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Shaking the Ceiling:

First Leadership Role Attainment for Collegiate Women

Elizabeth J. Siecinski

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Abstract

Using qualitative research methodology, factors and barriers influence leadership role attainment for collegiate women were explored and examined. The study used semi-structured interviews with four participants to look at factors influencing leadership attainment and why women decide to lead. The researcher identified factor before and after college that impacted a women's decisions to lead, and her ability to attain a role. Challenges and barriers that women face in their leadership role attainment were also found. Overall, the research found that due to barriers and challenges women struggle to lead authentically, and that they see leadership as way to contribute to a greater good in society. The confidence that is given to a woman through family and outside influences is also paramount in their belief that they can attain a leadership role. Finally, recommendations for student affairs professionals, women in leadership positions, and future research were made based on research findings.

Keywords: Women Leaders, Leadership, Higher Education

Dedication

“No one achieves anything alone”

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all the people that made this statement so true in my goal of completing my master’s degree

To my parents for supporting me in this endeavor and never doubting I could do it. Thank you to my mom for inspiring me to go to grad school, and for giving me the courage and guidance to tackle this goal. Thank you to my dad for always believing in me and always telling me that I can do it, no matter the circumstances. To my siblings (Maggie, Tim, and Mark) thank you for being in this educational journey with me, for sharing the love of learning with me, and all the laughs in-between. Thanks to you all for supporting me not just now but always. One of my greatest blessings in this life is the love and support you provide me. I could not do it without you.

Corey Jones thank you for being by my side these two years. Thank you for never letting me think quitting was an option. Thank you for all the hours of phone calls/facetimes, long drives and encouraging words that you put into supporting me and loving me through graduate school. I am better with you by my side.

Thank you to my grad school pals and lifelong friends, who have been there alongside all the good and hard moments. Without our late-night talks, and mutual love and support these years would have been far less fun and far more challenging. Thank you for showing me what it means to have true friendship, filled with love and grace.

To all the strong women in my life who have continued to be an example of leadership and strength, thank you. It is because of your examples that I feel compelled to share and show what women are capable of, because you made me feel like I was also

capable. I feel fortunate to get to be surrounded by such an amazing group of women in my life. We truly do love a supportive sister.

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strong, and brave. To face the challenges that are ahead, and to make room for others beside you. Empowered Women, Empower Women.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Across college campuses faculty and staff aim to prepare students for a future, a future that often involves leading (CAS, 2015). While this remains a goal of higher education, barriers to women's leadership in higher education have been attributed to gender expectations, sabotage and discouragement, lack of support and opportunity, and not having a strong leadership identity. (Hannum, Muhly, Shockley-Zalabak, & White, 2014). Leadership theories suggest common styles and important values to women, but those values are not often the common practices or organizations and systems. It is for these reasons that women still only hold a small fraction of the leadership positions available in the workforce and on college campus (Hoyt, 2010).

In order to encourage women to attain leadership roles, faculty and staff need increased knowledge on what contributes to a women's desire to lead and the ability to attain those roles. Understanding how a woman is able to overcome the barriers presented in her life and then persist into a leadership position may identify key factors that will allow for better leadership development of women. This proposed study seeks to define, explain, and understand the phenomenon behind student leadership roles for women and their ability to attain and succeed in positions of leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and explore how college women come to attain their first leadership roles in college. The secondary purpose of this study was to assess and explore the factors which contribute to a collegiate woman's ability to achieve leadership positions in their college life. The study also aimed to discover what barriers

college women face in their reaching for leadership roles, and how they overcome those barriers in order to be able to persist. This study was inspired and guided through the research that show significant gaps are seen in leadership achievement between men and women. Finally, this study identified what factors contributed to the successful leadership attainment of college women in order to increase mentors and educator's knowledge so that they may better help women be successful in leadership roles.

The results of this study will improve the recruitment and retention of female student leaders. Students want to be a part of an organization that is congruent to their values and social opportunity (Desields, Kara, Kaynak, 2005), and in order to be congruent to a student's values, professionals must be aware of them. By better understanding what women value in organizations, professionals can create structures that will support, and therefore retain their leaders. The study will aim to combine the issues highlighted in previous research with the knowledge gained from participants to contribute to the literature for women's leadership research.

Research Questions

Women hold almost 60% percent of undergraduate degrees in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017). Despite this high percentage of degree attainment there is still a gap in leadership roles held by women. Gender roles, expectations, and stereotypes act as barriers to this attainment, as well as gendered structures of organizations (Archard, 2012; Hoyt & Kennedy 2008). This study will aim to see how college women are able to attain in their first leadership role in college. The following research questions were used to help guide the study:

- 1) What factors prior to college lead to leadership attainment for women in college?

- 2) What factors during college contribute to leadership attainment for women in college?
- 3) Why do women get involved in their organizations?
- 4) What barriers do college women experience in relation to their leadership attainment?
- 5) What benefits do women anticipate from their leadership roles in the future?

Significance of the Study

Developing leadership skills is an important process for student development. This process is complicated when considering what leadership skills are valued in society and how women's natural leadership differs from the leadership norms based on male centered leadership. Women feel pressured to adopt the dominant male styles when they are placed in leadership roles which may conflict with their own preferred style of leadership. In order to begin the process of breaking the glass ceiling, women must first have a chance to lead. The study sought to identify what factors contribute to college women's ability to achieve leadership roles and to inform those who support female leaders in order to promote their continued attainment of these positions. This study will identify what factors contribute to leadership opportunities for women, how women are able to thrive in leadership roles, and what benefits it presents them with as they continue into their professional careers.

Limitations and Delimitations and Assumptions

Limitations

As a qualitative study, the application and generalizability of this study was limited by the number of participants and their scope of involvement and experiences.

The research took significant effort to find participants from the campus population that are representative of both diverse backgrounds and types of leadership positions. Based on the criteria for selection, a fully diverse group of participants may not be possible which may have an impact on the generalizability to the overall issues of women's leadership.

Another limitation of the study is the transferability of the findings to women in leadership roles at other institutions. This study took place at a mid-sized Midwestern university in a rural community. The particular findings in this study may be more representative of that community and not be transferable to other institutions with different demographics.

Researcher bias and experience also presents as a potential limitation of the study. The researcher has a personal connection and passion for the topic. As both a woman inspired by and who sought, leadership positions, the researcher believes in the empowerment of women, and may have some personal bias towards those who have made similar decisions. The researcher also identifies as an educated, white, cisgender woman and the lens through which she experiences the privileges and challenges of those identities must be taken into consideration. Special attention was given in the interpretation of the data to minimize the bias and decrease the impact on the study.

Assumptions. This research relied on the assumption that the volunteers are being truthful and honest in their disclosure of their experience. There is the potential for sensitive information to be shared by participants and as such, the answers to questions must be honored as truthful to increase the validity of the study.

Definitions of Terms

Leadership position. Holding an executive officer position, as defined by the organization, in a registered student organization (RSO).

Leadership style. The self-identified style that a leader chooses to use in their organizational role.

Woman. This definition is based in gender identity. Gender identity is the “innermost concept of self”. Participants in this study will self-identify as a woman. This means within their concept of self; they identify with the societal and personal aspects of being a woman. (Human Rights Campaign, 2011).

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed introduction to the study. It outlined the importance of the study and the impact it will have on higher education and those who have influence in the development of female leaders. This study explores the influential factors that affect women’s leadership development and their ability to achieve leadership positions in collegiate environments. The following chapters will include a review of the literature and the proposed methodology for the study, results, and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Leadership theory and development are areas that have been highly assessed by researchers (Rosch & Anthony, 2012). Leadership style and development is different for women as they work through gender expectations and the roles that have been thrust on them by society. Leadership development begins in the K-12 years and continues when women arrive on campus (Eagly & Carli, 2012) and one way this development occurs is through the formation of a feminist identity (Downing & Roush, 1985). Factors such as bureaucratic structures, gender roles/expectations, multicultural factors, and intersectionality create additional challenges as women begin to explore what leadership means to them (Eagly & Carli, 2012). Despite the barriers women face, influences such as mentors (Dominque, 2015; Edds- Ellis & Keaster, 2013) and the impact of previous woman leaders, such as the involvement of women in the civil rights movement, help young women persevere and attain leadership positions (Robnett, 1996). These topics will be further addressed and a review of Marcia Baxter Magolda's (2004) self-authorship theory will be reviewed to provide a theoretical framework through which the findings of this study will be interpreted.

Leadership Styles

In a study completed by Rosenbusch and Townsend (2004), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was distributed to college aged students of all genders and specific organizations to determine differences between gender and style. Rosenbusch and Townsend (2004) found that women tend towards roles as more transformational leaders, while men favor a transactional style of leadership. While, they were unable to

find significance in leadership style and organizations in their study, they did not specifically seek out gendered organizations to determine if differences in leadership existed in those single gender organizations.

Avolio and Gardner (2005) used transformational leadership theory and built upon it to find four major components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, balanced information processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. A large part of authentic leadership is the ability to balance when you should and should not take action while not giving up on internal personal factors (Gardiner, 2015). Authentic leadership theory must also account for the intersectionality of persons who identify in marginalized and oppressed communities, something that is not considered heavily in the current research (Gardiner, 2015). Strong ties to authentic leadership are found when leaders feel that they are able to be a voice for, and supporter of, social justice issues (Gardiner, 2015). “Authentic leadership may be facilitated when leaders work with others to engender meaningful engagement in their communities” (Gardiner, 2015, p. 7).

Rosch and Anthony (2012) worked to compile a leadership pedagogy for college students. They surveyed a multitude of scholars to consider the most important aspects in developing leadership in college students. They identified the three major facets of leadership education: being (attitude), knowing (knowledge), and doing (skills) (Rosch & Anthony, 2012). Development in these areas will provide a strong foundation for leadership attainment. Students need to be able to discover their inner qualities in order to understand the complexities of the world around them. They must also have knowledge on how to use their attitudes towards leadership in an ethical way. Finally,

students must learn the skills needed for leadership which includes technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills (Rosch & Anthony, 2012).

Postindustrial leadership theories place the relationships of leaders with their followers at the forefront (Rost, 1993). Most higher learning institutions find that the theories that are categorized as post-industrial are the most relatable to the students of today (Rosch & Anthoy, 2012). These theories are the transformational leadership approach, servant leadership approach, authentic leadership approach, and chaos/systems approach (Rosch & Anthoy, 2012). Women are found to fit most often into styles that are transformative and collaborative, and not only are they more likely to adopt these styles but are more effective in them (Rosener, 2011). These theories provide a background of information that can help supervisors, advisors, and campus understand the meaning behind actions and also the motivations.

College leadership programs often adopt leadership models to structure their student leadership programs. Popular models include the relational leadership model, social change model, and the leadership challenge (Rosch & Anthony, 2012). The relational leadership approach focuses on the positive purposes of leadership and views leadership as a complex process. This model does not incorporate leadership theory instead it identifies key traits and behaviors of leaders that will foster a healthy community (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Campuses that use this model focus on the importance of authentic personal relationships, strong ethics, and incorporate social justice issues into their goals.

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Astin, 1996) focuses on growing leadership skills that will allow for effective leadership in a complex and

interconnected society. The end goal for a student who is developing through the Social Change Model is that they are able to make positive change. There are three domains of this theory: the individual, the group, and the community domain. The individual domain focuses personal skills where leaders should learn to be conscious of their own behaviors, congruent in their values, words, and behaviors, and committed to their goals. The group domain is focused on interpersonal skills and incorporates the skills of collaboration, attaining common purpose within a group, and controversy with civility, where students are able to deal with conflict in a mature manner (Rosch & Anthony, 2012). Finally, students explore the community domain where they display citizenship, which is described as engaging positively with the larger society.

Another common leadership model seen on college campuses is The Leadership Challenge model (Rosch & Anthony, 2012). This model, developed by Kouzes and Posner (2008), has five behavioral domains that leaders display when working with organizations: Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart are the five behavioral domains (Kouzes & Posner, 2008). Through the Student Leadership Practices Inventory, students are able to discover their natural tendencies towards a specific behavioral area. The identification of these areas allows students to lean into their natural ways, while also making intentional efforts to grow their weaker areas (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Leadership education happens through different environments on a college campus. There are traditional classroom settings, intensive leadership workshops, leadership programs, and various other sources of leadership education. Because of the developmental stage that students are in during college, when thinking about leadership

development one must account for student development theory as well (Owen, 2012). Theories that focus on the psychosocial development of students such as Chickering and Riser's (1993) seven vectors, Perry's (1968) theory of intellectual and ethical development, Baxter Magolda's (2004) theory of self-authorship, and Kohlberg (1971) and Gilligan's (1982) stages of moral development are used as a base of leadership identity theory.

The Leadership Identity Development Model (LID) is both a theory and a model. The LID provides a way to understand how one comes to understand themselves as a leader and accept this as a component of their identity (Komives et al., 2005). A grounded theory was conducted by Komives, Owen, Longenecker, Manella, and Osteen (2005, 2006) to determine what a person must go through to gain awareness to be able to work effectively with others to accomplish goals as well as what environmental factors contribute to leadership development (Komives et al., 2005). Six developmental stages were identified by the researchers: awareness, explorations/engagement, leader identified, leader differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis (Komives et al., (2005). Knowledge and application of these stages inform leadership educators and facilitators on the best ways to facilitate change within students to encourage growth across the stages. LID suggests that students need to have access to mentors, provided with opportunities to gain knowledge of leadership skills, and encouragement to explore a wide range of leadership and organizational involvement (Owen 2012). Educators can also use this theory in combination with the various student development theories to provide a well-rounded base of development and to structure programming to best support students' leadership process (Owen, 2012). It should also be noted that intersectionality of

identities must also be addressed when comparing leadership and student development theory as they do often not account for how leadership development is affected through the interaction with the identities of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and social class (Owen, 2012).

Women's Leadership Development

Leadership is not a skill that one is born with, rather it is a set of skills that must be developed and nurtured over time (Eagly, Eagly & Carli, 2007). The current imbalance of leadership roles between men and women in society, both available and assumed, indicates that there must be more done to develop women leaders in society in order for these positions to be taken by women in the future (Eagly, 2007). Due to gender imbalances, gender stereotyping, and gender expectations that exist in society, it can be said that more must be done to cultivate leadership skills in women (Archard, 2012; Hoyt & Kennedy 2008). These gender issues are compounded by the challenge of negotiating what it means to be a woman in the context of society, personal, and interpersonal life (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008).

Often societal pressures thrust upon women at a young age actually inhibit the development of leadership skills and traits at a time when the development of leadership skills is essential so that individuals may combine the skills and knowledge to create a foundation for leadership in the future (Kress, 2006). Adolescence can be particularly challenging as it is a critical period of development where a young woman is finding a way to author her own voice, which involves negotiating one's own voice and battling the silencing that comes from society through gender expectations (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Silencing of one's voice in adolescence becomes additionally complicated when

an individual possesses multiple oppressed identities such as racial or ethnic identity (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008).

Negotiating voice is the process by which a woman distinguishes the difference between her inner voice of what she thinks and feels and the outer voice that is influenced by society (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Due to the importance of negotiating voice for women, many school programs focus on skills such as building confidence and self-esteem in order to create the foundation for leadership development (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). There is significant importance in parents, educators, coaches and the community as nurturers of leadership skills for young women (Kress, 2006). Programs of significance for the adolescent group include sports, community-based organization such as girl scouts or 4-H, and faith-based organizations.

In order to foster female youth leadership development, many different types of programs have been put in place to cultivate the skills needed to be a leader. Female only spaces such as all-girls school, all-girls programs, and all-girls classrooms have been utilized to foster this development. In an analysis of multiple studies Archard (2012) found that when girls are separated from boys in school, programs, and classrooms that they are able to take advantage of the authentic space created to develop the leadership and confidence skills needed to grow into successful adult leaders. An all-female environment also allows the students to feel safe from harassment, violence, and silencing gender constructions (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008).

Archard (2013) argues that the importance of these safety factors found in all women spaces is that it fosters a space where they feel free to explore what leadership means to them, as often the ideas previously presented to them are constructed based on

society's male dominated leadership perspective, which may not allow for authentic leadership development for women. Authentic leadership development is critical to the development of a leader as the natural individual traits of a person must be included in the process in order for the most effective form of leadership development to occur (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Researchers found that participants felt as though they had to force themselves into traditional leadership stereotypes, due to the societal pressures they feel, and as a result the women were initially tentative in identifying themselves as leaders (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Gardiner (2015) says "authentic leadership may be facilitated when leaders work with others to engender meaningful engagement in their communities" (p. 7). Overcoming these barriers to women's leadership development provides a foundation for many female development programs, with many programs being focused on nurturing the female voice in hopes of eliminating societal silencing and increasing authoring of one's own voice (Archard, 2013). Once women are able to author their own stories it allows them to progress through personal development and explore later stages in their personal and leadership development such as exploring their voice more deeply and negotiating their own leadership voice (Brown & Gilligan 1992).

Some women arrive at college having experience with leadership development already through high school and youth development programs, while others experience leadership development opportunities for the first time within the realm of higher education (Dugan, 2006). Development of leadership skills is one of the core functions of higher education's development of students (CAS, 2015) and many school's mission statements, as well as the programs offered by the university, focus on the fostering of

leadership in their students. While progress is being made in the emergence of female leaders, there is still a disconnection between the roles and the expectations of leadership (Haber-Curran, 2013). Women in top leadership positions still feel the need to adapt to more masculine approaches especially when they are in a male dominated environment (Eagly & Carli, 2004, 2007). This adaptation does not provide the ability for women to use more contemporary theories and models of leadership that more often fit their natural style (Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008). Research has shown that women benefit from the incorporation of stereotypically feminine skills that are congruent with female gender roles; relationship building, connectedness, care and concern, and the development of leaders into facilitators as the consensus over the definition of leadership changes (Eagly & Carli, 2003). This style is not favored in male-dominated and traditional “top leadership” roles and therefore creates a difficult situation where a woman feels the need to adapt to more autocratic, and direct approach that is neither authentic for the women, or most affective for the organization (Haber-Curran, 2013).

Dugan (2006) uses the social change model to explore women’s leadership development in college. Dugan found that in the leadership development of college students there is an increased need of values-based leadership training. When relating development to the social change model he saw that students of both genders struggle most with change and citizenship. Dugan (2006) explained that this means that there is a lack of leadership development programs instilling core and critical values into students, something that is needed for authentic and genuine leadership development. Instead many programs offer a skills-based approach focusing on skill development and while this does increase leadership development, it is the values that builds a strong base for continued

leadership development throughout the lifespan that is needed. This need for values-based leadership development increases when you look at women's leadership development in particular.

Women have an inclination for thriving in roles that allow them to practice authentic leadership (McKenzie, 2018). A critical portion of developing authentic leadership and thriving in authentic leadership is knowing what values and actions are authentic for themselves and gaining the experience to see how these roles exist in society. This type of process can also be referred to as discovering leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). Brenda McKenzie (2018) sought to discover how traditional-aged college women develop their leadership identity and was able to categorize women's leadership identity development into four phases. The first phase of the model is Leadership Awareness and Exploration (McKenzie, 2018). This is a student realizing that leadership exists as a whole concept, that it is not just a position but an identity and way of existing in the larger complex society (Komives et al., (2005). In this stage of the process a student begins to see leadership qualities in others but may not think of themselves as a leader. This exploration involves the students taking actions to step up in a group and begin to put themselves in a more dominate leadership position, something they have not done before at this point in time (McKenzie, 2018)

The second phase of McKenzie's model is Leader Identified. In this phase students will express themselves as leaders and begin stepping into different leadership roles. McKenzie (2018) describes how gender influences are particularly important in these steps as participants in the study noted that their lack of seeing themselves as a

leader was related to outside influences, such as seeing only men in leadership roles throughout childhood and society's gender expectations for women to be soft.

The third phase of McKenzie's (2018) leadership identity development model is Leadership Differentiated. This stage is specifically related to authentic leadership development and style development because it is at this point that the student negotiates their own personal view of development and their self-confidence is enhanced to change from a view of what the world sees as a leader to a more personalized viewpoint (McKenzie, 2018). The women in the study noted having many "aha" moments or defining moments during this portion of their development process. Finally, women move into the final phase, Generativity, where they identify the need to develop leadership in others and feel both the responsibility and ability to pass their skills onto others (McKenzie, 2018).

Defining moments are crucial to the leadership development of college women (McKenzie, 2018). Dahlvig and Longman (2010) examined the defining moments of college women and their impact on leadership development where defining moments were categorized as a turning or trigger point where a student changes their perceptions of self and begins living differently. Based on gender norms and expectations, these defining moments are of importance because they serve as the moment when women are able to turn from their previously lived norms to see themselves as leaders. The defining moments are frequently aligned with moments where core values are being tested, or specifically reflected from a peer or mentor (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). These moments were categorized into three areas: (1) someone "speaking life" into the women; (2) a specific event that lead to reframing of leadership potential; and (3) a moment where the

women stood for something outside themselves (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Many of the themes found in Dahlvig and Longman's (2010) research correlates with the themes of core values and authentic leadership. Leadership development for college women is contingent upon their ability to navigate voice and break through stereotypes to be able to speak for themselves and feel that they are indeed a leader.

Feminist Identity Development

Downing and Roush in 1985 introduced a development theory specific for women as they sought to develop a model that would take into account lived experiences, acknowledging the oppression that is faced within society (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, Renn, & Quaye, 2009). Using Cross's (1971) Black identity development model, as an inspiration, they created a theory that would look at how women develop a positive feminist identity. The Feminist Identity Development model is a stage model that often has individuals experiencing the stages multiple times and as women grow and experience more life events, they may cycle through the different stages more than once. Experiencing a crisis or major life event may require a woman to adjust her perspective and re-evaluate her feminist identity. Women will use the skills learnt previously to build upon one another and work more quickly through the stage the second time they experience it (Downing & Roush, 1985). Stage One of this theory is Passive Acceptance. Here "women lack awareness of the structural and systematic ways in which they face gender-based oppression. Women do not accept the idea of discrimination as a reality in their lives and follow dominate male standards and expectations of womanhood" (Evans et al., 2009, p. 271). In this stage women accept the traditional societal ideas of womanhood as acceptable and at times the student may not even see how ingrained these

are into themselves (Downing & Roush, 1985). The end of this stage is a “readiness, a receptivity or openness for change” (Downing & Roush, 1985, p. 698).

Stage two of this theory is Revelation. Revelation is a stage that is caused by a disequilibrium occurring in a women’s life that causes her to question the conventional understanding of womanhood (Evans et al., 2009, p. 271). This stage can be difficult to overcome for a women as she must work to fight her ““perceptual distortions”, or the ways in which women are socialized to distrust their perceptions and feelings” (Evans et al., 2009, p. 271). The hallmark of this stage is that women are negotiating the negative feelings of being a woman that they have grown up with and affirming the, now, more positive attributes of being a woman. Transition to the next stage happens when a woman is able to recognize how she has been involved in the current system and the action she would like to take to change.

The third stage is called Embeddedness-Emanation. In this stage “women attempt to reconcile their deep desire for greater gender consciousness while also negotiating their intricate connection to dominant culture” (Evans et al., 2009, p. 272). Women look for support mechanisms in this phase through sources like women’s groups, attending rallies, attending workshops, or taking courses focusing on women. This idea of embeddedness helps women become connected to other women and develop bonds that affirm their new gender constructs. Additionally, women in this stage will also experience emanation. Emanation is about understanding diverse perspectives (Evans et al., 2009, p. 272). It is about the “desire to lose their prior selves and rise above the culture of disrespect for women” (Evans et al., 2009, p. 272). It is important to note that

in this stage women may have. Negative concept of men and prefer to not interact and don't trust them.

Following stage three is stage four which is Synthesis. This is where a woman is able to take all she has now learned about the world to form a positive view on being a woman and embracing the qualities that being a woman comes with. Women in this stage also have let go of their prejudice against men and are able to also make judgements about men that are not grounded in stereotypes. Here women have overcome the traditional and oppressive ideas to "embrace the fullness of being a woman" (Evans et al., 2009, p. 272).

Finally, a woman reaches stage five; Active Commitment. In Active Commitment a solid and cohesive identity is formed, and actions that the woman takes will be towards changing the societal view of women. Women in the stage use their knowledge of gender roles and use their skills to educate and help change society for the betterment of women (Evans et al., 2009, p. 271). This stage is important because in this stage it is about knowing the roles and actively working to encourage others to empower women. This empowerment is not just going to rallies but taking part in action that will build up other women to fight the gender roles/expectations that they face in society (Downing & Roush, 1985). This theory is significant to women's leadership as it represents how a woman becomes conscious of the ideas that society as thrust upon her and acknowledges that there is a process to develop from the oppression that is experienced.

Factors Influencing Women's Leadership Development

The factors that influence women's leadership development include gender roles, gender expectations, gender stereotypes, sexuality, racial diversity all create barriers to

the leadership development of collegiate women (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, Dominique, 2015, Eagly & Carli, 2012). These barriers are even further compounded when you take into consideration the intersections of identities that women face when they identify with other oppressed groups based upon race and sexuality (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, Dominique, 2015).

Andrea Dominique (2015) researched black women college student leaders on a predominately white campus to assess what barriers exist for their development as well as what helps nourish their leadership skills. Students in her study noted high levels of interactions with oppression in the forms of stereotyping, microaggressions, and racial and gender expectations. Dominique (2015) found that there were significant struggles with negotiating voice for these women, as well as silencing hurting their ability to stand up and speak out.

When looking into areas of nourishment, the researcher found that something specifically impactful for these women was when they were able to draw from historical traditions and examples of black women's leadership which encouraged them to continue to develop through oppression to persist in leadership roles (Dominique, 2015). The women in the study discussed how their voices didn't sound like many that they heard in the presented leadership theories and examples they had seen on campus which led to them having to make an effort to look for their own examples as they were not readily available to them. This struggle is compounded by sometimes feeling as though adopting the title of leader is giving into an oppressive group (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). At the same time these students felt it was their duty to lead their group in order to give voice to their culture and people (Arminio et al., 2000). This was especially important as the

women often felt that because they were one of few women student leaders of color on campus, they needed to represent their identity well (Dominque, 2015). This pressure was not solely felt by marginalized and oppressed racial groups, but also by women of other marginalized communities such as those that identify with the LGBTQ community (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005).

The amount of research on specifically women who identify within the LGBTQ community who also identify as leaders is very limited (Renn & Bilodeau , 2005). While research is slowly being developed on this topic, many of the articles on sexual identity and leadership relate more to the male point of view (Renn & Bilodeau , 2005). Identity development is extremely important to college students, and that development affects the impact of identifying within a marginalized community and how that changes and shapes the way that a student develops (Renn & Bilodeau , 2005).

A strong commitment to leadership development for many in this community is built on the desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves and the commitment to continuing the mission and values of the LGBTQ community (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Not only does the desire to be a part of the LGBTQ community help students develop, but it also contributes to a source of leadership identity as they begin to adopt the values and find purpose serving the population (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Renn and Ozaki (2010) call this idea of combining personal identity and positional identity as a merged path to leadership. The positives of leadership development for women identifying in this area are clear, but there are also barriers to development such as not seeing representation and safety issues of being out in a community (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). These are the factors that a student must navigate as they progress through their

leadership development and they influence the student's ability to lead authentically. Leaders of marginalized communities often feel as though they must lead more for the group and less for themselves as individuals (Dominique, 2015, Renn & Ozaki, 2010).

Stereotypes, and expectations play a major role in the development and process of a student and their leadership skills. The formal and structural nature of the United States of America gives preference to male identifiers (Eagly & Carli, 2012). Women must work to fight these stereotypes as they begin to break the glass ceiling and achieve positions once viewed as strictly male roles. Bongiorno, Bain, and David (2014) researched the prejudices towards women in leadership roles, when examining the influence of women versus male political leaders in a campus community. They found that women who were tentative in leadership roles when presented are seen as less likeable than their male counterparts (Bongiorno et al., 2013). They argued that the reason for this finding was that in society's view women should be demure and gentle, but these are not the accepted leadership traits in society (Bongiorno et al., 2013).

Women also reported feeling challenged by male peers when engaging in the decision making and social interactions within a co-ed group (Haber-Curran, 2013). When a woman uses more typically male categorized leadership behaviors such as being more forceful in tone and direct in conversation, the woman was thought to be less likeable than their male counterparts and consequently has less influence. The reasoning behind this is that when women adopt the styles of men they are seen as being too direct, but when males' peers act with the same assertiveness it is just accepted behavior for men and seen in a positive light. This paradox is referred to as the double-bind in the workforce (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women don't know the right way to move forward, as

they can both be too nice and too direct (Bongiorno et al., 2013, Haber-Curran, 2013, Gardiner, 2015). Along with style of confronting, there is also the struggle of being considered too emotional. Women feel as though at times they are unable to show their real feelings due to receiving negative feedback growing up and in previous experiences (Gardiner, 2015).

Gendered experience is especially prevalent in the experience of women in roles in highly male dominated fields such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). In one study (Dugan, Fath, Howes, Lavelle, Polanin, 2013) a questionnaire was distributed to female undergraduate students in the STEM fields. The goals of the study were to assess levels of leadership capacity and leader efficacy. Leadership capacity was defined as being able to engage in the process of leadership and leadership efficacy was defined as the belief in the capacity to lead (Dugan, et al., 2013, p. 8). The study found that although the women held capability, they showed low levels of leadership efficacy. This is most likely due to feeling like they should promote their male peers as leaders instead of themselves (Dugan, et al., 2013).

In comparison, a study by Rovira-Asenjo, Pietraszkiewicz, Sczensny, Gumi, Guimera, and Sales-Pardo (2017) compared women and men's leadership evaluations across the four-year college experience and found that, throughout time, women become more confident while their male counterparts remained the same. They hypothesize that this is the result of men arriving on campus more confident and/or able to easily adjust to the leadership expectations while women gain confidence over time because they discover through experience that they are able to lead and also adapt to the dominate leadership style (Rovira-Asenjo et al., 2017).

Gendered communication also contributes to the gap in leadership attainment and confidence in leadership role for women. In top executive positions, typically held by men, gendered communication is represented by male executives' actions in treatment, action, and judgement toward their female counterparts (Edwards, 2017). An example of this is that when a woman is addressed harshly by a male peer and begins to react emotionally the male may then retract and act gentler and retract previous statements (Edwards, 2017). O'Connor (2018) found that women specifically identified these barriers as having to speak in the male context, having different speech patterns, and having to be conscious of counteracting gendered expectations. The women react this way for two potential reasons; one being that this is her authentic reaction and two, women have been socialized by society to react with emotions to this type of feedback. Edwards (2017) makes the argument that women need to develop more self-esteem, confidence, and strength to be able to better deal with these types of circumstances and be able to work better in high intensity situations.

The idea of gender stereotypes and expectations continued into specific roles such as the RA role on campuses. Cousineau and Chambers (2015) argued that many roles on campus are specifically gendered, meaning that they are tailored specifically for females and force females into specific gendered expectations. In their study they talked to women who were resident assistants regarding how they felt about their experience. The women expressed that they felt they had a different set of expectations for them compared to their male peers. They felt as though they had to be gentler and take on a mother like figure with their residents, and that they were not treated equally by their residents (Cousineau & Chambers, 2015). An example of this was when they attempted

to be more a disciplinarian, their residents wouldn't respond as well as they would to their male peers, and they would receive more resistance and difficulty. Traditional views of leadership hindered their ability to be proper peer leaders, as they felt as though they had to adopt the gentle approaches of a traditional female leadership role than how they may otherwise prefer to act (Cousineau & Chambers, 2015).

Bureaucratic structures can also have an impact of women's leadership roles. In the research done by Gardiner (2015), it was found that bureaucratic structures inhibit women's ability to lead. Through the lens of an authentic leadership approach, Gardiner (2015) stated that the typical bureaucratic structures established on campuses do not allow women to lead to their authentic self. She speaks specifically about how structures are set to be very firm and honest, but for a woman in her role she may feel that a gentler and more nourishing style would better aid in support of the structure of the organization (Gardiner, 2015). This calls for a need to have more flexible expectations, and expansion of leadership identities in leadership roles. (Gardiner, 2015).

Women's Leadership Behaviors

College aged women have more contemporary approaches to leadership, these being more relationship and collaboration skills than the previous task-oriented skills (Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008). While women have a tendency to have high levels of relationship-based skills, they struggle with the confidence and efficacy to put their skills into effect in organizations (Haber-Curran, 2013). Noted challenges in the process of displaying leadership behaviors for collegiate women are balancing relationship versus task behaviors, the role of leader versus friend, as well as the environmental context in which they lead. Women who led in more formal organizations, such as a sorority, felt

that at times the formality of the organization made them feel as if they had less ability to lead in a way that allowed them to use their relationship skills to include and build relationships with others (Haber-Curran, 2013). In turn other members of the study felt as though being a part of an all-female organization increased the understanding of members and empowered them to lead.

Self- efficacy is the belief that one has both the ability and the understanding of their own capabilities in order to take action on their goals (Bandura, 1997). Gender roles have had an effect on women's development in relation to their leadership skills. The lack of feelings of self-efficacy feeds into the socialized gender roles that women should not insert themselves into leadership position and push their ideas forward which results in the gender gap for leadership attainment for women (Sheppard, 2018). Women are more likely report that their future male partners will be the high earners in their household, an example of how low self-efficacy can limit leadership attainment (Sheppard, 2018). Other factors influencing women's development is the socialized role attainment that exists in the family and in relationships. In Sheppard's 2018 study she found that women were more likely than their male counterparts to favor job attributes that would help them gain in love relationships, being a good spouse/parent, and having good health. Although these factors could be influenced by personal preferences, the significance found in the study, across the group of participants, reinforces the literature that family and relationships behaviors are the behaviors that women are socialized to appreciate and therefore assume that is what they are to attain in life (Sheppard, 2018).

Women battle the stereotypes and prejudices that the world has created for them. These factors contribute to the fact that women feel that they are in constant battle with

each other (Allen and Flood, 2018). One study explored this phenomenon by examining women who were in high level roles such as directors, associate directors, faculty, and senior administrators in colleges. The study by Allen and Flood (2018) was arranged to investigate why women were able to rise to roles but did not find support from their female colleagues. The study found that women in the field of higher education are susceptible to forms of relational aggression (Allen & Flood, 2018). The idea of why the women interviewed conflicted with their peers was determined to be due to the feeling that they have to compete with each other in order to be successful. The field of higher education has mainly men in the leadership positions and this causes women to feel as if they have to do anything and everything to be able to succeed, including cutting down their female peers (Allen, Flood, 2018). The question raised by this study was how women fight this feeling and create a sisterhood that supports the success of each other. By participating in this destructive behavior women perpetuate a stereotype that only hurts their ability to grow.

Mentoring relationships have a high impact on women's leadership development and attainment. Female-female mentoring programs yield a strong communication dynamic, meaning that the increase in comfort with a same gendered individual allows for better communication to occur than in mixed gendered pairs (Edds- Ellis & Keaster, 2013). Mentoring relationships help give women the historical context and inspiration to become leaders (Dominique, 2015, Edds- Ellis & Keaster, 2013). Dominique (2015) looked at how women of color talked about their relationships both nourished them in the context for seeing how others before them were able to achieve, while also providing a comfortable space to process development and plan for growth. Women in a same-

gendered formal mentoring program felt as though this relationship gave them a head start, as they were able to anticipate barriers better and have the guidance necessary to successfully navigate them (Edds- Ellis & Keaster, 2013).

Impacts of Women's Leadership

It must be noted that women who are leading today, are standing on the shoulders of the women who came before them. Women have had a significant impact on the civil and human rights movements and Black women played a significant role in these movements in the south during the civil rights era (Robnett, 1996). It is continually seen that women's ability to lead from a communal perspective aids them in being able to unite a group and achieve goals (Colwill & Townsend, 1999). Often playing a silent part in history's perspective, research suggests that managerial techniques are shifting toward a style that fits women's natural tendencies in leadership (Colwill & Townsend, 1999).

Women who have obtained leadership roles have made difference in the places where they hold these positions. In the political environment women politicians are said to bring new light to policy making as they are better than men at conceptualizing public policy problems (Thomas, 2003). This can be seen in how women handle reform in regard to criminal legislation. Women are more likely than men to look at social antecedents of the problem and approach the problem with the root of the problem in mind whereas male counter parts are more likely to approach from legislative rules and procedures (Thomas, 2003). There is also a community within women political leaders even across party lines and it has been found that women across the board are more supportive of women's and children's issues than males in the political field. Women

continually make strides for laws in regard to the rights of women children and families. (Thomas, 2003).

Research shows that although it may be hard for a woman to gain leadership roles, once they do, they are able to achieve affective and visionary change (O'Connor, 2018). O'Connor's study in 2018 investigated how women were able to create a fully developed vision that resulted in institutional change. Questions were asked to see what factors participants felt contributed to their ability to lead, and how they worked to envision their personal motivations to persevere through challenges that come with institutional change (O'Connor, 2018). Four main themes were found in the women's responses 1) internal drivers such as confidence, purpose, and calling play a significant role, 2) keeping an orientation towards people, 3) barriers existed in the gendered language, and 4) making sure the change aligned with the institutional mission and values (O'Connor, 2018). The internal drivers are what make the difference in woman's ability to lead visionary change say O'Connor (2018). Their drive to "seek opportunities for the collective good" (O'Connor, 2018, p. 212) and "confidence rooted in awareness about strengths" (p. 212) means that they are specially qualified to make swift and critical change while keeping in mind the needs of the people in their institution. Motivations for women do not come from a want to attain power, but a want to make other lives and world better (O'Connor, 2018).

When women lead it opens up opportunities for others through many different aspects. In a study assessing women's mobility into CEO positions they found that one of the greatest assets to a woman being able to attain a new position is if there are other women who serve in high roles in the company such as a women CEO or chief officer

(Cook & Glass, 2014). Not only does it impact the mobility of other women, but it also increases the likelihood of longer tenure at a company (Cook & Glass, 2014). The overall institutional diversity increases a women's ability to break the glass ceiling. The impact of women's leadership extends to the ability women then have to pass on leadership skills and mentor younger female leader and this influence is significant in all communities (Dominque, 2015; Edds- Ellis & Keaster, 2013). Inspiration is given and when women can learn from others learnt experiences it helps them to face the challenges coming to them later in life. This is especially important for communities that are marginalized. To see that others have been able to overcome and thrive, gives hope and nourishment that they also may achieve (Dominque, 2015, Green & King, 2001).

Self-authorship

Dr. Marcia Baxter Magolda's Theory of Self-authorship (2001) will guide this study. Self- authorship is defined as the "internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relation" (Baxter Magolda, 2008). During her research Baxter Magolda interviewed college aged students to discover what developmental tasks and challenges they faced during this time in their life. Baxter Magolda found that three major questions took precedence for the students "How do I know? Who am I? And How do I want to construct relationships with others" (Baxter Magolda, 2001). The questions were then later categorized as the epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001). People learn the answer to these questions through the path to self-authorship (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, Renn, & Quaye, 2009).

Four phases to self-authorship were identified with movement from external to internal self-definition. The first phase of the theory is following formulas. In this stage “young adults follow the plans laid out for them by external authorities about what they should think and how they should accomplish their work” (Evans et al., 2009, p. 366). Students attempt to frame these views as their own, and when building relationships allow others to define them. They are reliant on “societal expectations, adults with whom they interact, and peers” (p. 367). Decisions about future careers and jobs are highly influenced by others in this phase. This does not lead to fulfilling work for students as other expectations may not line up with internal interests. When students discover that the external factors do not fit them personally, they seek other formulas (Evans et al., 2009).

Phase two of the theory is the crossroads. In this phase students becomes unsatisfied with how others have viewed them, and the plans others have made so they begin to look for better plans (Evans et al., 2009, p. 367). For some students this lack of a self-plan leads to a crisis. It leads to a certain event that changes them, and pushes them into self-authorship (Evans et al., 2009, p. 367). For other students the lack of self-plan leads to just a “general sense of unhappiness and lack of fulfillment” (p. 367). Students in this section are attempting to reconcile what the world has told them and what they want for themselves in both their personal relationships and careers. Questioning decisions and evaluation are key aspects of this phase. When an individual is able to attain a “clearer sense of direction and more self-confidence” (p. 367), it marks the end of the crossroads as students transition into becoming the author.

Becoming the author of one’s own life is the third phase in Baxter Magolda’s (2001) theory. This phase is categorized by the choices to stand up for your own

thoughts, feelings, and beliefs without taking into consideration the thought, feelings, and beliefs of external viewpoints (Baxter Magolda, 2001). Students want to live out the beliefs that they have fought to attain and discover within themselves. A strong self-concept is developed, and students may look at existing relationships and evaluate if their new-found self fits with those they are surrounding themselves with (Evans et al., 2009). There is more emphasis and care in commitment to people, and places as an individual is able to see how these decisions fit into their bigger picture (Baxter Magolda, 2001). These three stages work together to then form the foundation that will carry a student through the rest of their life.

Finally, the fourth stage of internal foundations is reached. In this stage a “solidified and comprehensive sense of belief” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 155) is constructed and lived out. Individuals are still aware of external factors but instead of reacting to them they are able to use their feelings of peace, contentment, and strength to trust their own feelings and follow what feels true to their inner self (Evans et al., 2009). Individuals are still open to change and know that they are allowed to adjust their foundation if necessary. This strong internal foundation can lead to new careers, or changes/commitment to relationships. In this final stage of the theory it is unlikely that an individual will revert back to previous stage. Although individuals may experience a crisis that shakes them personally, they are able to use the foundation built to navigate it and move forward.

An important influence on a person’s ability to become self-authored is the presence of good company (Baxter Magolda, 2002). Good company are the people who come alongside of a student’s journey and “provide guidance and good company while

participants construct internal definitions” (Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 5). Being good company is not about controlling the journey of the student, but about being along for the ride and providing guidance when asked and supporting a student as they make the choices that align with the internal voice they are cultivating (Baxter Magolda, 2002).

Baxter Magolda furthered her research in 2008 to follow up with participants in their thirties. In this stage of her research she found three elements of self-authorship. These three elements are trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Trusting internal foundations trademark features is that an individual realizes that they cannot control events that happen, but they can trust themselves and their feelings. Dealing with these events build confidence that build trust for one’s own voice (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Once trust is established one can begin to build their internal foundation. Baxter Magolda (2008) defines this as a personal philosophy to guide actions. In this stage they create a “cohesive identity”. The third element, securing internal commitments is when their identity is fully developed and so integrated into their life that they do not think of it on a daily basis. The theory of self-authorship will be used to interpret students’ responses in this research as well as, build interview protocol and questions.

Summary

Research has shown that leadership development is different for men than it is for women. Leadership styles that reflect women’s natural tendencies such as transformational, authentic, and collaborative are shown to be more effective and natural styles for women. Leadership identity development is significant as it is how a person comes to recognize themselves as a leader and make choices that encourages further

leadership attainment and achievement. Women who also hold identities in other historically marginalized communities face additional barriers that influence their development as leaders. Women may also find themselves struggling with identifying themselves as a feminist as they overcome the gendered expectations of society. All women face gendered issues such as gender expectations, and gender roles that contribute to their ability to achieve leadership roles and flourish in those leadership positions. Established women leaders help lead the way and mentor young women to be leaders and inspire them to continue. Self-efficacy also contributes to a women's ability to lead in the world and find success in leadership. Chapter three will discuss the methodology that will be used to conduct this research and reach the goals of the study.

CHAPTER III

Methods

This chapter will outline the methodological framework that was used to conduct the proposed study. This study looked at the factors that contribute to the attainment of leadership roles for college women and what they perceive as the benefits and challenges to those roles.

Design of the Study

This study used a qualitative research study utilizing a phenomenological approach to gather relevant information from participants. A phenomenological approach is a way to discover themes in a culture or group of people (Fraenkel, Wallen, Hyun, 2015) and this study explored the factors that college women experience in their development and achievement of leadership roles and positions. A participant group of four women were selected and invited to participate through a purposive sample (Fraenkel, Wallen, Hyun, 2015). A purposive sample is one where participants will be selected from those who have specific characteristics that meet the needs of the study. College women between the ages of 18-25 who are holding a leadership position for the first time in their college career were invited to participate in this study. Marcia Baxter Magolda's (2001) self-authorship theory will be used as a guiding framework through which the data will be viewed.

Women student leaders were selected and invited to participate in a semi-structured interview where questions are open ended in nature and provides room for the researcher to probe further for additional information related to the research during the interview based on participant responses. The interviews took place in a university library

study room and were scheduled for approximately 45-60 minutes in length. This private location provided participants with a comfortable environment to share without others overhearing the conversation. Questions aimed to gain insight into the factors that led to the participant's leadership role attainment, challenges they faced attaining the role, and the benefits they anticipate as a result of their leadership experiences.

Research Site

The site for this research is a mid-size, Midwestern, public, 4-year institution located in a rural community with an enrollment of approximately 7,500. The institution offers multiple undergraduate and master's graduate degree programs along with post-baccalaureate programs. The student population is 60% female and there are approximately 170 student organizations that are registered with the university. The organizations contain a wide variety of interests including but not limited to Greek letter organizations, government, political, social, service, religious, cultural, technology and general interest focuses.

Participants

Four women who are serving in their first leadership role in an organization were invited to participate in this study. Only students who have never held a formal position on campus before will be invited to participate to potentially improve participants' recollections of the circumstances leading to their attainment of the position. Participants were gained through targeted sampling methods. An email request was sent to advisors of student organizations on campus for them to nominate first-time women leaders of their organizations to be invited to participate in the research (Appendix A). After participants indicate willingness to be involved with the study via email invitation (Appendix B), the

researcher will select participants in order to have an accurate representation of the population on the campus environment as well as to obtain a diversity of experiences and organization focus. Participants Were informed that participation is voluntary and that they are able to withdraw at any time.

Table 1

Name of Participant	Organization	Year in School	Racial Identity
Samantha	Campus Wide Greek Organization	Sophomore	White
Zoe	Spanish Club	Sophomore	Black and Caucasian
Jill	Business Organization	Senior	African American
Latrice	Women in Business	Sophomore	African American

Instruments

This research study consisted of individual interviews conducted by the researcher. All participants selected agreed to participate in the interview and were offered an informed consent to sign. A demographic questionnaire was distributed to the participants to collect information on age, year in school, race/ethnic group, major, and type of organizations involved in (Appendix C). Each interview session was approximately 45-60 minutes in length and was comprised of pre-selected open-ended questions (Appendix D). Additionally, at the end of the set of pre-selected questions

participants were invited to provide any additional thoughts that they feel were important to their story.

Data Collection

Upon arrival to the interview each participant was given an informed consent statement that identified that participation was voluntary and that they were able to end the interview at any time (Appendix E). Participants were also made aware that audio recording will be used to ensure accurate transcription of data following the semi-structured individual interview. Following each interview, the researcher created a transcription of the interview. Participants were also given the opportunity to review the transcript to ensure accuracy. This process will help ensure the trustworthiness of the study, and increase the quality of the instruments (Fraenkel Wallen, Hyun, 2015; Krefling, 1991). The interviews were recorded with one recording devices. The interviews took place in a study room in the university library.

Treatment of Data

After interviews were completed, they were transcribed by the researcher. Participants were assigned pseudonyms during the transcription process in order to improve participant privacy. Two flash drives were used to store data with the first containing any personally identifying information of the participants while the second flash drive contains all of the transcripts, notes, and coding for the study. The flash drives were stored in a locked drawer in the researcher's office. Finally, the data will be kept for three years after the study is completed and then destroyed, per the university's IRB policy.

Data Analysis

Responses during the interviews were transcribed by the interviewer. The transcriptions were then coded to identify common themes in participant responses. Common themes were then be identified in further detail and assessed through using standard coding techniques (Saldana, 2013). One technique that was used was causation coding (Saldana, 2013) which is used to find links between what happened to a participant and how they responded to that happening. The three aspects that must be identified in causation coding are “the cause, the outcome, and the link between the cause and the outcome” (p. 164). This type of coding allowed for greater understanding of why the women made the choice they did and the significance of those choices. A thematic analysis was used in the coding of this data. Themes serve phenomenological research as they help derive meaning from the participants words and categorize them in “groups of repeating ideas” (Saldana, 2013, p. 176). The research looked for significant statements and commonality in statements that the participant provided in order to allow for common themes to emerge from the participants (Saldana, 2013).

Summary

This chapter highlights the methodology used in this study. Selection of participants, the research site, and the methods of data collection were all provided. Analysis of the data through causation coding and thematic analysis was also explained as well as the necessary human subject policies and guidelines followed during the study. Chapter IV will report the findings from the interviews with the participants.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore and define the factors that influence a collegiate women's desire and ability to attain their first leadership position. This chapter will focus on reporting the themes found during the four semi-structured interviews and the qualitative analysis conducted on those interviews. Themes were identified from the interviews and organized using the research questions.

Research Question #1: What factors prior to college lead to leadership attainment for women in college?

Two major themes emerged regarding the factors that influenced the participants' desire to look for leadership roles and attain them in their experiences prior to starting their collegiate career. The two themes were access to leadership roles and concepts and family influence.

Family Influence

All four participants identified family members who either influenced the way they view leadership or contributed to their wanting to attain positions and be a leader. Zoe spoke about how watching her mom showed her the kind of leader she wanted to be. She said that her mom is strong and stands her ground, something which she wants to be able to do.

She works in the mental health field, which is women dominated, but there are basically like five guys who worked there. And every time they had a meeting and would try to take charge, my mom would just say nope that's not what we are

doing here. When she wasn't a formal leader, she was an effective leader because she wasn't going to take anyone's crap.

Zoe shared that this example influenced her to not let people talk over her and stand up when people are talking over others. She said, "I think it's really bad ass, like my mom to just go 'hey, that's not how we act here'." Zoe also mentioned her dad instilling in her that if she wants something to change or get fixed, then she needs to do it herself. Reflecting on her identity as the daughter of a black man and a white mother, Zoe was told by her father that her identity as both mixed race, and as a woman, meant that she had to work harder to get ahead. "So, if I see something wrong, I can't expect other people to fix it for me. If you see something wrong, you have to fix it."

Latrice also spoke about how her family influenced her desire to lead. Latrice said that growing up she saw a lot of herself in her dad and since he was a successful businessman, it made her want to do the same thing. She shared that her dad taught her how to balance being nice and standing up for herself. Latrice talked about how it was him who originally encouraged her to break out of her shell and put herself out there, something that she felt is the basis for leadership. She related that he would emphasize that she had to be the one to take charge and demonstrate responsibility.

'You need to learn to speak up, you have to speak to someone.' He would push us. He would always make us order in a restaurant. If we were at a store and I'm buying one little thing, he would say we have to go buy it. You have to do this. He pushed us to do it. I think it was half him and half me that made me want to push myself.

Latrice also felt that her mom was also an important influence on her views of leadership saying, “she influenced me to be headstrong and influential and be caring for people.”

Jill spoke about how being a big sister in her immediate family impacted her perceptions and desire to be a leader in life. Jill felt that the roles she played with her younger sister helped prepared her to lead others.

I helped with raising her and she looked up to me as her big sister. So, that put me in a position where everything that I did was kind of under a microscope. So, it forced me to be a leader. When it comes to myself, like when it comes to school and work, or how I dress or talk or the things I show her, I have to take a high road. I have to think about what a leader would do.

Jill mentioned how she still feels the pressure of being a good leader and role model to her sister as she knows that her little sister is always paying attention even when you think she might not be. Jill also spoke about how her mom influenced her growing up, sharing that the way her mom behaved inspired her to want to emulate her example. Jill wants to learn to handle situations like her mom did and be able to show a similar level of professionalism that her mom displays in her interactions with others.

And then lastly, my mom, who I should've put first, my mom especially. She's a naturally good person and she's sacrificed everything she's ever gotten. Like she, she sacrifices constantly to make sure that I'm doing well, and she encourages me constantly and she's there for me. She gives me advice. Yeah. She deals with me. She's just a good woman and a perfect example, in a role model, in every way

Having her mom there as a role model has made her feel more confident in going for roles and increases her desire to give back to others through leadership. Jill reflected that her goal is to be the kind of woman and mother that her own mother is. Jill also talked about her dad's impact on her views of what it means to be a leader. Her dad always encouraged her to be the best, and this support has influenced her ability to both be a leader and see it as something attainable.

He's always encouraged me to get up and stop crying and to just be the best at everything. Even with track it was 'hey, you need to come in first'. He only accepts the top number one. Like I have to dominate in everything. He's the reason why I am competitive.

Samantha talked about a different kind of family influence, noting that her parents' divorce when she was eight was a reason why she felt that she had to become a leader because she 'just had to grow up'. Samantha discussed the support she received from her siblings and how her older sisters served as significant influences on her views of women and leadership. She related how her parents' reaction to the divorce changed the dynamic of their family. As a result, she 'had to find my own way because they were doing their own thing.' Samantha noted that this early thrust into leadership, and how she was forced to be both independent and responsible, was a key reason why she was able to develop skills that have made her successful today.

All four participants identified their family as being a strong influencing factor in their leadership development and motivation. Whether it be one or both parents, or her siblings, the participants noted these familial connections as being significant to precollege leadership attainment and the desire to lead in the future. They also noted that

the support that they received from their families was paramount in their leadership attainment.

Access to Leadership Roles and Concepts

All four participants spoke about, or identified, a role or experience they had with leadership prior to coming to college as being a factor in their views on leadership for themselves. While they all did not have a direct leadership role or position to refer to, all participants were able to identify some kind of formal experience prior to coming to college. Latrice talked about her experience in a high school leadership class as her first real leadership experience. She described the class as a place where she could become “more confident and better at teamwork”. One of the key aspects she highlighted was being in charge, “I really enjoyed leading a team.” Being a part of this class led to her later enrolling in an interest-specific leadership class. In that class she was able to continue to develop her leadership skills by being a fake CEO for her entrepreneurship class. Latrice shared that being a part of these organizations gave her confidence and teamwork.

I learned that I liked being able to direct people in the right way and be able to start them off from one place and get them to another place. Because it was all about becoming more confident and becoming better at teamwork and those types of skills.

Latrice also talked about how involvement in these groups began to give her a sense of greater purpose, something that would lead her to want to continue to develop as a leader in college. “I enjoyed leading a team.” Being a part of organizations in high school gave Latrice experience at attaining leadership roles.

We had different groups where we have to choose a leader for that as well. And I wanted to be leader of my group and it was between me, one guy, and then another girl. And I kind of figured, this girl is kind of more qualified than me to do this, but I really want to fight for it.

Jill was unsure if she had direct leadership roles prior to college when she first thought about it, “I was involved in sports and extracurricular activities, but I was never a leader or captain.” Jill thought that even just witnessing other student leaders however was influential on her attitudes towards leadership.

There were some girls that I would look at and up to as a leader. And some of their qualities that they would demonstrate were they were hardworking, they were the ones that were always on time, and went above and beyond.

Jill also stated that being a part of teams was impactful for her early development and eventual attainment of leadership roles because it taught her how to work with others. She shared that being on a team was where she connected with other women. “I was an only child for a large portion of my childhood. So just being around other girls, it basically taught me sisterhood, bonding, and teamwork.” Jill also talked about what may be considered a non-traditional leadership position, when she worked as a nursing aid during high school. She shared how she always wanted to be a nurse and so she sought out this opportunity to help prepare her for college. Jill was able to reflect that working in the healthcare environment taught her to be confident, resilient, and determined. “It’s given me confidence. That’s the perfect word. Confidence. I am able to go into situations and dominate, even if it is something as minor as being a nursing assistant.”

Zoe also had impactful experiences during her time in high school. Zoe shared that she was in multiple organizations in high school, but she didn't have a formal role in any of them. Instead she talked about being in debate club and the impact that had on her even today. Learning leadership for her came from witnessing bad leadership and establishing the kind of leader she wanted to be.

We had a friend who had been doing debate for all four years and he wasn't a good leader, he was just really tough on everyone. So, we decided that someone needed to be there for everyone. Being a leader is not always about telling people what to do, it's also being there and helping get things done. So, kind of seeing that negative leadership, empowered me to me a different kind of leader.

This approach to leadership would then lead Zoe to be elected to her current leadership position in college and feel confident in how she would be as a leader in college, a style that was more authentic to the values she held.

Finally, Samantha noted that her high school leadership roles were a significant factor in influencing her desire to seek leadership roles in college. She shared that she was always seen as a natural leader in her early education, experiencing her first role when she was the junior captain for her cheerleading team. She said that they were allowed to be "decision makers at cheer". Samantha spoke about how on a usual team the captains don't get to do much, but on their team, they were asked to watch routines and critique their performances and routines. Even though they ultimately were not in charge of the group.

We kind of called the shots, which is kind of different in a cheer team setting because obviously it's the coach who's coaching you, not your captain. So that was the start and the basis of like being like, okay I want to be a leader.

Samantha also talked about the opportunity to serve as writing editor for her yearbook in high school. She spoke about how being an editor taught her many lessons about being a leader in high school.

I learned how to take things with a grain of salt. Because when you're in a leadership role, you have to make decisions that are sometimes tough. People look at you and they're like 'Oh, you're out to get me.' And it's not that, it's just you're trying to make what's better for your team.

Serving in multiple leadership roles in high school taught Samantha the responsibility she would need to be a better and more effective leader in college and gave her the confidence to take on multiple tasks simultaneously. She shared how she had to learn in high school to "separate myself from my role when I need to in order to go home and be a daughter, sister and other things." She mentioned that learning how to balance these competing demands on her time made her responsible and ready for similar roles in college.

Overall all four participants noted that their ability to lead or have exposure to leadership roles prior to their college experience created a foundation that enabled them to lead. They talked about the skills they were able to acquire, and how it taught them that they could lead.

Research Question #2: What factors during college contribute to leadership attainment for women in college?

The factors that participants identified as being significant in affecting their desire to pursue leadership during college were discussed by the participants and three clear themes emerged from the interviews. The themes identified were: outside influences, personal qualities, and representation/part of a greater good.

Outside Influences

Three out of the four participants spoke about how it was encouragement that they received, or an opportunity they received from an outside influence, that helped them attain their current leadership role. Samantha talked about an experience she had with the graduate student advisor of the organization after her interview for her executive board position. She shared:

As I was walking out, one of the grad advisors said, ‘oh my God that was one of the best interviews we have seen’. And I thought ‘Oh thanks I’m just a little baby freshman’ and he told me that he could honestly see a future president in me.

Samantha said that him giving her that nudge and the confidence that came with it made her feel more assured going into elections. It made her feel good because it made her feel that even though she was young, she could handle the position. Samantha continued to talk about the influence that the advisors of the organization had on her ability to get her position. She referred back to it when reflecting on how she tries to reach out to new leaders.

You can pick out and see those people, that maybe they're younger and they have a lot to learn, but they have something and we're going to take a chance on them. Which I think is what they [the advisors] and the rest of the community did with me for [my organization].

Samantha said that having the encouragement from the advisors also made her feel more confident when she actually started in her role. She felt like even though she was younger on the board, that it would be possible for her to lead. Not only did that feeling help her attain her position, but it has continued to be a source of support for her in her position.

They saw that I was confident and I was outgoing, and I had a lot of ideas, but they were like, okay, she's a freshman, so she has to learn a lot, but maybe if we get her in here now she can be that president that we all wanted her to be.

Samantha also credits part of her ability to attain a leadership position with having examples of strong female leaders and role models in her life while still in college.

She's [Samantha's eldest sister] always been like the push because she's the oldest and the wisest. She has had such a good life, and such a good set of circumstances I feel handed to her after college. She has her master's degree, she's just amazing in every way. So, if I could be even three quarters or half the person that she is when I grow up, I'm doing something good

Samantha said that this was what made her want to attain roles, it was to try and be like those that have been such an influence for her.

Jill noted it was someone at college in the classroom that had a significant influence on her wanting a leadership role and going for a position.

My Professor, she's the reason why I went into public relations. She embraced me. So, my professor was one of the main people that inspired me to go into PR in general. And my mentor, [another Professor], she also encourages me to do my best, no matter what.

Jill notes that it is these women at school who keep her on the “right path” and continue to push her to push herself. Jill also notes recent media and the rise of “women power” as something that has encouraged and help her want to attain roles. Specifically, Jill spoke about her love of Hillary Clinton and why she looks up to her as a role model and inspiration.

Hillary Clinton, the pants, the pants suits! Because she's just...she doesn't give up.

She doesn't give a crap. And she's a strong, fierce woman. She studied politics.

She's in a male dominated industry and she's still dominates.

Jill is also inspired by Michelle Obama and Oprah as people who make her want to lead. These women make her want to lead and help her attain because they inspire and give her confidence to know she can do it too. “Seeing women, just the rise of women in the past couple of months has inspired [me].” When asked to explain she said “The new movement that's been going on with women and standing up for whatever it is and just being strong in the whole feminist movement and stuff. It's a little... it's inspiring!”

Latrice spoke first about mentors at school and that they were what brought her to the organization in the first place.

When I came here for the first weekend, they had all the transfers doing stuff. We went to [a building on campus] to do our business stuff. And at the end of the training I said, Hey, is there any type of women in business club or anything like that [to a male professor]? He said no but let me direct you over to [a female professor] who might have done something like that and talk to her about that.

And she was, ‘you're interested in a women and business club? Why don't we start something?’ So that's kind of how this whole thing ended up happening

Latrice says that if it wasn't for the prompt from the professor looking for something like this, then the organization and the opportunity might not have even been there at all, as there has never been a student led organization like this. Latrice has also continued to be supported by her father in this role. She mentioned that he was very supportive in the beginning and encouraged her to try her best.

When I first started out the club, he was telling me about how to be a good leader and all that. But he was also giving me ideas like, 'Hey, you could, you could do this next week' or 'you could have this event', or 'hey, I can get a speaker for you for this'.

This support once again made her confident that she would be able to do the tasks at hand.

As outlined above, three of four participants were able to identify an outside influencer, whether that be advisor, professor, family, or media figure, that made them feel like it would be possible to lead and made them want to try to attain a leadership role.

Personal Leadership Qualities

All four participants noted that they felt they had personal qualities that contributed to their ability to attain a leadership role. Zoe indicated that she thinks it is her confidence and willingness to stand up for herself and others which helped her to attain her role.

I don't let people talk over me. I was at dinner last night with some of friends and I was in the middle of telling a story and when my friends interrupted me and I said 'Hey, don't do that. That's not what we're doing, you can wait for three

seconds. It takes for me to end this story'. If we're in class and someone was saying something and then they get interrupted, if the teacher doesn't call out the person, I'll interrupt it I'll say, I just want to hear what so-and-so had wanted to say.

When Zoe said 'you had to do that' it was in reference to her having the quality of being open to taking charge and being willing to speak up in the group. Samantha also spoke about how her personal leadership traits have influenced her ability to be a leader and attain her role. She was able to name multiple qualities that she felt were essential to her leadership.

So if you're shy, but you're comfortable with you being shy and you are comfortable with kind of taking a step back and being 'okay, well I have a whole bunch of women around me that can talk up if like they need to', but then I know when I can speak up because that's what I'm most comfortable with. I think just kind of being comfortable in your own skin and being confident no matter what you are; shy, outgoing, bubbly, just being confident and knowing what you want and know what you're going to do, will help you out for sure.

Samantha also spoke about how being open minded and responsible also played a role in her ability to be a leader. She shared that although she feels she has not mastered it yet, that she needs to be more open-minded.

Being open-minded, because you're going to have to make some hard decisions, and no matter what, in any leadership position, hard decisions come along with that. You have to be open minded, so you are open to the changes that come.

Samantha knows that she has to continue to work on this area but believes that her openness is what has allowed her to collaborate so well with her peers. Finally, Samantha shared that she is responsible and that is definitely a quality she must have in order to be a leader. “Responsibility, skills and, making sure that you have all your cards in place, that’s how are you going to effectively make someone listen to you.” Both Zoe and Samantha shared similar ideas in that they felt as though they needed skills that would make sure they were heard as these opportunities are not something that would just be given to them. In order to be able to prove that they are leaders, able to be responsible and have a leadership role, they needed to show these traits.

Jill also noted some specific leadership qualities she felt she needed to demonstrate to others that led to her attainment of a leadership role. Jill talked about needing to appear strong and confident. Specifically, she talked about how throughout her time working as a nursing assistant, she has been able to gain confidence. “It's given me confidence. That's the perfect word. So, I'm able to go into those situations and dominate even if it is something as minor as being a nursing assistant”. This is what she uses as her motivation for being able to run for a leadership position and her willingness to put herself out there. She also noted that it makes her feel strong. Talking about her nursing role, how it has given her the skills to be a “a leader, and it's made me stronger. Yeah. Stronger. It's made me stronger.” This idea of being stronger and confident is something that she has felt is essential when going up for a leadership role and trying to fight the stereotypes that are assumed of her, or that she feels are on her. This theme of confidence as a skill is also consistent among the participants.

Latrice spoke of confidence as a skill, and she spoke of it most directly in terms of being able to speak in front of group of people. “I’m best at speaking, giving presentations and stuff like that. I think I’m great at that.” It was with this skill, that she felt when they held elections, that she would be able to be persuasive to the group and get their vote for the position. Latrice also believes that two other skills that are needed are ones that she has: being able to connect with people and to bring them together. She stressed the importance of “being good with people, being able to speak to them. Not people pleasing but being able to connect with people easily is important for a leader to do.”

All four participants were able to name a specific leadership skill that they have or used that was a factor in attaining their role. While these skills ranged from confidence, respect, and being good with people, and the participants all discussed different skills that they felt were important for them to have, all of them felt that there were specific skills that leaders needed to possess to be seen by others as being accepted in the leadership roles they were seeking to obtain.

Representation/Part of a Greater Good

Three out of the four participants discussed that one of the major reasons they choose to seek leadership positions was to be a positive representation to others and to be an influence on the greater good. Latrice noticed first that she was missing having an impact on others when she was unable to have that influence before transferring from her first institution

I learned, when I was at my school last year, that I don't like it when I'm not doing anything that doesn't influence other people. I was so busy working and I was

like, I miss helping, I miss helping people. I missed influencing them because when I'm not, I feel like I'm not doing anything important right now.

It was the lack of influence she had at her first school, and her feelings about it, that motivated her to do things differently. When she came to her current institution, she sought out a space where she could make a difference. Latrice chose to go into business and shared that when she started taking classes, she heard about the gap between men and women in business, but that reality hit her much more strongly when she got to her new school this year.

I think with the sense it's a woman in business type thing. Once I started learning more about the business field, I was like, okay. I know that there are a lot of differences when women are surrounded by men in these fields. And a lot of them feel very discouraged or like they can't speak out, or that when they do, they're usually talked over. And I was like, 'I need to be able to be surrounded by women and teach them to be able to speak out', things like that, because I kind of felt like that too.

It was this feeling that motivated Latrice to look for a 'women in business' organization and when she couldn't find one, to make one herself. Wanting to be able to empower not only herself but others, she shared that she needed more "women supporting women" and when she didn't see that herself, then it was time to do something about it.

Jill also noted that she also wanted to serve as a representative for women. She said that it wasn't just about being in a certain position, but also about bringing qualities to leadership that men don't always bring.

Because we need more strong women willing to go against men. Because we think differently, and we need women in different positions making executive decisions because sometimes men think irrationally... I feel like, women are more, not feminine, but feel like men are more competitive and love dominance and power. Not all of them, but a lot of men. Yeah. And I feel like women are more like open to the problem and researching and talking, I feel like women are more rational.

Jill said that she desires to give this to an organization that often has more men than women in the positions. "It's not about me, it's about us, and it's about us learning from each other." Jill also spoke about how her faith has played a role in her wanting to contribute to a greater purpose. For her, being a leader is also about spreading good things and representing her faith in positive way. She also wanted to be the kind of leader she did not see in the organization she was previously in.

I felt like I could do a better job than the people last year because only two people went to the meetings and it was just a lot of crap. So, I felt like I could use my skills and just get this organization going and bring new workshops and ideas and seminars

Zoe identified that she wants to be able to represent women in leadership as well. She has been inspired by the media but has taken it in a more direct approach in that it makes her want to attain a position and be a certain type of leader.

In the last couple of weeks in my women and politics class, we've been looking at women who run for leadership roles. A lot of people [when they] think of the typical leader, it's very alpha male, very dominant, and always really tough. But

then you look at these women who are running and they're just like, they're just like regular people who like decided to take that step. And so, for me, I want to be like that. I don't want to seem like a fake kind of person cause that's like a lot of leaders, they don't seem real to people.

When asked what this means to her, Zoe said “like when you have a mom who's digging around in her purse, to look for something before she goes up to talk, she pulls out her kid’s toys and things like that. That's kind of how I want to be.” Zoe referred to being able to be authentic and to be the kind of leader that she wishes she saw represented in the media. She wished to be the representation for a new view on leadership. Zoe continued by sharing why, for her, it is the best reason to go into leadership.

For me, that's like one of the best reasons to go into leadership, because you're trying to make a change and you aren't doing it for personal reasons. You're doing it for the people around you or people who are like you

These three women were all partially motivated to attain their roles by wanting to be something that they hadn’t seen in their own experiences or continue to contribute to improving women’s representation in the realms of leadership. It was an influential factor in them seeking their role, to be a part of something bigger than themselves and to be what they wish they were able to see in their life.

Research Question #3: Why do women get involved in their organizations?

Two themes emerged as to why women choose to get involved in the specific organizations that they selected as important to them. A key difference in the reasoning for how the participants chose their organization was the focus on the organization’s

purpose in and of itself. The two themes found for this question were Relationship to career and education and wanting to be a part of the greater good.

Relationship to Career and Education

For Latrice, she was originally motivated to be a part of the organization because it related to her major in school. She shared how she thought to herself when she got to her current institution, “I kind of want to be in more positions of leadership and I want to be involved in business or something to do with women.” As a management major, she felt it was important to begin doing something that would help with her future goal attainment. Latrice talked about meeting with the advisor for the first time and how the idea of the group was able to form:

I met with her and she told me about this group that was actually started about five years ago that was originated by the faculty, the women faculty and advisors in [the business college]. It was this group that we had, but it wasn't really student ran. There wasn't a lot of information about it and people didn't always know about the events, so I'm thinking we can kind of do it again, but we can revamp it as an RSO.

It was inquiring about this kind of group that was able to bring Latrice both to joining it and allowing her to be able to take on a leadership role in it.

For Jill, it was also something familiar and related to her major. She noted that she had been part of a speech team the year prior and so she thought “Hey, why not join the public relations group, if I've already been a part of the statement competition team?” For her it was a comfortable place to make a start and to be able to get involved. She also wanted to connect with her advisor and when the advisor suggested she join the

organization, “well I got involved because my advisor, she asked people in the major, asked them to join. So, I decided to get involved.” The initial part for her getting involved didn’t run that deep, it just seemed like the right thing to do for her education.

Zoe, who is the president of the Spanish Club, also said that her motives to get into the organization were simple to begin with. “One of my minors is Spanish. And so, I took Spanish all four years in high school. I sort of got involved with Spanish club. I was part of the Spanish honor society in high school as well.” Zoe thought that not only would it be fun based on her previous experience but that it would help her in relation to her minor as well.

Samantha also saw her organization as a way to get some access to career development. For Samantha, being a part of Greek Life on the Campus wide executive board is very much related to her chapter participation within Greek Life. She shared why she initially got involved with her organization, for her it was all about the fact that the organization’s philanthropy was about child abuse. As someone who wants to be a child psychologist someday, she said “it was a steppingstone into my career of child psychology.” Just the opportunity to have more interaction and involvement with this population was worth it as a reason to get involved.

Although they may not have an exact plan for how it will fit, all four participants noted some career or educational factor in their reasons for getting involved with their current organization and their personal desire to effect change in that specific organization.

Contributing to a Greater Good

The second theme that emerged from two of the participants was that the participants chose to be a part of their organization as a way of being able to contribute to what they saw as ‘the greater good’ of society and the world. Samantha talked specifically how, for her, it related to a very specific life experience that she wanted to be able to turn around and use to make the world a better place.

I loved their [organization’s] philanthropy. It was child abuse and the Girl Scouts. My nieces, who have actually been adopted to my sisters now, kind of went through child abuse with their mom. It wasn't good. So, they came into custody, DCFS had to step in. So that drew me to the philanthropy.

She was able to relate to the situation that these kids found themselves in but also drew inspiration from others who stepped up to help out.

I want to turn it around and make something better out of myself because you always hear those stories of this awesome basketball star who came from the worst neighborhood you could think of. And his mom was a single mom and didn't have a lot of money and this and the other. Obviously, that's not as bad as my situation, but I have had some kind of rough patches especially with like family ties being broken and things like that.

Being able to see herself as that kind of inspiration or source of support for someone else was very important to her. When asked why she felt help like that was important and giving back was essential she shared that “it’s always been something that I’ve liked to do. I’ve always like to help people instead of helping myself. I’m always the person who would lend a hand over asking ‘can you give me a hand?’”

Samantha noted this as not just an intrinsic quality, but something that has always pushed her to find places where she is able to give back through organizations, and it is also a quality she seeks in a group. “You have to be in it for a community or a group of people, whatever you're working for.” Noting it as a motivating factor to not only join a group, but to stay in the group. For her it goes beyond herself. “I think being a part of something greater than you and being a part of that and wanting to do better for the greater good is always something that leaders should keep in the back of their mind.”

For her the idea of contributing to the greater good is about motivation but also a basis for leadership. The two were able to combine to make her feel comfortable joining the organization. Even more so Samantha’s position within her organization is one that is focused on philanthropy. She said she picked this role because she felt like she would be able to keep her focus on others. “So, with that, obviously I could help the greater community with community service events because Greek life is huge with community service. We like to keep that in the back of our heads all the time.”

Latrice said that she first noticed her desire to want to get involved because of her lack of involvement at the first institution she attended during her collegiate career. Latrice shared:

Last year when I was at my other school, when I wasn't working, I was very bored and I was, ‘I can't be in this club because I have to be doing this’. And I just realized that I was very bored all the time. I need to be involved in something. I was, ‘there's no way I'm going to not be involved for the rest of my life’. It was that kind of thing.

When asked why she felt like it was important to be involved with something and influence people, Latrice said:

If I couldn't do that, I probably wouldn't care about, the potential to, to boost my resume or whatever. That's really my main purpose, to be able to influence other people. I truly enjoy leading other people. So that's really what it is.

For Latrice, doing her part of being involved also involved being able to serve as representation for women who contribute to that greater good.

Why I wanted to start it [the organization]? I was hoping to have speakers and events surrounding, what is it like to be a woman entrepreneur. What is it like to be a woman in a male dominated field; whether that's business or technology or engineering? Also talked about just regular business stuff that we're going to have, learning to be a professional learning to have the correct documents that you need, whether that's a resume or having a LinkedIn profile, stuff like that.

Part of the greater good for Latrice was about providing the gender specific content that she does not feel she would get in an otherwise mixed gender organization or non-specific focused group. Being able to provide this content, and the feelings derived from helping, contributes to her purpose and meaning in the organization.

Overall, why women got involved in their organization centered around seeing the organization as a tool to enhance their educational and career goals while also making improvements in the community in which the women lived and worked. Seeing these groups, and their own efforts within them, allowed the participants to see leadership as a tool to making change.

Research Question #4: What barriers do college women experience in relation to their leadership attainment?

When asked to identify any barriers that they faced in relation to attaining roles and positions of leadership, all of the participants identified some that they had faced. These barriers were able to be categorized as being related to fighting social pressures/expectations in some way. The barriers they identified can be divided into three main categories of societal pressures: gender, race, and age.

Societal Pressure/Expectations of Gender

Samantha, who has been a member and leader in mixed gender organization and an all-female organizations, pointed out that sometimes barriers come with having all the same gender in the room, and she felt that there are more barriers that come with being in a group with all females. “Obviously, all-female[groups] sometimes were really hard to work with. You would know that because females are really stubborn and like to have it our way.” Samantha shared that she has enjoyed being able to be in a group that is mixed because she feels it breaks up some of the single-gender issues that she has seen in her all-female groups. “Because sometimes when we're being overdramatic, as females sometimes do, the males would be like, they'd give you that look of ‘are we really fighting about this right now?’ Or ‘are we really like bickering about this?’ In her experience she said the men would help simplify the situation instead of overanalyzing the details. “Because as women, I feel like we want it to be like perfect, everything would be perfect. So, I'm with them. They're kind of just do this. It's an easy situation.”

For Samantha this perspective on the gender roles has had an interesting interaction with her perspective on it as a barrier. At times, having a male in the situation

has allowed her to recognize what she may be doing that is feeding into a gender expectation or stereotype. Samantha shared that she was able to rely on this when she thought maybe she was being “over dramatic” a quality she associates as being female. She stated she would ask “Am I being over dramatic? And he'd be, “yeah, just do this, that and the other and get down to the situation”. She added “don't make it harder on yourself because you're only going to stress yourself out more.” For Samantha it was the all-female groups and stereotypically female qualities that she felt were a barrier to her success.

Jill had also noticed a barrier in relation to competing with her female peers in that it does indeed feel like extra competition. Jill worried about how some girls appeared to be threatened by her presence or unwelcoming to her being part of the group. She shared:

Because you're going against people who are similar and want the same thing, so there becomes competition, natural competition. I wasn't a victim or anything, just natural competition that we all go through. So that's what I faced, but I got through it. And we're all great and everything's fine. But that was, yeah, well it was something I had to go through.

Jill noted that this threatening feeling made her feel like it was a space she cannot lead in, and at the same time, she experienced this in her mixed gendered groups as well. Jill shared an example of being in a group with male peers.

It was hard because sometimes having debates or conversations, my opinion would be dismissed, or my idea would be dismissed because I have not served on

the executive board or because I didn't find a video to support whatever it is. Just situations where my opinion wasn't valued.

Jill described where she saw this happening and how she dealt with it. Reflecting on her experience, Jill shared,

Oh, just in the campus community as a whole, you know. Not being on the executive board of certain RSOs, your opinion really doesn't mean much. You kind of have to just go with the flow and with what they have planned and it's like you might think 'Hey, I want to do more, I want to have an actual contribution to things.'

Those barriers have not stopped Jill, but in fact have made her feel more confident and stronger when she approaches the next leadership situation. Latrice has also felt the pressures that have come with being in a mixed group. She shared an experience she had in a class when she had the idea for a project, but her group did not want to elect her the leader.

And I was like, this was kind of my idea of the project we were working on in the beginning. I was 'I don't understand why you guys think he should be it'. And it was kind of this, not an argument, but a discussion about who it should be and eventually we all decided it would be me, but I definitely had to fight for it.

Latrice has continued to question this as she transitioned to roles at the university. As a woman on an all-female executive board, she has some views on what it might look like if there were to be a more mixed board.

A lot of the other RSOs in the college of business are led by guys. I've yet to see one of the presidents be a woman yet. I'm sure there might be one. But usually if

there are women in the executive board, it might be one of the treasurers or the secretary or something like that.

Latrice recognized that the preference for men makes it harder for women to gain positions of leadership in these groups.

So I do kind of wonder if it wasn't, if I hadn't decided to make this a women in business thing, if I decided to do just marketing-based or just accounting-based, would I be able to get a position as a president, as a woman?

She recognized that women had to meet higher levels of expectation in order to compete with the men in gaining positions within the organizations. "How willing are they to elect a woman into that? And I wonder if they do, she probably has to check off every box and even more."

Latrice identified issues of feeling like she can't just purely make her meetings about women's issues all the time, because if she does, she may run the risk of people being offended by the organization. She discussed with her adviser how organizations that have a focus on an under-represented population often have to struggle to justify their existence among the dominant population group.

You kind of have to watch out for people who are 'why is it specified around women?' And 'this is not inclusive'. She [adviser] said, 'you might have to look out for that because there's always going to be someone who says something'.

There's going to be a guy who thinks it's weird, but for the most part it's been fine so far.

Latrice addressed how this makes her feel able to respond to the potential negativity that could come her way.

I kind of expected [it] because there's always that one person who feels like if you're not talking about, especially with guys, if you're not talking about the majority then it's offensive. Like to have this one group, 'why do we need a women's club?' Why not?

She went on to address how minority specific groups challenged the status quo. She has accepted that some people may have negative opinions of the group but that does not deter her, from knowing that what she has created is positive.

Why isn't it inclusive? Because they kind of feel it's offensive because they're not used to it or it's not normal. But I said to respond to that I would probably just say, 'well, if you don't want to be in it, you don't have to be in it.' It's not going to harm anyone else.

In this way Latrice has had to fight to have the kind of group that she wants to have. She does not have the freedom of just being able to be comfortable and owning the fact that she truly does want this to be a women focused organization. She said "it's hard because it's about business and technology. So, every single one of our meetings can't really be women-focused." Latrice says that she has noticed this imbalance not just in her organizations but sees it in the campus community as well. She mentioned that her advisor talked about issues that she has felt in the faculty and academic community with her. Latrice has also felt the pressure in transitioning to college. She isn't sure what is the cause, but she has seen how her peers have acted different when being around men.

I feel like once people transition into a college, especially girls, there's kind of this pressure, this, 'Oh, I have to act a certain way for guys so I can, get a guy or whatever it is and I need to act like this type of girl and be this type of person all

the time so that I can get that.' So, in that aspect, yes, there's a lot of issues, around campus on that. I see that a lot actually. A lot of girls kind of change themselves and kind of do things for other guys so that they can be the person that the guy wants rather than, you know, deciding, 'Hey, I'm not the person I want to be, so maybe I shouldn't be with that person.'

Latrice also noticed some similar differences in behavior in her classes as well.

I think, academically, most of my classes are mixed gender. I do see a lot of the times, usually guys participate a little bit more. I'm not really sure if that's because of gender inequalities there. But I do notice that.

Latrice continued talking about how this can impact an organization, she said "But I can imagine that you know who, whoever else is a girl and on executive board that they might get talked over a lot or their ideas might be pushed to the side a lot." It wasn't just behavior that she had observed, she also identified some gender stereotypes that had manifested in the groups. "I would say speaking nicely and looking nice and not being too aggressive are probably the ones that I feel the most." Latrice feels lucky that because of her single gendered organization, she does not feel like in her organization she has to face these challenges, but she sees them as a problem in other mixed gender organizations.

Societal Pressure/Expectations of Race

Jill initially started to feel the barriers she would face with regard to leadership when she was in her role as a nursing assistant in high school. For her, her experience at the nursing home was affected by a combination of her race age, and gender. She said that for her, it created a sense that she had to work harder than others.

It was a lot of things. It was, well coming to work and doing everything as expected, like being better than everyone else when it came to like attendance and my work ethic and not ever complaining. Being more of a team player than a lot of the other caregivers. So, I definitely feel like I've put more of a foot forward at that time than everyone else.

Jill continued to share that she feels it is a barrier in her community for all women, and especially women of color, to achieve leadership positions. She talked about the lack of representation that she has seen among faculty and staff.

Because I have never seen a woman president at (our institution). I don't know, maybe a long time ago, but a lot of the department chairs are not women. Just a lot of the higher up people are men and until it's kind of not divided equally, but until there is at least, you know, 20 or 30% of women that are in these department chairs or president or making decisions, then it's hard. I want to see them.

Specifically, when talking about women in minority groups she shared "There isn't (representation) for women or for minorities. It's not a lot. Unless they're in like the minority affairs office that's it." The lack of representation creates a barrier not having the same access to role models and representation of other groups.

Latrice has noticed that because of her race there is another level she has to take into consideration when being a leader. She has to lead in certain ways in order to not be misrepresented.

I will say since I'm a black girl, there is also an expectation that I can be mature, but I can't seem like angry or anything like that. I have to make sure that I'm nice all the time and smile all the time. Which I smile a decent amount, but I'm not

always smiling all the time. Nobody is. I think there's that as well. I think there's an expectation for me that when I'm in this business type things, I do need to look a certain way. I need to put together my hair needs to look decent enough to get by. I think guys get away with looking sloppier than we do. I can't be too aggressive. I did already say that, but I can't be too aggressive with my leadership. Latrice not being able to be her full self or not feeling comfortable being able to embrace her most authentic self-limits her ability to lead the way that might feel most comfortable or fitting to her. She also experiences feeling that in order to be taken seriously she has to look a certain way as well. She said "I kind of forced myself to present myself as more mature than I can be. So people will see and say she's very professional. She knows what she's doing." Latrice mentioned that she has been told to watch out for her language and that she has to make sure she sounds educated and not ignorant.

A barrier that Zoe has faced has been there has not been people in leadership roles in the past for her who have paved a way for her or done things in the past as an example. So, when she leads, she feels as though it might be the first time.

I've been told by my dad, my whole life. My dad is black, he's a minority and then I'm mixed, and I'm also a woman. So, if I see something wrong, I can't expect other people to fix it for me. So, it's always been if you see there's something wrong with you, have to fix it yourself.

Three out of the four participants had an experience with their racial identity that they felt was a barrier to their leadership. Whether directly affecting the way they lead, or just in the availability of representation and mentorship, this barrier played a role in their ability to attain leadership roles, and their ability to actually lead.

Societal Pressure/Expectations of Age

Samantha talked about how her age can also at times be a barrier for her in relation to her roles and how she may be looked at differently because of it. Samantha talked about working with women who are older than her at work where she has a leadership role as a store manager. Although it is not related to her elected role in a student organization, it still had an effect on her mental attitude towards leadership.

That's been tough. It's kind of been tricky just because a lot of the women that I work with now are older than me, but they still know that the respect factor needs to be there. That's taught me a lot of being able to tell people what I don't like and what needs to be done in order for the store to operate better.

She felt like she worked for the position but at times she feels bad being so direct when the women she is working with are older. When she looked at her role on the council and thinking about how young she is compared to others she said "Are people not going to take me seriously? Am I going to be the laughingstock, is my term even going to be good? Things like that." Samantha also realized that if she were at a larger school, she may not have been able to get this position at her age, so it is something that she keeps in her mind and it affects her behavior. She feels like she has to act more mature and it has caused her to doubt her ability as a leader.

Jill also has felt the tension and barriers that she feels have come along with her age. She said when she was working as a nursing assistant, she felt judged for her age.

I just felt like it was a lot on my back, and I didn't really get a lot of respect because a lot of coworkers' kind of looked at me as this kid. 'What is she doing

here? 'She has no business being here.' I feel that at that time it taught me courage and strength.

She had to do more and show more in order to get the work done that others were doing because of how young she was. When asked to clarify these experiences, she said:

Nurses not wanting to talk to me or look me in the eye and kind of, just the little behaviors like that. But then I'd see other coworkers with them and think, 'Oh, well she's having a full conversation with her, but when I go and ask for help, it's disrespect'.

Jill explained that it was because of her age she couldn't fully participate in the group and could not do work in the same way as her coworkers.

For these participants age, and the perceptions that being younger than her peers gives to others, often formed a barrier between them and their ability to either attain a leadership role or to successfully navigate the responsibilities associated with it. From not receiving respect or feeling as if they must behave in a different way, it definitely effected their leadership and their perceptions of how they needed to act.

Research Question #5: What benefits do women anticipate from their leadership roles in the future?

When looking at the final research question, two themes emerged amongst the participants: investment in future goals and investment in the greater good. Overall the participants felt that their current roles would allow them to gain more experiences in the future and contribute to job aspirations. Additionally, they felt like their roles would allow them to impact a greater good for individuals and lift others up.

Investment in Future Goals

All four participants discussed career or personal gains as potential benefits of their current leadership experience for them in the future. For Zoe, exposing herself to leadership has made her feel that things that once weren't possible or should not be considered are now possible. She talked about the inspiration she has gotten watching other women lead and leading herself.

Even though I am a political science major, the thought of going into politics, absolutely terrifies me because it's scary. For my class we read all these different reports of this year, statistics of women who got into Congress or even just women who ran and made it through primaries but lost the actual election. And it's something that I've thought about more seriously. All these women can do it and a lot of them are doing it because there's no one else.

Although still focused on representing the benefit of investing in leadership more and exposing new paths for her career, Zoe said that through her leadership roles she has learned to be more directive and confident and knows that these are skills that will benefit her in her future career and roles.

Samantha also felt that her roles have been a great "resume builder" and that she has been able to build skills for the future. She chose her organization based its connection to a philanthropy that is related to her degree program. She hopes that because of her involvement in the organization will aid her goal of becoming a child psychologist. When asked how this role helps motivate her in her future career, she said: "I want to help the children that are in your community instead of just everywhere. Because these [are the] children [who] need it."

Being able to have these experiences with kids will help her talk in graduate school interviews and enhance her ability to get into a good graduate degree program. The future benefits for Samantha are also the connections and friendships she has been able to make in her leadership position. “Those sisters are always there for you to pick up.” By being a part of this organization, she is building a community she will be able to rely on for a long time. She continued talking about the people she has been able to build these connections with. “These people know so much about me and they care about me. And that comes with maturity and growth.”

“There's two women in my sorority now that I could lean on for anything.” Samantha shared that she has been able to go to them for advice on leadership, personal life, and school, and she would not have that without her organization. Jill similarly shared that part of the personal benefit she has gained is being able to have mentors who push her and invest in her. Specifically, she talked about two professors who have taken personal investment in her and have really continued to follow her and push her to do the best she can do. Jill sees herself being able to take this experience and share it, enhancing her ability to lead on future teams. “I can take my experience on the team here and just share things that I've learned about being a part of the team here and we can just learn from one another.”

The skills in teamwork that she has learned will be transitional skills to her future career. Combined with the workshops and events provided by the organization itself, her experiences will help her build the connections she needs and enhance her ability to get a job post-graduation. Latrice also saw her involvement in her team as a way to enhance her future. “I wanted to boost my resume. So, in the future, I could potentially get a job,

before I graduate, by building those connections.” Because of her future career goals, she said she is doing what she needs to do to learn the necessary skills.

I want to be a business consultant so it's good now to learn how to work with groups like that. Which, if I really go into that, will be my job in the future. Just building out those characteristics now so that when I get to that point, I'm not thrown off by that. Those are all the real reasons, being able to influence people and to boost my potential career in the future.

For all four participants they see their involvement as an investment in their future selves by building the skills they need to succeed. Whether that be specific leadership skills or the ability to build connection that will last or connect them with opportunity in the future, they see taking on these roles as an investment in their future self.

Investment in Greater Good

All the participants saw their leadership involvement as a way of not just investing in their own personal future, but also being able to help others by investing in the greater good of the world. They talked about how personal gains are important but what matters most to them is being able to influence and inspire others in the future.

Latrice shared:

If I couldn't do that, I probably wouldn't care about the potential to boost my resume or whatever. That's really my main purpose, to be able to influence other people. I truly enjoy like leading other people. So that's really what it is cool.

Latrice valued her ability to influence others and have an impact on them over anything else. She continued talking about why she felt that her role was important.

I think I have the responsibility to kind of make a path for them to kind of tear down the walls. If I invade myself in those spaces that are male dominated so that I can open the door and say, 'Hey, let's invite this person in'. Or 'Hey, you know, we should do this other thing that's not necessarily what you think about, but I do'. I think whenever there is something for women, or whatever type of group, there has to be one person that has to break down the walls for other people to come in. I think that's my main responsibility with that.

Breaking down walls and making space for others is a theme that continued amongst the participants when talking about why they see their roles as an important part in the future.

Jill shared that despite all the other gains, why she does what she does is for people beyond herself.

If I can be in a position where I'm able to like help people in any way, I would definitely take on the challenge. It's never been about something on a resume or a letter of recommendation or having a connection. I really don't care about that. I care about just doing it for just the good of God. That's it. I love people and I'm here on earth to give back. That's what I know what my purpose is. I do it to just help the marginalized folk. But not just the marginalized folks. The regular folks.

When asked how she wants to do this for others she said:

I want to provide myself as a resource and support any way that I can or help them find the correct person or resource in order for them to get there. If they do need help, but also if they don't, just be just open to them. I feel like my duty is just to accept and work together.

The feeling of responsibility and need to serve others is what drives Jill towards leadership and what she sees as the benefit in her future is being able to have that impact. Zoe shared that one of the reasons she leads is also because she feels she will be able to have an impact on people in the future. Zoe said that, for her, she has a responsibility and wants to be able to be a good role model for future people.

I mean if you're willing to be a leader, you can fall into the public spotlight. So, then you have that responsibility to be a good role model. Because you never know who's going to see you. I think it would be cool if later on [I was] a woman in Congress or something and she [future woman] saw all these women who were leaders and they were doing such good jobs.

She goes on to detail how she is able to see herself being one of those inspirational women to future women and girls and how those that inspired her makes her want to be inspirational.

That's why I thought it was possible for me to be a leader. The 2018 midterm election, there were so many women running because they saw that need, and you become a role model for not even just children, everyone. It's like you're in charge, here in the spotlight.

The idea of being able to have this kind of impact on others inspired her to want to attain more roles so she can have that kind of impact on others. She has been inspired, so she wants to do the same thing.

Samantha had the idea that her leadership will not just benefit herself but other people as well. She said that for her, she thinks of the stories that she has heard about

people being able to be the difference in others' lives, and that is the impact she wants to have.

Being in her position longer than some of the other participants, Samantha has already been able to see some of the payoffs of this and it has continued to make her believe it is a benefit she will see more of.

I feel because if they don't see me enjoying it [her leadership role] and that I'm learning from it and things like that, then what am I really doing? One of the women in my chapter actually reached out to me and she said 'Oh, I didn't get a council position this year (for our chapter) What would you feel about me possibly doing the overall [campus] council?' She was like, 'I see how much you love it, I see how much you want to put into it. I see all of these things in you. What can I do, to be like that too?' And I said 'yeah do it all. Take it, take in everything and run with it.' That's kind of my model.

For all of the participants in the study, they see their roles and leadership positions being larger than themselves and having an impact that will go beyond their time in the position. They see the greatest benefit being the impact they can have on others and the ability to represent those who are not represented currently.

Conclusion

Through this research study, and from the research questions, various themes were able to be found through the participant response. Themes of family influence, and exposure to leadership roles were found as pre-college factors that influenced leadership attainment. During their time in college, factors that influenced leadership attainment included outside influences, personal qualities, and wanting to represent and be part of a

greater good. All four participants found the ability to contribute to their education and career path an influential piece as well as wanting to be part of a greater good guided their decisions regarding which organizations to pursue both membership and leadership opportunities. Challenges regarding leadership attainment were experienced by all four participants and shared the common element of societal pressure that they felt held them back from achieving for positions. Gender, race and age were all particular societal barriers to women's leadership attainment. Finally, when participants reflected on what they felt they were able to gain from their leadership in the future, all of the participants reflected that they felt that they would have career benefits as well be able to invest in the betterment of society and leave a lasting impact. In chapter five, the findings will be discussed including implication for the profession and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V

Discussion, Recommendations, Conclusion

This research study used qualitative semi structured interviews to look at factors that influence leadership attainment for college women at a mid-sized Midwestern public institution. The purpose of this study was to explore factors influencing leadership attainment, as well as the barriers making it difficult for women in order to better understand why women take on leadership roles. The importance of this study is about finding ways to be able to empower more women to lead by understanding what motivates them. Four participants, all in their first elected leadership position in their college career, were interviewed and asked a set of questions (Appendix D) around the following research questions: (1) What factors prior to college lead to leadership attainment for women in college? ; (2) What factors during college contribute to leadership attainment for women in college? ; (3) Why do women get involved in their organizations? (4) What barriers do college women experience in relation to their leadership attainment? ;(5) What benefits do women anticipate from their leadership roles in the future? This chapter discusses the result of the study, recommendations for student affairs professionals, and recommendations for future research

Discussion

Across the research questions and themes found, conclusions can be drawn from the results. Overall, it is evident that women leaders face challenge's regarding their ability to lead authentically. When women are faced with the inability to lead authentically, it prevents the female norms of leadership to become mainstream and accepted. Women face these challenges in relation to their gender identity as well as their

race and age. This study confirms what other research has found (Colwill & Townsend, 1999, O'Connor, 2018): that women view leadership as a communal effort and are more focused on their ability to improve and help others than personal gain. Conclusions can be made from this as well that women as leaders are more collaborative and foster more personal relationships in their leadership style. This study also shows that women, and especially those from marginalized communities, see their leadership as a way to represent and make room for other women in leadership roles. This chapter will discuss the findings and meanings from this study.

Motivations to Lead

Across all four participants there were commonalities that persisted in their motivation to become a leader. The women noted that an important aspect of them taking a role in college was the access to a leadership role and experiences prior to that during their time in high school. Having access to roles early on is essential as it builds the confidence to negotiate the inner voice and desire to achieve more roles (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008 and Kress, 2006). All four women identified a key female figure, their mothers or older sister figures, who served as role models for them pre-college and displayed qualities that they wanted to emulate. Zoe talked about her mom as being a “badass” and that she was someone who would not let them walk all over her. Zoe has taken the example of those early role models as a source of motivation to speak up for herself and “not take anyone’s crap.” Dahlvig & Longman (2010) talk about these moments as “speaking life” and mentorship that really changes the way that women are able to think about themselves as leaders. This study confirmed that when the women had mentors, formal or informal, they could look up to that displayed leadership behavior

themselves and build their confidence to be a leader, an elemental that was essential in their belief that they could lead.

Leadership Identity Development theory states that access to mentors is essential for building a leadership identity (Owen 2012). This was found to be true amongst all four participants in the study. When speaking about their experiences precollege and in their college careers, all women identified someone who took the time to invest and encourage them in their leadership process. Latrice mentioned how her dad was able to push her to become more confident and speak for herself. She said “I became a little bit more outspoken (with his push) that made me want to be in leadership. I like being able to speak up for myself. He pushed me in that direction.” This confidence building is essential as it is the confidence and self-efficacy skills that women often struggle with when attaining roles (Haber-Curran, 2013).

Jill and Latrice also mentioned in particular that their female mentors have a significant impact on them. Jill especially feels supported by her female advisor in that she can provide context to situations and prepare her for challenges. This idea of historical context mentorship as mentioned by Dominique (2015) is particularly of importance for women of color as they face double jeopardy in leadership positions. Having a mentor shows women in these communities that it can be done (Dominique, 2015, Green & King, 2001). Not only did the presence of a mentor motivate the participants to lead but gave them the confidence to attain as well.

Representation. Another motivating factor for leading for all the women was a wanting to be able to contribute to a greater good. O’Connor (2018) says that women often have a greater desire for a common good that motivates them to lead and allows

them to navigate the barriers that come with leadership. When looking at the results of the study, themes of wanting to represent their demographic group and be a part of change were common among participants. Zoe says she has been taught “if she doesn’t do it, no one will do it for me.” When you look at that quote it shows that Zoe both feels it is her responsibility to show up and lead for her people as well as a motivator her to do so. When asked what they thought would be the lasting impact of their leadership, all the women said that they believed they were making the world better for others. Latrice said that she felt like she had the “responsibility to make a path for other women.” And Samantha said that she hopes that by leading, others will want to lead as well.

This visionary change is closely associated with women and particularly women who identify in marginalized communities (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005 and Dominique 2015) saying that they feel a particular vision and pressure to represent and help their communities. This was found in the participant’s here as well with Zoe, Jill, and Latrice all mentioning their racial identify as an additional reason why they feel it was important for them to be leaders. The women felt that their motivations were bigger than just a self-benefit, but that it was a benefit for the greater world and population. The idea of being able to attain a role, and the benefit of access to roles in the future is supported by Cook & Glass’s (2014) research that shows business with women CEO’s have a higher percentage of women in leadership roles.

Media/World Events. Three out of the four women mentioned world events and the rise in female leadership as a motivating factor to lead. Jill in particular said that she wanted to be secretary of her organization because of Hilary Clinton. She said that she found it inspirational that she was willing to be the secretary when she couldn’t be

president and that the world “needs more Hillary’s.” Zoe also mentioned the recent national election as affecting her motivation to lead, and that it has given her a new perspective on taking on these roles for herself in the future. Research shows that when other women are in leadership roles that it makes way for other women to do so (Cook & Glass, 2014). Having women of multiple identities in roles of leadership helps to create a path that other women then believe they can follow (Dominique, 2015; Edds- Ellis & Keaster, 2013). This idea was supported by this study as the women in the study were inspired and motivated by seeing women in the media and world succeed and work.

Career/Education. Final motivations for the women to seek and attain roles are that they felt it was important for their educational and career success. All four participants noted an educational or career related factor in their leadership attainment. For Jill this looked like choosing to be in an organization that is the student professional organization for her intended career path. Samantha picked an organization whose philanthropy is closely associated to her career goal of being a children’s psychiatrist. Latrice created an organization for women in business and Zoe was involved with the Spanish club which is her minor. The direct correlation to their degree programs and aspirations served as a motivator for all the women. Paying attention to career development and personal investment aligns with the crossroads portion of development in Baxter Magolda’s (2001) theory of self-authorship. What this shows is that the women in the study are beginning to make their own decisions and trying to make decisions that they feel work best for them. The intentional act of choosing an organization shows that the women are taking care and direction to begin to make their own path for their future selves.

Challenges

Although the women felt that overall their leadership was a positive experience, the women noted barriers for to their leadership attainment. The barriers faced by the women all align with particular societal pressures (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, Dominique, 2015, Eagly & Carli, 2012). We know that women have societal pressures and expectations thrust on them at a young age, and this complicates their ability to form the skills needed to succeed in leadership roles (Kress, 2006). The women involved in this study named a variety of societal pressures that felt affected their personal ability to attain leadership positions.

Gender. All four participants in this study noted gender related pressures and expectations as a barrier to their leadership opportunities. Jill and Latrice talked about experiences in groups where they feel they were spoken over and not give the chance to lead. Latrice in particular talked about a time when she was the person behind an idea, but the group wanted to vote a male into the position. This experience is confirmed as it is common in American culture to give leadership positions to males (Eagly & Carli, 2012), and that women must work harder to attain the same role. Latrice could feel this pressure saying “I wonder if they're even allowing women to be in the role if it is mostly made up of men. How willing are they to elect a woman into that? And I wonder if they do, she probably has to check off every box and even more.” These societal pressures create a barrier that does not allow the women to feel that they can lead authentically and be valued for what they bring to the table. The women note having to make sure that they speak in a way that makes them be listened to and that they need to act more mature and stronger in order to get the respect they deserve. This double standard is thrust on women

where they need to exhibit more masculine traits, but yet these skills are not viewed the same way as male peers (Haber-Curran, 2013). These pressures can create an imbalance of power, and deterrence to even trying to attain a leadership role. The women in the study were able to persist despite these barriers, but this is not true for all women leaders.

Two of the women also mentioned that they have experienced the relational aggression that can often be seen between women in leadership positions (Allen, Flood, 2018). Jill saw this as being women feeling a need to compete for the same spot. Jill says that this felt like a natural kind of competition. The natural challenge that Samantha felt was that she felt her organization, which was a single gender organization, might tend to be “overdramatic” or “overthinking”, meaning that she sees herself and peers falling into some of the negative stereotypical female behavior. Allen and Flood (2018), talk about that when women compete within the stereotyped roles thrust on them by society it can create this constant battle.

Double Jeopardy for Women of Color. Barriers for leadership are complicated when you consider the intersectionality of both race and gender. Dominique (2015) saw in her research that black women often deal with microaggressions and stereotypes directly related to their race and gender. Latrice talked about how she needs to be mature but can't be angry because she is a black girl. She also noted having to watch her facial expressions for fear that they will be interpreted wrong. The pressure that comes with feeling like you need to represent a whole culture and group is tiring for a leader (Arminio et al., 2000). The women in this study noted that they felt that there were not that many women on campus who looked like them in leadership roles and so they felt they had to do it. Women feel a pressure to show up and be a leader for their people in a

way that a white woman will not feel. This double jeopardy can create undo stress and pressure for our leaders on campus.

Having mentors and leaders available that are of the same identity as you is a significant factor for developing leaders (Dominque, 2015, Green & King, 2001). Jill and Latrice both stated that they do not feel their current campus climate has a high enough population of women leaders, let alone women leaders of color. Jill noted that she sees it in academic faculty in the department chairs. There are some women in these roles to look to, but the majority “aren’t the ones making the decisions.” Jill also shared that she has felt “behind” in attaining a role because she hasn’t always had a mentor to go to and get advice from when at school. Dominique (2015) noted that there is a strong need for student affairs professionals and leaders on campus to see these women and take interest. What these women face shows the complexities that women of color face in attaining leadership roles and how the double jeopardy of experiencing the marginalized identity of being both a woman and a person of color present for emerging leaders.

Leadership Development

When looking at the ability to develop as a leader, because of their status as women, women experience challenges in cultivating an authentic leadership style, which is a style in which women traditionally thrive (McKenzie, 2018). McKenzie’s research shows that it is critical for women to have experiences that allow them to discover what actions are authentic for them. In her theory, she explored a multi staged model as it related to traditionally aged female women. In the first stage of her model, a woman must become aware that roles exist. With the participants in this study, this stage of

development occurred in their pre-college experience. All four women were able to note experienced they had either in formal roles, or with other circumstances.

The second phase of the theory, leader identified, occurs when the individual names themselves as a leader. This occurred at different times for the participants. For Samantha it was clear that she had previously held leadership roles, whereas, Zoe and Jill struggled to name themselves as a leader until college. The third stage of the model is Leadership Differentiated, it is here where the leader begins to navigate their own voice and find their authentic style. This is where the student navigates internal and external voices, and idea that coincides with Gilligan theory of Moral Development (1992) and Baxter Magolda's theory of self-authorship (2001). It is here that the women of the study appear to be. All the women noted struggles in finding their voice, whether that be from outside or internal messages. It is significant to note this as it shows what a critical period of development these women are in, and the importance of being able to cultivate their leadership styles. Because of the barriers that women face it is critical to be able to help them develop an authentic leadership style (Archard, 2013 and Gardiner, 2015) in order to create a strong base for future leadership.

Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals

When looking at the research only one of the women mentioned a student affair professional as a significant factor in her development as a leader. Although positive, it leads one to believe that student affairs professionals need to increase their care attention in seeking out female leaders to mentor. Because we know of the critical role of mentors in the growth and development of leaders it is essential that student affairs professional seek out ways in which they can contribute. In addition to this, student affairs

professionals have a responsibility to create spaces in which women leaders can feel comfortable being themselves. In order to encourage authentic leadership development, professionals need to work to create a space in which students do not feel confined to the stereotypes and pressure thrust upon them. By creating these spaces, we will be able to create environments in which women can negotiate their inner voices and balance the views of the outside world and their inner self.

Another way in which student affairs professional can help their female leaders is by examining the way that we look at leadership traits and promote leadership development. Many traditional leadership theories are based on male dominated norms. When professionals continue to function in these norms, it forces women to adopt styles that do not allow for feminine traits to surface or be valued. By being more aware of language and bias in traditional leadership development practices, professionals can better cultivate and appreciate differing skill sets. In addition to this, the study shows that women place a high value on being able to be part of a greater good. If advisers are able to highlight experiences in which leaders are contributing to others and developing self it will continue their motivation and increase their desire to lead. By showing them the results of their work and the lasting impact, it can encourage the true core of their leadership identity.

Recommendations for Women Leaders

While there are advancements in roles for women in higher education and the workforce, there is still lack in representation. By being a woman who has reached or gone above the glass ceiling it is important to realize the effect one has to create change for those below. By creating mentoring programs women can show how they got where

they are and provide the background and support to women reaching for roles. This is especially essential for women of color as the historical context provided in these relationships is influential (Dominque, 2015). Because women commonly struggle with leadership skills such as confidence and self-efficacy, mentors can be paramount in showing women how to speak for themselves and build the confidence needed to compete in male dominated fields.

Another recommendation for women leaders is to be a good example in how to relate with other females. There are many stereotypes with female leadership that are perceived negatively by society, especially those related to relational aggressions. As women leaders, it is important to set a good example with female peers to show strong mutual benefiting relationships. When one-woman shines, she makes others shine along with her. It is our responsibility as women to help each other rise by providing support and setting an example of women supporting women.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this research was limited in scope due to the number of participants and other factors, it offers a blueprint for opportunities for further research. One suggestion for future research would be expanding on the number of participants to get a wider range of experiences. Another study could be conducted with leaders in their second or third leadership position to give a more reflective perspective on the building blocks of leadership. One of the areas in which the current study was limited, was that participant's struggled with words to describe their experience. Interviewing leaders with more experience may yield results with more rich detail.

Further research could also be done focusing on specific populations of women such as black women, Latino women, and women in the LGBTQ community. Looking at specific populations would allow further exploration and definition of the issues that marginalized populations face and allow to make specific recommendations in supporting students with intersectional identities. Along with this further research could be done to specifically how women feel their leadership will be able to translate to future success and efforts. The women of this study all mentioned that it was a significant factor in their leadership motivation, but the depths of this was not explored. By exploring this we may better see how we can make programs focused at developing their needs areas.

Conclusion

Women's Leadership is an emerging field of study that has shown specific challenges, strengths, and qualities of female leadership. The results of this study support the ideas of the existing literature. The interviews with women in their first leadership roles were conducted to explore how and why women choose to lead and what goes into the attainment of their role. The study showed ways in which, as professionals, we can better support women to attain roles and create spaces that foster authentic leadership. The study concludes that women choose to lead in order to contribute to a greater good in society, represent their peers, and also for personal and career advancement. It shows that women feel confident in attaining leadership positions when they have support from family and are inspired by the actions of other women, such as those in politics. The women interviewed faced many challenges to their leadership that relate directly to their gender identity in not feeling like they will be able to have a voice at the table or having to act differently to be viewed as a leader. Three of the participant's also addressed

having to manage barriers in their path as it related to both their race and gender. Despite these challenges, the women of this study used their personal motivation to contribute to something bigger than themselves and persevere to attain leadership positions.

The recommendation this gives professionals is to create spaces in which women can feel free of barriers, especially those imposed upon them, in order to develop authentic leadership. It is also the responsibility of higher education professionals to challenge traditional masculine leadership norms to make space for the benefits of female leadership. And most importantly, as women it is our role to mentor and help make space for other women to rise to leadership roles and show them that they are capable. By being in roles and mentoring women, more experienced women provide young women with the perspective needed to be successful. It is essential for us to create programming focused on women leaders and help them build confidence and self-efficacy skills. By learning about how and why these women lead, student affairs professionals can better support and advise women leaders. The hope of these leaders is that they may shake the ceiling, and that they will continue to shake it until they break it. By doing so they will be able to create a path for other women leaders and show them that it is possible to lead authentically as a woman.

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Appendix A

Advisor Contact Email

Hello, (Advisor Name)

My name is Libby Siecinski and I am a graduate student in the College Student Affairs Master's program at Eastern Illinois University. I am hoping to conduct research about the motivations to become leaders for female college students. This research is a required part of my degree program and I am looking for women in their first leadership role in the collegiate career to interview.

If you have any women leaders who are serving in an elected leadership role (e.g. executive board, executive council) for the first time in her college experience who you believe may be willing to participate in a 45-60 minute interview to discuss her experiences and thoughts about leadership, please forward their contact information for me to extend an invitation to interview. Before sending their name my way please make sure with your student that they are comfortable with you passing their name along, and that it is indeed their first time in an elected role in college. This would be a confidential and private interview. Thank you for your time and thank you for helping me in completing this research.

Libby Siecinski

ejsiecinski@eiu.edu

Appendix B

Student Contact E-mail

Hello, (Student)

My name is Libby Siecinski and I am a graduate student in the College Student Affairs Master's program at Eastern Illinois University. I am hoping to conduct research about the motivations to become leaders for female college students. This research is a required part of my degree program and I am looking for women in their first elected leadership position in college to interview for my research.

You have been nominated as a great candidate to participate in this leadership study due to your leadership ability. If you are interested in participating in this research, you will be asked to attend a 45-60 minute interview with me. We can meet at a time that is convenient for you and in one of the private library study rooms. If you decide that you would like to participate, please fill out the attached demographic data card so that I may know a little bit about you before the interview. Thank you for your time, and for helping me in completing this research and my degree!

Libby Siecinski

ejsiecinski@eiu.edu

Appendix C

Demographic Data Card

1. What year in school are you?

2. What is your age?

3. How do you identify your racial identity?

4. What is your major?

5. What is the name of the organization in which you hold an elected position?
(names of participant organizations will not be shared in reporting of the data).

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

As we discuss your role as a leader here at EIU, I would like to talk first about your experiences with leadership prior to coming to college.

- 1) Can you tell me about your first leadership experience, either as a leader yourself or when one of your peers took on a leadership role?
- 2) Were there other experiences that you had prior to college that affected your views on leadership?
 - a. Can you talk about how and why these were impactful?
 - b. Were these single gendered groups or co-ed? What was the nature of the group?
- 3) Prior to college, did you have any struggles, barriers, or difficulties in taking on leadership roles or positions?

Now let's talk about college.

- 4) Can you tell about the organization you currently are a leader in?
 - a. Why did you get involved with the organization?
 - b. Tell me about how you obtained your current position?
 - c. What drew you to it?
 - d. Why did you want to do it?
 - e. What were some of the challenges you encountered in obtaining this position?
- 5) When you think about leadership for yourself, what are some factors that stand the most for you?

- a. What particular qualities do you feel are important for leaders to have?
 - b. Which ones do you feel you possess?
- 6) Are there any other external factors or individuals that have impacted your leadership? If so, what factors and what kind of influence did they have?
- 7) People take on leadership roles for a variety of reasons, what are some of the reasons you feel are important for yourself?
- 8) Here on campus, do you feel that women have opportunities to be leaders?
- a. If so, what do you think is making that possible?
 - b. If not, what are some of the reasons that it isn't happening?
 - c. If not sure, what would help you better answer this question?
- 9) What do you see as your responsibility to other women who are interested in taking on leadership roles?

Appendix E

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Shaking the Ceiling: First Student Leadership Role Attainment for Collegiate Women

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by *Elizabeth Siecinski and Dr. Coleman*, from the *College Student Affairs Masters program* at Eastern Illinois University. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

OPTIONAL: You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a woman who is in their first collegiate formal leadership role.

• PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine and explore how college women come to attain their first leadership roles in college. The secondary purpose of this study is to assess and explore the factors which contribute to a collegiate woman's ability to achieve leadership positions in their college life. The study also aims to discover what barriers college women face in their reaching for leadership roles, and how they overcome those barriers in order to be able to persist. This study was inspired and guided through the research that show significant gaps are seen in leadership achievement between men and women. Finally, this study will identify what factors contributed to the successful leadership attainment of college women in order to increase mentors and educator's knowledge so that they may better help women be successful in leadership roles.

• PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. An email will be sent to advisors of student organizations to nominate their female student leaders to participate in the study with their consent.
2. Students will then be sent an email invitation to participate in an interview as part of the study. Participants will be given a demographic data card at this time to fill out prior to the interview.
3. Participants will schedule a 45-60 minute semi-structured, one on one interview with the principle investigator to take place in a study room in the library on campus.
4. Upon arrival to the interview students will receive an informed consent and be made aware of how the researcher will keep their information confidential.
5. The Primary investigator will also tell the participant that they will be audio recording the interview.
6. Upon completion of the research the primary investigator will invite the participants to read and review the research if they wish.

• POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts for this study. The only risk foreseeable is confidentiality. To combat this the primary investigator will be giving the participants pseudonyms and replacing any organizational involvement with a pseudonym to protect their identity.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Benefits to the subject include knowing that their experience will help mentors, teachers, and other professionals have a better grasp on how to inspire and help women achieve collegiate leadership roles.

The results of this study will improve the recruitment and retention of female student leaders. Students want to be a part of an organization that is congruent to their values and social opportunity, and in order to be congruent to a student's values, professionals must be aware of them. By better understanding what women value in organizations, professionals can create structures that will support, and therefore retain their leaders. The study will aim to combine the issues highlighted in previous research with the knowledge gained from participants to contribute to the literature for women's leadership research.

- **INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION (*Optional*)**

There will be no incentives for participation in this study.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of replacing any identifying features such as name of participant, and name of organizations with a pseudonym. All coded data will be kept on a flash drive separate from the researcher's computer and stored in a locked drawer in their office. The only people who will have access to this data is the primary investigator and the co-investigator. In accordance with IRB policy the data will be stored for 3 years and then destroyed.

The audio files will be kept on a flash drive that only the primary investigator and co-investigator will have access to and will be kept in a locked drawer in the primary researchers office. As per policy the data will be kept for three years and then destroyed.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

NOTE: Student researchers, whether PI's or Co-PI's, are not required to be identified in this section.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

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248-872-2994
Eastern Illinois Univeristy

Jon Coleman, Ph. D.
jkc Coleman@eiu.edu
Eastern Illinois University

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Ave.
Charleston, IL 61920
Telephone: (217) 581-8576
E-mail: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above subject.

Signature of Investigator

Date