

Exploring Nontraditional leadership training on Participants' self-efficacy and latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development in Africa south of the Sahara.

©Sr. Kevin Karimi School of Professional Studies - Marywood University.

ABSTRACT

This quantitative research study set out to answer the question, "What is the impact of non-traditional leadership skill training (IV) on participants' self-efficacy (DV1) and latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development (DV2)?" The non-traditional leadership training under scrutiny in this study is based on a tailor-made program, Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI). The SLDI program has been running in Africa south of the Sahara, for the last 12 years, 2007 – to date. The program is offered in ten countries of Africa south of the Sahara, which include, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Malawi, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It was hypothesized in this study that there would be no statistically significant difference between participants who have completed and those who have not completed the SLDI training. Overall, results reveal that there is no relationship between the IV and the two DVs. However, there is a fairly small but statistically significant difference between those who have completed the training and those who have not completed the training on the dependent variable self-efficacy (DV1) but no statistically significant differences were found for latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development (DV2).

INTRODUCTION

This study was guided by the question "What is the impact of non-traditional leadership training on Catholic Sisters' self-efficacy and latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development?" It was hypothesized that there would be no statistically significant difference between the scores of the two dependent variable for participants who have completed and those who have not completed the SLDI training. In Africa south of the Sahara about 80% of Catholic Sisters have been found to lack academic credentials and professional skills to enable them be more effective in their ministries (Wakahiu, 2013; Wakahiu & Shaver, 2015). The need to provide these skills led to the development of a nontraditional leadership skills training in ten countries of Africa south of the Sahara since the year 2007 (Wakahiu, 2013). The program runs in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

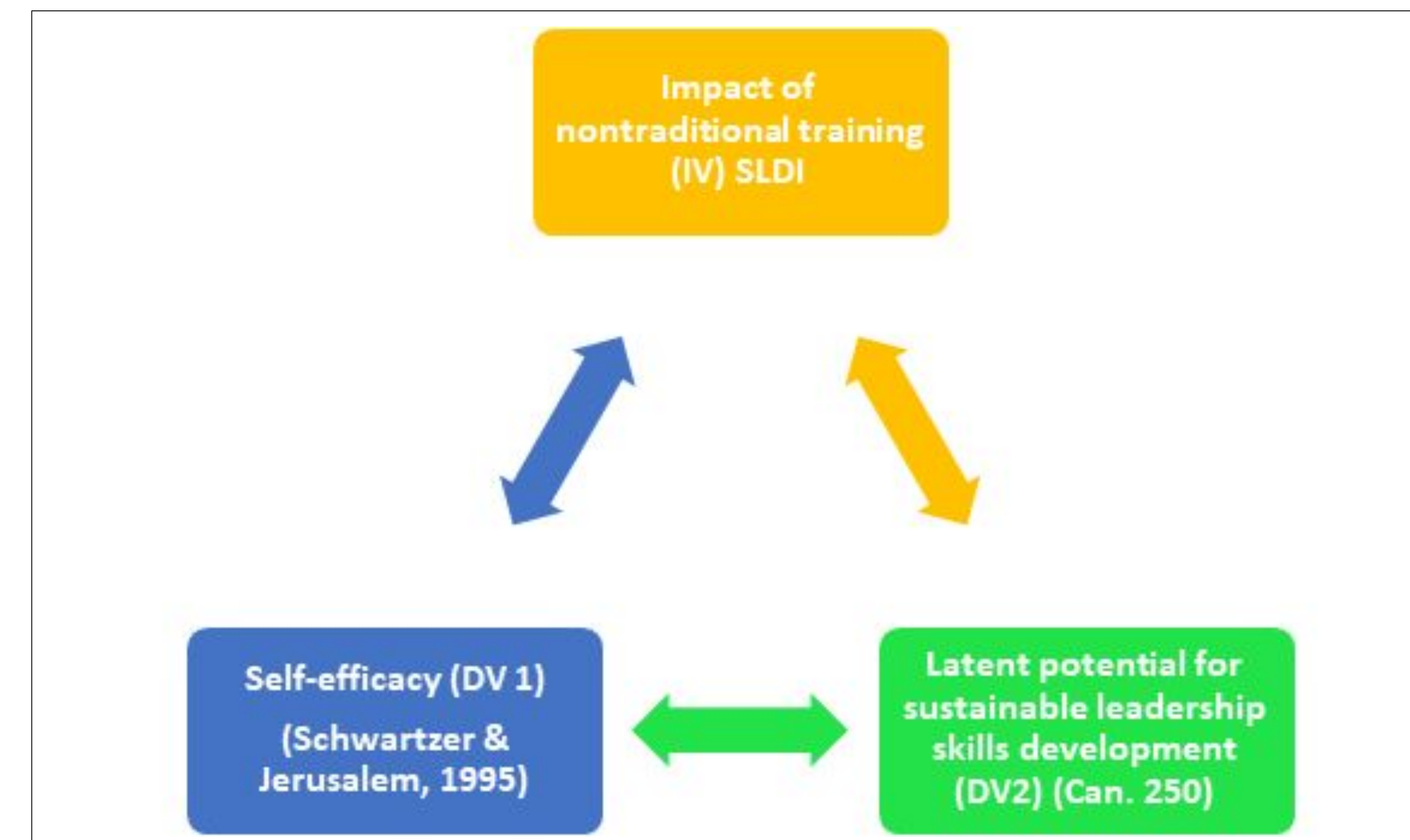
Qualitative studies on SLDI reveal that the training and mentorship improves professional skills and performance among participants (SLDI Evaluation report, 2018; Wakahiu & Keller, 2011). However, no quantitative study has been conducted to test the impact of the program on leadership and professional development, necessitating this current study. This is to determine efforts being made for the much required professional skills to match the increasing socio-economic needs in Africa south of the Sahara in the rapidly changing times among Catholic Sisters.

The need to provide Catholic Sisters with up to date credentials and professional development has been recommended since the second Vatican Council first by Pope Pius XII (Gaunt, 2018). Other Popes, including John XXIII, (Mater et Magistra, 1961) John Paul II (Ex Corde Ecclesiae, 1990) even urged the wealthy nations to support poor nations with provision of quality education as a step toward alleviation of poverty and ignorance in the global community. Catholic sisters from the global North now share from their past experience with the global South after organizing themselves with structures and curriculars to address their lack of credentials for ministry (Mulderry, 2017). Moreover, Catholic Sisters now than before are expected to provided credentials for the work they provide, unlike the yesteryears when they depended on learning on the job and mentorship from the more qualified practitioners among them (Johnson et al., 2019; Wakahiu, 2013).

METHODS

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, which allows for descriptive, attitude and opinion analysis, with data being collected at one point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample size was selected using occidental sampling method (Patten & Newhart, 2018) where 1,958 participants were identified from the database of participants compiled since 2007. For a 95% level of confidence and +/-0.05 confidence interval, a minimum of 322 participants were required (Raosoft.com online sample size calculator, 2019). IRB approval was obtained through the Exempt Review Committee for ethical considerations in conducting research with human subjects.

The survey comprised of 50 questions which included 10 from the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), combined with another 40 researcher designed questions, provided with a professional expert review. The survey was administered online through Qaultrics.com for a period of two weeks, where 814 participants responded, constituting 42% response rate. Data was then analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 26.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Am forever grateful to my academic advisor and Director of the program Dr. Alex Dawoody, my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Lloyd Lyter, Dr. Mary Gautier and Dr. Lori Swanchak who might not know how their mentorship and guidance has meant so much and will remain ingrained in my mind and heart, now and hereafter. Thanks to my professors and all my classmates who have been such a blessing to me at Marywood University.

My profound gratitude to the four founding Women Religious Congregations in Pennsylvania, IHM Sisters-Scranton, Franciscan Sisters, Sisters of St. Joseph and Society of Holy Childhood, and the Hilton Foundation without whose generosity and concerted efforts the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) would not be the reality it is today. Their continued support has seen to Organization grow from strength to strength expanding exponentially from professional skills to higher education opportunities for Catholic Sisters in Africa.

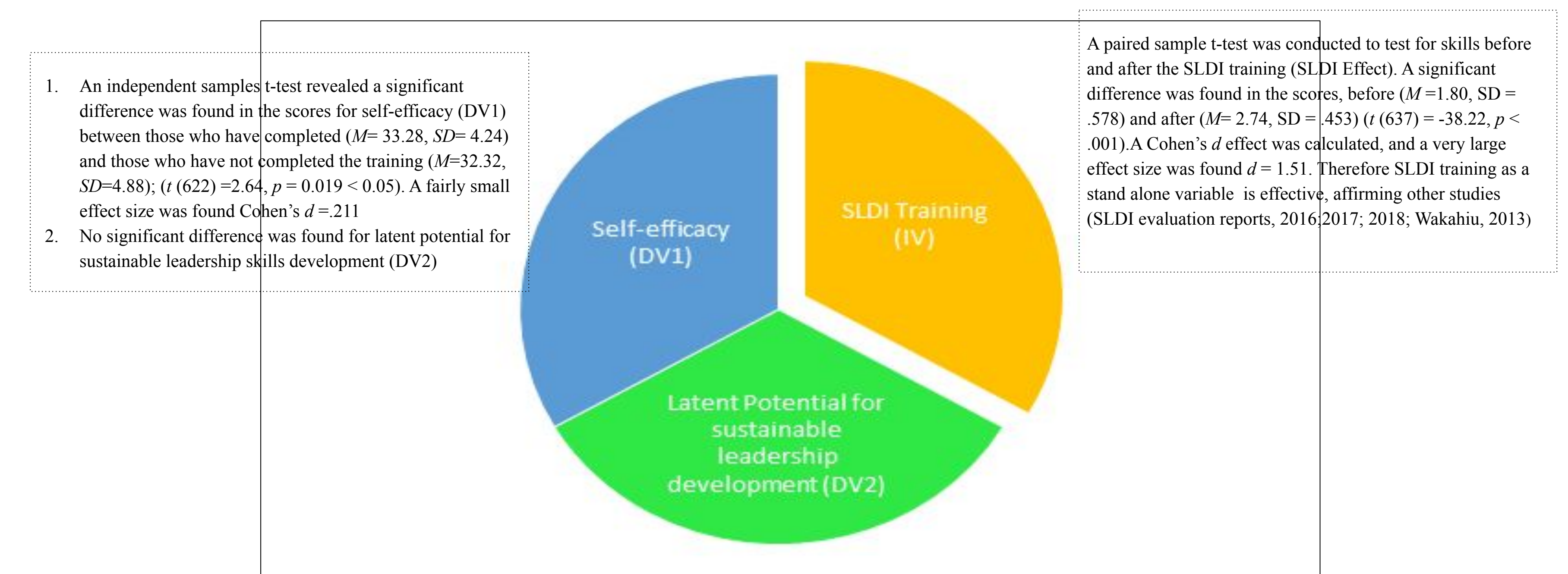
I acknowledge the support of Sr. Draru Mary Cecilia LSMIG PhD, the Executive Director of ASEC, who permitted me to carry out this study enabling me to reach the Alum and New Cohort in the SLDI program. Thanks to Jennifer Mudge Assistant Director Program Evaluation for maintaining a very up to-date database making this project feasible and all staff at ASEC USA & Africa. God bless each one, God bless All.

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ex Corde Ecclesiae (August 15, 1990). John Paul II. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc1508990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html
- Gaunt, T. (2018). *Pathways to Religious life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, M., Guatier, M., Wittberg, P. & Do, T. (2019). *Migration for Mission*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Mater et Magistra (May 15, 1961): John XXIII. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html
- Mulderry, D. D. (2017). "People are Suffering; People are Christ, and We Are Responsible": Sister Mary Emil Penets Campaign for Social-Justice Education in the 1950s. *The Catholic Historical Review*, 103(4), 725–754. doi: 10.1353/cat.2017.0161
- Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2018). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- SLDI Evaluation report (2018). SLDI phase IV Evaluation report. Scranton, Pennsylvania.
- Wakahiu, J. (2013). Mentoring: A model of cultivating leadership competencies in Kenyan women religious. *Advancing Women Leadership Journal*, 33, 132-141.
- Wakahiu, J & Keller, D. (2011). Capacity Building: A Phenomenological Study of the African women perceptions and experiences in the leadership training program. *Advancing Women Leadership Journal*, http://advancingwomen.com/awl/Vol31_2011/wakahiufinal157_30.pdf
- Wakahiu, J. & Shaver, R. (2015). Perception and Experience of Distance Learning for Women: Case of the Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA) Program in West Africa. http://www.iesnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_3_September_2015/12.pdf

RESULTS

A factor analysis reveals SLDI effect has no relationship with self-efficacy ($F(3, 581) = .427, p = .734 > .05$) and latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development ($F(3, 340) = .771, p = .511 > .05$). Multiple regression analysis reveals that SLDI training (Effect) is neither a predictor variable for self-efficacy (DV1) nor latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development (DV2). A coefficient correlation shows a weak but no significant relationship for SLDI Effect with the two dependent variables. These results reveal there is no significant relationship between the IV and two DVs.



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of SLDI training as a stand alone variable is evident. However, the study fails to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the nontraditional training with self-efficacy and latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development. Participants who responded to the question on the SLDI training sufficiency compared to other accredited courses ($n = 228$), show a very high score 9.73 for the group mean out of the possible 12 points. However, this score cannot be generalized for the rest of the participants because the sample size falls below the minimum 322 for a 95% level of confidence. This was unlike the response rate for the rest of the variables in the study SLDI effect ($n = 638$), self-efficacy ($n = 624$) and latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development ($n = 358$).

The no relationship with the dependent variables regardless of the high group mean scores for self-efficacy 32.82, explains Bandura's self-efficacy theory and tenets:- past experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and physical states more than the SLDI training. The group mean score of 13.42 for latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development fell in the same range of moderate competencies among participants similar to the moderate competencies reported SLDI Effect after the training, with a group mean score of 0.94 out of the possible 2 points for high competencies. This study concludes that because SLDI training cannot be a stand alone player where still 77% have not pursued higher education after SLDI. The situation of Catholic Sisters in Africa south of the Sahara, could be improved by the overwhelming support from participants in this study who *somewhat to strongly agree* to improve and reduce latent potential for sustainable leadership skills development through the following recommendations .

