WOMEN'S NETWORK PARTICIPATION AND

WORKPLACE COPING RESOURCES

by

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(Under the direction of Karl Kuhnert)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the benefits associated with participating in women's networks within organizations. The results suggest that participating in women's network social activities is associated with higher levels of network supportiveness, which is related to greater well-being and more positive attitudes toward the organization. The results do not support the hypothesis that participating in women's networks would be positively related to leadership self efficacy. The impact of different characteristics of women's networks on the benefits associated with participating were also evaluated.

INDEX WORDS: Women's Networks, Personal Network Characteristics, Leadership Self Efficacy, Supportive Relationships, Well-Being

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family. Thank you, Josh for your love and never ending support of my dreams and goals. Thank you to my parents for your love and encouragement throughout my life.

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There are many people without whom this project would not have been possible. First, I thank my major professor Dr. Karl Kuhnert for his guidance and encouragement. His mentoring and guidance influenced this project immensely, and he has helped me achieve so many of my professional goals. Thank you, Karl, for everything! Next, I thank my committee members, Brian Hoffman and Wendy Ruona. Their feedback contributed to the success of this project. I also thank all of the people who helped me collect my data. I could not have reached my sample without you! Last, but far from least, I thank Susan Hitchcock and Lyn Turknett for inspiring, supporting, and encouraging me throughout this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to an article in *Business Week*, internal groups referred to as *women's networks* (also known as women's affinity groups, employee resource groups, and caucuses) are "flourishing" (Brady & McGregor, 2007). In research conducted by Catalyst, eighty-one percent of surveyed organizations reported supporting an internal women's network (Pomeroy & Foust-Cummings, 2009). These groups are dedicated to the advancement of women within their organizations and are reported to provide women with various benefits such as leadership opportunities, role models, social support, and career development information (Catalyst, 1999; Singh, Vinnicomb, & Kumra, 2006). However, there appears to be almost no empirical research investigating the outcomes associated with participating in the groups. In fact, some research on outcomes associated with participation in formal networks within organizations explicitly excludes those dedicated to women (e.g., Van Emmerik, Euwema, Geschiere, & Schouten, 2006).

Many researchers have argued that women's networks limit women's power within organizations by isolating an already lower power group from the more powerful networks including men (e.g., Bierema, 2005, Eagly & Carli, 2007), but participation in women's networks may provide participants with valuable benefits, such as opportunities to develop greater leadership self efficacy and expanded sources of social support and deserve further study. By providing women with opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills, observe and interact with female leadership role models, and obtain other types of career support, women's networks have the potential to help women develop leadership self efficacy. By providing frequent opportunities to network with other women in the organization, women's networks may

provide a source of social support. Thus, by providing sources for developing leadership self efficacy and social support, women's networks may enable women to better cope with stressors in the work environment.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the indirect impact of participation in women's networks on psychological strain. Specifically, the role of leadership self efficacy and social support were examined as mechanisms for the relationship between women's network participation and psychological well-being. This study also investigated the impact of women's networks on turnover intentions and organizational commitment. The indirect effect of women's network participation on turnover intentions and organizational commitment were examined, through the program's more proximal effects on leadership self efficacy, social support, and ultimately reduced strain. Direct effects of women's network participation on turnover intentions and organizational commitment were also examined. Moreover, characteristics of women's networks that might make some women's networks more effective than others were evaluated. Program content, availability of role models through the network, and perceived support for the network were explored as moderators.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Women's Networks and Coping Resources

Although women's networks are an increasingly popular intervention in organizations, the existing research on these groups is limited and generally descriptive and qualitative. However, the existing research does illustrate the purpose behind the groups as well as some of the activities organized and sponsored by them, providing some insight into how members might benefit from participating. Women's networks in organizations arose to help eliminate barriers to the advancement of women. The networks generally provide members with a series of programs meant to provide networking and career-development opportunities that they would not ordinarily receive from their jobs (Catalyst, 1999). Singh et al., (2006) found that women's networks provide members with several categories of activities. The recruitment of female talent, providing female insight into marketing decisions, and career development programs for members represent a few types of activities provided by the groups. Mentoring programs and personal/social activities were also identified as important components of the networks. Personal/social activities focused on work-life balance topics as well as entertaining after work events, such as wine tastings and group trips to an art gallery.

Although these opportunities may relate directly to career-related outcomes such as information about job opportunities through expanded professional networks and expanded career- development through participation in new parts of the business (e.g., marketing), the primary benefit of these groups may be coping resources to deal with the challenges inherent in the work environment. In fact, the women in Singh et al.'s (2006) research indicated that the most valuable aspect of participating in the women's network was the social support provided.

Singh's research was qualitative, though, and the aim of the current study is to empirically evaluate the impact of women's networks.

However, in order to understand how women's networks may provide coping resources, it is first important to understand stress and stress-related outcomes. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress explains why certain situations lead to psychological distress, posing cognitive appraisal and coping as mediating processes. Cognitive appraisal is the process of evaluating a stimulus in the environment as either stressful or not stressful. In other words, due to different beliefs or thinking patterns, some people may perceive an event as stressful while others may have only a positive or neutral reaction to the situation. Coping is the process of managing the demands of the situation perceived as stressful as well as the resulting emotions. The resulting emotions can lead to what researchers refer to as strain, or the negative consequences associated with stress. Stress-related strains can take the form of both physical and psychological maladies, such as cardiovascular health and emotional exhaustion. As a first step in the investigation of the stress-related benefits of women's networks, the current study focuses on psychological well-being. Psychological well-being refers to a state in which one regularly feels positive emotion and a lack of negative emotion (Warr, 1990) and has been used as an indicator of stress-related strain in previous research (e.g., Parker & Sprigg, 1999).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) discuss a variety of coping resources that people use to maintain their sense of well-being in the face of situations appraised as stressful. Among these various resources, positive beliefs about the self and social support stand out as resources likely provided by women's networks that may help women cope with work demands. Positive beliefs about the self are particularly important in determining effective coping strategies, and this includes beliefs about one's efficacy in certain situations. Leadership self efficacy is defined as a

"specific form of efficacy associated with the level of confidence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with leading others" (Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008, p. 669). Fortunately, the benefits provided by women's networks align with the factors believed necessary to develop leadership self efficacy.

Social support is also an important coping resource, as it tends to buffer the relationship between stress and negative consequences of stress (e.g., Viswesvaran, et al., 1999, Cohen & Wills, 1985). Social support is defined as the felt availability of emotional and instrumental help from those in the immediate environment, and types of social support range from emotional (e.g., expressions of empathy) to tangible and informational (e.g., providing problem-solving help) (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Research on the relationship between women's advancement within organizations and stress has specifically suggested that in order to help women cope with stress, organizations should build programs providing social support (Nelson & Burke, 2000, p. 117). Moreover, research suggests that social support is a key benefit of women's network participation. (e.g., Stroh, Langlands, & Simpson, 2003; Singh et al., 2006).

Thus, by helping women develop leadership self efficacy beliefs and social support, we expect that women participating in women's networks may be better able to cope with stress in the work environment. Their ability to better cope may be demonstrated by a decrease in the level of strain they experience. Strain is defined as the psychological effects of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and positive coping resources are related to lower levels of strain (e.g., Osipow & Davis, 1988). Therefore, women's networks may ultimately reduce the strain women face at work, which should in turn reduce turnover intentions and increase organizational commitment (e.g., Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007).

Leadership Self Efficacy

As previously defined, leadership self efficacy is "a specific form of efficacy associated with the level of confidence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with leading others" (Hannah, et al., 2008, p. 669). Leadership self efficacy has been shown to relate positively to leadership aspirations (Singer, 1989; 1991), motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001), and even effective leadership ratings provided by others (Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000). Fortunately, based on established methods for increasing efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1997), Hannah et al., (2008) discuss several ways by which leader efficacy may be developed: mastery experiences, vicarious learning (i.e., role modeling), and increased awareness of tools available for task completion (i.e., skill and resource awareness).

The various benefits provided by women's networks may serve as leadership self efficacy enhancing experiences as discussed by Hannah et al., (2008). Mastery experiences, or past accomplishments in the leadership domain, are described as the most effective method for increasing efficacy (Hannah et al., 2008). As women's networks tend to be member-led (Catalyst, 1999), they often provide women with the opportunity to practice their leadership skills on committees and subcommittees (e.g., career development events subcommittee or scholarship administration subcommittee). Through these experiences, the women may be challenged to develop new skills, helping them to begin developing leadership self efficacy. In fact, there is evidence suggesting that women who have had more leadership opportunities do demonstrate higher leadership self efficacy (Chan & Drasgow, 2001).

Vicarious learning can also contribute to the development of leadership self efficacy, and it involves observing the behavior of competent models performing the task of interest. However, it is important to note that the amount of learning that occurs through the observation

of models depends on the level of similarity between the observer and the model (Hannah et al., 2008), and there is evidence suggesting that women tend to have trouble finding role models that are similar to themselves due to a lack of females in upper level leadership positions (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002). For example, in a study of professionals transitioning into new roles, Ibarra (1999) found that the female participants tended to have more trouble finding role models whose behavioral style they felt would be effective for them, recognizing that the behaviors of male role models would often be perceived differently when enacted by females. This made it difficult for the women to learn how to enact their new roles effectively. Women's networks tend to bring in external speakers and exemplary internal female leaders as speakers and to provide the members with the opportunity to interact with them (Singh et al., 2006). The opportunities to observe and interact with these women may increase the chance of members finding senior women whose behaviors they may model.

Increased awareness of tools to enhance performance in leadership domains, such as through leadership skills training, was also discussed as a way to increase leadership self efficacy (Hannah et al., 2008), and a primary function of women's networks appears to be providing skills and career development training (Catalyst, 1999). Time management, public speaking, professional image, and leadership skills are examples of topics that may be focused on in the career development events. By providing women with additional information that may help them become more effective, the career development events may help the women develop a general sense of efficacy. Although many of the events are not directly focused on leadership, participation in these career-related events will likely make the women feel more effective in general, which may be seen as a prerequisite to developing views of oneself as a leader. Hannah et al., (2008) suggest that leadership self efficacy results from a complex interaction of various

domains of self efficacy, including general self efficacy beliefs. Stroh et al., (2003) report results showing that members of women's networking groups indicated that they are satisfied with the content of the career development events. Many of the career development events are directly related to management skills, though, which should play a direct role in enhancing women's perceptions of their abilities in leadership positions.

Therefore, by providing opportunities to practice leadership, observe and interact with senior female leaders, and develop new skills through management and general development events, women's networks appear to provide many leadership self efficacy enhancing experiences. The more the women participate in these groups, the more likely it appears they will develop leadership self efficacy:

> *Hypothesis 1a: General participation in women's networks will be positively related to leadership self efficacy.*
>
> *Hypothesis 1b: Participation in women's network management development activities will be positively related to leadership self efficacy.*
>
> *Hypothesis 1c: Participation in women's network general self development activities will be positively related to leadership self efficacy.*

Leadership self efficacy should then be related to lower levels of strain. Recent research demonstrates that leadership self efficacy can buffer the deleterious effects of stereotype threat on women's performance and well-being (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010). Stereotype threat refers to anxiety associated with confirming negative stereotypes about members of one's group (Steele & Aronson, 1995) and research suggests women experience stereotype threat when reminded of stereotypes about women's inferior capabilities as leaders. Davies et al. (2005) found that when women were shown commercials with gender stereotypical content (e.g., a woman jumping on a

bed with joy about a skin care product), they were much less likely to volunteer for leadership roles, choosing helper roles instead, than women who were shown nonstereotypical commercials (e,g., a commercial about insurance) prior to choosing a task. Meanwhile, Hoyt and Blascovich (2010) found that women who had higher levels of leadership self efficacy experienced higher cardiovascular activation than women with lower levels of leadership self efficacy, which at first glance suggests a negative effect of leadership self efficacy. However, the researchers found that this heightened cardiovascular activation was associated with more positive coping behaviors. Ultimately, the women with higher leadership self efficacy were better able to cope with threats and demonstrated higher levels of general well-being. Therefore, we expect that leadership self efficacy will be associated with improved general well-being:

Hypothesis 2: Leadership self efficacy will be positively related to well-being.

Social Support

According to Wolff and Moser (2009), networking is "behaviors that are aimed at building, maintaining, and using informal relationships that possess the (potential) benefit of facilitating work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily granting access to resources and maximizing common advantages" (pp. 196-297), and it has been linked to both subjective (e.g., career satisfaction) and objective (e.g., salary growth) career success factors. The research also demonstrates that developing relationships with others within one's current organization is more important for salary growth than developing relationships with others outside of one's organization. Not surprisingly, networking opportunity has been found to be a valuable benefit of participating in women's network activities (Stroh et al., 2003), and the most important networking resource the women appear to gain is social support (Singh et al., 2006). The types of social support provided by networks likely range from emotional (e.g., expressions of empathy)

to tangible and informational (e.g., providing problem-solving help) (Cohen & Wills, 1985), and even developmental (e.g., providing career-related guidance) (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Although many researchers argue that women only networks may not provide women with the same number of relationships with powerful others as those networks including both men and women (e.g., Eagly & Carli, 2007), women may still develop key relationships with others that provide valuable emotional, informational, and developmental support.

By providing women's network activities during which women will have time to develop relationships with one another, women's networks will likely impact the type, amount, and breadth of sources of social support perceived. In other words, women who participate in women's network social activities will likely have more supportive personal networks with wider sources of support (personal network breadth) than women who do not work for organizations with women's networks and women who choose not participate in their women's networks. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3a: Participation in women's network social activities will be positively related to personal network supportiveness

Hypothesis 3b: Participation in women's network social activities will be positively related to personal network breadth.

Research generally suggests that social support buffers the negative effects of stress, such that when experiencing high levels of stress, those with high levels of social support are less likely to experience stress-related consequences, such as emotional exhaustion or illness (e.g., Manning, Jackson, & Fusilier, 1996; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Russell, Altmaier, & Van Velzen, 1987). Several models attempting to explain the mitigating effect of social support on the relationship between stress and strain have been proposed, but meta-

analytic evidence suggests that social support reduces the perception of stressors in the work environment as well as the strains associated with perceived stressors (Viswesvaran, et al., 1999). However, some recent research suggests that social support may increase stress in certain situations, such as when social support interactions heighten one's awareness of stressors in the workplace (Beehr, Bowling, & Bennett, 2010). This scenario is certainly possible with women's networks, as the programming may make the women more aware of discrimination and other challenges associated with being women in leadership than they were previously. However, research investigating the role of gender in social support reactions suggests that women tend to react positively to social support (Beehr, Farmer, Glazer, Gudanowski, & Naduez Nair, 2003). In addition, other research demonstrates that when a person is under a high degree of stress at the outset, social support will help mitigate the negative stress-related outcomes. It appears that it is only when the person is experiencing a low degree of stress the he or she may feel worse if provided social support (Crocket et al., 2007). As previous research suggests that women experience heightened stress in management positions (Nelson & Burke, 2000), we suspect that social support will decrease the strains associated with being women in leadership positions and will thus be positively related to general well-being.

Hypothesis 4a: Personal network supportiveness will be positively related to well-being.

Hypothesis 4b: Personal network breadth will be positively related to well-being.

Attitudes Toward the Organization

Hom, Roberson, and Ellis (2008) argue that women are "pushed away" from organizations by discrimination, fewer developmental opportunities, and other sources of challenge and stress and demonstrate that women in management do in fact demonstrate higher

levels of turnover than men. By providing women with resources to deal with these stressors and reduce the negative effects on their well-being, women's networks may indirectly reduce women's turnover intentions. In fact, research suggests that women use leadership self efficacy to cope with leadership-related stress and maintain their well-being (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2010), Well-being has been shown to be related to lower turnover rates (Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009) as well as organizational commitment (Podsakoff, et al., 2007). Therefore, the following is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: Well-being will be negatively related to turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 6: Well-being will be positively related to organizational commitment.

Participating in women's networks may also directly relate to lower turnover intentions and increased organizational commitment, primarily for reasons related to being a demographic minority in the organization. There is consistent evidence in relational demography research demonstrating that individuals prefer groups composed of similar others (e.g, Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). Applied to organizations, this suggests that when an organizational member is in the minority, they will be less satisfied with being a member of the group. Indeed, there is evidence demonstrating that members of groups that are in the minority in an organization are less attached to the organization, as indicated by lower levels of organizational commitment (Tsui, et al., 1992) as well as higher turnover rates (Pfeffer & O'Reilly, 1987). Moreover, higher turnover rates among women in management have been explained by feelings of isolation among the women due to being women in male dominated organizations and management levels (Hom, et al., 2008).

Interestingly, one justification for implementing networks has been to decrease these levels of isolation (Joshi & Jackson, 2003). Research indicates that the best diversity management practices are those that encourage individuals to identify both with their demographic subgroups as well as with the organization as a whole (e.g., Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Perhaps by providing women with an outlet to interact with other women who are also members of their organization, women's networks encourage this dual identification with the organization as well as with their demographic group. There is also anecdotal evidence suggesting that women's networks may influence attitudes toward the organization. Deloitte and Touche, in particular, has been a pioneer in finding ways to retain and develop women, and appears to be one of the first to support an active women's network. Their efforts began when they found that the turnover rate among senior level female employees at the firm was 33%, and that 80% of those women were now employed by other firms. By instituting several women's initiatives, a women's network being one, Deloitte and Touche decreased turnover among senior women by 18% and the number of women in senior leadership positions and who have achieved partner status has been tripled (Stroh et al., 2003).

Moreover, if as suspected, women's networks provide women with more role models and opportunities to interact with women at higher levels of the organization, their perceptions of advancement opportunity may also increase, which would most likely lead to an increase in attachment to the organization. By providing training and other developmental opportunities, the networks may also elicit feelings of gratitude and the need to reciprocate. Research shows employees tend to reciprocate benefits like training and development opportunities provided by the organization with commitment and decreased turnover intentions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In sum, by providing female role models who show what success for female leaders in

that organization looks like, and providing women with tools to do so, women will be more likely to believe that success in the organization is possible.

Therefore, participation in women's networks may positively influence organizational attachment variables:

Hypothesis 7: Participation in women's networks will be directly and negatively related to turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 8: Participation in women's networks will be directly and positively related to organizational commitment.

Women's Network Characteristics

However, there are several characteristics of women's networks that may determine how effectively they can positively influence women's stress-related coping resources and organizational attitudes. Eagly and Carli (2007) warn that women's networks can be negative, because if it is the only networking group in which women participate, this excludes them from the social networks with the most power – those including men. Moreover, Bierema (2005) conducted an in-depth qualitative analysis of a developing women's network in a Fortune 500 manufacturing organization and found evidence suggesting that by segregating themselves, the network reinforced patriarchal attitudes in the organization, rather than increasing the power of the women who participated. Thus, women's networks potentially have both negative and positive consequences, and empirical investigation of their effects is needed to back up the recommendation and continued support of these programs in organizations.

Stereotype threat research suggests some important characteristics of the programs that my differentiate the programs that will have the most positive impact from those that may even negatively influence the women participating. As previously mentioned, Davies et al. (2005)

demonstrated that when women were shown commercials with gender stereotypical content, they were much less likely to volunteer for leadership roles. The commercials were thought to prime stereotype threat, or anxiety associated with confirming stereotypes about women's inferior capabilities as leaders. However, when the researchers created an identity safe environment by including the statement, "there is a great deal of controversy in psychology surrounding the issue of gender-based differences in leadership and problem solving ability; however our research has revealed absolutely no differences in either ability on this particular task," the effect of the stereotypical commercials disappeared. In this condition, the leadership aspirations of the women were basically equal regardless of whether the stereotype threat was primed or not. Thus, depending on program characteristics, women's networks may actually activate stereotype threat and decrease participants' leadership self efficacy beliefs, but they may also create identity safe environments that could serve as buffers for stereotype threat activating sources elsewhere.

Although the goals of women's networks are to advance participants' careers (Catalyst, 1999), they sometimes include content that may be stereotypical and serve to elicit stereotype threat reactions in the participants. Much like a stereotypical commercial that might not even have anything to do with leadership, there may be programs or activities hosted by the networks that similarly prime gender stereotype threat. Singh et al. (2006) discuss one women's network that sponsored a group shopping outing. Moreover, the authors report that work-family balance programs were common among women's networks. Although work family balance is certainly a valuable topic of discussion, over emphasis on the topic in women's networks may also elicit stereotype threat. By constantly focusing on it in women's groups, it may reinforce women's stereotypical roles as caregivers, unintentionally serving to decrease their leadership self efficacy beliefs.

Hypothesis 9: The relationship between participation and leadership self efficacy will be moderated by women's network program content, such that the positive relationship will be weaker the more stereotypical content is included.

Similarly, the extent to which female leadership role models are available through the women's network may also impact effectiveness. The participation of role models may help create an identity safe environment. Marx and Roman (2002) found that the negative effect of stereotype threat on women's math test performance was eliminated when a competent female experimenter administered the test or when the participants were made aware of other competent females. Based on the results of the study, the researchers go so far as to suggest that if there were more female role models in the math domain, the gap between men and women on math performance would be eliminated. Likewise, the participation and engagement of high level, successful female leaders in women's networks may contribute to an identity safe environment, helping the lower managerial level women see that it is possible to succeed as a female leader.

Hypothesis 10: Availability of female leadership role models through the network will moderate the relationship between participation and leadership self efficacy, such that the greater the belief that female role models are available through the program, the stronger the relationship between participation and leadership self efficacy.

Moreover, the extent to which participation in women's network programs relates positively to organizational attachment may be determined by whether the participants perceive organizational support for the network. It is possible for women's networks to develop within organizations, but without formal support from the organization. Perceived organizational support research suggests that attitudes toward the organization are developed based on the

actions of organizational agents whose actions are seen as representing the intentions of the organization as a whole (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The actions of supervisors, for instance, may be seen as representing the organization, and have been shown to influence perceptions of organizational support (Eisenberger, Stinglhanber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). Thus, if the network and its actions are not seen as representative of the organization's intentions, participation may not be related to attitudes toward the organization. With no visible support from organizational agents (e.g., HR or Management), it may have no influence on the participants' attitudes toward the organization.

Hypothesis 11: The relationship between participation in women's networks and organizational commitment will be moderated by perceived organizational support for the programs, such that when there is a higher level of perceived support for the programs, there will be a stronger relationship between participation and organizational commitment.

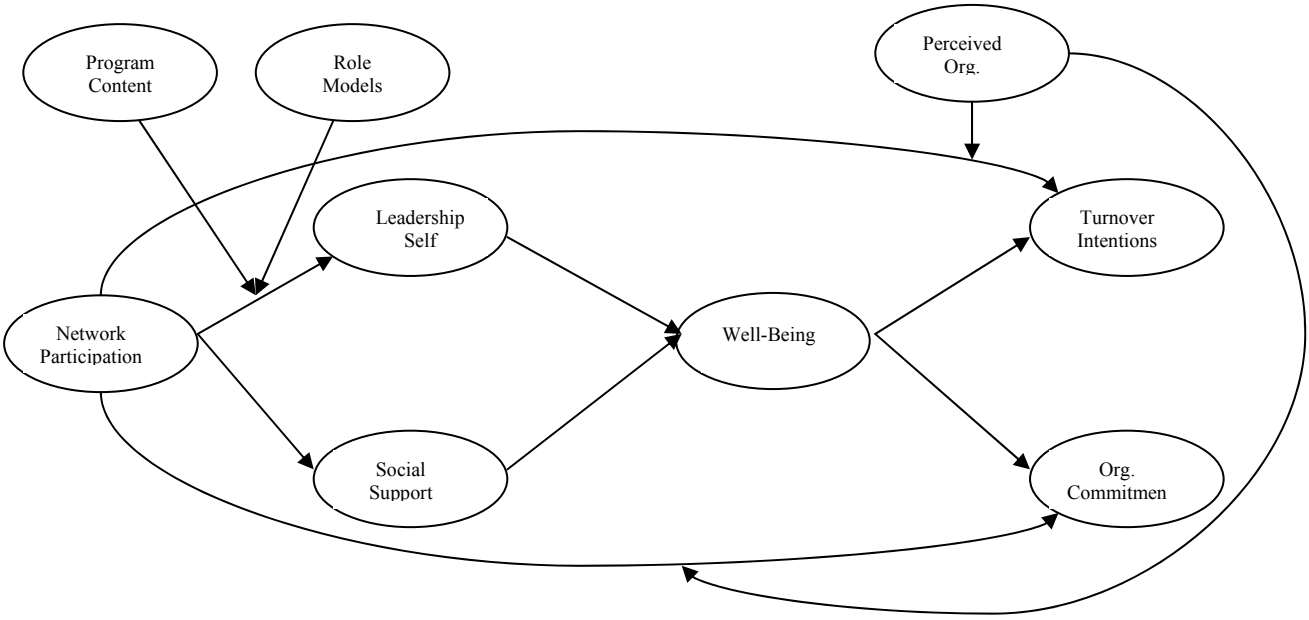
Hypothesis 12: The relationship between participation in women's networks and turnover intentions will be moderated by perceived organizational support for the programs, such that when there is a higher level of perceived support for the programs, there will be a stronger negative relationship between participation and turnover intentions.

In summary, in order to evaluate the influence of women's networks in organizations, this study investigates how participation in women's networks may help women deal with stress in the work environment. The psychological well-being that should result from improved leadership coping resources should then relate to greater organizational commitment and reduced turnover intentions. The direct effects of women's networks on organizational commitment and

reduced turnover intentions were also investigated. Moreover, specific characteristics of the women's networks were evaluated as moderators in an effort to identify features of effective women's networks. The full theoretical model is displayed in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

Path model demonstrating hypothesized relationships.



CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Participants and Procedure

In order to reach women in a variety of different organizations, a snowball technique (Ruane, 2005) was used to recruit female participants from multiple organizations in diverse industries. The sampling strategy started with contacting individuals participating in an established external women's networking group, comprised of approximately 50 members representing at least 20 different organizations. The participants were sent a link to an online survey and asked to both take the survey and send it out to other professional women they know, both within their current organization and in other organizations**.** Although this initial sample belongs to an external women's network, it is estimated that about half of the organizations represented have known internal women's networks and half do not. The snowball sampling technique (Ruane, 2005) has been used to collect data from populations that are difficult to reach (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997) and to collect data on sensitive topics, such as turnover intentions or career information that participants may be reluctant to share if they believed their organization might have access to the information (e.g., McCleese, Eby, Scharlau, & Hoffman, 2007). Twelve leaders of internal women's networks within organizations were also targeted and asked to send the survey link to their members. This is believed to have helped increase the participation of women from organizations with women's networks. Overall, the snowball method and the direct targeting of organizations with women's networks resulted in a sample of women with varying levels of experience with women's networks, ranging from no experience (i.e., their organization does not have a women's network) to a high level of experience (i.e., their organization has a women's network and they participate in network sponsored events frequently). A total of 522

women began the survey. Three hundred fourteen indicated that their organization has a women's network and 208 indicated that their organization does not have a women's network. However, only 319 completed the survey. From the 319 completed surveys, 152 women indicated that their organization has a women's network and 167 indicated that their organization does not have a women's network.

Women's Network Measures

Women's Network participation. Women's Networks were defined as, "formally or informally organized groups of women within organizations who meet regularly to organize and participate in programs and events to help women develop and advance professionally." After reading this definition, participants were asked, "does your organization have a Women's Network?" Participants who answered "no" to this question were directed to complete the components of the survey not directly related to women's networks. Participants who answered "yes" to this question were asked further questions about their participation in the Women's Network. Following previous research on participation in training and development activities, Women's Network participation was operationalized as frequency of women's network event participation (Tharenou, 2001). The item "How often do you participate in the events?" was used and measured on a 5-point scale with "Yearly" being the lowest (1) and "Weekly" being the highest (5). One percent indicated that they attended events weekly, 2 percent biweekly, 28 percent monthly, 62 percent quarterly, 13 percent yearly, and 21 percent "almost never."

Participation was also evaluated based on type of activity. The activities identified by Singh et al. (2006) and other research on women's networks (e.g., Bierema, 2005) were used to identify a list of topics covered by the programs. Thus, participants were given the list of different topics that might be focused on at an event or by a speaker, and they were asked to

indicate how frequently they have attended events focusing on the topic, using a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). In a pilot version of the survey, the "yearly" to "weekly" scale was used for type of activity, but feedback from women with women's network experience indicated that the specific types of events were offered so infrequently that the specific frequency scale would be difficult to answer and that it might not be particularly meaningful. In response to this feedback, the scale was changed to the more general, "never" to "almost always," 5-point frequency scale. Participants were also provided with space to identify "other" topics not included in the list, although very few women added to the list.

The list of activities was organized into 4 categories of developmental activities: Social Activities, Management/Skill Development Activities, General Professional Development, and Organization Focused. The full list of activities can be found in the copy of the survey found in Appendix B. As the primary focus of this study is on activities that might help women develop coping resources, organization-focused activities were considered beyond the scope of this study and were not included in the analyses.

Factor analysis techniques and internal consistency analyses were conducted to test the 3 category classification scheme. First, a confirmatory factor analysis with all 30 activities and 3 factors was conducted. Next, an item analysis was conducted and 9 items with poor factor loadings were removed. The remaining 21 items and 3 factors were then tested. A 1 factor model of the 21 items was also tested to determine if the distinction between types of activities was reasonable. Model fit was evaluated by examining the χ^2 statistic, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMSR), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Values less than .08 for the SRMSR, greater than .95 for the CFI, and greater than .95 for the TLI are considered acceptable indications of model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The χ^2 statistic was

significant for all models tested, which would indicate poor model fit. However, the 3 factor model with 21 items met or nearly met the conventional rules of thumb described above. Moreover, the change in χ^2 was computed to statistically compare the 3 factor model with the 1 factor model (this was not done for the 30 item model, as it was not a nested model). There was a significant change in χ^2 between the 3 factor and the 1 factor models. This indicates that the 1 factor model is a significantly worse fitting model than the 3 factor model. This suggests that the 3 factor model fits the data best and that the scales are distinguishable and can be used to analyze the hypotheses. Therefore, in addition to the single item general measure of participation in women's networks, the hypotheses in this study were also evaluated using participation in the 3 different categories of activities where specified in the hypotheses. Goodness-of-fit indices and the model comparison analyses are displayed in Table 3.1. Factor loadings are displayed in Table 3.2. Each scale also demonstrates acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability: social activity participation ($\alpha = .89$), management development activity participation ($\alpha = .94$), and general self development activities participation ($\alpha = .93$).

Stereotypical content. Stereotypical content was operationalized as frequency of participation in activities focusing on stereotypical topics. A panel of subject matter experts was used to identify events that were categorized as gender stereotypical or gender neutral/professional. Following research on gender stereotypes and gender roles, stereotypical topics were defined as those events that reinforce women's roles as household managers and caregivers, or that heighten awareness of other feminine role characteristics, such as being physically attractive (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Professional/gender neutral topics were defined as topics that would benefit members of either gender group (e.g., general professional skills workshops). The following 6 items were identified as stereotypical by 75

percent or more of the 4 subject matter experts: social activities (that would interest both men and women), book clubs - nonprofessional books, professional clothing demonstrations (e.g., Dress for Success), work family balance, panels to advise HR to include women-friendly benefits, activities to recruit women for the organization, and social activities (that would interest mostly women). Although the factor analysis results did not support a stereotypical content factor (as the items above all either loaded on one of the 3 categories of activities or were dropped), the internal consistency reliability for the items identified as stereotypical was acceptable ($\alpha = .78$). The items were used to create a stereotypical content scale for the purpose of hypothesis testing, but results based upon this scale should be interpreted with caution.

Female role models available. A modified version of the role modeling dimension of Ragins and McFarlin's (1990) mentoring scale was used to measure availability of role models provided. As the hypothesis specifically addresses the role of networks in providing role models, the scale was modified to reflect whether or not the network has played a role in providing role models. Therefore, the following three items were used: "My organization's women's network has made me aware of women who serve as role models for me," "My organization's women's network has made me aware of women who represent who I want to be," and "My organization's women's network has made me aware of women I identify with." The modified version of the scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .92$).

Perceived support for the program. Following Rynes and Rosen's (1995) research on characteristics of diversity initiatives, perceived support for the women's network was assessed by asking participants to indicate whether the CEO plays an active, visible role in supporting the women's network, whether the general manager of their particular business unit plays an active,

visible role in supporting the women's network, and whether they think the women's network has adequate resources from the organization. The measure was 4 items measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .80$).

Women's Network Outcome Measures

Leadership self efficacy. A slightly modified version of Murphy's (1992) measure of task specific self esteem for leadership was used to measure leadership self efficacy. The scale assesses the individual's level of confidence associated with leading a group successfully, and was modified from its original form which was used with students to fit the workplace context. Only one item was modified: instead of "I know a lot more than most students about what it takes to be a good leader," the item read, "I know a lot more than most of my coworkers about what it takes to be a good leader." A 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used. The 6 item scale demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = .76$).

Personal Network Supportiveness and Personal Network Breadth. In order to measure personal network characteristics, items were created to assess key characteristics of one's network. Based upon a review of the literature, 2 main dimensions of network quality were taken into account when developing the items: supportive resources provided and breadth of relationships. Supportive resources provided, or personal network supportiveness, assesses the types of social support resources being provided by relationships within the network. Breadth of relationships, or personal network breadth, assesses both the size of one's personal network and the extent to which the members of one's network are from different systems within the organization. This is similar to the way Higgins and Kram (2001) conceptualized of developmental networks. Items from Ragins and McFarlin's (1990) mentoring support scale

were modified in order to measure the resources provided by the relationships within the network. Items from Ferris, Treadway, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, Kacmar, Douglas, and Frink's (2005) Political Skill Inventory networking skill scale were modified to measure breadth of relationships within the network. Both horizontal and vertical diversity of people within one's personal network were assessed, by asking questions related to relationships with people from different departments within the organization (horizontal) as well as from different levels of influence within the organization (vertical). See the full survey including these items in Appendix B. A 5 point scale was used, with response options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

As this scale has never been used in previous research, factor analysis techniques were used to evaluate the 2 factor model proposed. First, a confirmatory factor analysis with 11 items and 2 factors was conducted. Next, an item analysis was conducted and 2 items with poor factor loadings were removed. The remaining 9 items and 2 factors were then tested and compared to a 1 factor model of the 9 items. Model fit was evaluated by examining the χ^2 statistic, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMSR), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). Values less than .08 for the SRMSR, greater than .95 for the CFI, and greater than .95 for the TLI are considered acceptable indications of model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998). Goodness-of-fit indices and model comparison results are displayed in Table 3.3. Overall, the 2 factor model with 9 items was the best fit, and it was a significantly better fit to the data than the 1 factor model. Items and factor loadings are displayed in Table 3.4. Each factor also demonstrated acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability. Overall, there were 4 network supportiveness items (α = .87) and 5 network breadth items (α = .84).

Well-being. The job-related anxiety scale in Warr's (1990) measure of well-being was used. The scale asks participants to indicate on a 6 point likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 6 (all of the time), how often in the past few weeks their job has made them feel a series of 6 emotions. The anxiety scale indicated an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = .87$).

Organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer's (1990) 8 item affective organizational commitment scale was used. It was scored on a 5-point likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability ($\alpha = .90$).

Turnover intentions. Cammann, Finchman, Jenkins, and Klesh's (1979) 3-item turnover intentions measure was used and measured on a 5-point likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability ($\alpha = .95$).

Controls Variables

Diversity Climate Perceptions. McKay, Avery, and Morris's (2008) 4 item measure of diversity climate was also included. A sample item is "Top leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity." The scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (e.g., $\alpha = .84$) and was measured on a 5-point likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 3.1

Goodness-of-Fit Indices and Model Comparison Results for Women's Network Activity Type

	χ^2	df	SRMSR	TLI	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
3 Factor (30 items)	1141.34	402	.10	.94	.94		
3 Factor (21 items)	478.19	186	.07	.96	.96		
1 Factor (21 items)	1087.25	189	.12	.87	.87		
3 Factor v. 1 Factor Comparison						609.06	3

Table 3.2

Factor Loadings for Women's Network Activity Scales

Item (Activity)	Soc. Acts.	Mgmt Dvlpt	Self Dvlpt
Networking events with senior leaders	1.25		
Networking events with female senior leaders	1.26		
Networking with peers	.93		
Social activities (that would interest mostly women)	.89		
Strategic planning		1.02	
Administrative skill (accurate record keeping, policy making and administration, etc.)		.82	
Resource allocation and monitoring (e.g., budgeting)		.96	
Managing direct reports		1.02	
Project Management		1.01	
Business judgment workshop (e.g., learning about financials)		.98	
Staffing (hiring decisions, etc.)		.99	
Developing subordinates		1.11	
Professional clothing demonstrations (e.g., Dress for Success)			.90
Executive presence			1.04
Work family balance			1.04
Resume Building			.81
Business etiquette			1.01
Networking skill			1.16

Personal awareness	1.11
Encouraging/inspirational speakers	1.04
Finding a mentor	1.02

Table 3.3

Goodness-of-Fit Indices and Model Comparison Results for Personal Network Characteristics Scales

	χ^2	Df	SRMSR	TLI	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
2 Factor (11 items)	208.50	43	.07	.94	.95		
2 Factor (9 items)	111.23	26	.05	.95	.97		
1 Factor (9 items)	345.50	27	.10	.84	.88		
2 *Factor v. 1 Factor Comparison*						234.27	1

Table 3.4

Factor Loadings for Personal Network Characteristic Scales

Item	Network Supportiveness	Network Breadth
I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who use their influence to support my advancement.	.81*	
I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who suggest specific strategies for achieving career success.	.85*	
I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who bring my accomplishments to the attention of important people in my organization.	.84*	
I have a strong network of relationships with people at work with whom I have frequent social interactions outside of work.	-	
I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who guide my professional development.	.77*	
I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who think highly of me.	-	
I have strong relationships with a large network of colleagues in many different business units within my organization.		.65*
I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.		.58*
I have a large network of people at work with whom I can talk about		.65*

confidential work-related matters.	
I have good relationships with a large network of influential colleagues and associates at work.	.69*
I have good relationships with a lot of people in management positions that are above my own level in the organization.	.62*

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Analysis Strategy

To evaluate the hypotheses proposed in this study, the outcome variables of interest were compared across different levels of participation in women's networks, as well as across women who have women's networks available in their organizations versus women do not. In addition, Hypotheses 1 through 8 suggest a series of 3 path mediations (2 sequential mediators in the relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable). Taken together, the hypotheses propose that participation in women's networks will influence turnover intentions and organizational commitment through their direct impact on leadership self efficacy, personal network supportiveness, and personal network breadth, and through their indirect impact on well-being.

The results are organized according to the direct relationships proposed. The first way the direct impact of women's networks was evaluated was to create 4 categories of participation levels and evaluate differences in the direct outcome variables. The 4 categories were as follows: (1) no women's network in organization, (2) women's network available, but do not participate (responded "never), (3) women's network available and do not participate frequently ("rarely" and "sometimes" participate), and (4) participate frequently ("often" and "almost always" participate). Participation in training activities has been similarly categorized for comparison purposes in previous research (e.g., Elo, Ervasti, Kuosma, & Mattila, 2008). ANOVA was used to evaluate the differences between the different groups on the direct outcome variables. Then, regression was used to evaluate the 3 path mediation hypotheses for the different levels of participation. Women with no access were excluded from the regression analyses as they did not

actually provide responses to the continuous variables used to evaluate level of participation. Moreover, lack of participation due to lack of access is very different than lack of participation when there is a women's network available. Therefore, treating it as a low level continuation of the participation variables may have made the participation variables meaningless.

According to Taylor, MacKinnon, and Tein (2008), the joint significance test using regression is the preferred method for testing 3 path mediation. Based on the results of a Monte Carlo study comparing multiple different methods, the joint significance test had high power and controlled Type I error. In each 3 path mediation to be tested, participation is the independent variable, leadership self efficacy and social support variables are the direct mediators, the well-being scales represent the indirect mediators, and turnover and organizational commitment are the dependent variables. Joint significance testing for 3 path mediation requires a 3 step regression analysis requiring the following equations:

1. The direct mediator is regressed on the independent variable
2. The indirect mediator is regressed on the independent variable and direct mediator
3. The dependent variable is regressed on the independent variable, direct mediator, and indirect mediator

According to Taylor, MacKinnon, and Tein (2008), there is support for the 3 path mediation effect when the coefficient for the independent variable is significant in the first equation, the coefficient for the direct mediator is significant in the second equation, and the coefficient for the indirect mediator is significant in the third equation. The authors argue that the first requirement in Baron and Kenny's (1986) popular method for testing mediation effects, that the independent and dependent variables be significantly related, is too stringent in 3 path mediation models. The authors also argue that the Sobel (1982) test of indirect effects that is

often used when following the Baron and Kenny method is a product of coefficients test, which did not perform as well as the test of joint significance in terms of power and Type I error in the Monte Carlo study.

Moderation analyses were also conducted to evaluate the impact of certain women's network characteristics on the outcome variables. Means and correlations based upon the data provided by women in women's networks are displayed in Table 4.1. Means and correlations for the outcome variables based upon the data provided by all participants are displayed in Table 4.2.

Leadership Self Efficacy

Hypothesis 1 suggests (a) general participation in women's networks, (b) participation in women's network management development activities, and (c) participation in women's network general self development activities will influence leadership self efficacy beliefs. Hypothesis 2 then suggests that leadership self efficacy will predict well-being, which will then be related to turnover intentions (Hypothesis 5) and organizational commitment (Hypothesis 6).

First, differences in leadership self efficacy between women who do not participate in their organization's women's network, those who participate a moderate amount, those who participate frequently, and those who do not have a women's network in their organization were evaluated. Overall, the ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,311) = 1.70$, $p = .17$. Categories were also created according to participation in women's network management development activities and general self development activities in order to compare leaderships self efficacy levels, and in both cases, the ANOVA was not significant, $F(3,300) = .73$, $p = .53$ and $F(3,304) = 1.40$, $p = .24$. This suggests that there are not overall differences in leadership self efficacy between

women who do not have access to women's networks within their organization versus women who have access to women's networks and participate in them frequently.

Nevertheless, the effect of women's network participation within organizations with women's networks was evaluated. To begin testing the 3 path mediation effects, leadership self efficacy was then regressed on general participation in women's network activities, and the coefficient was not significant, $\beta = .12$, $p = .13$. Thus, further analyses for the mediated effect of general participation in women's networks on turnover intentions and organizational commitment through the effect on leadership self efficacy and well-being were not conducted. However, the 3 path mediation effect of participation in women's network management development activities through leadership self efficacy was evaluated. Leadership self efficacy was regressed on participation in management development activities, and the coefficient was significant ($\beta = .17$, $p = .04$). Well-being was regressed on management development activities and leadership self efficacy, and leadership self efficacy did not significantly relate to well-being ($\beta = .14$, $p = .11$) (See Table 4.3). Therefore, further analyses were not conducted. The same process was conducted for participation in general self development activities. Participation in general self development activities was related to leadership self efficacy ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$), but leadership self efficacy was not significantly related to well-being ($\beta = .16$, $p = .07$), and further analyses were not conducted. All together, there is no support for participation in women's network activities affecting well-being by enhancing participants' leadership self efficacy levels, let alone turnover intentions and organizational commitment being influenced by women's networks through their joint effects on these variables.

Personal Network Supportiveness and Breadth

Hypothesis 3 suggests participation in women's network social activities will result in (a) greater personal network supportiveness and (b) greater personal network breadth. Hypothesis 4 then suggests network breadth and network supportiveness will predict well-being, which will then be related to turnover intentions (Hypothesis 5) and organizational commitment (Hypothesis 6).

First, differences in personal network supportiveness between women who do not participate in their organization's women's network social activities, those who participate a moderate amount, those who participate frequently, and those who do not have a women's network in their organization were evaluated. Overall, the ANOVA was significant, $F(3,309) = 4.11$, $p < .01$, and pairwise comparisons among the means were evaluated. As the test of equality of error variances was significant, the Dunnett's C test was used to evaluate significant differences. There were significant differences between women who have women's networks and do not participate in them and those who participate frequently, with women participating frequently reporting higher levels of personal network supportiveness. There was also a significant difference between women who do not have a women's network in their organization and women who have a women's network and participate frequently. Those who participate frequently reported higher levels of personal network supportiveness than those without a women's network (See Table 4.4).

To test the full 3 path mediation effects proposed, personal network supportiveness was regressed on social activity participation, and the coefficient was significant ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$). Well-being was regressed on participation in social activities and personal network supportiveness. The coefficient for network supportiveness was significant ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). This provides support for network supportiveness mediating the relationship between

participation in women's network social activities and well-being. Turnover was then regressed on social activity participation, network supportiveness, and well-being. The coefficient for well-being was significant ($\beta = -.51$, $p < .01$). Organizational commitment was also regressed on social activity participation, personal network supportiveness, and well-being. The coefficient for well-being was significant ($\beta = .35$, $p < .01$). These results suggest that network supportiveness may mediate the relationship between social activity participation and well-being, and that well-being may mediate the relationship between personal network supportiveness and organizational commitment, providing support for the 3 path mediation model. See Table 4.5 for a summary of the results described above. However, to further test this effect, the methods above were recalculated with the addition of diversity climate as a control variable, and the effects of both social activity participation on network supportiveness ($\beta = .14$, $p = .05$) and network supportiveness on well-being were no longer significant ($\beta = .13$, $p = .15$) (See Table 4.6).

In addition, differences in personal network breadth between women who do not participate in their organization's women's network social activities, those who participate a moderate amount, those who participate frequently, and those who do not have a women's network in their organization were evaluated. Overall, the ANOVA was significant, $F(3,309) = 3.33$, $p = .02$, and pairwise comparisons among the means were evaluated. The test of equality of error variances was significant, and the Dunnett's C test was used to evaluate significant differences. Only the difference between women who participate in women's network events frequently and moderately was significant. Interestingly, there were no significant differences between women who do not have women's networks and those who do (See Table 4.7).

Nevertheless, the role of personal network breadth was also evaluated as a direct mediator in the relationships between participation in women's network social activities and

turnover intentions and organizational commitment. In the first equation, personal network breadth was regressed on social activity participation, and the coefficient was significant (β = .24, $p < .01$). Well-being was then regressed on social activity participation and network breadth (β = .32, $p < .01$), and network breadth was significant, providing initial support for partial mediation. Next, turnover intentions was regressed on social activity participation, personal network breadth, and well-being. Well-being's coefficient was significant (β = -.56, $p < .01$). This provides evidence suggesting that the relationship between personal network breadth and turnover intentions may be mediated by well-being. The same process was conducted for organizational commitment, which was regressed on social activity participation, personal network breadth, and well-being. The coefficient for well-being was significant (β = .35, $p < .01$). The results suggest support for the 3 path mediation model. See Table 4.8 for a summary of the analyses described above. In addition, the analysis was conducted using diversity climate perceptions as a control variable, and although, the coefficient for diversity climate perceptions was significant in every step, women's network social activities remained a significant predictor of network breadth (β = .16, p=.046), network breadth remained a significant predictor of well-being (β = .22, $p < .01$), and well-being remained a significant predictor of both turnover (β = -.25, $p < .01$) and organizational commitment (β = .25, $p < .01$) (See Table 4.9).

Direct Relationships between Women's Network Participation and Turnover and Commitment

Hypothesis 7 suggests a direct negative relationship between participation in women's networks and turnover intentions. The first test of this hypothesis was to compare the turnover intentions of women with no women's networks to those with women's networks who participate in them. The ANOVA tests for differences in turnover intentions based on general participation ($F(3, 318) = 1.00$, $p = .39$), participation in social activities ($F(3,316) = 1.87$, $p =$

.14), participation in management development activities ($F(3,305) = 1.36$, $p = .26$), and participation in general self development activities ($F(3,310) = .71$, $p = .55$) were not significant. Next, the turnover intentions of women who belong to organizations with women's networks were correlated with general participation ($r = -.07$, $p = .39$), participation in social activities ($r = -.11$, $p = .17$), management development activities ($r = -.05$, $p = .53$), and general self development activities ($r = -.10$, $p = .24$), and none of the correlations were significant. Therefore, any relationship between women's network participation and turnover intentions is fully mediated by other outcome variables (e.g., network breadth).

Hypothesis 8 suggests that there will be a direct relationship between participation in women's networks and organizational commitment. The first test of this hypothesis was to compare the organizational commitment of women with no women's networks to those with women's networks who participate in them. The ANOVA tests for differences in organizational commitment based on general participation ($F(3, 319) = .33$, $p = .80$), participation in social activities ($F(3,317) = 2.62$, $p = .05$), participation in management development activities ($F(3,310) = 1.60$, $p = .19$), and participation in general self development activities ($F(3,310) = .41$, $p = .75$) were not significant. Organizational commitment of women who belong to organizations with women's networks was then correlated with general participation ($r = .04$, $p = .59$), social activities ($r = .17$, $p < .05$), management development activities ($r = .11$, $p = .19$), and self development activities ($r = .12$, $p = .15$). There was only support for the relationship between organizational commitment and social activities. However, when participation in social activities was included in the same equation as network breadth, network supportiveness, or diversity climate perceptions, it became insignificant, suggesting full mediation through the effect of women's networks on those variables.

Due to the effects of diversity climate perceptions on the relationships between participation in women's network social activities and personal network supportiveness, the diversity climate perceptions of women who have women's networks versus those who do not were explored. The overall ANOVA was significant based upon participation in social activities ($F(3,308) = 3.86$, $p = .01$), but the only significant differences were among women who participate in women's networks, not between women who do not have women's networks in their organization and women who do.

Moderation Analyses

Hypothesis 9 suggests that the relationship between participation in women's network activities and leadership self efficacy would be moderated by women's network program content, such that the positive relationship would be weaker the more stereotypical content is included. Although factor analysis results did not suggest a stereotypical content factor, the activities rated as stereotypical by subject matter experts were used to evaluate this hypothesis. Hierarchical moderated regression was used, beginning with leadership self efficacy being regressed on general participation in women's network activities ($\beta = .01$, $p = .90$) and participation in stereotypical activities ($\beta = .20$, $p = .04$). The participation by stereotypical activity participation interaction was added to the equation and was significant ($\beta = -.34$, $p < .04$) (See Table 4.10). The interaction was then plotted to understand the nature of the relationship, and suggests that the relationship between general participation and leadership self efficacy is negative in direction the more women are participating in the activities rated as stereotypical (See Figure 4.1). This provides support for Hypothesis 9.

Hypothesis 10 suggests that if a women's network provides female leadership role models, the positive relationship between participation in women's networks and leadership self

efficacy will be stronger. Hierarchical moderated regression was employed to test this hypothesis. First, leadership self efficacy was regressed on participation ($\beta = .14$, $p = .12$) and role model availability ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .55$). When the interaction term was added, it was significant ($\beta = .40$, $p = .03$). However, even though the interaction term was significant, the full model was not significant ($F = 2.54$, $p = .05$), and the results do not provide evidence of moderation (See Table 4.11).

To further test this hypothesis, the hierarchical moderated regression analyses were also conducted with each type of activity. Leadership self efficacy was regressed on participation in women's network social activities ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$) and role model availability ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .18$). When the interaction term was added, it was not significant ($\beta = .13$, $p = .13$) (See Table 4.12). Leadership self efficacy was also regressed on participation in management development activities ($\beta = .19$, $p = .03$) and role model availability ($\beta = -.07$, $p = .45$). When the interaction term was added, it was not significant ($\beta = .68$, $p = .22$) (See Table 4.13). Finally, leadership self efficacy was regressed on participation in general self development activities ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$) and role model availability ($\beta = -.06$, $p = .49$). When the interaction term was added, it was not significant ($\beta = .24$, $p = .53$) (See Table 4.14). Therefore, regardless of the type of participation considered, there was no support for the hypothesis suggesting role model availability would moderate the relationship between participation and leadership self efficacy.

Hypotheses 11 and 12 suggested that perceived organizational support for women's network programming would moderate the relationship between participation in women's networks and attitudes toward the organization (i.e., organizational commitment and turnover intentions), such that the relationship would be higher the more support for the programs was perceived. Therefore, turnover and organizational commitment were both regressed on general

participation (β = -.03, p = .70 on turnover; β = -.03, p = .69 on commitment) and perceived program support (β = -.20, p = .01 on turnover; β = .37, p < .01 on commitment). When the participation by perceived program support interaction term was added to the equation, it was not significant in predicting turnover (β = -.30, p = .45) or commitment (β = -.18, p = .64) (See Table 15). Similarly, turnover and organizational commitment were each regressed on social activity participation (β = -.06, p = .47 on turnover; β = .09, p = .28 on commitment) and perceived program support (β = -.18, p = .03 on turnover; β = .33, p < .01 on commitment). When the participation in social activities by perceived program support interaction term was added to the equation, it was not significant in predicting turnover (β = .37, p = .40) or commitment (β = -.45, p = .27) (See Table 4.16). Turnover and organizational commitment were also each regressed on management development activity participation (β = -.00, p = .98 on turnover; β = .03, p = .74 on commitment) and perceived program support (β = -.18, p = .04 on turnover; β = .35, p < .01 on commitment). When the participation in management development activities by perceived program support interaction term was added to the equation, it was not significant in predicting turnover (β = .48, p = .29) or commitment (β = .08, p = .85) (See Table 4.17). Finally, turnover and organizational commitment were each regressed on general self development activity participation (β = -.00, p = .46 on turnover; β = .06, p = .46 on commitment) and perceived program support (β = -.17, p = .05 on turnover; β = .34, p < .01 on commitment). When the participation in general self development activities by perceived program support interaction term was added to the equations, it was not significant in predicting turnover (β = -.01, p = .98) or commitment (β = .36, p = .32) (See Table 4.18). Therefore, the results do not support the hypothesis that perceived support for women's network programming would moderate the

relationship between women's network participation and turnover and organizational commitment.

Results Summary

The impact of women's networks on participants' leadership self efficacy, personal network breadth, and personal network supportiveness was investigated. The mediating role of these variables in the relationship between participation in women's networks and well-being, and well-being's resulting impact on turnover intentions and organizational commitment was evaluated. There was no evidence of differences between women who have access to and participate in women networks and those who do not in terms of leadership self efficacy. There was also no support for leadership efficacy as a mediator of the relationship between participation in women's network activities and well-being, turnover intentions, or organizational commitment.

The results do provide some support for the impact of women's network social activities on personal network characteristics, though. There was a significant difference between the mean levels of network supportiveness of women who do not work for organizations with women's networks and those who do have women's networks and participate in them frequently. Network supportiveness, through its effect on well-being, was also initially supported as an intervening variable in the relationship between participation in women's network social activities and turnover intentions and organizational commitment. This effect became insignificant when diversity climate perceptions was controlled for, though.

The results did not support a significant difference between mean levels of personal network breadth across women who do not have women's networks in their organization versus women who have women's networks and participate in them. However, network breadth,

through its effect on well-being, was also supported as an intervening variable in the relationship between participation in women's network social activities and turnover intentions and organizational commitment. This effect remained significant even when diversity climate perceptions was included in the model.

Due to the effect of diversity climate perceptions on the mediation analysis of network supportiveness, an exploratory analysis of differences in diversity climate perceptions between women who work for organizations with women's networks versus women who do not work for organizations with women's networks was conducted. There were no significant differences, suggesting that positive diversity climate perceptions may not necessarily be an outcome of participating in women's networks.

Direct and moderated effects were also evaluated. There was no support for direct effects of women's network participation on turnover intentions or organizational commitment. There was no support for role model availability moderating the relationship between participation in women's network activities and leadership self efficacy, nor was there support for perceived support for the women's network moderating the relationship between participation and turnover intentions or organizational commitment. The results do provide support for the moderating effect of stereotypical content on the relationship between participation in women's network activities and leadership self efficacy.

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables for Women who Work for Organizations with Women's Networks

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Participation	2.80	1.18	-													
2. Social Acts.	2.95	1.15	.63**	-												
3. Mgm't Acts.	1.92	1.03	.42**	.50**	-											
4. Self Dev Acts.	2.59	1.1	.55**	.68**	.62**	-										
5. LSE	3.94	.43	.12	.24**	.17*	.23**	-									
6. Network Suppt.	3.33	.86	.12	.27**	0.12	.06	.23**	-								
7. Network Brdth.	3.69	.70	.19**	.24**	.04	.06	.41**	.55**	-							
8. Well-Being (A)	4.10	.94	.16*	.23**	.18*	.12	.19*	.34**	.35**	-						
9. Commitment	3.48	.80	.04	.17*	.11	.12	.20*	.43**	.40**	.46**	-					
10. Turnover	2.31	1.12	-.07	-.11	-.05	-.10	-.05	-.43**	-.27**	-.58**	-.68**	-				
11. Role Models	3.73	.95	.37**	.39**	.32**	.28**	.01	.31**	.30**	.03	.25**	-.12	-			
12. Program Suppt.	3.68	.92	.22**	.30**	.24**	.18*	.09	.37**	.34**	.20*	.36**	-.20*	.56**	-		
13. Divsty. Climate	3.67	.75	.20	.26**	.16	.16	.12	.54	.39	.41**	.51**	-.53**	.34**	.52**	-	
14. Stereotypical	2.06	.87	.51**	.73**	.69**	.83**	.21*	.10	.14	.17*	.13	-.07	.35**	.23**	.19*	-

*Note. *p<.05, **p<.01*

Table 4.2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Outcome Variables for All Participants

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Leadership Self Efficacy	3.94	.51	-						
2. Network Supportiveness	3.30	.87	.21**	-					
3. Network Breadth	3.71	.70	.37**	.57**	-				
4. Well-Being	4.12	.96	.17**	.34**	.31**	-			
5. Commitment	3.51	.81	.13*	.45**	.47**	.48**	-		
6. Turnover	2.32	1.22	-.09	-.37**	-.28**	-.58**	-.67**	-	
7. Diversity Climate	3.64	.86	.12*	.51**	.41**	.44**	.57**	-.57**	-

*Note. *p<.05, **p<.01*

Table 4.3

Effect of Women's Network Management Development Activities on Leadership Self Efficacy and other Outcome Variables

Variable and Statistic	LSE Step 1	Well-Being Step 2
Management Development Activities	.17*	.16
Leadership Self Efficacy (LSE)		.14
Well-Being (Anxiety)		
F	4.22*	3.70*
R^2	.03	.05
ΔR^2		.02

Table 4.4

Dunnett's C Differences in Network Supportiveness based on Women's Network Participation

Women's Network (WN) Participation	M	SD	No WN	No Part	Mod. Part.
No WN	3.28	.88	-		
No Participation in WN	2.96	.99	.32	-	
Moderate Participation in WN	3.22	.89	.05	-.27	-
High Participation in WN	3.65	.87	-.37*	-.69*	-.42*

*Note. *p<.05, **p<.01*

Table 4.5

Effect of Social Activity Participation on Network Supportiveness and other Outcome Variables

Variable and Statistic	Network Suppt. Step 1	Well-Being Step 2	Turnover Step 3a	Commitment Step 3
Social Activity Participation	**.27****	.16	.11	-.00
Network Supportiveness (NSuppt)		**.29****	-.29**	.32**
Well-Being (Anxiety)			**-.51****	**.35****
F	11.49**	11.30**	33.32**	20.49**
R^2	.07	.14	.41	.30
ΔR^2		.08**	.22**	.11**

Table 4.6

Effect of Social Activity Participation on Network Supportiveness and other Outcome Variables, Controlling for Diversity Climate Perceptions

Variable and Statistic	Network Suppt. Step 1	Well-Being Step 2
Diversity Climate	.52**	.31**
Social Activity Participation	**.14**	.12
Network Supportiveness (NSuppt)		**.13**
Well-Being (Anxiety)		
F	34.50**	11.97**
R^2	.32	.20
ΔR^2		.01

Table 4.7

Dunnett's C Differences in Network Breadth based on Women's Network Participation

Women's Network (WN) Participation	M	SD	No WN	No Part	Mod. Part.
No WN	3.74	.71	-		
No Participation in WN (No Part)	3.56	.82	.17	-	
Moderate Participation in WN (Mod Part.)	3.57	.71	.16	-.01	-
High Participation in WN	3.95	.70	-.21	-.39	.37*

*Note. *p<.05, **p<.01*

Table 4.8

Effect of Social Activity Participation on Network Breadth and other Outcome Variables

Variable and Statistic	Network Breadth. Step 1	Well-Being Step 2	Turnover Step 3a	Commitment Step 3b
Social Activity Participation	**.24****	.16*	.07	.02
Network Breadth		**.32****	-.11	.29**
Well-Being (Anxiety)			**-.56***	**.35****
F	8.63**	13.15**	25.46**	18.95**
R^2	.06	.15	.35	.27
ΔR^2		.10**	.26**	.10**

Table 4.9

Effect of Social Activity Participation on Network Breadth and other Outcome Variables, Controlling for Diversity Climate Perceptions

Variable and Statistic	Network Breadth. Step 1	Well-Being Step 2	Turnover Step 2a	Commitment Step 3b
Diversity Climate	.34**	.43**	-.37**	.35**
Social Activity Participation	**.16***	.11	.12	-.03
Network Breadth		**.22***	-.02	.20**
Well-Being (Anxiety)			**-.45****	**.25****
F	14.58**	9.89**	29.49**	21.36**
R^2	.17	.23	.45	.37
ΔR^2		.04**	.17**	.10**

Table 4.10

Moderation Results for Stereotypical Activity Participation on the Relationship between General Participation and Leadership Self Efficacy

Variable and Statistic	Leadership Self Efficacy	
	Step 1	Step 2
Participation	.01	.08
Stereotypical Acts. Part.	.20*	.41**
Part. X Stereo.		-.34**
F	3.28*	5.42**
R^2	.04	.10
ΔR^2		.06**

Table 4.11

Moderation Results for Role Model Availability on the General Participation and Leadership Self Efficacy Relationship

Variable and Statistic	Leadership Self Efficacy	
	Step 1	Step 2
Participation	.14	-.16
Role Model Availability	-.05	-.15
Part X Role Model Avail.		.40*
F	1.24	2.54
R^2	.02	.05
ΔR^2		.03*

Table 4.12

Moderation Results for Role Model Availability on the Social Activity Participation and Leadership Self Efficacy Relationship

Variable and Statistic	Leadership Self Efficacy	
	Step 1	Step 2
Social Activities	.31**	-.25
Role Model Availability	-.12	-.43
Soc Acts. X Role Model Avail.		.13
F	6.30**	5.00**
R^2	.07	.08
ΔR^2		.02

Table 4.13

Moderation Results for Role Model Availability on the Management Development Activity Participation and Leadership Self Efficacy Relationship

Variable and Statistic	Leadership Self Efficacy	
	Step 1	Step 2
Mg't Dev't Activities	.19*	-.30
Role Model Availability	-.07	-.27
Mg't Acts X Role Model Avail.		.68
F	2.4	2.11
R^2	.03	.05
ΔR^2		.01

Table 4.14

Moderation Results for Role Model Availability on the Self Development Activity Participation and Leadership Self Efficacy Relationship

Variable and Statistic	Leadership Self Efficacy	
	Step 1	Step 2
Self Dev't Activities	.25**	.07
Role Model Availability	-.06	-.17
Self Dev't Acts X Role Model Avail.		.24
F	4.46*	3.09*
R^2	.06	.06
ΔR^2		.00

Table 4.15

Moderation Results for Perceived Support on the General Participation and Turnover and Organizational Commitment Relationships

Variable and Statistic	Turnover		Commitment	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
General Participation	-.03	.20	-.03	.10
Perceived Program. Support	.20*	-.05	.37**	.36*
Participation. x ProgSupport		-.30		-.18
F	3.57*	2.57	11.69**	7.82**
R^2	.05	.05	.13	.13
ΔR^2		.00		.00

Table 4.16

Moderation Results for Perceived Support on the Social Activities Participation and Turnover and Organizational Commitment Relationships

Variable and Statistic	Turnover		Commitment	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Social Activities	-.06	-.33	.09	.42
Perceived Program. Support	-.18*	-.35	.33**	.54**
Participation. x Social Activities		.37		-.45
F	3.37*	2.48	11.97**	8.30**
R^2	.04	.01	.13	.13
ΔR^2		.01		.01

Table 4.17

Moderation Results for Perceived Support on the Management Development Activities Participation and Turnover and Organizational Commitment Relationships

Variable and Statistic	Turnover		Commitment	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Management Development Activities	-.00	-.41	.03	-.04
Perceived Program. Support	-.18*	-.34	.35**	.32
Participation. x Management Dev. Acts.		.48		.08
F	2.42	1.20	10.51**	6.98**
R^2	.03	.04	.13	.13
ΔR^2		.01		.00

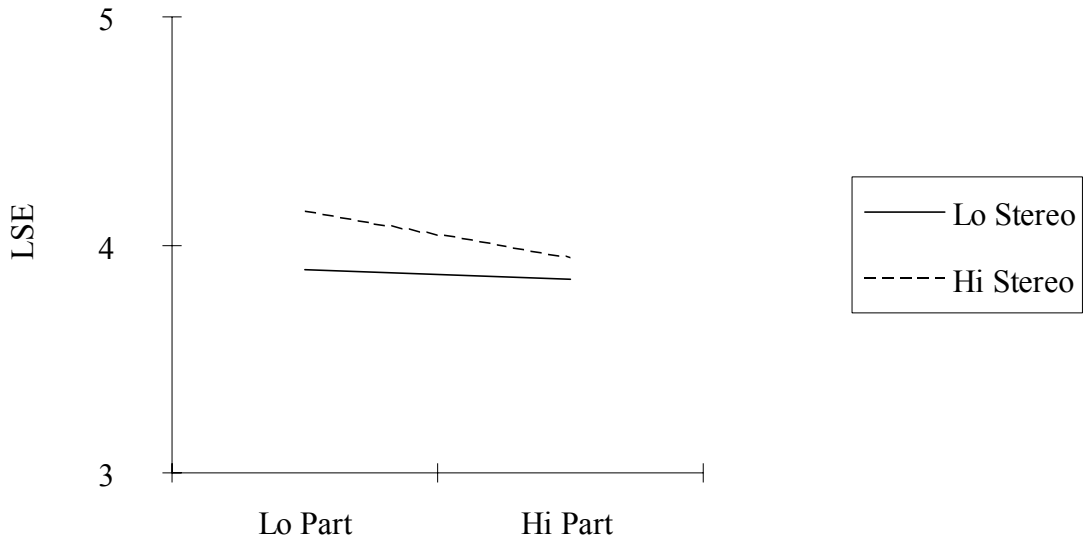
Table 4.18

Moderation Results for Perceived Support on the Self Development Activities Participation and Turnover and Organizational Commitment Relationships

Variable and Statistic	Turnover		Commitment	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Self Development Activities	-.06	-.05	.06	-.22
Perceived Program. Support	-.17*	-.16	.34**	.17
Participation. x Self Dev. Acts.		-.01		.36
F	2.64	1.75	10.86**	7.58**
R^2	.04	.04	.13	.14
ΔR^2		.00		.01

Figure 4.1

Plot of the interaction between general participation and participation in stereotypical activities when predicting leadership self efficacy



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study to was to investigate whether participating in women's networks provides women with resources to cope with the stress women often face in the workplace. It was expected that these coping resources would lead to greater well-being, which would then result in greater organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions. In general, by investigating participation in 3 different categories of activities sponsored by women's networks, the results of this study provide some support for this general idea. A secondary purpose of this study was to evaluate whether certain characteristics of women's networks would make them more beneficial than others. The results of this study provide initial support for this general idea, as well.

Leadership self efficacy is the first coping resource that was hypothesized to be positively influenced by participating in women's network activities. There was no difference in leadership self efficacy levels of women who participate in women's networks in their organizations compared to women who do not have access to women's networks. The results also do not suggest that leadership self efficacy mediates the relationship between participation in women's networks and well-being. Although women's networks do appear to provide many of the experiences that are known to increase efficacy (e.g., role models), the most effective way to develop efficacy beliefs is through mastery experiences, or developmental experiences (Hannah, et al., 2008), which may not be provided by women's networks to the degree necessary to make a difference in leadership self efficacy beliefs. Moreover, leadership self efficacy may be trait-like and difficult to change. Ng, Ang, and Chan (2008) demonstrate that leadership self efficacy mediates the relationship between effective leadership and the personality traits of neuroticism,

extraversion, and conscientiousness, suggesting that leadership self efficacy is explained by personality, which is generally considered stable.

However, the moderation analyses conducted in this study suggest that participation in stereotypical activities sponsored by women's networks (e.g., fashion shows) may negatively impact participants' leadership self efficacy levels. Frequent participation in women's networks and frequent participation in stereotypical events was associated with lower leadership self efficacy than frequent participation in women's network events and infrequent participation in stereotypical events. This finding could be important as it suggests that the content of women's networks impacts the extent to which women's networks provide women with positive career-related benefits. An alternative explanation is that women with higher leadership self efficacy levels may be less interested in the activities rated as stereotypical, though. Although lab studies suggest that leadership self efficacy is malleable, further research is needed to know whether leadership self efficacy influences women's network event participation or vice versa.

The other coping resource hypothesized to be influenced by women's network participation was social support. There were 2 social support variables evaluated in relation to participation in women's network social activities: personal network supportiveness and personal network breadth. The results suggest that women who participate in women's network social activities frequently reported more supportive personal networks than both those who participate in them less often and those that do not have women's networks in their organizations. Thus, the results suggest that by participating in women's networks, women are able to develop more supportive relationships. Specifically, personal network supportiveness refers to the degree that the relationships in one's network provide career-related developmental support. It is particularly important that women's networks appear to be impacting this variable,

as previous research indicates that men and women engage in networking activities to the same extent, but that women's careers are less likely to benefit from the networking behaviors. One reason for this may be the types of relationships they develop. Forret and Dougherty (2004) suggest that the differences in career benefits may be due to the type of resources they receive from the relationships within their network. It may be that men develop more developmental relationships that advance their careers (i.e., they develop greater network supportiveness) and that women develop more friendship relationships that are wide in terms of breadth, but that do not necessarily provide career-related support. The results of this study suggest that women may be enhancing their developmental relationships by participating in women's networks, which may help them advance.

Greater personal network supportiveness also appears to be improving women's well-being, and as a result, their retention-related attitudes (turnover intentions and organizational commitment). This is consistent with the results of previous research. Totterdell, Wall, Holman, Diamond, and Epitropaki (2004) found that employees with weakened social networks due to a merger experienced more stress, and Morrison (2002) found that employees with broader social networks were more committed to their organizations. These results are important given the recent attention to workplace stress (Avey, Luthens, & Jensen, 2009). It suggests that women's networks may be an intervention to help reduce the negative outcomes of stress, such as turnover. Moreover, it supports the recommendations of researchers like Nelson and Burke (2000) who recommend providing opportunities for women to network with one another as a way of reducing their stress. It also supports the idea of women's networks as an intervention to reduce the turnover rates of women.

On the other hand, there were no differences in personal network breadth among women who do not have access to women's networks and women who actually participate in women's networks frequently. Among women who do work for organizations that have women's networks, participation in women's network social activities was related to personal network breadth, though. This suggests that reverse causation is a possibility to be seriously considered. It could be that women who already have more relationships within the organization would be more motivated participate in the women's network social activities. Further research is needed to evaluate this effect and what characteristics of the women themselves make them more or less likely to participate in women's networks.

There were other hypotheses in this study for which there was no support. It was hypothesized that there would be a stronger relationship between participation in women's network activities and leadership self efficacy when there were more female role models provided by the network. Again, this insignificant finding may be due to the fact that leadership self efficacy is a more stable trait than the hypotheses in this study suggest. However, Gibson (2004) discusses the difference between distant versus close role models and cites research suggesting that at times distant role models can be more impactful. Moreover, when people get to know a role model that was once a distant role model, they often find negative attributes that are not worth aspiring towards. Perhaps women's networks give women the opportunity to get to know previously distant role models, which may not be as positive as originally suspected.

The hypothesis that the relationship between participation in women's network activities and turnover and organizational commitment would be stronger the more perceived support for the network there was, was also not supported. This may be due to the weak direct relationship between participation in women's network activities and organizational commitment and

turnover intentions. However, it also may be that perceived support impacts something more proximal to participation, such as diversity climate perceptions, which may then impact turnover intentions and organizational commitment. Future research is needed to evaluate the reason for the lack of support for this hypothesis.

Limitations

Although the results of this study provide initial insight into a phenomenon that has not yet been empirically examined, there are several limitations of this study that should be noted. First, the network characteristics scales were created and modified based on the current study and have not been thoroughly validated on samples separate from this study. They were created based upon well-tested scales, though, and the factor analysis and internal consistency analyses suggest that they are reliable and valid. Nevertheless, future research should investigate the validity of these scales in a full scale development context.

Second, the sample size in this study is smaller than desirable, especially when participation in women's networks was categorized. This may have limited the power to detect significant differences in some cases. Moreover, this study was cross-sectional and proposed several mediation hypotheses. Mediation implies causation and to truly test for causation, the effect needs to be tested in a lab setting in which more control over extraneous variables is possible, as well as in a setting in which the outcome variables can be measured and compared both before and after women begin participating in women's network programming.

There are also many variables that were not accounted for in this research that could have impacted the outcome variables, as well. For instance, the participants' industry, occupation, tenure, and level in their organization's hierarchy may impact their leadership self efficacy levels

and personal network characteristics, and these variables were not controlled for in the analyses. Future research should take these variables into consideration.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

There are 2 key areas of practical implications and future research: (1) the impact of women's networks on participants' networks of developmental relationships and (2) the impact of women's networks on diversity climate perceptions. Although other researchers' arguments about the danger of women's networks further isolating women from the networks of men may also be true (e.g., Bierema, 2005), the results of this study suggest that participation does provide women with a benefit that may help them further advance. However, future research should further investigate with whom women are developing supportive relationships as a result of participating in women's networks. It is possible that women's networks are helping them develop relationships with men, either through activities sponsored by the network that men also attend, or through the female contacts they develop through the women's network.

Although it was not hypothesized, diversity climate perceptions were related to participation in women's networks, and future research should provide an in-depth analysis of this relationship. Diversity climate perceptions refer to an individual's beliefs that the organization values diversity, and research demonstrates that diversity climate perceptions are related to the retention of minorities (McKay et al., 2007), and decreased relational conflict among people in the organization from different demographic groups (Hickes-Clarke & illes, 2000). This has important practical implications and should be further assessed in future research. For instance, some characteristics of women's networks may be more likely to enhance diversity climate perceptions. Research suggests that diversity climate perceptions are formed based on cues in the organizational environment, such as becoming aware of more

demographically diverse workgroups. Pugh, Dietz, Brief, and Wiley (2008) found that the extent to which workforce diversity impacts diversity climate perceptions (i.e., the belief that the organization values diversity) is dependent upon the diversity of the community in which the organization is embedded, though. When the community in which the organization is embedded is highly diverse, the impact of diversity inside the organization does not impact diversity climate perceptions. Although the comparison is not exact, the research suggests that determinants of diversity climate perceptions are context-specific and suggest that participation in women's networks may not impact diversity climate perceptions when they are in organizations or industries that already have greater female representation. In the exploratory analysis of diversity climate perceptions of women in organizations without women's networks versus those of women who have women's networks and participate, there were no overall differences. Perhaps many of the organizations that do not have women's networks are within industries or professions in which women are already well-represented at higher levels, such as in education, and providing them with additional opportunity to interact may not impact diversity climate perceptions. Further exploring the types of organizations that have women's networks, the types of organizations that are likely to benefit from women's networks, and the impact of women's networks on diversity climate perceptions in different types of organizations would likely be a fruitful area of future research, and one that would result in instructive information for organizations.

Another area of both practical implications and future research is the different benefits associated with participating in different types of events sponsored by women's networks. Although many women indicated that they participate in management development activities and general self development activities, the benefits of women's networks found in this study are

associated with participating in social activities. This suggests that if organizations are interested in providing women with opportunities to develop their personal networks, they should guide their women's networks to focus on providing the social activities. However, it is unclear what the benefits associated with participating in the other types of events provided by women's networks are, and the investigation of which may be a promising area of future research. For instance, although the results of the analyses investigating the relationship between participation in women's network management development activities and leadership self efficacy were not convincing, perhaps leadership aspirations are less stable and more likely to be influenced by participation in such events. Lab studies have shown that leadership aspirations can be changed by introducing positive cues about women's abilities as leaders into the environment, which may be what providing management development activities through the women's network would impact (e.g., Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005).

In addition, women's network are not the only kind of employee network commonly supported by organizations. Organizations often provide networks for African American, LGBT, and many other groups of employees (Friedman & Craig, 2004) that are often in the minority or groups that have been discriminated against in the past. The results of this research should provide insight into the benefits of these initiatives, but future research should also investigate the impact of these groups on some of the variables researched in this study, as well as others.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide initial evidence of the benefits of women's networks in organizations. In particular, it appears that the social activities provided by women's networks provide women with the opportunity to develop more supportive relationships within their organizations. These supportive relationships are likely to play a direct role in helping more

women advance to higher levels of their organizations. Moreover, these more supportive relationships appear to be related to greater well-being, and more positive retention-related variables. Considering the prevalence of women's networks in organizations and the lack of empirical research on this subject up to this point, this finding is very important and suggests that women's networks should continue to be recommended and supported. In fact, in the current economic environment in which organizations do not have access to abundant resources but still need to retain valuable employees, women's networks may be a relatively inexpensive initiative to help increase the retention and well-being of one important group of employees.

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APPENDIX A
SOLITITATION LETTER AND ONLINE CONSENT FORM

Dear Prospective Participants,

I am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Karl Kuhnert in the Department of Psychology at the University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled Women's Experiences in Organizations. The purpose of this study is to collect information about women's experiences in organizations. The expected benefit of which is to use the information to improve organizational programs and policies meant to help women. If you participate, you will be asked questions about the types of programs your organization provides for women and how you feel about yourself and your organization.

If you are a professional woman currently working for an organization, please consider completing this survey. In addition, it is important that a large number of women from many different companies have the opportunity to take this survey, so PLEASE CONSIDER SENDING THIS SURVEY TO OTHER PROFESSIONAL WOMEN YOU KNOW (BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION).

Please be assured that your participation will remain confidential. In order to protect the data collected in this survey, the survey website is secure. However, some of the survey questions ask about your feelings toward your organization, and should they be intercepted could result in negative employment outcomes. To mitigate this risk, we have secured the link and further recommend that you use a non-company computer to complete the survey. Should you prefer an alternative means of completing the survey, you may email the principal investigator at scharlau@uga.edu for a PDF attachment that can be printed out, completed, and returned to: Liz Scharlau, Department of Psychology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-3013.

Your participation will involve the completion of a survey that should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate, stop at any time, or skip any question that you wish without the risk of penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The results of the research study may be published, but the published results will be presented in summary form only.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to send an e-mail to scharlau@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 612 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu.

By the clicking NEXT below, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project.

Thank you,

Liz Scharlau Roling, M.S.
Doctoral Student
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Internal Women's Networks

For the purposes of this study, women's networks are defined as formally or informally organized groups of women within organizations who meet regularly to organize and participate in programs and events to help women develop and advance professionally. Please consider this description of women's networks when answering the following questions.

Women's Network Participation

1. Does your organization have a Women's Network?
    - Yes
    - No

If participants answered no to the question above, they were directed to the section of the survey that does not pertain to women's networks. If they answered yes to the question above, they were directed to the questions below before proceeding to the rest of the survey.

2. How often does the women's network provide events?
    - Weekly
    - Biweekly
    - Monthly
    - Quarterly
    - Yearly
    - Almost Never
    - Not Sure
3. How often do you participate in the events?
    - Weekly
    - Biweekly
    - Monthly
    - Quarterly
    - Yearly
    - Almost Never

Women's Network Activities

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

4. How frequently have you attended women's network programs/activities of this type?

    Building Relationships

    - Networking events with senior leaders
    - Networking events with female senior leaders
    - Networking with peers
    - Social activities (that would interest mostly women)
    - Social activities (that would interest both men and women)
    - Book clubs - nonprofessional books
    - Book clubs - professional books

Management / Leadership Skill Development

- Strategic planning
- Administrative skill (accurate record keeping, policy making and administration, etc.)
- Resource allocation and monitoring (e.g., budgeting)
- Managing direct reports
- Communicating effectively / presentation skill
- Public relations
- Technical proficiency (expanding knowledge of industry-specific or profession-specific information)
- Project management
- Business judgment workshop (e.g., learning about financials)
- Staffing (hiring decisions, etc.)
- Developing subordinates
- Selling/influencing
- Change management

Professional Development

- Professional clothing demonstrations (e.g., Dress for Success)
- Executive presence
- Work family balance
- Resume building
- Business etiquette
- Networking skill
- Personal awareness
- Encouraging/inspirational speakers
- Finding a mentor

Organization Focused

- Activities to recruit women for the organization 6 6
- Panels to advise HR to include women-friendly benefits 6 6
- Involvement in marketing activities

Women's Network Features

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Role Model Availability

5. My organization's women's network has made me aware of women who serve as role models for me.
6. My organization's women's network has made me aware of women who represent who I want to be.
7. My organization's women's network has made me aware of women I identify with.

Perceived Support for the Program

8. Upper management in this company plays an active, visible role in supporting the women's network.

9. The manager of my particular business unit plays an active, visible role in supporting the women's network.
10. The operations of the women's network are funded by the organization.
11. The women's network is adequately resourced.

LEADERSHIP SELF EFFICACY				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Leadership Self Efficacy

12. I know a lot more than most of my coworkers about what it takes to be a good leader.
13. In general, I'm not very good at leading a group of my peers.
14. I am confident of my ability to influence a group I lead.
15. I have no idea what it takes to keep a group running smoothly.
16. I know how to encourage good group performance.
17. I am able to allow most group members to contribute to the task when leading a group.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING					
Never 1	Occasionally 2	Some of the time 3	Much of the time 4	Most of the time 5	All of the time 6

Job-related anxiety-contentment - Thinking of the past few weeks, how much of the time has your job made you feel each of the following?

18. Tense
19. Uneasy
20. Worried
21. Calm
22. Contented
23. Relaxed

ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Organizational Commitment

24. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
25. I enjoy discussing my organization with people inside it.
26. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
27. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one.(R)
28. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization. (R)
29. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization. (R)
30. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
31. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization. (R).

Turnover Intention

32. It is likely that I will actively look for a new job in the next year.
33. I often think about quitting my job.
34. I will probably look for a new job in the next year

Diversity Climate Perceptions				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Diversity Climate

35. I trust my organization to treat me fairly.
36. My organization respects the views of people like me.
37. Top leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity.
38. The organization maintains a diversity-friendly work environment.

GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCES				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Personal Network Characteristics

39. I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who use their influence to support my advancement.
40. I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who suggest specific strategies for achieving career success.
41. I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who bring my accomplishments to the attention of important people in my organization.
42. I have a strong network of relationships with people at work with whom I have frequent social interactions outside of work.
43. I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who guide my professional development.
44. I have a strong network of relationships with people at work who think highly of me.
45. I have strong relationships with a large network of colleagues in many different business units within my organization.
46. I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work who I can call on for support when I really need to get things done.
47. I have a large network of people at work with whom I can talk about confidential work-related matters.
48. I have good relationships with a large network of influential colleagues and associates at work.
49. I have good relationships with a lot of people in management positions that are above my own level in the organization.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographic information is being asked so that we can ensure that this survey has been answered by individuals with a wide range of experiences. Your answers are completely confidential and will be reported only in the aggregate.

50. What is your gender?
    - Male
    - Female
    - Other
51. In what year were you born?
52. What is your race/ethnicity?
    - African American/Black
    - Asian American
    - Caucasian/White
    - Latino American/Hispanic
    - Native American
    - Other (please specify)
53. What is your marital status?
    - Single (Never Married)
    - Married
    - Divorced or Separated
    - Widowed
54. Do you have any children?
    - Yes
    - No
55. In what state do you live?
56. Please indicate the highest level of formal education you have completed?
    - Elementary/Middle School
    - High School
    - Some College
    - Bachelor's Degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.)
    - Some Graduate School
    - Graduate Degree (e.g., M.A, M.S, Ph.D.)
    - Professional Degree (e.g., J.D., MBA)
57. What industry do you work in?
    - Accounting/Finance
    - Advertising/Public Relations
    - Arts/Entertainment/Publishing
    - Banking/Mortgage
    - Clerical/Administrative
    - Construction/Facilities
    - Customer Service
    - Education/Training
    - Engineering/Architecture

- Government/Military
- Healthcare
- Hospitality/Travel
- Human Resources
- Insurance
- Internet/New Media
- Law Enforcement/Security
- Legal
- Management Consulting
- Manufacturing/Operations
- Marketing
- Non-Profit/Volunteer
- Pharmaceutical/Biotech
- Real Estate
- Restaurant/Food Service
- Retail
- Sales
- Technology
- Telecommunications
- Transportation/Logistics
- Other (Please Specify)

58. What is your profession?
59. Please indicate the size of your organization.
    - 1-49 employees
    - 50-99 employees
    - 100-499 employees
    - 500-999 employees
    - 1,000-4,999 employees
    - 5,000-9,999 employees
    - 10,000-49,999 employees
    - 50,000 or more employees
60. Which best describes your organization?
    - Public
    - Private
    - Government
    - Non-Profit
61. Please indicate your current job level.
    - Administrative/Support
    - Technical
    - Entry-Level
    - Associate
    - Supervisor
    - Manager
    - Director

- Vice President
- Partner
- CEO/Executive
- Other (Please Specify)

62. Do you currently supervise others? Yes/No
63. Please indicate your work status.
    - Full-time
    - Part-time
    - Contract
64. When did you begin your current job?
65. When did you begin working for your organization?
66. When did you begin working in your very first job?
67. Please indicate your annual income.
    - $0-$25,000
    - $26,000-$50,000
    - $51,000-$75,000
    - $76,000-$100,000
    - $101,000-$250,000
    - $251,000 and above

Thank you for your participation. Your responses have been submitted. Please consider sending this link to other professional women that you know:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SYQPLMV