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Mentoring Women Entrepreneurs: Perceived Needs and Benefits

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INTRODUCTION

Though mentoring is well recognized and widely practiced, researchers have had difficulty specifically identifying what a mentor does. Jacobi (1991) argued that mentoring is defined in numerous ways depending on the applied field. For example, a mentor in the workplace is “a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times promoting or sponsoring” (Zey, 1984, p. 7). According to Kram (1985), the term ‘mentor’ dates back to Greek mythology concerning the relationship of an older experienced adult who helps a younger individual learn to navigate in the adult world as well in the working world. In the workforce, a mentor is a personal coach who has experience and the ability to offer guidance and support. In 1988, Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, and Feren defined a mentor as “a senior member of the profession or organization who shares values, provides emotional support, career counseling, information and advice, professional and organizational sponsorship, and facilitates access to key organizational and professional networks” (p. 16). Fagenson (1989) further defined a mentor as “someone in a position of power who looks out for you, or gives you advice, or brings your accomplishments to the attention of other people who have power in the company” (p. 312).

Different authors variously define mentor. Although the definitions are not the same, the definitions do convey the same meaning. Hence, the thoughts of guidance and instruction come to mind when most people think of mentoring. One of the most recent definitions of mentoring comes from Mitchell, Eby, and Ragins (2015) who stated that mentoring is a developmental relationship connecting a less knowledgeable protégé with a more knowledgeable mentor. Thus, the meaning behind mentoring has not genuinely changed. The definitions suggest that there are numerous functions or roles a mentor plays to their protégé.

There is increasing interest in the role of mentoring entrepreneurs, and specifically female entrepreneurs (Laukhuf & Malone, 2015; Krotz, 2011; Ncube & Washburn, 2010; Cochran, 2019). This research attempts to identify the self-perceived needs of female entrepreneurs regarding mentoring.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women entrepreneurs are a rapidly growing demographic. Babson College’s (2012) Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reported that 126 million women entrepreneurs are active worldwide (Laukhuf & Malone, 2015). GEM reported in their 2016/2017 report that over 163 million women started new businesses (Strawser et. al., 2021). New analysis by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) shows that if women and men around the world participated equally as entrepreneurs, global GDP could ultimately rise by approximately three to six percent, boosting the global economy by \$2.5 trillion to \$5 trillion (Unnikrishnan & Hanna, 2019). Kelley reports that the number of women who launch businesses out of necessity is 30% higher than male counterparts (Kelley et al., 2012). Women-owned businesses close at a higher rate than their male counterparts, but only by ten percent (Strawser et al., 2021).

In an annual report by the National Women’s Business Council (NWBC), the organization reported on deliberations focused on the most persistent issues affecting rural minority women entrepreneurs—those turning to necessity entrepreneurship, those with businesses at the scaleup stage, and those who enter the market through inheritance or participation in a family-run

business or farm. Members of this Council's Rural Women's Entrepreneurship Subcommittee identified the following as an urgent set of issues requiring solutions:

- succession planning
- inheritance and estate taxes
- lack of available home and child care
- limited access to culturally competent entrepreneurial resources (NWBCA, 2021).

These are the types of issues and challenges for which mentoring programs could prove beneficial for female owned business and entrepreneurial start-ups.

A recurring theme in business literature is a valuable contribution mentors play in helping women entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses (Krotz, 2011). Mentoring programs that have been designed for women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their effectiveness and benefit (Kickul et al., 2010; Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2010). In another study, the suggestion was made that women entrepreneurs were reported as being independent but preferring teamwork to working alone (Akanm et al., 2010). This may indicate that women entrepreneurs would value mentoring programs and mentor-mentee relationships.

Understanding Mentoring roles and functions

The roles and functions that represent the dyadic process in mentoring are complex, different, and challenging (Kram & Ragins, 2007). However, mentoring as a tool can be used to develop and accelerate a protégé's career. A mentor has the responsibility to be cautious of whom is selected and recognize the value in a potential protégé (Dow, 2014). Kram and Ragins (2007) stated that mentors who provide guidance into social and informational networks, produce a greater visibility of the protégé's strengths and potential. A reliable mentor will take the initiative to select their protégés carefully and follow through for a particular period for proper protégé development (Dow, 2014). The responsibility comes with the ability of the mentor having a perspective aptitude. Mason, Griffin, and Parker (2014) advised perspective taking is when an individual embraces another individual's point of view. A good effective mentor has the aptitude to see other individual's standpoints and apply those standpoints to their perspectives. Therefore, a mentor's behavior and characteristics can be valuable tools in determining how a protégé will operate and succeed.

Numerous studies have found that mentors aid in the being the source of a protégé's career enhancement and advancement (Joo et al., 2018; Helms et al., 2016; Dow, 2014; McDonald & Westphal, 2013; Dworkin et al., 2012). The information obtained in the studies provide mentoring roles and functions that produce an understanding of the entire process (Kram & Ragins, 2007). According to Chun, Sosik, and Yun (2012), mentoring provides career-oriented functions that help to promote and assist in a protégé's career progression and development. Ultimately, the studies have found that formal mentors often provide fewer mentoring functions which revealed the importance of informal mentoring (Hu et al., 2016).

Mentoring relationships

Mentoring relationships come in two forms, formal and informal. The difference in the two forms varies in styles and activities. According to Ragins, Cotton, and Miller (2000), these relationships are diverse in their length, structure, purpose, and definition. Moreover, there are noteworthy variances between formal and informal mentoring relationships that can sway both

delivery and acceptance of mentoring functions and career outcomes (Kao et al., 2014). Formal versus informal mentoring has been used as variables in numerous studies. Ragins et al. (2000) conducted a study with results generating the thought that informal mentoring relationships can be employed in formal mentoring relationships. By applying the unstructured, naturally occurring mechanisms that happen in informal mentoring, formal mentoring can have a higher success rate (Finkelstein et al., 2012). In Hu, Wang, Wang, Chen, and Jiang (2016) study, the results yielded that attraction serves as a fundamental antecedent through which mentors' moods influence mentoring support in a formal mentoring relationship. Rather formal or informal, mentoring has to be thorough in many different ascendants.

Organizations and individuals who seek the concept of developing mentoring relationships should focus on the type of relationship that best fits all parties involved. Ragins et al. (2000) conducted a study focusing on the assumption that all types of mentoring are equal. However, the author's results revealed that protégés in nourishing formal mentoring relationships were reported more positive than protégés in insufficient informal relationships. Hence, even though the relationship may be developed by a neutral party, the mentoring relationship needs an optimistic approach. Protégés must be highly motivated and reliable for a mentor to select them. The mentors, rather colleagues or supervisors, have high expectations for protégés to display an intellectual engagement and to show the drive to become successful. The mentor's advisement and guidance impact the social connection and friendship between a protégé and a mentor. Thus, the mentor's leadership and perspective will derive from their experiences and will be affecting the relationship throughout the duration of the interactions. Therefore, a mentor should have a goal to appeal to the protégé and their fellow networking connections.

Formal and Informal Mentoring

According to Finkelstein et al. (2012), formal mentoring is a common practice which is developed with the organization's assistance or intervention. The relationship is guided through the organization and tends to be shorter than informal mentoring relationships (Finkelstein et al., 2012). Often, formal mentors have little ambition to guide a protégé that they did not personally seek out. Hu et al. (2016) stated that formal mentors will offer less career-related support, psychosocial support, and role modeling to their protégé. On the contrary, Kerssen-Griep (2013) argued that a mentor provides the protégé with professional knowledge, career advisement, and guidance within the formal mentoring relationship.

Within an informal mentoring relationship, there are no written procedures and requirements. A mentor will voluntarily develop a relationship to provide a protégé with psychosocial support and guidance (Lloyd-Jones, 2011). However, the development stage requires more time in the beginning but last longer than formal mentoring relationships as well as may continue beyond the work setting. Moreover, an informal mentoring relationship is developed through unstructured, self-initiated social interaction when the mentor or the protégé create the mentoring relationship among themselves (Kao et al., 2014; Blickle et al., 2008). Just as selecting something important in life, protégés should be cautious of selecting the right person to be their mentor. Mitchell et al. (2015) suggested that mentors should have specific characteristics that will contribute to the success of the protégé. These authors advised that through existing research, protégés who obtain a mentor similar to themselves are favored to have a more positive outcome. The likeness is an important antecedent for the selection between a mentor and a protégé. This mentoring antecedent affects many factors such as professional and organizational

commitment along with the perceptions of the mentor's role modeling. Kao et al. (2014) utilized the similarity-attraction theory to uphold their proposal of protégés prefer to interact with mentors who are similar to themselves rather than mentors who are different.

Mentoring outcomes

Organizations apply various tactics to overpower conflicts and to support change which produces outcomes. Thus, those outcomes determine how an organization will continue to proceed. For example, there is research evidence with results that support and endorse mentoring programs. Tharenou (2005) conducted a longitudinal study of Australian employees from a variety of public and private organizations. The results indicated that women benefit more from mentoring than men do in the aspect of career support-oriented mentoring. However, despite results indicating that work-related mentoring benefits women more than men, some women believe that mentoring does not generate the same benefits for them as mentoring seems to do to men (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010). Nonetheless, in a 2014 study conducted by Eller, Lev, and Feurer, formal mentoring relationships help establish open communication and availability between mentors and protégés which results as being beneficial for both parties. According to Kram and Ragins (2007), when administrations apply mentoring as an effective strategy for employee career growth and development, the organization will see improved socialization, orientation, and career advancement along with improving equity for female employees. The organization will see a result lower employee turnover when job satisfaction is higher (Pasaoglu & Tonus, 2014). Additionally, employees can benefit, influence, and learn from one another in mentoring relationships. The benefit of enhanced learning through the transfer of skills and knowledge amongst employees allows for the development and promotion of individuals.

Ultimately, learning from past experiences and adapting to the environment determines the organization's capability to succeed (Evans & Kivell, 2015). An organization's administration can foster individual and organizational learning, reinforce positive organizational behaviors, promote well-being in the workplace, and career management (Laiho & Brandt, 2012). A positive mentoring program benefits when an organization confronts the gender inequality barrier by applying mentors to help in the acceptance of female managers. Moreover, a formal mentoring program has a positive reputation in the organization (Laiho & Brandt, 2012). Lumpkin (2011) argued that employees will feel accepted and better comprehend the nature of the work by participating in mentoring programs as established by the administrators. The mentoring program will allow women teach other women how to overcome barriers and manage challenges (Clarke, 2011). Thus, a successful mentoring program will lead to the overall career success for males and females.

Agencies will see positive outcomes from a formal mentoring program such as an increase in employee job performance and placement, facilitating networking, and advancement in careers (Folta, Seguin, Ackerman, et al., 2012; Lumpkin, 2011). According to Clarke (2011), mentoring programs within the organization boosts attitudes and support career aspirations. In addition, formal mentoring programs increase productivity and enhance employee investment within the organization (Perez, Bromley, & Cochran, 2017). Similarly, Petras and Grace (2014) discussed a benefit that mentoring programs provide a positive perception to the public of cooperative work efforts within the organization. On the contrary, formal mentoring programs have negative outcomes. Organizations can see mentoring participants claiming the relationship felt forced or was mismatched in the arrangement between the mentor and protégé (Law et al.,

2014). Also, a personality conflict may inflict differences of opinion between the mentor and protégé. However, mentoring programs have proven beneficial to organizations beyond meeting goals. Organizations can have a result of overall progressive growth in mentoring women for advancement and promotions when the correct characteristics and elements are applied. Ultimately, an organization with a formal mentoring program that is successful and does not revert back to the anti-women mentality will generate an advancement for the entire organization.

Gender issues and challenges

The problem of the females not having the support and encouragement to seek promotions, strains the females in totality. According to Bennett (1984), women report having difficulty gaining support and acceptance by coworkers. When male coworkers discourage the females from attempting to progress, the females' motivation decreases. Motivation of advancement, additional duties, and working harder linger to barely thriving. Females will withdraw and decline in learning and developing the necessary job skills to become competent for promotion (Worden, 1993). Ultimately, women pursue other working opportunities to improve and develop a worthier quality of work life.

Developing a mentoring program

A successful organization will realize the need to have improvements depending on the area in need. For instance, the suggestion of organizational intervention is when an organization wants to improve the overall organizational design (Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2013). Thus, the change begins when administration acknowledges a specific area such as the underrepresentation of females in management positions in male-dominated workplaces. An effective organization will evaluate and adjust approaches based on the challenges and opportunities ahead (Robbins, 2015). Gurianova and Mechtcheriakova (2015) argued that a successful organizational structure involves remaining flexible and does not build on the basis of current problems such as resistance to change. Management can vanquish the resistance to change through different techniques. Those techniques consist of the mentoring program as well as pairing skeptical male employees with females to help overcome the uncertainty of female leaders (Clarke, 2011). By exposing the males to the females, management can reduce the hesitation and potentially initiate a positive working environment.

Ultimately, a productive mentoring program requires particular features such as organizational assistance which is a key element. When developing a successful mentoring program, administration should provide training and role definitions to the selected mentors and protégés as well as providing the proper structure and guidance for the entire duration of the mentoring relationship (Corner, 2014). However, agencies that have an organizational strategy to initiate a formal mentoring program must be measurable and held accountable. An established policy and procedures manual pertaining to a formal mentoring program will provide the entire organization guidance. Within the manual should be the characteristics and elements of a professional mentoring relationship such as designated timeframes, meeting locations, and content (Corner, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

A survey instrument was developed in order to assess the demand and interest for mentoring among women who are currently engaged as small business owners and entrepreneurs through the SBA Small Business Development Center network. Specifically, women surveyed were those participating in the annual conference for women entrepreneurs jointly sponsored by Southeastern Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center. During the 2022 *Women in Entrepreneurship Conference*, 29 of women completed the survey. Results are at a 90% confidence level with a margin of error of 10%. See the survey in Appendix A. The survey consisted of five sections: the first gathered respondent's current state of business ownership. Section two had respondents rate their own expertise level on a wide range of subjects with which entrepreneurs typically regularly engage and that will affect their success rate. In the third section, responses were gathered relative to their perceived need for a mentor. The fourth section asked respondents for basic demographic information regarding age and education, and the fifth section gathered information regarding whether the individual preferred mentoring from someone of the same or different sex. The surveys were distributed online in the concluding session of the annual conference with allowance for time to submit. There were no specific topics relative to mentoring taught in the conference that might have influenced the responses. Blind surveys were conducted, and the results are presented in the following section.

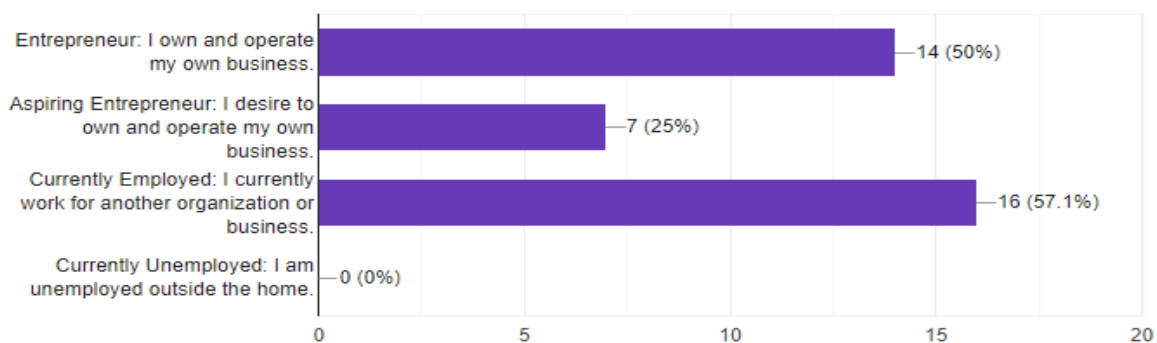
LIMITATIONS

The sample size was minimal providing a threshold of statistical significance. Delimitations included sampling only those women who attended the annual conference hosted by the School of Business at Southeastern and the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center.

RESULTS

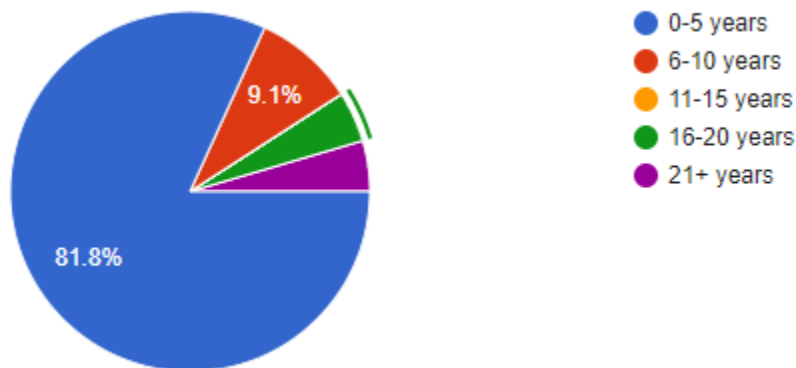
Twenty-nine of the women who attended the 2022 *Women in Entrepreneurship Conference*, responded to the survey distributed during the conference. Half of the respondents indicated that they were already engaged in an entrepreneurial venture, while 25% indicated their intention to start their own business. Over half (57.1%) were currently employed by another organization, indicating that roughly half of those who already owned their own business were still working for another organization.

Table 1: Current Entrepreneurial Status



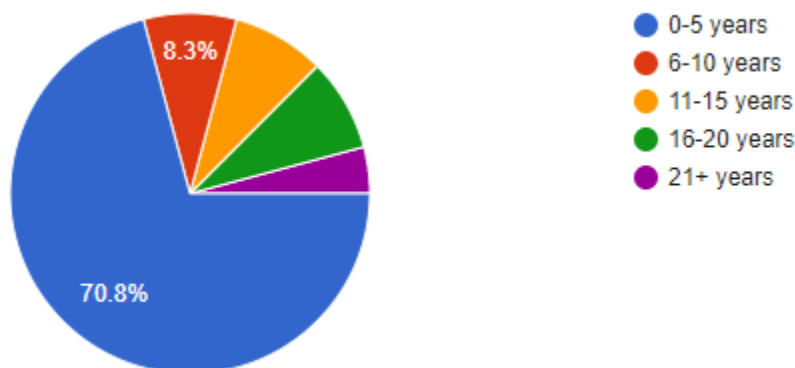
The vast majority have owned their businesses for five years or less (81.8%) although this number presumably includes those aspirant entrepreneurs who are in the planning/staging process (with zero years). Two respondents reported owning their businesses from 6-10 years, one responded owning their business 16-20 years, and one responded owning their business over 21 years.

Table 2: Length of Self-Employment/Entrepreneurship



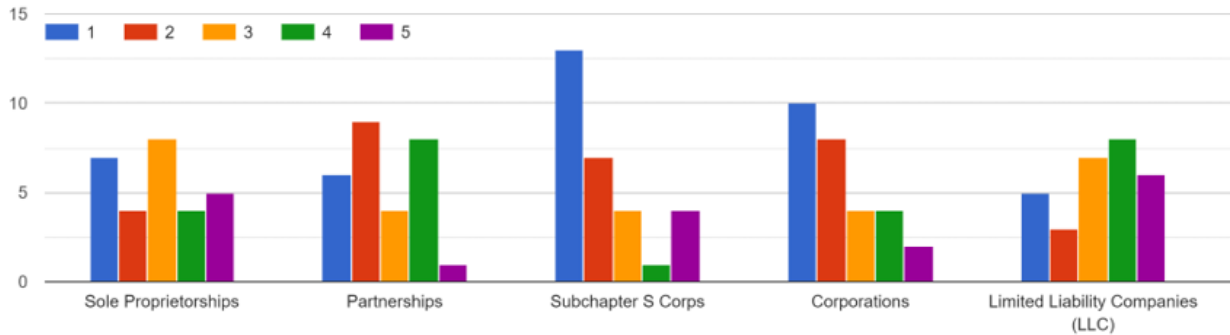
Of those responding, over 70% indicated working for another organization or business for up to five years, while 8.3% responded working for another firm for six-ten years. Another 8.3% reported working for a company for 11-15 years, 8.3% reported 16-20 years, and 4.2% reported working for another company for over 21 years.

Table 3: Length of Employment for Another Organization or Business



Participants indicated their own knowledge on a variety of topics by ranking each topic on a Likert scale of one to five, with one being the least knowledgeable and five being the most knowledgeable. The first five subject areas dealt with business organizational form. Results are summarized in Table 4.

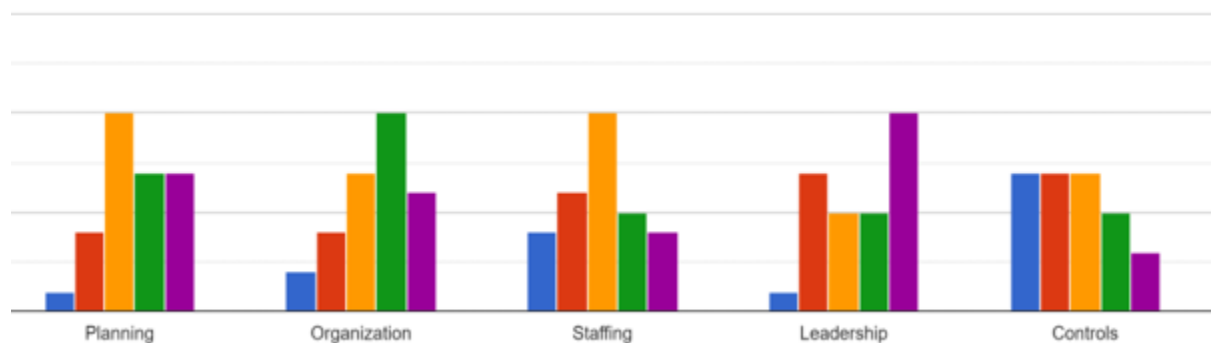
Table 4: Self-Perceived Knowledge on Business Organizational Forms



Responses indicated non-normal distribution curves. The side-by-side comparisons of answers indicated that among those women attending the conference, there was a fairly even distribution of responses among regarding the sole proprietorship. A small number ranked themselves as very knowledgeable on partnerships, and perhaps the least knowledgeable ranking among respondents was on the topic of corporations, both Subchapter S and C corps. The strongest area of self-perceived knowledge related to LLCs. Regardless of the type of organizational form, there is evidence that many respondents still could benefit from mentoring and training regarding the legal forms of business ownership.

When asked to rank their self-perceived knowledge on the management functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling, responses also indicated that there is a benefit to additional training and mentoring, particularly in the areas of staff, and controlling. Respondents overall gave themselves higher marks in planning, organizing, and leading as is seen in Table 5.

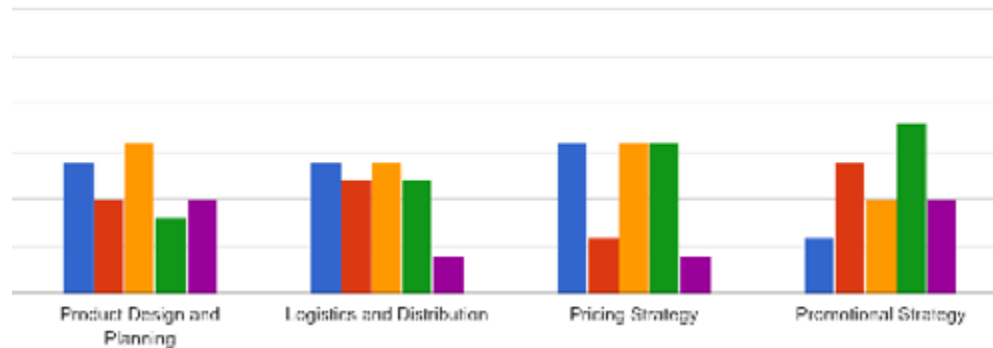
Table 5: Self-Perceived Knowledge on Management Functions



Participants were also asked to rank their knowledge on the four Ps of marketing: product (design and planning), place (logistics and distribution), pricing strategy, and promotional

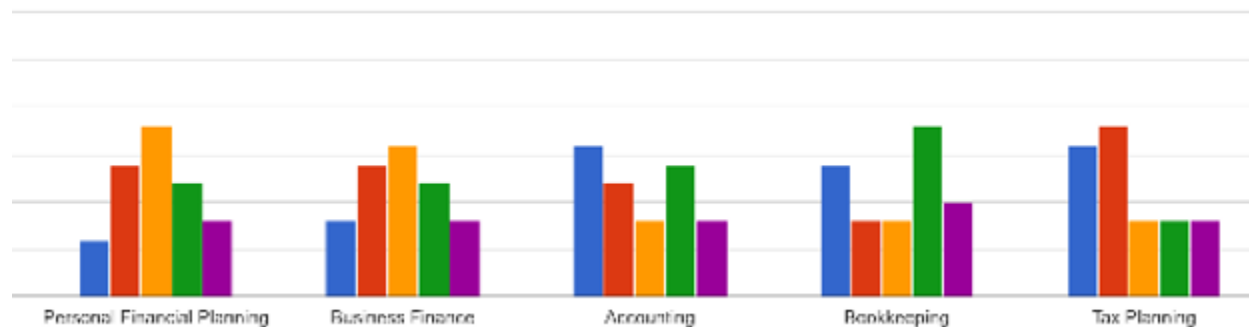
strategy. Responses were more evenly distributed on the topics of product and place but indicated the potential for great benefit in training and mentoring in these two areas. Place strategy had the lowest rank of the two regarding those who felt most knowledgeable and ranked themselves as a five. The areas of pricing and promotion strategy likewise indicated potential for additional information and mentoring, with pricing having the lowest number of respondents ranking themselves as a five (most knowledgeable). See Table 6.

Table 6: Self-Perceived Knowledge on Marketing

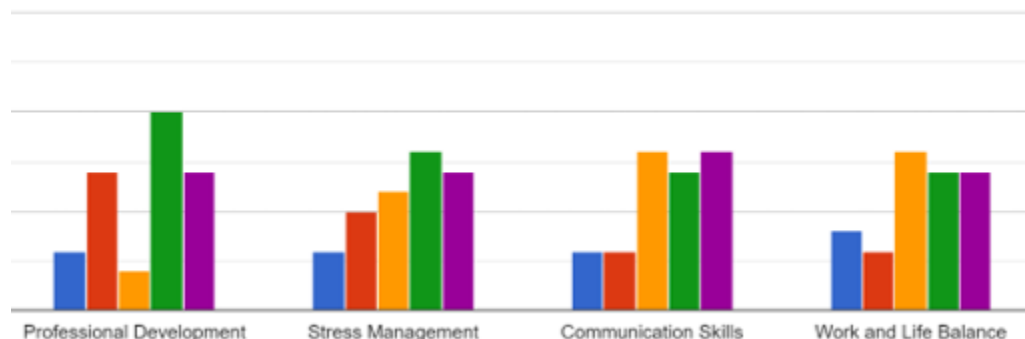


Conference participants were also asked to rank their knowledge on areas related to financial planning, including personal finance, business or corporate finance, accounting, bookkeeping, and tax planning. These areas indicated great potential topics for additional training, education, and mentoring. On the topic of personal financial planning and business finance, responses were normally distributed. But on accounting, bookkeeping, and tax planning the responses indicated much less self-perceived expertise as seen in Table 7.

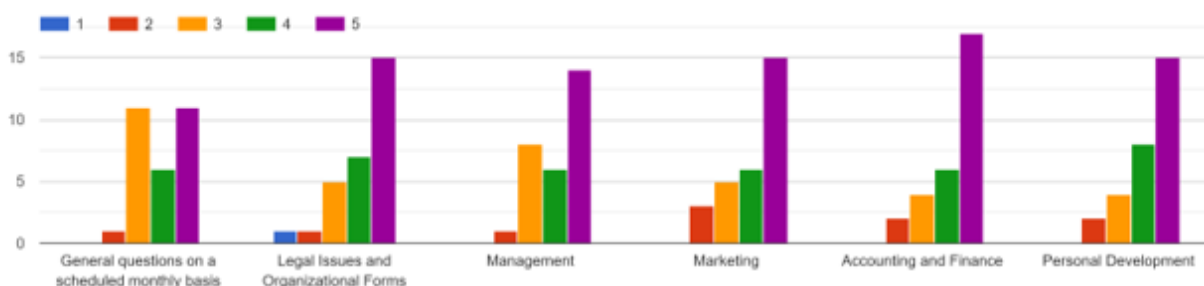
Table 7: Self-Perceived Knowledge on Finance, Accounting, and Taxation



A final group of questions revolved around personal and professional development. Participants were asked to rank their knowledge on professional development, stress management, communication skills, and work and life balance. In this area, the women who responded gave themselves the highest marks overall among all other questions. Each of the four areas skewed positive toward respondents being more knowledgeable than not as is demonstrated in Table 8.

Table 8: Self-Perceived Knowledge on Personal and Professional Growth

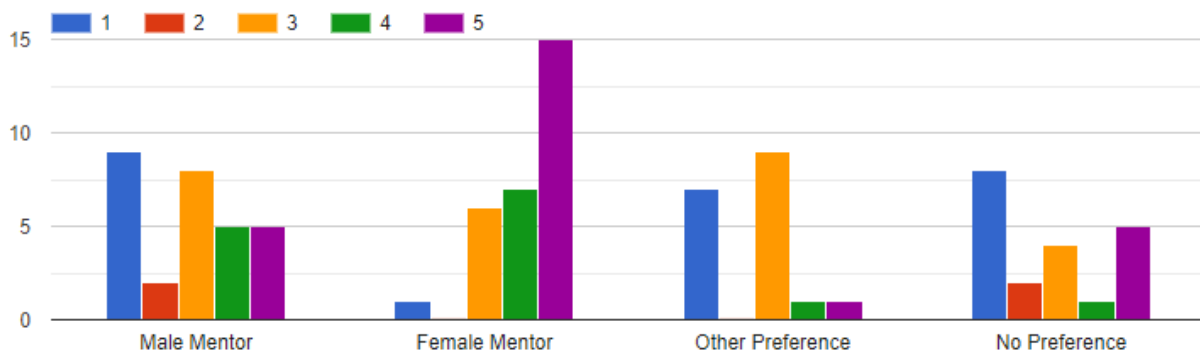
Of greatest interest in this study, were the two rankings provided in the following table (Table 9). Participants were asked to rank on a scale of one to five, with five being absolutely beneficial and helpful topics or areas in which having a mentor assist them in developing or growing their own business. The following topics were ranked: General Questions, Legal Issues and Organizational Forms, Management, Marketing, Accounting and Finance, and Personal Development. The groupings provided in Tables 1-8 were summarized to get an overall impression of those topics that women entrepreneurs might most see as beneficial and helpful in a mentoring relationship. Table 9 illustrates a strong desire among those who responded for a mentoring relationship.

Table 9: Ranking of Benefit and Helpfulness of a Mentor by Topic Area

In every area, the distributions were skewed heavily positive toward the perceived need and benefit of a mentor by those women entrepreneurs completing the survey. Even in the area of personal development, where most ranked themselves most knowledgeable, respondents ranked their perceived need for a mentor as greatly beneficial and helpful. Of the six topic areas, the least heavily skewed were those general questions indicating the desire for specific topics and expertise seen as most beneficial. The highest area of need among the six areas related to accounting and finance, indicating both a potential for mentoring as well as additional training and educational opportunities that could be targeted at women entrepreneurs.

Because some research has indicated the desire by women for mentors of the opposite sex (Hampton & Whitlock, 2022; Hampton, 2020), a question was included regarding preference for male, female, other, or no preference.

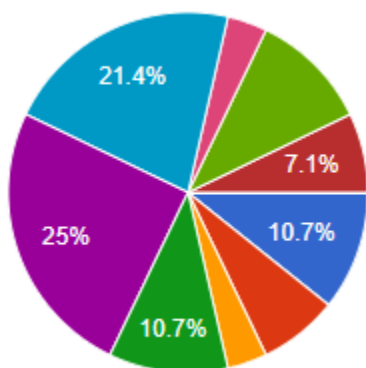
Table 10: Preference of Mentor by Sex



Results, as seen in Table 10, do not indicate similar preferences for the female entrepreneurs in this study. The previously cited studies were largely in male-dominated industries and may be more practical than anything (the number of females may be severely limited for example), and the type of work (law enforcement) may be a driving variable. Regardless, there was not a similar desire to have a male mentor expressed by female entrepreneurs. Those women answering the question in this study had an overall preference for mentors of the same sex, and all other preferences were not indicative of a strong desire otherwise.

Two additional demographic questions were asked in the survey regarding age and educational background. As seen in Table 11, the age distribution was wide.

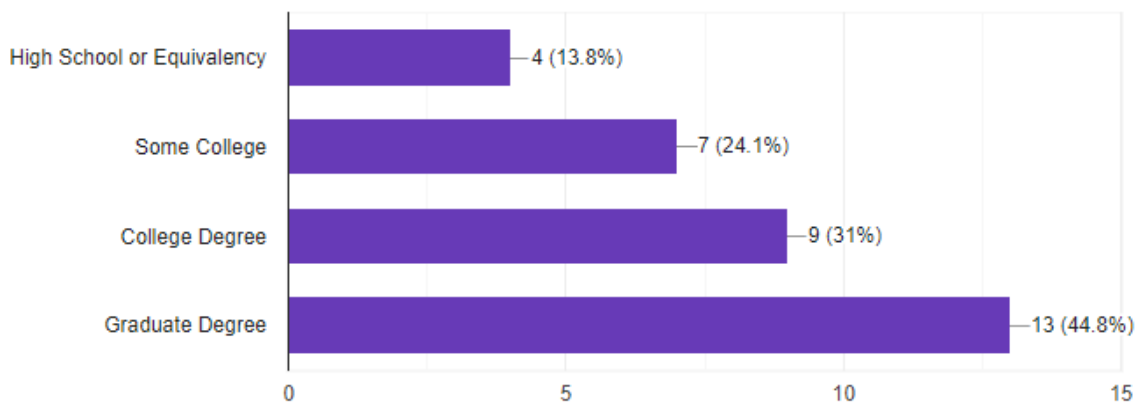
Table 11: Age Distribution



The largest age category of participants was age 41-45 accounting for 25% of the responses. This was followed by age 46-50 (21.4%) of responses, and the following three age categories (20-25; 36-40; and 56-60) each accounting for 10.7% of responses. The two age categories (26-30; and 61-65) accounted for 7.1% each. And finally, two age categories (31-35; and 51-55) each accounted for 3.6% of responses.

Table 12 indicates the educational background of respondents, with 13.8% indicating completion of high school, and 24.1% responding that they had completed some college. Women attending the conference also indicated in the survey that 31% had complete a college degree, and 44.8% had completed a graduate degree. There appears to be a correlation worth future research regarding the higher amount of education and the greater perceived benefit of mentoring.

Table 12: Educational Background



A PROPOSED MODEL OUTLINE

As a result of the survey a proposed model is outlined that could be implemented and coordinated through the statewide Small Business Development Center in Oklahoma. Though the outline may also be appropriate for a national network of the SBA affiliated SBDCs. The model would include:

- Identification of women entrepreneurs with a need and willingness to participate in a mentoring program.
- Identification of university professors, SBA and SBDC employees, and CEOs or retired CEOs (and organizations like SCORE) interested in assisting women entrepreneurs.
- Assessment tools to ascertain greatest needs and areas of expertise, including but not limited to a survey instrument derived from the one used in this study.
- Pairing entrepreneurs with mentors who have the experience and expertise in the areas most needed by the entrepreneur and matching best the profile preferences of both entrepreneur and mentor.
- A library of resources built over time for use by participants and mentors.
- Follow-up and check-in from OSBD staff with entrepreneurs and mentors twice a year for accountability, assessment of progress and needs being met, and quality assurance.
- An annual conference or session within the Women in Entrepreneurship Conference, with mentors attending either in person or online. Potential new entrepreneurs and new mentors could meet and be paired with advance planning for participants.

CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs continue to be a growing phenomenon around the globe. Studies have shown that mentoring is a valuable resource when implemented properly and matched appropriately with the needs of mentees. Because women face unique challenges in the workforce as well in balancing life and work requirements, having an ongoing mentoring program is perceived by women business owners as beneficial. By developing a skills needed based program where successful and experienced business professionals invest their time and knowledge with women business owners should assist women in long-term success and viability of their business concerns.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Women Entrepreneurship Mentoring Needs Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study through the Oklahoma Small Business Development Center and Southeastern Oklahoma State University. All of your responses are confidential and non-attributable to you. If you would like to receive a copy of the final research findings, you may submit your email to ahampton@SE.edu with a request. Please answer the following questions and then hit “submit” at the conclusion of the survey.

Section 1: Check all of the following that apply regarding the most appropriate descriptions of your current situation:

- Entrepreneur—own and operate my own business ___ Years with current business
 ___ Years owning previous business(es)

- Aspiring Entrepreneur—desire to own and operate my own business

- Employed—work for another business ___ Total years working for other others

- Unemployed—unemployed presently
 ___ Years of previous experience working for others

Section 2: On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 being your greatest area of expertise, check each of the following areas relative to your own personal expertise.

Topic/Area	1	2	3	4	5
Legal Issues					
Organizational Forms					
Sole Proprietorship					
Partnerships					
Subchapter S Corps					
Corporations					
Limited Liability Companies (LLC)					
Management					
Planning					
Organization					
Staffing					
Leadership					
Controls					
Marketing					
Product Design and Planning					
Logistics/Distribution Strategy					
Pricing Strategy					
Promotional Strategy					
Accounting and Finance					
Personal Financial Planning					
Business Finance					
Accounting					
Bookkeeping					
Tax planning					
Personal Development					
Professional Development					
Stress Management					
Communication Skills					
Work and Life Balance					

Section 3: On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no benefit to 5 being absolutely beneficial and helpful, rank the following statements regarding having a mentor as you develop or grow your own business:

Topic/Area	1	2	3	4	5
General questions on a scheduled monthly basis.					
Legal Issues					
Management					
Marketing					
Accounting and Finance					
Personal development.					

Section 4: Please respond by checking all that apply:

Age Range

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 66-70 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-55 | <input type="checkbox"/> 71-75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60 | <input type="checkbox"/> 76-8 |

Educational Background

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School | <input type="checkbox"/> College Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some College | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Degree |

Section 5: Rank your own self-perceived need for a mentor as a woman entrepreneur or aspiring entrepreneur on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being no need to 5 being a high need.

If you had a mentor, rank your preference for each of the following on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being least preferred to 5 being most preferred.

Mentor Preference	1	2	3	4	5
Male mentor.					
Female mentor					
Other Preference					
No Preference					

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