

WHAT DOES LOVE HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

Embracing and Articulating Your Value to Propel your Life and Career

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LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a lot of research conducted about gender inequality in the workplace over the years. Data collected by the U.S. Labor Statistics date back to as early as when the Fair Labor Standard Act was created while data generated from the U.S. Census has been some of the most comprehensive data that researchers have used to document the progress, the trends, the challenges and the predictions. Most researchers use the U.S. Census data because it allows for longitudinal studies to help track changes over time and control for influencing factors like recessions, the creation of new industries, etc.

In evaluating the "concept of value," some of the data collected to help identify what women value in leadership included data from one of the most famous books on leadership, The Leadership Challenge, by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, as well as other articles and books from legendary management guru, Tom Peters and Robert Greenleaf, creator of the servant leadership model. Based on a list of 10 highly-regarding leadership traits, the research identified commonalities between the national research and what local professionals identified as traits they valued in their leaders.

Corporations like American Express, McKinsey & Company, educational and advocacy organizations like LEANin, Workable, and Stanford and Cornell Universities have started their own longitudinal, quantitative research to expand the body of research to better understand the varied issues, biases and other factors that impact our understanding of the wage gap among men and women, what women value and what organizations and companies can do to promote policies, training and programs that ensure more leadership roles for women in the corporate and nonprofit organizations and the pay that accompanies those responsibilities and roles.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method design involved nonexperimental, qualitative methods due to limitations on time to design a research plan that would include obtaining input from all current members and members who have indicated interest in the organization's Insights for Women and Women In Business programs.

To get an idea of what local women value personally and in leadership, an invitation list of 209 women was identified. This list included women who were invited to a local women's empowerment conference this summer because of their initial interest in personal development and business issues related to women. These women were all invited to a focus group to help gain insights to what they value in the workplace and how local organizations can help meet their needs through training programs and financial resources.

The information gathered from the focus group were utilized to operationalize terms like "value" and "success." These terms and trends identified in the focus group were used to develop a survey that utilized closed questions and scale responses. Each participant on the original list had an opportunity to participate in the focus group as well as the online survey.

Latest research and survey designs suggest that online response rates can range from 10 percent to the most successful 60 percent of the sample. Out of the 209 sample, there were 38 responses to the online survey. This is a 18 response rate.

To help boost the response rate, an introduction email was sent, which outlined the parameters and expectations for participation and notified them they would receive a separate email with the survey link. Reminder emails were sent daily to nonrespondents with a web link to the survey. A private Facebook event page was also generated and sent to those nonrespondents who had Facebook profiles. Thank you emails were also sent to thank respondents for their feedback.

KEY STATS

ON AVERAGE – WOMEN MADE UP

53% Of Entry-Level Employees
27% Of Vice Presidents
40% of Managers
24% Of Senior Vice Presidents
35% of Directors
19% of Executives in the C-Suite

Source: Harvard Business Review

	Male	Female
Takes Initiative	48	56
Practices Self-Development	48	55
Displays High Integrity and Honesty	48	55
Drives for Results	48	54
Develops Others	48	54
Inspires and Motivates Others	49	54
Builds Relationships	49	54
Collaboration and Teamwork	49	53
Establishes Stretch Goals	49	53
Champions Change	49	53
Solves Problems and Analyzes Issues	50	52
Communicates Powerfully and Prolifically	50	52
Connects the Group to the Outside World	50	51
Innovates	50	51
Technical or Professional Expertise	50	51
Develops Strategic Perspective	51	49

Top Leadership Traits: Local Women identify similar traits as National Trends

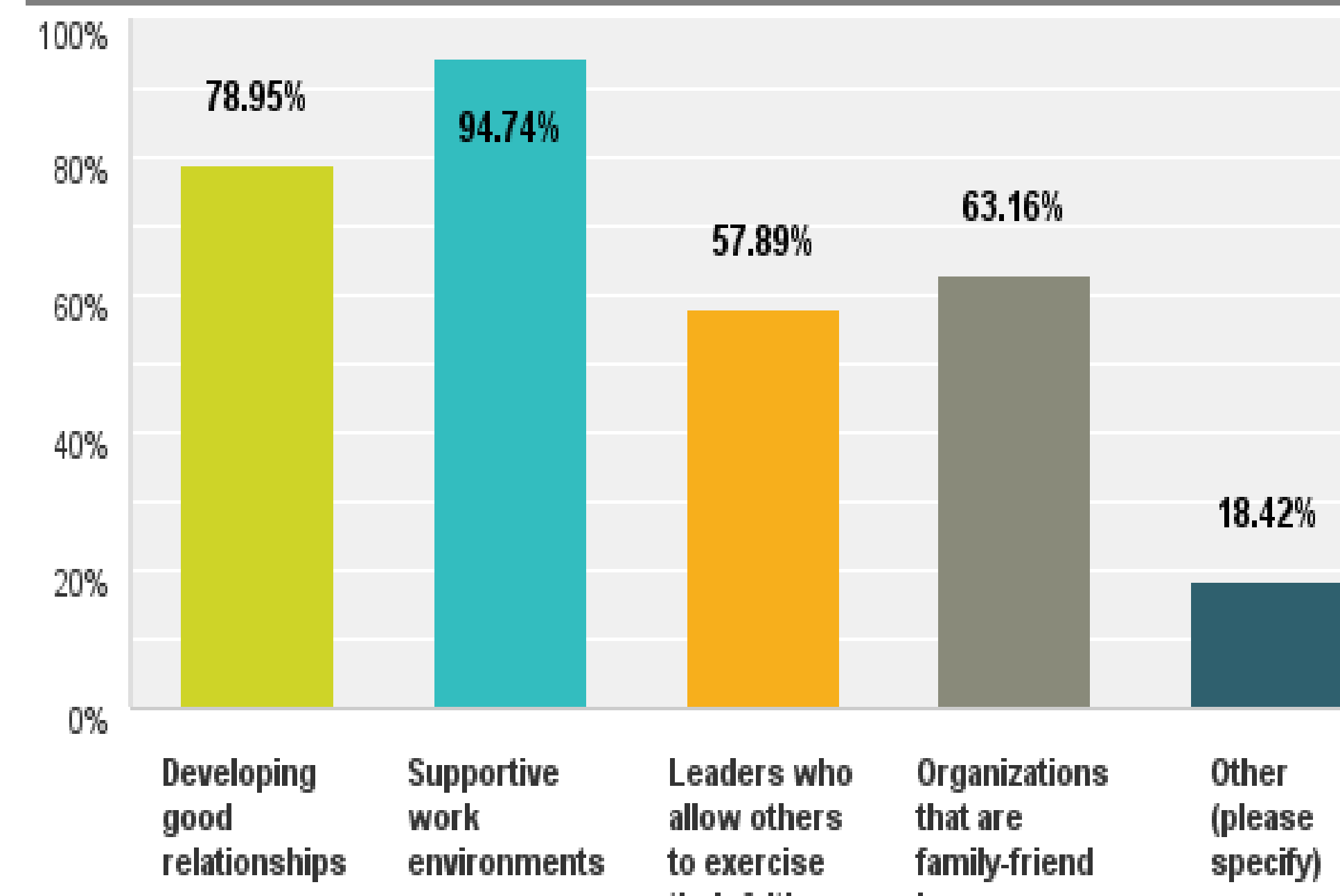
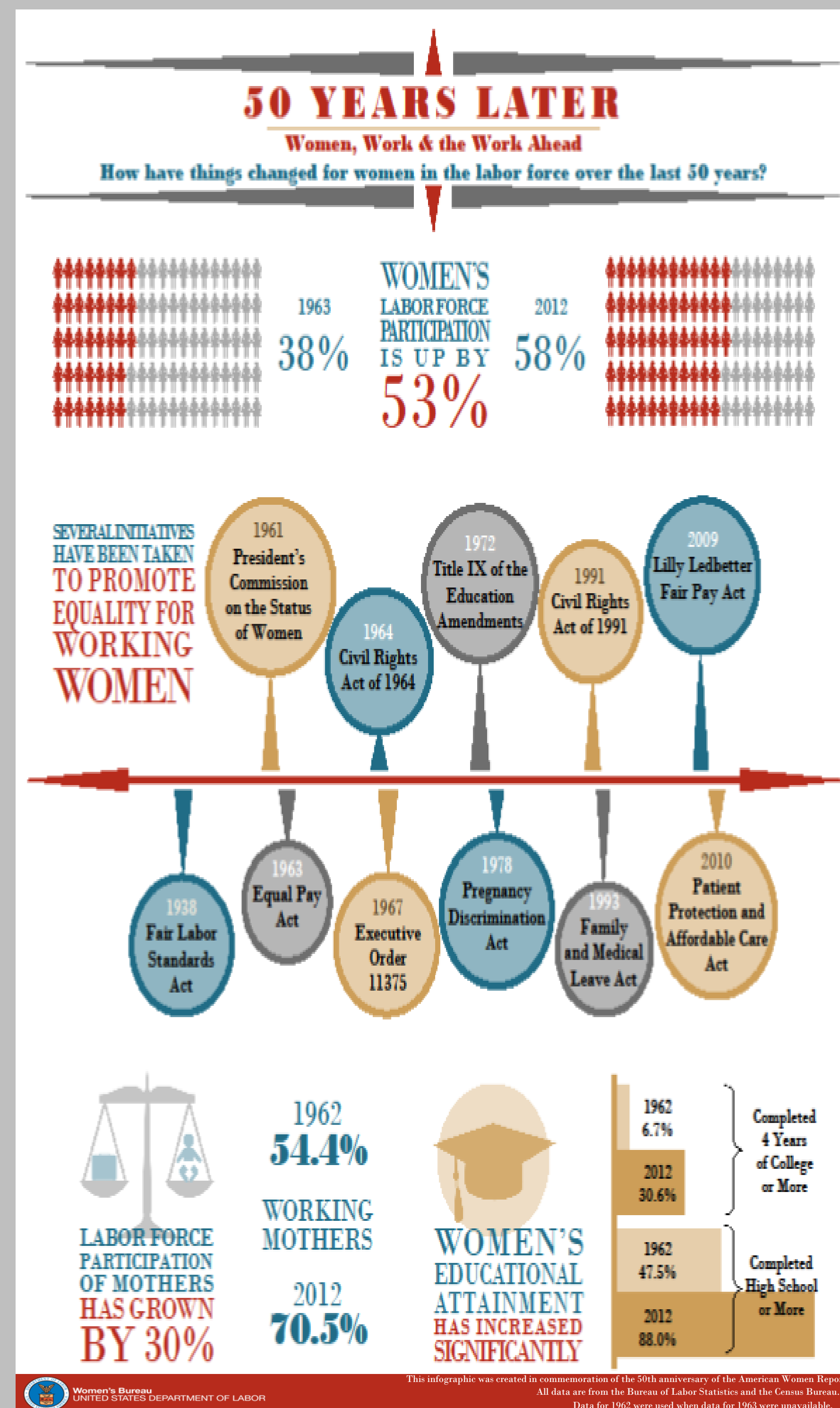


Figure 1-Comparison of Results: (Left) Women Ranked higher than men in 36 of the 49 categories. (Right) The other category revealed five other traits not directly mentioned in other responses. They include financial stability; working with organizations that support individual life-long dreams and goals; environments that support group successes; and provide a "real" service to individuals and communities.



Minority-Owned Firms Fueling the Growth in Women's Entrepreneurship

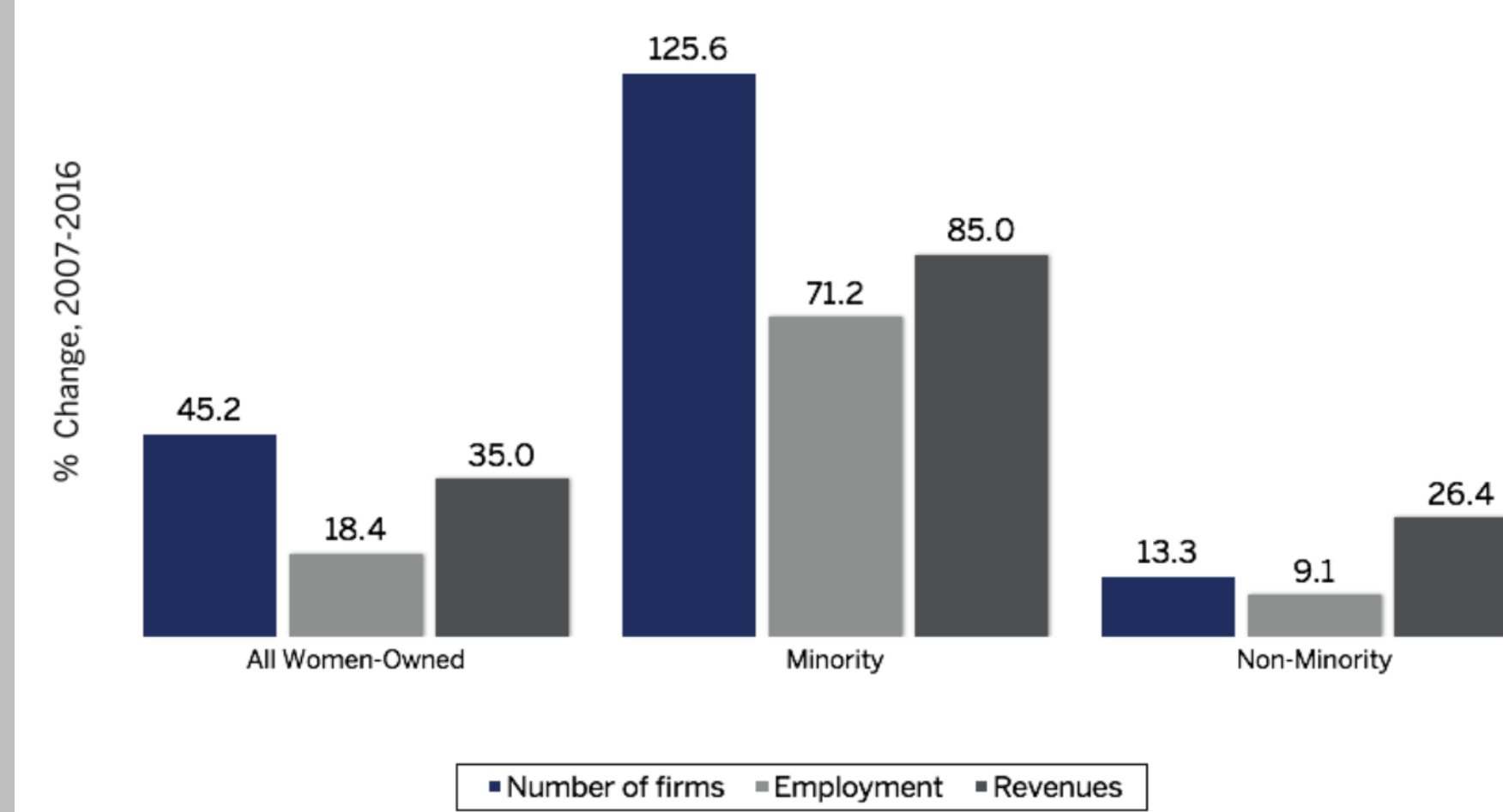


Figure 2- Growth in Minority Firms

Nearly one third of the women represented in this sample reported owning a business or started a business within the last 10 years.

STATS AT A GLANCE

57% of women in nonprofit sector aspire for top leadership roles
72% of women ages 18 to 34, aspire to hold the position of CEO.
 Source: The Chronicle of Philanthropy

FINDINGS/ANALYSIS

There are many reasons that could explain inequity, but much of the research has outlined "decisions" as one clear solution. The main goal of this research project was to research what local women value in the workplace and how they compare to national research and trends. The ultimate goal is to utilize the information to help guide decisions that will help determine the resources needed for trainings, programs and policies that help address market needs and creating strategies that empower women to pursue and attain impactful and meaningful leadership roles and the financial security they desire.

Some of the findings of the research include:

1. Developing relationships and innovative thinkers who are willing to take action appear to rank at the top of the leadership trait list for both local women and women and men nationally.
2. At least 58 percent of the sample ages range from 50 to over 60. This also seems to similar to national labor workforce trends that project the number of women aged 65 to 74 to increase by 89.8 percent by 2018 – more than the number of women in any other age group.
3. Almost a third of the sample reported being African American business owners or becoming self employed since 2007. This increase follows national figures reported by the American Express that suggest Women-owned businesses have risen by 45 percent over the past nine years, meaning that the rate of growth in the number of women-owned firms is fully five times the national average. Firms owned by women of color doubled during the same time period.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Based on the trends and findings identified, there are several strategies that can be implemented to help guide future trainings, programs and policies that will help it meet the needs of existing members while developing programs and initiatives that attract new professionals to the workforce or those starting a new career path. Some of the recommended strategies include:

- Utilize the leadership traits list identified in the survey as a template for companies and individuals to develop a measurement tool to create a leadership matrix that can be used for companies wanting to better document and measure their diversity practices and management leadership principles used to guide promotions and advanced leadership opportunities, as well as to help train staff to prevent bias in the hiring/promotion process.
- The trend of an aging workforce means there are more women in the workforce who may need to be retrained to adapt to changing workplace needs or new industries. Some of these women may also need additional access to educational training, new business networks and resources to help them remain competitive in the workplace.
- Leaders should conduct more in-depth research in the growth of women entrepreneurship to determine what helped lead to that growth, and if and what opportunities does that present in helping women build capacity, create more meaningful partnerships and collaborations to increase impact and continue growth.

