (4) honest self-expression, (5) acting with confidence, (6) cultivating self-intimacy, (7) building a power web, (8) inspiring other women, and (9) embracing one’s sexuality (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). Through understanding the Nine Domain of Women’s Power, women who aspire to leadership roles can develop their leadership skills by reclaiming their confidence, challenging their fears, and overcoming self-sabotage (Arylo, 2012; Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

**Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny**

The first domain of a woman’s personal power lies in her recognizing her own unique destiny. According to Lerner (2012) this includes a woman throwing away excuses and reclaiming her power through recognizing how her own talents and abilities position her to make unique contributions to the world. In other words, a woman who
wants to overcome thinking too small can do so by acknowledging her ability to have a significant impact and live up to her full potential. When women recognize that their unique differences and diverse experiences have the potential to cultivate innovation and transform organizational culture, they do the work to empower themselves to make an impact (Wells, 2017). The stereotypical perception of women’s leadership capabilities in the professional realm can be gradually shifted through women refining their individual talents and developing their distinct executive presence (Mathevula, 2014; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Making sustainable and lasting change requires focus and willingness to improve consistently over time (Helgesen, 2018). Female leaders can recognize their unique destiny by committing to make small changes every day and deciding to strive for excellence so that they can make the greatest impact in their organization (Forbes, 2015; Lerner, 2015). Women who want to overcome self-sabotage will need to be persistent and resilient, especially when faced with gender bias and rejection in the workplace (Chen, 2017). Additionally, women must engage in purposeful growth at the personal, interpersonal and organizational level so they can successfully navigate advancements in their leadership career and move closer to their unique destiny (Avila, 2018; Lerner, 2012).

**Constructive Preparation**

Constructive preparation involves a woman accepting the discomfort that may arise when she steps up as a leader and into her power. This is evidenced in Lerner (2012) where she asserts that change can bring fear of the unknown, even when the change involves asserting oneself in productive ways. The key in feeling discomfort due
to change is to stay present and not allow the uneasiness to impede forward momentum. This is evidenced in Tweed (2018) where the author found that women can overcome fear by being goal oriented, driven, and unafraid to put themselves out there for promotion to leadership positions. According to Lerner (2012), personal and professional growth involves moving into new territory, and this type of change inevitably feels uncomfortable.

Women can incorporate constructive preparation by acknowledging fear and instead of retreating, allowing it to propel them forward in all of their endeavors (Lerner, 2012). Wagoner (2017) advises that strength, self-confidence, and self-acceptance are some of the most vital components that women need to develop in order to overcome anxiety, fear, and worry in the workplace. Reframing the natural feeling of discomfort into an opportunity to overcome fear and reach new levels can increase a woman’s perception of herself and improve her leadership confidence (Montgomery, 2019). A woman who engages in constructive preparation acknowledges that the emotions that accompany discomfort, fear, success and failure are all beneficial to developing their leadership style and these emotions are “essential components of human nature; [that provide] adaptive elements [that] motivate thought and behavior” (Cure, 2009, p. 5).

**Owning All of One’s Self**

This domain of a woman’s personal power involves a woman owning both her strengths and weaknesses (Lerner, 2012). Appreciation of all of the aspects of one’s self allows a woman to leverage her gender strengths and understand areas of herself that could be further developed or improved (Harris, 2018). Taking responsibility for the totality of one’s self brings the authenticity of self-acceptance and self-expression
(Lerner, 2012; Wagoner, 2017). In Montgomery (2019), the author found that women should acknowledge both their strengths and weaknesses so that they can learn how to demonstrate power, competency, and calm in important settings. Owning all of one’s self liberates women from feeling stuck and provides a level of clarity that is important for transformational female leaders in any career path (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003; Lerner, 2012).

Female leaders who own all of themselves are quick to acknowledge their own vulnerabilities, strengths, successes, and failures. In Zheng et al. (2018) the authors assert that women can own all of their attributes and experiences by engaging in self-advocacy toward personal and professional development of their positive and negative traits. Overcoming self-sabotage in this domain takes the courage to seek feedback and activate strategies that maximize personal strengths and facilitate growth in areas of personal weaknesses (Harris, 2018). A woman who owns all of herself is able to accept compliments, receive constructive criticism, and accept credit for her own accomplishments without minimizing (Cure, 2009; Helgesen, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

**Honest Self-Expression**

According to Lerner (2012), honest self-expression involves expressing one’s self genuinely through thoughts and feelings. This requires one to have the courage to remain true to themselves even in the midst of opposition (Chen, 2017). A woman who engages in honest self-expression is anchored in who she is, transmits her unique value to her organization, is ethical in all of her dealings, and is determined to be authentic in her leadership role (Chin, 2011; Dewalt, 2018). Honest self-expression involves a woman
getting in touch with her true feelings through cultivating a greater understanding of who she is and through demonstrating her insights through her own leadership (Lerner, 2012).

The literature has demonstrated that it takes candor to be direct, honest, and conscientious in bringing issues to the table in any workplace culture (Day, 2014; Lerner, 2015). Female leaders who practice honest self-expression allow the world to see who they are truthfully without apology or holding back (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010). Albertini-Bennett (2018) found that women who come from a place of sincerity and honest do so with a sense of confidence that can only be accomplished through increased awareness of herself. To overcome self-sabotage in this area, female leaders must exert the effort to express themselves and pursue their wants, needs, and desires (Arylo, 2012; Avila, 2018; Lerner, 2012).

**Acting with Confidence**

Confidence is nurtured when one accepts things they cannot control and chooses to act courageously to overcome crises and personal failures (Briles, 2006; Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). This realm of a woman’s personal power involves tapping into negative and positive life experiences and finding the lesson in each occurrence. Women who develop their confidence are able to project with certainty a deep level of competence in their area of expertise (Zheng et al., 2018). When women become confident and self-reliable, they break down the barriers that self-sabotage create and lay the foundation for a better future (Briles, 2006). Self-empowerment through increased self-esteem permits female leaders to be the best that they can be without holding back (Arylo, 2012).

Acting with confidence involves a woman acknowledging herself for taking steps
in a new direction and appreciating her accomplishments, no matter how big or small (Lerner, 2012). Women who do so do not engage in negative self-talk and instead engage in positive self-affirmation (Derks et al., 2016; Helgesen, 2018). In Cure (2009), the author found that women relieve themselves from holding back as leaders by negating the lack of confidence and replacing it with affirmations of their vision, goals, and progress toward achieving success. When female leaders act with confidence, they create certainty within themselves and increase their organizations trust in their ability to lead (Lerner, 2012, 2015).

**Cultivating Self-Intimacy**

Lerner (2012) explains self-intimacy as the ability of a woman to deliberately know herself more deeply. This happens when a woman commits to spend time alone with herself in an effort to become more aware of herself in meaningful ways. Dewalt (2018) expressed that authenticity is a self-reflective, emotional experience, that keeps one in tune with their true self. Women who cultivate self-intimacy take time daily to go within, deliberately schedule down time with themselves, accept parts of themselves that they do not like and take steps to understand and change them, engage in practices to better understand themselves, and allow themselves to cry or mourn loss (Lerner, 2012). When self-intimacy is cultivated, women increase their knowledge of self and are thus able to engage in authentic self-acceptance (Dewalt, 2018; Lerner, 2012).

**Building A Power Web**

This domain of personal power involves building a network of people who are committed to one’s personal growth and professional achievement. As such, building a power web assists a woman in garnering support for her goals (Lerner, 2012). When
women build a power web, they find listeners, connectors, and motivator that provide the sounding board that is crucial to their personal and professional advancement (Harris, 2018; Lerner, 2012). Women who are successful leaders know how to solicit the opinions of trusted colleagues, friends, and other individuals in their network before they make a decision that could affect the perception of their leadership (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Women who understand the importance of developing an organized network value the support of other people, both male and female, who can advance and support their leadership aspirations (Escobedo, 2011). Wagoner (2017) asserts the benefit to women who build a community of support and notes that when they know that they are not alone, they begin to feel a sense of solidarity instead of isolation. Female leaders who build a power web are not afraid to ask for help when it is needed, are very aware of the types of support they need, and do not feel guilty or burdensome for enlisting the support of others (Lerner, 2012).

**Inspiring Other Women**

When a woman embraces the various domains of her power, she is better equipped to help other women do the same. Mentoring relationships with other women will naturally develop when a woman is sincere, makes herself available, and is willing to empower others even in the midst of learning how to reclaim her own personal power (Lerner, 2012). Effective female leaders inspire other women through collaboration and mentorship and know that this is fundamental to their own professional success and upward mobility (Brock, 2008; Montgomery, 2019). Lerner (2015) furthers this idea by asserting that when women sponsor other women, they see their success as an important
investment in the overall profession, organization, and workplace culture.

Women who understand their own power are not intimidated by, or jealous of, the success of other women. When female leaders seek to empower other women, they intentional identify at least one other woman that they can support and inspire (Lerner, 2012). Ryder and Briles (2003) also note that women who inspire other women do not engage in acts that undermine, sabotage, or damage the reputation of another. Women who inspire other women refrain from using gossip, social alienation, or bullying as a form of social control and instead employ strategies of pleasantness, positivity, resourcefulness, and comradery toward the women in their professional network (Cure, 2009; Lerner, 2012).

**Embracing One’s Sexuality**

Sexuality, perhaps the most controversial of the Nine Domains of a Woman’s Personal Power, is a component of every woman’s identity and should be regarded as just as important as any other facet of womanhood. The ability to embrace one’s sexuality is crucial to understand how to navigate the extremes of engaging in overly sexy or flirtatious behavior and exhibiting male qualities in the workplace (De Vries, 2015; Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). According to Zheng et al. (2018) women who embrace their sexuality and gender strengths learn how to blend agency with communion to develop a unique leadership style that “reflects agentic focus on task achievement and a communal focus on nurturing others” (p. 638).

Embracing one’s sexuality is crucial so that gender is not used as an excuse to manipulate other people in the workplace (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). The modern workforce is becoming increasingly aware of the impact that sex/gender issues
have on organizational culture (De Vries, 2015). In Zheng et al. (2018) the authors assert that:

On the one hand, women leaders demonstrated their demandingness through their dissatisfaction with the status quo, conscious effort to push people out of their comfort zones, holding people accountable to those expectations, and calling people out if their performance was not up to par. On the other hand, women leaders highlighted their care and support for others in meeting high expectations, which helped them soften their direct hard-charging goal orientation that could be seen as cold and threatening. (p.638)

Female leaders are careful not to exhibit extremely masculine agentic qualities or extreme girlish behavior such as flirting at work or using prosodic speech in the professional setting (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Women who reclaim their personal power know how to operate within the workplace without being overly sexy or squashing their femininity, and consequently garner respect from both their male and female colleagues (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

Gaps in the Literature

Studies reviewed on the topic of women in leadership indicate strong agreeance among the authors that female leaders experience internal ambivalence toward achieving success in their careers because they feel an obligation to self-sacrifice for the betterment of their families (Ruderman, 2005). In Ruderman (2006) the author explains that “women remain fixed in early familial internalizations and identifications and find themselves repeating patterns of self-sabotage that impede their success” (p. 85). The results of the research reviewed echo this statement as several studies (Lyness & Grotto,
2018; Shahtalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2012; Wells, 2017) uphold that women are making advancements to leadership positions but continue to internalize negative sociocultural and political attitudes that cause them to get in the way of their own professional progress.

The overall results of this research indicate that women must overcome the external barriers that hinder their success as well as the internal self-sabotaging behaviors that hinder them from striving for and thriving in leadership positions. This review of existing literature was sufficient in describing the effect of external and internal barriers to women’s success in their professional lives. There is, however, a gap in available research when it comes to defining and describing the specific self-sabotaging behaviors that female judges experience. Additional research is needed to define self-sabotaging behaviors of women in judicial leadership as well as the strategies these women have used to overcome self-sabotage throughout their legal career.

**Synthesis Matrix**

A synthesis matrix was created by this researcher using the variables presented in the literature review. This matrix allowed the researcher to show agreement between the literature reviewed and the variables being studied. The synthesis matrix is depicted in the format of a table to visually show alignment between the literature and the study variables (Appendix A).

**Summary**

This chapter provided a review of the literature surrounding the external and internal, or self-sabotaging behaviors, that women face in their pursuit of leadership roles in public, private, and judicial sectors. Four major elements that create a narrative for the
foundation of this research were covered. First, the historical system of patriarchal leadership was discussed. Next, an overview of the history of the gender gap in leadership was provided. Additionally, barriers to women who aspire to leadership in any career path were highlighted. Then, the literature review provided findings on specific barriers that women are faced with when they desire leadership in the legal sector through becoming judges. The conceptual framework for this research study was also presented through a discussion of nine specific self-sabotaging categories and the corresponding Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power that can be used to overcome self-sabotage.

Gaps in available literature pertaining to specific barriers female judges face in their quest for judgeship were provided. The chapter concluded with a synthesis matrix table that gave a visual overview of the literature from various sources that supports the research. Chapter III will present the methodology for this research, restate the purpose statement and research questions, and provide a detailed rationale for the research design. A discussion on the study’s population, sampling frame, sample, and instrumentation will be provided. The proposed methods for ensuring validity and reliability, collecting data, and analyzing data will be discussed. Limitations as perceived by the researcher will also be covered.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Chapter III details the methodology and research design of this study. According to Roberts (2010) the methodology chapter describes the design and procedures of a study in a clear, concise, and detailed manner so that results of the study can be interpreted by other researchers who may choose to replicate the study. This study used an explanatory mixed-method research design because an explanatory design “explains or clarifies the degree of association among two or more variables at one point in time” (Creswell, 2012, p. 358). As discussed in Lerner (2012) there are nine self-sabotaging categories and individual sabotaging behaviors associated with each category. The purpose of using an explanatory mixed-methods design was to narrow down the most prevalent behaviors experienced by female judges through first administering a quantitative survey instrument and then conducting follow up interviews with each participant to gather rich qualitative data. The interviews assisted the researcher in exploring the lived experiences of female judges, explaining the impact that self-sabotaging behaviors had on their path to judicial leadership, and finding out what strategies helped them overcome self-sabotage in their leadership careers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female state trial court judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female state trial court judges to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.
Research Questions

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female state trial court judges experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?
3. What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Research Design

According to Creswell (2012), the research purpose and research questions guide the research design, which is used to inform the specific procedures, sample, data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods. Roberts (2010) advises that using a mixed methods research design where qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined in a single study generally produces results with greater breadth and depth. Mixed-methods research designs produce numbers, or statistics, as well as participant stories to illustrate what the numbers mean (Patton, 2015). An explanatory mixed-methods research design was used in this study because it provides a more thorough investigation into the research problem since quantitative data are gathered first and qualitative data collected second to elaborate on quantitative results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The research design for this explanatory mixed-methods study included a sequential approach that first obtained data from a quantitative research instrument and subsequently gathered data utilizing a qualitative instrument. This is evidenced in
Roberts (2010) when she asserts that quantitative methods “summarize large amounts of data and reach generalizations based on statistical projections [and] qualitative research tells a story from the viewpoint of the participants that provides rich descriptive detail” (p.145). The quantitative instrument helps elucidate the what, while the qualitative instrument informs as to the possible why, which adds power and richness to the explanation of the data (Roberts, 2010).

This research used electronic surveys to narrow down the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors amongst female judges. A follow-up qualitative interview was then scheduled with each participant. Individual responses were analyzed by this researcher to identify relevant patterns of self-sabotage. The patterns uncovered were subsequently used to create meaningful themes related to the participant’s self-sabotaging behaviors as well as categories of strategies used by the women to overcome self-sabotage. Data were triangulated using the identified themes, patterns, and categories that appeared throughout the survey and interview process. This researcher created a list of codes by which to record the frequency of each theme interpreted as occurring throughout the data collection process.

**Quantitative Research Design**

As explained by Patten (2013), “a distinctive feature of quantitative research is that researchers gather data in such a way that the data are easy to quantify, allowing for statistical analysis” (p. 9). A quantitative research design consequently emphasizes objective measurement of a given phenomenon through producing data that can easily be reduced to numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, the results of a
quantitative research design are presented by the researcher as quantities, numbers, or statistics (Patten, 2013).

According to Roberts (2010), in a quantitative research design the researcher collects data that can be gathered from structured surveys and are primarily numerical in nature. The quantitative design of this research involved administering an electronic survey to eight participants to first familiarize them with the purpose of the research study and then gain numerical data regarding the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors. Once quantitative survey responses were gathered, the researcher used the qualitative research design to gain a sequential, richer understanding of the data gathered from the quantitative data.

**Qualitative Research Design**

In Patton (2015), the author asserts that “qualitative research inquires into, documents, and interprets the meaning-making process” (p. 3). This is further evidenced in Roberts (2010) where she advises that a qualitative research approach is based on phenomenology, a philosophical orientation that emphasizes and focuses on finding meaning through exploring the lived experience of people from their own unique perspective. Researchers who use a qualitative research design “gather data that must be analyzed through the use of informed judgment to identify major and minor themes expressed by participants” (Patten, 2013, p. 9).

The qualitative research approach selected for the qualitative portion of this study was phenomenology because it “requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with
others” (Patton, 2015, p. 115). Phenomenological studies focus on describing what people experience, how they experience it, and how that experience is related to the prevalence of other conditions or events. Above all other methods of qualitative research, a phenomenological study was the most appropriate to use because it helped identify and describe the phenomenon of self-sabotage as well as the effect that engaging in self-sabotaging behavior had on the leadership careers of female judges.

**Method Rationale**

A thematic study was formed as a result of discussions and considerations regarding the topic of women in leadership and self-sabotaging behaviors. Two faculty researchers and four doctoral students discovered a common interest in exploring specific self-sabotaging behaviors of women in leadership and the strategies used by female leaders to overcome self-sabotage. The four peer researchers participated in a thematic study to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors that female leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers in addition to exploring the impact these behaviors may have had on their career development. These researchers also wanted to identify strategies female leaders used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. This explanatory mixed-methods research was designed with a focus on nine categories of self-sabotage and the nine corresponding domains of women’s personal power. Female leaders in educational and public organizations were selected by the thematic team of researchers and each researcher interviewed their own population of women.

Thematic consistency was created through collaboration on the purpose statement, research questions, quantitative and qualitative instruments, and research procedures. The group of thematic researchers worked individually within a single selected sample
population of female leaders and all used the same methodology, explanatory mixed-methods, and interview and survey questions. This allowed the researchers to examine both quantitative and qualitative methods for the phenomenon studied to increase the depth and scope of the study.

The term peer researchers is used to refer to the other researchers involved in conducting this research study. The researcher and her fellow doctoral candidates studied female leaders in the following fields: Jamie Crews, senior public sector leaders; Rebecca Pianta, school superintendents; Elizabeth Rivas, law enforcement leaders; and this researcher studied California state trial court judges.

**Population**

The population is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) as “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (p. 129). Simply put, the population is the group of individuals that a researcher is interested in studying (Patten, 2013). For the purpose of this research, the population consists of female judges in the United States who serve or have served in California state trial courts.

There are minimum statutory and constitutional regulations on who is legally qualified to serve as a judge which relate to age, education, and legal experience (Reddick, Nelson, & Paine, 2009). The political climate can influence the total population of female judges since they can be formally selected for service through gubernatorial appointment, partisan election, nonpartisan election, legislative appointment, court appointment, or temporary assignment. The population for this study consisted of approximately 3,088 female judges who serve on state trial courts in the
United States (George & Yoon, 2018). In California, each of the 58 California counties has a trial court where a judge hears testimony and reviews evidence to decide criminal, civil, and family law cases by applying relevant law to the relevant facts of the case (Judicial Council of California, 2019).

**Sampling Frame**

In Creswell (2012), the sampling frame is defined as a list of all the potential individuals within a population that can actually be obtained by a researcher. The sampling frame for this study included female judges within the State of California and this study focused on females who serve or have served as judges in California’s State Trial Courts. There are currently more than 70,000 women in all facets of the legal profession, 3,088 are state trial court judges, and 543 are state trial court judges actively serving on the bench across all counties of the State of California (Judicial Council of California, 2018). Female judges who currently serve or have previously served on the Court of Appeal or Supreme Court level are outside of the scope of this research and were not considered or included in the sampling frame of 543 state trial court judges.

**Sample**

Patten (2013) asserts that “when it is impractical to study an entire population, researchers draw a sample, study it, and infer that what is true of the sample is probably true of the population” (p. 53). The sample is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) as the group of participants from whom the data are collected. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) advise that the size of a sample “relies on the concept of ‘saturation,’ or the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data” (p.59). The sample size for this study consisted of eight women, which is an appropriate sample size.
since it is believed at this point participants would not provide any new information that would lead to the identification of additional themes or patterns (Patten, 2013).

A purposeful, convenience, snowball sampling strategy was used to identify participants that met the sample criteria. Purposeful sampling was designated because the selection process requires that respondents be “information rich and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2015) which in this study is the phenomenon of self-sabotage. Convenience sampling was also employed so that the researcher could engage participants who were locally accessible and willing to be studied (Creswell, 2012). Because judges are not easily available for personal meetings with members of the general public, a snowball sampling method was used as a strategy for this researcher to gain referrals from eligible participants to others who fit the sample requirements and would be agreeable to participating in the research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

This researcher initially employed a convenience sampling method through reaching out to their professional network of female judges for eligible participants. After identifying individuals that met the research criteria below, the researcher asked study participants to identify other female judges within their respective networks who also met the criteria. Participants were selected based on whether they met the following criteria:

- Participant must be a female state trial court judge;
- Must have served in a California state trial court for at least two years;
- Must have a minimum of ten years of experience in the judicial branch;
- Must be known for advocating for women in leadership;
Must be willing to be interviewed and agree to the informed consent form.

**Population**
- Approximately 3,088 Female State Trial Court Judges in the United States

**Sampling Frame**
- 543 State Trial Court Judges in California

**Sample**
- 8 Female Judges who have served in a California State Trial Court for at least two years

*Figure 1. Population, Sampling Frame, and Sample*

**Instrumentation**

This study used explanatory mixed-methods instrumentation, which involves quantitative and qualitative data collection. According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2017), the explanatory mixed-methods approach is a sequential approach used when a researcher is interested in “following up the quantitative results with qualitative data. Thus, the qualitative data is used in the subsequent interpretation and clarification of the results from the quantitative data analysis” (p.196). In this study, an electronic survey was administered to research participants using a Likert scale to respond to questions about self-sabotaging behaviors. A follow-up interview was then scheduled to meet with the participants individually to gain their account of how their lived experiences with self-sabotage have impacted their leadership careers and what strategies they employed to help them overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.
**Quantitative Instrumentation**

A quantitative instrument is used to “produce data that can be easily reduced to numbers, such as structured questionnaires or interview schedules with objective formats, such as multiple-choice questions” (Patten, 2013, p. 19). The quantitative instrument utilized in this study was created by a thematic team of four peer researchers and based on the conceptual framework. The team collaborated on the quantitative instrument to ensure alignment with the research questions and purpose of the study. This research began with a closed-ended electronic survey instrument (Appendix B) administered through Survey Monkey to the eight participants selected from the sampling frame. An alignment table was established to confirm that each item on the quantitative instrument answered the research questions and aligned with the purpose of the research (Appendix C).

According to Adams and Lawrence (2019), closed-ended response surveys provide the respondent an opportunity to use rating scales that produce quantitative measurements ranging from dichotomous (true/false or yes/no) to multiple choice, through Likert scales. Closed-ended rating scale surveys also allow the researcher to easily quantify and calculate the frequency of themes as McMillan and Schumacher (2010) advise that numerical scales are "used extensively in questionnaires because they allow fairly accurate assessment of beliefs or opinions" (p. 198). A Likert scale was used to measure the level of agreeance with each of the survey questions related to self-sabotaging behaviors since a Likert scale is “a rating scale in which respondents report their intensity of an experience or their level of agreement” (Adams & Lawrence, 2019).
In utilizing this approach, the data from each individual survey can be easily analyzed to provide quantifiable results.

**Qualitative Instrumentation**

Patten (2013) asserts that qualitative instrumentation yields data in words that cannot be easily quantified or reduced to numbers. Additionally, qualitative instruments are designed with the purpose of exploring a topic in-depth with a relatively small number of respondents (Daniels & Minot, 2019). Major measures used by researchers to gather qualitative data include observations, questionnaires, artifact reviews and structured or semi-structured interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). This research study utilized in-depth structured interviews to elicit qualitative data that was aligned to the research questions and overall purpose of the study. The thematic team of four peer researchers collaborated on interview questions (Appendix D) and created an alignment table to confirm that each question was purposeful in answering the research questions and fulfilling the purpose of the research (Appendix E).

According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2017), “qualitative researchers usually take a naturalistic approach to the world (i.e., studying things in their natural setting), while attempting to understand phenomena through the ‘voice’ of the participants” (p. 142). To gather qualitative data, this researcher conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with all eight participants as a follow up to the electronic survey. The purpose of conducting follow-up interviews was to gather detailed responses from each individual participant in their own voice. Additionally, the interview was used to collect rich information on the lived experiences of women who experienced self-sabotage during their judicial career. Ultimately, the interview questions were designed to yield responses
from participants on the impact that self-sabotaging behaviors had on their judicial leadership careers as well as to explore the strategies participants used to successfully overcome self-sabotage.

**Researcher as an Instrument of the Study**

The researcher was solely responsible for completing all of the qualitative fieldwork through conducting participant interviews; therefore, the researcher becomes an instrument of the study. Subsequently, the researcher made firsthand observations of activities and interpreted themes through their own perspective as a participant-observer (Patton, 2015). Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) explain that “researchers ‘use their sensory organs to grasp the study objects, mirroring them in their consciousness, where they then are converted into phenomenological representations to be interpreted” (p. 167). The themes and patterns elucidated by the interviews were transcribed and provided to each participant to safeguard against any misinterpretations or researcher bias. The researcher of this study has thirteen year of experience working in the justice field and has held a leadership role for 3 years.

**Validity and Reliability**

The validity of instrumentation is relative to the overarching goal of the research as evidenced in Patten (2013) where the author posits that an instrument is only valid to the extent that is accurate in measuring what it was developed to measure in relation to the research questions. The thematic team of peer researchers used the research questions to develop the survey instrument and interview questions, consulted an expert panel for an external audit of the instrument for feedback and refinement, and conducted field testing of both the survey and interview to establish validity and ensure alignment with
the conceptual framework. The reliability of an instrument means that it produces consistent results. This is evidenced in Creswell (2012) where he asserts that reliability means the results from research instruments are steady in producing similar outcomes when administered to multiple research participants at different points in time. The peer researchers in this study consulted an expert panel, conducted field testing, and completed instrument refinement to ensure that the research instruments were reliable in producing similar results when given multiple times to different participants.

**Expert Panel**

Usry, Partington, and Partington (2018) inform that comprising an expert panel is useful in establishing content validity and reliability. Before this researcher commenced recruiting members of the sample population, the thematic team of peer researcher consulted an expert panel to review the survey instrument and interview questions for alignment. Three Brandman University professors of doctoral-level education provided feedback for the team of peer researchers on both the quantitative and qualitative instruments. Feedback gathered from this panel of experts was used to refine the instruments so that they answer the research questions, fulfill the intended purpose of this research study, and align with the study’s conceptual framework.

**Quantitative Field Testing**

Field testing the electronic survey is an essential step in the research process to improve the clarity, accessibility, functionality, and format of the quantitative instrument. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) “it is critical to pilot test both the instructions and the survey before distributing them to the identified sample” (p. 237). The field testing for the electronic survey instrument was completed by the thematic team
of four researchers to confirm alignment with the research questions, ensure validity, and confirm reliability. Each peer researcher found an individual similar to their sample to complete the pilot test. After completing the field test, the participants provided feedback to the research on the survey instrument using the Survey Field Test Participant Feedback Tool (Appendix F). Based on the feedback, changes were made to the language used in certain questions so that the survey would be easy for the participants to understand as the researcher would not be present as they complete the survey to clarify anything that is unclear. Revisions were made to the instrument so that the questions were in alignment with answering the research questions and fulfilling the purpose of the research.

**Qualitative Field Testing**

Qualitative field testing was conducted to confirm alignment with the research questions and ensure instrument validity and reliability. In McMillan and Schumacher (2014) the authors advise that “techniques to ensure good qualitative questions include interview script critiques by experienced interviewers, interview guide field testing, and revision of initial questions for final phraseology” (p. 383). The interview questions for this study were field tested by the thematic team of four researchers in the presence of an expert interviewer who was present to ensure that the researcher was not leading the participant to answering questions in a particular way. Each peer researcher field tested the qualitative interview instrument on an individual similar to the target sample but whose responses would not be used in the actual study.

After the field test, individuals who engaged in the test interview gave the researcher detailed feedback on the instrument and interview procedures using the Field Test Interviewee Feedback Tool (Appendix G). The expert observer also provided the
researcher with feedback on how to improve the qualitative interview process for both the participant and researcher through completing the Interview Observer Feedback Tool (Appendix H). Qualitative field testing allowed the researcher to check for bias, evaluate the questions for intent, assess the length of the interview, and gain an idea of how easily the data can be analyzed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). After the field testing, revisions were made based on participant and observer feedback to refine the interview instruments and interview procedures. This was done so that the researcher could become comfortable conducting interviews therefore making each participant comfortable enough to provide honest and thorough responses that answer the research questions.

**Data Collection**

The data collection process begins with the researcher establishing rapport, building trust, and participating in reciprocal relations with the identified participants for the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) assert that data collection in mixed-methods research “includes the collection and analyses of quantitative (closed-ended and numerical) and qualitative (open-ended and textual) data (i.e., a quantitative and qualitative research question must be posed, individually analyzed and interpreted, and followed up with an overall interpretation)” (p.178). Data collection for this research was not conducted until the researcher completed the National Institutes of Health web-based training on protecting human research participants (Appendix I) and the application for the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) was approved (Appendix J). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for making
sure all ethical and legal considerations are followed throughout the course of the data
collection for the research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Once the BUIRB gave the researcher permission to begin data collection, the
researcher contacted potential participants to introduce the study and find out if they
would be interested in participating. Potential participants were contacted using a
snowball method where one female judge recommended another who would be a good fit
for the study. During the initial contact, the researcher formally introduced herself,
explained the study and obtained each individual’s informed consent to participate in the
research. The researcher also ensured that participants understood that any information
obtained would be confidential, kept in a locked file and that she would be the only
person with access to the data collected.

**Quantitative Data Collection**

Quantitative data was collected through an electronic survey that was refined by
the thematic group of peer researchers with the guidance of multiple faculty members.
The survey was administered within the Survey Monkey platform to the eight female
judges who agreed to be part of the study. All electronic survey data were secured in an
account that was password protected. The data obtained from the quantitative survey
were used to determine the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors amongst the target
population of female judges.

This researcher used their access to an internal email directory of judicial officers
and judges to initiate contact with multiple female judges and inform them of the study.
The female judges who were interested in the study contacted the researcher by phone or
email to express their willingness to participate. At this point, the researcher verified that
those interested met the criteria for participation and shared with them the purpose of the study. An overview of the quantitative component of data collection was provided and the participant was informed that they would receive an email (Appendix K) with a formal invitation to the study that included a description of the research and a direct link to the electronic survey.

**Qualitative Data Collection**

The thematic team of peer researchers created a set of interview questions (Appendix D) for the purpose of qualitative data collection. The interview questions were designed to be open ended and scripted so that rich data could be collected in a semi-structured manner. The interview questions included follow up probes that were used to gain clarity on participant responses to the initial interview questions. All interview question and supplemental probes were consistent with each individual participant. A series of individual face-to-face interviews were scheduled with each of the eight participants. The participant was in complete control of deciding when and where the interview would take place, which allowed them to feel comfortable in providing honest responses to the interview questions.

Before each interview the participants received, reviewed, and signed an informed consent form (Appendix L). The researcher conducted each interview with a professional tone and maintained objective body language throughout so that each interview was delivered in a consistent way. The Temi Transcription application was used to capture the interview in real time for accurate transcription. Handwritten notes were also taken to record illuminating observations. At the end of each interview the researcher allowed the participants to ask questions and clarify any part of the interview. Finally, the participant
was ensured that they would receive a transcript of the interview to review and approve before the researcher moved on to data analysis.

**Protecting Participants**

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) advise that “the researcher is ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in a study” (p. 23). The researcher was mindful of the need to protect the confidentiality, privacy, and truth-telling of participants during the data collection phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Prior to administering the survey and conducting the interview, the researcher informed the participant of their right to withdraw from the study at any time (Roberts, 2010). The researcher also went over the informed consent form (Appendix L) and allowed the participant to ask questions before signing since “all prospective participants must be fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in the research project before they agree to take part” (Roberts, 2010, p. 33). A copy of the Research Participants Bill of Rights (Appendix M) was also provided and reviewed with each participant. Additionally, safeguards were put in place to ensure the confidentiality of each respondent. The results of the online survey were only accessible to the researcher and secured in a password-protected individual account. Interview notes, audio, and transcripts were kept in a locked file. The researcher also protected the participant’s identity through masking their names and other identifying information.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis transforms raw data into findings (Patton, 2015). In mixed methods research, the technique of using the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of researching phenomena (Tashakkori &
According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) “when analyzing quantitative and qualitative data within a mixed methods framework, researchers undergo at least some of the following seven stages: (a) data reduction, (b) data display, (c) data transformation, (d) data correlation, (e) data consolidation, (f) data comparison, and (g) data integration” (p. 490). For the purpose of this research, a data reduction approach was used since it involved reducing the dimensionality of qualitative data through using a quantitative instrument to narrow down which self-sabotaging behaviors among female judges merited further exploration with the qualitative interview instrument. As Patton (2015) asserts data analysis “involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting the trivial from the significant, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal” (p. 521). The following section illustrates how the researcher was able to use mixed methods analysis to extract the most meaning from the data, thus enhancing the quality of the data analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was collected from eight participants through the online platform Survey Monkey. Utilizing the Survey Monkey platform allowed the researcher to analyze data in real time as participants completed the survey. The collection of responses assisted the researcher in answering the research question: “What self-sabotaging behaviors do female judges experience throughout their leadership careers?” Simple descriptive statistics were used to determine the numerical mean of quantitative data because they provide a summary of data based on the sample and research questions
(Daniels & Minot, 2019), which allowed the researcher to determine and describe which behaviors were most prevalent in each self-sabotaging category.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) advise that “qualitative data is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories” (p. 367). As such, each of the interview transcripts were thoroughly reviewed by the researcher multiple times to identify key themes and patterns related to the answering the research questions. Figure 2 illustrates the steps of qualitative analysis.


Assigning reliable codes to qualitative data allows a researcher to sort meaningful descriptive themes into groups and patterns for further analysis. After the transcripts were reviewed, the researcher developed initial codes for the data, which is a crucial step in analyzing, describing, classifying and interpreting emergent themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher used NVivo software to code themes that aligned with the research questions and purpose of the research.

**Intercoder Reliability**

Intercoder reliability is the extent to which coders agree with one another on the coded themes and patterns in research. High coder agreement on code content points to a
valid coding scheme which can be an indicator of high reliability in the result. This is evidenced in Patton (2015) where the author states that “engaging multiple analysts and computing the interrater reliability among these analysts is valued, even expected, as a means of establishing credibility” (p. 665). This is an important and necessary step in coding qualitative research data because intercoder reliability protects against skepticism through ensuring that coding is efficient through data gathering, analysis and interpretation (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2006). The thematic team of four peer researchers conferred and compared codes, themes, and patterns to ensure that they were similar and in alignment with answering the research questions, thus increasing the credibility of research findings.

**Limitations**

The limitations of a study are specific characteristics that may affect the ability to generalize, even though such limitations are usually outside of the researcher’s control (Roberts, 2010). According to Creswell (2012) “limitations may address problems in data collection, unanswered questions by participants, or better selection of purposeful sampling of individuals or sites for the study” (p. 259). The specific limitations of time, distance, and sample size as perceived by the researcher are discussed in the section below.

**Time**

This research was conducted around the schedule of female State Court Judges who serve on the bench in the Superior Court of California. The researcher allotted approximately one hour of uninterrupted time with each participant to conduct the interview, which produced significant time constraints. Therefore, given the demanding
schedule of each participating female judge, time was a significant limitation of the study. To mitigate this limitation, immediately after each respondent completed the electronic survey the researcher contacted the participant to schedule the follow-up interview. The researcher scheduled the face-to-face interview at least two weeks in advance to allow participants enough time to complete the interview as their schedule permitted.

**Distance**

Since the researcher needed to conduct multiple face-to-face interviews, distance was a limitation of the study. The research was delimited to participants who could meet within 60 miles of the researcher in Northern California. The restraints on distance could produce results that are not generalizable to female State Court Judges outside of the researcher’s geographical location.

**Sample Size**

The small sample size chosen for this study created limitations. Results gathered from a sample size of eight female State Trial Court Judges in Northern California may not be able to be generalized for the entirety of State Trial Court Judges across California or the United States. Additionally, female judges who serve on the bench in federal courts, appellate courts, and the Supreme Court of the United States may have a different lived experience than that of the small sample studied in this research.

**Summary**

This chapter explained the methodology used for this thematic research study, including a general overview of explanatory mixed methods research. The purpose and research questions were also reiterated prior to introducing the research design. The
section on research design highlighted the components of mixed methods research, including quantitative and qualitative approaches and the rationale for selecting this method of research. The population, sampling frame, and criteria sample selection were explained in detail. An overview of instrumentation, the specific quantitative and qualitative instruments, and the researcher as an instrument in the study was also discussed. The validity and reliability measures of engaging an expert panel and field testing the quantitative and qualitative instruments used in this research were explained. An in-depth discussion of procedures used for collecting and analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data was presented, which includes measures taken by the research to protect the study’s participants and ensure intercoder reliability. The chapter concluded with a section on the limitations of the research as perceived by the researcher. Chapter IV will provide further analysis and interpretation of the research findings.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Chapter IV provides a thorough analysis of the data collected from the explanatory mixed-method study that examined the lived experiences of female state trial court judges. This chapter begins with a review of the purpose statement, research questions, research methods, data collection procedures, population, sample and demographic data. Chapter IV concludes with a detailed summary of the data collected and major findings related to each research question.

Overview

Presented in this chapter is a review of the research purpose statement and research questions. A description of the research methodology and data collection procedures is also provided. Details about the population, sample, and demographic data of research participants are also given. Chapter IV of this research study closes with an in-depth analysis of the findings gathered from the electronic surveys, which were used to narrow down the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors, and the interviews conducted with female state trial court judges that explored their lived experiences with self-sabotage in their career.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female state trial court judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female state trial court judges to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.
Research Questions

4. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female state trial court judges experienced throughout their leadership careers?

5. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?

6. What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

An explanatory mixed methods research design was used in this study. Data was collected in a sequential manner where the researcher first administered a quantitative electronic survey to the research participants and then subsequently conducted qualitative follow-up interviews with each individual subject. Quantitative data collection via electronic survey was gathered using the Survey Monkey online platform. Detailed results from the quantitative instrument can be found in Appendix N. Qualitative data was collected by the researcher from individual semi-structured interviews with research participants. Interviews took place at a location and time that was convenient for the research participant. Each interview was recorded in real time and then transcribed with the Temi Record and Transcribe smartphone application. Once the transcriptions were completed, the researcher used NVivo software to code themes and patterns uncovered in the data collection process.

Population

The population for this study includes female judges in the United States who currently serve or have served in a state trial court. The overall population for the study
consisted of roughly 3,088 female judges across all state trial courts in the United States (George & Yoon, 2018). In California, each of the 58 counties has a trial court where there are approximately 543 women judges statewide. The target population for the purpose of this study includes women who have experience as a state trial court judge, have served in a California state trial court for at least two years, have a minimum of ten years of experience in the judicial branch, and are known for advocating for women in leadership.

Sample

A sample of eight female state trial court judges was selected to participate in this study. A purposeful, convenience, snowball sampling strategy was used to identify participants that met the sample criteria. The researcher currently works for the Superior Court of California and therefore had access to a professional network of female judges. Participants were selected and invited to participate based on whether they met all of the following criteria:

- Must be a female state trial court judge;
- Must have served in a California state trial court for at least two years;
- Must have a minimum of ten years of experience in the judicial branch;
- Must be known for advocating for women in leadership;
- Must be willing to be interviewed and agree to the informed consent form.

A convenience sampling method was used to initially identify female state trial court judges who may meet the predetermined participant criteria. Potential study participants were contacted by email or phone to determine if they were interested in participating in the study. After identifying qualified participants, the researcher used snowball sampling
to find other eligible participants by asking if the judges who were part of the study knew of any other judges who would be willing and able to participate in this research.

**Demographic Data**

The participants agreed to be included in this study due in part to the assurance that their information would be kept confidential. As such, the researcher made every effort to protect the identities of each participant by keeping identifiable information in a secure place that can only be accessed by the researcher. Names and other identifying information were also omitted from the presentation of data findings. The eight participating judges were numerically identified as outlined in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Month and Year of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>February 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. J=Judge*

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

Data collection for this study was initiated in December 2019 and was completed in February 2020. The researcher used the research questions to guide the analysis of emergent themes and patterns. Findings related to answering each research question will
be presented in further detail. Narrative descriptions and excerpts from the transcripts of participant interviews will be used in conjunction with tables to elucidate emergent themes and major findings based on the data collected from participants.

**Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

The first research question of this study is purposed to answer: *What self-sabotaging behaviors have female state trial court judges experienced throughout their leadership careers?* The conceptual framework of nine specific categories of self-sabotaging behavior and the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power as adapted from *In her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Lerner, 2012) and *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder & Briles, 2003) was used to guide the coding of data for this study. Emergent themes relevant to answering this research question were coded and organized into nine conceptual areas based on the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power and the corresponding self-sabotaging categories associated with each domain. Within each self-sabotaging category, data are presented as they relate to specific self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by this study’s participants. For a review of the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power see the conceptual framework in Appendix O.

**Thinking Too Small**

The self-sabotaging category of Thinking Too Small includes five self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by women in leadership. These five self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories by which the data was coded. Table 3 shows the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this
category, and the number of times female state trial court judges reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

Table 3

*Thinking Too Small Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants in Their Careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THINKING TOO SMALL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming parents/upbringing for why things aren’t going well in life</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing one’s value</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having courage to step out of comfort zone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being open to new experiences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making perfection the standard</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8*

The most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors in the category of Thinking Too Small are minimizing one’s value and making perfection the standard, which were reported a total of 12 times respectively. In regard to minimizing one’s value, Judge 3 shared that,

In my early years as an attorney I engaged in constant self-comparison. As a black woman especially, I felt like I never quite measured up. I didn’t think that I had any unique value. What made things worse was that this industry was dominated by white men. On a daily basis I was very unsure of myself, my skills, or whether I even belonged. I had this idea that I needed different ‘representatives’ to show up for me at work because who I really was was not good enough.
Other participants expressed their experience with feeling as though they had to make perfection the standard. Judge 5 elaborated on her feelings when she stated that, The legal profession is very demanding. So much is expected of you. Knowing the standards of the department heads made me think that I always needed to be on point. Everything I did had to be perfect so that others would respect me. I felt like I always had to prove myself. You know, the guys in the office could goof off and get away with it. At least that’s how I saw it. I, on the other hand, couldn’t have an off day or bring less than perfect work because somehow it would be blamed on me being a woman.

The next behavior that appeared as a theme was not having courage to step out of comfort zone. This specific self-sabotaging behavior emerged a total of nine times. Judge 1 shared that, I was scared to apply for promotions or ask for raises. What’s funny is that I was great at negotiating for my clients but could never do the same for myself. I was the first one to push others to try new things, be open to new experiences, but when it came to myself it didn’t quite work out like that. I was uncomfortable. It was easier to tell others to be brave than it was for me to actually be brave for myself.

The last emergent theme amongst participants was not being open to new experiences, which was reported with a frequency of four. An example was shared by Judge 6 where she expressed that, I didn’t want to rock the boat. I didn’t want to mess anything up. I had already done more than I ever thought I could so I stuck to what was familiar. The
thought of trying anything new or different made me cringe. I liked my little office with my predictable tasks so I didn’t really want to do or be more at that time.

No participants reported blaming parents/upbringing for why things aren’t going well in life, and this theme did not emerge in the qualitative interviews.

**Fear and Worrying**

The self-sabotaging category of Fear and Worrying includes seven self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by women in leadership. These seven self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories by which the data was coded. Table 4 illustrates the self-sabotaging category, specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the frequency of times female state trial court judges reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors throughout their leadership career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEAR AND WORRYING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling anxious or worried when contemplating change</td>
<td>5 62.5%</td>
<td>6 75.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling out of control</td>
<td>1 12.5%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resisting change</td>
<td>1 12.50%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of looking stupid</td>
<td>2 25.0%</td>
<td>3 37.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling like an imposter on the job</td>
<td>5 62.5%</td>
<td>3 37.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulling over negative experiences</td>
<td>3 37.5%</td>
<td>1 12.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being afraid of rejection</td>
<td>4 50.0%</td>
<td>1 12.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8
Feeling anxious or worried when contemplating change was the most frequently reported self-sabotaging behavior in the category of Fear and Worrying with a total frequency of 11. Judge 8 shared her experience with feeling anxious or worried at the thought of being transferred from the criminal law bench to preside over family law cases. She reported that,

Even though I knew the rotation was coming I still felt uneasy about moving from the known to the unknown. My entire career was in practicing criminal law and presiding over criminal cases.

Judge 2 also reported a similar experience with feeling anxious or worried when contemplating change. She shared her fear that she would not be successful moving from attorney to judgeship,

When I started entertaining the idea of applying for judgeship, I think I loved the thought but I was afraid that I would not survive the transition from lawyer to judge.

The self-sabotaging behavior of feeling like an imposter on the job emerged eight times total. Judge 4 illuminated this when she stressed how it took many years to believe she was deserving of her success. She advises that,

If I recall correctly, feeling like an imposter was one of the behaviors in this category? I definitely have experienced that. Even though I had the same degrees, the same education, similar years of experience, I still doubted myself. It took me years to accept that I deserved to be where I was. Like, I worked hard to get here.

Fear of looking stupid and being afraid of rejection both appeared five times. In regard to the fear of looking stupid, Judge 1 shared that,
I actually feel like the more education and training I got the more I was afraid to look stupid at work.

Judge 7 reported that being afraid of rejection was a prominent fear in her career. She advises that,

Just the thought of the potential of being rejected was crippling. I wanted people to respect me so I did a lot of people pleasing. Eventually I found out that you can’t please everyone. Rejection is a fact of life.

Fear of rejection also appeared in Judge 1’s interview when she shared that,

Oh yes. Definitely fear of rejection. That was the main thing holding me back early in my career. I didn’t go for anything if I felt it would end in rejection. I was not comfortable being told no. I never asked for a raise, professional development, or went up for a promotion because I didn’t want to be told no and for some reason I just knew that I would be. I didn’t ask for anything because I was afraid of no.

Mulling over negative experiences appeared a total of four times across the survey and interview data. Judge 6 told about her experience when she shared that,

It didn’t matter how many people gave me praise for my work, I would spend more time thinking about that one mistake than enjoying the praise. I would obsess over how I could have done things differently, even when mistakes were not entirely my fault.

Feeling out of control and resisting change each appeared one time respectively in the electronic survey however these themes did not emerge in the follow-up interviews.
**Misunderstanding One’s Self**

Misunderstanding One’s Self is a self-sabotaging category that includes five specific behaviors that may be experienced by women in judicial leadership. The five self-sabotaging behaviors functioned as subcategories by which the data were coded. Table 5 highlights the self-sabotaging category, the five specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the total number of times that female state trial court judges reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 5**

*Misunderstanding One’s Self Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants in Their Careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MISUNDERSTANDING ONE'S SELF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accepting compliments</td>
<td>7 87.5 %</td>
<td>6 75.0 %</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not seeking out feedback</td>
<td>1 12.5 %</td>
<td>0 0.0 %</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on one person who criticizes them</td>
<td>1 12.5 %</td>
<td>1 12.5 %</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitating to describe or talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego</td>
<td>4 50.0 %</td>
<td>4 50.0 %</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accepting parts of self that need development</td>
<td>0 0.0 %</td>
<td>0 0.0 %</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8*

The most prevailing self-sabotaging behavior in the category of Misunderstanding One’s Self was not accepting compliments, which appeared 13 times. Judge 3 reported that she was uncomfortable hearing about herself, as recently as four years ago when she was formally installed as a judge. She shared that,
This is a tough one for me, even still to this day. At my investiture they did a bio of me, you know, the typical speech about my experience, accomplishments, etcetera. I was so uncomfortable with the attention. Even immediately after I was sworn in, it was hard for me to accept well wishes and congratulations.

Judge 1 shared a similar experience with not accepting compliments. She reported that,

I would get really uncomfortable when people complimented me on anything. I felt like I had to be gracious and accept their compliment, but inside I was so uncomfortable because what they said about me didn’t match how I felt about myself.

Hesitating to describe or talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego was the next most prevalent self-sabotaging behavior in this category. It appeared with a frequency of 8. Judge 8 also shared that,

I can’t think of one specific instance, but I still find it hard to talk about myself without feeling like I am being haughty or arrogant.

Focusing on one person who criticized them was a theme that appeared two times. Judge 5 shared that,

I have kind of played to one person who was hard on me. I wanted them to be impressed. I felt like I had to redeem myself in their eyes. I hate to say that I spent a lot of time focused on this one individual. Hindsight is 20/20 because now that I look back on it, that person really did not have much of an impact on my career.

Not seeking out feedback was reported one time in the quantitative instrument, but this theme did not emerge in the qualitative interviews. The participants also did not
share that they had any experience with the self-sabotaging behavior of not accepting parts of self that need development.

Dishonesty

The self-sabotaging category of Dishonesty encompasses four self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by women in leadership. These four self-sabotaging behaviors became the subcategories by which the data was coded and analyzed. Table 6 shows the overall self-sabotaging category of dishonesty, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within the category, and the number of times participants reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

Table 6

*Dishonesty Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants in Their Careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISHONESTY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying “yes” to things when actually mean “no”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking sides when would prefer to stay neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silencing self when it would be best to speak up</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking to be nice to avoid confrontation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8

Seeking to be nice to avoid confrontation appeared most frequently in the self-sabotaging category of Dishonesty with a total of two reports. Judge 2 talked about an incident with a more experienced judge. She admits that she was nice because she didn’t want conflict and shared that,
I could just tell that this judge liked to start things. Unnecessarily. Whenever I had to interact with him I just kind of smiled and nodded. I didn’t want to get pulled into his drama.

The self-sabotaging behavior of saying yes to things when meaning no appeared once in the quantitative instrument but did not emerge in any of the follow-up interviews. No participants reported taking sides when they would prefer to stay neutral or silencing self when it would be best to speak up.

**Holding Back**

Holding Back is a self-sabotaging category that includes nine particular self-sabotaging behaviors. The nine specific self-sabotaging behaviors were used by the researcher to organize and code the data. Table 7 below provides more detail on the overall self-sabotaging category, the nine behaviors within the category, and the frequency that each behavior was reported by the participants on the study.

Table 7
*Holding Back Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants in Their Careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOLDING BACK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reaching out for help when needed</td>
<td>3 37.5%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding criticism</td>
<td>1 12.5%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making inflections; Not making bold statements</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologizing unnecessarily</td>
<td>1 12.5%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking down to oneself</td>
<td>8 100%</td>
<td>7 87.5%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting in the back of the room during meetings or conferences</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hesitating to speak up in a meeting or group discussion 0 0.0% 0 0.0% 0

Camouflaging” - the act of holding back when you have the answer, question, or thought, because you are concerned about what other people think or the impression they will have of you 0 0.0% 0 0.0% 0

Being insecure in balancing work and family obligations 4 50% 5 62.5% 9

Note. Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8

Talking down to oneself appeared 15 times and was the most prevalent self-sabotaging behavior in this category. Judge 7 shared that,

My inner critic would always nag at me. I was way harder on myself than I should have been.

Judge 8 also reported that,

Feeling like I was not good enough was a constant. In my head, I could turn the slightest imperfection in my day into a catastrophe. Anything that went wrong was all my fault, and ten times worse, even when it wasn’t.

Judge 4 shared her experience,

Talking down to myself and then wondering why I felt so depressed. I was damaging my self-worth more than anyone else.

Being insecure in balancing work and family obligations emerged nine times and Judge 6 shared,

Even before I was a judge or an attorney for that matter, I always worried that my ambitions would tear me away from my family. In the early years of my
career I held myself back because I didn’t want to be spread too thin. I could not stomach sacrificing my home life for my work life. The balancing act was tough. I had these things I wanted to pursue but I also wanted to be fully present for my family. I really delayed myself because I didn’t know if I could handle the burden without tipping the scales too far in either direction.

Not reaching out for help when needed was reported three times in the survey but did not surface in the interviews. Avoiding criticism and apologizing unnecessarily each appeared one time in the quantitative instrument but these themes also did not emerge in any of the qualitative interviews. The self-sabotaging behaviors of making inflections; not making bold statement’s, sitting in the back of the room during meetings or conferences, hesitating to speak up in a meeting or group discussion, and camouflaging did not emerge in the either the surveys or follow-up interviews.

**Lack of Self-Reflection**

The Lack of Self-Reflection self-sabotaging category involves a total of six specific self-sabotaging behaviors. The data were coded according to the six unique self-sabotaging behaviors included in the category. For more information about the Lack of Self-Reflection category, including the six self-sabotaging behaviors and the number of times these behaviors were reported by participants, see Table 8 below.

**Table 8**

*Lack of Self-Reflection Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants in Their Careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF SELF-REFLECTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping too busy to avoid being alone</td>
<td>Count 2, %25.0</td>
<td>Count 0, %0.0</td>
<td>Total 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Judges Reporting</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Judges Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowing self to mourn losses or cry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not taking vacations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowing any down time; not being truly “off” when off from work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hating to be wrong</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding grudges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8

The self-sabotaging behavior of not allowing any down time; not being truly off when off from work was reported two times. Judge 7 elaborated that,

It was hard for me to leave work at work when I was off the clock. I would stay late, take work home, and have sleepless nights over what needed to be done the next day. It was not healthy.

Not allowing self to mourn losses or cry also emerged two times. Judge 5 recalled her experience with this when she shared that,

I was in the middle of a big trial when someone really important to me died. I had to preside over this trial. The news was in my courtroom every day. Even though I wanted to take time to mourn I just couldn’t. So many people were watching. It would have been highly inappropriate for me to cry at work. I felt like I was on autopilot. I just had to grit my teeth, put on my judicial demeanor, and tough it out.

Keeping too busy to avoid being alone was reported twice in the survey but was not mentioned in the interviews. Not taking vacations was also reported in the survey one time but was not brought up in the interviews. There were no reports by participants of hating to be wrong or holding grudges.
Isolating

Isolating is a self-sabotaging category that entails five individual self-sabotaging behaviors. The five self-sabotaging behaviors acted as the guide by which the data was coded. Table 9 provides more detail about the self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors indicative of isolating, as well as the frequency that participants reported experiencing these behaviors.

Table 9
*Isolating Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants in Their Careers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count   %</td>
<td>Count %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISOLATING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being afraid to reach out to people</td>
<td>2       25.0 %</td>
<td>1       12.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being unaware of the types of support needed</td>
<td>1       12.5 %</td>
<td>0       0.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling guilty for taking up too much of people’s time</td>
<td>1       12.5 %</td>
<td>0       0.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relying exclusively on female mentors</td>
<td>0       0.0 %</td>
<td>0       0.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only networking upstream</td>
<td>2       25.0 %</td>
<td>0       0.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8

The self-sabotaging behavior of being afraid to reach out to people was the most prevalent behavior in the category of Isolating. This behavior emerged three times and was described by Judge 8 when she shared,

The world of litigation can be very scary. At times intimidating. I can say that in the past I have used isolation as sort of a protective factor to avoid reaching out to colleagues and higher ups. Isolating protected me and at the same time prevented me from making connections with key advocates and decision makers.
Only networking upstream was reported two times in the survey but no detail was provided in the follow-up interviews. Being unaware of the types of support needed and feeling guilty for taking up too much of people’s time both appeared one time in the survey respectively, but these behaviors did not emerge in the interviews. No judges reported relying exclusively on female mentors.

**Disempowering Other Women**

There are five self-sabotaging behaviors associated with Disempowering Other Women. These five self-sabotaging behaviors were used to subcategorize the data collected. In Table 10, the category of Disempowering Other Women is highlighted, along with the five specific self-sabotaging behaviors associated with the category. Table 10 also lays out the total number of times the participants reported experiencing these specific self-sabotaging behaviors.

**Table 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling too busy to help other women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking “I did it the hard way, why help?”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling jealous of other women who have “made it”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking behind a woman’s back or spreading rumors about them</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being harder on women subordinates than men</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8
The most prevalent self-sabotaging behavior in the category of Disempowering Other Women was thinking ‘I did it the hard way, why help?’ which appeared four times. Judge 4 shared,

I almost hate to admit this now. But I did feel like I struggled so much to get to this level so why should I make it easier for someone else. I thought other women had to pay their dues like me. It was a flawed way of thinking.

Feeling too busy to help other women, feeling jealous of other women who have made it, and being harder on women subordinated than men all emerged one time in the electronic survey, but no mention of these behaviors surfaced in the interviews. There were also no reports from participants of talking behind a woman’s back or spreading rumors about them.

**Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace**

Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace is a self-sabotaging category made up of seven associated self-sabotaging behaviors. The data was coded in accordance with these seven specific self-sabotaging behaviors. Table 11 shows the overall category of Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace, the self-sabotaging behaviors involved in this category, and the number of times that female state trial court judges reported their experience with these behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Number of Participants who Reported Behaviors in Survey</th>
<th>Number of References of Behaviors Reported in Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFUSING SEX/GENDER ROLE CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94
Dressing too sexy at work 0 0.0 % 0 0.0% 0
Squashing natural feminine qualities 6 75.0% 7 87.5% 13
Exhibiting male/agentic qualities of other women who have “made it” 6 75.0% 0 0.0% 6
Twirling hair; exhibiting girl like behaviors 0 0.0% 0 0.0% 0
Flirting at work 0 0.0% 0 0.0% 0
Using prosodic speech or speech patterns (“Valley girl,” uptalk, vocal fry) 0 0.0% 0 0.0% 0
Conforming to societal gender expectations (cleaning up, taking notes, arranging food) 3 37.5% 1 12.5% 4

Note. Number of Judges reporting behaviors, n = 8

Squashing natural feminine qualities was the most frequently occurring self-sabotaging behavior in the category of Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace. It emerged a total of 13 times. Judge 2 shared that,

I have always been exposed to women in different areas of leadership. Like feminine, strong, respectable women. So, I was surprised when I realized that I dumbed down my femininity whenever I was the only woman in a room full of men. I guess I made the assumption that they would never respect me if I was my natural self. I did whatever I could to suppress my feminine traits. I was totally projecting my issues onto them.

Judge 6 also shared,

I wanted to assert myself as a new judge. I did not want to be known as the new woman judge. I wanted to be respected as a judge, period. For some reason I thought that my femininity had to be minimized so I could be taken
seriously by other judges, attorneys, litigants even. My experience was that 
women had to assimilate if they wanted to survive the old boys club.

In regard to conforming to societal gender expectations, Judge 2 reported her 
experience,

I sort of defaulted to being the designated caretaker in the room. I don’t even 
know why I felt obligated to do that.

Judge 3 also reported that,

This is a category where trying to blend in caused me to act out what I was 
programmed to believe. Like what a woman’s role is. To be honest, I didn’t even 
notice I was doing it.

Exhibiting male/agentic qualities of other women who have made was reported 
six times in the survey but did not emerge in the interviews. Participants did not identify 
dressing too sexy at work, twirling hair; exhibiting girl like behaviors, flirting at work, or 
using prosodic speech of speech patterns.

**Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

The second research question sought to answer: *What impact did self-sabotaging 
behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?* All of the 
participants in this study indicated agreement that self-sabotaging behaviors had an 
impact on their leadership career as illustrated in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number of Judges reporting impact, n = 8
Every participant shared how self-sabotaging behaviors impacted their career development. Judge 1 reported that,

Self-sabotage makes life a lot harder than it needs to be. And I really undermined my own success by engaging in self-destructive behaviors.

Judge 2 agreed that self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on her career when she shared that,

I wondered why I was so stressed out all the time. Then I noticed I put a lot of unnecessary stress on myself with my negative thinking. My career suffered because I was burning out constantly.

Judge 3 shared her perception of the impact of self-sabotage on her leadership career by stating,

I got in my own way. I lacked the confidence to step out of my comfort zone. That complacency stalled my career.

In her response, Judge 4 indicated that,

It definitely made things more difficult for me because I would put things off and then they would pile up. I was missing deadlines and always felt like I was scrambling to keep up.

Judge 5 acknowledged that self-sabotaging behaviors impacted her career and at times still affect her if left unchecked. She shared,

I started my career with a goal in mind and then as I would begin to pursue that the self-doubt would creep in and knock me off course. I still struggle with self-doubt now but I never let it get too far out of hand. I have too much evidence to reassure me that I know what I’m doing.
Judge 6 reflected on the impact that self-sabotage had on her career performance when she reports that,

I could have attained judgeship earlier if I had not been so afraid to apply. My fear set me back many years.

Judge 7 shared that,

The internal conflict was real. Like, I really wanted to get ahead but my actions didn’t match my desire.

Finally, Judge 8 reported that,

Self-sabotaging caused me to lose a lot of things. Promotions, relationships, time.

I missed out on so many opportunities because I talked myself out of going for it.

**Strategies Used to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

The third research question seeks to answer: What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors? Strategies identified by the participants for each self-sabotaging category are highlighted in detail below. The strategies are organized into themes that are in alignment with the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power.

**Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny**

Two strategies emerged as themes in alignment with Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny. The first strategy participants used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors in the category of Thinking Too Small was knowing one’s potential and the second strategy was being bold. The frequency of each strategy is highlighted in Table 13 below.
Table 13  
*Strategies Used to Address Thinking Too Small*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing one’s potential</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being bold</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8*

Knowing one’s potential appeared five times and was reported by 62.5% of participants. Judge 4 illuminated the overall idea of knowing one’s potential when she shared that,

> Understanding the power and influence that I had really helped me overcome thinking too small and embrace my potential. I learned to stop thinking less of myself. It took work to get comfortable with who I was and what I had to offer but it was worth it.

Being bold emerged three times and was present in 37.5% of the interviews. Judge 2 shared how being bold helped her overcome Thinking Too Small. She indicated that,

> I think you have to be bold. For me boldness didn’t come naturally, at least not initially. I’ve had to fake boldness many, many times in my career. But I feel that taking bold action and getting results helped me stop underestimating myself.

**Constructive Preparation**

Three strategies to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors in the category of Fear and Worrying emerged from interviews with participants. These include engaging in Constructive Preparation by focusing on the good, not letting fear stop you, and embracing change. The strategies and frequency they emerged are highlighted in Table 14.
Table 14  
*Strategies Used to Address Fear and Worrying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on the good/positive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not letting fear stop you</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracing change</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8

Focusing on the good/positive was reported three times and appeared in 37.5% of interviews. Judge 8 reported that,

The way I combat fear is to shift my focus to the positive.

Judge 5 also mentioned focusing on the good when she shared that,

I had to stop thinking everything was going to be bad and start believing that things could actually be good.

Three judges identified not letting fear stop them as another strategy they have used to overcome Fear and Worrying. This strategy showed up three times and in 37.5% of interviews. Judge 3 shared her personal experience with overcoming fear when she informed that,

I would confide in other women that I trusted. Women who had way more experience than I did. Sharing my fears with them and hearing about their individual experiences helped me understand that I could feel fear and still go after what I want. These women had a way of validating my feelings and still encouraging me to push past the fear and never give up. To acknowledge the fear and do it anyway.

Judge 4 added to the idea of not letting fear stop her when she shared how she overcame her fear or being told no. She reported that,

I noticed that the ones who got the rewards took the risk. I started to understand that hearing no would not be the end of my career and that really, the word no was
the worst thing that could happen to me. I took baby steps outside of my comfort zone at first. Eventually I got comfortable with the idea that I may be told no, but I also just might be told yes. This mindset always keeps my fear in check.

Finally, embracing change was a strategy that emerged two times and in 25% of the interviews. Judge 7 asserted that,

The best way to get over fear is to embrace change. Change is inevitable. Why worry about things you can’t control?

**Owning All of One’s Self**

Two major strategies emerged to overcome behaviors in the self-sabotaging category of Misunderstanding One’s Self in exchange for Owning All of One’s Self. One strategy that surfaced was giving yourself credit and the other was learning self. The strategies and frequency they emerged are highlighted in Table 15.

![Table 15](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving yourself credit</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning self</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8*

The strategy of giving yourself credit appeared four times and in 50% of the interviews. Judge 7 stressed the importance of giving yourself credit when she shared that,

I know it’s not always easy to look inside and give yourself validation, but I think it is so important to take time to celebrate yourself. Give yourself credit and understand that you deserve it.

Judge 1 adds to the idea of giving yourself credit in order to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors associated with Misunderstanding One’s Self by stating,
The shift happens when you stop looking at the things you haven’t done and start looking at the things you did. You gotta give yourself credit for any and all progress.

Learning self was a strategy identified four times and in 50% of interviews. Judge 2 shared her thoughts by saying,

Once I did the hard work of getting to know my true self I felt more balanced in life. It was very empowering. Learning myself and accepting myself made me much more confident.

**Honest Self-Expression**

One strategy to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors in the category of Dishonesty emerged in qualitative interviews with the judges. The strategy reported for using Honest Self-Expression was being authentic. The strategy and frequency it emerged is shown in Table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being authentic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8*

Being authentic appeared eight times and in 100% of interviews. Judge 4 shared that,

Uh, it helps if you recognize what you really want when you have to make hard decisions. You have to be ok with whatever you decide. I think the best way to be ok is to know that you are being true to yourself.

Judge 5 added to this sentiment when she reflected on how she puts inspirational items in her chambers to remind her to be her authentic self. She shared that,
I have a little, what do you call it, like a plaque on my desk that says ‘be you.’ It’s a small reminder that guides me.

**Acting with Confidence**

The participants identified three strategies that helped them overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors involved with Holding Back which led to them Acting with Confidence. The three strategies include speaking up, being kind to self, and asking for help. The strategies and frequency they emerged are indicated in Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking up</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being kind to self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8*

Speaking up was a strategy that appeared four times and in 50% of the interviews. Judge 7 informed that,

You just can’t hold back. You have to find your voice and speak up. Once I started doing that I started earning respect. Even when people didn’t agree with me they respected my opinion.

The judges also identified being kind to self as a strategy to overcome Holding Back. Being kind to self was a strategy that emerged two times and in 25% of interviews. Judge 3 shared that,

I try to think positively of myself. I take time to be nice instead of negative. I just don’t beat myself up anymore.

Finally, the participants used the strategy of asking for help which appeared 2 times and in 25% of the interviews. Judge 6 stated that,
Asking for help takes the pressure off of trying to figure everything out on your own. Sometimes we hold ourselves back because we are doing too much. It’s ok to ask for help. There’s a quote I like that says ‘If you want to go fast go alone. If you want to go far go together.” I think everybody needs a little help to go far.

**Cultivating Self-Intimacy**

There were two strategies that emerged in the interviews with participants to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors in the category of Lack of Self-Reflection in exchange for Cultivating Self-Intimacy. These strategies were taking time for self and journaling. Each strategy and the frequency that they emerged are indicated below in Table 18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking time for self</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8

Taking time for self surfaced as a strategy five times and in 62.5% of interviews.

Judge 1 spoke to the importance of this when she shared,

I make sure to check in with myself regularly. At least daily if not more often than that. This job is so demanding and it’s easy to lose touch. Taking time to just be me at the end of the day is mandatory.

Judge 7 added to this idea when she shared,

I take a walk with my dog after work to clear my head and hit reset on my day. It’s important for me not to let the issues at work affect my family life. Walking gives me time to transition from judge to mom. Oh, and wife.
Participants identified journaling as another strategy to cure lack of self-reflection. This theme showed up three times and in 37.5% of the interviews. Judge 5 shared how she relies on journaling to help her self-reflect. She shared,

You know what I like to do? I like to journal. It helps me get my thoughts out and keep track of what I’m feeling at the time. It amazes me when I look through my journal how much I’ve grown.

**Building a Power Web**

Two strategies to address the self-sabotaging behaviors associated with Isolating emerged in interviews with participants. For Building a Power Web, the first strategy that emerged was reaching out and the second was building meaningful relationships.

The strategies and frequency they emerged are indicated in Table 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaching out</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building meaningful relationships</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8*

Reaching out emerged as a strategy four times and in 50% of interviews. Judge 3 stressed the importance of reaching out instead of isolating when she shared,

You have to network with people. Reach out more. Isolating is so easy. It’s not healthy but it is easy. Reaching out takes courage but it also helps you find your support system.

Another strategy identified by the judges was building meaningful relationships which appeared four times and in 50% of the interviews. Judge 1 shared that,

When I decided to stop isolating, I was determined to make every professional interaction meaningful. I learned to plant seeds about who I was and what my
aspirations were. Once I began positioning myself for judgeship, I let others
know and eventually made connections with people who could advocate for
me and were responsible for appointing me to my position as judge.

**Inspiring Other Women**

One strategy to deal with self-sabotaging behaviors in the category of
Disempowering Other Women emerged in interview with the judges. The strategy was to
engage in Inspiring Other Women by giving back. The strategy and frequency it occurred
is indicated in Table 20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving back to women</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8*

Giving back was a strategy that showed up eight times and in 100% of the
interviews. Judge 6 shared how she has used this strategy when she reported that,

> I make it a point to continue to give back to women, especially young women.

Having relationships with men and women on the bench when I was an intern
really played a significant role in my decision to remain in the legal field. That
first hand experience was what sparked my interest as an attorney to ultimately
aim for the bench.

Judge 8 also shared that she gives back to other women when she indicated that,

> Because I valued and still value the investment others made in me, I invest in
other young women by engaging with organizations and law schools in the
community that link law students with judicial clerkships and legal
internships.
Embracing One’s Sexuality

One strategy to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors associated with Embracing One’s Sexuality instead of Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace emerged. This strategy was embracing, not exploiting femininity. The frequency of this strategy is highlighted in Table 21 below.

Table 21
Strategies Used to Address Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embracing, not exploiting femininity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Number of Judges reporting strategies, n = 8

Embracing, not exploiting femininity was a strategy that emerged eight times and in 100% of the interviews. Judge 5 advises that,

It took time and much practice, but I learned to accept my differences as strengths no matter what environment I was in. I stopped looking at my femininity as a disadvantage and began to embrace my feminine differences. This allowed me to change my perspective, my engagement, and the way I presented myself in positive ways.

Judge 4 also shared that,

I got rid of the idea that acting more like a man could make me a better judge. I stopped playing into the boys club mentality and just accepted myself for who I was. I can’t change the fact that I’m a woman, I just don’t let my gender dictate how I conduct myself. I’m not just a female judge, I am a judge that also happens to be a woman and that’s perfectly ok.
Findings Related to Research Question 1

Judges in this study identified specific self-sabotaging behaviors that they experienced throughout their leadership careers. Table 22 illustrates the top 10 self-sabotaging behaviors in order from most frequent behavior to least frequent behavior. The percentage of participants who indicated they had experience with these self-sabotaging behaviors is also presented below.

Table 22
Listing of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Sabotaging Behavior</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>% reported in survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking down to oneself</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squashing natural feminine qualities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accepting compliments</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimizing one’s value</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making perfection the standard</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling anxious or worried when contemplating change</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having courage to step out of comfort zone</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being insecure in balancing work and family obligations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling like and imposter on the job</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitating to describe or talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Number of Judges reporting, n = 8

Based on the analysis of the data collected the following findings were made by the researcher:

Finding 1: Talking Down to Oneself

The judges in this study identified that their experience with talking down to themselves held them back professionally. One major finding was that participants felt that their self-sabotaging inner voice caused them to be very critical of themselves. The negative self-talk also made participants feel inadequate. This self-sabotaging behavior was damaging to the confidence and self-worth of female state trial court judges.
Finding 2: Squashing Natural Feminine Qualities

One key finding regarding participants infusing sex/gender role confusion in the workplace involved them downplaying their feminine differences at work. Women in judicial leadership have experienced the internal pressure to squash their natural feminine qualities and adapt to the male centric workplace environment. Female judges felt that suppressing their feminine traits would garner them more respect from colleagues.

Finding 3: Not Accepting Compliments

Participants experience with misunderstanding themselves presented in the form of them being unable to accept compliments or recognition from others for their achievements. The judges in the study were uncomfortable fielding attention or having others talk about their accomplishments. They also had a hard time genuinely accepting praise from others.

Finding 4: Minimizing One’s Value

Another major finding was that female judges engaged in self-sabotage by minimizing their value. As the minority in judicial leadership, women feel that they are not as good as their male counterparts. This self-imposed perception of mediocrity caused participants to undermine their potential.

Finding 5: Making Perfection the Standard

Judges in this study experienced thinking too small when they practiced making perfection the standard. Participants noted that they feel that being a woman puts them in a position where they must always perform at the highest level or have their imperfections blamed on their gender. This unrelenting standard is responsible for women feeling like nothing they ever do is good enough.
Finding 6: Feeling Anxious or Worried When Contemplating Change

Fear and worry caused participants to feel anxious when contemplating change. The female judges explained that while periodic judicial reassignments were expected, they still experienced anxiety when faced with the reality that they may not be prepared for the differences between civil, criminal, and family law cases. Anxiety and worry were a hindrance to the careers of the women in this study.

Finding 7: Not Having Courage to Step Out of Comfort Zone

The key finding for female judges not having the courage to step out of their comfort zone entails their reluctance to try new things and subsequent affinity for sticking to what is familiar. Women who stick to their comfort zone are not open to new experiences. They also do not pursue things that involve risk or require any extra effort on their part.

Finding 8: Being Insecure in Balancing Work and Family Obligations

Women who pursued judicial leadership were concerned that they would not be able to handle the demands of both work and family. As women advanced in their legal career they felt they would have to sacrifice portions of their personal life to remain competitive. The ideal that family obligations would not be met due to their profession caused women in litigation to hold themselves back.

Finding 9: Feeling Like an Imposter on the Job

The participants experienced feeling like an imposter on the job even though they had the same education and comparable experience to their counterparts. This self-sabotaging behavior cause women to feel like they did not deserve their success or that
they had not done enough to earn their position. Women who feel like imposters on the job fear that one day someone will expose them for not being qualified or capable.

**Finding 10: Hesitating to Describe or Talk About Accomplishments to Others for Fear of Trumpeting Ego**

Women in this study were hesitant to talk about their accomplishments. The finding was that female judges feel like talking about themselves would make the appear self-absorbed. Participants did not boast about themselves nor did they exhibit outward expression of pride in their achievements.

**Findings Related to Research Question 2**

The female state trial court judges who participated in this study were in complete agreement that self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on their leadership careers. This key finding is aligned with answering the research question: *What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?*

**Finding 11: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Impact Women’s Leadership Careers**

All of the participants felt that self-sabotaging behaviors had a significant and lasting impact on their leadership careers. The impact of experiencing self-sabotaging behaviors was that things were harder than they needed to be which caused unnecessary stress and professional burn out. Self-sabotaging behaviors also delayed career development and led to missed opportunities for career advancement.

**Findings Related to Research Question 3**

The following finding is aligned with answering the research question: *What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to
overcome self-sabotaging behaviors? 17 strategies that were in alignment with the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power emerged as major themes in participant interviews.

**Finding 12: Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny**

Participants in this study recognized the importance of knowing their potential as a strategy to overcome thinking too small. Knowing one’s potential helped the judges embrace their power and influence. The women recognized that they can offer unique contributions and make a lasting impact on their profession once they understand the breadth of their personal power.

**Finding 13: Constructive Preparation**

The judges approached fear and worrying in constructive ways by focusing on the good instead of the negative. Recognizing fear as a natural component of change allowed the women to validate their feelings while still moving forward. This change in perspective helped them acknowledge fear and still perform at their highest potential. The judges also used the strategy of embracing change to overcome the fear and worry that often comes with professional transitions.

**Finding 14: Owning All of One’s Self**

One key finding in line with owning all of one’s self is that the participants learned to give themselves the credit they deserve. Learning self is also in line with owning one’s self as the judges felt more balanced when they got to know and accept all of their strengths and weaknesses. Women in this study understood that they can acknowledge their progress, celebrate their own success, and improve parts of self that need development if they get in touch with who they really are.
Finding 15: Honest Self-Expression

Judges in this study underscore the importance of being authentic when making difficult decisions. Being true to self helped the participants overcome engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors associated with dishonesty. Women in the study found that nothing is more important to honest self-expression than being ok with themselves when all is said and done.

Finding 16: Acting with Confidence

The strategy of acting with confidence helped women overcome holding back. It was found that women in the study discovered their own voice and practiced speaking up. They did this whether or not other people agreed with them. Participants also mastered being kind to themselves instead of self-critical. Finally, women who acted with confidence were not afraid to ask for help when help was needed.

Finding 17: Cultivating Self-Intimacy

A major finding was that women in judicial leadership know how to cultivate self-intimacy through taking time for themselves. Daily self-reflections helped keep the judges grounded and self-aware. Journaling was also used by the women as an outlet to gather their thoughts and process their feelings.

Finding 18: Building a Power Web

Networking was used by female judges to counteract effects of isolating. The participants acknowledge that it takes courage to reach out to people they do not know. They also acknowledge that the benefits of having a powerful network outweigh the discomforts of initiating contact. Female judges do not treat relationships casually as they are sure to make every professional interaction meaningful.
**Finding 19: Inspiring Other Women**

Judges in this study appreciated the help they received from women on the bench when they were pursuing their legal career. In turn, the participants decided to give back to other women who are climbing up the legal ladder. The women seek to empower and inspire others to pursue careers in law. They also mentor other women who have their sights set on becoming judges.

**Finding 20: Embracing One’s Sexuality**

A key finding was that women in judicial leadership do not exploit or downplay their sexuality in the workplace. The judges in this study have learned to embrace their gender and they do not restrain their feminine qualities. Women have learned to navigate the boys club legal environment without sacrificing their natural femininity.

**Unexpected Findings**

Two unexpected findings emerged from this study. The first involved the perception of potential participants about the study overall. When this researcher initially introduced the study to potential participants, many of them expressed that the word “self-sabotage” had a negative connotation and they were reluctant to engage in research that would depict women in a negative way. However, once participants agreed to engage in the study and met with the researcher for clarity, their negative perception of the topic changed. The unexpected finding was that once the researcher spoke with them in depth, the participants no longer saw the topic as negative and began to understand that this study would be conducted with positive intent.

A second unexpected finding was that all the participants indicated that talking down to oneself was a self-sabotaging behavior they have experienced in their career.
The fact that all of the participating judges had experience with talking down to themselves could be attributed to external factors unique to the legal environment that cause women to engage in negative self-talk. This level of 100% consensus on one specific self-sabotaging behavior was not anticipated by the researcher.

**Summary**

Chapter IV provided a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data collected in this explanatory mixed methods study. A review of the purpose statement, research questions, research methodology, data collection procedures, population, sample, and demographics of the participants was also presented. The data were analyzed and presented using narrative descriptions and corresponding tables. Emergent themes and major findings related to the research questions were also discussed.

**Summary of Findings**

- **Self-sabotaging behavior: Talking down to oneself.** Negative self-talk caused women judges to experience feelings of inadequacy, lower self-confidence, and diminished self-worth.

- **Self-sabotaging behavior: Squashing natural feminine qualities.** Women in judicial leadership downplay their natural feminine qualities to adapt to the male centered environment.

- **Self-sabotaging behavior: Not accepting compliments.** Judges in this study have difficulty accepting praise from others for their accomplishments.

- **Self-sabotaging behavior: Minimizing one’s value.** Women feel they are not as good as their male counterparts and often undermine professional success by minimizing their value.
• Self-sabotaging behavior: Making perfection the standard. Unrealistic personal standards caused female judges to feel like nothing they do will ever be good enough unless it is perfect.

• Self-sabotaging behavior: Feeling anxious or worried when contemplating change. Fear and anxiety hindered participants and caused them to feel unprepared for inevitable changes in their career.

• Self-sabotaging behavior: Not having courage to step out of comfort zone. Female judges were reluctant to try new things and prefer to stick with what is familiar.

• Self-sabotaging behavior: Being insecure in balancing work and family obligations. Demands of work and family made women feel that they had to sacrifice one for the other as they did not think they could be good at balancing both.

• Self-sabotaging behavior: Feeling like an imposter on the job. Judges experienced imposter syndrome when they compared themselves to their colleagues. They believed that one day someone would expose them as unqualified for the job.

• Self-sabotaging behavior: Hesitating to describe or talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego. Women feel like talking about their achievements made them appear egotistical or superficial.

• Impact of self-sabotage on women’s leadership careers. Self-sabotaging behaviors made things harder for female judges, delayed their career development, and caused them to miss opportunities.
• Strategy: Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny. Women in judicial leadership know their potential and understand they are capable of making unique contributions.

• Strategy: Constructive Preparation. The judges understand fear and prepare for change in productive ways.

• Strategy: Owning All of One’s Self. Women give themselves credit for their strengths while accepting and developing on their weaknesses.

• Strategy: Honest Self-Expression. Being authentic and true to self helps female judges express themselves honestly.

• Strategy: Acting with Confidence. Judges know how to speak up, be kind to themselves, and are not afraid to ask for help.

• Strategy: Cultivating Self-Intimacy. Women take time for daily self-reflection.

• Strategy: Building a Power Web. Participants create a professional network that is meaningful and supportive.

• Strategy: Inspiring Other Women. Women in judicial leadership take time to give back to other women with similar aspirations.

• Strategy: Embracing One’s Sexuality. Female judges know how to embrace and not exploit their sexuality in the workplace.

In Chapter V, a summary of the research findings will be presented. Conclusions based on major findings from the data collected will also be connected to the literature and discussed. Finally, the researcher will make recommendations for further research based on the major findings, conclusions, and limitations of the research.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V will present a summary of the key findings and conclusions based on this explanatory mixed methods study. The conclusions made in this chapter were drawn from the literature and major findings of the research. Recommendations for further research will also be given. This chapter will conclude with the researchers remarks and reflections on the research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female state trial court judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female state trial court judges to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Research Questions

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female state trial court judges experienced throughout their leadership careers?

2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?

3. What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Methodology

This explanatory mixed-methods study investigated the lived experiences of female state trial court judges in California. The researcher administered an electronic survey on Survey Monkey to narrow down the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors.
A face-to-face follow-up interview was conducted at a time and place that was convenient for the participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed with the Temi Record and Transcribe smartphone application. NVivo coding software was used to code the themes and patterns that emerged from the research,

**Population**

This study’s populations included female state trial court judges in the United States. The population consisted of approximately 3,088 female judges (George & Yoon, 2018). The target population for this study was the 543 women judges from all 58 counties in California. Those eligible to participate had experience as a state trial court judge, had served in a California state trial court for at least two years, had a minimum of ten years of experience in the judicial branch, and were known for advocating for women in leadership.

**Sample**

The sample for this study consisted of eight female state trial court judges. Purposeful, convenience, snowball sampling was used to identify participants and invite them to the study. The researcher currently works in the justice system and used her professional network to gain access to female judges. Once identified, eligible candidates were invited via email to participate. Participants were found eligible to participate based on whether they met all of the following criteria:

- Must be a female state trial court judge;
- Must have served in a California state trial court for at least two years;
- Must have a minimum of ten years of experience in the judicial branch;
- Must be known for advocating for women in leadership;
Major Findings

Major findings were drawn from the data collected from electronic surveys and participant interviews. After analyzing the data collected, the researcher made the following findings.

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: What self-sabotaging behaviors have female state trial court judges experienced throughout their leadership careers? Participants in this study shared their experience with various self-sabotaging behaviors. Key findings are aligned with behaviors found within the nine Self-Sabotaging Categories.

Finding 1: Talking Down to Oneself

All of the study participants shared that they had experienced the self-sabotaging behavior of talking down to themselves throughout their leadership careers. Engaging in negative self-talk caused female state trial court judges to talk themselves out of opportunities and ultimately hold themselves back from career advancement. Participants acknowledged that a nagging negative internal voice made them extremely self-critical. One participant reported that talking down to oneself caused her to feel unworthy and another participant reported having bouts of depression due to the effects of this self-sabotaging behavior. Talking down to oneself made the women feel undeserving of success and robbed them of their personal power.

Finding 2: Squashing Natural Feminine Qualities

Seventy-five percent of participating judges referenced squashing their natural feminine qualities in the workplace. Historically, the legal profession has been
dominated by men and female judges felt that their femininity put them at an automatic disadvantage. Participants shared their perception that they received less respect from other judges, lawyers, and members of the public relative to other judges who were male. As a result, the judges minimized their natural feminine tendencies in exchange for approval from the justice systems ‘old boys club’.

**Finding 3: Not Accepting Compliments**

About 87% of study participants acknowledged that they had experienced not being able to accept compliments. Participants expressed feelings of discomfort and embarrassment when they were praised by others for their accomplishments. The women in the study noted that they were raised to be humble and feel awkward when people hold them in such high regard. To them, openly accepting compliments would imply that they are arrogant, which is not a trait that favors women in the workplace.

**Finding 4: Minimizing One’s Value**

A total of 75% of participants communicated that they had engaged in self-sabotage through the minimization of their value. Since its inception the legal profession has been largely male, and women in litigation shared that they have compared themselves to their male counterparts to see if they measured up. The consequence of this self-comparison was that women rarely felt good enough when compared to their male colleagues. In turn, participants admit that they became uncertain about their ability to practice law and thus began to minimize their professional worth.

**Finding 5: Making Perfection the Standard**

Close to 62% of study participants had experienced the self-sabotaging behavior of making perfection the standard in their leadership careers. The women acknowledge
that male colleagues could get away with less than perfect work, however they felt that presenting anything less than perfect would be detrimental to their career. The judges felt that they could not make any mistakes and had to always operate at the highest level. This self-imposed demand for perfection created internal pressure and unnecessary stress. The participants also expressed their belief that any mistakes or professional missteps would be blamed on the fact that they are women.

**Finding 6: Feeling Anxious or Worried When Contemplating Change**

Sixty-two percent of the judges in this study shared that they experienced feeling anxious or worried when confronted with change. The judges explained that prior to being appointed to judgeship they had concerns about whether they would be able to successfully navigate the transition from attorney to judge. Even though judicial reassignments are anticipated in the state trial court system, multiple judges found that they were scared to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar when transferred between civil, criminal, and family law courts.

**Finding 7: Not Having Courage to Step Out of Comfort Zone**

Half of this study’s participants experienced not having the courage to step out of their comfort zone. The female judges expressed that when they were attorneys, they were afraid to ask for raises, apply for promotions, or ask their employer to pay for them to attend training conferences for professional development. They shared that they were better at encouraging others to try new things than it was for them to try new things themselves.
Finding 8: Being Insecure in Balancing Work and Family Obligations

Fifty percent of participants spoke to being insecure in balancing their work and family obligations. Women who aspired to climb the legal career ladder experienced uncertainty about whether they could handle the demands of work and family life. Women who are also wives and mothers felt that they could not pursue their career aggressively and still maintain stability in their home life. This uncertainty caused them to delay advancing their legal career so that they could be present for their families.

Finding 9: Feeling Like an Imposter on the Job

About 62% of the study participants admit to having felt like an imposter on the job at some point in their leadership career. The women in this study experienced imposter syndrome, where they believed they were unqualified to do their job and that eventually one day they will be exposed by others as an imposter. These women felt undeserving of their success even though they had education and experience that was comparable to their colleagues.

Finding 10: Hesitating to Describe or Talk About Accomplishments to Others for Fear of Trumpeting Ego

Half of the women in this study shared their experience with hesitating to talk about their accomplishments for fear of being perceived by others as arrogant or self-centered. The judges shared that in general, they would avoid talking about themselves too much and admit they would become uncomfortable when compelled to do so. This self-sabotaging behavior caused these very successful women to feel ashamed of their achievements, even when what they have accomplished could propel them further in their careers.
Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: *What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?* In this study, the judges expressed if they felt that self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on their leadership career. This finding is drawn from participants’ responses about their perception of the impact self-sabotage had on their professional lives.

**Finding 11: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Impact Women’s Leadership Careers**

One hundred percent of the study participants expressed their belief that at least one of the self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on their leadership careers. The judges studied admit that their experience with self-sabotage held them back professionally. Some of the impacts reported include that the women made things harder on themselves than they needed to be, they were under immense stress constantly, and they suffered from burn out regularly. Ultimately, the participants feel that their careers were hindered in some way due to their self-sabotaging behaviors.

Summary of Findings Related to Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: *What strategies did female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?* The judges in this study shared personal strategies for overcoming self-sabotage in their leadership careers. Findings are drawn from participant responses and aligned with the Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power.

**Finding 12: Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny**

The participants used the strategy of recognizing their potential to understand how much power and influence was available to them if they just embraced it. Female judges
in this study advise that they were able to recognize their unique destiny through getting to know their potential. Women who understood what they were capable of were more confident in their contributions and felt they could make a significant impact in their workplace.

**Finding 13: Constructive Preparation**

One major finding was that female judges use the strategy of focusing on the positive instead of the negative to constructively prepare for the unknown. When faced with change, the participants acknowledge they may be afraid of what is to come, but ultimately this fear does not hold them back. These women have learned to combat fear and worry by consciously embracing change and planning for any changes in productive ways.

**Finding 14: Owning All of One’s Self**

Women in this study learned to own all of themselves by giving themselves the credit they deserve for their accomplishments. This strategy allowed the judges to celebrate their progress, appreciate their strengths, and develop their weaknesses. Getting to know themselves was also a strategy that helped the women become more self-aware and comfortable with the totality of who they are. Being in tune with themselves helped women in judicial leadership make personal life decisions that would benefit their leadership careers.

**Finding 15: Honest Self-Expression**

All the participants in this study shared that they use the strategy of being authentic to engage in honest self-expression. Judges who are true to themselves have been able to conduct themselves in honest ways throughout their leadership careers. The
women use authenticity to stay connected to what they really want. They have learned to be ok expressing things in the professional setting that are genuine and true to who they are.

**Finding 16: Acting with Confidence**

Women in judicial leadership relied on self-confidence as a strategy to overcome self-sabotage. Participants developed their own unique perspective and asserted themselves with poise. The women also found their voice in the workplace and were not afraid to express their ideas. Self-confidence was also developed in the women when they were kind to themselves internally through using positive self-talk. When they needed help, women in judicial leadership were not afraid to ask others for assistance and advice.

**Finding 17: Cultivating Self-Intimacy**

Participants in this study cultivated self-intimacy through taking time for themselves regularly. Self-reflection was one strategy used by judges to get in touch with themselves. Using quiet time to perform daily check-ins with self helped the participants build a foundation on balance and self-awareness. The women also used journaling as a tool to express their thoughts and feelings privately.

**Finding 18: Building a Power Web**

Establishing a powerful professional network helped participants excel in their career. Half of the study participants used the strategy of reaching out to other professionals to build their support network. Building a power web exposed the women to people and opportunities that helped them achieve judicial leadership. The other half
of study participants prioritized making every professional interaction meaningful which ensured that they were able to maintain a solid network of allies and supporters.

**Finding 19: Inspiring Other Women**

Judges giving back by mentoring and being an example to the next generation has been the catalyst for women making strides in the judicial arena. The judges continued to advise other female judges long after reaching a status that would normally set them apart. All the judges credited mentorship and receiving guidance as one of the components that helped them be successful. For this reason, the judges in this study emphasize the importance of inspiring other women in the judiciary to pursue their professional goals.

**Finding 20: Embracing One’s Sexuality**

The women interviewed have come to terms with how their gender played a role in their leadership careers. Participants have had to embrace their femininity in order to compete and thrive in the male dominated judicial field. For these women, sexuality is not to be used as a weapon or viewed as an impediment in professional settings. Alternately, the women treat their sexuality as a unique trait that is to be appreciated and honored. As the women grew to embrace their femininity, they no longer saw their sexuality as a hinderance but instead realized the beauty of being a woman in judicial leadership.

**Conclusions**

Conclusions for this research are based on the findings of this study as supported by the literature. The researcher was able to draw multiple conclusions regarding participants experience with self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact of these self-
sabotaging behaviors, and strategies they used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors in their leadership careers.

**Conclusion 1: Women Need to Recognize Their Own Potential**

One conclusion that is supported by the major findings is that women need to recognize their own potential if they want to excel professionally. This requires that a woman acknowledge how her talents and abilities position her to make unique contributions as a leader. According to Wells (2017) women who recognize their potential feel empowered and intellectually competitive in the workplace, which helps them face gender-based challenges in a healthy manner. When women recognize their unique destiny they will understand their capacity to have a significant impact, even when they are the minority in male dominated industries.

**Conclusion 2: Women Must Approach Fear in Productive Ways**

Another conclusion supported by the major findings is that women must approach fear in productive ways. According to Cure (2009), women who constructively prepare for fear understand that fear is an essential component of the human experience and they use fear as an adaptive catalyst that motivates their thoughts and behavior. Women in leadership must learn that fear and discomfort will naturally occur whenever they step into their power and explore new territory. When women in leadership acknowledge fear instead of denying it, they negate the false beliefs surrounding their fear and strip fear of its debilitating power (Lerner, 2012).

**Conclusion 3: Women Must Understand Themselves and Give Themselves Credit**

It is also concluded that women in leadership must understand themselves and give themselves credit. Women who understand themselves honor their strengths and use
them for personal empowerment. These women also acknowledge their weaknesses and work to develop the parts of themselves that need improvement. Findings from the study showed that women who understand all of themselves also give themselves the credit they deserve for their personal and professional accomplishments. Successful women acknowledge the entirety of themselves.

Conclusion 4: Female Leaders Need to be Authentic

The major findings also support the conclusion that female leaders need to be authentic. For women in leadership, being authentic in the workplace improves personal happiness and professional performance. Women who are authentic also express themselves clearly and deliberately in the professional setting (Ryder & Briles, 2003). According to Chin (2011) women who are authentic are true to themselves, sure of who they are, and broadcast to their organizations that these traits are essential to success. This authenticity allows female leaders to reconcile their internal thoughts and feelings with purposeful external action.

Conclusion 5: Women Need to act With Confidence

Another conclusion supported by the major findings is that women in leadership need to act with confidence. Women who act with confidence break down the barriers and false beliefs created by years of engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors. According to Zheng, Surgevil, and Kark (2018), women who project confidence are decisive leaders who value others’ talents and contributions. However, confident women are not overly concerned with other’s opinions because they have their own internal conviction that guides their actions. When women act with confidence they invoke certainty and trust in themselves and the people they lead.
Conclusion 6: Women Must Engage in Daily Self-Reflection

It is also concluded from the major findings that women in leadership must engage in daily self-reflection. Women who spend time with themselves increase their self-awareness and cultivate self-acceptance, two traits that are essential to effective leadership as they increase positive personal development (Dewalt, 2018). Intentionally taking time daily to go inward, check in with self, and understand emotions will lay the foundation for female leaders to create balance in their lives. When women are self-reflective, they take full responsibility for themselves. This commitment to a deeper knowledge of self ultimately helps women in leadership gain a deeper understanding of others, which positions them to be more effective leaders.

Conclusion 7: Women Need to Build a Support Network

Another conclusion supported by the major findings of this study is that women need to build a support network. Having a powerful professional network is essential for women who aspire to leadership and executive positions. According to Wagoner (2017) women with networks of support benefit from connectivity and dialogue with other leaders who have acquired similar positions and achieved similar success. Women who build strong support networks can leverage their relationships for the betterment of their leadership careers, their organization, and its members.

Conclusion 8: Female Leaders Need to Inspire Other Women

A conclusion supported by the major findings of this study is that female leaders need to inspire other women. Women who understand their personal power are intentional about empowering other women to do the same. Female leaders use collaboration and mentorship to motivate other women to pursue professional success.
According to Brock (2008), healthy relationships with women are powerful assets to women’s professional and personal lives. Women who inspire other women give back by offering career coaching, nurturing friendships, and supporting other women’s personal development. They see their sponsorship of other women’s success as an important investment in the lives of these women and subsequently in the culture of the workforce overall.

**Conclusion 9: Women Should not Exploit Their Sexuality in the Workplace**

The major findings of this study support the conclusion that women should not exploit their sexuality in the workplace. Female leaders have mastered allowing their natural feminine qualities to shine through without exploiting themselves or their sexuality. According to Ryder and Briles (2003), successful women in the workplace do not seek to gain sexual power over men and do whatever is in their power to mitigate their female advantage over men. Women who do not exploit their sexuality in the workplace do not exhibit unnatural qualities or act in ways that are overly agentic or extremely girlish. These women embrace their gender as another component of who they are, not as an impediment that holds them back professionally.

**Implications for Action**

Based on a thorough review of the literature and the results of the study, the following implication for action are recommended:

- State trial courts in California should create mentorship programs for women who are lawyers and aspire to judicial leadership. Gender based mentorship will help female attorneys understand the journey of women who have attained judgeship and reduce the stigma on whether women can handle the bench. To avoid
conflicts of interest, the judges and attorneys should not work within the same county.

- The State Bar of California must incorporate curriculum that includes the lived experiences of real female judges as part of their inclusion and diversity initiatives to encourage more women to aspire for the bench.

- Findings of this study should be presented to organizations such as the State Bar of California, the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ), and any other professional development networks aimed at supporting women in litigation and judicial leadership.

- Professional networking groups for women must specifically address self-sabotaging behaviors, how they impact career progress, and what can be done to overcome self-sabotage.

- Researcher should present results of research through writing articles that include major research findings.

- Early education programs must include mentoring and career counseling to introduce girls and young women to possible careers in traditionally male dominated fields.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

These recommendations for further research were made based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

- Given the limitations of this study, it is recommended that further research be done within a broader population and sample size. Professional associations such
as the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) may have the resources and capacity to conduct a replication study on a larger scale.

- A replication study that specifically explores the experiences of women of color who are judges.
- A replication study with female attorneys who are eligible for judgeship but have not applied.
- A replication study with women who applied for judgeship but did not get elected or appointed as a judge.
- A replication study with women from different careers and ethnicities.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Working in the field of criminal justice has afforded me the opportunity to sit in many different courtrooms. After observing courtrooms with both men and women on the bench, respectively, I began to notice a difference in the way male and female judges were treated by attorneys and litigants. I could tell as a layperson that men on the bench garnered a more respectful tone from attorneys and less combativeness from litigants than women on the bench. I could not help but wonder if the women on the bench felt the same way. I also wondered whether they internalized this treatment and began to question how this affected their self-esteem and internal language.

The research on external barriers that can sabotage women in leadership is plentiful. The literature about the effects of self-sabotage was not as easily found. The research on self-sabotage amongst women judges was pretty much non-existent. I recognized this as a challenge and accepted the call to action. I wanted to dig deeper into the ways that women in leadership experience self-sabotage, how it impacted them or
their career, and how they were able to overcome self-sabotage and achieve professional success. I thought it would be especially interesting to explore this with women judges, who have achieved the most powerful position in the legal career, but still seem to be disempowered and underrepresented in the workplace.

Now that the research is complete I realize that my target population was quite ambitious. The average researcher may not have easy access to the network of judges that I was able to tap into for this study. Being able to meet and interview eight female state trial court judges was an honor and privilege. I truly appreciate the kindness and candor of these very powerful, extremely busy women. I hope that this study will contribute useful information to the field of knowledge on powerful women’s experience with self-sabotage. I also hope the results of the study will help women who aspire to judicial leadership understand that they too can overcome self-sabotage and reach the peak of success in their legal career.
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A - Synthesis Matrix

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<tr>
<th>The Historical System of Patriarchal Leadership</th>
<th>Barriers to Women in Leadership</th>
<th>The Gavel Gap - Barriers in Leadership for Female Judges</th>
<th>Thinking Too Small</th>
<th>Fear and Woefully</th>
<th>Misunderstanding One's Self</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Holding Back</th>
<th>Lack of Self-Reflection</th>
<th>Isolating</th>
<th>Disempowering Other Women</th>
<th>Using Sex-Gender Role Conflict in the Workplace</th>
<th>The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power</th>
<th>Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny</th>
<th>Constructive Preparation</th>
<th>Opening All of One's Self</th>
<th>Honoring Self-Expectation</th>
<th>Acting with Confidence</th>
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<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Gender Gap: A Historic Perspective of Women in Leadership</th>
<th>Barriers to Women in Leadership</th>
<th>The Gavel Gap: Barriers to Leadership for Female Judges</th>
<th>Thinking Too Small</th>
<th>Fear and Worrying</th>
<th>Misunderstanding One’s Self</th>
<th>Disdaining</th>
<th>Holding Back</th>
<th>Lack of Self-Reflection</th>
<th>Isolating</th>
<th>Disempowering Other Women</th>
<th>Using Sex/Gender Role Conflict in the Workplace</th>
<th>Recognizing Women’s Unique Power</th>
<th>Conspiring to Punish</th>
<th>Owning All of One’s Self</th>
<th>Honing Self-Expression</th>
<th>Acting with Confidence</th>
<th>Cultivating Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Building a Power Web</th>
<th>Inspiring One’s Sexuality</th>
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APPENDIX B - Quantitative Electronic Survey Instrument

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. Clicking on the “agree” button indicates that you have read this informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate. If you don’t wish to participate, you may decline by clicking the ‘disagree” button.

Agree: I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and “Bill of Rights.” I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in the study. Disagree: I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey.

INTRODUCTION

“We have the power inside to be great,” says women’s advocate Helene Lerner, “but oftentimes it’s covered by false beliefs about ourselves.” Lerner’s book, In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self (2012) maintains that women need to embrace their inherent power. “The world needs more women leaders,” Lerner says. “That means we [women] need to step out in ways we haven’t been.” To achieve true power, Lerner says women must first recognize and overcome its barriers. She describes nine common self-sabotaging categories that hold women back. A framework was adapted from Lerner’s thesis coupled with the work of Ryder and Briles from The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives (2003) to group female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching domains.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on women’s personal power and self-sabotaging behavior. This study is focused on the following nine domains of Women’s Personal Power and nine corresponding categories of Sabotaging Behavior.

1. Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny: THINKING TOO SMALL
2. Constructive Preparation: FEAR AND WORRYING
3. Owning all of One’s Self: MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF
4. Honest Self-Expression: DISHONESTY
5. Acting with Confidence: HOLDING BACK
6. Cultivating Self-Intimacy: LACK OF SELF REFLECTION
7. Building a Power Web: ISOLATING
8. Inspiring Other Women: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN
9. Embracing One’s Sexuality: INFUSING SEX ROLE CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

It’s best not to ‘overthink’ the statements and respond with your first perceptual thought. It is anticipated you can complete this survey in 10-15 minutes. After you complete and submit the survey, the researcher will contact you to schedule an interview to explore your thoughts on these behaviors and how they may have an impact on women’s ability to move forward in her career.

© Dr. Marilou Ryder
**Directions:** The following survey represents 9 categories of self-sabotaging behaviors. For each category there is a list of behaviors associated with each category. Using the six-point scale for each behavior, please indicate how you have personally exhibited each behavior throughout your adult life as you progressed along in your career.

1 = Strongly Agree  
2 = Agree  
3 = Slightly Agree  
4 = Slightly Disagree  
5 = Disagree  
6 = Strongly Disagree

1. **POWER DOMAIN:** Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny (Capacity to have a significant impact; living up to one’s potential)  

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: THINKING TOO SMALL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I blamed others for why things aren’t going well</td>
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<td>I minimized my value (“I’m just a…”)</td>
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<td>I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was not open to new experiences</td>
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<td>I often made perfection the standard in my life</td>
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2. **POWER DOMAIN:** Constructive Preparation (Embraces, understands and accepts fear)  

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: FEAR AND WORRYING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career</td>
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<td>I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation</td>
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<td>I resisted change</td>
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<td>I feared looking stupid</td>
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<td>I felt like an imposter on the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>I mulled over my mistakes</td>
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</table>
I feared being rejected

3. **POWER DOMAIN**: Owning all of One’s Self (Owns and appreciates accomplishments and limitations)

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I could not accept compliments or praise</td>
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<td>I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve</td>
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<td>I have focused on a person criticizing me</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have been resistant to describe or talk about my accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego</td>
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<td>I did not accepted parts of myself that needed development</td>
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4. **POWER DOMAIN**: Honest Self Expression (Accepting strengths and weaknesses)

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISHONESTY**

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<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I said “yes” to things when I actually wanted to say ‘no”</td>
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<td>I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral</td>
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<td>I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up</td>
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<td>I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation</td>
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5. **POWER DOMAIN**: Acting with Confidence: Approaching obstacles with confidence; having the courage to step forward

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: HOLDING BACK**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I did not reach out for help when I needed it</td>
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© Dr. Marilou Ryder
I have avoided criticism

I made inflections rather than make bold statements a

I have apologized unnecessarily

I have talked down to myself

I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings

I preferred not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion

I have held back when I had the answer, question or thought because I was concerned about what other people think or the impression they will have of me

I felt insecure towards balancing work and family obligations

6. **POWER DOMAIN:** Cultivating Self Intimacy (Getting to know oneself more deeply)

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have kept busy to avoid being alone</td>
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<td>I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry</td>
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<td>I have not taken vacations when I could</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have not allowed myself to experience “down time”</td>
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<td>I have hated to ‘be wrong’</td>
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<td>I have held a grudge with someone</td>
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7. **POWER DOMAIN:** Building a Power Web (Building a network of personal and professional advisors for support)

   **SABOTAGING CATEGORY: ISOLATING**

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<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn’t already know</td>
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© Dr. Marilou Ryder
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career

I felt guilty for taking up too much of people’s time

I have relied exclusively on female mentors

I relied only on networking upstream

8. **POWER DOMAIN**: Inspiring Other Women (Ability to inspire and empower other females)

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISEMPowering OTHER WOMEN**

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have felt too busy to help other women</td>
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<td>I thought, why I should help other women since I did it the hard way</td>
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<td>I have felt jealous of other women who have ‘made it’</td>
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<td>I have talked behind a woman’s back</td>
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<td>I have held women to a higher standard at work than men</td>
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9. **POWER DOMAIN**: Embracing One’s Sexuality (Awareness of gender roles and sex role stereotypes)

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: INFUSING SEX/GENDER ROLE CONFUSION IN WORKPLACE**

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>I have dressed sexy at work</td>
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<td>I have squashed my natural feminine qualities</td>
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<td>I have exhibited male like qualities that aren’t part of my natural personality</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have exhibited ‘girl’ like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have flirted at work</td>
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<td>I have used prosodic speech or speech patterns (“Valley girl,” uptalk, vocal fry)</td>
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</table>
I have conformed to societal gender expectations (cleaning up, taking notes, arranging food)

10: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors on Women’s Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe some of the behaviors listed in this survey have had an impact on my career development (lack of promotions, moving ahead in career in a timely manner, lack of access to top positions etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>Question 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What self-sabotaging behaviors do female state trial court judges experience throughout their leadership careers?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact do self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D - Qualitative Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol – Interviewer’s Copy

Participant: ________________________________  
Date: _____________________________________  
Organization: ___________________________________

INTERVIEWER SAYS:

My name is Tiffáni Thomas and I am a Mental Health/Diversion Court Coordinator with the Superior Court of California, County of Solano. I am also a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I would like to thank you for participating in the Women and Self Sabotaging Behavior survey and volunteering to be interviewed to expand the depth of response.

I will be conducting interviews with a number of female state trial court judges such as yourself to hopefully provide a clear picture of self-sabotaging behaviors that can impact women’s career development efforts. In addition, I would like to explore any strategies you have used to overcome any identified self-sabotaging behaviors you experienced throughout your career. The questions I will be asking are the same for each female state trial court judge participating in the study. The reason for this is to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating female state trial court judges will be conducted in the same manner.

INFORMED CONSENT (required for Dissertation Research)

Please let me remind you that your participation is completely voluntary and will greatly strengthen the study. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or would like to end the interview or not respond to a question, please let me know. Your information will be kept confidential and your name will be changed to protect your identity. After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

I have provided a copy of the questions and list of self-sabotaging behaviors for the nine categories of sabotaging behavior defined in my research that I will ask for your reference; however, I may have follow-up questions if clarity is needed. The duration of this interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Before we get started, do you have any questions about the interview process?

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your career journey that brought you to
the role you currently serve in today?

2. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of THINKING TOO SMALL

   (a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
   (b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

3. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of FEAR AND WORRYING

   (a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
   (b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

4. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF

   (a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
   (b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

5. As you think back on your career please reflect on women’s behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of DISHONESTY

   (a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
   (b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

6. As you think back on your career please reflect on women’s behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of HOLDING BACK

   (a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
   (b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

7. As you think back on your career please reflect on women’s behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION
8. As you think back on your career please reflect on women’s behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **ISOLATING**

(a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?

(b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

9. As you think back on your career please reflect on women’s behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**

(a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?

(b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

10. As you think back on your career please reflect on women’s behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **INFUSING SEX/GENDER CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

(a) Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?

(b) Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any of these self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

11. The top five sabotaging behaviors that the survey respondents identified as exhibiting throughout their careers were (1) (2) (3), (4), and (5). Of these five behaviors which two do you feel have the most impact on females attempting to promote within their careers?

12. Can you speak to your perception of how critical it is for women to overcome these behaviors as they relate to career development and promotions?

13. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding women and self-sabotaging behaviors?
## APPENDIX E - Qualitative Alignment Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Question 4</th>
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<th>Question 6</th>
<th>Question 7</th>
<th>Question 8</th>
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<th>Question 10</th>
<th>Question 11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What self-sabotaging behaviors do female state trial court judges experience throughout their leadership careers?</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact do self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female state trial court judges?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>What strategies do female state trial court judges use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F - Survey Field Participant Feedback Tool

As a doctoral student at Brandman University, I appreciate your feedback as it helps me to the most effective survey instrument as possible. Your participation is crucial to this effort.

Please respond to the following questions after completing the survey. Your answers will assist me in refining the survey items. This will allow me to make edits to improve the survey prior to administering to potential study participants.

A hard copy version of the survey has been provided to refresh your memory of the instrument, if needed. Thank you very much for your assistance. Your participation is greatly appreciated!

1. How many minutes did it take you to complete the survey, from the moment you opened it on the computer until the time you completed it? __________

2. Did the portion up front that asked you to read the consent information and click the agree box before the survey opened concern you at all? ________________
   If so, would you briefly state your concern ____________________________________________

3. The first paragraph of the introduction included the purpose of the research study. Did this provide enough clarity as to the purpose of the study? ______

4. Was the Introduction sufficiently clear (and not too long) to inform you what the research was about? ______ If not, what would you recommend that would make it better? _______________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

5. Were the directions to Part 1 clear, and did you understand what to do? ______
   If not, would you briefly state the problem ____________________________________________

6. Were the brief descriptions of the 6 choices prior to your completing the 10 items clear, and did they provide sufficient differences among them for you to make a selection? ______ If not, briefly describe the problem __________________________

7. As you progressed through the 10 items in which you gave a rating of 1 through 6, if there were any items that caused you say something like, “What does this mean?” Which item(s) were they? Please use the paper copy and mark those that troubled you? Or if not, please check here:____
1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe your experiences with self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact, and strategies used to overcome the barriers?

2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?

3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked?

4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?

5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview?
1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?

2. Were the questions clear or were there places when the interviewee was unclear?

3. Were there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing?

4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regard to the preceding descriptors?

5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regard to the preceding descriptors?

6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?

7. Are there parts of the interview that seemed to be awkward and why do you think that was the case?

8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would it be and how would you change it?

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?
APPENDIX I - National Institutes of Health (NIH) Certificate on Protecting Human Research Participants

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Tiffani Thomas successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 05/14/2018

Certification Number: 2618316
Dear Tiffanie Thomas,

Congratulations! Your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendices.

If you need to modify your IRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The modification form can be found at IRB.Brandman.edu.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank You,

IRB
Academic Affairs
Brandman University
12555 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
irb@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu
A Member of the Chapman University System

This email is an automated notification. If you have questions, please email us at irb@brandman.edu.
WOMEN’S POWER AND SELF-SABOTAGING BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Dear Potential Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tiffáni Thomas, a doctoral candidate at Brandman University. The purpose of this explanatory mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are welcome to choose not to participate. If you do decide you participate, you may withdraw at any time. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. Survey questions will pertain to your perceptions of identified self-sabotaging behaviors you may have experienced throughout your career and the impact they may have had on your career development.

Please review the following information:

I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowable by law. If the study design of the use of data is to be changed I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identity codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the principal researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments or concerns about the study or informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University at 16355 Laguna Canyon Rd. Irvine, C 92618 (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact Tiffáni Thomas at tthoma15@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at (707) 330-4889; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Advisor at ryder@brandman.edu.

Sincerely,

Tiffáni N. Thomas
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX L - Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION ABOUT: Women in Judicial Leadership: Using Personal Power to Overcome Self-Sabotage

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Tiffáni Thomas, MA

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in this explanatory mixed-method research study by Tiffáni Thomas, MA, a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Prior to deciding on whether to participate, please carefully read the information below and feel free to ask questions about anything that you may not understand. The purpose of this mixed-method study is to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female state trial court judges and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study is to identify strategies employed by female state trial court judges to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

This study will explore how self-sabotaging behaviors effect the professional lives of female judges, who are in the top position of the legal career. The data collected from surveying and interviewing female judges are intended to increase the field of understanding on the impact of self-sabotage on the careers of women in judicial leadership. Findings gathered from the research are anticipated to be used to describe self-sabotaging behaviors and identify strategies used by female judges to resolve patterns of self-sabotage.

By participating in this study, I agree to participate in an electronic survey using Survey Monkey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. In addition, I agree to participate in an individual interview as a follow-up to the electronic survey. The interview will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will be conducted by Tiffáni Thomas in person. Completion of the electronic survey and individual interviews will take place December 2019 through February 2020.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be...
used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted, and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies used by women to overcome self-sabotage. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the women in judicial leadership, self-sabotage, and strategies used to overcome self-sabotage. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If I have any questions or concerns about the research, I am encouraged to contact Tiffáni Thomas at thoma15@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 707.330.4889; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Faculty Advisor, at ryder@brandman.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study, and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed, and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name of Participant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signature of Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Printed Name of Principal Investigator</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX M - Brandman University Institutional Review Board Research

Participants Bill of Rights
APPENDIX N – Quantitative Electronic Survey Results

I have blamed others for why things aren't going well
8 responses

I have minimized my value ("I'm just a...")
8 responses

I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone
8 responses
I was not open to new experiences
8 responses

I often made perfection the standard in my life
8 responses
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career
8 responses

I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation
8 responses
I have been reluctant to seek feedback that would help me improve
8 responses

I have focused on a person criticizing me
8 responses
I have been resistant to describe or talk about my accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego
8 responses

I did not accept parts of myself that needed development
8 responses
I said "yes" to things when I actually wanted to say "no"
8 responses

I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral
8 responses

I remained silent when it would have been best to speak up
8 responses
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation
8 responses

I did not reach out for help when I needed it
8 responses

I have avoided criticism
8 responses
I preferred to sit at the back of the room at conferences or meetings
8 responses

I preferred not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion
8 responses
I have held back when I had the answer, question, or thought because I was concerned about what other people think or the impression they would have of me
8 responses

I felt insecure towards balancing work and family obligations
8 responses
I have kept busy to avoid being alone
8 responses

I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry
8 responses

I have not taken vacations when I could
8 responses
I have not allowed myself to experience "down time"
8 responses

I have hated to 'be wrong'
8 responses

I have held a grudge with someone
8 responses
I thought, "why should I help other women since I did it the hard way"
8 responses

I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'
8 responses

I have talked behind a woman's back
8 responses
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men
8 responses

I have dressed sexy at work
8 responses

I have squashed my natural feminine qualities
8 responses
I have exhibited male-like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality
8 responses

I have exhibited 'girl like' behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk
8 responses

I have flirted at work
8 responses
I have used prosodic speech or speech patterns ("Valley girl," uptalk, vocal fry)
8 responses

I have conformed to societal gender expectations (cleaning up, taking notes, arranging food)
8 responses

I believe some of the behaviors listed in this survey have had an impact on my career development (lack of promotions, moving ahead ...manner, lack of access to top positions etc.).
8 responses
### NINE DOMAINS OF WOMEN’S PERSONAL POWER

Adapted from *In her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Helene Lerner, 2012) and the *SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder and Briles, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMAIN 1: RECOGNIZING WOMEN’S UNIQUE DESTINY</strong>&lt;br&gt;Capacity to have a significant impact; living up to potential</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sabotaging Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>THINKING TOO SMALL</td>
<td>Blaming parents/upbringing for why things aren’t going well in life&lt;br&gt;Minimizing one’s value (“I’m just a...“)&lt;br&gt;Not having courage to step out of comfort zone&lt;br&gt;Not being open to new experiences&lt;br&gt;Making perfection the standard (perfection can be paralyzing)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMAIN 2: CONSTRUCTIVE PREPARATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;Embraces, understands and accepts fear</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sabotaging Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAR AND WORRYING</td>
<td>Feeling anxious or worried when contemplating change&lt;br&gt;Feeling out of control&lt;br&gt;Resisting change&lt;br&gt;Fear of looking stupid&lt;br&gt;Feeling like an imposter on the job&lt;br&gt;Mulling over negative experiences&lt;br&gt;Being afraid of rejection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOMAIN 3: OWNING ALL OF ONE’S SELF</strong>&lt;br&gt;Owns and appreciates accomplishments and limitations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sabotaging Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF</td>
<td>Not accepting compliments&lt;br&gt;Not seeking out feedback&lt;br&gt;Focusing on one person who criticizes them&lt;br&gt;Hesitating to describe or talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego&lt;br&gt;Not accepting parts of self that need development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DOMAIN 4: HONEST SELF-EXPRESSION</strong>&lt;br&gt;Accepting strengths and weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sabotaging Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>DISHONESTY</td>
<td>Saying “yes” to things when actually mean “no”&lt;br&gt;Taking sides when would prefer to stay neutral&lt;br&gt;Silencing self when it would be best to speak up</td>
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### DOMAIN 5: ACTING WITH CONFIDENCE
Approaching obstacles with confidence; having the courage to step forward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabotaging Category</th>
<th>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOLDING BACK</td>
<td>Not reaching out for help when needed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding criticism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making inflections; Not making bold statements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apologizing unnecessarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking down to oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sitting in the back of the room during meetings or conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hesitating to speak up in a meeting or group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Camouflaging” - the act of holding back when you have the answer, question, or thought, because you are concerned about what other people think or the impression they will have of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being insecure in balancing work and family obligations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DOMAIN 6: CULTIVATING SELF INTIMACY
Getting to know oneself more deeply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabotaging Category</th>
<th>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION</td>
<td>Keeping too busy to avoid being alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not allowing self to mourn losses or cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not taking vacations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not allowing any down time; not being truly “off” when off from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hating to be wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holding Grudges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DOMAIN 7: BUILDING A POWER WEB
Building a network of personal and professional advisors for support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabotaging Category</th>
<th>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISOLATING</td>
<td>Being afraid to reach out to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being unaware of the types of support needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling guilty for taking up too much of people’s time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relying exclusively on female mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only networking upstream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DOMAIN 8: INSPIRING OTHER WOMEN
Ability to inspire and empower other females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabotaging Category</th>
<th>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN</td>
<td>Feeling too busy to help other women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking “I did it the hard way, why help?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling jealous of other women who have “made it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Talking behind a woman’s back or spreading rumors about them
Being harder on women subordinates than men

### DOMAIN 9: EMBRACING ONE’S SEXUALITY
Awareness of gender roles and sex role stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabotaging Category</th>
<th>Female Self-Sabotaging Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFUSING SEX/GENDER ROLE CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE</td>
<td>Dressing too sexy at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Squashing natural feminine qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibiting male/agentic qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twirling hair; exhibiting girl like behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flirting at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using Prosodic Speech or Speech Patterns (“Valley girl,” uptalk, vocal fry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conforming to societal gender expectations (cleaning up, taking notes, arranging food)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>