**INTRODUCTION**

Approximately 40 percent of women who earn engineering degrees in the United States leave their profession (Singh et al., 2013). Although there is neoliberal push in society to encourage people to go into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields and a simultaneous move to address the gender pay and equity gaps in these fields, women still leave science and engineering at a higher rate than men (10%) (Fouda, Singh, Cappaert, Chang, & Wan, 2016). What factors affect female decisions regarding entrance and retention in the engineering profession in the United States?

**METHODOLOGY**

To answer this question, this study used both an online survey and semi-structured interviews to create a portrait of the professional arc of female engineers from choosing their major through their decision to stay or leave the field. The participants of the study were 35 female engineers who were entering their program of study, just started out in the field, had a clear identity within their chosen profession after years of work, or left the profession. The close-ended questions were analyzed using SPSS. The open-ended questions were analyzed through NVivo software with in vivo coding for first cycle coding and pattern coding for second cycle coding.

**Conclusion & Implications**

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of female employees' experiences in male-dominated professions. In this study, all participants stated that they felt they belonged to the engineering profession. All but 3 participants responded that they felt that different genders were valued equally in their profession. However, when additional questions were asked, many study participants shared stories of discrimination and prejudice. Thirteen (13) participants stated that female engineers were often held to different standards than men in recognition, promotion, and salary. Nine (9) participants stated that they were excluded or ridiculed due to their gender. Also, three (3) participants stated that they often felt isolated due to their gender. In other words, there was still perceived discrimination and prejudice in the profession. However, many of them did not recognize or label these practices and culture as discriminatory or prejudicial. This might have been because they understood discrimination and prejudice as ill-intended hostility and sexual violence. Management must understand female employees' workplace experiences by recognizing the factors that make them motivated to become engineers (Table 1), satisfy and dissatisfy them (Tables 2 & 3), lead them to leave the profession (Table 6), and hurt gender equality (Table 4). In order to improve the workplace culture, they must consider establishing inclusivity practices (Table 5).

**RESULTS**

- **Why did you become an engineer?**

- **What makes you satisfied?**

- **What makes you unsatisfied?**

- **How does someone get promoted in your organization?**

- **What can your organization do to increase gender inclusiveness?**

- **What made you leave the profession?**

**Conclusion & Implications**

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