



Vanderbilt University

ANCHORING THE LEADERSHIP LADDER

Perceptions of Systemic Gender Bias and Its Role in
Women's Career Progression Across Multiple Industries

Presented By : LaShaunda A. Ford
Jennifer L. H. Nelson
Capstone Advisor: Dr. Jeanie Forray

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ABOUT CARDINAL

Subscription-based executive networking organization

- Founded in 2019
- For women by women
- Primary drivers:
 - Strengthen their leadership
 - Magnify their influence
 - Pave the way for others to follow



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AT CARDINAL

#01

Virtual platform

#02

Clubhouse
locations

#04

Live & On-Demand
workshops

#03

Core Groups



PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

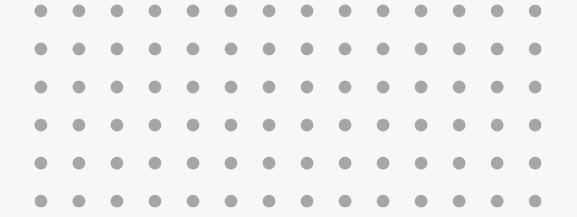
CARDINAL'S WHY.....

Review Systemic Gender Bias and how it affects women in leadership.

GOAL: Leveraging insights to help Cardinal understand its member base better and strengthen their organizational offerings



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

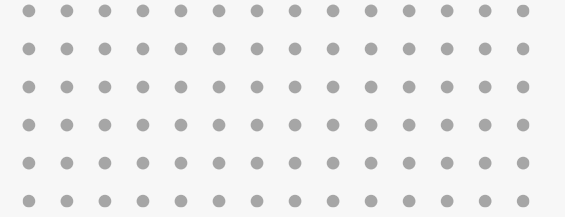


PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

WHAT IMPACT DOES SYSTEMIC GENDER BIAS HAVE ON THE CAREER ASCENSION OF WOMEN INTO LEADERSHIP ROLES ACROSS DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES?



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SUB RESEARCH QUESTION #1

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SUB RESEARCH QUESTIONS #2

HOW DOES THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE SYSTEMIC GENDER BIAS IN THEIR ROLES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION?



LITERATURE REVIEW

- 01 Initial
- 02 Individual
- 03 Organizational
- 04 Societal



Societal

Role Congruity Theory

(Eagly and Karau, 2002; Tower & Alkadry, 2008)

Relational disconnectedness

(Silarr & Wright, 2020; Heilman, 2001)

Transformational Leadership

Eagly et al., 2003

Attitude shifts

(Helgesen, 2020; LeanIn.org, 2020)



Societal

Organizational

Pay Inequity

(Meara et al., 2019;
GAO, 2023)

Overlooked for Promotions

(Smith et al., 2019)

Less influence as Mentors

(Ibarra et al., 2010)

Lack of Sponsorship

(McKinsey &
Company, 2022;
Staines et al., 1974)

Societal

Organizational

Individual

Less interest in leadership
roles

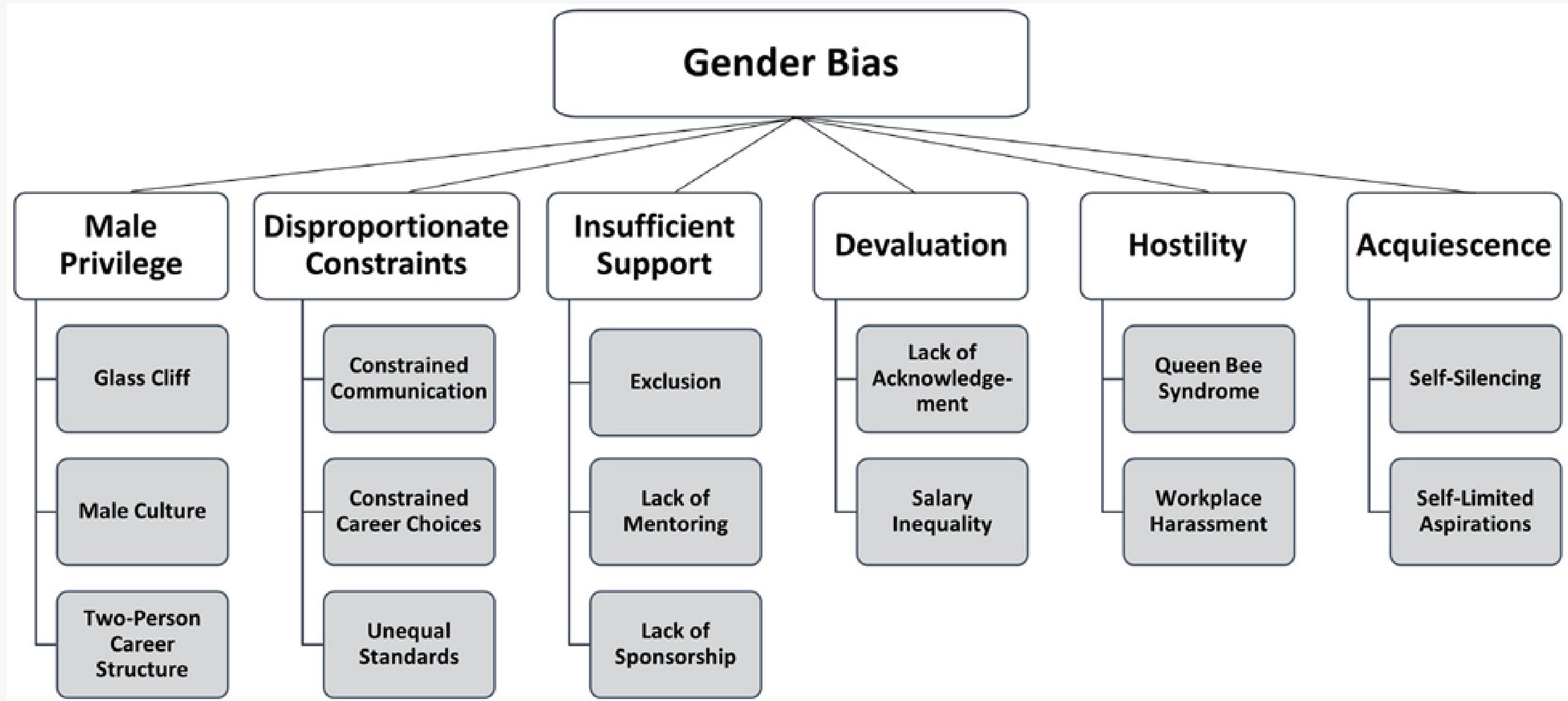
Limited
promotions

Loneliness or lack
of authenticity

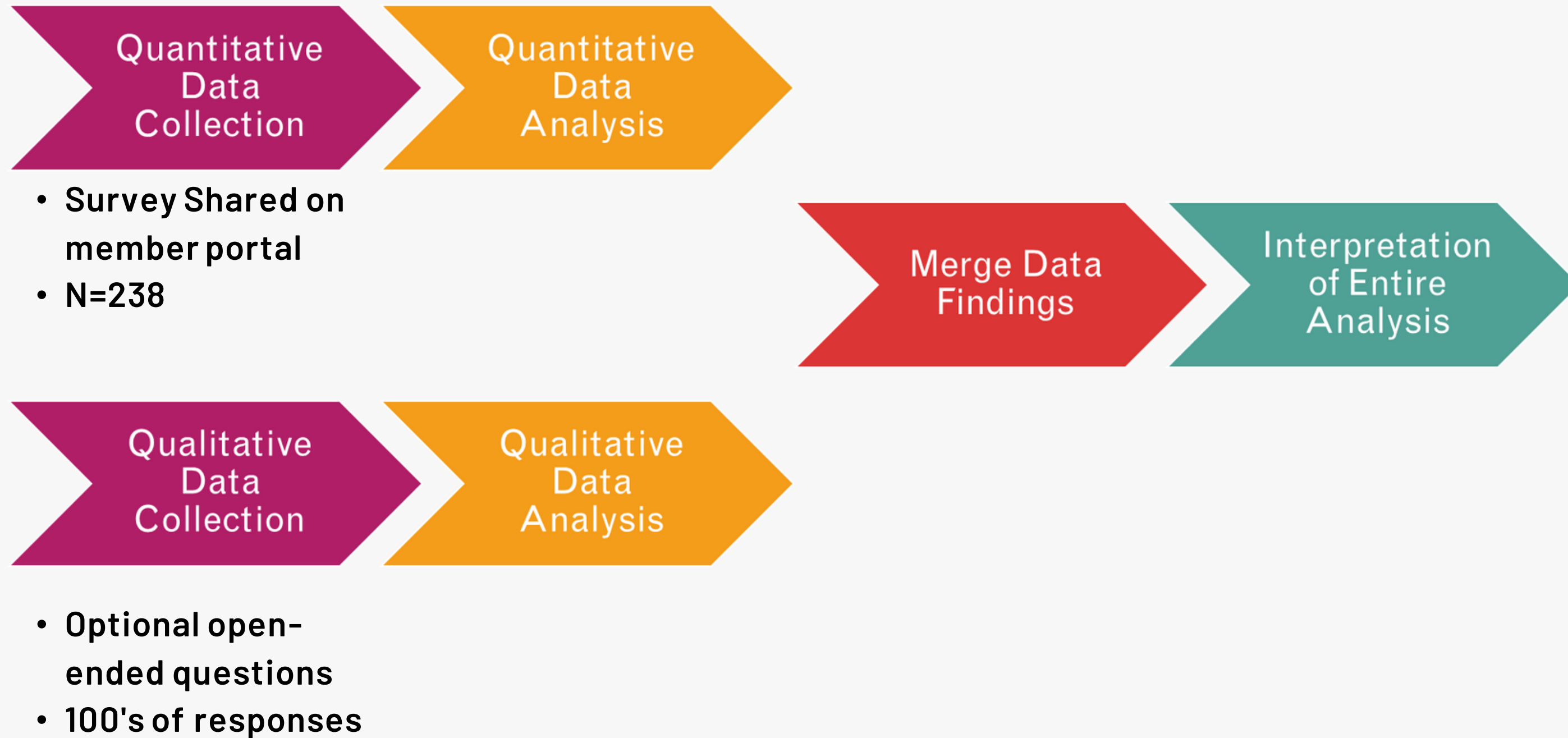
(Eckel et al., 2020, Ong, 2021)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Bias Scale for Women Leaders (Deihl et al., 2020)



CONVERGENT MIXED METHODS



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- Survey Shared on member portal
- N=238



- MANOVA



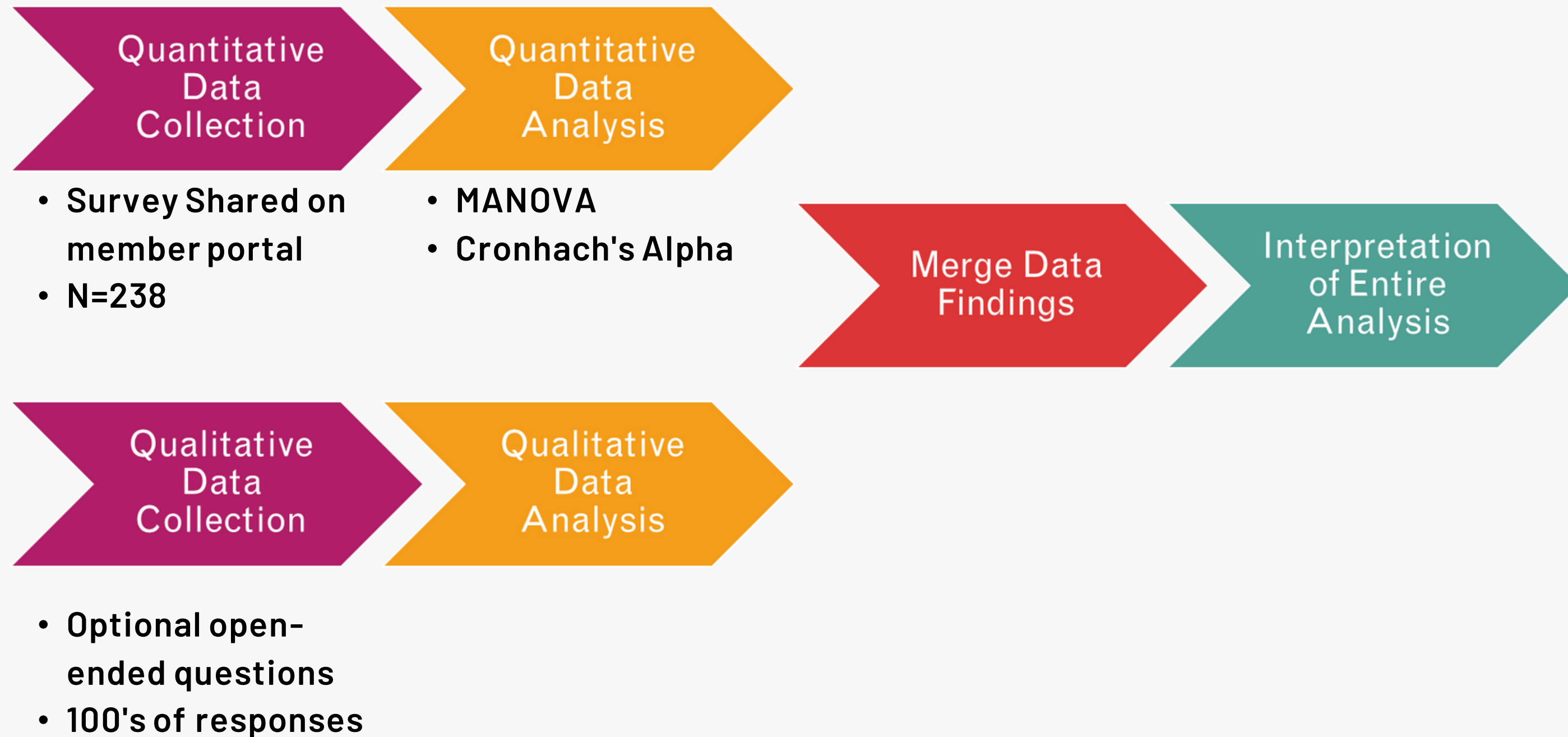
- Optional open-ended questions
- 100's of responses



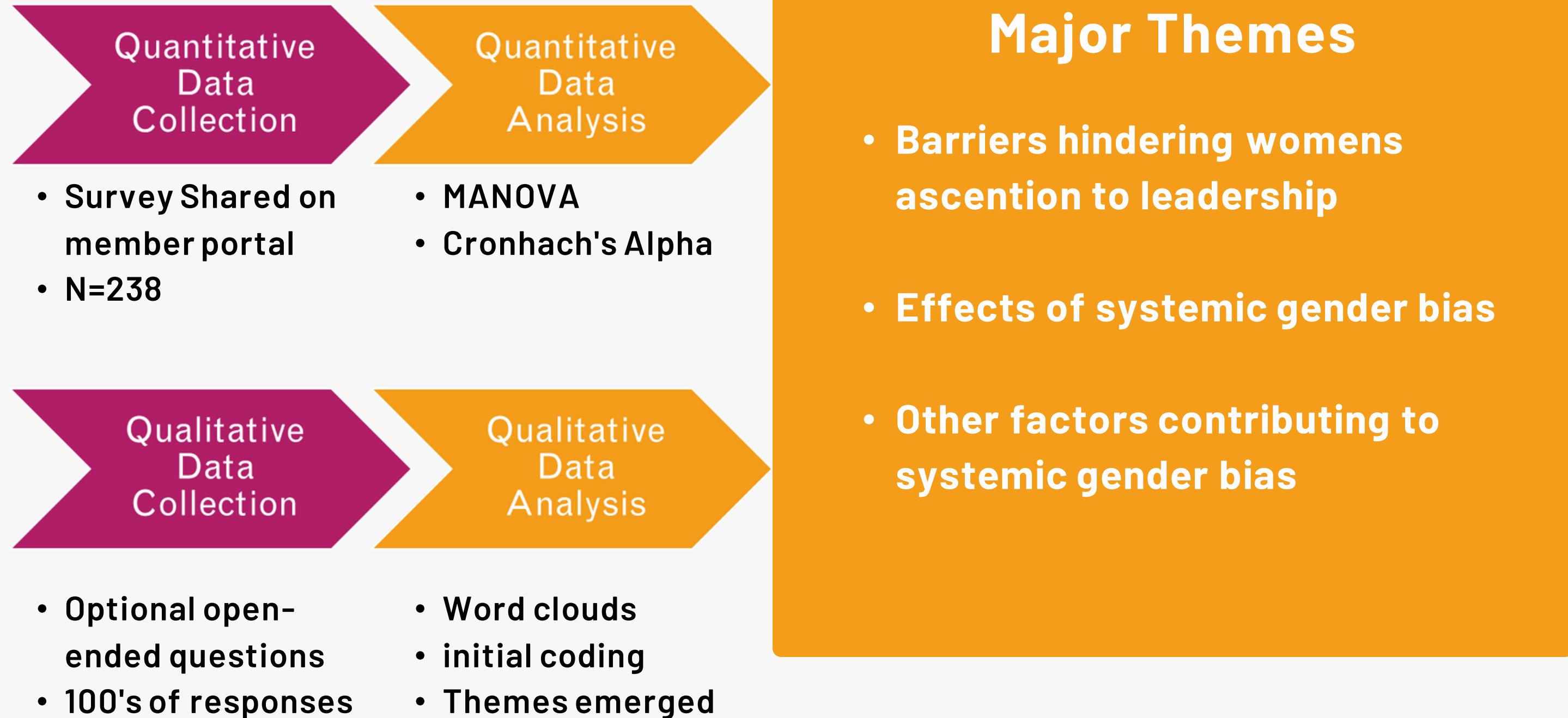
Three MANOVA Analysis

1. IV --> Revised industry groupings
DV --> Higher-order factors
2. IV --> Revised industry groupings
DV --> Lower-order factors
3. IV --> Job level
DV --> Higher-order factors

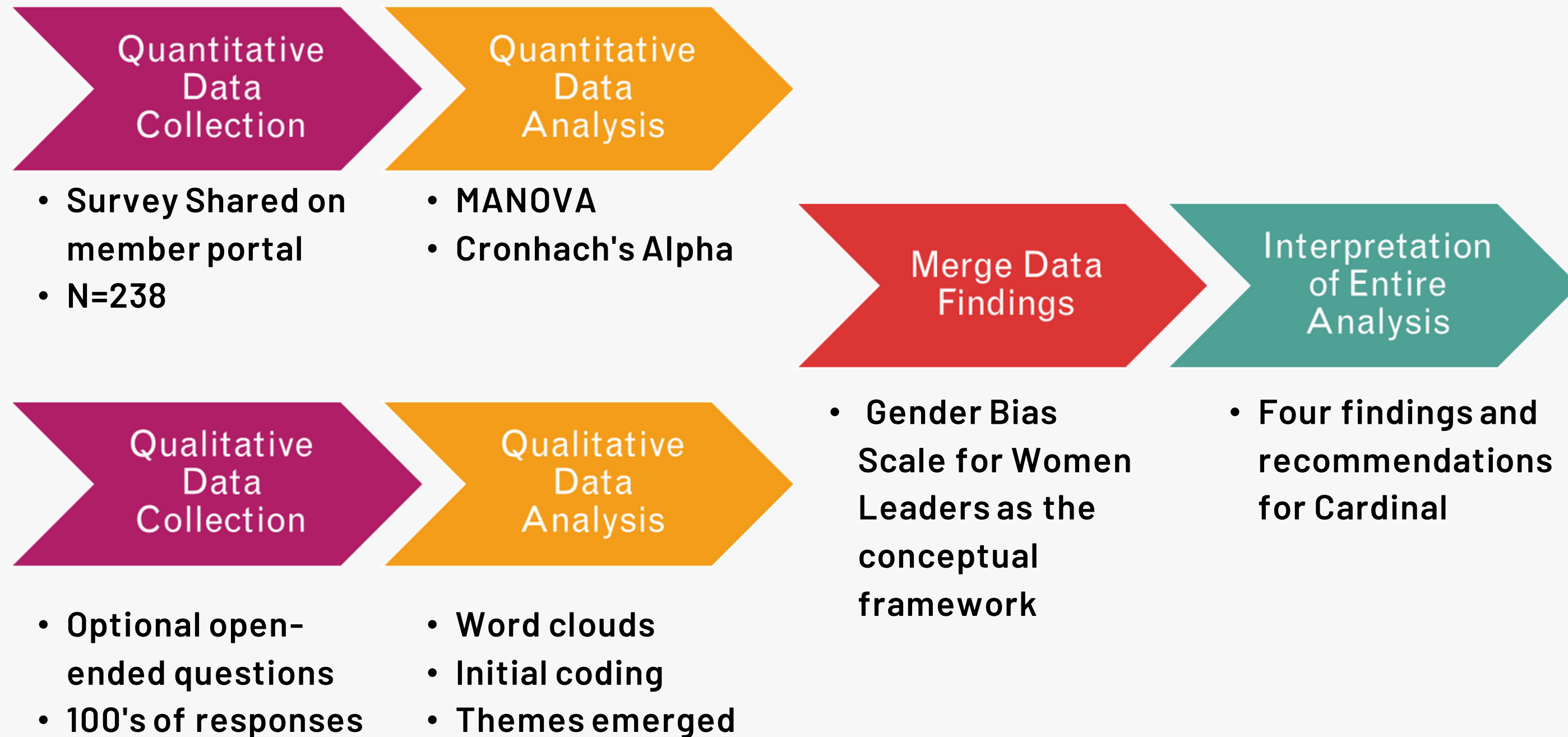
CONVERGENT MIXED METHODS



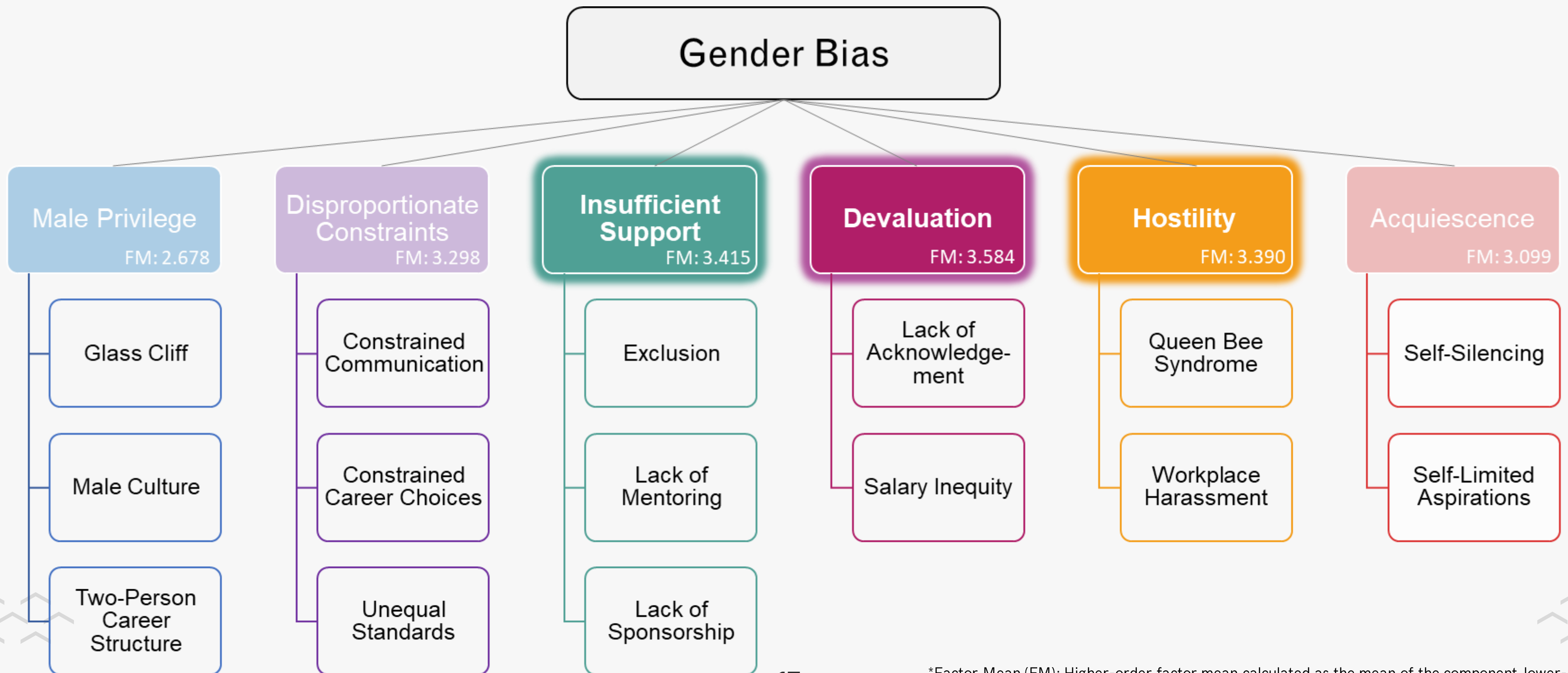
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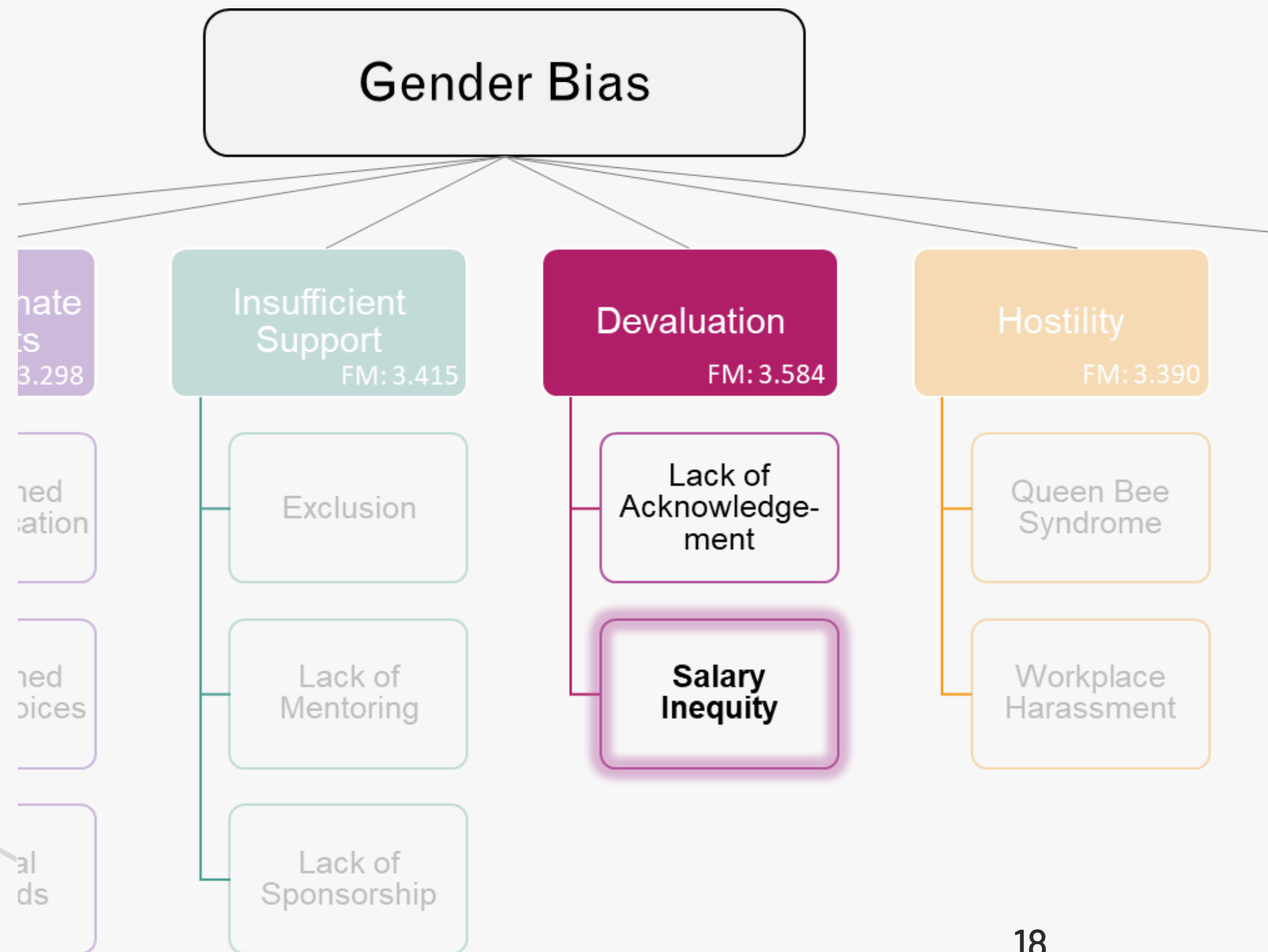


FINDING #1: BIAS WAS EXPERIENCED GREATEST ACROSS HIGHER-ORDER FACTORS CLASSIFIED AS DEVALUATION, INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT, AND HOSTILITY. LOWER-ORDER BARRIERS MOST EXPERIENCED BY MEMBERS INCLUDE SALARY INEQUITY, UNEQUAL STANDARDS, AND LACK OF SPONSORSHIP. (PRQ)



*Factor Mean (FM): Higher-order factor mean calculated as the mean of the component lower-order factors. Lower-order factors means calculated as the mean of component questions.

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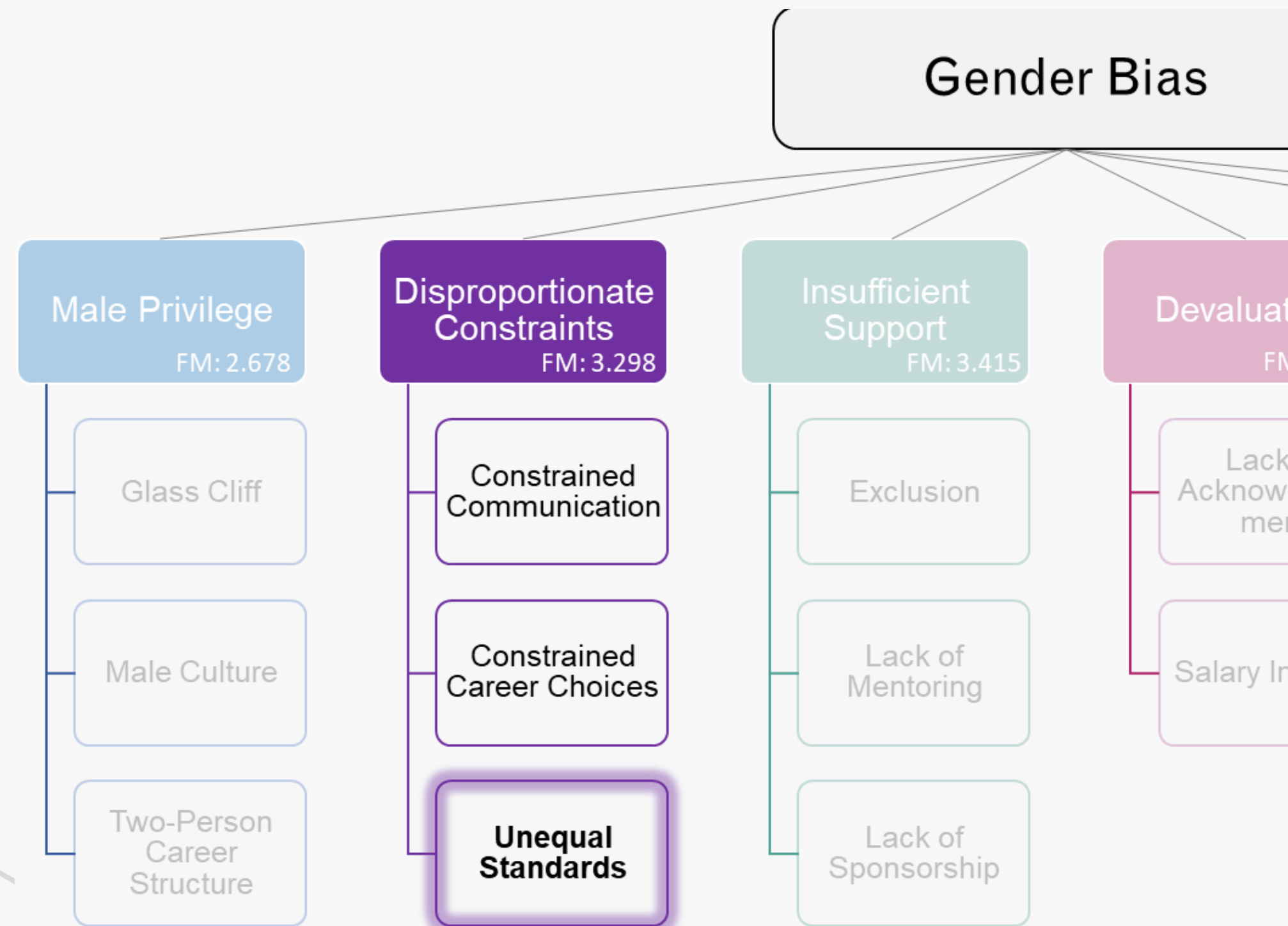


Salary Inequity

"At one point, I was so lowly paid that when I made a lateral move and exception needed to be made to adjust my salary to get me into the pay band for the new lateral role."

Factor Mean: 3.998

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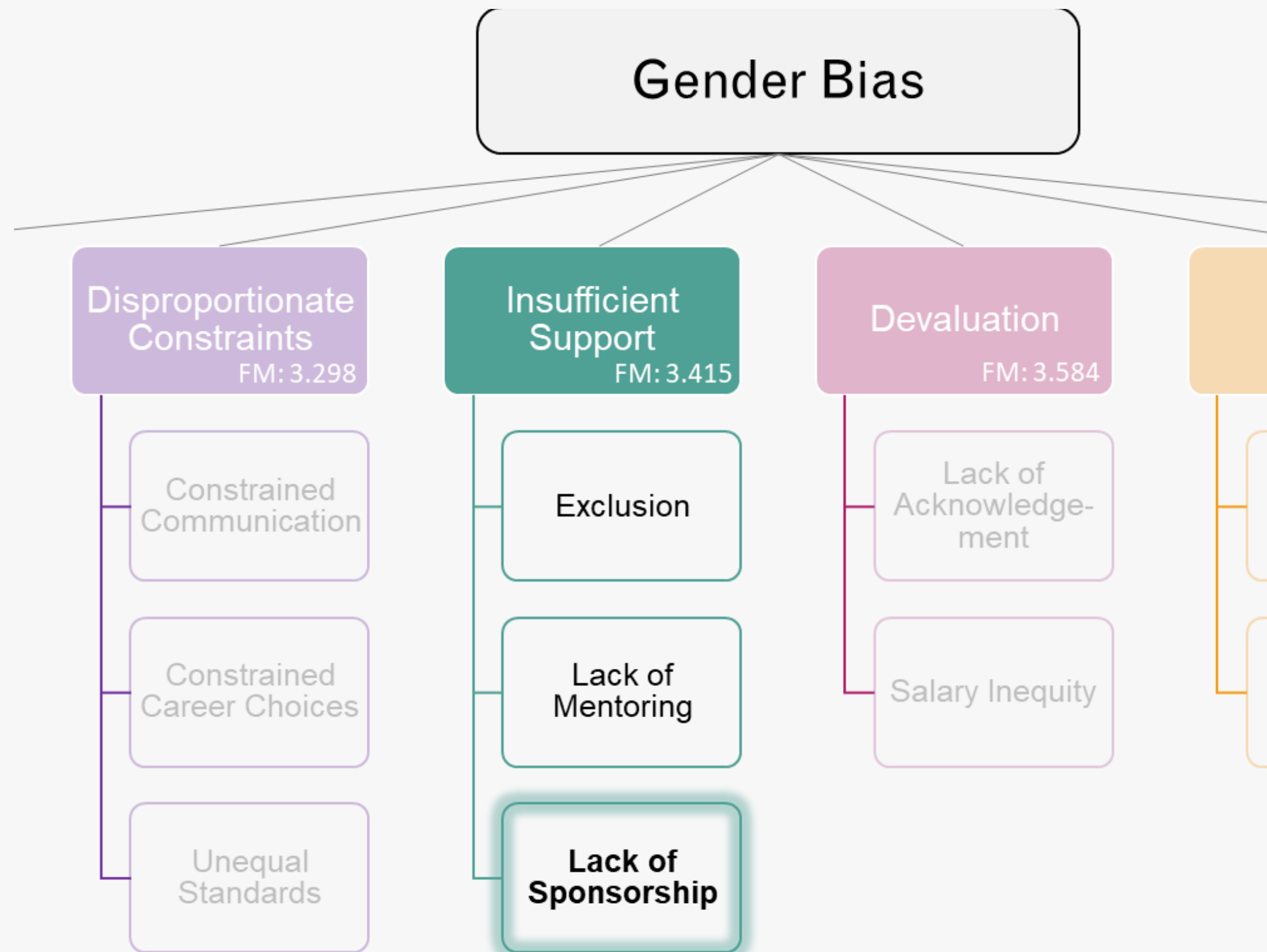


Unequal Standards

"I am mom, and I have had my commitment to my team & organization questioned when I had to leave at a reasonable time to pick my child up from daycare (even when I log back in to work once I am home). Male peers have been given accolades for leaving work to pick up their kids or coach their teams. No questions about professional commitment for the guys.

Factor Mean: 3.973

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Lack of Sponsorship

"Career advancement has taken me longer than male peers. I've asked for coaching on specifics when it comes to vague feedback) that I felt was gendered) & then was told that I needed to figure it out myself (while male peers got exec coaches.)"

Factor Mean: 3.832

FINDING #2: INDUSTRY DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN HOW GENDER BIAS SHOWS UP IN THE WORKPLACE (SUB Q1)

p = .001

Model 1: Higher order

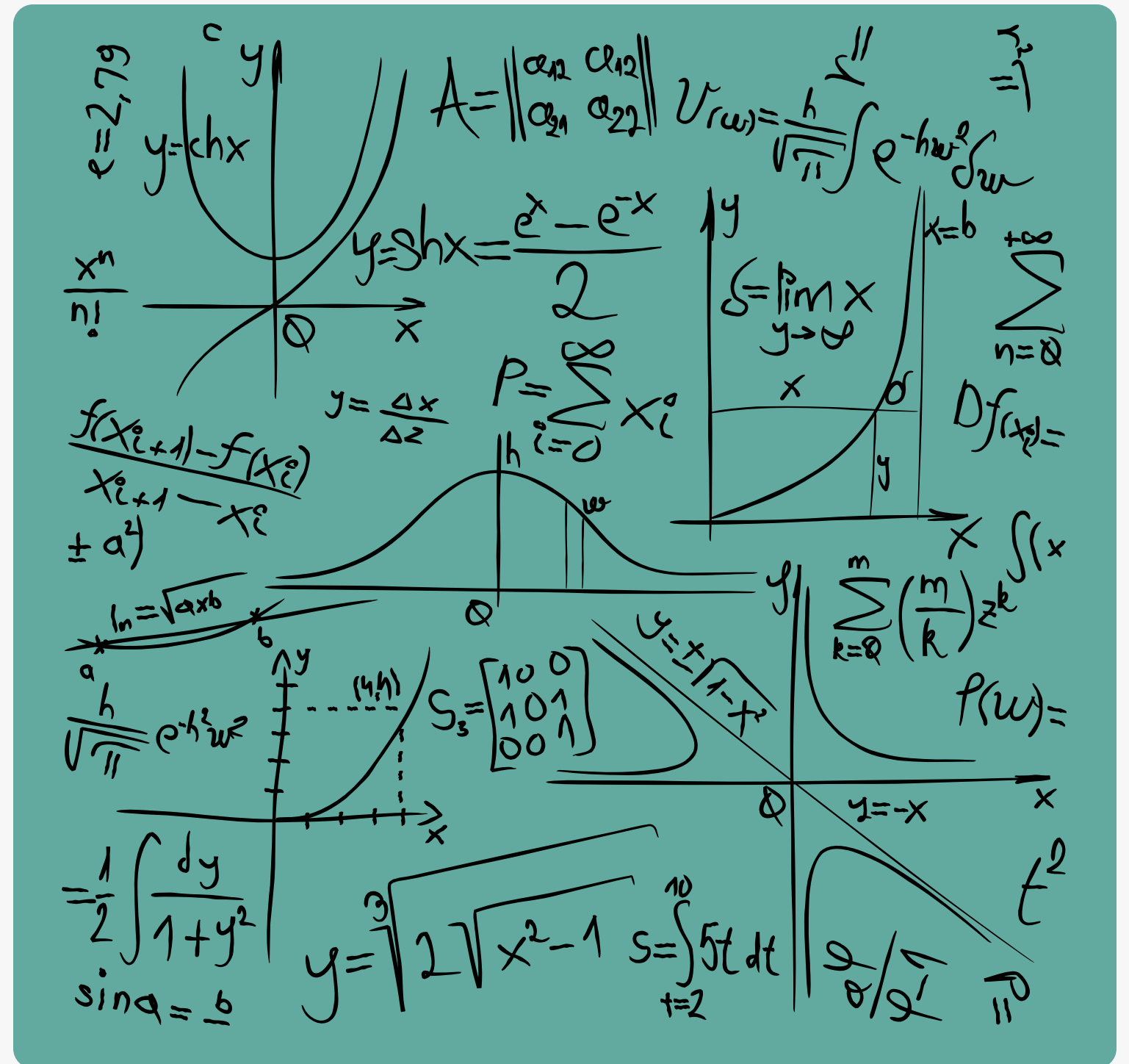
Accepted the NULL hypothesis

$$F(60, 227) = 1.17, p = .210$$

Model 2: Lower order

Accepted the NULL hypothesis

$$F(150, 227) = 1.31, p = .0324$$



FINDING #3: SIGNIFICANCE EXISTS FOR THE PERCEPTION OF GENDER BIAS AT THE VP LEVEL THROUGH MALE PRIVILEGE. (SUB Q2)



Model 3: Job Level

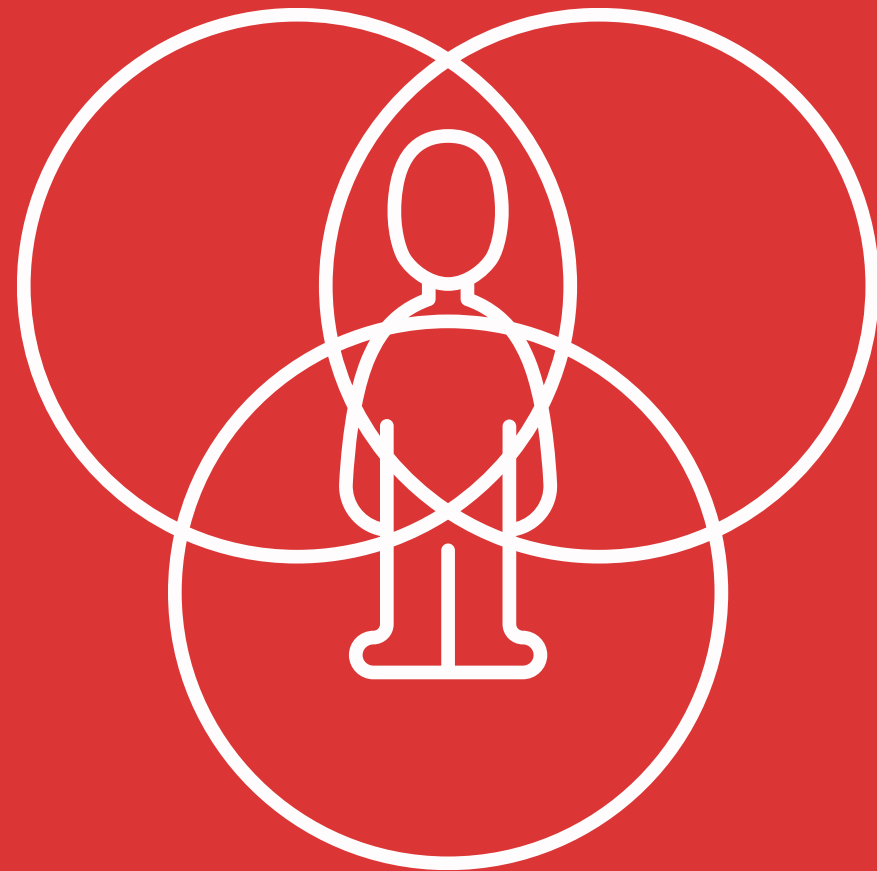
Failed to accept the NULL hypothesis

($p = .001$, 95% CI [1.501, 6.183])

$F(24, 233) = 1.76, p = 0.0187$

"I believe that the bias I've experienced over two decades has led to a much higher probability of burnout as everything I've had to fight so much harder than my male colleagues to be heard, to be promoted, to be paid, and all the other things."

FINDING #4: WOMEN LEADERS EXPERIENCE INTERSECTIONAL BIAS ACROSS FACTORS AT THE INDIVIDUAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SOCIETAL LEVELS. (SUB Q2)



Individual Bias

- Appearance, personality, protected characteristics

Organizational Bias

- Inequity in compensation

Societal Bias

- Family roles responsibilities

"I am often called out for looking young and questioned about my years of work experience"

RECOMMENDATION #1

INCREASE PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS TO HELP MEMBERS RECOGNIZE AND COMBAT DEVALUATION, INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT AND UNEQUAL STANDARDS (Finding #1)

“Hiring and promoting talented women is the right thing to do for society, and it is an economic imperative.”

- Carlos Ghosn.

RECOMMENDATION #2

EXPAND THEIR MEMBER NETWORKS AND DEVELOP ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING FOR NEWER FEMALE LEADERS. (Finding #3)

“We know that when women are empowered, they immeasurably improve the lives of everyone around them—their families, their communities, and their countries.”

- Prince Harry, ‘Duke Of Sussex.’

RECOMMENDATION #3

DEVELOP PROGRAMMING TO ADDRESS
INTERSECTIONALITY EXPERIENCED BY
WOMEN LEADERS (Finding #4)

*“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”
(Audre Lorde, 1982)*

RECOMMENDATION #4

FOCUS PROGRAMMING ON THE TYPES OF BIAS
VS NEEDING TO SPECIFY BY INDUSTRY
ACROSS THEIR MEMBER BASE (Finding #2)

"An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly is the ultimate competitive advantage."

-- Jack Welch

The background features a grayscale cityscape with various circular icons overlaid. These icons include a hand holding a smartphone with social media icons, a globe with network connections, a hand holding a tablet with a dollar sign icon, a hand writing on a document with a bar chart, a hand holding a smartphone with a globe icon, and a person walking up stairs towards a bright light. The overall theme is technology, business, and achievement.

THANK YOU

LaShaunda A. Ford
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