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Motivational Factors Influencing Women's Decisions to Pursue Upper-Level Administrative Positions at Land Grant Institutions

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Much of the research on women advancing in higher education has been focused on the external barriers and how to break down the barriers. This study acknowledged that external barriers existed, but determined that a new approach needed to be explored for implementing new initiatives geared toward advancing women to upper-level administrative positions (e.g., president, vice-president or provost). Using the elements of Bandura's Model of Reciprocal Determination, specifically self-efficacy, personal behavior, environment, and the interaction of all three, this qualitative study examined women in upper-level administrative positions and investigated what influential factors were responsible for motivating them to this achievement.

Key words: higher education, female administrators, women leaders, self-efficacy

Introduction

Over 160 years after the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y. in 1848 (Osborn, 2001), women are still discussing, researching, and lobbying for many of the same issues and resolutions to problems laid out in the first meeting. The issues are equal opportunities for employment and equitable means to advance in one's career choice. Throughout history, women fought to improve their lives and the lives of women who came after them. As educators, women challenged the comforts of familiarity to reach new understandings. Unfortunately, it takes time to change long held beliefs and values regarding the role of women in society. Fueled by the women's movement, affirmative action, feminists, and women's strong work ethic and abilities, women have made great strides in becoming more visible within the workforce and in greater numbers at colleges and universities.

Wenniger and Conroy (2001) concluded that women were more likely to head smaller schools or lead community colleges, which traditionally emphasize teaching over

research. As of 2006, the same conclusion exists with only 13.8% of the doctoral institutions were led by women. Conversely, the largest percentage of women presidents (28.8%) led community colleges with 23.2% of the women overseeing baccalaureate schools (Jaschik, 2010).

Similar trends have occurred for the second in command or the chief academic officer at most institutions. In 2009, American Council for Education (ACE) published the first national census of Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) in the United States. The census revealed the lowest percentage of women CAO's employed at doctorate-granting institutions (32%) compared to 50% of the women CAOs at associate's colleges; 38% at master's institutions; 37% at baccalaureate institutions; and 33% at special focus institutions (American Council for Education, 2009).

Despite the fact that the percentage of women presidents had more than doubled what it was 20 years ago from 9.5% in 1986 to 23.0% in 2006, the most significant change took place between 1986 and 1998 with only 1.9% of the rise being between 2001 and 2006. Furthermore, this relatively small percentage of college presidencies stands out because less than half of the CAO's are women (40%) and the CAO is the senior academic rank from which presidents tend to be selected. Thus, the proportion of women at these senior academic ranks shows that women remain underrepresented as presidents (Jaschik, 2010).

In contrast to the top two upper-level positions, the number of women in the administrative branch (includes executives, directors, and managers) at four-year public institutions increased 57.8% from 1997 to 2007. The number of men during this same time period only increased 12.3% (U.S.

Department of Education, 2010). As of 2007, the proportion of women in the administrative branch is almost 50%. However, the administrative branch is a very broad category and includes many middle management positions in which women may or may not have upper-level decision making authority.

These data support the premise that women made progress and achieved many of the goals established by the first adopters of the women's movement. However, women have not climbed career ladders with the same speed and ease as their male counterparts (Thomas, Bierema, & Landau, 2004) nor have they become a predominant force in prime leadership or decision-making positions, especially within higher education (Walton & McDade, 2001).

The Statement of the Problem

Much of the research of women in administrative roles has been concentrated on the external barriers that exist in higher education and are considered particularly troublesome for professional women (Baugher & Martin, 1981; Bowers & Hummel, 1979; Kanter, 1977). For instance, colleges and universities, like most institutions, were established by men. Consequently, they tend to have processes and structures in place that are reflective of male values and lifestyles (e.g., no accommodation for child care). These already established values and processes are difficult to change.

Further studies were conducted and several barriers were found in recruitment and hiring practices, training, formal and informal communication networks, and sex typing of certain types and levels of administrative positions. In fact, fields identified with women are often downgraded as in the case of home economics, nursing, library science, and student affairs. Women in these fields often

are overlooked and find that their experience is disregarded when institutions initiate a search for vice-presidents, provosts, or other top administrative positions (Sandler, 1986).

Other studies coined the phrase "Chilly Climate" in higher education or the "Glass Ceiling" effect. These studies were focused on the countless intangible inequities of women in the workforce such as fewer resources, fewer opportunities, and sexual harassment that prohibited or barred women from applying or accepting positions within upper-level administration. The compounding effect of fewer opportunities for administrative promotion perpetuates the lack of women in the pipeline (Nidiffer, 2001).

When reviewing an organizational chart, women are most likely clustered within the middle and bottom portions of the pyramid. Thus, women are far more likely to be assistants and associates than presidents and provosts, especially at four-year public research universities (American Council for Education, 2009; Kaplan & Tinsley, 1989). These middle management type positions are where women's skills have minimal chance of impacting the overall university policy, and opportunities for advancement are virtually non-existent (Baxter & Wright, 2000; Elliott & Smith, 2004; Wenniger & Conroy, 2001). Basically, women who are employed in lower administrative positions must have the education, skills and expertise to do the job, but do not impact the future of the organization because there is less communication with the primary organizational hierarchy (Ferguson, 1984).

Historically, women have received little or no encouragement to seek leadership positions, while men were encouraged to enter administration to a greater degree than women (Growe & Montgomery, 1999). This lack of encouragement exists even though women who earn doctorates are more likely than men to desire an academic career, but are not being hired at equal rates. Interestingly, from 1997-98 to 2007-08, the number of women earning doctorate degrees increased 67.9% in comparison to men who had a 17.1% increase in the number earning doctorates. In fact, women surpassed men in the total number of doctorate degrees conferred in 2007-08. Therefore, more women have the education credentials for these academic career positions, but may not be encouraged to pursue such a career.

Even though women are lauded for having the right combination of skills for leadership which yield outstanding effectiveness, there appears to be a widespread recognition that women often come in second to men when competing for upper level leadership positions (Eagley, 2007; Wellington, Kropf, & Gerkovick, 2003). Furthermore, because leaders are thought to have manifesting traits such as confidence, aggressiveness and self-direction, stereotypes about leaders generally resemble stereotypes of men more than of women. Consequently, people more easily credit men with leadership ability and more readily accept them as leaders (Eagly, 2007; Wenniger and Conroy, 2001).

Basically, with more women holding positions that are stepping stones to upper-level management, it is apparent that doors of opportunity have opened for the advancement of women. However, with 45% of the administrative and faculty positions in higher education held by women, the number of women in upper-level positions primarily at four-year doctoral research institutions is still fairly sparse in comparison to the number of men suggesting more leadership development, mentoring, networking, and greater efforts by institutions to identify and attract women leaders are needed (Jaschik, 2010).

Purpose of the Study
While research has identified barriers, documented the external forces inhibiting a woman's ability to move upward in her career, and developed methods to overcome, eliminate, or change the barriers, patriarchal culture, and masculine leadership roles, the prior research has had little effect on the advancement of women to upper-level administrative positions at four-year doctoral research institutions. As a result, researchers need to look through a different lens and consider the influential factors motivating a woman's decision to pursue and succeed to upper-level administrative positions, particularly at four-year doctoral research institutions.

Overall, the goal of this study was to promote a fuller understanding of motivation as an important "ingredient" influencing a woman's decision to advance in her career. Motivation is perceived as the central focus to understanding behavior and is a concept used to describe forces that initiate or direct behavior. In other words, motivation serves to link the stimulus change to the behavior change and provides a possible explanation for this relationship (Petri, 1991).

The study of motivation is broad and may be analyzed using four main categories, physiological, individual, social, and philosophical. Although each of these levels of analysis is important, the focus for this study was on the individual analysis. Basically, the study of motivation at the individual level involves understanding motivational changes that occur within a person as a result of organizational or environmental conditions. The individual level of motivation was examined to provide insight into the important motivational factors that influence the behavior of the individual (Petri, 1991).

Bandura's (1977) research is important for an understanding of motivation at the individual level because it strongly suggests that some motivated behaviors are learned through observation. Motives are personal possessions which have subjective reality. Motivated behavior, on the other hand, is evaluative which implies choice and decisions. Human decision making is an integrating process that takes account of the multiplicity of variables including facts, values, and feelings (Cavalier, 2000). The source of motivation increasingly is being seen as something inside the person, an intrinsic part that needs to be supported or elicited rather than established. Eliciting natural motivation requires supportive interpersonal interactions and environments that provide for autonomy support and a match of personal and organizational goals (McCombs, 1994).

Using Bandura's Model of Reciprocal Determination, the researcher investigated in-depth what influential factors were responsible for motivating women to achieve upper-level positions in higher education. Specifically, the components of Bandura's Model which included self-efficacy, personal behavior, environmental factors and the interaction of all three components were explored.

Bandura (1986) suggested that personal factors affect behaviors and interpretation of environmental cues. Self-efficacy influenced effort, persistence, and choices of responsibility. One of the beliefs that promote autonomy is the strength of personal self-efficacy. As efficacy increases, individuals feel a greater sense of control, which leads to less anxiety, greater persistence, more task-related effort, and better use of feedback. Self-efficacy is an assessment of all the personal factors that could affect one's performance such as past performance, ability, adaptability, capacity to coordinate skilled sequences of actions,

and resourcefulness (Locke & Latham, 1994). For instance, if a woman has a high self-efficacy, she possesses a personal belief in her ability to pursue and achieve her stated goals for career advancement, and thus motivated to explore employment opportunities in the upper-level administrative arena.

Secondly, the study determined how a woman's action or reaction (personal behavior) to situations or events affected her beliefs and attitudes in fulfilling her career goals. Women can help to advance their careers and the profession and to nullify stifling stereotyped images of leaders by being well-prepared and qualified for the position (Gupton & Slick, 1996). In relation to career development, targeted behaviors would be identified in relation to a specific outcome. Ultimately, the successful female administrator needs to create a blueprint for personal ownership and professional growth. She is the architect of her future, creating all the changes, building upon personal beliefs and prior experiences, shaping her life by purposes and principles (Ausejo, 1993). In other words, women's motivations for upward career mobility are influenced by the establishment of a career path or career goals that are set for advancing to upper-level administrative positions.

Finally, research suggests that factors influencing motivation might vary with gender, cultural identity, and environmental factors (Hoddell, Street, & Wildblood, 2002). Environment factors, by definition, are external to the individual and are not as easily changed, altered, or implemented. However, the individual has a choice as to how she reacts to these environmental cues and how she can use them to her benefit, especially as she advances in her career. Essentially, environmental factors such as the role of a mentor, the organizational structure and culture influence a woman's decision toward career advancement.

According to Bandura's Model, the person (beliefs and expectancies), behavior and environment interact in ways that have reciprocal influence on each other. Bandura (1989) contends that within a system of "triadic reciprocal causation" self-generated influences are just one source of human action along with other personal factors (background) and the environment which both have a determining influence on action.

Research Questions
An understanding of motivation can serve as a valuable tool for understanding the causes of behavior in any organization, which in turn helps to predict the effects of any action within the working environment and directs behavior so that individual goals can be achieved (Nadler & Lawler, 1977). With this in mind, this study answered the following overarching question along with four sub-questions related to Bandura's model of motivation including the four components of self-efficacy, personal behaviors, environmental factors and the interaction of these three components:
What motivational factors are perceived by women to influence their decision to pursue upper-level administrative positions?

1. What are the perceptions of women's self-efficacy related to career advancement?
2. How do women's personal behaviors (career path, mobility, and overall skills) affect their beliefs and attitudes towards career advancement?
3. What are women's perceptions of the effects from environmental factors such as organizational structure, campus culture, and mentors in regard to their career advancement?
4. In what ways do self-efficacy, personal behaviors, and environmental factors interact to

influence women's motivation towards career advancement?

Together the responses to these questions created a composite of the factors influencing women's motivation to pursue upper-level administrative positions in higher education administration.

Methodology

A multi-case study approach was used to provide a more in-depth understanding of the motivational factors affecting women's decisions to advance in their careers, specifically to upper-level administrative positions. According to Merriam (1998), a qualitative case study "is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27). Insights gleaned from the case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. The sources of data included in the study were: (1) in-depth, semi-structured, individual interviews with each female and (2) pertinent documents related to their career progression, (e.g., vita, organizational chart, etc.). In addition, a reflection journal was kept to record emerging themes, implications to the data analysis, the length of interview, interviewee's inflection of voice when asked certain questions, and which questions may need to be reworded for future interviews.

For this study, participants were identified from one specific type of higher education institution, the land-grant college or institution. Using the land-grant system provided the opportunity to receive a sample of participants from institutions with similar roles and missions and located in each of the fifty states. Participant selection was achieved using purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) in order to satisfy criteria seen as having the potential to enhance its descriptive quality.

In this study, 61 potential participants meeting the criteria (female, upper-level position such as president, vice-president, or provost, three years at the land-grant institution) were invited to participate. A formal invitation letter, a short questionnaire, and an overview of the study were sent to the potential participants. The interview sample was identified from those who agreed to participate in the study. Because this investigation focused on women who were currently employed in upper-level higher education administrative positions, participants who were invited needed to be considered successful in their careers. For this study, success was defined as retaining an upper-level administrative position for at least three years. By using women acknowledged to be successful, the study had an advantage of exploring the motivation behind the critical decisions and behaviors exhibited by women in upper-level administrative positions. Although a specific sample size was not set, the sample needed to allow for a reasonable number of different positions.

From this group of 61 women, 18 participants agreed to participate and provided the requested information (vita, organizational chart, and consent form) and thus, were included in the study. Unfortunately, of the two women employed as the president or chancellor, one retired as president in June 2007 and the other declined to participate. The participants included four chief academic officers, two vice presidents for finance, seven vice presidents for student affairs, and five other vice presidents. See table 1 for the characteristics of the participants.

Using Creswell's (1998) data analysis spiral, the researcher established main coding categories and then entered the interview data (narrative excerpts) into a spreadsheet program for ease in data manipulation. The spreadsheets were divided into the three main components (main codes, Level 1) of self-efficacy, personal behaviors, and

environmental factors based on Bandura's Model of Reciprocal Determination and one spreadsheet to record the participants discussion of the interaction among the three main components. A reiterative coding process was then conducted which allowed for findings to emerge as suggested by the data, in other words, inductive analysis. Both within-case and across-case analysis was conducted.

For this study, the narrative excerpts were further analyzed and grouped into sub-codes (level 2) as defined by the literature reviewed. Also, this study followed the process suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1981) to further categorize level 2 sub-codes into at least two and not more than six level 3 sub-codes. Guba and Lincoln recommend four guidelines for developing level 3 sub-codes that are both comprehensive and illuminating. First, the number of people who mention something or the frequency with which something arises in the data indicates an important aspect. Second, level 3 sub-codes will appear to various audiences as more or less credible. Thirdly, sub-codes will be unique and should be retained. Finally, certain level 3 sub-codes may reveal "areas of inquiry not otherwise recognized" or "provide a unique leverage on an otherwise common problem" (p. 95). Several iterations of the analysis resulted in the refinement and clarification of level 2 and 3 sub-codes and their definitions. From the three levels of codes, the data analysis produced a total of 35 findings that were then reduced to three broad themes threaded throughout the levels of codes.

Results

The findings are described within each of Bandura's components of self-efficacy, personal behavior, and environmental factors (Table 2) and respond to each of the research sub-questions. A few of the verbatim quotes are included to exemplify the findings.

Self-Efficacy

Bandura noted that unless people believe that they can bring about desired outcomes by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Women exclude entire classes of options rapidly, on efficacy grounds, without bothering to analyze costs and benefits. Behavior such as this can only be explained by adding perceived efficacy to the decision making model (Kester, 2001). Beliefs of personal efficacy touch every aspect of a woman's life whether by how well she motivates herself, perseveres in the face of adversities, or the life choices she makes.

In this study, the participants felt their confidence was defined by their abilities and effectiveness as well as just having the internal belief that they can do the job and in some cases, better than those in the current position. A woman's strong confidence was built on the continued rewards, accomplishments, and achievements. In addition, networking and observing others succeed assisted in identifying the best methods or steps to handle specific situations or improve and thus, increased confidence. Dr. Marshall approached confidence by being self-assured. She explained,

> "I think a person needs to be self assured, and that's not to say I know everything. I don't know a lot of things. But I know I can figure it out by talking to other people, by going to the library, by using the lab. I am smart enough to figure it out. That's self assurance."

The successes and challenges of the participants provided a measure of their self-efficacy. The participants tended to define success in relation to assisting students, staff and colleagues as well as

providing opportunities for them to improve and succeed. They also described success in terms of making a difference either at the institutional level or in the lives of students or colleagues. Dr. Shilo defined success as "small saves" and having respect for herself and others. Basically, it is

> "the impact that I'm able to make; that I will have left at least a fingerprint here, more than on my desk, but that, I think that's something we should all do for many positions at any level, is to make a difference and to make the load easier for the people that you work with. I'm real relationship oriented so, I think it's respect, the impact that you're able to have, and the unexpected. They're not intangible, but small saves. If you can come to your office and have a small save every day, it really does add up. You know, so we can provide little miracles, little mini miracles, small saves, that I think make a huge difference to how the campus feels, how we feel about ourselves and what we do, and I think sometimes you got to go looking for them, but they're there every day."

Personal Behavior

This study uncovered several types of personal behaviors affecting the participants' advancement to an upper-level administrative position in higher education. Women in this study did not plan their career path; rather they took advantage of opportunities as they arose. Making a difference either at the institution or in the lives of students and staff and evaluating value systems were critical factors when deciding to move to an upper-level position at the current institution or move to another institution. Besides earning a terminal degree, all the participants encouraged developing the ability to work with a diverse

group of people, demonstrating a collaborative leadership style that also empowers others, and valuing other people's ideas and expertise. In describing her leadership style, Dr. Letterman noted,

> "I like the team approach a lot to addressing issues at the university, because we are a complex institution and you need multiple perspectives to address some of these issues. You do have to be upfront with innovative ideas, but they have to be ones that people are willing to work in a team to move forward, or they won't get done. You do have to work with a number of peers and strong leaders at your own level to accomplish very complex tasks. You do have to make a decisive decision that nobody likes, and give people the motivation to get it done."

Balancing work time and personal time, whether with family, friends, or just oneself, concerned over half of the participants. Making choices between time with family and career was the greatest compromise expressed by the participants. The lack of time with family is directly affected by the increased time spent at work and additional work responsibilities, which participants considered to be a concern. Dr. Hatfield confessed, "I live to work and work to live and I love that. You get a lot of energy from that." Dr. Shilo admitted, "I don't rest enough and I don't go on vacation enough. I'm not quite a devout workaholic, but I'm on their watch list." Dr. Patton declared,

> "I am a workaholic and I give my heart and soul to what I do. My service is my work. I don't have the kind of time I wish I had to really go out and do things in the community. To spend time away from work is a scheduled event."

Even with these concerns and consequences for advancing in their careers, participants would not have changed anything because

every challenge or experience was a positive tool for growth.

Environmental Factors

Environment factors, by definition, are external to the individual and are not as easily changed, altered, or implemented. However, the individual has a choice as to how she reacts to these environmental cues and how she can use them to her benefit, especially as she advances in her career. In addition, a person's inability to understand or become fully integrated into the structure, reward system, and culture can lead to powerlessness, frustration, and even failure. For that reason, the structure and culture of the organization should provide opportunities and not limit access for women to attain experiences in the organization and prepare them for attaining administrative positions (Kanter, 1993; Wernick, 1994). The specific environmental cues most noted in the literature as affecting a woman's career advancement include organizational structure, culture, and mentoring.

Some considerations for understanding how women function in an organization include understanding the organizational environment and culture and considering the numerical distribution of women in the existing organizational structure (Kanter, 1993). All but one institution had a male president or chancellor. Even with these statistics, most of the participants felt the organizational structure supported women and provided women opportunities to advance.

Unlike the organizational structure which is more the external skin of the institution, the campus culture provides the internal attributes of the institution. The goals, style, values, and ethics of the institution are learned, felt, or perceived by the faculty, staff and even the students. The success of any of these groups is determined by how well their goals and values match to the institution. The participants felt if persons are valued by those to whom they report to, then the participants would be perceived by others as being credible, trusting, competent, and effective. Participants felt the president or CEO determined the tone of the campus and a change in the presidency made a huge difference for them in either staying at the institution or making a difference in their unit and thus, the university. According to Ms. Butel, it was an interesting experience to understand how the leadership tone set by the person at the top impacts an organization. She further explained:

> "Now we have our brand new president who is going to change the face of this university very, very rapidly because he is already bringing in three new people at the VP level each of whom is superbly qualified for the job they were recruited to do. The difference is like night and day. I would never have believed that you can see that kind of difference overnight. And it's gratifying, because having lived for seven years under an administration, I would never have pinpointed that during the beginning or middle of the administration how kind of stultifying that kind of environment is."

Stewart (1986) found that for women's career development, mentoring had a positive effect on goal achievement, timely introduction into administrative professions, role model identification, network expansion, and political familiarity with the institution. The participants described their mentors as either promoting them and thus, helping them to advance in their careers or as coaches providing advice, tips, and insight needed to be successful. Networks of people, particularly those in the same type of position, were considered by the participants as important support groups.

Participants commented about the importance of being visible and how mentors helped them to be more visible. Dr. Sankey's colleague in the department was very supportive and made sure she got involved.

> "He would invite me to come for coffee in the main building which was about one mile away. I would always have an excuse not to come. Well, he persisted and said that I needed to do this. So, I did and it helped me get socialized in the department. By being the only woman and the youngest person in the department, it would have been easy to just hide out. By being asked to go to coffee could have been the difference between success and failure. In addition, when this man became department head, he made sure that I was put on some key committees. Then, when he became dean, he made sure I was provided similar opportunities. I am now a leader nationally and therefore, I have chaired a number of national committees and prominent groups. So, my peers feel I am a leader."

Interaction of the Three Components – Self-Efficacy, Personal Behavior, and Environment

Bandura (2001) used the term reciprocal determinism, in which the environment, behavior, and the person interact in ways that have reciprocal influence on each other. In other words, cognitions influence choices of environments and behaviors, which then influence behavioral performance and, ultimately, beliefs concerning those environments and behaviors (Maddux, 1995). In this study, nine of the 18 respondents agreed with Bandura's theory of the interaction which occurs between an individual's personality (ability, values, needs, expectations, etc.), her perceived environment, and her personal beliefs. Dr. Samuelson described the linkage like a series of three knobs.

> "You turn them up or turn them down depending on what's happening with the other knob. Your self-confidence is up or down depending upon what's happening in your leadership role and how hard you want to push a committee. They are all mutually dependent on one another and I think the success of a leader is the ability to understand the ratio with which each of those must interact at any one time and to be willing to adapt and change."

In contrast, seven out of the 18 respondents either felt personal behavior (being prepared) or a combination of personal behavior and the environment contributed most to their decisions to advance to an upper-level administrative position in higher education.

Overarching Themes

By examining the findings from this study within the three components (level 1 codes) of Bandura's model and how these components interact to reciprocally influence each other, three themes integrated throughout the findings and across all levels of codes emerged. Theme one consists of a woman's need to seek out support groups and have the opportunity to nurture others as she pursues an upper-level administrative position. Theme two suggests there are requirements of institutional knowledge, skills to manage and lead projects and colleagues, experience working in higher education and in a specified area, and participation in different trainings in order to advance to an upper-level administrative position. Finally, Theme 3 embraces the idea that women must establish a value system, follow their own values and do not compromise their values in order to advance to an upper-level administrative position in higher education. Table 3 shows the themes

that interact or cut across all coding levels or categories.

Because the participants mentioned support systems and networks either in building confidence, providing sponsorship, encouragement and feedback or assisting with the interview process, theme one stresses the need for mentors or coaches. In addition, hiring and working with good people who participants helped to grow and succeed substantiated the reason the participants entered higher education. Participants in this study described role models who are caring, giving, and provide opportunities to promote other women. The participants also realized at many institutions, the tone of the university is set by the person in charge and recognized the strong leaders are those who collaborate and empower others.

The second theme demonstrated the need for knowledge, skills, and preparedness for other job opportunities, committee work, increased job responsibilities, and being effective in their current position. Increasing one's skill set, becoming more proficient, efficient, and competent as well as receiving specialized training were emphasized by most of the participants in order to do one's job well, increase confidence and to advance in one's career.

Values are the main thrust of theme three. According to the participants, decisions and working relationships must be value driven in order to maintain credibility, trust, honor, integrity and to move the institution in the right direction. Participants stressed comparing one's values to the institutional values for similarities. Also, participants described many of their role models as very ethical and tough by pushing for what they felt was right. The compromises faced by the participants focused on determining the value of their time at work, at home, and even for themselves. Participants with the

"I-can" attitude have the confidence to stand by their values and not allow their values to be compromised.

Discussion and Implications
The overarching themes emerging from this study suggest that women are motivated to pursue upper-level administrative positions if they are supported by others and are able to provide support and guidance to others (Theme 1); have knowledge of university processes and executive position responsibilities and are competent, efficient, and effective (Theme 2); and finally are able to maintain their personal value systems (Theme 3). More importantly, the combination of all these factors interacting and influencing the other impacts women's decisions to pursue upper-level administrative positions.

Theme 1: Support Groups and Nurturing
The participants in this study emphasized the need for support groups not only for building confidence and assisting in the direction of their career path, but also as role models, coaches or to provide feedback. In addition, participants tied their successes, challenges, and skill attainment to people's influence and assistance. Women need a person or several people to be their sounding boards to bounce ideas off of and to work through issues or concerns. For women, these support groups and individuals reinforce their beliefs in their abilities and experiences to develop, implement and complete a project. In addition, the feedback from these support groups is critical in helping women improve, grow, and increase their confidence.

Formal and informal mentorship programs were not specifically explored in the interviews, nor did the participants describe any type of mentorship programs. This was somewhat surprising since mentoring programs are not new to the public sector and have been implemented within various

higher education organizations such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). However, the participants provided descriptions and stories of people who offered their expertise, assistance, and encouragement. For the most part, fellow colleagues at other institutions, former or current department or unit heads (even a chancellor), or former graduate school professors were identified as coaches, supporters or those who provided encouragement or feedback. According to Powney (1997), women as senior managers were all successful by definition because of personal motivation and support. In the case of this study's participants, mentors or supporters were very much involved in their entry and advancement in higher education.

In addition, participants felt by helping others, they also assisted the institution to reach its mission and goals. In fact, participants in this study were fairly adamant in the fact that when a person reaches the upper-level administrative arena, the emphasis is nurturing and influence the success of others rather than on self. Dr. Samuelson used an analogy to describe where a woman in upper-level administration should focus her attention.

> "From a woman's aspect, it's like if you're going to a party and you're going to worry about what you're going to wear because you want to make a good impression on everybody versus going to the party and making sure that you have made everybody else comfortable and spoken to everybody. If you lack confidence, you're going to worry about what you look like. If you are confident, you don't worry about what you look like, you're going to worry about everybody else having a good time."

Participatory, collaborative, team oriented, and cooperation were words used by the participants to describe various leadership styles. According to Madden (2002), collaboration is an effective leadership strategy. Collaboration works because participatory and consensus-based decision-making is far more satisfying for participants and produces results and plans that people readily embrace. The participants in this study would be best described as catalysts leaders in which they feel good when bringing out the best in others and by being democratic. According to Brunner (1993), catalyst leaders do not use the "power over" people because they achieve power through people by moving people, motivating people and getting the job done through people. At the same time, the "power to" method is used when they want to empower others to make their own decisions collaboratively and to carry them out through a collective and inclusive model.

The participants in this study agreed that women leaders often possess the attributes of compassion, empathy, inspiration, and vision, equating these aspects of nurturance forming the basis of tone, voice and vision in women's leadership. These attributes of a leader were necessary as women leaders advance in their careers (Helgesen, 1990). In fact, participants described their role models with many of these attributes in addition to promoting other women, being human or real, leading as a woman rather than as a man, and creating a harmonious work place. As Wenniger and Conroy (2001) noted, the leadership roles are changing and people today are prone to gravitate towards leaders who are nurturing, caring, and giving. Women understand and can easily adapt to inclusive leadership, team orientation, and empowering others. "Women have a profound talent for making order out of the most confounding intricacies of apparent chaos, moving well

from the pieces to the whole, creating quilts from scraps and baskets from plants" (p. 14).

Furthermore, participants in this study found working in teams was beneficial and ensured that the experts were at the table when making tough decisions. Participants made every effort to involve the people most affected by the decisions. In addition, the participants strived to be inclusive and keep the communication lines open. For one participant, Ms. Roller, a quilting bee came to mind as she described her leadership style along with good communication.

> "I look at it [my leadership style] like a quilting-bee. You've probably seen them on TV. My grandmother used to do them. It's this big room, with a big frame and you have all of these women on all the corners and they work together to reach the middle. They have to communicate. How many spots am I off, and so when they get to the middle it all works, because if it's off, it doesn't work, and so it takes lots of communication so that they are in sync when they get to the middle. So I think that that's my leadership style."

Participants cited the opportunity to influence and work with individuals or groups of people as reasons for being in higher education. Conversely, it was also the reason to not pursue the presidency because of the isolation from these groups of people who the participants felt they helped. Therefore, for women to pursue upper-level administrative positions, opportunities to interact, influence, and impact people are important motivational factors.

Theme 2: Knowledge and Skills
All of the women in this study expressed strong personal confidence and self-esteem.

For the most part, these women never doubted their ability to do the job or to lead a group. Participants based their confidence on their acquired knowledge, experience in the field and doing well. Echoing the statement of Hymowitz (2004), these women did not view themselves as ambitious, but viewed their success as resulting from their positive experiences, effective leadership, accomplishments, either personally or through other people, and increased responsibilities.

Participants emphasized the need to be prepared and acquire various skills especially in listening, interpersonal, institutional process, higher education finance, and even the law. One participate indicated the need to read well, quickly, and feel comfortable in just catching the broad view rather than all the details. Ms. Butel summarized the necessary skills and attributes needed for her position, which also can be translated to other positions in higher education.

> "To do this kind of job, you have to have very good leadership skills combined with very good managerial skills. In the kind of job I do, I not only oversee my specific division, but I'm also part of the executive leadership team and budget counsel of the university, so I need to know a lot about the entire institution and how it functions to be a participant at that level. You need to have very good people skills. And I think this is particularly relevant for women. You have to be the kind of person who can be aggressive when you need to be, persuasive, and sort of get things done. Get people to collaborate around a set of goals, push hard when you need to, and back off when you need to. You know, do all of that without being abrasive, without creating too many enemies. And at least the way I do

my job, I have to be able to function on a lot of different levels."

All in all, integrity, leadership and interpersonal skills as well as institutional knowledge, experience in the field, and being prepared either for job interviews, meetings with faculty, staff, constituents, or talking with the CEO were highlighted by the participants in this study. Therefore, obtaining a broad knowledge base, being competent in the field, and acquiring good interpersonal skills are important factors to motivate women to pursue upper-level administrative positions.

Theme 3: Value Systems

Participants in this study shared the need for women to determine if positions they pursue are a good fit. In other words, women need to assess their values and the value system of the institution to determine if there is a match. The participants cautioned other women not to compromise their values and to not lose sight of what is really important in life. This follows the feminist principles that require the articulation of very clear statements of right and wrong, or acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Madden, 2002). Thus, strong leaders are guided by values and feminist theory provides a belief system that is the foundation for the values of higher education administrators of both genders. Dr. Patton concurred in that

> "the secret to my success is being able to identify where the values are in sync. And where I struggled, is when [the institution] didn't even know what their values were, let alone whether my values were in sync with their values. And I think that's a piece that fuels success or fuels trouble. But part of that is environmental, but the specific piece for me is what does the institution value, what is the character of that institution, and who am I as a person, and are those consistent?"

At the same time, women in this study determined that the tone of the institution was set by the president or CEO. The CEOs of institutions play a central role in shaping norms, policies, and practices that help create or ameliorate the chilly climate for women administrators (Chliwniak, 1997). If the CEO is a strong advocate for women, then acceptance and support for women in upper-level administration is more prevalent.

All the participants commented about time and how they have had to make choices in their professional and personal life regarding time commitments. Long hours and numerous responsibilities in the workplace coupled with family, household, marital, social, and personal demands on time lead to multiple time commitments. In addition, making tough value oriented decisions about where to spend their time created compromises for the women of this study. Some participants put their careers on hold while raising a family or decided to remain at an institution to allow their children to complete school rather than taking the fast track up the career ladder. O'Brien and Janssen (2005) conclude that women are encouraged to apply for positions, yet led to question if they really can fully participate because of external responsibilities such as caregiver roles within a family. At the same time, participants recognized that institutional time has become their time. In other words, participants found difficulty in finding personal time and time to be with friends.

Ensuring a good fit between the participants and the institution, specifically not jeopardizing personal values were necessary factors influencing women's decisions to pursue upper-level administrative positions. Being ethical, credible and accountable were important attributes in leaders and were further emphasized when the participants

described their role models and the reason their role models were successful.

Interaction of Themes

The main point of Bandura's Model of Reciprocal Determination is that people are motivated by the interaction of their personal confidence or self-efficacy, their personal behaviors, and the environment. Likewise, the themes which motivated the participants to pursue upper-level administrative positions in higher education are intertwined.

The support and encouragement by others motivated many of the participants to enter higher education and to pursue upper-level administrative positions. At the same time, knowledge and additional skills were gained through people who showed interest in the participants and coached them as they moved to the next level. As was discovered by many participants, the supportive environment and positive culture for women was linked to the CEO. Many participants remained at institutions where they were valued by the CEO, and thus by the institution.

In turn, the participants were very much engaged to help and influence others. At the same time, they promoted collaborative and team oriented work places. Inclusion rather than exclusion was the motto for many participants. In other words, focusing on others rather than self as well as how they could improve the institution were ways in which the participants were motivated to move to an upper-level administrative position.

Some of the skills required for the positions were value driven such as good ethics, accountability, and credibility. Without a good set of values aligned with the institutional values, women have difficulty working in diverse environments and may develop a high tolerance to accept what they feel cannot be changed. On the other hand, possessing the knowledge, skills, and experience provided participants the confidence needed to pursue an upper level position.

Recommendations

As was discovered through this study, women have the self-confidence, educational background, and years of experience to pursue upper-level administrative positions. However, women need support groups and the ability to nurture others. In addition, the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills, and the ability to maintain and evaluate values were identified as motivational factors for women. Consequently, women need assistance from the institutional leadership to develop, promote and implement initiatives focused on these factors, which will motivate women to pursue upper-level administrative positions. Three initiatives were recommended: (1) implementation of mentoring programs, (2) provision of professional development opportunities, and (3) development of a family-friendly culture.

Aspiring women administrators should seek out support groups within their field and investigate any opportunities to network with women and men in similar fields. In addition to informal mentoring, institutions need to consider supporting formal mentoring programs. The development of mentoring programs which pair promising young women with experienced male or female administrators can help women understand the unwritten rules.

Institutions must either develop training programs or financially support aspiring women to attend various state and national organizational groups to become networked and take advantage of their internships and training. Women need to take the initiative and volunteer for projects that would increase their visibility and further develop

leadership skills and abilities. At the same time, institutions need to offer opportunities to aspiring women to develop their leadership skills through training, specialized leadership institutes, and to ensure women are well represented on various campus committees and task forces. Basically, to increase the number of women in senior academic leadership roles, it is necessary to provide avenues for women in the academy to enhance or develop leadership competencies (Flood, et al., 2010).

Higher education institutions must consider re-evaluating their value system to ensure it is inclusive of everyone's values, including those of women, and to implement family friendly initiatives. Obviously, this will not be an easy task. However, one step is for institutions to stop requiring excessive time commitments that force employees to "prove" their job is more important than their family. In addition, incorporating family friendly policies and practices allows women and even men to be caregivers of children or parents without being penalized and provides a secure and friendly work environment. More importantly, women need to be tough and establish values that fit their personality and integrity. Women must stand up for what they feel is right and not conform to values that deviate from their own values.

Recommendations for Future Research
A number of unique issues arose in this research that warrant further exploration. The first issue is the general health of women especially as more women enter the upper-level administrative positions. Participants were concerned about their personal health and fitness. Having enough energy, discomfort of menopause, and emotional instability are just a few of the concerns raised by participants.

The second issue concerns women who do not promote other women. In other words, women may discourage more than they encourage other women. As the participants indicated, women have not been as helpful to other women in their advancement as men often are for other men. Researching why women diminish other women's successes especially as they advance may provide further insight as to women's slow progress towards upper-level administrative positions

Another issue to research is the imposter phenomenon. A couple of the participants raised the idea of feeling as though they were imposters and wondering if anyone was going to question them. The imposter phenomenon is an experience that negatively affects one's self-concept and self-esteem. A person suffering from the imposter phenomenon believes even though they are successful, their accomplishments were the result of luck or some external circumstance (Clance & Imes, 1978). Even though the phenomenon was introduced 30 years ago, the possibility that this phenomenon is affecting women's advancement to upper-level positions should be investigated.

Finally, another research study is to identify the motivational factors of aspiring women in higher education (women in middle management), and compare those factors to the motivational factors identified through this study. Ideally, similarities would validate this study. On the other hand, differences would provide additional motivational factors influencing women to advance in their careers.

Conclusions
One of the objectives of this study was to embrace a more positive tone of research rather than one that analyzed topics perceived as negatively charged in determining causes for women not advancing as quickly in higher education.

This study conceded that barriers existed, but looked internally to what motivated individuals.

Overall, the women in this study enjoyed their work and were very confident in their abilities and skills. These women did not question their confidence to do the job and to do it well. They have the credentials and experience to advance to the level of presidency. However, the women in this study have no desire to advance to the presidency. Instead they aspired to upper-level administrative positions that provided opportunities to work with faculty and students, contribute to the successes of colleagues and students, and to be in the trenches making change happen either by implementing programs or changing policy. For these women, their successes were defined by the success of others, success of programs and the success of the institution rather than their personal achievements of title, power and money. As Dr. Samuelson expressed,

> "I'm not looking for the next job. I don't have to worry about me, and I'm not focused on building my resume. I'm not focused on building me. Instead I'm focused on building the university, and getting faculty awards and getting grants for them, and building their programs. I'm confident I can do that. And I enjoy doing that. And I think to me it's not money, it's not title, it's not power. It's if I enjoy what I'm doing, and I'm having fun at it, and if it's advancing the university. If the purpose of my job is working out so that what I'm doing is adding value, then I'm very successful. I'm very pleased. And from department chair up it's always been about the other person, not about me. And can I grow the other people? Am I growing my faculty? Am I increasing the quality of students? Is the curriculum better? Is general education better? It's all about making other people successful, and if they're successful then I'm successful."

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Table 1: *Characteristics of the Participants*

Alias Name	Alias Name of Institution	US Location	Current Position	Years in Current Position	Tenure Status	Highest Degree	Mobil (Y/N)
Kathleen Anderson	University of Concretia	Midwest	Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness	6	Non	PhD	N
Carol Butel	Salsberry State University	West	VP for University Relations	7	Non	JD	N
Kelly Caldwell	Jackson State University	Southeast	VP for Student Affairs	3	Non	EdD	Y
Diane Clark	Marvel State University	South	Sr. Vice President & Provost	4	Tenured	PhD	Y
Ashley Colter	University of Concretia	Midwest	VP for Student Affairs	5	Non	EdD	Y
Christine Garrett	Jackson State University	Southeast	Provost	3	Tenured	PhD	Y
Evelyn Gutrell	University of Catterberry	Midwest	Vice Chancellor - Student Affairs	6	Non	PhD	N
Amanda Hatfield	Elijahton University	East	VP - Development & University Relations	7	Non	PhD	N
Julie Letterman	University of Bartelsville	Midwest	Sr. Vice Chancellor - Academic Affairs	3	Tenured	PhD	Y
Kathy Marshall	Bethany State University	Midwest	Vice Provost for Academic Services & Technology	13	Tenured	PhD	N
Charlene Patton	Evergreen State University	East	VP for Student Affairs	4	Non	PhD	Y
Mary Pratt	University of Johannesburg	South	Vice Chancellor - Student Affairs	8.5	Non	PhD	Y
Loraine Roller	Sussex University	South	Sr. VP & Chief Financial Officer	3	Non	BBA	Y
Barbara	University of	Southeast	Provost	6	Tenured	PhD	N

Samuelson	Donavan						

Category (Level 1 and 2)	Findings (Number of Participants)
Self-Efficacy	
Confidence – a feeling of assurance or certainty.	Women have an "I-Can" attitude. (13)
	Knowledge, experience and doing well increase confidence. (11)
	External awards, appreciation notes, and achieving "stretch" goals build confidence. (10)
	Women are able to build confidence with the help from people. (9)
Success	Making a difference at the institution or impacting decisions define success. (10)
	Helping and influencing others define success. (11)
	Accomplishing goals define success. (9)
	Success is determined by how one confronts change. (9)
	Hiring and working with good people and receiving notes of appreciation were considered success stories. (11)
Challenges	Dealing with change was considered a challenge. (12)
	With various challenges or risks, women experience many different emotions, feelings, moods, or mental states. (9)

Linda Sankey	Evergreen State University	East	Sr. VP Research & Dean of Graduate School	8	Tenured	PhD	N
Martha Schlinder	University of Bartelsville	Midwest	Vice Chancellor - Business & Finance	7	Non	MBA	Y
Joan Shavley	University of Shenandoah	West	VP - Student Services	9	Non	PhD	Y
Katrina Shilo	Marvel State University	South	VP Student Affairs	7	Non	PhD	Y

Table 2: *Categories and Findings*

Personal Behaviors	
Career Path – a course or way of chosen pursuit.	Participants did not plan to enter higher education. (12)
	Participants wanted to become a policy and change maker. (12)
	Participants aspired to be President, Dean of Students or achieve in chosen field. (17)
	Participants maintained status quo and were content to stay in current position. (13)
	Women must be prepared, seek out assistance from mentors or friends when interviewing for positions. (12)
	Women need to determine if the position is a good fit when interviewing for positions. (9)
Mobility – move from place to place	Gaining new ideas, discovering different methods and processes, broadening knowledge base, and working with a variety of people are advantages to moving from institution to the other. (11)
	By staying at one institution, you maintain your reputation and have a better knowledge and history of the university. (9)
Skills – ability, proficiency, technique, specialized training	Women must develop and maintain skills related to knowledge. (18)
	Women must develop and maintain skills related to performance. (18)
	Women musts develop and maintain skills focused in the behavioral skills. (18)
	Women need to develop leadership skills primarily in being able to collaborate and empower others. (17)
Compromises	Women must balance time between family, work, and yourself. (15)
	Women spend too much time at work, taking more risks and making compromises. (14)
Environment	
Organization	Organization supports women, gives them power, and is an advocate for women. (12)
	Organization is still an ole' boys club. (8)
Culture	Administration values women and is good fit for women. (10)

	Cultural factors create a chilly climate for women, (9)
	Women perceive the culture to be awkward and may be tougher for women in some disciplines. (12)
	Transformation or change is in progress at some institutions. (12)
Mentoring	Mentors focus on career development and provide sponsorship, and coaching. (17)
	Mentors provide psychosocial benefits such as support, encouragement, and feedback. 15)
	Most role models had various traits that contributed to their success such as caring, helpfulness, effectiveness, and very astute. (18)

Table 3: *Themes and Supportive Findings*

Themes	Supportive Findings (Coding levels/names indicated)
1. Women's need to seek out support groups and have the opportunity to nurture others.	External awards and accomplishments build confidence. (Self-Efficacy/Confidence)
	Helping others builds confidence. (Self-Efficacy/Confidence)
	Helping and influencing others defines success. (Self-Efficacy/Success)
	Hiring and working with people and receiving appreciation notes are examples of success. (Self-Efficacy/Success)
	Women must be prepared and seek assistance from others. (Personal Behaviors/Career Path)
	Gaining new ideas, discovering different methods and processes and working with a variety of people are a few of the advantages of moving from one institution to the other. (Personal Behaviors/Mobility)
	Women must develop and maintain leadership skills. (Personal Behaviors/Skills)
	The organization supports women. (Environment/Organization)
	Culture transformation is in progress and in favor of women. (Environment/Culture)
	Mentors focus on career development. (Environment/Mentoring)
	Mentors provide support, encouragement and feedback. (Environment/Mentoring)
	Role models had various traits that contribute to their success such as caring, helpfulness, effective, promote other women. (Environment/Mentoring)
	Participants felt that self-efficacy, personal behaviors, and the environment must be present and interact so that women can advance in their careers. (Self-Efficacy/Personal Behaviors/Environment interaction)
2. Requirement of institutional knowledge, skills to manage and lead projects and colleagues, experience working in higher education and participation in different trainings.	Knowledge, experience and doing well increase confidence. (Self-Efficacy/Confidence)
	Women must be prepared and seek assistance from others. (Personal Behaviors/Career Path)
	Gaining new ideas, discovering different methods and processes and working with a variety of people are a few of the advantages of moving from one institution to the other. (Personal Behaviors/Mobility)
	Maintaining your reputation and historical knowledge are a few of the advantages of staying at one institution. (Personal Behaviors/Mobility)
	Women must develop and maintain skills related to knowledge. (Personal Behaviors/Skills)
	Women must develop and maintain skills related to performance. (Personal Behaviors/Skills)
	Mentors focus on career development. (Environment/Mentoring)
	Role models had various traits that contribute to their success such as caring, helpfulness, effective, promote other women. (Environment/Mentoring)
	Participants felt that self-efficacy, personal behaviors, and the environment must be present and interact so that women can advance in their careers. (Self-Efficacy/Personal Behaviors/Environment interaction)
3. Women must establish a value system, follow	I-Can Attitude. (Self-Efficacy/Confidence)
	Women need to determine if position is a good fit. (Personal Behaviors/Career Path)
	Women must develop and maintain skills related to behavior. (Personal Behaviors/Skills)

their own values and do not compromise their values.	Women must balance time between family and work. (Personal Behaviors/Compromises)
	Women spend too much time at work and taking on more responsibilities, increasing risk. (Personal Behaviors/Compromises)
	The administration values women. (Environment/Culture)
	Role models had various traits that contribute to their success such as caring, helpfulness, effective, promote other women. (Environment/Mentoring)
	Participants felt that self-efficacy, personal behaviors, and the environment must be present and interact so that women can advance in their careers. (Self-Efficacy/Personal Behaviors/Environment interaction)