The networked self: exploring networks as a source of career development and identity for female engineers – Participant information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Purpose of the study

Women-only formally organised internal and external professional networks are argued to be a vital source of support to women in male dominated industries, such as engineering, as women tend to be excluded from informal ones (“old boys' club”). However, little research has been conducted about the impact these women-only networks have on the construction of the professional identity of women. This study, aims at exploring how female engineers develop, enter, maintain, engage with, alter and leave formal internal and external networks and the extent to which these networks contribute to the construction, maintenance and alteration of career identities. The findings of the study will enable engineering companies to (re)design their women-only networks in order to make sure that they empower and retain women engineers.

What does my participation entail?

If you agree to participate, you will be invited for a one-to-one interview with the researcher, Dr Vanda Papafilippou. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be conducted in a place suitable to you (i.e. your workplace, at the University, etc.) or via Skype with Dr Vanda Papafilippou. The interviews will be conducted during January and April, 2019. The interview questions will be around: (i) your career history (background information); (ii) the range and nature of women-only networks you are currently participating in and (iii) if, and if yes how, your participation in women-only networks has impacted on the way you see yourself as an engineer (i.e. your career identity). Once you confirm that you are happy to take part in the interview, Dr Vanda Papafilippou will contact you, by email, to arrange a convenient date and time.

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and afterwards transcribed by a person employed by the University, who has signed a confidentiality agreement. Interview transcripts will be carefully anonymised: the real names of the participants will be replaced by pseudonyms, the names of colleagues and the companies mentioned will be deleted and substituted by generic references, such as [male manager 1], [female colleague 1], [company 1] etc. or removed completely if they lead to the identification of the participant. Should you request, you can have the final interview transcript for you to approve. In future publications and presentations only the
anonymised transcripts will be used. The audio record and transcription will be stored on a password-protected computer and only the researcher will have access to it.

It is your right to withdraw from the study at any point during the interview. Please indicate if you wish to do this at any point. You can also withdraw after the interview has taken place, by emailing Vanda Papafilippou via the contact details below.

The study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Business and Law Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact Professor Sue Durbin (Sue.Durbin@uwe.ac.uk)

If you have any questions relating to this project, please contact:

Dr Vanda Papafilippou

Email: Vanda.Papafilippou@uwe.ac.uk

Telephone: 0117 32 87984