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A Comparative Case Study Exploring the Experiences of Women Leaders in Academic Affairs and Administration in Higher Education Through the Lens of Intersectionality

Johniqua S. Williams

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This dissertation has been read and approved as fulfilling the partial requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Leadership.

Kimberly McEleevn, PhD Chair	Jennifer M. Lovelace, PhD Director, Doctoral Program in Education
Wendi Jenkins, EdD Methodologist	Brian Tyo, PhD Director, COEHP Graduate Studies
Kimberly D. Gill, PhD Committee Member	Deirdre Greer, PhD Dean, COEHP

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A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my tribe. First, I'd like to start with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I love you and thank you for the tremendous support during this process. You are the foundation of my purpose, and you will always order my steps.

To my dynamic parents, John Wesley Williams and Sharon Lynn High-Williams. My adoration for you is paramount. Because of you, I am. I promise to strive to make you proud and be a light for our family legacy to come. I could not have done this without you.

To the women in higher education, this dissertation is dedicated to your voices that are often silenced due to systemic marginalization's in a male-dominated society. My goal is to always speak your truth in an effort to move the field of higher education forward.

Last, but certainly not least, to one of the greatest loves of my life, Roberta High. You were, and always will be, the wind beneath this dream. As a little girl, you told me to go as far as I could go in my education. Well, nanny, this is it. Your granddaughter is a Doctor of Education. I stand on your shoulders, and I am a better woman for it.

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Abstract

There is an increasing concern about the absence of women in senior positions in academia and administration within institutions (Johnson, 2016). There is limited research to compare the journeys of women leaders in academics and administration. This study is an examination of women's experiences of perceived barriers to leadership roles in faculty and administration. Using comprehensive interviews, this study explores personal accounts to emphasize apparent barriers to career advancement. The goal of the study is to explore women in senior positions in academia and administrative paths to leadership.

The male dominated society has made it challenging for women to grow their careers in higher education. Bonawitz (2009) assessed factors including demographics, gender norms, education, employee relations, family, and unwritten rules. Additionally, researchers have evaluated policies and procedures to work on increasing the number of women in educational leadership (Bonawitz, 2009) Historically women have been a part of higher education, yet it's not until recently that they have been represented in literature (Bonawitz, 2009).

This study is a consideration of gender with an emphasis on institutional obstacles that hinder the progression of women into executive leadership positions in higher education. The study explores the leadership journeys of seven women leading in the roles of vice president level and up in administration and seven women serving in the roles of chair level and up on the academic side in the USG. I used intersectionality as a theoretical framework for the study. Yuval-Davis (2013) expressed that intersectionality is the examination of gender, race, and class as intersections. Lived experiences were examined to explore barriers and strategies that can impact individuals and groups concerning characteristics of gender and higher education. The

study allows intersectionality theory to show different identities of women that are not often talked about in literature, while avoiding generalizations.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Johnson (2016) delivered data that highlighted discrepancies in executive leadership in higher education. The report categorized women in higher education according to their ranks, such as executive faculty and administration. The report also presented tenure-track faculty positions were 57% men and 43% women. In Johnson's report, men were paid more than women across all faculty and administrative ranks in higher education, and men were more likely to hold senior positions. Men earned an average of 20% more than women at public institutions and 23% more at private institutions across all ranks (Johnson, 2016).

The American Council on Education (2016) stated women administrators were more likely than their male associates to have made sacrifices in their occupations to fulfill family responsibilities. Women held fewer college presidencies than men across all sectors and institutional types (Johnson, 2016). "Women were most likely to be presidents at private, 2-year colleges (45%); at every other institutional type, less than one third of presidents were women" (Johnson, 2016, p. 44). Outside of the presidency, women faced fewer opportunities to become chief academic officers (CAOs); 44% across all sectors and 38% at private institutions signify the percentages of CAOs. The gap may be less for CAOs, but the literature shows the CAO route traditionally leads to the presidency (Johnson, 2016,). Women aiming for presidencies are impacted, as 43% of women presidents advanced from CAO positions, compared with 31% of male presidents (Johnson, 2016). The odds are more probable for men to become college presidents exclusive of PhDs or EdDs. On the other hand, women dominate men achieving more doctorates, yet hold less representation in executive leadership positions than men (Johnson, 2016).

Johnson (2016) mentioned 27% of women vs. 19% of men presidents altered their careers to accommodate personal lives. According to the American Council on Education (ACE, 2017), the career ladder for women has remained relatively the same in relation to historical stereotypes that still impact women in executive leadership roles. Women have been expected to effectively maintain their executive functions and serve in caregiving roles for their spouses, children, and elderly parents (Johnson, 2016). According to the ACE (2017) report on college presidents, 32% of women presidents changed their career sequences to take care of family compared to 16% of men presidents. The duality of each role adds additional pressure for women and impacts women's career mobility. Women presidents and women CAOs have a history of not being married or having children compared to their male equivalents (Johnson, 2016). It is imperative to explore experiences of executive women in leadership comparatively to understand why they are underrepresented, identify barriers, and learn strategies that impact advancement.

Historically, higher education administration has been saturated with white men (Bonawitz & Andel, 2009). According to Nidiffer (2002), experiences of women in U.S. postsecondary education are "the direct legacy of America's historical resentment toward women's higher learning" (p. 3). Bonawitz and Andel (2009) explained, "Men have been administrators, presidents, and deans in American academia for decades longer and in larger numbers than women have held these positions" (p. 23). Women in higher education in executive leadership roles are the minority in work environments, as they are often the only woman to sit on boards and presidential cabinets (Bonawitz & Andel, 2009). Leadership, when demonstrated by a majority standpoint, is hindered by a limited perception, a lack of richness of ideas, and experiences (Harrow, 1993). Experiences of women in executive leadership positions influence the trajectory of women entering the field of higher education (Nidiffer, 2002).

Executive Faculty Experiences

Tierney and Bensimon (1996) talked about the importance of executive faculty members of color at a mostly white institutions and female faculty members in male-dominated departments or study areas. The role of women faculty is extensive, and there are many responsibilities within and beyond the parameters of their job descriptions. The responsibility of faculty members echoes the significance in concentrating on the prime educational duty among colleges and universities (Schreiner et al., 2011). The role has been highlighted for faculty members holding demographic traits such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Women of color faculty are often expected to support students who share their demographic characteristics more so than their white or male colleague (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Moore, 2017; Padilla, 1994). Executive faculty are expected to achieve formal duties listed in their job descriptions and informal responsibilities of the university culture. If there is a lack in the fulfillment of the assigned duties, faculty face negative consequences. Some consequences include loss of time for research, mental fatigue, and emotional exhaustion due to macroaggressions and challenges (Griffin, 2011; Moody, 2004). Haney and Lee (2015, 2016, 2017) found executive leadership from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, regardless of race or gender, tend to experience implicit bias based on stereotypes and stigma by the middle and upper middle SES and white-collar faculty or staff on many campuses.

Haney and Lee (2017) pointed out that the stereotype of low SES faculty is they can relate to students with similar SES statuses. In comparison, executive leaders with high SES tend not to be able to connect to executive leaders, staff, faculty, and students who have low SES (Haney & Lee, 2017). Langhout et al. (2009) talked about concerns for expectations of executive

leaders who come from a low SES or are minorities in terms of race and gender. Langhout et al. stated executive leaders who are minorities or have low SES are expected to do their work and perform supporting roles for students or fellow faculty with shared identities. This expectation is not the standard requirement for all faculty, and it is an additional expectation based on their identity (Langhout et al., 2009).

Due to the duality of formal and informal expectations, women executives often do not feel they have the time or outlets to express classism, racism, or discrimination in higher education (Langhout et al., 2009). Women in higher education experience feelings of isolation (Deshpande, 2016). Americans typically approach gender and racialized positions as being visible and embodied in day-to-day settings. The assumption is all women executives come from middle or upper SES backgrounds (Haney, 2015). In contrast, SES is often invisible and presumed to be the same among all faculty, staff, and students (Haney, 2015).

Administration Experience

With over 1,500 responses from presidents, chancellors, and CEOs from public, private, not-for-profit, and private-for-profit institutions in the American College President Study, the ACE (2017) found "women and racial/ethnic minorities were underrepresented among the presidency. Three out of every ten college presidents were women, and fewer than one in five presidents (17%) were racial/ethnic minorities" (p. 1). The ACE (2017) also showed gender bias in hiring practices: "Prioritizing experienced presidents, colleges and universities further skew the pool of candidates toward white men, which works against efforts at diversifying the presidency" (p. 1). Presidents who responded to the survey acknowledged the significance of "taking action to diversify higher education and the leadership pipeline" (ACE, 2017, p. 1). Most

respondents (89%) said efforts need to take place to end gender bias in higher education policies and procedures.

Brown (1987) stated the route to become an administrator in higher education is not familiar or well understood for women due to lack of previous models. The profession is not well known to undergraduates as a career possibility, unless students are involved with the student affairs office (Rowe-Allen & Smith, 2017). According to Brown, individuals' interests in student affairs careers come by way of chance rather than design. Rowe-Allen and Smith (2017) speculated students pursuing degrees in student affairs can sometimes have an unrealistic and incomplete image of the profession. For many administrators, lived experiences, critical incidents, a convergence of identities, shared values, and influence from those in the field have drawn administrators to this profession (Rowe-Allen & Smith, 2017). Stanley (2006) concluded that administrators are not able to express their experiences that impact their feelings of acceptance candidly. A great deal of their time is spent on invisible labor, particularly mentoring underrepresented students, faculty, and staff (Stanley, 2006).

Chávez and Sanlo (2013) talked about how most administrators and university leaders are unaware of the importance of understanding the complexities of intersectionality. To aid in campus climate and provide a diversity of thought, there needs to be a broader consideration of the identities of minority women administrators and what they encounter in their roles (Chávez & Sanlo, 2013). According to Sagana and Johnsrud (1991), "By increasing the minority presence in student affairs, student services divisions can cultivate a more racially and culturally diverse campus environment, which can, in turn, enhance the achievement of students" (p. 105). Chávez and Sanlo (2013) stated, "Identity influences experiences and perception of power or lack thereof

and affects how we think about and practice within the power structures of colleges and universities" (p. 106).

Statement of the Problem

Kezar and Gehrke (2016) shared there are two sides of the house in higher education: one being the faculty and the other being staff and administration. Women have been studied in silos of executive faculty and administration but looking at executive leadership in higher education in silos puts higher education at a disadvantage (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016). To move the field forward, there is a need to have a comparative look at the experiences of women in executive faculty and administrative roles (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016). When researchers look at holistic experiences of women in leadership ranks in academia, there is more at stake in terms of diversity of thought in higher education than the numbers of women who have attained executive level positions (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016).

It is vital to explore women's identities holistically, yet there has also been a lack of evaluation of social identities that influence who executive women leaders are, how they see themselves, and how they relate to others (Reynolds, 2001). These compartments of identity include race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, etc. (Reynolds, 2001). The objective of this study was to explore identities in addition to gender and race and the experiences of women in executive leadership roles.

Leading theorists in intersectionality, Lorde (1984), Crenshaw (1989), and Collins (1986) have deliberated on ways in which geographical location and identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality) intermingle and have exposed systems of oppression. Shields (2008) stated, "One category of identity such as gender, takes its meaning as a category in relation to another category" (p. 302), meaning that identities are interwoven within one another. Thus, women

executive leaders interact with each identity which shapes their personal interactions (Shields, 2008). An intersectional perspective forms a foundation for understanding intersections between systems of power and privilege and how personal narratives relate to identity development, evolve, and are understood (Jones, 2013).

There has been limited exploration of executive leaders collectively and through the lens of intersectionality (Reynolds, 2001). The theoretical framework of intersectionality served as a filter for the experiences of women in executive leadership. The intention in using this framework is to understand how gender, class, and racial identities combine to create unique experiences in career elevation in academic and administrative settings. Reynolds (2001) talked about the holistic study of women in higher education and considered race and gender in experiences of executive leaders in higher education. When considering race, class, and gender together, it is essential to understand that a minority group may not see gender as salient or in the same way as women from the dominant group (Reynolds, 2001). Intersectionality requires minority groups to create alternative means of validating their ideas of being (Collins, 1989). The goal was to express experiences of each subgroup in detail.

Purpose of the Study

Women in higher education need to tell their stories so the landscape of higher education can change for the better (Harrow, 1993). Dembouski (2018) stated women's voices in higher education need to be heard on identity intersections. With an understanding of who women are in higher education, policy and procedures can be set in place to accommodate women leaders in higher education (Dembouski, 2018). Women interested in entering the field will be able to see the barriers that have been placed in front of other women as they climb the ladder of success.

The researcher examined the journeys of women in leadership in academics and administration in public, 4-year institutions in the University System of Georgia (USG), and other institutions before the USG. The study adopted intersectional theory to explore how women in leadership in academics and administration perceive their career paths, possible barriers, and strategies they have used to during their journey. Filling the gap with literature about comparative similarities and differences, barriers, and strategies in executive leadership positions in higher education is essential to understanding women's experiences. Aiston and Jung (2015) advocated for the consideration of womens voices who hold leadership positions in higher education allowing their narratives to have exposure.

Research Questions

Research questions were developed using intersectional theory, which gives voice to marginalized women through their narratives. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do women in higher education executive leadership positions in the USG describe their journeys toward earning university leadership positions?
2. What are similarities and differences between journeys of women leaders in academics and administration?
3. To what extent has the intersections of race, class, and gender impacted women's journeys to leadership?

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality is the theoretical framework that informs the study. The aim for using the intersectional theory is to take into consideration the variety of ways in which identities are associated and intertwined (Crenshaw, 1989). The origins of the intersectionality framework are

with feminists and women of color scholars and are premised on the understanding that individuals within society live within various identities and come from culturally different backgrounds that function with systematized power (Crenshaw, 2008). The intersectionality perspective maintains several identity constructs and lived experiences that impact individuals both in positive and negative ways historically and socially (Parent et al., 2013). Intersectionality provides an understanding of women leaders' experiences. Intersectionality was used to identify structural norms in relationship with identity, by looking at lived experiences of women executive leaders (Shields, 2008).

Women executive faculty and administrators have been studied in silos in higher education (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016). Intersectionality aids in addressing the study of women by researching them holistically. MacKinnon stated, "the synergistic relationship between inequalities as grounded in the lived experience of hierarchy by changing not only that people think about inequality but the way they think" (MacKinnon, 2013, p. 1028). Intersectionality provides communication around struggles of power, lived experiences and concepts that go against the marginalized viewpoints of race, gender, sexuality, and other identities (Collins, 2000).

There was a concern within the study that women are not adequately represented in executive leadership roles, and the literature primarily includes studies focused on gender and race. Thus, intersectionality was selected to be empathetic to women's different identities and experiences. Intersectionality is an all-inclusive theory that considers the coming together of different identities, examining historical and social norms attached to each identity that influences how individuals present in the world. (Warner & Shields, 2013). The literature states

that when researchers use this theory in their research "socially locate individuals in the context of their 'real lives" (Berger & Guidroz, 2009, p. 1).

Methodology Overview

With the approval of Columbus State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher used qualitative research to format this study. Qualitative research is a method examining individual and group understandings of their lived experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, a qualitative study is an investigation procedure for observing the complexities of lived experiences and designed to collect comprehensive analyses of participants and guided in natural settings (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative research allows "research that produces descriptive data based upon spoken or written words and observable behavior" (Sherman & Reid, 1994, p. 1). The connection between a case study method and a qualitative methodology was used to observe personal and professional occurrences of participants who work for public, 4-year institutions of higher education in the USG.

The design of case studies allows the researcher to evaluate a particular individual or experience, which is the case confined by time and experience, and to obtain information by using different collection measures during the study (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1989). Merriam (1998) recommended involving several cases in a study to make conclusions and understandings convincing. Also, a case study method allows an exhaustive understanding between participants, the framework of the study, and the phenomenon of culturally responsive pedagogy (Patton, 2015). Maxwell (2005) talked about the use of case study methodology as a process of alignment. The case study method "tends to see the world in terms of people, situations, events, and the processes that connect these; explanation is based on an analysis of how some situations

and events influence others" (Creswell, 2013, p. 29). Additionally, case studies "tend to ask how x plays a role in causing y, what the process is that it connects x and y" (Creswell, 2013, p. 31).

Setting and Sampling

Through the lens of intersectionality, the study is an exploration of the experiences of women leaders in academic affairs and administration in higher education. The study took place in 4-year public universities in the USG. There are 26 four-year colleges and universities in the USG. I individually interviewed participants from the four research-intensive (R1) universities in the USG: Augusta University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, and the University of Georgia. Patton (2015) specified a researcher must work within limitations of available resources. By selecting women in the USG where the researcher was employed, the researcher had access to participants due to the USG affiliation.

Member checking and purposeful sampling methods were used for the study. Member checking is participant endorsement, a method for increasing the reliability of results (Brit, 2016). Seven female faculty, chair level and above, and seven administrators, vice president level and above, who currently work for public 4-year institutions of higher education in the USG were selected. Patton (2015) stated purposeful sampling offers informative data. The selection of purposeful sampling permits the researcher to select participants based on exclusive standards (Patton, 2015). Participants are required to work within the USG for at least a year in addition to the requirements of region, job title, and gender. Participants were selected based on the institution type and their position at the university.

Data Collection

Creswell (1994) talked about how data collection involves several steps. For this study, those steps included setting boundaries for the study based on the participants and collecting

information through interviews and document review (Creswell, 1994). Data collection included one-on-one, semi structured interviews with participants and document review (e.g., published documents, curriculum vitae, and resumes). Data took into consideration the previous and current lived occurrences of being a woman realizing the roles of executive faculty and administration in higher education. Additionally, data was reviewed for the organizational culture of the university and intersectionality in participants' experiences.

I communicated with each participant, notified them of the process, and requested approval for the interviews to be recorded and their vitae and resumes collected. A semi structured interview method with open-ended questions was the technique used for data collection (Creswell, 2014). Shank (2006) said semi structured interviewing "allows the interviewee some latitude in how questions are asked, and in what order, but it is still the case that all interviewees are asked the same basic questions" (p. 50). This approach allows researchers to conduct interviews from a regulated point of view with internal questioning (Shank, 2006). Additionally, the method permits the researcher and the participant the opportunity to expand the dialogue with related topics that may arise from conversation from the general topic of the research questions (Shank, 2006).

Data Analysis

Data analysis took place concurrently with data collection from participants, data analysis, and narrative reporting by the researcher (Creswell, 1994). Data was collected, organized into categories, structured into a storyline, and transcribed into qualitative text (Creswell, 1994). I transcribed the transcripts, read the transcripts several times, and coded the transcripts into themes and categories related to the research questions. Tesch (1990) called these processes "de-contextualization" and "re-contextualization," resulting in high-level

analysis. Interview transcripts, journals from pre- and post-interviews, and curriculum vitas and resumes were used to recognize sequences and themes that transpired. The data was evaluated using a comparative method.

The continuous-comparative process, established by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further developed by Charmaz (2006), involves assessment of the transcripts, audio, and submitted documents for interpretation . Charmaz (2006) stated, "Making comparisons between data, codes, and categories advance your conceptual understanding because you define analytic properties of your categories and then begin to treat these properties to rigorous scrutiny" (p. 178). Data was displayed in tables of tubular information (Creswell, 1994). This format allows the reader to see the relationships among categories of data with displays of categories, such as site, demographic variables, time, and role (Creswell, 1994).

Descript was used to analyze data. Descript is software intended for researchers working with extensive transcripts, text-based, and multimedia information. The researcher used Descript in transcription evaluation, coding, text clarification, content inquiry, and discourse analysis. Additionally, the researcher used the software to display data in forms of maps, clusters, and multidimensional scaling, which allows the reader to quickly identify trends and patterns. Lastly, the researcher used the software to identify and classify opinions and experiences through text to determine the attitude of the women executive leaders toward their experiences in higher education.

Limitations, Assumptions, and Delimitations

There are numerous limitations in this study. The first limitation is the validity and reliability which is in direct connection with the study being qualitative. Qualitative studies are often one-time experiences: "Because qualitative research occurs in the natural setting, it is

challenging to replicate studies" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 211). Wiersma (2000) stated a case study encompasses the actions of a person, group, or organization. The example of this one person's interpretation may or may not indicate the practices or personal feelings of others (Bauhoff, 2011).

Second, participants may have selective recollections, get the sequence of events out of order, or recollect optimistic events and conclusions to their actions and adverse results to the researcher (Creswell, 1994). These concerns can generate a bias in the research (Bauhoff, 2011). Third, participants may not want to become personal in one-on-one interviews due to the level of their positions (Creswell, 1994). The fourth limitation is the lack of institutional types due to selecting public, 4-year universities in the USG and not looking at universities outside of the USG. To reduce bias, the researcher journaled. Journal writing amongst participants and the researcher provides the triangulation of data sets at numerous levels. Lastly, the researcher works for the USG and a part of the culture of women in the USG. Additionally, the researcher chose to limit the setting to make the data manageable, useful, and accessible.

A delimitation of the study is working with Research 1 (R1) institutions in the USG. The literature has pointed out that women are prone to work at private, 2-year colleges vs. R1 institutions (Johnson, 2016). An assumption in this research could be that participants' experiences directly relate to race, gender, and class in higher education. This assumption is necessary because it allows the data collected to deliver the information required to answer the research questions in the study. The researcher anticipated that women executive leaders would have been confronted with hardship, typecasting, and judgement due to findings in the literature regarding women in higher education (O'Connor, 2015).

Definitions of Terms

The following is a list of terms and definitions found in this dissertation. The terms referenced were used to increase readers' understanding of the information presented in the context of this study.

- *Case study design.* Yin (2003) indicated case study research is appropriate when investigators hope to "(a) define research topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual or complex multivariate conditions and not just isolated variables, and (c) rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence" (p. xi).
- *Culture*. The shared beliefs that a group acquires through problem solving of internal and external adjusting. Because these beliefs were more than adequate, they become the norms for the group as to how to respond to specific problems (Schein, 2009).
- *Executive leadership.* The faculty tenure track provides a structured pathway for higher education's executive leadership positions. This directly correlates to loftier roles and appointments (Madsen, 2012; Tomás et al., 2010).
- *Gender.* Gender refers to the condition of being male, female, or neuter. In a human context, the distinction between gender and sex reflects the usage of these terms. Sex refers to the biological aspects of maleness or femaleness, whereas gender implies the psychological, behavioral, social, and cultural issues of being male or female (i.e., masculinity or femininity; American Psychological Association, 2020).
- *Intersectionality.* The way in which gender intersects with other identities can be better understood through the lens of intersectionality. This analytical tool assists in clarifying how oppression and privilege are affected by these intersections (Crenshaw, 2008).

- *Leadership*. The impact that an individual has over a group to reach a set goal. (Northouse, 2013).
- *Organizational culture.* Schein (1985) Best described as a group's implicit shared beliefs; organizational culture impacts how a group is affected by different environments. Organizational culture operates at three levels: underlying assumptions, values, and artifacts/creation. Working under this premise, it is necessary to understand that organizations have numerous subsets and departments; all within their own cultures. "shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about and reacts to its various environments" (p. 24).
- *Higher education.* Higher education refers to education beyond high school, especially at a college or university. An academic institution that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees and is accredited (Dictionary.com, 1995).

Significance of the Study

The term *diversity* in higher education has become a buzzword, and most actions taken toward equality are primarily rooted in race (Bell & Hartmann, 2007). The need for balancing diversity influences an active effort to implement diversity as a goal, especially in higher education (Berrey, 2015). With race as a primary focus, there is an assumption by majority groups of no longer needing to think about how race intersects with ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or other types of social hierarchies (Bell & Hartmann, 2007). In the literature, there seems to be an avoidance with connecting race to intersecting hierarchical systems or the need for racially based policies and efforts to address institutional racism, segregation, and oppression (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Berry (2015) talked about how colleges reproduce oppression by disregarding the existence of discrimination and limiting the achievement of diversity and inclusion goals. Faculty holding privileged statuses are often unaware of hierarchies related to race, class, gender, and sexuality, having learned before college to normalize privilege and oppression in school interactions and to dismiss power inequality from understandings of race in education (Byrd, 2017; Warikoo, 2016). Byrd (2017) and Tatum (2015) argued institutional efforts must move beyond a focus of compositional and representational diversity and instead create multiple opportunities for interactional diversity and working toward racial dialogue and awareness. In realizing the intended benefits of such interactions, attention must be paid to issues of power, privilege, intersectionality, and social justice (Gurin et al., 2002).

Despite the advancement of women in executive leadership roles, women still have difficultly securing these positions. Researchers have compartmentalized leaders into silos of academics and administration. The significance of this study is the comparison of experiences, barriers, and strategies for both academic and administrative executive leaders. In higher education, women face barriers that block them from attaining executive leadership. The literature in terms of solutions to overcome obstacles is segmented based on academic and administrative leaders. Rarely is there a collective solution for both academic and administrative leaders, even though they both work for the same entity. In comparing experiences, barriers, and strategies of academic and administrative executive leaders, there may be a set of solutions that address the overarching problem of the lack of women in executive leadership and barriers that both face. Thomas (2004) expounded on the benefits of having women leaders in higher education would overall improve the diversity and equity of the institution (Thomas et al., 2004).

The significance of this study is that it provides literature for women executive leaders in higher education. Additionally, the analysis advances imperative communication around women leaders in higher education, which will help create diverse workspaces that are mindful of women through policies and procedures aware. The researcher is optimistic that the analysis of the study on executive women in higher education will aid in bringing an understanding of women's management qualities. Studies of this caliber provide a blueprint for women professionals to know what to expect as they climb the academic ladder. The goal is for universities to be focused on the needs of their women leaders, instead of primarily focusing on responsibilities and outputs, producing an all-encompassing, equitable, and compassionate atmosphere for women executive leaders.

Intersectionality approach adds significance to the current state of higher education, highlighting a more inclusive outlook. Intersectionality theory brings a holistic view of women leaders' identities. Research on women executive leaders is important to the literature in higher education, providing an inside look at the experiences, barriers, and strategies of women leadership.

Summary

If women tell their stories comparatively, the landscape of work in higher education can change for the better (Harrow, 1993). Comparing experiences of women executive leaders is particularly useful for understanding how institutional barriers and strategies influence the success or failure of women matriculating into leadership roles in a university system. Additionally, understanding and comparing experiences of women in executive leadership roles helps to better tailor a solution of increasing women in executive leadership roles in higher education. There is a void in the literature in relationship to what is identified about executive

faculty and administrators in comparison. Thus, a study is needed to provide data that is limited in the literature. The next section addresses key literature of women experiences, intersectional points of view, and comparison among faculty and administration.

Chapter II reviews current literature associated with women executive faculty and administration and their historical experiences in higher education, intersectionality, barriers, mentoring, and women's leadership in higher education.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

This chapter provides a summary of scholarly research on journeys of women in executive leadership positions in higher education. In the literature, there has been recognition of women leaders in higher education, compartmentalized into two segments: academics and administration. Very rarely in literature is there a comparison of roles. In addition to the lack of contrast of roles, these sectors are rarely evaluated through the lens of intersectionality. The review explores the experiences of executive leaders, the lack of compassion for women leaders in academia and administration in higher education, and the futures of each career path.

Within the chapter, there is a historical perspective of women leaders' progression and positions in higher education. Following the historical view of women in higher education, the chapter is distributed into three segments: barriers, strategies, and intersectionality. The initial section is an examination of obstacles faced by women leaders on their journeys. More explicitly, the review is an investigation of societal barriers in terms of gender, race, and work-life balance. The second section is a consideration of strategies women leaders have used to work around internal and external barriers. Strategies that are explored are mentorship, networking, and professional development. In closing, the chapter overviews intersectionality, and outlines the analysis of the study results. The framework focuses on the voices of women leaders previously overlooked or excluded, especially in the analysis of quality and efforts to remedy specific social problems (Jones, 2013).

History of Women in Higher Education

Higher education in the United States began at Harvard University, founded in 1636 (Gordon, 1997). Harvard was established by men who were educated in England and wanted to educate men in the United States. Women were not allowed to attend. Women were not enrolled

in higher education until the 1800s (Gordon, 1997). Gordon (1997) stated that women attending higher education was detrimental to their health. The opposing view was that women ought to be educated to assist their sons in academic success, ensuring the male-dominated culture was maintained (Solomon, 1985).

During the 1830s, many women's colleges were established. Between 1836 and 1875, the number of women's colleges grew to more than 50 (Parker, 2015). By 1890, the percentage of women pursuing undergraduate degrees had risen to 47%, which contributed to an expansion in hiring women faculty in higher education (Gordon, 1997; Parker, 2015). Solomon (1985) thought of women in the classroom and not in the home created an uneasy environment for women to learn. Others felt it was important for women to be educated to have intellectual conversations with their husbands and others with whom they came in contact (Gordon, 1997; Solomon, 1985).

According to Gordon (1997) and Solomon (1985), during the late 1800s and early 1900s, women attended coeducational and all-women colleges. With the expansion of access to institutions, women took on leadership roles, such as faculty and administrative roles, at all-women colleges (Parker, 2015). Women in higher education energized other women to believe it was crucial to help the next generation of women have access to higher education. After a great resistance, women could take classes to progress in their academics (Parker, 2015). Gordon and Solomon explained how women won awards for their scholarship. Men were unsettled by achievements and praises of women taking classes and female academicians (Gordon, 1997). Rossiter (1995) stated women leaders were disregarded and worked to fight inequality. Operational costs of separating men and women in the classroom were high. Costs and the

recruitment of male students forced many colleges to return to coeducation in 1837 (Rossiter, 1995).

During World War II, women were involved in the development of higher education, while men were at war (Rossiter, 1995). During this time on campus, women took charge in higher education, taking classes and learning, while also working in executive leadership roles. Women gained experience in research and leadership in higher education, becoming chairs and presidents (Rossiter, 1995). The amendment to the Higher Education Act (1965), Title IX, was authorized into law on June 23, 1972, by President Nixon. This rule provided women equal access to education and federal aid under the law. Women were no longer to be discriminated against based on their gender (Higher Education Act, 1965). Furthermore, higher education provided women access to attend higher education and equal access to financial aid (Gangone & Lennon, 2014).

The number of women in leadership has stayed consistent since the passage of Title IX. As noted in *Benchmarking Women's Leadership in the United States,* "As of 2018, women account for only 18% of our top leaders and make 78.7 cents to every dollar earned by a man-a wage gap that increases with age" (University of Denver Colorado Women's College, 2013, p. 5). The overall conclusion from the ACE's (2017) American College President Study is the changing of the guard takes time, and the process of moving women into presidential roles has been slow. Though the representation has been gradual, the profile of a president in 2016 is like that of one in 2011: "A white male who had earned a doctorate and had served as a president of his institution for an average of 7 years" (ACE, 2017, p. 59). The representation of senior leadership should be made more diverse, which should be a priority of the academy moving forward (Gangone & Lennon, 2014). Having diverse leaders in higher education is important to

all. As reported, “Institutions with a higher percentage of female leaders boast higher revenue for businesses and receive more national research funding” (Gangone & Lennon, 2014, p. 8).

The University of Denver Colorado Women’s College (2013) published the report, *Benchmarking Women’s Leadership in the United States,* which exemplified the shortage of women in leadership positions in both academics and administration. There is a difference in representation of executive leaders at a university opposed to colleges. The numbers represented at institutions that give doctoral degrees were at 38% of the faculty, 45% of faculty at master’s and baccalaureate institutions, and 53% of faculty at associate-degree-granting institutions. The numbers show that there are more men represented than women, except between associate-degree-granting institutions. At doctoral degree-granting institutions, women account for 43% of the full-time faculty, up from 32% in 1991. Although this increase signifies progression in higher education, there is still a gap in representation of women among esteemed faculty statuses.

At associate-degree-granting institutions, women are paid less than men: 52.7% to 47.3%, respectively (University of Denver Colorado Women’s College, 2013). For tenure-track faculty in doctoral institutions, women faculty include 29.1%, opposed to 55.8% assumed by men. The outstanding percentage of faculty are lecturers and considered non-tenure track. Institutions traditionally advance faculty from within the college which impacts women’s advancement to executive leadership, because they are not in the faculty positions to be able to advance. The data showed that there was less representation of women at executive level positions including president and vice president. Similar to administration, non-tenure-track jobs disregard women from accomplishing chief levels of academia (University of Denver Colorado Women’s College, 2013).

Regarding earnings, men are still making significantly more than women and that statistic has not change since the 1980s. In 1980-1981, women faculty earned 81.6% of the salary of men, paralleled to 82.4% in 2010-2011 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). Community colleges and 4-year institutions have a significant difference in the pay range for women faculty and administration. Women make close to 20% less than their male counterparts (18.4% for public and 18.9% for private institutions), and that number has remained relatively the same for the past 30 years. In contrast, women only make 4% less than men at 2-year public institutions, and at 2-year private institutions women earn more than men at (2.2%) (NCES, 2011).

The pay gap for women varies between public, private, and community colleges. Men continue to make more than women at doctoral-degree-granting institutions (AAUP, 2011). Similar to corporate America and other sectors, women earn less. At doctoral-degree-granting institutions, women faculty members earn 78% of men faculty pay, paralleled to 88% at master's-degree-granting institutions, 90.2% at baccalaureate-granting institutions, and 95.9% at associate-degree-granting institutions (AAUP, 2011).

When other minority identities are added, discrepancies are even more drastic. In "2009, women of color accounted for 11.4% of instructors (up from 10.7% in 2007), 10.6% of assistant professors (up from 9.9% in 2007), and only 3.7% of professors (compared to 3.4% in 2007; NCES, 2011). Overall, women of color accounted for 8.1% of all faculty in 2011, an increase from 7.5% in 2007" (NCES, 2011, p.8). As women expanded their career in higher education they slowly began to occupy the presidency role. The presence of women advanced from 23% of presidents in 2006 to 26.4% in 2011 (Cook, 2012). Women presidents at associate-degree-

granting institutions increased from 29% in 2006 to 33% in 2011. At doctoral-granting institutions, it was more significant at 15% in 2006, rising to 22% in 2011 (Cook, 2012).

Cook, (2012) stated that over a third of women presidents come from being chief academic officers (CAOs). Including all college and university presidents, 52% of women presidents and 42% of men presidents were formerly provosts or CAOs (Cook, 2012). The data demonstrates that women interested in becoming a president should investigate CAO positions as a direct pathway, through the traditional faculty route (ACE, 2009). Women are only 40% of CAOs, with less women CAOs in progressive, influential institutions. Women CAOs are 50% of CAOs at community colleges, 38% at the master's level, 37% at baccalaureate institutions, and 32% at doctoral-granting institutions (ACE, 2009). As predicted in *Benchmarking Women's Leadership* (University of Denver Colorado Women's College, 2009), presidents 61 years of age and older have increased to 60% (Cook, 2012). Women are 25% of all sitting presidents, and most candidates to become presidents, are women that are currently presidents, which is a hindrance for women when openings emerge (Cook, 2012).

Women in positions of senior-level leadership have traditionally come through faculty ranks (Johnson, 2016). Many senior leadership positions are held by faculty who have earned tenure and are at the associate professor level or higher. The process of tenure consists of scholarship, service, and teaching in their institution and field of study. Women have historically been underrepresented at all levels of faculty, and few women are offered tenure-track positions (Johnson, 2016). In the American College President's Survey, the ACE (2017) conveyed the route to executive leadership is through faculty. Women with the desire to matriculate to the tenure track need to understand the process and be mindful of their timeline and professional

development. Lennon (2013) suggested women "still lag significantly behind men in status, salary, and leadership positions in academia" (p. 12).

Barriers

To identify reasons behind the lack of women in executive positions in higher education, researchers have exposed difficulties women executive leaders encounter as they progress within their career (Harris et al., 2013; Kim & Cook, 2012). Bonawitz and Andel (2009) discovered women in executive-level leadership are met with barriers ranging from lack of mentorship to assist in guiding them through their career, discrimination based on identity traits, and male privilege. Studies on executive women have shown women may encounter inadequate employment opportunities and role conflict in addition to patriarchal approaches toward women fulfilling traditional stereotypes (Aiston & Jung, 2015; Pirouznia, 2009; Shah, 2010). In this section, barriers, such as gender inequities, culture, social, economic status, and lack of mentorship, are described to expound upon barriers impacting women's advancement into executive leadership positions.

Gender Barriers. Globally, women encounter many barriers to advancement into executive leadership positions, including gender-based discrimination. Despite progress toward gender equality, women are sometimes held back by university practices and structures biased toward men. O'Connor (2015) purported "changing women's position in universities requires changes to a gendered culture" (p. 305) to reverse the bias against women. This section provides an overview of how gender can be a barrier to career advancement.

Northouse (2013) expounds on how women pursuing executive-level positions experience pressure from their personal and professional lives, in terms of stereotypical expectations and societal norms. *Gender typecasting* is the "consensual beliefs about character

traits that describe men and women" (Harris et al., 2013, p. 486), The consensual beliefs of both men and women act as obstacles for women when attempting to advance their careers (Aiston & Jung, 2015). Campbell et al. (2010) stated, "Gender identity and differences are acquired through various developmental processes associated with life stages, such as schooling and work-life" (p. 19). According to Diehl (2014), men and women subscribe to thinking negatively toward women based on gender stereotypes. Often, negative stereotypical thinking impacts career trajectories of women (Diehl 2014).

Bonebright (2012) wrote about how women wear their gender as a label, and the label causes challenges for women leaders, especially when they are assertive in their communication, they are seen masculine. Eagly et al. (2014) illustrated, in comparison to women, men are viewed as being better leaders and more task oriented, based on their prior experiences as leaders. When women work within the context of their roles as executive leaders, their effectiveness is often challenged or questioned due to perceptions that women are less proficient than men (Eagly et al., 2014). Winkler (2000) specified women may be cautious in practicing self-promotion as a necessary skill to advance in executive leadership. Women have to overcome the fear of being perceived as arrogant, self-centered, self-serving showoffs, and labeled as aggressive (Winkler, 2000).

Researchers have pointed out implicit bias and structural impediments as barriers for women progressing into executive roles. In *Barriers and Bias,* the American Association of University Women (AAUW, 2016) described *role incongruity* as a no-win situation for women leaders. Role incongruity theory has prejudice roots that stem from gendered expectations that are not comparable to work life balance (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women are expected to perform in stereotypical ways: "kindly and cooperative as women but assertively and competitively as

leaders" (AAUW, 2016, p. 25). Women who do not adapt to traditional expectations about how women should think, communicate, and lead often face backlash or resistance (AAUW, 2016). The concern of not being able to be one's authentic self can discourage women from pursuing leadership opportunities (AAUW, 2016).

Women's Roles. Neumann (2009) explored the roles of tenured executive faculty in U.S. research institutions, concentrating on women that work in science, technology, math, and engineering and how they collaborate in groups. In this qualitative study, Neumann interviewed with 78 professors in different disciplines at five U.S. research universities. Neumann discovered there was a difference in what the women did in terms of job responsibilities than the men who had the same roles. Neumann (2009) stated, "Women were more of the human, political, and social aspects of working in research groups, whereas their male counterparts engaged more in research leading to publications the coin of the realm for promotion to full professor" (p. 4). Subsequently, less women are positioned to be considered for faculty or administrative positions in higher education. Neumann found the primary goal of institutions was student success due to states' relationships and performance-based funding. Neumann uncovered relational work that is beneficial for students is often facilitated by women, helping institutions meet their university objectives.

Stuck in the Middle. Garza and Eddy (2008) conducted a qualitative study titled, "In the Middle: Career Pathways of Midlevel Community College Leaders." The study interviewed three directors/deans and six lead faculty. During the interviews, the researchers found women "who have made the move to administration often get stuck in mid-level positions and do not advance to senior leadership" (Garza & Eddy, 2008, p. 11). The data exposed several themes related to women's progression. Due to the stereotypical expectations of women, several

participants did not plan to advance into their current executive roles, and out of the nine participants only one discussed a desire to progress to a higher position. Additionally, the researchers found a barrier for women looking to move up to senior leadership was the requirement to move to another state. Women commonly construct their careers to work around children and the occupations of their husbands, making relocation difficult. In conclusion, the researchers found women making the decision to accommodate family could adversely impact the leadership opportunities that are needed for executive leadership employment due to their gendered expectations (Garza & Eddy, 2008).

Leadership with Bourdieu's Model. Grady (2019) conducted a qualitative narrative study on women university presidents titled, "Leadership with Bourdieu's Model of Cultural Capital." The study consisted of eight women presidents and their experiences of navigating leadership in a male-dominated society. The researchers interviewed women presidents who led public doctoral-granting universities. The interviews were 1-hour, face to face, and on campus, guided by the following research questions: (a) "How do women university presidents navigate leadership boundaries?" and (b) "How do women university presidents create leadership success?" The following are the findings of the study, divided into sections of (a) becoming a member, (b) leading as a member, and (c) staying a member.

Each participant in the study identified they were aware of the work it took to gain presidency status. As one participant said, "I knew there were no short cuts" (Grady, 2019, p. 15). The presidents at the start of their careers were hired as research assistant professors, and 5 of the 8 reported being the only woman in their department for years. The eight presidents in this study talked about feeling support from their universities, yet also being fully aware of their genders as presidents and effects on follower perceptions. Because they felt aware of their

gender, each thought they worked hard to manage follower perceptions. Although seven had served as interim leaders, all eight participants were in their first official presidential role. The researchers found the presidents felt a sense of challenge when it came to working at a R1 university as a woman. Gender and leadership were essential to their leadership learning. One president described:

> For women who grew up in situations where we sat in rooms full of men, listened to rooms full of men talking, listening became a very, very important tool that we had. Because, by listening, we could see what was important, and we could hear what was important to the men in the room. And then, when we had something to say, we'd know how to make it resonate, rather than just throwing it out there hoping for the best. (Grady, 2019, p. 24)

The presidents described that women are viewed differently than men by their teams, students, faculty, and staff and how this awareness impacted their actions and decisions. The researchers found the limitations of the study to be a small sample size, and only having 8 of 24 bounded categories of public universities with the Carnegie Classification descriptor of doctoral universities. Regarding the implications and conclusion of this study, there are significant gaps for women all around higher education. As depicted in the study, four of the women did not have a direct path to the presidency, and the researchers called it a *nonlinear path*. As times progress, Grady (2019) suggested higher education to acknowledge gender diversity as standard and permit women to take advantage of a new and maintainable culture.

Minority HBCU Presidents

Washington Lockett et al. (2020) managed a study on controlling images, comments, and online communities: a critical discourse analysis of conversation about Black women presidents

at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). This research paper used a black feminist theory (BFT) lens and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The goal of their study was to investigate public discussion through discourse in publicly comment sections of articles and news reports about Black women HBCU leaders. The researchers found rarely in the literature is there a discussion of experiences and narratives of women of color presidents. The researchers interpreted the view of Black women in media as directly related to how women presidents were viewed. Washington Lockett et al. made reference to the history of negative portrayals of Black women in media and how the consumer of the media sees and internalize images for Black women. The researchers used intersectionality as their initial framework. The study pointed out the importance of understanding the continuance of these images of women, and researchers should be mindful that any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account does not adequately address the way minorities are perceived (Washington Lockett et al., 2020).

Twenty-three presidents fit the study requirements. Two hundred forty-seven items for analysis were found via networks such as newspaper and magazine articles, newscasts, online periodical articles, YouTube videos, podcasts, institution websites, and press releases. Washington Lockett et al. (2020) stated commenters would use intersecting identities to discuss problems, such as if they were single, married, or parents. There were examples of commenters using words such as “well-heeled puppet,” “Queen,” and “liars.” There were also examples where commenters used language that overlapped with gender roles/norms, when commenters discussed problems with women in leadership roles. The researchers found the following words used repeatedly: class, strength/strong, intimidating, incompetent, controlling, evil, and aggressive. The presidents were referred to as “old girl” or “bitch.”

In relationship with job performance, a lot of the commenters based their comments on if they felt the female president was a good fit for the university they worked at. In the comments, researchers found the terms "Angry Black Woman," also known as the Sapphire, who ruled the institution in an "evil," domineering way. There was an abundance of comments regarding the president's ability or lack of ability to do the job as president because of her gender. Moving forward, the researchers indicated there is a need for a platform within higher education for Black women to "share their own experiences to address negative narratives crafted" (Washington Lockett et al., 2020, p. 11). Washington Lockett et al. (2020) mentioned, as the opportunities for women in higher education expand, it is paramount for women of color to have a chance to achieve a more symbolic number of presidential positions to combat the negative stereotypes that haunt them as they progress in their field.

The literature displays that gender impacts women's experiences, as they progress into executive leadership roles. Gender bias, discrimination, and social perceptions are additionally quoted as possible accounts for discriminations (Tomás et al., 2010). Based on the existing literature, the primary causes of pressure for female administrators are effective uses of time, expectations at work, responsibility on the job and in the home, and financial difficulties (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Harris et al. (2013) stated, "It is societal expectations that produce and maintain inequality between genders" (p. 483). Their point of view is sustained by Pirouznia (2009), who emphasized, "Role expectations and cultural norms are shown clearly in the reality of the existing inequity" (p. 150). Malik (2011) exposed gender inequity and how it negatively impacts women having access to informal networks, mentors, and role models. Malik implied this lack of support echoes a male chauvinist point of view that women are not adequately proficient to meet the needs of leadership and home responsibilities.

Race and Socioeconomic Barriers

Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson (2013) referenced how the standards of culture relate to what is traditionally perceived acceptable in society. Culture has had positive and negative effects on women overall impacting the ability for them to progress into executive positions, yet theorist Shah, (2010), states cultures impact has not been extensively evaluated in literature. Metcalfe and González (2013) said since 1990, "Scholars have become interested in how the practice of leadership and management in schools is influenced by culture" (p. 4). Social norms of men and women impact the ways in which they lead, communicate and interpret day to day activity. Schein (2004) related culture and leadership to be "two sides of the same coin" (p. 2). Sensitivity to cultural bias toward women leaders is rooted in understanding the societal cultural norms.

According to Timmers et al. (2010), cultural standpoint clarifies how women are restricted in accomplishing senior-level positions in higher education. Culture is described as "the enduring set of beliefs, values, and ideologies underpinning structures, processes, and practices that distinguish one group of people from another. The groups of people may be at the school level (organizational culture) or the national level (societal culture)" (Schein, 2004, p. 5). Harris et al. (2013) stated, "Culture itself raises barriers for women's aspirations simply because of the attitudes, learned behaviors and routine practices that are practiced and reinforced" (p. 489).

Class and SES have been empirically examined as an important aspect of faculty background for work-life for expectations, and the shaping of executive faculty-student interaction (Lee, 2017). Low SES students and administration often feel alienated on campus (Stuber, 2009). Students feeling alienated by their low SES status may raise crucial question for

the faculty members from low SES backgrounds who may not want their status to be exposed; a stigma may be placed on them if they reveal their backgrounds (Lee, 2017). As Haney (2015, 2016) noted, faculty members are assumed to be from middle or upper SES backgrounds. Executive faculty members from low SES backgrounds could choose to keep their backgrounds self-contained rather than risk discomfort or alienation, which would reduce possibilities of providing status-specific mentorship to low-SES students (Margolis & Romero, 1998). The privacy of low SES executive faculty then turns into a feeling of inadequacy when put into certain leadership roles, thus the lack of women represented in higher education (Romero, 1998).

Women faculty of color are often few in numbers; students, however, believe women of color are visible, observable, and, therefore, locatable (O'Hearn, 2015). Women faculty of color are institutionally recognized as a source of diversity, providing an institutionalized pathway to different forms of involvement—for example, sitting on committees to represent diverse perspectives and working with minority students or programs (O'Hearn, 2015). Lee and Maynard (2017) found the role of faculty members to be important to students and contingent on faculty member's choice to be "out" about their backgrounds, experiences, and class statuses.

The authority of women professors of color is more likely to be challenged by individuals who hold a majority status (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000). The socialization of the majority group is that they predominately grew up in white neighborhoods, schools, and communities, and have had few intimate interactions with people of color as equals and therefore few opportunities for their racial biases to be challenged (Massey & Denton, 1993). Racial isolation impacts the perceived experiences of others. Even if faculty are progressive and committed to racial justice, they may be complicit in preserving a structure that is unjust to faculty of color and other underrepresented groups (Massey & Denton, 1993). There is a higher probability of racial and

gender biases toward women and faculty of color than that of white and men counterparts (Ford, 2011; Johnson-Bailey & Lee, 2005).

Women faculty are often asked to do behind-the-scenes, invisible work concerning marginalized groups at the expense of their scholarly productivity (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012). Comparatively, when the work requested is visible as service, there is still the potential for exploitation. Padilla (1994) coined the phrase *cultural taxation* to signify added services and responsibilities required of female faculty and faculty of color because of their racial and cultural backgrounds. Cultural taxation has disparaging influences on their career advancement and job fulfillment for women faculty and faculty of color (Padilla, 1994). Sharing these narratives can provide opportunities for institutions to value this kind of work and invest in protecting underrepresented faculty from the negative impacts of cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994).

Research has shown women of color are held to a higher standard and greater expectations than faculty of any other group (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). According to Lloyd-Jones (2009), education and hard work are an inseparable pair that will lead to a life of social equity and more significant career opportunities, yet for minorities, standards are different, and marginalized groups need to perform at more elite levels than others. Stanley (2006) pointed out during an administrator of color's experience, they will take part in mentoring relationships with their team, fellow students, or faculty of color. Often, due to the connection with professionals of color, administrators are seen as experts on matters of diversity by members of their campus communities (Stanley, 2006). James (2006) argued it is not only minorities' jobs to support students, faculty, and staff of color; it should the expectation all employees and students succeed from the support of all administrators.

Jackson and Flowers (2003) produced research where African American administrators identified barriers for recruitment and retention of qualified administrators. For administrators of color, barriers included lack of mentorship, working conditions, compensation, and lack of professional identity (Jackson & Flowers, 2003). Race, ethnicity, sexuality, SES, and gender of administrators of color are directly related to how they navigate their professional responsibilities. Although identity is seen as insight, innovation, and drive, women executive leaders are not without historical systematic limitations and pitfalls (Chávez, 2009). The limitations are a lack of power and agency, which affects how women administrators and women administrators of color think and participate in the structure of academia (Chávez, 2009).

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is defined as the coming together of an individual's personal life and professional life (Cambridge, 2020). Emphasis on work-life balance has been to promote a holistic healthy lifestyle that allows professionals to feel balanced in their personal and professional lives (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). In the most recent years, the conversation on work-life balance has acquired attention, particularly in higher education institutions (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). Naugle et al. (2013) shares how the initial conversation around work-life balance was only a concern for women because of the stereotypical expectations that women are to be caregivers first, followed by developing their careers. Mazerolle et al. (2008) expounded on the intricate experience that both men and women face when attempting to find balance with work, family and free time. Within higher education women seem to be the focal point of understanding work-life balance. Women are intentional in selecting careers that allow them to balance both home and work life, so that they find success in rearing children and supporting a family (Perna, 2005).

Women in Athletics' Work-Life Balance

Mazerolle and Barrett (2018) piloted a study titled, "Work-Life Balance in Higher Education for Women: Perspectives of Athletic Training Faculty." The study was an interpretative phenomenological analysis study, with semi structured interviews. Sixteen women (18 with children, eight without children) athletic training faculty participated. Ten were married at the time of the interview, three were single, two were engaged, and one was in the process of getting a divorce. The purpose of the study was to understand the sensitivities of women athletic training faculty members concerning harmonizing their professional work expectations and personal lives. The researchers found from the data that mothers were having a hard time finding balance.

The role of a faculty member in partnership with motherhood seemed to be attainable because of the flexibility in course schedules (Mazerolle & Barrett, 2018). In order to attain successful balance with academic rigor and personal endeavors one must build their own strategy and a community of support. In connections with strong networks and personal strategy the researcher highlighted the importance of organization and time management, both allow for triumph in the workplace and personal life. The close of the study exhibited that higher education encourages work-life balance providing a level of autonomy and flexibility for success. (e.g., spouse, mother, friend; Mazerolle & Barrett, 2018).

Australian Women Administrators

Redmond et al. (2017) published a study titled, "Becoming a Female Leader in Higher Education: Investigations From a Regional University." The study was a qualitative study on the experiences of seven females who had effectively achieved senior leadership positions at a regional university in Australia. Each participant had a wide array of experiences yet there was a

camaraderie and similarity among shared trials and difficulties they faced. Throughout the study they also shared their insights into what has permitted opportunities to achieve success in their leadership roles. The study collected data by way of interviews. The main questions for the study were: What are the common experiences and characteristics of the women in leadership positions in a regional university? and What recommendations would senior leaders have for aspiring and midlevel leaders?

The participants came from middle-class families and were the first generation in their families to attend a university. The study's data was divided into two sections: barriers and strategies. Each of those sections had themes. One of the themes under barriers was participants' views of leadership. Participants had a strong appreciation for networks and relationship building, and often attested for their success to be from the relationships they had built along the way. For example, a participant connected leading people with being able to conduct oneself: "I don't think you can be an 'external leader' if you are not able to lead yourself" (Redmond et al., 2017, p .337). An additional theme was gender discrimination. Participants stated they experienced gender discrimination more as they began to seek higher level executive positions. One participant explained, "I have seen men get promoted and get jobs, and I have thought 'How the hell did they get that?' when you look at what I have got" (Redmond et al., 2017, p. 342). Six of the seven women faced gender-based discrimination throughout their career. One participant stated understanding discrimination had an overwhelming impact. She described, "I was unsupported and undermined frequently. I felt unappreciated, sidelined, and completely demoralized" (Redmond et al., 2017, p. 342).

The final two barrier themes were work-life balance and career planning and aspirations. As for work-life balance, one participant felt the need to put her focus on family and

left her executive leadership position, which left a gap in the career path. This participant felt that her decision was "misguided" and "crazy." Inevitably the choice to leave impacted her tenure within the university, retirement benefits, and stability in her chosen field. The participant stated:

> My work-life balance has always been appalling, and I would never have been able to do it without my very supportive husband. He was the core parent. We made a decision 20 years ago that my career was going to be in pole position. (Redmond et al., 2017, p. 343)

In respect to career planning, participants reviewed the impact of intentional and unintentional planning of their career development, in relationship with modifications that had to be made along the way. Because of their status of first generation students there were gaps in understanding the steps for progression in higher education, let alone the understanding of how to navigate as senior leadership positions.

As for strategies, the senior leaders in this study endorsed women to be hands-on and aware of what positions they want to attain, where they want to go, and to plot a course to navigate for success. Additionally, participants expressed the need for women to seek and to embrace growth opportunities outside of their comfort zones. All seven of the senior leaders argued the significance of being aware of the steps that need to be taken to develop a career in higher education and to keep track of prior career decisions. Lastly, participants expressed the concern of supporting new leaders coming up the rank and partnering with the university to provide support to those currently in the field and those to come (Redmond et al., 2017).

Work–Life Integration and Mentorship

Marguez-Santana (2016) published a study titled, "Women Senior Student Affairs Officers at Four-Year Public Institutions: Work-Life Integration and Mentorship." A phenomenological approach was used to discover the career trajectories of 15 current women

senior student affairs officers (SSAO) at 4-year public institutions, observing influences that attributed to their successful journey into executive leadership. In addition to the obstacles in direct connection of being a woman in higher education. Critical feminist theory was the theoretical framework used to support the study. Two themes were substantial in the findings: "the inability to achieve work-life balance was the biggest roadblock to the SSAO position, and mentorship was noted as a significant factor that led to their success" (Marguez-Santana, 2016, p. 6). The researcher asked participants if they had maintained work-life balance throughout their career trajectories. Most participants shared it was challenging to maintain a work-life balance. Although 13 of the 15 participants shared their struggles with preserving work-life balance, their standpoints and experiences were different from one another.

Some participants felt they had never experienced balance throughout their careers, and other participants felt balance was not consistent for them and came in waves depending on the time of the school year. A few participants communicated they attained work-life balance after they reached the SSAO position. For example, one participant termed her experience as a sacrifice to advance in the field of higher education:

> I am not a good example of a person that has maintained work-life balance. Essentially, I have no personal life, because I've been all work. I've had to sacrifice personal relationships, getting married, having children when I wanted to, all those things to move up in student affairs. (Marguez-Santana, 2016, p. 257)

Louise shared how motherhood was impacted while trying to find balance: "I think if anybody lost out, sometimes it was probably my children. . .. I probably feel more confident that I did the best I could at work as opposed to the best I could have at home" (Marguez-Santana, 2016, p. 257). The concern of having work-life balance was predominant in the study for 13 of the 15

SSAOs. The trials were not the same, but the drive to put career first was dominant in participants' replies.

When participants were asked to advise on how women could overcome gender-related barriers, 11 of 15 participants implied mentorship and reliable networks were primary factors in overcoming obstacles. For instance, one participant stated she was able to navigate her career because of a mentor she could call on whenever she encountered an obstacle: "A supportive partner has been critical for me. I'm not sure how a single parent would do this, because there are times where you have to work in conjunction to manage both" (Marguez-Santana, 2016, p. 258).

This qualitative study on how women SSAOs displayed that balance was not a constant, but as they progressed in their career, became more stable. The goal for the study is to promote awareness of critical issues related to the gender disparities that continue to exist in 4-year public institutions of higher education. From the awareness, the hope is studies will continue to look at women with an intersectional lens as to why work-life balance is more pertinent for women. The objective was to show the triumph of current SSAOs at 4-year public institutions, providing a blueprint to up and coming working professionals, and delivering critical strategies to acquiring a senior-level position while navigating societal barriers.

Experiences in Science and Engineering Academia

Kachchaf et al. (2015) conducted a study called, "Career–Life Balance for Women of Color: Experiences in Science and Engineering Academia." The National Science Foundation (NSF, 2012) acknowledged there is a difference in career–life balance in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for women of color compared with their white and male colleagues. Due to the lack of minority representation, there is a direct impact on retention and progression for minorities in STEM (NSF, 2012). This article materialized from a 5-year study

backed by the NSF. In "Beyond the Double Bind: Women of Color in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics," the NSF examined the experiences of women of color (Asian American, Black, Latina, Native American, and mixed-race women) in science and engineering and identified strategies that enabled them to succeed and advance in STEM education and professions.

Participants in the NSF (2012) article included three underrepresented minority women in three different STEM disciplines. Two African American women and one Hispanic woman represented the participation pool. The study was qualitative, and the interviews were semi structured open-ended questions. Participants were asked to define their academic experience, their current academic or work situation, a challenging time and how they overcame it, feelings of recognition in their field, ambitions for the future, and guidance for institutions and individuals. There was no direct question about career and life balance; however, they were asked, "How does being in this academic program/workplace fit in with other aspects of your life?" Participant A expounded on their perception of balancing family and work:

> I love what I do. I don't love it enough that it would be the only thing in my life. For me, when personal life is going well, professional life is easier. When things are not going well personally, it kind of makes everything else harder. (Kachchaf et al., 2015, p. 180)

During the interview, the participant further discussed the perception of family and work-life balance in comparison to men:

> Many of the people are men without family, or with wives that don't do anything else and have the time to completely devote to family. There's a timeline when I have to have kids by and not necessarily when my male colleagues do, so the expectation at this point in

> my life—being at work for 12 hours a day and not having a job until I'm like 35 or 36—definitely affects people like me. (Kachchaf et al., 2015, p. 181)

One participant disclosed an experience she had with her advisor talking about other women faculty and their balance between life and work. She used a direct quote her advisor used when talking with her. One of the most alarming finds of the study was when participants who served as executive faculty within the college were challenged about her work-life balance when deciding to have a family. Subsequently, the participant chose to keep her pregnancy a secret, mentioning she did so to protect her professional image and minimize the length of time during which she would have to answer questions. One week after her delivery, the participant went back to work to ensure her responsibilities were maintained. Even returning to work 1 week after giving birth was not enough to prevent her department chair from questioning her work ethic:

> He said, "I haven't seen you around much. And your maternity leave doesn't start until next fall." And I remember just everything welled up in me—just anger. I said, "I don't mean to be crass; I don't mean to be rude, but I'm going to be very blunt with you. Do you realize that I was back in this office when I was still dripping blood? I was in here, doing my work, continuing my research, and had done so ever since. (Kachchaf et al., 2015, p. 181)

Limitations of this study involve a racial disproportion among participants. The sample size was small and only represented two African American women and one Hispanic. Overall, within the study, the researchers found two critical findings from the interviews. One is that narrative supplied insight on executive women faculty lived experiences in STEM fields. Second, the study pointed out that often based on masculine norms and environmental pressures, women hide their emotions and desires to advance their careers (Kachchaf et al., 2015).

Strategies

Higher education institutions are as diverse as the students, faculty, and staff that they support. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy to navigate the multidimensional experiences of women in higher education. Over the course of history women leaders have been determined to advance their careers and the careers of women who come after them (Ballenger, 2010). The skillset of problem-solving increases women's career credibility providing them with a greater opportunity to attain executive-level positions within higher education (Airini, 2011). Securing effective mentors, learning how to work as a team member, self-assurance, knowing when to take risks, and humility are elements that the author describes as tools for women's career advancement. (Airini, 2011). In this section, strategies such as mentorship, networking, and professional development programs are divided into sections to explain strategies that have been advantageous for women to navigate barriers.

Mentoring

Mentoring is essential for the personal and professional development of executive leaders in higher education. Researchers found that regardless of career sector the importance of mentorships is paramount to the career development of women in executive-level positions (Maranto & Griffin, 2011). Researchers have suggested mentorship can aid in navigating barriers and pursuit of advancement within the academy (Airini, 2011). Meschitti and Smith (2017) defined mentoring as "an exclusive relationship in which a more experienced person provides strategic advice to facilitate the professional and personal development of another, less experienced one" (p. 167). Kram (1983) described phases of mentoring: (a) the connection between the mentor and mentee, developing a relationship so that communication is fluid and comfortable and (b) having moments of separation for personal/professional development,

allowing the mentee to live out and learn from what the mentor taught. Kram (1983) verified "the mentor relationship has great potential to facilitate career advancement and psychosocial development in both early and middle adulthood by providing a vehicle for accomplishing these primary developmental tasks" (p. 608).

Mentorship is one pathway to obtain leadership positions. Cullen and Luna (1993) considered the positive implications of women representation in leadership positions, furthermore the importance of women mentoring women in the academy. Their work was influenced by Kram's (1983), Erikson's (1963), and Levinson's (1978) research on mentoring in terms of career and psychosocial functions. Mentorship has demonstrated a positive effect on one's career. Research has shown faculty who are mentored are more likely to move up the faculty ranks (Searby et al., 2015).

Mentors for Female Presidents

Reis and Grady (2020) conducted a qualitative study on eight women presidents at doctoral-granting universities. The drive of this study was to understand how mentorship impacted career experiences of the eight women presidents. The study assessed eight presidents' experiences with mentorship as a strategy for career advancement. The researchers used a qualitative study to collect presidents' experiences. Each interview was face to face, and participants were informed it was recorded. The findings expose their view on traditional and nontraditional mentorship as it related to progressive leadership experience. The research questions were: (a) How does gender inform the mentor/protégé relationship? (b) How does mentorship connect to leadership opportunities? and (c) How does mentorship support administrative success?

The eight presidents all designated two or more significant individuals that were mentors to them during their career, bringing the total to 23 mentors mentioned. Of the 23 mentors described, 18 were male, and three were female. Participants expounded on their experience with formal mentorships they received by way of professional development and informal mentorships that were developed from natural interactions with individuals in the field of higher education. All parties stated that both styles of mentorship opportunities added value to their development. As the data showed, most of the presidents' mentors were men, and participants accounted for the experiences they had and made mention of the support received from males.

The lesson of reciprocity was apparent within the study, the women presidents felt the need to be a mentor to women aspiring leadership as a way of giving back for the support they received. A few participants indicated that the format of conversation directly related to their personal and professional needs add value to a mentor relationship. Furthermore, the participants mentioned the structure of one on one or small group connections are beneficial, in addition to professional development and conferences associated with developing women's leadership. The Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) program for new deans and associate/assistant deans is intended to acquaint future leaders with executive leadership positions to, advance necessary leadership abilities, and offer interacting occasions. Although the programs were beneficial, the presidents found more value in one-to-one mentoring relationships. President G discussed the difference between formal versus informal mentorship programs

Findings from this study provided a look at the president's experiences with their mentors, which in turn provides an opportunity for higher education to see how women benefit or need support. Reis and Grady (2020) concluded by stating universities should look at

programs that provide women with a diverse collection of supporters to aid in the development of career advancement.

Cullen and Luna (1993) said, “Mentoring promised to promote aspiring women up the career ladder eliminating the ‘gender gap’” (p. 126). In their study, as women gained support for higher level positions, mentoring was identified as a strategy that is key to success. As time has progressed, the term mentorship had also expanded to sponsorship. Overall, researchers have recommended mentoring and sponsorship are imperative to career education and development. As Luna and Cullen (1995) stated, “Mentoring should be viewed as important to the institution, and mentors should be regarded as valuable talent scouts and trainers” (p. 35). Not only is mentoring beneficial to individuals, but it is also useful to the organization, students, faculty, and administrators (Reis & Grady, 2020)

The absence of diverse executive leaders inhibits the success and progression of higher education (Johnson, 2016). Progression in the representation of women in higher education is evident, yet there is still a significant deficit in terms of women reaching executive levels of administration (Gardiner et al., 2007). Mentoring has been impactful with helping the lack of women in executive leadership roles (Gardiner et al., 2007 For higher education to remain significant acknowledged several benefits of positive mentoring relationships as “improved opportunity and success in career advancement; increased institutional loyalty; higher salaries; improved time management and productivity; increased procurement of grants; improved satisfaction with the profession and work-life balance; higher administrative aspirations; and improved networking skills” (p. 67).

Formal and informal mentoring is vital for women leaders in higher education (Bynum, 2015). In higher education, there are formal mentoring programs, yet research has shown

informal mentoring may have a greater value: “Informal mentoring relationships form by chance, without any rearranged schedule or agenda” (Bynum, 2015, p. 70). Peer mentorship among women that find themselves in the same position in their personal life and their career improves women’s progression through the administrative ranks (Bynum, 2015). Research suggested numerous advantages to peer mentoring, which will advance leadership opportunities.

Hannum et al. (2015) expressed concern for women at lower-level institutions indicating that they are facing a no-win situation when they take on executive leadership too early, and they do not obtain sufficient mentoring to develop their path to success. Compared to men, women tend to take the lead in lower-level institutions in lower rank positions while men take the time to network and build their careers (Niemeier & González, 2004; Rosser, 2012). Regardless of academic background and potential, women are willing to take on the role at lower-level institutions (West & Curtis, 2011). When an institution has a gap in administrative positions, women assistant and associate professors will apply and run into the probability of not being prepared because they started their administrative careers earlier than anticipated and don’t have the mentoring support they need to be effective (West & Curtis, 2011).

Women suffer when they do not have proper mentorship, causing them to leave leadership roles in higher numbers than men. As a result of women suffering in their administrative positions:

> Family life suffers, colleagues may not perceive them to have as much power as men, and they may limit their access to resources to move up the ranks. One major factor that seems to be prolific is lack of mentoring. (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016, p. 309)

Universities and corporate organizations benefit from the progression of women entering leadership roles (Hannum et al., 2015). Advancement for woman leaders in higher education

needs to consist of a developmental plan which includes a mentorship program, and internal/external support along the way (Hannum et al., 2015).

The argument has been made that many women do not seek leadership positions. However, Hannum et al. (2015) further stated, "There are women who desire to be senior leaders and have the skills to do so but face multiple challenges on their journey to the top" (p. 66). Optimal leadership is when the representation of diverse voices, skills, and experiences having the opportunity to be exemplified (Hannum et al., 2015). As women progress in their field, the less access they have to role models and mentors. Hannum et al. (2015) specified, "Men are still viewed as default leaders and women as atypical leaders" (p. 66). There is a perpetuating stereotype that plays in womens minds that tell them if they act like men they will receive respect of their male counterparts. Hannum et al. (2015) stated, "In addition to the intangible challenges related to identity and stereotypes, women tend to be assigned heavier course, service, and advising loads relative to their male counterparts" (p. 66).

During a surplus of accomplished women in higher education, there is yet a lag in women in higher education administration. Researchers specify the method to attaining more women in leadership is to ensure that women leaders support other women leaders aspiring to enter the field. Researchers further expound on this point by saying "sending the elevator back down to pick other women up" (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016, p. 313). Gibson (2006) stated the "political climate of the organization is an essential attribute" (p. 68) to fostering a "culture of success" (p. 68) where "senior faculty are committed to the success of junior faculty" (p. 68). This philosophy also embraces care for women who would like to have children and women who are already currently working within the institution. Blood 2012 specified that "recognition of mentoring is likely to increase the number of senior faculty members willing to spend time

mentoring more junior faculty" (Blood et al., 2012, p. 1206). The author concludes with expressing the importance of being a mentor, suggesting that the success of the act is not overnight, yet with temperance and consistency the benefits are of great merit.

Networking

Networking is the opportunity for female executive leaders to gather information that is both beneficial to their personal and professional development (Maranto and Griffin, 2011). Odhiambo (2011) labeled networking as a connection established to share information. Villadsen and Tack (2001) conducted a study evaluating women executives in public institutions managing family and career . Senior administrative and academic women leaders were able to reflect on the development of their career and offer strategies and lessons learned to women interested in entering the field. Participants suggested that women wanting to move up in their career should be intentional in the selection of their life partners and personal and professional networks (Gerdes, 2003).

Mathur-Helm (2002) recommended women in leadership positions participate in social events during work and after hours alongside their male colleagues to build a more reliable network. Although it may be argued women must take the initiative in joining social activities, it may present a moral dilemma for women as to whether they should adapt to the male norm (Mathur-Helm, 2002). Women have found success over patriarchy authority and through the "glass ceiling" by establishing networks with alliances that are not the same race or gender (Mathur-Helm, 2002). Luhabe (2002) encouraged female employees to form networks with peer alliances that empower women to support each other as they move up the hierarchy. Luhabe proposed that peer alliances will provide transformation in organizations while breaking down discrimination.

Professional Development

Professional development and learning are important to women leaders as professionals, but also to the institution in which they work. Professional associations are instrumental for networking, allowing women leaders to come into contact with professionals who can assist in their career advancement (Mathur-Helm, 2002). Women must have access to information for promotion, learn different perspectives, and then apply what they learned to the roles they aspire to have (Mathur-Helm, 2002). Griffin et al. (2010) expressed the importance of professionals interested in professional development to display adaptivity, proactivity, and flexibility. In efforts to gain pertinent information from professional development the participant needs to insure they are dedicated to doing the work required (Haley et al., 2015).

Baker (2009) wrote about how professional competencies provide an outline for the examination of one's career and personal strengths and weaknesses. For one to find skill and success as a leader within higher education, most professionals seek "professional development plans, supervisors, and career counselors to promote career advancement" (Parker, 2002, p. 83). Professional development is twofold, providing participants updated information reflective to their field of choice and beneficial to those seeking future employment (Baker, 2009). There has been a noteworthy curiosity in womens leadership as academic scholarship has become more widespread in media. As women in higher education continue to move into executive leadership roles, the demand for professional development increases. While professional development is paramount in supporting women leaders, Gangone (2016) mentioned, there are multiple ways for women to advance their career, and professional development is not the only way for women to become leaders. Woollen (2016) and Isaac (2007) designated women leadership as multidimensional.

Professional development for executive faculty and administration is divided to address the specific needs of the areas in which they work. For administration, student affairs professional associations have acknowledged career competencies to outline information and skills inside the field (ACPA – College Student Educators International & NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, 2015) The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS, 2011), uses competency areas to inform employees of best practices in the field and inform them of possible professional development.

Australian Senior Women in Higher Education

Tessens et al. (2011) explored senior women in higher education institutions perceived development needs and support based on their gender. To evaluate the needs of leaders and understand the challenges of senior women the researchers completed a qualitative study and used a survey to gather information. The following are the number of senior women at two different Australian universities, 134 senior women at University A in mid-2009 and 70 at University B in late 2009, encompassing academics at Level D and E and professional administrative staff. The survey found the leaders' needs were parallel. Tessens et al. spotlighted some strong themes: (a) the impact of excessive workloads and high levels of administration on their effectiveness; (b) the need for peer and supervisor support and networks, underpinned by effective organizational skills and administrative support; and (c) the gendering of careers, especially academic careers, evident in male colleagues receiving more support, resources, and recognition.

Of the suggested themes were the environment of the university and the stressful work requirements on the respondents. A vast majority, 80% of respondents, found a senior women program would be beneficial in providing key information for the progression of their

careers. Not only did participants confirm the program to be essential but also included the favored content. The favored content "included skills in people management, political awareness, operational issues, and career development, and preferred format was mentoring, peer networks, coaching and 360-degree feedback, and shadowing and mentoring at another university" (p. 653).

At University A, 50% of participants, and at University B, 30% had experienced a women's program. Lack of interest in an all women's group, and time conflict accounted for approximately 63% of participants at University A who had not attended the activity of the senior women's network in 2008. At University A and University B, 81% and 86%, respectively, indicated women should be offered a leadership program. Given a leadership program were to be offered, 64% of respondents at University A and just over half at University B specified they would participate. The survey of all senior women at two different Australian universities found that there was an all-around need for support from peers, supervisors, and networks.

Jackson and O'Callaghan (2009) interviewed 91% of female college presidents to assess how many of them had participated in professional development prior to the study. Only, 72.5% of female presidents participated in one or more professional development programs. The study shows how professional development helps with personal and professional skills. Universities have the opportunity to further assist women interested in moving up by recognizing female applicants and inspiring and delivering them with proficient opportunities that will aid in career progression (Jackson & O' Callaghan, 2009).

Lessons from Women Leaders

Wegner (2018) directed a study entitled, "Lessons from Women Leaders: The Impact of Professional Development." This study was a qualitative study that employed grounded theory

design to have an improved understanding of the phenomenon of professional development experiences of women CSAOs and how professional development influences career mobility. Ten CSAO participants shared in the study. From the findings, two themes emerged: meaningfulness and motivation. Participants stated motivation was an internal and external feeling they experienced when taking part in professional development. Participants felt more motivated to do their jobs in a more informed way. Participants expounded on how they found value in professional development in three ways: "commitment to learning for self and with/for others, learning specialized content, and relationship building with colleagues" (Wegner, 2018, p. 39).

Participants indicated their renewed commitment to learning for themselves and not others. One participant stated, "I don't think you become a student affair professional without some true core belief in lifelong learning. I don't think you work in higher education, especially a leadership position, without truly embracing the concept of lifelong learning" (Wegner, 2018, p. 40). In addition to a renewed commitment, participants discovered they learned specialized content. One participant labeled how learning diversity incorporates identifying how "people learn differently and learning to teach to that difference, whether different cultures or styles of learning" (Wegner, 2018, p. 40). The theory was in direct alignment with the results, recommending women to be encouraged to participate in professional development. The study highlights the importance of universities and professional associations utilizing their resources to create opportunities for current and up and coming leaders.

Theoretical Framework

The term intersectionality was introduced by Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw was a scholar of law and critical race theory and a black feminist. Crenshaw (1991) developed

intersectionality to illuminate the experiences of women of color in relationship to the intersection of race and gender. The theoretical framework for this dissertation is intersectionality theory, by feminist, Crenshaw (1989). Intersectionality provides women, particularly in higher education, a comprehensive view of leaders' experiences through the lens of their identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Parent et al. (2013) stated, "The intersectionality perspective maintains that multiple identities construct novel experiences that are distinctive and not necessarily divisible into their component identities or experiences" (p. 640). There is a gap in the literature regarding studies that directly relate to intersectionality and executive women leaders in higher education. Thus, the importance of exploring intersectionality theory concerning woman leaders' experiences, as they progress in their career, is paramount (Yuval-Davis, 2013). Using intersectionality as the study's theoretical foundation is valuable to understanding the status of women's identities in higher education, and the aim of constructive critiques and societal change (Crenshaw, 1991). Researchers can use intersectionality to bring awareness to those from adverse backgrounds (Parent et al., 2013).

Intersectional theory formed a foundation for understanding intersections between systems of power and privilege in which personal narratives are related to identity development (Jones, 2013). The influence of W. E. B. Du Bois's is rooted in intersectionality theory. W. E. B. Du Bois's (1903) explanation of double consciousness is a direct connection to how minorities interact within the oppressions of their identities. According to Warner and Shields (2013):

> The origins of the intersectionality framework grew out of feminist and womanist scholars of color pressing the position that most feminist scholarship at that time was about middle-class educated, white women and that an inclusive view of women's

> position should substantively acknowledge the intersections of gender with other significant social identities, most notably race. (p. 303)

McCall (2005) and Shields (2008) labeled intersectionality as a theoretical framework that can provide analysis on more than one identity at a time, instead of reflecting identity categories independently. Intersectionality has a history of assessing the experiences of minorities to evaluate the interwoven dynamics of systemic oppression (McCall, 2005). In the origins of the theory, women of color are primarily the focus. In the expansion of the theory, women scholars have taken charge to explain the duality of others (Jones, 2013). The development and gratitude for intersectionality as a framework is now used more broadly to define intersecting identities of individuals beyond women of color (Strayhorn, 2013).

Within the history of literature, the author communicates that race, gender, class, age, and ethnicity, have been evaluated separately versus seeing how they interconnect within the human experience (Berger & Guidroz, 2009). Berger and Guidroz (2009) expressed the value of understanding one's identity through intersection social contexts. By applying an intersectional method, the study "socially locates individuals in the context of their 'real lives'" (Berger & Guidroz, 2009, p. 11). According to Strayhorn (2012), "Intersectional explorations and practices can serve as a gateway for exploring, interpreting, documenting, and most importantly providing solutions to social concerns facing U.S. higher education institutions" (p. 11). The expansion of research policies and practices that recognize the relevance of intersectionality may be significant in improving outcomes for current and future women leaders in higher education (Strayhorn, 2012).

As opportunity becomes more available, demographics shift, and institutions become more diverse, the need will increase for intersectional support for faculty and administration

(Yuval-Davis, 2013). Yuval-Davis (2013) stated some intersectional support groups have existed but have not been thoroughly analyzed or recognized for the intersectional support they offer. Examples of these groups are affinity groups for minorities in faculty, people who identify as LGBTQI, women, or minority men. Although these intersectional spaces are worthy of support, it is unlikely the support systems and practices will improve if continued research is not completed (Yuval-Davis, 2013).

The intersectionality framework urges researchers to consider how individual and social constructs of difference and commonality matter in ways that are intertwined (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2010). Ropers-Huilman and Winters (2010) suggested higher education researchers and practitioners need to understand and foster intersections and interactions of different groups and the intersecting identities in those groups of people. Crenshaw (1991) expounded on how research and practices that emphasize and recognize intersectionality and accompanying interactions are needed for meaningful paradigm shifts to occur in higher education. In looking at intersectionality in women faculty chair level and up and administration vice president and up, it is important to look at the interaction of privileged identities and how people of these groups influence marginalized groups (Hancock, 2007). Intersectionality scholarship has focused on populations that are double or multiple minorities, as the intersections of their marginalized status amplify their oppression and highlight their unique experiences (Crenshaw, 1991).

Summary

Chapter II delivered historical and current literature related to women in executive leadership roles in higher education. It is evident from the literature that women have not always had a place in higher education and continue to struggle to find a place of leadership (Bain & Cummings, 2000; Johnson, 2016; Jones, 2014; Lennon, 2013; Pasquerella & Clauss-Ehlers,

2017; The White House Project, 2009). There are a variety of experiences that impact women and women of color in executive leadership differently than the majority group. The literature exposed barriers women face in leadership positions in higher education. Additionally, the literature revealed strategies such as mentoring specifically in the academy, as an alternative for professional development. Lastly, the conceptual framework aligns within the areas of the theoretical framework of intersectionality theory

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to take a comparative look at women in executive leadership positions in higher education. The study followed an intersectional approach and explored the influence of gender, race, and class on the progression of women into executive leadership positions at research-intensive (R1) universities. There has been a lack of literature to evaluate the social identities that influence who executive women leaders are, how they see themselves, and how they relate to others as they move up in their careers (Reynolds, 2001). Fogg (2003) wrote about how women face career advancement disparities.

Researchers have not adequately described the experiences of women in executive leadership positions. Bailyn (2003) said most literature has an apparent focus on gender neutral treatment of males and females. This concept ignores the life experiences and diversity of women. Aiston and Jung (2015) reiterated the importance of hearing the voices of women who lead, illustrating that women are present in higher education and the realities of what they experience become more evident. To move the field forward, there is a need to have a comparative look at the experiences of women in executive faculty and administrative roles (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016).

Chapter III features the research methods used to complete this study. This chapter includes the following sections: research design, the role of the researcher, participants, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and a summary. A synopsis of the qualitative design in connection with a case study approach is specified. Additionally, this section covers how the participants were chosen, methods for assembling and examining data. The chapter concludes with an overview of the methods that were employed to improve the validity of the study.

Research Design

A qualitative case study research design was selected for this study. Qualitative research is the study of individual and group constructions of reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam & Tisdell (2015) conveyed that qualitative researchers are granted the opportunity to have a greater connection with their participants they work with in the study. This qualitative comparative case study methodology aided in echoing the executive women leaders' stories (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) noted, "Stories are the data, and the narrative is the analysis by interpreting the story, placing it context, and comparing it with other stories" (p. 128). Case study design allowed the researcher to access a segmented group of executive women leaders in connection to lived experiences regarding their race, class, gender, and provided insights into participants 'actions.

The qualitative study is an examination of leadership journeys of women in academics and administration at public, 4-year institutions in the southeastern United States. Using the lens of intersectionality, the study was an exploration of how women in leadership in academics and administration perceive barriers and describe strategies they have used to overcome obstacles. The participant responses were used to guide the research. The research questions were developed using intersectional theory, which gave a voice to marginalized people through their narratives. The following research questions guide this study:

- How do women in higher education executive leadership positions in the USG describe their journeys toward earning university leadership positions?
- What are similarities and differences between journeys of women leaders in academics and administration?

- To what extent has the intersection of race, class, and gender impacted women's journeys to leadership?

Methodologists have confirmed qualitative case studies are often used in the field of education (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2013). Yin (2013) identified that case studies are explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive. Additionally, case study approach includes "when," "how," and "why" questions (Stake, 1995). Therefore, the results are transparent, and the focus of the participant is valid and reflective of real life (Yin, 2013). Case studies are a bounded system that permits the researcher to have parameters around the characteristics of the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). For the sake of this study, bound cases were women in executive leadership in academics and administration.

A qualitative case study allows the researcher to study contemporary issues in real-life contexts. Both qualitative and case studies are fundamental when endeavoring to reveal information in the qualitative analysis. By studying women executive leaders in two bounded systems of administration and academics, a comparison was formed. The study looks at women in executive leadership positions. Their journeys to leadership, impacts of social identities and intersections, strategies used for advancement, and possible barriers they faced during their career.

Role of the Researcher

Creswell (2014) identifies the researcher as one who is concerned with the process of the study, and the significance in the stories, words and prior history of the participants. Locke et al. (1987) stated the researcher's openness is useful and favorable to the study. Because the researchers background enables an understanding of the subject and participants' experiences,

the researcher recognized biases in the research process, as described by Gadamer (1975). Critical self-reflection was used throughout the entire research process.

The researcher has worked in the University System of Georgia (USG) for the past 9 years and has an affinity for seeing women grow into executive leadership roles. Over the past 9 years, the researcher has directly worked with executive women leaders in higher education. In working with executive leaders, the researcher has seen the pros and cons of being an executive leader in higher education administration and faculty. The researcher selected a sample of women who are leaders in higher education and work for the USG. There was no direct affiliation with study participants. The researchers goal is to attain executive leadership status, and this study serves as a guide to understand the behind the scenes of the executive role.

Creswell (2014) stated qualitative researchers meet with participants at their site or institution to interview or see and document behavior in its authentic environment. The researcher was responsible for the development of the study, including data collection and analysis. The researcher initiated all communication with participants and was directly involved in the fieldwork of the study and communicated with each participant via Zoom due to COVID-19.

To diminish bias and increase impartiality, the researcher followed a script when conducting each interview. During recruitment, the researcher did not recruit anyone with a personal or direct professional affiliation for the sample of this study. Each participant was provided with the same general information on the study. The researcher had scripted questions, so each participant was asked the same thing.

Participants

This section is an overview of how the researcher selected participants who fit the criteria to participate in the study. Charting population and setting, in addition to sample criteria, promotes a better understanding of participants (Creswell, 2014).

Population and Setting

Semi structured interviews were administered through the Zoom video chat service. This interview technique permitted the participants to contribute to the interview during a time and in a location that was convenient for both parties. Johnson and Christensen (2008) shared qualitative interviews are used to gather "information about a participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about a topic" (p. 207). Through exhaustive interviews with the women executive leaders, they each illustrated circumstances, stories, and memories they experienced during their tenure. Participants of this study consisted of seven female faculty, chair level and above, and seven administrators, vice president level and above, who work for public 4-year institutions of higher education in the USG.

Each participant was asked to work one year within the USG. R1 universities are competitive, and women have to be the best to secure an executive leadership role. Johnson (2016) pointed out a very small percentage of women advance to executive-level status at R1 institutions. Women are most likely to become executive leaders at private and/or 2-year colleges (Johnson, 2016). Screening of participants was done through a website search of executive leaders who work at R1 universities in the USG. The researcher made a list of all the women who fit the criteria. From there, the researcher sent out emails to women on the list, and the researcher selected the first 14 candidates who replied and met the qualifications for the study.

Patton (2015) indicated a researcher should work in assured limits related to available resources. Thus, the researcher collected information from women executive leaders who had no affiliation with the researcher. The researcher individually interviewed participants from the four R1 universities in the USG. With the selection of women in the region where the researcher resides, the researcher had an understanding of participants' geographic locations and institutional climates.

Sample

The population for this study was women executive leaders in higher education. For this study, all participants must be women who have completed at least one academic year in their executive roles at 4-year, R1, public universities. Each participant was asked to participate in an interview and supply the requested documents which were the curriculum vitae and resume.

The participant pool was purposefully selected to address the needs of the study by looking on the website to make sure they meet the study requirements. Patton (2015) stated purposeful sampling provides comprehensive and significant information. Additionally, purposeful sampling permits the researcher to be intentional with the selecting of participants that meet the needs of the study (Patton, 2015). For purposeful sampling, "The researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then tried to locate individuals who have those characteristics" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 6). This study employed purposeful sampling to identify 10 participants who are executive leaders. Creswell (2007) stated purposeful sampling occurs when "the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125).

The sample size for the study was 10 participants or until saturation occurred. The researcher's goal with choosing a small sample size was to afford time for a 60-minute, semi structured interview to collect data and provide a comprehensive analysis of interview transcripts.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation is paramount for the direction of the qualitative studies (Creswell, 2007). There are several types of qualitative research tools. Among the most used instruments in research are observations, surveys, and interviews (Eladio, 2006). The researcher administered semi structured interviews. Fourteen higher education, executive women leaders were interviewed using open-ended questions. Johnson and Christensen (2008), stated "Open-ended questions take you into the natural language and worlds of your research participants, and therefore, open-ended questions provide primarily qualitative data" (p. 176). In this section, there is an overview of the data collection methods. This section concludes with the validity and reliability of the study.

Interviews

For the study, the researcher used a case study approach with a systematized procedure, consisting of face-to-face Zoom interviews for an exhaustive assessment of women executives' experiences. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) clarified, that within qualitative studies, "the researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p. 15). Marshall (2016) stated a intimate face-to-face interview, or a video call authorizes the researcher to ask for detailed clarifications of answers. Creswell (2009) indicated that qualitative interviews "are intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (p. 181). Johnson and Christensen (2008) also states that "qualitative interviewing allows a researcher to enter into the inner world of another

person and to gain an understanding of that person's perspective" (p. 207). During interviews, the researcher has opportunities to ask follow-up questions using body language as possible ques (Marshall, 2016). Interviews are essential to qualitative studies when the researcher cannot observe past events and when informants cannot be directly observed (Creswell, 1994).

Semi structured interviews grant participants opportunities to explain their personal experiences and have the benefit of uncovering involvements the researcher may not anticipate (Creswell, 2014). This interview approach aids in establishing the interview questions through the lens of intersectionality. Using interviews or narrative documents is influential in expanding the psychological consideration of intersectionality (Few et al., 2003). The researcher prepared the interview questions, using the research questions as a guide (see Appendix A). The questions used during the interviews were in direct affiliation with the related literature and the research questions. The questions allowed the researcher to collect stories from participants about their positions as executive leaders, intersectionality traits, obstacles, and approaches to navigate barriers.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by a translation company, Descript, which helps researchers capture value from the audio recorded during interviews. In addition to converting audio to text files, transcripts were delivered with tools for interviews, meetings, and films. Each participant was asked the same questions during the interviews. The researcher asked follow-up questions because of the semi structured style.

The demographic data such as names and institutions were changed to provide privacy to the participants (Creswell, 1994). Patton (2002) verified, "Researchers have been advised to disguise the locations of their fieldwork and change the names of respondents, usually giving them pseudonyms, as a way of protecting their identities" (p. 411). A consent form was provided

to all participants, each were asked to sign and return it to the researcher (see Appendix B). The consent form provided contact information, presented the researchers intent, and explained the direction of the study. Interview protocol aided in the organization and investigation of the interview data. The review of participants curriculum vitae and resumes reinforced the interview analysis.

Validity and Reliability

According to Leung (2015), validity in qualitative research is determined by the appropriate use of tools and data collection procedures during a study. In ensuring initial validity, the following strategies were employed. Triangulation is the process where three or more measurements are used to establish convergence and credibility (Merriam, 2009). For triangulation, data was collected through multiple sources, including interviews, document reviews, and researchers' journals.

Next was assuring confidentially to participants of the study (Creswell, 2014). To safeguard confidentiality, each participant, and university was appointed an alias. All documents from the study were stored and locked to protect participants' privacy. Member checking took place during the study (Creswell, 2014). The findings were reliable, and the study could be duplicated. Triangulation of the interviews and accompanying documents offered verifying evidence for the study's reliability (Creswell, 2014). Eckerdal and Hagstorm (2017) stated the questioner questions are standardized, and respondents are asked the identical questions in the alike order. The questionnaire can be duplicated for consistency. In the instance that a second researcher wanted to further the study they can use the questionnaire to verify that the results are reliable (Eckerdal & Hagstorm, 2017).

The researcher articulated the researcher's biases in the researcher's role section of this document, as the researchers experiences can shape the study and conclusions drawn from the data. Malterud (2001) specified, "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (pp. 483–484). The researcher brought assumptions about the challenges women face during their leadership journeys due to the researchers interest in women's executive leadership.

In qualitative research, Johnson and Christensen (2008) emphasized the significance of research validity or *trustworthiness*, in connection with reducing researcher bias. The researcher is individual who upholds viewpoints and values that relate to the researchers identity and existence. The researcher understands and acknowledges points of view and values could have a relationship to the beliefs and values of participants in the study. Reinert and Ropers-Huilman (2013) said:

> Recognizing that we all view the world through our own unique lens, influenced by our experiences, it is necessary to realize the importance of reflexivity not only in our efforts at teaching and learning social justice but also in all of our daily interactions. (p. 1)

Three techniques to confirm trustworthiness were used in this study. To minimize bias and increase objectivity, the researcher used a scripted pre-interview checklist and pre-approved interview questions with each participant. The researcher provided an overview of the intention of the research, the researchers role, the methodologist position, and reason for the selection of participants in connection with the data gathered (Borman et al., 1984). Triangulation was used to support dependability and internal validity.

As part of the data collection, the researcher maintained a journal. Qualitative research employs journaling as a qualitative research technique (Janesick, 1999). Journal writing was combined with the research to offers data that echoes the actions of the researcher. For the sake of this study, the researcher journaled before and after interviews. Journal data contained the researchers reflections on the researchers role as the researcher throughout the entire process (see Appendix C). Lastly, journaling was used as written evidence of the experience between the participants and the researcher.

Data Collection

Creswell (2014) informed researchers of the steps to data collection to include setting boundaries, "observations, interviews, documents, and visual materials and establishing the protocol for recording information" (p. 149). The researcher requested permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Columbus State University before beginning the data collection process. The CSU approval letter (see Appendix D) confirms IRB approval. The researcher collected data using interviews, resumes and curriculum vitae, and demographic surveys (see Appendix E). Triangulation was accomplished by using three data collection methods such as demographic surveys, interviews, and documentation review.

By way of a USG institutional search, the researcher identified participants who met the criteria for the study. The researcher sent an initial recruitment email (see Appendix F) to identify candidates, asking if they would be interested in participating in the study. Once participant selection was complete, the researcher sent a letter (see Appendix G) to prospective participants and the Participant Confirmation Email (see Appendix H) to each individual. The researcher allowed 48 hours for participants to complete the forms and return them to the researcher. The letter to the prospective participant specifies the study's overall purpose and

summarizes the researchers relationship to the topic. As soon as the required documents were returned, the researcher sent a confirmation email with the date and time of the interview (see Appendix I for the Pre-Interview Checklist and Script).

Interviews

Interviews are the most traditional form of data collection in reference to qualitative studies (Creswell, 2014). Based on the three research questions, the interview protocol was developed. Each question is designed to create an open dialogue between the participant and the researcher. Interview questions were asked to each participant, in connection with their experience as executive leaders, intersectionality traits, conceivable obstacles, and strategies used to attain success in their careers. Interviews were conducted via Zoom to document and recognize the occurrences of women achieving executive leadership positions (see Appendix A).

For confidentiality purposes, participants' names were identified numerically for participants, and institutions were identified alphabetically. Once the interviews were finalized, the researcher sent a follow-up email (see Appendix J) to each participant. The email consisted of thanking each participant for their time and effort in aiding in the study. Participants received emails concerning transcript verification and confidentiality reminders. Participants were reminded of the researchers contact information and assured that they should contact the researcher directly if they had questions about the study.

Document Review

Yin (2013) stated, "Because of their overall value, documents play an explicit role in any data collection in doing case studies" (p. 103). The following resources used as a part of the document review stage: (a) university website, (b) participants' vitae and or resumes, and (c) demographic questionnaire. The researcher ask each participant to provide copies of their

curriculum vitae or resumes. The documents provided a look into educational backgrounds, prior work experiences, professional development involvement, networks, and previous institutional types. The vitae enabled the researcher to consider patterns of longevity in the workforce while also looking for gaps or omissions of leadership positions. The researcher reviewed each institution to assess the demographics of the presidential cabinet, executive faculty, and leadership.

Demographic Questionnaire

Johnson and Christensen (2008) stated, "Researchers use questionnaires to obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality, and behavioral intentions of research participants" (p. 203). Qualitative questionnaires produce important data that are beneficial to researchers from many disciplines. The Questionnaire consisted of subjects such as the impact of race, class, and gender on daily activities within higher education.

For the sake of this study four demographic questionnaire questions were asked of participants. Eckerdal and Hagstorm (2017) identified that demographic survey questions are beneficial; the questions are usually located at the start of the survey and solicit personal information about the participants background. When analyzing survey results, this information helps the reader visualize the people who are participating in the study (Eckerdal & Hagstorm, 2017). O'Leary (2014) confirmed that using a questionnaire authorizes the researcher to produce data specific to the research and promotes understanding of the topic that could be missed if the questions weren't present.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was conducted concurrently with data collection, data analysis, and narrative report writing (Creswell, 2014). The researcher collected information from the women executive leaders within the USG, sorted the data into categories, and formatted the data into a story or picture in the qualitative text.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003), "working with data, organizing and breaking into manageable units, synthesizing and searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 145). The researcher used hand-coded transcripts to identify emergent themes using colored markers and highlighters. Although the researcher hand coded data, transcripts were sent to Descript for coding of the transcripts based on themes and subthemes.

With the information offered by the software and the hand-coding process, the researcher was equipped to organize data into themes and subthemes for further analysis. The researcher used Charmaz's (2006) constant-comparative technique for analyzing the data. Charmaz (2006) stated, "Making comparisons between data, codes, and categories advances your conceptual understanding because you define analytic properties of your categories and then begin to treat these properties to rigorous scrutiny" (p. 178). Finally, the coding process was organized and categorized, assigning a code to each case grouping in relationship to faculty and staff.

Summary

A qualitative case study design was used to explore the journeys toward executive leadership for 14 female executive leaders in the USG, located in the southeast United States. Data collection methods included interviews, document collection, and researcher journaling, which were used to expand the interpretation of participant's lived experiences towards the

progression of executive leadership positions. Data was analyzed using an array of methods such as Rev, and NVivo 12 for Mac, transcript analysis, peer investigation, and document review. The researcher compared data from participants, monitoring mutual themes that occurred, and analyzed the data for significant similarities and differences in the data for individual participants. Through the lens of intersectionality, the data was displayed in a narrative profile format. The narrative method was used to ensure participants were permitted the chance to tell their personal experiences through each interview question.

Chapter IV: Results

This idea that we all have the same life is false. Race, class, and gender come together to shape the life chances of people in very different ways (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 3).

Through the framework of intersectionality, women executive leaders were asked to share their experiences within higher education career development. Intersectionality overlaps with identity and the difficulties societal biases (Parent et al., 2013). The purpose of this study was to take a comparative look at women in executive leadership positions in higher education. The study used an intersectional approach and explored the influence of race, class, and gender on women's advancement into executive leadership positions at research-intensive (R1) universities.

There has been a lack of literature to evaluate the social identities of who women executive leaders are, how they see themselves, and how they relate to others as they move up in their careers (Reynolds, 2001). Fogg (2003) wrote about how women face career advancement disparities. Chapter IV is divided into the following areas: participants, findings, and final summary. Each section of the chapter features data collected during the interviews and data assessment related to the study's purpose. In this chapter, the researcher considered the themes and subthemes that emerge from the findings.

Participants

On October 1, 2020, post-IRB approval, the researcher sent potential participants an email requesting contribution to the study. Those interested in the study were requested to reply with their availability for a Zoom interview, along with their consent form. All 14 participants were interviewed via Zoom from October 21–December 4, 2020. For 60 minutes, the researcher asked each participant 12 semi structured interview questions. The researcher gave each

participant and institution a pseudonym. Participant attrition was 100%. There were no discrepant cases. After interviews were completed, Zoom videos were downloaded into the Descript software and transcribed. The researcher sent the transcriptions to each participant for validation.

Personal descriptions about participants' experiences emerged from the semi structured interviews. The women executive leaders identified several intrinsic factors that influenced their career decisions and personal experiences. Chapter IV includes results from the semi structured interviews with 14 women executives, which consisted of seven female faculty members at the position of chair level or above. Seven administrators were at the level of vice president or above and work for public, R1, 4-year higher education institutions in the University System of Georgia (USG). The first seven participants are administrators, followed by seven executive faculty within the USG. A general overview of participants' demographic characteristics is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Participant Demographics for Administrators

Participant	Title	University	Ethnicity	Age Range	Children/ Dependents	Material Status	Degree
Participant 1	Vice President for Public Service and Outreach	Institution A	White	31-60	None	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 2	Chief Diversity Officer	Institution C	Black	31-60	2-4	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 3	Assistant Vice president of Student Affairs	Institution C	Black	31-60	1	Married or domestic partnership	EdD
Participant 4	Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs	Institution C	White	31-60	1	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 5	Executive Vice President for Operations	Institution C	White	31-60	None	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 6	Chief Human Resources Officer	Institution B	Black	31-60	2-4	Divorced	PhD
Participant 7	Vice Provost Diversity and Inclusion and Strategic University Initiatives	Institution A	Black	31-60	2-4	Married or domestic partnership	PhD

Note. All participants were executive leaders within the University System of Georgia and identified as cisgender.

Table 2

Participant Demographics for Executive Faculty

Participant	Title	University	Ethnicity	Age	Children/ Dependents	Material Status	Degree
Participant 8	Dean, College of Family and Consumer Sciences	Institution A	White	60+	None	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 9	College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Institution C	White	31-60	2-4	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 10	Associate Provost for Academic Fiscal Affairs	Institution A	White	60+	1	Married or domestic partnership	MBA
Participant 11	Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Educator Preparation	Institution D	White	60+	2-4	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 12	Dean Academic College of Veterinary Medicine	Institution A	White	60+	None	Single	PhD
Participant 13	Vice Provost for Academic Affairs	Institution A	White	31-60	2-4	Married or domestic partnership	PhD
Participant 14	Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs	Institution D	Black	31-60	2-4	Married or domestic partnership	PhD

Note. All participants were executive leaders within the University System of Georgia and identified as cisgender.

Participant 1 is the vice president for public service and outreach at University A. She has been at University A since 2009, serving in a variety of capacities. Before being hired at University A, she worked at another state university in the USG. Participant 1 has been in higher education for over 20 years.

Participant 2 is the chief diversity officer at University C. She has been at University C for 1 year. Prior to University C, she worked in the corporate sector as a director of ethnic and minority affairs for 8 years. Participant 2 is a tenured faculty member who has been teaching in higher education for over 20 years.

Participant 3 is the assistant vice president of student affairs at University C. Participant 3 is the only participant with an EdD in education administration. Participant 3 has been with the university for 1 year. Prior to University A, she worked at another state university in the USG. Participant 3 has been in higher education for 18 years.

Participant 4 is the vice president for enrollment and student affairs at University C. She has worked at University C for the past 2 years. University C is the second R1 university where she has served as vice president of student affairs and enrollment management. Participant 4 has worked in higher education for 24 years.

Participant 5 is the executive vice president for operations at University C. Participant 5 has served in the role for 2 years. Prior to this role, she was still with University C as the executive vice president for strategic communication and chief marketing officer. In addition to her PhD, Participant 5 has an MBA from University C and over 20 years of executive experience. She has also served 16 years as a faculty member.

Participant 6 is the chief human resources officer at University B. Participant 6 has worked at University B for 5 years. Prior to this role, she worked primarily in student affairs for over 20 years. In addition to administration, Participant 6 is an adjunct professor in the College of Education.

Participant 7 is the vice provost of diversity and inclusion and strategic university initiatives at University A. For the past 22 years, Participant 7 has worked at University A in a

variety of capacities. During her time at University A, she attained tenure. Prior to working at University A, she worked at another state university in the USG.

Participant 8 is the dean of the College of Family at University A. Participant 8 has worked at University A for 8 years. Prior to working at University A, all of Participant 8's experiences were at R1 universities in the role of faculty. Participant 8 has worked in education for almost 40 years.

Participant 9 is the college dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at University C. Participant 9 has worked at University C for over 20 years. Prior to her position as dean, she was chair of the sociology department for 6 years.

Participant 10 is the associate provost for academic, fiscal affairs at University A. Participant 10 has worked with University A for the past 27 years in positions ranging from program coordinator and business coordinator to assistant dean. Participant 10 is the only participant with an MBA. Before working at University A, Participant 10 worked at an R1 university. Participant 10 has been in higher education for 36 years.

Participant 11 is the associate dean of undergraduate studies and educator preparation at University D. Participant 11 has worked at University D for 23 years. She moved up the ranks from professor to department chair and then associate dean. Before working at University D, she worked at an R1 university. Participant 11 has worked in higher education for over 30 years.

Participant 12 is the academic dean of veterinary medicine at University A. Participant 12 has worked at University A for 3 years. Before working at University A, she worked at an R1 university as a dean in veterinary medicine. Participant 12 has worked in higher education for 28 years.

Participant 13 is the vice provost for academic affairs at University A. Participant 13 has worked with University A for 28 years. Participant 13 has moved her way up at University A from teaching assistant to associate professor, followed by the dean of research and graduate programs. Participant 13, in addition to her PhD, has a JD from an R1 university in the North. Before working at University A, Participant 13 worked as a lawyer for 11 years.

Participant 14 is the associate provost for faculty affairs at University D. Participant 14 has worked at University D for 1 year. Before working at University D, she worked as a vice provost for academic and faculty affairs. Participant D is the only participant with executive leadership experience at a historically Black college university, serving as the assistant vice provost for academic operations. Participant D is a tenured faculty, with 18 years of teaching experience.

The findings are then summarized into five themes, and four subthemes shared across the 14 participants as followed: (a) race, (b) class, (c) gender, (d) strategies (including subthemes of mentorship and support systems), and (e) other intersectional identities (including subthemes of sexuality and regional location).

The study consisted of seven female faculty who are in positions at the chair level or above. The seven administrators are vice president level or above and work for public, RI, 4-year higher education institutions in the USG. Although each participant currently works in the USG, the majority of them have worked outside of the USG for most of their careers. Aside from the title, gender, and geographical region considerations, participants needed to have at least one year of experience in an executive leadership role in higher education at an R1 university to participate in the study. R1 universities are competitive, and women must have extensive leadership experience to secure an executive leadership position.

Findings

The interviews on women executive leaders' personal experiences during their career and currently in the USG captured the essence of each woman's shared and individualized experiences. The interviews expounded on the journeys that framed career decision making in executive leadership, including the women's passions, aspirations, challenges, drive, and growth throughout their experiences. The following research questions guided the qualitative exploration of this phenomenon, which gave voice to marginalized women through their narratives:

1. How do women in higher education executive leadership positions in the USG describe their journeys toward earning university leadership positions?
2. What are similarities and differences between journeys of women leaders in academics and administration?
3. To what extent have the intersections of race, class, and gender impacted women's journeys to leadership?

The data captured the phenomenon's essence and each participant's individual experiences as told through intersectional lenses of race, class, and gender. Data was hand-coded and organized into themes before it was placed into Descript software for organization. Descript was used to conduct inductive coding. Using inductive coding, the researcher developed codes from the data using phrases and terms by the participants. Five significant themes and four subthemes (a) race, (b) class, (c) gender, (d) strategies (including subthemes, of mentorship and support systems), and (e) other intersectional identities (including subthemes of sexuality and regional location) emerged, from the data and are discussed in the following sections.

Race

For the sake of this study, race is defined as "any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of shared ancestry" (Race, 2021). Race was identified as a theme. Most women in the study explicitly expressed, throughout their interviews, how race impacted them within higher education and their personal lives. Throughout the interviews, there seemed to be varying views on race, how race had impacted their development, and how they are perceived based on their race. In terms of development, participants were asked, "Has your race impacted your career development? If so, how?" Participant 4 stated:

> I'm sure that my race has impacted my journey, and as a white female person who identifies as white, there is a privilege that comes with being white. Has it impacted my career development? I'm sure. I probably don't notice it as much because that is a privilege that I walk around with every day.

Similar to Participant 4, Participant 1 articulated that her race was a benefit to her development:

> I have to think that my race has helped me just because of our historical past. Higher Education has not been immune to the kinds of partial hiring practices that particularly public organizations all over the United States and have practiced.

Although most white participants stated they understood they had privilege because of their racial status of being white, a few participants stated they have used their privilege as leaders to be mindful and impactful in the field of higher education. Participant 8 stated:

> In summary, it was easier for me because I was white, but I was brought up in a household that brought attention to inequities and unfairness. That's probably why I'm in the field empowering others and particularly women and women of color.

Participant 5 had a different experience, stating she felt her race development was judged because of her privilege. She shared an experience that helped to develop her:

> At my previous institution, one of the roles I took on was as a chief diversity officer. The institution had never had one. And I was very committed to the idea that they needed to be much better on diversity issues. And I wanted to establish some things.
>
> The experience was positive and negative, and I had some folks who I believe that because I was white, pursuing a diversity agenda, at a Southern faith-based institution, I was able to get stuff done, that perhaps someone who was a person of color would have had a more challenging time getting through that good old boy system. On the other hand, I did have some members of the minority community who were a little bit frustrated that the institution was not looking to find a diverse person to lead the diversity work, and I had a lot of conversations around that. I understood that I had my perspective and was bringing certain experiences to the table. What I worked hard to do was create space, bring other people to the table with me so that it wasn't just my project. So, eventually, we got to really good places, but it was some really good, honest conversations about race and, how the institution was, trying to move ahead.

Participant 9 also expressed how she was aware of her privilege in comparison to her other colleagues:

> I'm a white woman. I'm privileged as a white woman. I know I'm privileged because I'm white. When I act pushy, I'm seen as a white person when I push. I might be seen as

> pushy, but I'm not seen as an angry Black woman. I might be seen as an angry white woman, but that doesn't mean anything, people don't even see an angry white woman. That's not a phrase like the angry Black woman is, so I know that's, that, a privilege I have.

Participant 10 also shared their sentiments of how they are aware of their race. Yet, she found herself more compassionate toward others with the country's most recent race relation concerns. She shared:

> It's easier when you're white. It just is! People will listen to you; I don't have to worry about my safety and dealing with people. Is there white privilege? Yes, it has helped me, I think, to advance where other people aren't necessarily given that opportunity. I've got to tell you this summer it's hit me in the face, right? If anybody watched George Floyd's film and wasn't affected, there's something inhuman about them. And I don't care, male, female, whatever race you are, watching somebody being executed right before your eyes. If that wasn't a meaningful experience, I don't know what is.

The findings were transparent in showing a distinct difference in how white women executive leaders experienced race as a part of their development compared to African American women. Within the theme of race, there seems to be an intrinsic sense of responsibility for women of color to represent their race. Participant 3 stated:

> I feel very responsible for being an example of success, a good colleague of grace, and care of all the things. Often, I am very aware that I am the only person of color at this table. So, I have to be careful about how I carry the torch every day. I have to be cautious about how I respond. I need to be careful about how I engage because I don't want my work or my investment to negatively reflect on anybody else of color. I feel like it's

education when people interact with me. Hopefully, it speaks well of who we are as a people and opens them up to work with me.

Participant 4 also mentioned her experience as a woman of color:

> It has been critical and central to my way in which I see myself in terms of the positions that I've taken in terms of how I have approached those positions, both in terms of a senior leader on campus, speaking up to power as well as representing power, particularly to students, faculty, and staff of color. I feel like I have an obligation to my community. When I think about my leadership, I feel like it must be authentic and because I feel like people have to feel like they can reach out to me. I think it doesn't help if people get into certain positions and are no longer accessible, and they can't be reached.

Participants were asked the question, "What is your perspective of how others view you based on your race, gender, and class?" Regarding race, Participant 1 stated:

> You know the lens of my race, my background, my gender, and, in terms of the way people perceive me, I guess I don't focus so much on that. I try to just be more aware of the fact that I don't understand all the dynamics that are going on in particular relationships.

Participant 2 stated, as an African American woman, she feels her perception is much different than most minority women:

> There were certain things I just didn't experience, and part of it had to do with my middle-class background, and it also had to do with DC. This is a special place, and progressive Black folks were just obvious. They're all around, and they were running things. And when we're talking about police, and the interaction with police. I never experienced that. I never did. And I give this anecdote all the time that when I went to

school, the police would come to our school and be in a band every year and play music. Like I just never learned to fear them. They were my neighbors. They were people that we knew. My brother was a cop. When people told me that they were getting harassed, I would be like, what did you do? Because I did not understand that there was this notion of policing Black and Brown people in a way in which they were targeted unfairly. And because, for me, police were just people. So, I felt like if they were flawed, you could tell them if they were doing something crazy, I would just say it. I remember watching Sandra Bland and what happened to her. And feeling, oh my God, that could have easily been me at any point.

Participant 3 also experienced how others perceived her based on her race. She shared:

> From my students and parents, especially students and parents of color, I hear very often "when I saw that you were a Black woman, my heart just filled" or when my students of color walk into my office and see the size of my office. It is just a pride moment. It's a moment of pride. It's a moment of honor. I treasure that, and I understand where that comes from. I get that, I understand where that comes from. Concerning my colleagues and, maybe those at my level, or above, but I would assume that most of my colleagues, white male, a white female would say I don't, see P3 as a Black woman. I see her as P3. That very much, "I don't see color kind of thing." Like she's one of us, she's at the table. She's a part of this team. I don't see her according to her race or gender, or her class. I just see P3. That is what I would assume.

Participant 8 wondered how some of her staff perceive her, and she tried to get to know them. She specified:

> For example, my colleagues here on this campus are in several buildings and, everybody matters to me in the organization, including the building services staff. And I will tell you who are the building service staff. Black men and women were scattered in several buildings. I know them in this building where I am because I see them routinely, but I don't in the other buildings. So, each fall and spring semester, I take them to lunch as a group because I want to tell them the college cares for them. I want to know your name and face. They're the eyes and ears for something going on in the building.
>
> I wonder, though, if I behave differently when I go to lunch, how we joke, how we talk to each other, thinking about perception, and I'm trying to be the Dean. But, you can't remove position and hierarchy in the same situation. So, I don't know what layers filter that situation, but I think we have a good time together. They always ask me, "When are we going the next time?," and quite frankly, it's a dress-up occasion, more so for them. I'm still in whatever I wore to work that day. But we'll do selfie photos, and when something happens in their family, I don't go to their houses necessarily, or them to mine, but I wonder about that because it's in a different group context.

Similar to how participants perceived themselves when it came to other perceptions, the minority experience was different. There was a stereotypical expectation placed on several women of color. Participant 2 shared:

> The most significant thing on race is the stereotype that I do not like to confirm, and I work my darndest not to do, which is not being detailed or, that Black folks are not going to put forth their best, and that they're going to have mistakes in their work.

Additionally, participants brought up the stereotype of being assertive and outspoken concerning race several times. Participant 2 shared:

> My dad raised me, but my mom was always around. Very outspoken. My grandmother, very outspoken, to the point where they just didn't have filters. I've had to learn how to do better than that. And so, I think for me, one of the other things that I'm trying to do is balance being assertive and outspoken with this notion of the angry Black woman.

Participant 3 shared:

> "Angry Black women"—we get that label so quickly. So, I'm very aware of that. And I try not to be the sister with the attitude. That's not my personality anyway, but some moments call for you to get angry, and I have to be careful how I share my frustration and my passion.

Class

Class is often identified as one's social position in a society based on occupation, income, wealth, prestige, or poverty (Gilbert, 2008). Class is seen as directly connected with social class, yet social class is comprised of additional influences like education, income, occupation, lifestyle, and family background (Crenshaw, 1991). The data indicate each participant was impacted by their class currently and as they developed into executive leaders. Although they all identified class as an implication to their development, their experiences were different because of their other intersecting identities. The practical suggestions of these findings are discussed in this section, starting with the expectations participants' families have placed on them.

During the interview, participants referenced the ranges of class they faced throughout their life. The range varied from upper class to lower class. Participant 2 related her connection to being middle class with having expectations to succeed:

> I had a very, very middle-class upbringing. I was not the first to go to college by any stretch. It was an expectation as far as a child, as soon as I could read, there was an

> expectation that I would go to college, go to medical school even. I was not the first PhD in my family. There are many doctors, many lawyers. And so, there was always the expectation that I would go to college and likely go further. So that was expected of me. I expected it of myself, and my family did too.

Like Participant 2, Participant 7 had access to a privileged lifestyle that propelled her to progress in her field. She shared:

> Generally, that came from parents and grandparents who had that mindset you have to work twice as hard to be considered half as good. And so, respectability was critical to how you showed up. In terms of leadership, I know that I exude that kind of respectability persona. It's how I choose. What I wear in the morning it's how I choose to be. It's everything I think about how I show up and how I write my emails and all those pieces. So that's an important part to me about my leadership.

Participant 7 recognized her privilege and saw how it impacts her leadership. She also discussed how people might misunderstand her:

> I noticed how people perceive me. I also know that respectable persona can make some people feel that I can't, I don't understand. Some people of color, some African American folks, students, faculty, staff, say to me, "You would never understand what it's like in my situation." I hear people literally say that to me. "Oh, because you have such an executive presence, you can't understand me."

Participants 3 and 14 had a different experience with class then Participants 2 and 7. They expounded on how their poor working-class status keeps them related to the populations with which they work. Participant 3 stated:

> One thing I've noticed, especially recently, is I apologize a lot. And I am hesitant to ask for anything. So, for example, I've noticed especially recently, A lot of my colleagues who are not people of color come to the table and ask, just ask. My first thought is, how can I make a way out of no way? How can I make this happen for my students without having to ask for help, without having to ask for money, without having to answer to anyone? I've always lived by this philosophy of, if I asked, I really needed, if I asked like I have no other way to get it, but I noticed that other folks don't do that! So, I think that may come from my background, my growing up in a lower socioeconomic situation where you're taught to survive, and you are taught to make it happen, make a way. I feel like that still impacts me as the professional that I am today. And it impacts my work because I could probably accomplish a lot more if I would just ask.

Participant 14 realized she may have grown up working class, but her children lived a different life than her. She shared:

> I grew up very much, working-class poor, probably. My father didn't finish high school. My mother did. They both worked really hard and tried to make sure I got a decent education, but like many households, when there is a break in the marriage, children live in poverty. And when my parents separated, I stayed with my father to finish high school. This is interesting because my parents always had middle-class ideals, but they were just working-class people. If you asked me about what my life is today and how I raised my children, that's what your colleagues see. Your colleagues don't see where you came from. Your colleagues see where you are now. And so now with me, I am somebody that they would think, oh, very sort of middle-class, upper-middle-class. Both my children went to college and It didn't dawn on me until one day I was talking to my daughter, and

she's in law school now, and I said, oh my goodness. I just realized it because we were talking about first-generation students, and I said something to her, and she said, “I'm not first-gen” but, like I had forgotten. So, class is interesting because I think that unlike gender and race, class can always just be hidden.

Expounding on hidden class, Participant 14 explained in greater detail her perception of how class intersected with race:

I'll share this story with you, too, cause I'm not sure if anyone has said this. I just said this to one of my coworkers the other day. My husband and I are looking for a place to buy, and one of the gentlemen that work for me said, oh, you should live where the other VPs live. Who he was talking about was another vice president, an older white man who makes a lot more money than I do. And I said, “oh, I don't want to live where he lives.” And he was like, “Why?” Because the guy who works for me is younger. And I said I was raised to know that you don't let white people know all your business. And if they see that you can live as they live, they don't like that. And that's one of those things that’s sort of baked into the cake when you're a certain age, is that you can't share all of this with somebody because I have been extremely blessed, but somebody, again, might think you're a little bit too big for your britches.

Relationships with class function like a mirror. How people are treated based on class eventually reflects on how people act based on perception. Participant 7 shared similar views:

I think about the way I show up because of my background and recognizing that all people of color and women that look like me don't show up the same way because they don't have that similar background. How can I support them? I don't want to be that Black

female, a senior academic leader who only can connect with people similar to myself, because I think we can, we can do that, even within our own spaces.

Participant 8 shared how class impacted her actions. She shared:

> Yeah, I sometimes think my class made me feistier or felt I must prove myself. We get classist on what institution someone's from. This is a hierarchical, and as much as I like, flat organization, and I'd like to go have lunch with the building services staff, as much as I'd have lunch with a group of donors, we're all here together. But we got a lot of things that the hierarchy is calling me, Dean all the time, instead of my first name, and it's very strong in the South because I could be called P8 when I was a dean in Washington State, but here it's very clear the dean title matters.

Like Participant 11, Participant 13 discussed that her class impacted how they present themselves in the workforce:

> I work in the administration building with the president. So, I always dress up for work, which is more than I would as a faculty member. I always feel like when I'm walking to class, I feel self-conscious. As if people are saying "Yeah, there goes a 'suit,'" as opposed to I'm still the same person, but in certain contexts, you just have to sort of wear that costume.

Participant 11 shared:

> Even if it's an awareness of language and how I'm responding to emails, and whether I'm using Dr. or my first name, or whether I'm addressing them by their first name or their last name, I'm trying to look at how do I respectfully honor voices. The goal is not to build up walls that break them down.

Six of 14 participants identify as first-generation college students. Participant 5 expounded on her experience with class and the impacts of being a first-generation college student. She said:

> I was a first-generation college student. I came from a blue-collar household. Class has been the most significant element of my identity. I was at a high school that was not as well-resourced as a lot of the other folks that we were competing against. A lot of assumptions about us were made because of the side of town that we were all in. I went to the university, where professors had presumed that I had certain experiences as a young person. We never had a family vacation because we were always working.
>
> Professors would talk about those kinds of lived experiences, and that wasn't me. I had a job the entire time I was in college, and that has really impacted my own personal mission and what I want to accomplish at a university. But even now, as a professional, there are a lot of folks who move forward into the C-suite, a lot of folks who are on the boards that I deal with, a lot of folks that are in the community that I work with. Part of my job is fundraising, and I don't have the background they have, and that's not always true, there are a lot of folks who are like me, who've worked their way through, but class has always been something that I've been very aware of.

Participant 13 stated:

> I'm a first-generation college student, and most of my extended family, even cousins, have not gone to college. I have the JD and then a PhD, so, it's pretty different from the rest of my family. My mom worked as a bank teller, and it's something that I'm very aware of. I think I don't take that for granted in terms of even my own career path. I don't think it occurred to me that I would be a college professor, let alone a senior

administrator. Even now, when I go home, my family is in upstate New York, and it's very different.

Presumed shared class experiences were prevalent in the data. Participant 5 illustrated her lived experience:

> There were four billionaires on that board of directors that I would interface with regularly. That's not something that even my parents could get their minds around. But then when I'm interacting with all of those folks, they presume because I am an executive leader that I have all these shared experiences with them. The truth is I had a part-time job in high school as janitorial worker, cleaning toilets. And that doesn't even enter their mind; that's part of my life's journey. And so, they talk to me as if I've had all these experiences. So, it's just very interesting. I'm living a double identity and navigating a double life.

Participant 7 also shared how people perceived her based on her class:

> Growing up, I was very aware of my background. My educational background is Ivy League, just for a lot of reasons, very fortunate, very blessed, but that is the reality. And I know that when people see that it signals something to them that I can see in the way in which they address me or deal with me or reference it, in situations where it's not relevant. Colleagues recalibrate probably in their heads, saying okay, so she's this, oh, she's a little bit more acceptable, she's closer to one of us.

Participant 9 identified the multiple levels of class and effects between the various levels:

> I haven't heard people talk about multiclass or bi-class, because my dad's mom married well when I was two, and so I got some access from that side, but then on my mom's side, my mom never went to college, very working-class, white, working pink-collar jobs. I

know when I first took my wife to Ohio to meet my family, my grandmother would take us to the country club. However, I didn't have us do that because I'm uncomfortable there.

Gender

Sex refers to the biological aspects of maleness or femaleness, whereas gender implies the psychological, behavioral, social, and cultural issues of being male or female" (i.e., masculinity or femininity; American Psychological Association, 2020). Within higher education, there is a stigma that men often mistreat women executive leaders. Participant 8 stated, "The men get the leadership tasks, and the woman get the supportive tasks." The following data indicate significant differences, disregard, and inequitable practices from men in higher education toward women. Participant 3 stated:

> It's interesting that at the lower levels of my career, I was surrounded by women. But through the ranks, the higher you climb or the higher you look, it's predominantly male. I have seen male colleagues promoted and I'm really confused about how that happened. There are a couple of my white male colleagues that I must walk on eggshells around. I don't disagree with them openly. I try not to embarrass them in front of other people because I've seen I can't get anything done when that happens. So, I'm very delicate with their ego because I feel like they are imperative to what I need to accomplish for students. If I break their ego, which is easy to break, then I won't have that connection that my students need me to have to accomplish certain things. So, I find myself tiptoeing around a couple of people, particularly because I've noticed that they address me and interact with me a little bit differently than they do other people.

Participant 4 shared an experience where she felt her gender was belittled. She expounded:

> In my earlier career development, say right after graduate school, I first reported directly to men. I felt often tapped on the head. I felt like they didn't really truly value what I was contributing, nor did they make me feel valued. Then I began reporting to a woman who was a very strong woman, a very strong leader on the campus. She had a lot of savvy and charm and political capital on campus. And so, she empowered me in career development, and she promoted me. She inspired me to have self-confidence as a female. After working for her, I transitioned to another campus, where I, again, reported directly to a male, but also my colleagues were all men, and I was told when I first got to that job that the decisions were made in the men's restroom. My response was, I'm going to have to figure out a way to get in there.

Participant 9 stated:

> If I say something as a woman and Bob says something as a man, it's going to be sometimes taken very differently. And I have been in situations where I've said something, and then it was repeated by a man, and they hear it when he says it, but they didn't hear it when I say it.

The findings revealed how university culture mimics the larger societal context where women executive leaders feel they have to work twice as hard to access executive leadership positions. Participant 5 shared:

> I won't be bashful; my aspiration is to be a university president. And I've been trying to set myself up to do that. I have a degree in the humanities. I don't have a degree from an Ivy League institution. I'm a state schoolgirl. I went and got an MBA at 54 because I felt like I needed that additional credential. What is the old saying? If you're a woman and

> you do something, you got to be twice as good. So, I have a PhD, and I have an MBA. I have two years of a JD.

Participant 12 talked about being the only woman in her department and men giving her responsibility because she was a woman:

> They put me on every committee to be representative of my gender. And it was very stressful. I was probably there before I knew enough to be there. I tried to do the best I could, always! And it took a lot of time and time away from things I could be doing. But looking back, it was a big part of my development. I look on it as mostly a good thing now, but then I was exhausted. I was an anomaly. I used to feel it when I went into a group of young women, they want you to be bigger than life. Whether you try to live up to their expectations and hopes, for some reason you're important to them, giving them permission or comfort in knowing they can be successful.

The interviews showed gender and race impact executive leaders' development. There was an overlap in how the women faced and negotiated their gender based on racial identities. Participant 7 shared:

> I would say, particularly in my current role, race trumps gender. A huge gender perception is an interesting piece also around for women of color, right? That gender part that you, as a woman, can be erased in people's minds or not seen or not valued in the same way. It does show up sometimes when I have two children, and they're young. And so sometimes, I have to do the mommy thing, and I mentioned it. I could just almost see the, oh yeah, she is a mother, like, oh, I forgot about that, because it's like, I'm the person who talks about race. She's the Black woman who helps us understand what we need to do around race. And I think that gender piece gets lost sometimes.

Participant 14 shared:

> Women have to figure out another way in which to be liked; that's also one of the things that women and women of color, in particular, have to learn. However, women have always got to be collaborative. And Black and Brown women, extra collaborative. Otherwise, you come off angry, isolated, and you don't want to be a team player. My white colleagues could do it, and they would just say, oh, that's just how P14 is. That's not what they're going to say about me. So, what I try to do in my work now is to ensure that the men in the department understand that's the dynamic that's going on.
>
> I've got to work on the women and women of color. Stop raising your hand for everything, be strategic. Gender is the easier one to deal with because when you sit in the room, and you have to advocate in any way or leading any particular way. White women are always on your side when it comes to gender because that's what the room generally looks like. It's your little brown face and maybe one other white women and white men. When it comes to race, everybody just looks over at you. Like you've got all of the answers. But then when it comes to gender, and you speak up, then your white female colleagues say yeah. And then that's when I like to take the pivot, and I say, and that accounts for race too, because then they go, oh, okay. It does. And sometimes there's a little strategy too, to try to get that because oftentimes they won't be on board if you're just talking about race. The gender part is a lot easier. Cause your tribe gets a little bit bigger.

Sexual assault and harassment have received considerable attention in scholarship, policy, and, most recently, public discourse. Participant 12 depicted an experience she had while developing within her career. She referred to an instance where her dissertation committee sexually harassed

her: “There were, the incidents of, wandering hands, I would say by committee members, and it was very uncomfortable and very unpleasant.”

Many of the interviews disclosed examples of how women in leadership discriminated against other women who were trying to move up in their careers. Participant 13 expounded on an experience she had in the workforce:

> I worked with a senior partner, it was a woman who literally said to me, “I climbed the ladder, and I pulled it up behind me. You're on your own.” I was like, wow, that's the most extreme example, but it's amazing.

Participant 14 also explained an experience she had while working in higher education at a historically Black college university:

> First of all, we would have these ceremonies, and all the vice-presidents in the cabinet would be up on the stage. They were all Black men, and they didn't see anything wrong with that, and as I started to move up, there were some men who said directly to me that I was too ambitious and that I like, I needed to slow it down. Don't try to be too big for your britches kind of thing. So, it was very notable there. They had never had a female president, and then we eventually did for a short interim period. The worst thing about her being there was that she was an older woman who didn't like women, and it broke my heart because we were so excited for her, but she liked being the only woman in the room. So, it came from both sides. The men were saying, we don't mind you ascending, as long as you go at the pace which we think is appropriate for you, and then having a woman come in the leadership position and only wanted to surround herself with male colleagues.

Men and women often internalize gender stereotypes. Therefore, there is a focus on how men and women are seen by others and how they see themselves. The data brought stereotypes to the forefront. Participant 10 related her personal development in relationship with men to a Disney movie rooted in women's stereotypical expectations in the home:

> Females were generally told not to speak or given messages not to speak. Or don't be the one in the forefront. Growing up, I can harken back to this little girl. I used to watch Disney movies, and it was always, you're this little princess, and this prince will come along and save you and somehow sweep you away, and all problems will go away. And that kind of thinking sets up those expectations. That you don't have to be a problem solver because some male is going to come along and take care of you. I grew up in what would be considered a kind of a traditional household where my father worked and my mother stayed home. I think a lot of that kind of conflict of that, maybe these kinds of fairy tales don't come out true. And, as you grow up and you get out of your household, you realize there is no prince coming to save you, gosh, I better save myself. That kind of woman, who's able to get ahead and acquire some of the attributes that may or may not be admired by males because it's considered too aggressive and unladylike.

Another example of the expectation for men to take the lead was when Participant 8 was asked who she was before she married her husband. Participant 8 shared, “She said, ‘Were you, anybody, before you were Mrs.?’ I laughed so hard because she wanted to tie my identity to being Mrs. Of course, I was just gentle and sweet and told her, but she didn't know.”

Societal pressures and the expectations of parents were apparent in the findings. Participant 10 shared:

> It was a burden when you're told that you want to do those things, and maybe you feel like you're not living up to that expectation, where you should be. It has to come a time that you throw away those thoughts and then relook at yourself and decide your value. That was a long hard road for me to take that idea, throw it away, and find me. And a lot of those things are what goes back to those values that you might be given from your parents.

All 14 participants talked about work-life balance and the expectations of maintaining a household while being an executive leader. Participant 13 shared:

> I have two children, and it was one of those things as far as a stereotype like I just did not talk about my children, except to people who were good colleagues that had children. Not many. I realized I was at a national meeting, and someone said to me, oh, you have children. And I was like, okay, now I've done a disservice to all the women out there. But I do think there's this perception of, if you have children, you are somehow perceived differently. I mean, at the time when I was just about to go up for promotion and tenure, I adopted a child, and I said, I'm going to be away on spring break. She is in China, and I said, I got to be away for spring break. And the senior colleague said to me, "Oh, this is terrible timing. People are going to completely think you're not committed to your work." As you can imagine, I was livid, throwing title seven all over the place. It was probably the most pronounced thing that ever happened to me. There was no retaliation or no repercussions from that, but it just really pointed out to me that it's a fragile world.

During the interviews, participants identified that women are vastly underrepresented in academia, and, issues with motherhood and career-life balancing are classified as the cause.

Participant 13 articulated the need for spouses of women executive leaders to help with the family in connection to the pandemic:

> It is very difficult for people to get their work done, especially if you're dealing with children who are home or not in school, and it's disproportionately on women, which I am absolutely indignant about because I feel like this is the time for husbands or partners to step up. We've done double duty for a long time. And really, when I became associate dean, I said to my husband, I can no longer drive to a piano lesson at 3:30 p.m. and sit there. And I've worked at ballet lessons and piano lessons and everything else for years and years while working on manuscripts and everything else. This is a different kind of job, and I have to be in the office, and even with this job, I, again, told my husband, I can't start cooking dinner at 7:30 p.m. When I get home, you can't be sitting here hungry unless you want cereal. You're going to have to think this through regarding dinner for our family.

Participants in the study alluded to their relationships with their fathers as a part of their success. Five of the 14 participants were raised by their father primarily. Participant 9 shared:

> My dad helped me tremendously. He's pretty amazing for a white dude. He introduced me to Angela Davis. We used to watch Angela Davis on PBS. He gave me James Baldwin. He gave me that autobiography of Malcolm X. I was stupid enough to think I wanted to be a Black Muslim, and I am not African American, and they are horrible to women.

Participant 6 shared:

> I literally hold dear to me what my father has always taught me. He would say, "Drive, drive, through the storm, because if you stop in the middle of the storm, the storm can sit

over your head, but just keep moving." And so, I've carried that with me throughout. I just keep driving.

Participant 10 said:

> So, my father always believes or would tell us that we were chiefs and leaders because of our last name. My father was a Marine Corps Pilot from WWII. He instilled that in us, so I knew I was a leader.

Participant 14 shared similar sentiments:

> My father didn't necessarily see me as just a girl. He told my mother he wanted a boy. And so, I think in a lot of ways, he raised me as if my gender didn't matter and then to grow up and realize, oh my goodness, it does. In my career, in particular, that was difficult. And learning how to make these slight little shifts without selling yourself completely out.

Although stereotypical roles are still rooted in the expectations of women, there are emerging factors taking place where the male is more of the support system, yet some institutions are not prepared for women leadership. Participant 5 shared her experience:

> So, the one good example is, with the USG or with other things that we do for fundraising or whatever, I'll get invitations for my spouse that I have to go somewhere and do something. But the things that are inevitably set up for spouses are almost always oriented toward wives. And my husband gets this itinerary of events, and he is like, "Why would I do that?" and then I, on the other hand, I'm in a room full of men. Very often, more men, there are starting to be more women, but, when I go to events and those things are set up and organized around men.

Participant 4 expressed the expectation of conventional norms concerning characteristics:

> I think being a female, particularly with the work that I do, a lot of folks are going to say that I am a caring person because I'm female and that I'm nurturing, that I'm going to be understanding and empathetic. I think those are some of the positive viewpoints that others have been made before in the past. I don't have to demonstrate that because it's assumed that I have those qualities about me, and that, especially for other women that they could trust me, I think we have a sort of a natural trust to share things with females.

Participant 9 talked about the negative effects of gender characteristics:

> Sometimes I think women think I'm a certain way because I am a woman. Women think they can talk to me. I wonder, if I weren't a woman, would they share this stuff with me? Women cry with me a lot, that's emotional labor, and that takes a lot.

Participant 13 shared a story of a time when she felt she needed to share more of who she was to see women's progression in the field:

> Particularly gender just makes me that much more aware of how it's important for me to share things that are gender-related or that I have a family. Or this is how I navigated that space. Just reaching out so people can envision what's possible. I know that when I left my old institution, I was really hoping that the person behind me would be a woman. The person that I wanted to do said she would not do it, which I found deeply disappointing. I feel like I have an obligation to the future of higher education. I love being an administrator. I love the things that I do, but I also feel a certain responsibility to other women who are younger just to say, I'm doing this, there's a lot of challenges it's hard to navigate, but you can do it.

Professional Development

Participants shared personal strategies they used to navigate their development as executive leaders. Participant 2 shared:

> Take the time to really understand who you are, how you see yourself in the world, and what role you want to play in that world. I think my career has made a lot of detours because I wasn't clear about that in the beginning.

In relationship to efficient and effective communication, Participant 4 shared, "It's giving someone space to be able to do the work as well as delegating it to them. Trusting them and supporting them along that way." Participant 4 expounded further on a strategy she uses to be effective and efficient in communication:

> Writing down the things that I would like to say so that they do not come out of my mouth and just trying to be a lot more patient so that when I do speak that it doesn't come across as being a bitch, being too strong, being too pushy as a woman. I am just really trying to think through what I say and be more mindful about how I'm perceived.

Participant 6 talked about understanding the importance of personal values: "Tighten your values, make sure that you're operating with your values, know who you are. That's number one because that's going to be challenged at every turn." In addition to values, Participant 6 found reading to be essential to career development, saying, "What are you reading? What are you putting in? What's forming your world worldview? What's informing your perspective on life."

Participant 7 spoke about knowing your boundaries and what is important in women's roles in higher education:

> I can't die on every hill. I've got to let some slip, let some go, to determine what is it that I really want, what's really going to be important to what I want to accomplish in my career. And I'm talking about this from the work that I do in diversity. The best way to get there is not to feed into the stereotype of the aggressive Black woman, but also, the best way for me to get there is going to be to build trust, to get the defense down, and then to have the conversation, in a way that people can hear it and receive it. Before I come with that ask, I try to be strategic around my colleagues and other leaders to make sure that the only time they're dealing with me is not when it's around diversity.

Participant 10 talked about the significance of not allowing fear to impact your career:

> Don't be afraid to ask questions. I think that it's good to question what you're doing, and it's fair to ask the people around you questions. If you're polite and you're truly inquisitive, keep your mind open to those experiences and allow them to come in and question them as they happen to you.

Participant 12 shared the importance of being helpful to others: "So being the best faculty member you can, generous with your time and willingness to help others. You need to be able to say no, but you need to be able to say it in context." Participant 13 stated:

> I think one of the number one things is always being incredibly prepared for all contingencies. And I think having practiced law, I've been a litigator, and when I go in, usually I've got notes, I've got all kinds of stuff or whatever context that I need. There's probably way more than I ever need, but just really, knowing your stuff because there's no substitution for competence and being firm, I think that you have to be confident, and it's hard to do that if you're not prepared.

Participant 13 also illustrated the effects of executive leadership and trusting the process:

> Being able to step back, some days I have to just say, wow, that was a really bad day. Then I'll regroup. You have to have thick skin. It's hard. I wake up at 3:30 in the morning, pretty much every day, thinking about something, but you just have to know, I made that decision for a reason. I'm going back to sleep, and that's how it is.

Lastly, Participant 13 shared the impact of taking time off to regroup:

> They're not going to be a lot of weekend breaks for the most part, but just think of ways that you can create a little solitude, whether it's taking a walk or always having family dinner, like our house, we always have family dinner. I always have breakfast with my daughter, unless there is some really big reason not to. Things like that to create balance because otherwise, you'll just be torn apart.

Participant 3 had a different experience in association with networking and connecting with mentors. She stated:

> I don't go to dinner with people, and that's probably my fault. I don't do the work to have those relationships because it's hard. I just don't know how to genuinely do that. So, I think that's been a barrier for me. So, what I try to do is I try to nurture the relationships that I have. I try to love, not in a disingenuous way like I'm trying to get something, but I do, I and I believe it's strong.

Many participants communicated having male mentors for the majority of their careers. Participant 7 stated, "Some women, white women, definitely white women and white males that I've just been fortunate to have mentors and sponsors to me. And so, that's been that kind of professional front." Participant 14 said:

> It's okay to have relationships with people that are purely transactional. That's fine because everybody's not meant to be your girlfriend, and everybody's not meant to go to

> the movies with you. And it's okay. And sometimes we'll be like, I haven't talked to the person, and I don't want them to think I'm just reaching out because I'm applying for the job where they work. Men constantly do things that promote themselves, so that their name shows up on the document so that their face is on the website. You got to be as kind to yourself as you would be to someone else that you love.

Support Systems

In line with support, participants mentioned the professional development programs they participated in while climbing their career ladder. Participant 3 stated, "My mentor introduced me to African American women in higher education. A group with NASPA and that group changed my life." As a chief diversity officer, Participant 7 talked about her support system in the Southeastern Conference: "The chief diversity officers in the sec we get together, And it's interesting. We've been able to sustain it with everyone's busy schedule." Participant 14 had the great opportunity to be an American Council on Education (ACE) fellow. She shared:

> ACE fellowship. I was the American Council on Education fellow the 2014-2015 year. You get to a host institution followed by travel to a lot of other institutions to work on a project. You bring it back to your home institution. It's widely known as being one of the programs that most people who go into ended up being a college president.

Many participants stated their families were their support systems. Twelve of 14 participants were married, and they expressed how their spouses were incredibly supportive of them as they progressed in their roles. Participant 14 shared:

> Selecting your spouse is probably one of the most important decisions you will make. Who you decide to partner with impacts how you move throughout your career. I came to

Atlanta for a job, and my husband threw his stuff in the bag and said, when are we leaving. There are a lot of men that won't do that.

Participant 3 said:

My husband is number one! It's interesting because he doesn't get what I do. He works in higher education but doesn't do this type of work; he's just there to just be there. I know he's on my side. I know he's got my back no matter what.

Participant 5 said, "My husband is the best; yeah, I got married late. I didn't get married till I was 40," and Participant 10 shared:

I've been lucky, as I said, my husband, we've been married for 35 plus years. So, he's been a large part of my life. And he's been a person who I've been able to bounce things off of. He always suggests for me to step back and maybe wait a day before I respond, and then read it and you go, oh, that really wasn't so bad.

Participant 7 expounded on how their community growing up supported her to be who she is as a leader. She shared:

I know I come from a really strong community, of family, faith, and all of those pieces have been really great. I say this often, I'm fortunate that I was raised in Southwest Atlanta. I was raised in a predominantly Black community. My husband and I talk about that because we have the same background, which was incredibly affirming, incredibly empowering.

Participant 12 also explained how a community outlet reinforced her development:

When I first became dean, my pastor called me up and said, let's go out to lunch, and he wanted to talk about Proverbs and how important that was as a leader to read Proverbs.

> He mentored me about being a good shepherd and, that's good advice. Also, to make sure that you take care of your people.

All 14 participants stated their circle of friends and professional confidants became smaller as they progressed to their executive roles. Participant 12 stated:

> I think it's gotten smaller and, I don't know that's a good thing. I think it's because of the space that I'm in. I just feel like I have to be more careful about what I share and who I share it with. And so, there are fewer folks that I reach out to about certain things. Honestly, when you get into these positions, and you're one of the only ones, you stick out, and you're also easily targeted. I just feel like I must be very careful about who I talk to and what I share. Everybody that has been in this space will say the same thing.

Participant 4 also agreed, saying, "Your support system grows smaller as you're promoted. So, there is a disproportional relationship between the support system and, as you get promoted to executive leadership, rarely discussed."

Participants 5 and 10 mentioned feeling isolated and not being liked as the circle of support became smaller. Participant 5 said:

> As you move up the ladder, it's really easy to get isolated. When you're the only person who does what you do, especially when you get to a certain level in the organization, people on your campus can't be your confidants.

Participant 10 shared:

> As you move into higher responsibilities, you have to let go of the idea that everybody's going to be your friend, especially being younger. I don't know if males are the same way, I think most females are pleasers. And so, you want everybody to like you and that everything you do is to make people like you, and as you have more responsibility and as

you mature, I think you realize that you're not going to make everybody happy if you're doing your job right.

Other Intersectional Identities

Regional/local identity refers to how people classify with the social system of the region in which they reside (Häuszer & Frey, 1987). During the interviews, some participants who were not from the South initially talked about how regional location played a role in their career development. Participant 10 stated:

> I think there are regional differences as far as I grew up in California, and I have been living in the South now for 35 years. I know that it's a little bit harder for me to encourage younger women to step forward because of the kinds of roles that are much more defined in my perception in the South, as opposed to where I came from. So, I try to work hard with women to speak out and say what they need to say.

Participant 6 shared:

> The geographical nuances of being in Atlanta. For example, terms of endearment, and how I'm addressed. I worked with a particular facility gentleman; a great guy who called me dear. And the New Yorker in me wants to say hey, I'm not your dear. The mature professional recognized it wasn't intentional discrimination but related it to the South and the vernacular they use.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is a person's sexual, emotional, romantic, and affectional attractions toward another human being (Pincus, 2011). Participant 9 identified as a lesbian who is married to their spouse. During the interview, Participant 9 communicated her experiences with her sexuality:

I think it's less of an issue that I'm, a lesbian or queer as well. And I think they see that some people see that and want to use it as a box to check. I can talk about homicides, but I can't talk about everything related to gay rights. I'm not a gay rights movement expert. But I know that I relate to other people because I'm the intersectionality of being a woman and being queer, which I think helps me relate to other people who have minority intersections. I could be hidden, and not everybody gets that opportunity, whereas most people. People are not going to assume I'm Black or African American, they're not all going to assume I'm lesbian. Yes. I can often make the decision to be out.

Participant 9 expanded her dialogue on sexuality to relate to her intersecting identity of race:

Because I'm white, I don't think I have been put on any committees, but I was put on a committee with the American Sociological Association because I was a part of the LGBTQ+ community. And when I got there, I'm like, why am I on this committee? I accepted it. But I don't study this area. Why am I on this committee? Because they wanted people who fit this category to get their opinion. It might be better off to have somebody who doesn't identify in one of these categories but studies it. I'd like to believe I was chosen for the committee because I speak up, and I try to speak truth to power.

Participant 9 also shared how she uses her privilege to help those who are discriminated against:

I work to try to be aware of what I'm doing. I try to share my privilege when I can. As I noted before, I try to be mindful that people come and cry to me, students are more likely to come to me because I'm a woman. I know that African American students are more likely to go to African American faculty. I know that once students know someone's queer, students are more likely to go to them. Knowing that and being aware of that and pointing that out to others is a part of who I am and why I'm in leadership.

Summary

Findings in this chapter stem from the essence of the experiences shared among the 14 women who participated in this study. Depicted is the involvement of women in executive leadership positions. The following research questions guided the study: How do women in higher education executive leadership positions in the USG describe their journeys toward earning university leadership positions? What at are similarities and differences between journeys of women leaders in academics and administration? To what extent has the intersections of race, class, and gender impacted women's journeys to leadership? The data brought forth significant content from the semi structured interviews with participants. From this content, five significant themes and four subthemes emerged from the data and are discussed in the following sections.

The first theme, race, spoke to how women executive leaders' personal experiences with their race impacted participants' development as leaders. Within the data, the theme of class demonstrated the effects of relationships and communication with others, determining self-concept, confidence, and perception of ability to take on specific responsibilities, roles, or career goals. Women of different classes and races live different lives and often don't have direct interactions with one another to express their truths. In spite of personal contact, gender conflict has some of the same structural issues as race and class. Gender differences in the workplace typically stemmed from social factors, which influenced men's and women's behaviors. Within the study, gender differences involved both physical and emotional factors. Their identities influenced the women's behavior in the workplace and their personal lives.

Within the theme and subtheme data (d) strategies (including subthemes of mentorship and support systems) emerged the importance of having a mentor, sponsor, family, and

champions who will aid in development as an executive leader. Those who are mentored or have a support system are able to understand their career and personal decisions more deeply. Within the theme and subtheme data(e) other intersectional identities (including subthemes of sexuality and regional location), regional identity was determined by participants' evaluation of traditional norms in the South versus other parts of the country. Sexuality was expressed by a member of the LGBTQ+ community, stating her experience and providing avenues for social and professional understanding. In Chapter V, the researcher shares an in-depth discussion of these themes and how they relate to the literature outlined in Chapters I and II. The implications of the study and recommendations for future research are also outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter V: Discussion

Chapter V's findings promote increased understanding and awareness of women executive leaders' lived experiences within higher education. In addition, Chapter V also evaluates the findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research and close with the thoughts and conclusions. Using a qualitative case study research design, the study took a comparative look at women in executive leadership positions. The study used an intersectional approach to explore the impact of gender, race, and class on women's advancement into executive leadership positions at research-intensive (R1) universities.

Summary of the Study

This study examines women's apparent barriers to leadership in executive leadership roles in higher education. Using comprehensive interviews, the study explored personal accounts to emphasize the supposed barriers to career advancement. Women have been studied in silos of executive faculty and administration but looking at executive leadership in higher education in silos puts higher education at a disadvantage (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016). To move the field forward, there is a need to have a comparative look at women's experiences in executive faculty and administrative roles (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016). It is vital to explore women's identities holistically. Yet, there has also been a lack of evaluation of social identities that influence who executive women leaders are, how they see themselves, and how they relate to others (Reynolds, 2001). These characteristics of identity incorporate race, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, etc. (Reynolds, 2001). For the relevance of this study, the researcher explored class, gender, and race only.

Sixty-minute, semi structured interviews with the women executive leaders were administered over several weeks. From the interviews, each participant expressed their stories

differently. I noted several themes and subthemes. Overall, each participant spoke to the following five themes and four subthemes: (a) race, (b) class, (c) gender, (d) strategies (including subthemes of mentorship and support systems), and (e) other intersectional identities (including subthemes of sexuality and regional location). The woman executive leaders in this study were diverse in age, race, education, class status, and titles; they all were impacted by race, class, and gender as they evolved in their careers. By sharing these experiences within this study, the expectation is that further research should be conducted to be inclusive of women's voices.

Analysis of the Findings

The findings conferred in this study offer increased awareness of women executive leaders' journeys at R1 institutions within the USG, showing a comparative experience of seven faculty, chair level and above, and seven administrators, vice president level and above. In Chapters I and II of this study, an intersectionality theoretical framework was used and supporting literature was outlined to illustrate the need for additional research on this subject. The purpose of intersectionality takes into consideration distinctive ways in which identities are connected and interwoven to adequately define intersections specific to each person's experiences (Crenshaw, 1989).

Inductive approach analysis was used to make meaning of the data. The inductive method is pertinent when doing an exploratory study to help grasp the phenomenon studied (Gioia et al., 2013). The inductive approach works in connection with coding, and permits the researcher to detect transparency and gives reliable considerations of the data (Gioia et al., 2013). Findings were provided in the voices of participants using quotes. Each of the quotes captured the essence of participants' voices, then the data was categorized into five themes and four subthemes. In this chapter, conclusions are discussed based on how the findings connect with the literature and the

research questions. Implications are included for women executive leaders regarding career trajectory, support, and retention.

Findings were analyzed using intersectionality theory to understand women executive leaders better and unload their experiences. Intersectionality theory helped investigate the difficulties that exist in both the identities of women and the intersections within higher education. Additionally, intersectionality theory helped frame the analysis to see how operating in existing power structures within the academy impacts women's career development in executive leadership positions in higher education. The use of intersectionality theory for the research questions and the interview was developed with a concentrating on undoing the domineering practices that obstruct and suppress women's voices and their experiences (Price, 2019). Intersectionality theory allowed me to explore a nuanced understanding of women executive leaders' identities without obstructing its mission to examine overlapping axes of power.

Women were asked to share their narratives, empowering participants to give voice to their career decision making, ascribing their meaning in their own words despite the systems that suppress them based on their race, class, and gender (Mills & Unsworth, 2018). To better understand the factors of the women executive leaders' journeys toward earning university leadership positions, the first research question asked was: How do women in higher education executive leadership positions in the USG describe their journeys toward earning university leadership positions? An overarching sentiment from participants was the understanding of hard work, mentorship, and networking. Both mentorship and networking have a direct correlation with the literature. Knowing how to work around and solve problems surges women's likelihood to flourish in executive-level positions (Airini, 2011). Each participant spoke about being

prepared for their role and ensuring they sought after opportunities to continue their development.

The literature's depiction of male-dominant mentorship was evident in the findings. All participants identified their initial and primary source of mentorship came from men. As women progress in the field, the data and literature showed there is less access to role models and mentors that look like them. Hannum et al. (2015) specified, "Men are still viewed as default leaders and women as atypical leaders" (p. 66). With a lack of female representation, women leaders may try to imitate their male peers' behaviors, taking on roles that may come off as aggressive and cold, and more accessible women could be seen as too motherly and not strong enough to lead (Hannum et al., 2015). Hannum et al. (2015) stated, "In addition to the intangible challenges related to identity and stereotypes, women tend to be assigned heavier course, service, and advising loads relative to their male counterparts" (p. 66).

Luhabe (2002) encouraged female employees to form networks with peer alliances that empower women to support each other as they move up the hierarchy. Networking was a very distinct experience for participants. In contrast, mentorship came from a more personally connected place. Odhiambo (2011) labeled networking as a connection established to share information. Networking seemed to be more transactional for participants allowing the executive leaders to have quick access to skills, learning about new opportunities, or guidance to the next step in their career development. The findings indicated the women felt there was a greater chance to experience diversity when networking, in contrast to mentorship, where most of their connections were male dominated. Women have found success over patriarchal authority and through the "glass ceiling" by establishing networks with alliances that are not the same race or gender (Mathur-Helm, 2002). Based on the information provided during the interviews, women

executive leaders experienced duality between executive faculty positions and administration. This information leads to the second research question, which asked: What at are similarities and differences between journeys of women leaders in academics and administration?

For participants who experienced both executive faculty and administrative positions, there was a timidness to talk about the difference. Kezar and Gehrke (2016) shared there are two sides of the house in higher education: one being the faculty and the other being staff and administration. Women have been studied in silos of executive faculty and administration but looking at executive leadership in higher education in silos puts higher education at a disadvantage (Kezar & Gehrke, 2016). For example, Participant 2 stated, "I think my administrative colleagues are not going to be happy with this. I would say that I needed to be more on my Ps and Qs as a faculty member. We must have evidence, and we have to be very clear about our evidence, administrators are just trusted with no proof." It was stated several times that there seemed to be more freedom for executive faculty versus the administration, which was characterized as always having to be on and required service to their role year-round. There appeared to be a clear distinction between executive faculty and administration. The final research question presented in the study was as follows in collaboration with the three themes of race, class, and gender: To what extent has the intersections of race, class, and gender impacted women's journeys to leadership? The following represent the findings in connection with the literature.

Race

Within the findings, there were distinct differences regarding career and life experiences in connection to race. It was immensely apparent that the white women executive leaders were very aware of their privilege. There was an appreciation for the opportunities they were afforded

yet a deep sense of responsibility to understand those of difference and advocate for justice when needed. Women of color executive leaders' outlook were starkly different. There appeared to be this incredible consciousness of accountability and expectation for women of color to do more for their job and ethnic communities.

All the minority participants indicated they felt they had to work harder than their peers because of assumed expectation for their ability was low. According to Lloyd-Jones (2009), education and hard work are an inseparable pair that will lead to a life of social equity and more significant career opportunities. Yet, for minorities, standards are different, and marginalized groups need to perform at more elite levels than others (Lloyd-Jones, 2009). Stanley (2006) pointed out during an administrator of color's experience, they will take part in mentoring relationships with their team, fellow students, or faculty of color. Often, due to the connection with professionals of color, administrators are experts on diversity matters by members of their campus communities (Stanley, 2006).

The pattern of accumulating disadvantage is echoed in the sentiments of intersectionality literature. Intersectional theory formed a foundation for understanding intersections between systems of power and privilege in which personal narratives are related to identity development (Jones, 2013). The findings indicated a duality of experience for women of color. One is their experience in the workplace and another in their personal life. The literature mirrored this finding.

Class

Class was heavily associated with the driving force behind participants' successes. Six of 14 participants identify as first-generation college students. Being first-generation college students encouraged the women executive leaders to strive for their best for themselves and their

families. There was also a perspective that class was not always apparent and that it could be hidden. The findings signify some participants did not always share the class they grew up in, nor did they desire to share their current status with colleagues. Due to the duality of formal and informal expectations, women executives often do not feel they have the time or outlets to express classism, racism, or discrimination in higher education (Langhout et al., 2009).

Women in higher education experience feelings of isolation (Deshpande, 2016). Americans typically approach gender and racialized positions as being visible and embodied in day-to-day settings. The assumption is that women executives come from middle or upper SES backgrounds (Haney, 2015). A few participants during the interviews indicated their colleagues' assumptions in terms of their class were in error, and they did not feel the need to communicate any difference in their reality. In contrast, SES is often invisible and presumed to be the same among all faculty, staff, and students (Haney, 2015).

Gender

The results about gender indicate a sense of unified oppression and discrimination among each participant. Northouse (2013) said women are frequently understood initially by gender. The interviews also specified that the women leaders did not feel comfortable doing the following: self-promotion, speaking out of turn, or speaking publicly against their male counterparts. Winkler (2000) specified women might be cautious in practicing self-promotion as a necessary skill to advance executive leadership. Women must overcome the fear of being perceived as arrogant, self-centered, self-serving showoffs, and labeled as aggressive (Winkler, 2000).

There was a unanimous response from participants, affirming they had to work twice as hard to ensure they were seen, heard, and respected by their male colleagues. Eagly et al. (2014)

illustrated, in comparison to women, men are viewed as being better leaders and more task-oriented, based on their prior experiences as leaders. When women work within the context of their roles as executive leaders, their effectiveness is often challenged or questioned due to perceptions that women are less proficient than men (Eagly et al., 2014). Within the data, the women associated gender with a variety of masculine stereotypes perpetuated on to women. Bonebright (2012) talked about how women wear their gender as a label, and the label causes challenges for women leaders, and there is a direct to connection masculinity. Campbell et al. (2010) stated, "Gender identity and differences are acquired through various developmental processes associated with life stages, such as schooling and work-life" (p. 19). Many participants identified that they had to let go of the traditional expectations of what women should be to develop within their career as executive leaders.

The concluding phase was to analyze women leaders' experiences in academic affairs and administration in higher education through the lens of intersectionality. All 14 participants stated there were barriers during their journey to becoming an executive leader. The barriers differed based on their intersecting identities. Yet, these testimonials continue to exemplify the need for further information on comparing women executive leaders within higher education. Although participants felt there was support for them in pockets in terms of mentorships and developmental programming, there is still a need for women to have exemplar roadmaps on how to become an executive leader in the arena of executive faculty and administration. These sentiments suggest higher education needs to take the initiative to understand why there is a gap in women executive leadership and ways in which women can be supported as they matriculate within their field.

Strategies

Strategies	Participants Suggestions
Networking	"I think networking is very important for your development as a leader"
Mentorship	"For me formal mentorship programs were the best route"
Professional Development	"Joining professional organizations within your field will provide and network and allow you to learn from others at other universities. You learn you're not alone"
Personal development	"Take the time to really understand who you are, how you see yourself in the world, and what role you want to play in that world." "As you move into higher responsibilities, you have to let go of the idea that everybody's going to be your friend, especially being younger."

Comparison

The results indicated that the participants points of view around race, class, and gender varied based on prior experience. Yet, there were no comparison of their identities based on their executive leadership roles within the USG or prior institutions. However, there were comparisons based on how the executive leadership perceived one another's job duties, and rigor. All participants agree that the development and advancement of students were executive faculty and administrator's main goal. Executive faculty felt that administrators didn't have to prove their work through data. Stating that when faculty present information to the university, they have to have data to confirm their communication. Contrarily administrators felt they there were working year-round to ensure the progression of the university, while faculty have sections of time off during the school year.

Limitations of the Study

Within R1 institutions in the USG, there is a smaller representation of women in executive leadership roles in this study. There were no women presidents, and the highest executive-level position represented was the provost/vice president. Another limitation is the

lack of institutional types due to selecting public, 4-year universities in the USG and not looking at universities outside of the USG. Moreover, the researcher chose to limit the setting to make the data manageable, useful, and accessible. The study's requirements impacted the number of executive-level participants the researcher was able to secure for the study. The 2-year requirement of working within the USG limited me from talking to newly hired executive leaders. The smaller sample size of 14 participants from a southern region can also be considered a limitation of the study. Given the methodology for this specific study, the researchers goal was to reach saturation with participant replies and create a detailed record of what was discussed during the interviews.

The qualitative study is related to validity and reliability and may be a limitation to the study. Qualitative studies are often one-time experiences: “Because qualitative research occurs in the natural setting, it is challenging to replicate studies” (Wiersma, 2000, p. 211). Furthermore, case studies may advocate what could be found in comparable organizations, but further research would be needed to confirm whether findings from one study would simplify elsewhere (Bauhoff, 2011). Due to COVID-19, all of the semi structured interviews had to take place on Zoom. The environment of Zoom may have played a role in creating an impersonal experience for participants. Lastly, the researchers minority status may have impacted participants’ comfort levels when talking about race. When minority participants replied to the researchers questions, they often stated, “You know what I mean, you're a Black woman,” assuming there would be an understanding of their particular experience because the researcher is a minority. The researcher often had to ask minority participants to explain what they experienced in great detail to make sure the data was descriptive. In reverse, because of racial tensions that took place during the summer of 2020 and throughout history, there was a sense of discomfort and remorse by white

participants. Nevertheless, the researcher asked each contributor to give an honest and transparent explanation of her executive leadership experience through the lenses of race, class, and gender. The information gathered was based on each participant's willingness to share her story.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study's foundation was to take a comparative look at women in executive leadership positions in higher education through the lens of the intersectional approach, and explore the impact of gender, race, and class on women's advancement into executive leadership positions at R1 universities. The findings indicate women's experiences related to gaining access to executive leadership positions are vast and complex. Additional studies need to be completed to understand social identities that influence who executive women leaders are, how they see themselves, and how they relate to others as they progress in higher education.

The experiences collected from this data create multiple opportunities for future research. From the 14 executive leaders who participated in the study, I could hear their lived experiences as they progressed into executive leadership and assessed that several topics are significantly under-researched in higher education. Additional studies that address the social identities that influence who executive women leaders may include the following:

- *Recommendation 1: Analysis of the Impact of Living Double Identities for Women Executive Leaders.* In a year marked by crisis, women have taken on more responsibility in the home and the workplace. Although they are present in both of those roles, there are aspects of their identities that are not fully represented because of fear of stepping out of the societal expectations of fitting in and playing their position. When the authenticity of a women's identity is not represented, avenues for

gender equality may not fully take place due to suppressed voices. This study can explore how and why women hide certain aspects of their identities to progress and maintain their organizational climate status.

- *Recommendation 2: Societal Influence of Racial Trauma on Minority Executive Leaders.* After George Floyd's killing, many academic and executive leaders are trying to figure out ways to support their Black executive leaders and employees. Yet, human resources and diversity equity and inclusion leaders must address the mental health impact on Black Americans. Often the leaders over DEI work are minorities themselves impacted by the same trauma. This study could add to the literature sharing the lived experiences of minority executive leaders that still have to be leaders, educators, and mentors in their institutions in the midst of being troubled by the paralyzing misfortunes associated with their race.
- *Recommendation 3: Compare and Contrast Study Between Men and Women Executive Leaders on the Masculine Norms Within Higher Education.* This study would help investigate the gender variances in leadership to deliver analytical comparative examination. The study could explore potential barriers that need to be overcome and find some ways of increasing representation of women and organizational performance among men and women.
- *Recommendation 4: Can You Have It All? Career and Family as an Executive Leader in Higher Education.* The societal expectations for women to manage their households while they develop their careers can, at times, be deflating for women. Research has proven there are fewer executive women leaders. Yet, there are not as many studies

exploring why. This study could explore the why and assess if the reason for lack of representation directly ties to family and work-life balance.

Implications of the Study

This study's findings endorse numerous characteristics of previous literature on women executive leadership positions in higher education. Additional research into the implementation of mentors for women executive leaders would help identify how more encouraging environments can be created for women executive leaders. Rowe-Allen and Smith (2017) speculated students pursuing degrees in student personnel could sometimes have an unrealistic and incomplete image of the profession.

For many administrators, lived experiences, critical incidents, a convergence of identities, shared values, and influence from those in the field have drawn administrators to this profession. Creating policies to promote the inclusion of incoming leaders into R1 universities will help universities become inclusive. Programs could benefit from evaluating and revisiting current systems to minimize the effects of women feeling inaccessible and misread in their executive roles. The American Council on Education (2016) stated female executives were more expected than men to make sacrifices in their occupations to accommodate family obligations. It was apparent the stereotypical expectations placed on women from masculine norms are still present and impact women's success in executive leadership roles. As part of our responsibility to social justice, we must encourage continuous engagement in professional development, training, and dialogue about women's concerns and considerations in their career-decision making processes in higher education.

Conclusion

In researching the lived experiences of women executive leaders at R1 universities within higher education, a multitude of findings were revealed. This study addresses a substantial gap in educational research. Considering participants' diverse, intersectional lived experiences allows for an accurate view of women executive leaders. Through the analysis process, the themes affirmed women executive leaders face hurdles in their career development yet remain resilient in their pursuit. Mary (2016) stated, "Using intersectionality as a framework for studying these experiences can provide a structure for understanding personality and self-change within women" (p. 12). Moreover, this study recognized social contexts in which intersectionality may be noticeable. The compromise of the push and pull between race, class, and gender is exceptionally hard for women in executive leadership roles (Mary, 2016). Denial or compartmentalization of social identities negatively impacts women leaders who want to authentically represent themselves in the workforce.

The study's limitations, joined with the scarcity of the literature surrounding this topic, warrant additional research. Despite an increase in women executive leaders, women leaders are still void in top leadership positions, especially at R1 universities. This underrepresentation in numbers and status signifies having more women in the pipeline is not enough to improve the leadership status of women in higher education. Consequently, a vital transformation is needed. This qualitative study suggests a crucial component of change should be an increase in women's use of their lived experience and voice to evocate change for the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Has your gender impacted your career development? If so, how?

2. Has your race impacted your career development? If so, how?

3. Has your class impacted your career development? If so, how?

4. What is your perspective of how others view you based on your race, gender, and class?

5. Have you ever been asked or felt compelled to do additional work on sit on committees because of your race, gender, or class? If so expound on your experience.

6. Tell me about your most impactful leadership experience?

7. Looking back, as a younger professional who or what helped you through challenges? Sometimes people rely on systems, themselves, or other people, what do you remember about your experiences?

8. Can you describe your current systems of support?

9. How do you think race, class and gender has shaped or influenced what type of leader you are?

10. Have you had a mentor while attaining executive leadership? If so describe their impact on your advancement.

11. In your current role have you ever had to over some stereotypes because of your to race, class or gender?

12. Have you faced barriers in connection to your race, gender, and class? Did you use strategies to overcome the barriers? If so please express what they were.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project conducted by Johniqua Williams, a student in the doctoral program in the Educational Curriculum and Leadership Department at Columbus State University. Dr. Kimberly McElveen will be supervising the study and will be listed as a co-principle investigator of the study.

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to take a comparative look at women in executive leadership positions within higher education. The study will consider an intersectional approach and explore how or if gender, race, and class, impact the advancement of women into executive leadership positions at research-intensive universities. The objective is to fill the gap in literature that has limitedly shown an intersectional comparative assessment of women executive leaders within higher education. The goal is to hear the voices of women who lead in higher education allowing their perspectives and experiences to become visible by listening to stories as lived and experienced.

II. Procedures:

Your participation in this research study will involve a recorded Zoom interview, during a date and time that is convenient for you. The questions will be open-ended in nature and will focus on your personal experiences. The interview should take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The data collected during this study will only be used for dissertation publication and associated presentations. Additionally, you will be requested to provide your CV's and or Resume. The information collected during the study may be used for future research projects.

III. Possible Risks or Discomforts:

To my knowledge, the interview you will participate in will have no more risk or harm than you would experince during your everyday life.

IV. Potential Benefits:

The potential benefit to participating in this study will be providing potential helpful information to those who work as or aspire to be executive leaders in higher education.

V. Costs and Compensation:

There is not cost associated with participating in the study.

VI. Confidentiality:

All documents (i.e. transcripts, informed consent forms, participant confirmation emails) and audio recordings will be kept electronically on the researcher's personal computer. The documents and recordings will be kept in a password protected filing system, which will only be accessible by the researcher. Once transcripts have been approved (using only the pseudonyms) by each participant, the audio recording will be deleted from the

researcher's computer immediately. The remaining documents will stay in the password protected filing system for a period of five years. After five years, the additional documents will be permanently deleted from the researcher's computer.

VII. Withdrawal:

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time, and your withdrawal will not involve penalty or loss of benefits.

For additional information about this research project, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Johniqua Williams at 678-895-8446 or williams_johniqua@columbusstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Columbus State University Institutional Review Board at irb@columbusstate.edu.

I have read this informed consent form. If I had any questions, they have been answered. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Signature of Participant	Date

Revised 10/01/2017

Appendix C

Sample Journal

Pre-interview with Participant 8

Today I am looking forward to meeting with the Dean from University A. She has been with the university for seven years in the role of Dean, and I think that she will be able to share a wealth of knowledge in terms of her personal experience. I know that University A is an extremely competitive university to work. Seeing that she has been a chair for the past seven years speaks to her skill set and navigating a land grant university. I am so curious to hear about her journey. As a dean for a university, I want to know if Gender, race, or class have impacted her. I hope she feels comfortable and is eager to reply to any of the questions.

Post Interview Participant 8

WOW! My cup runneth over. I will do my best to put into words the experience I had with Participant 8. She is a powerhouse and has been extremely strategic and sensitive to the needs of developing her career. As a white female in her role, she was very aware of her privilege and the access it brought her along the way. While on the other hand, she also was very ready to learn from all types of people. For example, she was open to learning from minorities and people with less access and from her partners that have access and resources. I think that her age played a role in her maturity and navigation in the role. The goal for her does not seem to make a name. Still, to provide opportunities for others and to make sure her department is sustainable and provides value to the students it provides for and for the university where it resides.

She made several references about working hard because her department is seen as less than because they were social science. The other sciences, such as engineering, biology, chemistry, etc., are seen as hard science. There were several mentions as to how she had to fight for funding among the other sciences. With her being over 60 years old, I think she has had a tremendous opportunity. Also, since she does not have children, she is afforded more opportunities and time to complete her work. In terms of a support system, she has a devoted husband that has been by her side for 15 years. When she needs him most, she stated that she could communicate with him. Even if she just needs to vent and not reply to him, she finds that support from her husband.

Additionally, I found her experience with professional development to be parallel with the literature. For example, most mentors were males, and she had a professional development that shaped her into being the leader that she is today. The following were quotes that stood out to me.

- "Hate begets Hates" Lead with what you want in return.
- "Go for it even if it's traditionally what men do" She provided a powerful Fishing story that provided future networking opportunities.

Overall, the first interview went smoothly. I was able to record it and complete it within the hour allotted.

Future Study

- Women in Main dominated fields I want to hear their experiences.

Appendix D

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Institutional Review Board
Columbus State University

Date: 09/23/2020
Protocol Number: 21-008
Protocol Title: A Comparative Case Study Exploring the Experiences of Women Leaders in Academic Affairs and Administration in Higher Education Through the Lens of Intersectionality
Principal Investigator: Williams, Johniqua

Co-Principal Investigator: McElveen, Kimberly

Dear Williams, Johniqua:

The Columbus State University Institutional Review Board or representative(s) has reviewed your research proposal identified above. It has been determined that the project is classified as exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b) of the federal regulations and has been approved. You may begin your research project immediately.

Please note any changes to the protocol must be submitted in writing to the IRB before implementing the change(s). Any adverse events, unexpected problems, and/or incidents that involve risks to participants and/or others must be reported to the Institutional Review Board at irb@columbusstate.edu or (706) 507-8634.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact the IRB.

Sincerely,
Andrew Dorbu, Graduate Assistant

Institutional Review Board
Columbus State University

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Please specify your ethnicity.

A. White
B. Hispanic or Latino
C. Black or African American
D. Native American or American Indian
E. Asian / Pacific Islander
F. Other/ Please list_____

What is your age?

A. 15 - 30 years old
B. 30 - 45 years old
C. 45+

Do you have children/ dependents?

A. None
B. 1
C. 2-4
D. More than 4
E. Prefer not to say
F. Other than children, please list the type _____

What is your marital status?

A. Single, never married
B. Married or domestic partnership
C. Widowed
D. Divorced
E. Separated

Appendix F

Recruitment Email

Greetings,

My name is Johniqua Williams, and I am a doctoral student in the Education Curriculum and Leadership program at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. As a higher education professional of over nine years, I have taken an interest in exploring the journey of executive leaders in higher education. In particular, I want to explore how intersections of identity influence a women's experiences in terms of possible barriers and strategies toward advancement. For the purpose of my study, I am looking for five women faculty, chair level and above, and five administrators, vice president level and above, who currently work for the public, four-year institutions of higher education in the USG. The purpose of this study is to identify how intersectionality impacts the progression of women, with an emphasis on organizational culture barriers that limit the advancement of women into executive leadership positions in higher education.

To participate in the study, you must meet the following criteria: 1) identify as a woman, 2) serve as faculty, chair level or above, or administrators, vice president level or above, 3) currently work for a public, four-year institution of higher education in the USG, and 4) are willing to provide a curriculum vita or resume. By volunteering, you will be asked to participate in a 60-minute Zoom interview with the researcher. Interviews will be recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Each participant will be given a pseudonym to protect her confidentiality and will have an opportunity to verify the information in the transcript of her interview. All documents and audio recordings will be kept in a locked, secured location. Only the researcher will have access to the materials. As stated previously, this process is completely voluntary.

If you meet the listed criteria and are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at xxxxx@columbusstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Johniqua Williams
Doctoral Candidate College of Education & Health Professions
Columbus State University

Appendix G

Letter to Prospective Participants

Dear Prospective Participant,

I am a doctoral student in the Education Curriculum and Leadership program at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. As a higher education professional of over 10 years, I have taken an interest in exploring the journey of executive leaders in higher education. In particular, I want to explore how intersections of identity influence a women's experiences in terms of possible barriers and strategies toward advancement. This letter serves as a formal invitation to take part in a qualitative research study about your experiences as an executive leader in higher education.

Your participation in this research study will involve a recorded 60-minute Zoom interview at a date and time that is convenient for you. The questions will be open ended and will focus on your personal experiences. Once the transcription of each interview has been completed, you will be sent a copy of your interview transcript to verify the validity of the transcript.

Only the researcher will have access to the data, and it will be securely locked inside the researcher's home. The data will be kept on file for a period of 5 years. Each participant's identity will be kept confidential, and only pseudonyms will be used to distinguish participants. To my knowledge, the interview you will participate in will have no more risk or harm than you would experience during your everyday life.

If you choose to participate, please sign and send in the attached Informed Consent Form. If you have any questions or concerns about your potential participation, please feel free to contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Johniqua Williams
Doctoral Candidate College of Education & Health Professions
Columbus State University

Kimberly McElveen, PhD
Chair, Dissertation Committee
College of Education & Health Professions

Appendix H

Participant Confirmation Email

Hello <Insert Participant Name>,

This email serves as the confirmation of your participation in the study *A Comparative Case Study Exploring the Experiences of Women Leaders in Academic Affairs and Administration in Higher Education Through the Lens of Intersectionality.* Based on the information you provided, the following date and time have been scheduled to complete the interview. If you have any questions or need to make adjustments to your interview time, please feel free to contact me at the contact information listed below.

NAME: <INSERT PARTICIPANT NAME> INTERVIEW DATE: <INSERT DATE>
INTERVIEW TIME: <INTERVIEW TIME>

Sincerely,

Johniqua Williams
Doctoral Candidate
College of Education and Health Professions
Columbus State University Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
Email: xxxxx@columbusstate.edu
Date:
Participant Name:

Appendix I

Pre-Interview Script

Before we begin, I would like to thank you for participating in this interview and agreeing to be a part of the research study. The hope that this will be a positive experience that will allow me to learn more about your personal story as a female executive leader in higher education. As you know, the purpose of this study is to explore the consideration of gender with an emphasis on organizational culture barriers that limit the advancement of women into executive leadership positions in higher education. Also, drawing on intersectionality, as a complex and developing feminist theory, the study is a consideration of ways in which narratives can illuminate hidden complexities while seeking to avoid simplifications and essentialisms.

First, I would like to take a moment to once again review the Informed Consent Form you signed on <DATE OF SIGNED CONSENT FORM>. The purpose of this form is to ensure that you understand your rights as a participant and recognize my commitment to you as a participant regarding anonymity. Please take a moment to once again review the form.

(ALLOW PARTICIPANT THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW FORM) Do you have any questions before we begin? If no questions are asked, a recording device will be turned on, and interview will begin. The intent is to be 60 minutes. I will check in with you at 55-minute mark to ask if you're ok with going over the time allotted to accommodate any questions that were not answered.

(If the participant has questions, those will be addressed until no additional questions are asked.)

Appendix J

Participant Interview Follow-Up Email

Dear <Insert Participant Name>,

Thank you once again for taking the time to participate in the research study. Attached to this email, you will see the interview transcript from your interview. Please read over it and let me know if there are any edits you would like me to make. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Johniqua S. Williams, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate
College of Education and Health Professions
Columbus State University
Phone: (XXX) XXX–XXXX
Email: xxxxx@columbusstate.edu