ABSTRACT

Angelia G. Adams, EXAMINING THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT, MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FEMALE CFOs AND CAOs IN THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (Under the direction of Dr. Cheryl McFadden). Department of Educational Leadership, July 2014.

Women are now playing an important role in community colleges as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and presidents; but despite their increasing numbers, inequalities exist between women and men in various roles within these institutions (Drake, 2008). According to Dean (2009) and Eagly (2007), higher education institutions have maintained a male-dominated culture in which women remain underrepresented in academic leadership. But, leadership within higher education exists at various levels throughout the institution (Ummersen, 2009). Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to examine females serving at the senior-level CFO and CAO administrative positions in the NCCCS in order to develop an understanding of how the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development have affected their advancement. The research participants were female CFOs and CAOs with more than two years of experience serving in their present positions in the NCCCS. Data were gathered from five CFOs and five CAOs in the NCCCS.

This study's results concluded that the workplace environment has dramatically changed and now offers more opportunities for females seeking advancement. In addition, the workplace environment was ranked the most important component in terms of advancement for females CFOs and CAOs. The experiences gained in the workplace are valuable resources. Professional development was ranked second by the CFOs and CAOs. Additional educational degrees and certificated credentials were explained as needed for promotions. Finally, the evidence revealed mentoring as the least important and not a necessity for advancement. This study contained

various implications for females seeking advancement into the CFO and CAO positions. The

study concluded with recommendations for future research.

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT, MENTORING AND

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FEMALE CFOs AND CAOs IN THE NORTH

CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to the loving memory of my parents, Bettie G. and Duran "Randy" Boling and the Man in the Goat Pen. Mama, you were always my cheerleader and I miss you so much. I know you are still cheering for me each day in heaven. Daddy, I miss you but I feel your love each day in my heart. One day, we will get to go fishing together again. Man in the Goat Pen, you were right…I could do it! I miss you, your love, and the many times we had together.

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Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path. Proverbs 3:5-6.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Education contributes to society's stability, solidarity, and well-being in addition to providing people with an opportunity for upward mobility (Benokraitis, 2014). Education in the United States has undergone four significant changes since the beginning of the twentieth century: Universal education has expanded, community colleges have thrived, public higher education has "burgeoned," and student diversity has increased as more women and racial-ethnic groups have enrolled in higher education institutions (Benokraitis, 2014, p. 247). Students, faculty, and administrators are socialized in higher education; their academic and work lives are shaped by the organizational culture that encompasses them (Dean, Bracken, & Allen, 2009). Education serves as a central way by which a culture can transmit its values, knowledge, and expectations for individuals (Ferris & Stein, 2014). According to Dean (2009) and Eagly (2007), higher education institutions have maintained a male-dominated, patriarchal culture in which women remain underrepresented in academic leadership. Ferris and Stein (2014) explain a patriarchal culture or patriarchy as a male-dominated society or the "rule of the father" (p. 246). Furthermore, Benokraitis (2014) contends that in patriarchal societies, women have less access to power, and are at a disadvantage in creating and implementing rules because the cultural, political, and economic structures are controlled by men. Eagly (2007) describes higher educational institutions as having a persistent patriarchal culture based on the masculine norms that are present throughout their culture.

Since 1981, there have been more females than males of all ethnic and racial groups, enrolled in college, and these females now earn a larger percentage of associate, bachelor and master's degrees (Benokraitis, 2014). Many females, like their male colleagues, seek job

opportunities in higher education institutions. Birnbaum (1988) describes American colleges and universities as the "most paradoxical of organizations (p. 3) as well as one of the largest industries in the nation. Also, many believe higher education institutions "exhibit levels of diversity, access, and quality that are without parallel (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 3). Yet, some researchers explain how the hierarchical culture created within higher education is not as conducive for females seeking advancement as it is for their male colleagues (Dean, 2009; Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2009). As a result, women in higher education today face many obstacles as they seek upward mobility into upper-level positions such as presidents, vice presidents, provosts or chancellors. To this point, many of the studies on women advancing into senior-level positions have reviewed only those in presidential positions, mainly at universities (Bornstein, 2009; Dean, 2009; Eddy, 2009; Moses, 2009; Turner & Kappes, 2009). Leadership within higher education, however, exists not only at the presidential position but at various levels throughout the institution (Ummersen, 2009).

This study examined how women who advanced into senior-level administrative positions of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Academic Officer (CAO) in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) perceive the role that workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development played in achieving their positions. Women are now playing an important role in community colleges as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and presidents; but despite their increasing numbers, inequalities exist between women and men in various roles within these institutions (Drake, 2008). Using a model created by Miller and Miller (2002) for evaluating gender equality, five areas were documented where women face individual, interactional, and institutional inequalities: access to institutions, campus climate, interactions with instructors, instruction, and employment. In many higher educational institutions, the

2

culture places women at a disadvantage as they seek upward mobility (Rois, 2012). For example, female staff and administration experienced the glass ceiling, sexual harassment, and unfair job expectations (Bracken, Allen & Dean, 2006; Collins, Chrisler & Quina, 1998; Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001; Sagaria, 1993). Faculty women detail experiences of tension between tenure and family commitments (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006).

Eddy and Cox (2008) describe community colleges as gendered organizations in which the hierarchy and positional power remains with the male population. Women hold 29% of all community college presidencies whereas there are 57% female students (Eddy & Cox, 2008). Therefore, the leadership roles do not reflect the diversity of their student population. Similarly, Phillippe and Sullivan (2005) refer to community colleges as gendered organizations because 65% of nonprofessional staff, which includes secretaries, clerks, and maintenance, are female, but only 29% are presidents. Amey (2004) describes the community college culture as male oriented in terms of leadership styles, working relationships, and expectations. Furthermore, Lester (2009) identifies how gender issues often go overlooked and devalued in community colleges. Therefore, research is needed in the community colleges to develop an understanding of the perception females have about the workplace environment and if gender inhibited their advancement. Even though the number of females continues to increase in the community college environment (students, staff and faculty), the issue of an organizational structure where males remain in the leadership roles is evident (Eddy & Cox, 2008). Additionally, within these structures, women continue to be judged by the male models of leadership and gendered stereotypes persist (Eddy & Cox, 2008).

Schein (2004) agrees that "culture is a phenomenon that is around all the time created by our institutions with others, shaped by leadership behavior and a set of structures, routines, rules,

3

and norms that guide and constrain our behavior" (p. 1). Research was needed to evaluate how the workplace environment, which is shaped by the norms, contributes to the achievement of female CFOs and CAOs seeking advancement. Typically in the community college system, leaders advance from the role of faculty member to a department chair, dean, and then to a senior-level leadership position (Drake, 2008). Coping with family obligations, gender bias, and discrimination, many females seek assistance from an appropriate mentor to deal with being judged by stereotypes and experiencing perpetual marginalization (Dean, 2009).

The significance of mentoring is prevalent in numerous research studies and is essential in the life of females striving for advancement (Brown et al., 2001; Dean, 2009; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Rios & Longnion, 2000). Understanding the typical pathway of advancement in the community college system, female faculty members frequently view themselves as outsiders, feeling isolated as well as constrained by the structure of academics, family relationships, and obligations from outside responsibilities. Too often there is no one ready to assist females in gaining access to the informational networks and organizational systems that are required for success in higher education (Gibson, 2006; Rios & Longnion, 2000). Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) detail how women who aspire to obtain administrative positions in higher education are more successful with the help of a mentor. However, since fewer women than men have obtained senior-level positions, females often have difficulty locating a suitable mentor to assist them with advancement (Dean, 2009).

Without mentors, females are not as successful in obtaining leadership positions in the higher educational environment (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011), so when advancement opportunities are available, women find themselves at a disadvantage. Indeed, literature reveals the difficulty in finding suitable mentors and being successful in leadership positions with

4

mentors (Bierema, 2001; Catalyst, 1996; Dean, 2009; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Rois & Longnion, 2000; Sullivan, 2009). Therefore, research was needed to develop an understanding of how women obtain leadership positions with or without mentors, specifically, this research addressed whether or not according to the female leaders' perceptions, the presence of a mentor impacted their achievements. Pearch, Craig, and Willits (2005) address the need for mentors and mentorship programs to fill upcoming gaps in leadership positions at community colleges. However, this and other research can be questioned if females who have already achieved leadership positions do not perceive mentors as a requirement for advancement.

Community colleges are facing changing and challenging environments directly related to the large number of retiring faculty and administrators (O'Banion, 2007). To address this situation, community colleges are creating in-house programs for staff development (O'Banion, 2007; Watts & Hammons, 2002). These programs are designed to help participants develop a better understanding of the community college culture and how to perform roles more effectively within it. Historically, professional development for community college employees has been on-the-job training, graduate education, workshops, and short-term unconnected leadership training opportunities (Piland & Wolf, 2003). Consequently, individuals may have difficulty finding the appropriate professional development to assist them in obtaining a leadership position. Kellerman (2012) argues that the industry of professional development and training have profited from the billions of dollars spent each year from leaders seeking their programs, but it is questionable if the leaders and society have equally benefited. Thus, research was needed to determine if any professional development activities contributed to advancement.

Many females who seek upward mobility within higher educational institutions consider a senior-level administrative position suitable for their talents. To develop a better understanding

5

of this rarely studied group of women in CFO and CAO positions, this study examined how the

workplace environment, mentoring and professional development have assisted them in

advancing into senior-level administrative positions within the NCCCS.

Problem Statement

Much has been written about the career paths, obstacles, difficulties and cultural barriers

for females in higher education presidential positions (Bornstein, 2009; Dean, 2009, Eagly, 2007,

Eagly & Carli, 2009; Eddy, 2009; Moses, 2009; Turner & Kappes, 2009). Amey (2006)

criticizes leadership literature in postsecondary education that focuses only on the presidential

roles, stories, ideas, and pathways. Vaccaro (2011) notes how women with different roles face

completely unique and different struggles. Therefore, reviewing only presidential leadership

perceptions may not detail the experiences of female CFOs and CAOs. From feminist standpoint

theory, a key component "is that women's lives are systemically and structurally different from

men's lives" (p. 61) and these differences produce different knowledge and experiences (Wood,

2005).

As administrators begin to retire, many females are embracing the opportunity to advance

into leadership positions. Consequently, as females advance, their role in the institution

changes, allowing new opportunities for other women. It can then be questioned if a leadership

role improves their access to power and privileges within the higher education workplace

environment. Women seeking upward mobility in the community college environment will need

to obtain information regarding potential pathways, education, specialized training, mentors, and

obstacles they might face while seeking advancement. When such information is available, other

women are able to identify potential pathways for advancement and actively seek these

opportunities. Without this information, the complex cultural norms of higher education will impede the progress of females seeking advancement.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine females serving at the senior-level CFO and CAO administrative positions in the NCCCS in order to develop an understanding of how the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development have affected their advancement. The data was collected from women currently serving in these positions within the NCCCS. The knowledge obtained from this study offers information for females achieving this status as well as others seeking these roles. In addition, it provides information to the governing board of the NCCCS so it can provide the needed professional development in these areas for women and encourage college presidents to create environments with opportunities for promotions that can potentially give interested individuals leadership roles.

Research Questions

This study addressed fundamental questions about the importance of the community college workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development as perceived by women who have successfully advanced into the senior-level CFO and CAO administrative positions. Since females face different obstacles and barriers from their male counterparts, information from women who have advanced in academia is valuable (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This study examined how women who advanced into senior-level administrative positions of CFO and CAO within the NCCCS utilized the workplace environment, mentoring and professional development to achieve their positions. VanDerLinden's (2004) study of gender differences in community college organizational policies, practices, structure and institutional dynamics supports that women are underrepresented and feel unvalued or not involved in the

decision-making processes. Additionally, the research reveals that females are overextended

when it comes to service and extra duties on campus or activities that have little recognition in

relationship to their career advancement (VanDerLinden, 2004).

The literature is rich with details concerning the difficulties for women new to academic

administration in finding a suitable mentor of a higher rank (Bornstein, 2009; Dean, 2009;

Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Eddy, 2009; Turner & Kappes, 2009). Yet, little is documented

about how females in the community college environment use the workplace environment,

mentoring, and professional development to assist them in successfully advancing into the

senior-level positions. To accomplish this goal, the following questions guided this study:

> *RQ1*: In the perception of the leaders, how has the community college workplace
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> environment affected their advancement into senior-level administrative
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> positions?
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> *RQ2:* In the perception of the leaders, how has the relationship of a mentor
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> (formal/informal) affected advancement into senior-level administrative
>
> positions?
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> *RQ3:* In the perception of the leaders, what role has professional development
>
> played in their advancement into senior-level administrative positions?
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> *RQ4:* In the minds of the respondents, which of the three variables seemed the
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> most and least important?

The first question required collecting data about the culture of the workplace environment

in terms of advancement as it relates to these females, since advancement is often determined by

the culture of the environment (Ummerson, 2009). Hagedorn (2002) contends that the cultural

climate or environment for women is better at two-year colleges in comparison to four-year

institutions. However, the two-year college is still considered an environment in which women

and minority faculty encounter barriers, such as discrimination, the glass ceiling, or academic

funnels (Townsend, 2009). Nevertheless, females continue to advance and research was needed,

from their perspective, to examine the role of the workplace environment. The second question

required addressing the need and role of a mentor for these women. In academia, there is a lack

of female mentors (Dean, 2009). Yet, mentoring offers an essential component to the success of

women in the higher education culture (Dean, 2009; VanDerLinder, 2004). VanDerLinder

(2004) describes the mentor relationship as a needed source of social support within the

organizational culture that will create an environment for female administrators to advance.

Since females continue to advance, and the workplace environment changes, the role of a mentor

was examined, from their perspective, to evaluate their need. The third question required

collecting data on how professional development has benefitted these females. O'Banion (2007)

contends that some programs are inadequate for preparing individuals for leadership roles and

that universities need to design programs to prepare individuals for community college

administrative leadership. Therefore, there was a need to address which, if any, professional

development activities in the minds of the participants assisted them in advancement or

preparation for their present positions. The fourth question gave the participants an opportunity

to express what they value the most from the researched phenomenon.

Theoretical Framework

Feminism is the "belief in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes and

the social movements organized around that belief" (Ferris & Stein, 2014, p. 261). Feminism is

a theoretical perspective as well as a social movement. Ferris and Stein (2014) assert that

feminist concepts and goals are not static but focused on bringing about "greater gender equality

in a particular time and place" (p. 261).   In the United States, the women's movement can be divided into three chronological waves. The first wave is associated with the right to vote, the second wave is associated with equal access to education and employment, and the third wave focuses primarily on diversity.

Feminist theory, which developed during the twentieth century along with the women's rights movement, allowed for a different method of understanding social institutions (family, education, the economy, and/or mass media) and the changing roles of gender in contemporary society (Ferris & Stein, 2014).   In essence, feminist theory places gender at the center of the analysis, suggesting that gender is a "primary organizing characteristic in society" (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 668). Jaggar (2004) explains how feminist standpoint theory is a method of reviewing and authenticating women's lived experiences by exposing the tensions and resistance in which they evolve. The root of feminist standpoint theory is that females (as the repressed group) have different lives from males (the dominant group) and these differences play a role in shaping their reality (Wood, 2005). For many years females in higher education have not been able to advance in similar ways as their male counterparts. Standpoint theory can be used to illuminate such injustices that oppressed groups face as well as review the lives of individuals in subordinate positions (Orbe, 1998). In such manner, female CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS described their experiences about navigating the workplace environment.

Feminist standpoint theory has its origins in Marxian philosophies that ideology and society are shaped by the individuals in power while the working-class or proletarian (those marginalized) standpoints are characteristically ignored or dismissed (Vaccaro, 2011). Yet, any system that separates itself from diversity in the environment tends to weaken and lose its complexity and distinguishing nature (Morgan, 2006). The organizational culture is comprised

10

of the values, beliefs, and customs that are shared by the group members as well as their understanding about the goals the institution is pursuing (Medina, 2012). These shared experiences result in learned behavior and reflect the cultural norms and rules within the organization (Schein, 2008). As a result, the traditional higher education bureaucratic system coupled by a male-dominated culture offers fewer opportunities for marginalized groups (VanDerlinden, 2002). Feminist standpoint theory uses this concept and discloses how the oppressed group can give a unique understanding of the culture as opposed to those in power or the ruling class because the ruling class is considered to be too close to the situation (Scholz, 2011). Eddy (2009) reveals that 27% of two-year college presidents are female compared to 18% of baccalaureate colleges and 13% of doctoral universities. Therefore, the community college environment appears to be more favorable for female advancement in comparison to other higher educational environments. As such, the voices and lived experiences of these females offered insight into their advancement processes.

Community colleges play an important role in preparing students for the workforce as well as opening their access into postsecondary education. An open system allows interaction between the environment and its surroundings (Banathy, 2009; Morgan, 2006). Openness is a key component within the system, and the relationship between the environment and the internal functioning relies on a mutual dependence (Morgan, 2006). Due to the social and cultural expectation of leadership roles, women often feel as though they must perform on a higher level of ability than their male colleagues to obtain an equal level of legitimacy and acceptance (Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2009; Wood, 2009). With 53.5% of community college presidents 61 years of age or older (Eddy, 2012) the leadership landscape could potentially be changing. Hence,

females must pay close attention to the higher educational environment which limits the number of opportunities for women (Ummersen, 2009).

Methodology

This section provides a brief description of the study design, collections, methods, and analysis of the data. Chapter 3 provides more descriptive details of the methodology. This study conducted in-depth, open-ended interviews with females currently serving in senior-level administrative CFO and CAO positions in the NCCCS. Within the NCCCS, there are 58 colleges. It is the third largest system in the nation based on actual number of colleges. I utilized qualitative methodology using phenomenological approach to develop a better understanding of how women who advanced into senior-level administrative positions in the NCCCS utilized the workplace environment, mentors and professional development to achieve their positions. A phenomenological approach is appropriate for the population being studied to develop an understanding of the perceptions of individuals from a cultural viewpoint (Fetterman, 2010) and self-identified factors that might assist or impede the advancement related to workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development.

This approach provides a deep understanding of the phenomenon as it was experienced by the participants while it seeks to define the essence of the experience (Creswell, 2007). The main source of data for this study was collected from face-to-face interviews. Analysis of verbatim transcriptions of the interviews involved coding and categorizing to identify emerging themes from the data.

The selected women being interviewed were contacted by phone and emailed a copy of all questions. Each participant was given the opportunity to participate in the study. All interviews and collected data were summarized. Accurate data collection was ensured. The data

collected from the interviews were categorized into three sections: workplace environment, mentoring and professional development. This data were then placed into NVIVO software to aid in open coding and discovering recurring themes. NVIVO is designed to condense and manage large amounts of data to assist in facilitating linking words and themes. The results were transcribed into a database while I continued interviewing and collecting data. The focus of the analysis generated data that determined the value of the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

Career path: the defined sequence of steps an individual follows, usually consisting of formal education, specialized training, and work experience that result in advancing one's professional goals (Drake, 2008).

Glass ceiling: explains that women face several barriers that are exclusive to them within the workforce and higher education (Owens, 2009).

Lived experiences: this term is used in phenomenological studies to stress the importance of individual experiences of people (Moustakas, 1994).

Mentor: a senior person within the higher education institution who advices and guides a junior or less-experienced colleague. These relationships can be formed informally as well as formally (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011).

Norm: a rule or guideline regarding what kinds of behavior are acceptable and appropriate within a culture (Ferris &Stein, 2014).

Phenomenological study: This type of study gives meaning to the experiences of a phenomenon (topic or concept) for several individuals (Creswell, 2007).

13

Phenomenon: The central concept being examined by the phenomenologist/researcher that has been experienced by the participants in the study (Creswell, 2007).

Professional development: education or training taken with the purpose of enrichment and employment purpose. Historically for community college employees it can been on-the-job training, graduate education, short-term unconnected leadership training opportunities, and workshops (Piland & Wolf, 2003).

Senior-level Executive Leader: is a member of the community colleges administration in a position to include the president, vice president, assistant vice president, and dean (Amey et al, 2002; Touchton et al, 2008).

Workplace culture/environment: is established based on the dominant belief structure that reflects the values, rituals, norms, criteria for success, rewards, sanctions, and rules (Townsend, 2009).

Significance of the Study

There are multiple studies in higher education that illustrate the career pathway of females who obtained presidential positions in community colleges as well as universities (Blackwell, 2009; Bornstein, 2009; Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2009; Eddy, 2009; Golombisky, 2012; Meyers, 2012; Sullivan, 2009; Wood, 2009). The research from this study gives valued information about a different, but equally important, level of administration. As women seek upward mobility within higher educational institutions, the culture often impedes their career advancement (Ummerson, 2009). Ummerson (2009) examines how this challenging environment is difficult for women to navigate through the male norms that have been defined and established by men.

14

This qualitative phenomenological study was significant for its contribution to the understanding of women in the senior-level administrative CFO and CAO positions in the NCCCS. This research highlighted their leadership roles which are valued yet, often times, overlooked. It potentially may have profound significance for women seeking to serve in these leadership positions. It portrays who is currently serving in these positions while reviewing how they advanced.

More specifically, this understanding provided insight into their experiences in advancement within the higher educational culture, giving information for the following purposes: First, this study gathered personal and professional data concerning the workplace cultural environmental experiences as it related to advancement for females. Currently, for this population, the information does not exist in the literature. Interviews provided an insightful understanding of the environment while exploring the issues as they relate to their advancement. Secondly, the study examined the roles of mentors as they relate to the advancement of females into the senior-level administrative positions in the NCCCS. The literature has established the value of mentors and the role they play in advancement for females (Bornstein, 2009; Dean, 2009; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Eddy, 2009; Turner & Kappes, 2009). This study revealed if mentoring is available and/or needed for female CFO and CAO in the NCCCS. Third, the study determined what professional development, if any, aids in the advancement of females into the senior-level administrative positions. Additionally, it assisted those individuals who are responsible for planning professional development for higher education institutions. Turner and Kappes (2009) explain that professional development opportunities for females are a critical component if they are seeking a leadership position in higher education. Individuals seeking

senior-level administrative positions in the community college higher educational environment will be able to use the information derived from this study to plan their career paths.

Limitations and Delimitations

Some limitations affected the results.   Potential limitations may develop from "problems in data collection, gaining confidence of participants, unanswered questions, or better selection of samples" (Creswell, 2005, p. 252). Some females may refrain from disclosing negative information about the institution where they are employed and may not answer questions correctly or at all.   In an effort to maintain confidentiality, only pseudonyms were used in the study. A related limitation was the accuracy with which each female discusses her workplace environment, mentoring and professional development. Other possible limitations included the goal and assumptions associated with the phenomenology design and the literature justifying the research problem, and the need to focus on the voices and experiences of this focus group.

Assumptions

In this study, one assumption was that other females might aspire to CFO and CAO administrative positions in community colleges who can utilize this information. Qualitative research relies on the researcher generating meaning from the participants who have experienced the phenomenon as well as their willingness to share the information with others (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, another assumption was that female CFOs and CAOs would have a willingness to share, recall and discuss their experiences. A third assumption would that using open-ended interview questions as described by Creswell (2009) will give the participants the opportunity to willingly share their experiences without limiting valuable information to the study. A final assumption was that the phenomenological approach would reveal insight as well as in-depth information into the process related to workplace environment, mentors and

professional development from the participants.   This information gives future females and

NCCCS leaders awareness and enhanced knowledge of how this phenomenon relates to their

achievement.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the

study and explains the purpose, methodology and significance along with the limitations and

delimitations. The second chapter provides a review of the literature as it relates to females

seeking administrative roles in higher education. This literature review includes obstacles within

organizational culture that women must overcome to obtain leadership positions and the

discussion and analysis of cultural norms, family obligations, bias, discrimination, and leadership

roles as they relate to upper mobility within higher education for the participants.   The second

chapter also discusses how the workplace environment, mentors and professional development

assist females in advancement into community college leadership roles. The third chapter

provides an explanation of the qualitative phenomenological research methods used in this study

for the female senior-level administrative CFO and CAO positions in the NCCCS. The fourth

chapter presents a discussion of the findings that resulted from the research. The final chapter

considers the implications of the study's findings for females seeking senior-level administrative

CFO and CAO positions in an institution within the NCCCS and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to examine how women who have advanced into senior-level positions of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Academic Officer (CAO) in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) utilized the workplace environment, mentors, and professional development to achieve their positions. Therefore, to develop an understanding of the higher education environment and how it relates to females, an extensive review of current literature will examine potential experiences that women may face while seeking career advancement and leadership opportunities in higher education, specifically the NCCCS. A brief history on how women have entered into higher education and the faculty track many female administrators follow while seeking advancement will be examined. This examination will also compare the differences between the university structure and the community college system. The gender inequality issues faced in several areas will be discussed, along with illustrations of the possible obstacles erected by the male-dominated patriarchal culture.

Too often in academia, leadership models are not scrutinized to insure that there are comparable roles, opportunities, positions, and perspectives for both males and females (Dean, 2009; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Some researchers have revealed how women who are effective leaders at colleges must make choices in balancing work and family while lacking mentors and professional development as well as confronting other social obstacles (Dean, 2009; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Additionally, the complex structure in higher education has created organizational roles and images based on the perception of leadership according to the male norms within the culture (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women face historical and deeply embedded views and stereotypes; these are the components that lead to a leadership labyrinth which females must

successfully navigate and surpass in order to reconstruct academe with their diverse views and voices (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

History of Women entering into Higher Education

Taking a historical view into the process of women entering into higher education as students, faculty, and leaders will provide insight into their existing administrative roles. In 1837, Oberlin College became the first higher educational institution to admit women, some 200 years after Harvard University opened its doors to men (Ropers-Huilman, 2002). This slowly began to change the educational environment for women. In 1870, the changing climate resulted in women being admitted more often. Yet women still were not allowed to attend most universities because only 30 % were coeducational. However, as they entered colleges, even though their numbers were small, their presence changed the landscape (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Their education began to open the door into new areas for employment, leadership, and advancement opportunities. However, women were not able to advance in senior-level administrative positions in higher education until 1892 at the University of Chicago (Gangone, 2008).

In the 19th century, women took advantage of their opportunity for higher education and entered coeducational universities and women's colleges (Gangone, 2008). According to Nidiffer (2001), the triumph of coeducation can be measured in two fundamental ways. The first is the actual number of women in colleges and universities. By 1920, almost half of all higher education students were female. Second is their successful academic achievement in this environment. In fact, there are multiple examples that illustrate the success of females, and according to Nidiffer (2001), women at the University of Chicago earned 46% of baccalaureate degrees and 56.3% of the Phi Beta Kappa keys from 1892 to 1902.

Despite their success in the classroom and in graduation rates, their level of advancement into leadership roles in higher education was not comparable. However, they were able to increase and begin to change the demographics of faculty (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). From the beginning of the century, 20% of the faculty in higher education were women, and by 1975 their numbers had increased to 33%. Additionally, women were more prevalent at community colleges and in the humanities and social science departments in universities (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). However, in an effort to save money, 40% of community college instructors were part-time in 1970 and increased to 50% in 1975 (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, coeducation was considered to be the norm for women (Wolf-Wendel, 2002). Nevertheless, disparities and obstacles were evident throughout and within higher educational institutions (Rasheed & Sinha, 2002). To better understand some of these difficulties, Rasheed and Sinha (2002) explain how women within higher educational institutions faced racial and gender-based discrimination coupled with isolation. Even though these women had achieved academic success they were not viewed as equal faculty members of the system; their gender and/or minority racial status kept them from navigating upward. This isolation along with lacking mentors and support mechanisms ensured that barriers to their advancement would remain firmly in place (Rasheed & Sinha, 2002). However, at colleges serving only females, women began moving into powerful positions in higher education, including presidential and chief executive officer positions in the late nineteenth century (Brown, 2001). Prior to the early part of the twentieth century, women were mainly disregarded and resented (Nidiffer, 2001). However, even though they faced adversity, they continued to make progress and advancement into the male-dominated culture of academia.

The early years of the Depression were challenging for state universities, but at the end of the 1930s, enrollments were nearly equal in the public and private higher education sectors (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Additionally, progress was made regarding racial segregation and equal rights in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case when the Supreme Court ruled that separating children based on their race was illegal. Faculty salaries increased and they began to establish collective bargaining units and take part in institutional governance (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). In 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was expanded to forbid discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin in both public and private educational institutions. By 1975, the demographics of faculty changed; women grew from 20% to around 33%, mostly at community colleges and in the humanities and social sciences departments in universities. American colleges and universities were employing nearly 1.6 million people, including faculty, staff, maintenance workers, and administration. Public institutions were awarding 88% of associate degrees, 69% of bachelor's degrees, and 42% of first professional degrees (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

During the past forty years, women's roles in society have changed noticeably (Coder & Spiller, 2013). Yet Tedrow and Rhoads (1999) explain that women are less likely to participate in upper-level administration in higher education. However, community colleges demonstrated the greatest increase of women in senior-level positions between 1986 and 1991. Women's representation on college faculty increased from 40% in 1995 to 45% in 2005. In 2005, community colleges enrolled 6.2 million students, nearly 41% of all undergraduates and 2% of the entire nationwide population (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The majority of higher education faculty are not on the tenure track, but faculty are expected to increase their productivity, by teaching more students and assuming additional administrative responsibilities.

21

Cultural Norms

Although the twentieth century saw social, political, and cultural changes that allowed women to make progress in their admission to and achievement in higher education, the cultural norms of the environment created additional barriers (Rasheed & Sinha, 2012). For many centuries, institutions have maintained a male-dominated, patriarchal culture (Dean, 2009). Research in the normative organizational culture of higher educational institutions explains how patterns within departments create subcultures. Ultimately, within these subcultures, women in management are held to a different standard due to gender (Deem, 2003). Ropers-Huilman (2008) explains how women face unique dilemmas in negotiating their multiple roles while adjusting to various identities which impede their role expectations within the organization. As wives, mothers, and daughters, women historically have been the caregivers of the family, not the leaders. Therefore, while attempting to negotiate though the system, these women must also balance the multiple demands of their roles and change the interpretation of their role in the institution. The female cultural role hinders their ability to be seen as a leader within the male norms of the culture.

With an absence of established female behavioral models, socialization within the culture that women can relate to and a low interest in the traditional leadership models have resulted in many females feeling rejection from the institution (Morley, 2004; Tomas, Lavie, Duran & Guillamon, 2010; Van Vianen & Fischer, 2002). According to Tomas, Lavie, Duran and Guillamon (2010), many women often feel as though they are not united with the normative of the university. Females are readily seen as students, staff, and faculty members; the culture that surrounds them has defined them within these roles. Consequently, some females feel a dysfunction with the power structure and value associated with the culture. In addition, this

disconnection results in some women feeling as though they are not valued candidates for upper-level administrative positions in the institutions (Tomas et al., 2010).

When individuals know and understand the values and norms of a group then they understand their beliefs and ideals. When there is one powerful group or dominant culture with greater power and influence, there is a risk of overlooking the inequalities that exist within the organization or institution (Ferris & Stein, 2014). Due to having more males in leadership roles, the definition of an institution's leadership is created based on the dominant culture, which in higher education is masculine norms (Eagly, 2007). As a result, some women in leadership, faculty, and other positions are considered substandard because these roles have historically been measured based on male governance (Eagly, 2007). This male oriented governance views leadership styles, expectations, and working relationships from a long tradition of masculine guidance. Therefore, in many cases, this patriarchal culture has created stereotypes that impede the advancement and create barriers for some women attempting to adapt to the cultural norms (Eagly, 2007; Eddy, 2009).

Stereotyping involves ascribing traits to people based on their cultural group, membership, or social category (Embry, Padgett & Caldwell, 2012). Due to stereotypes for females, women often find it particularly challenging to navigate cultural and structural obstacles while pursing academic careers (Bornstein, 2009). Rudman and Phelan (2010) argue that gender roles can influence women's implicit "gender stereotypes, self-concept, and career aspirations" (p. 198) and that women are steered into more traditional female leadership roles for fear of unfavorable reactions if they attempt a nontraditional path.

Many organizational leaders have a clear, well-defined, normative definition of their expectations for leaders, what they do, and their leadership roles (Dean et al., 2009). In adhering

to the organization's cultural expectations, academic leaders are able to gain respect and support among their constituencies (Dean et al., 2009). In addition, women and men who desire leadership roles in higher education must incorporate the characteristics expected by the professional culture surrounding them (Dean et al., 2009). Yet, being a female visually challenges the expectations of leadership roles in academia (Dean, 2009; Dean et al., 2009; Rois, 2012). Due to the social and cultural expectations of leadership roles, women must perform on a higher level of ability than their male counterparts to obtain an equal level of legitimacy and acceptance (Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2009; Wood, 2009).

Organizational theory offers an understanding of the structure, decisions, culture, climate, and behavior within an organization (Scott & Davis, 2007). The organizational culture consists of values, beliefs, and customs that are shared by the group members as well as their understanding of the goals the institution is pursuing (Medina, 2012). These shared experiences result in learned behavior and reflect the cultural norms and rules within the organization (Schein, 2008). Meyers (2012) explains how the culture of higher education is changing and shifting into a corporatization of the academy. Even though it will influence everyone in the system, women will be impacted the most due to their already marginalized status in higher education. The corporatization of the system occurs when colleges and universities support a caste system in which full professors, department chairs and deans, who are mostly male, have the most authority, control, power, and access to the resources (Meyers, 2012). Thus, Meyers argues that corporatization of academia increases competition for limited resources and gives faculty less power within the system. Often this results in resistance to change and leadership within the academy.

Academic leadership is male dominated which gives men seeking leadership roles an advantage over females. Women are not obtaining academic careers proportional to their degree attainment. Dean et al. (2009) explain how women are less likely to gain tenure- track positions or to achieve tenure and/or promotion. In addition, men and women struggle with establishing families, meaningful personal lives while pursuing tenure. Women are still considered the primary caretakers for their families and children (Ferris & Stein, 2014). In 2010, among full-time workers who had children under the age of 18, fathers spent approximately 11 hours per week on child care and domestic chores compared to mothers spending 17 hours (Benokraitis, 2014). Therefore, it is particularly more difficult for females to achieve this status (Dean et al., 2009).

As women do achieve leadership positions, Golombisky (2012) explains how the environment constrains them to perform as women, but blaming them for performing as women or punishing them for performing in a more masculine role presents a "double-bind" (p.20). Many women begin their career in academia as faculty (Dean et al., 2009; Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, being a member of the faculty does very little to directly prepare individuals for the type of responsibilities related to senior level leadership roles or the presidency (Dean et al., 2009). Eagly and Carli (2007) explain that women seeking higher-level leadership positions within a male-dominated environment must out-perform their male counterparts. The awareness of male superiority has been built into the structure of institutions and organizations, which eventually provides an advantage for men with regard to acquiring leadership positions and power (Acker, 1993; Drury, 2010; Maier, 1999; Martin, 2003). Men and women have been socialized to behave differently in the workplace which has resulted in divergent views on leadership (Sernau, 2014). Consequently, the societal leadership role expectations, historically,

have given men an advantage (Carli & Eagly, 2007; Drury, 2010; Zastrocky, 2007). The

societal leadership role is how members of the organization view or interpret leadership.

When the cultural norm of leadership is predominantly male, females will need to challenge the

hierarchical structure of the organization in order to advance (Amey & Eddy, 2002). Mock

(2005) argues that compared to their male counterparts, women in leadership positions and

female faculty face a double standard within the cultural norms of higher education. Evidence

revealed, which may not be the norm or standard at all institutions, that when a male missed a

committee meeting to attend his daughter/son's ballgame, this behavior was considered to be

admirable (Mock, 2005). However, if a woman misses a meeting for exactly the same reason,

she is perceived as not being fully committed to her institution. Due to extensive normalization

and feminization of segments within the organization, women find themselves at a disadvantage

(Bousquent, 2012). Males often have a more direct path to leadership roles than women and are

able to succeed by themselves because the concept of a leader is predominantly male and the

organizational cultural norm (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Thus, Eagly and Carli (2007) contend that,

due to stereotypes, women face challenges as emerging and current female leaders because they

are often viewed as an inadequate leader compared to their male colleagues. As a result of the

cultural norms and stereotypes within academia, an environment has been created in which males

dominate while women face bias and discrimination.

Bias/Discrimination

Typically within many organizations, the cultural stereotype of a leader is male.

Stereotyping is judging individuals on the basis of preconceived generalizations about groups or

categories of people (Ferris & Stein, 2014). For many years, organizations, politics, presidents,

and higher paying jobs have been dominated by male leadership. Consequently, a cultural view

of leadership would be male dominated. Therefore, as women begin to transition into the upper-level positions, their male counterparts may perceive them as threats (Oakley, 2000).   As a growing number of females are able to obtain leadership positions, preserving and maintaining the currently well-functioning "old boy's network" becomes an issue. Oakley (2000) describes the old boy's network as an informal male social system whose top ranking members exclude the less powerful males and all women from affiliation. This network exhibits bias and discrimination toward females.

Even though there are laws in place to discourage and ultimately prevent discrimination, Dean et al. (2009) argue that women continue to experience bias in a higher education environment through hiring practices, unequal workloads, resources, salaries, and the limited availability of opportunities for professional development and advancement.   Women have been faculty members in higher education for more than 100 years; however, they still earn less than their male colleagues across all ranks (Christman, 2002; Meyers, 2012) and frequently have heavier teaching loads (Meyers, 2012). Females in academe are denied opportunities to learn leadership competencies on the job (Sullivan, 2009) because they may not be invited to decision making meetings or involved in the planning process of the institution so the "pipeline to the top dwindles to a trickle" (Dean, 2009, p. 129).

According to Guth and Wright (2009),the Equality Act of 2006 places the responsibility on all public authorities to eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) which promote equality of opportunity between men and women. As a result of the Equality Act of 2006, women should have equal opportunities for promotions and advancement within institutions and discrimination and harassment should be eliminated.

In 2002, Bradburn and Zimbler found that individuals in faculty tenured positions were 60% male and 42% female. Furthermore, of the faculty members who were full-time but not employed in tenure-track positions, 15% were male compared to 24% female. Therefore, the research concluded that tenured tracks were more likely to be held by males, and women were more likely to be employed in the non-tenured tracks. These tenured-track positions have the potential of advancement into leadership roles within higher education.

The academic environment is structured around inequality which results in conflict and bias. Meyers (2012) explains that individuals with power in academia are not willing to view the institutional structure as having bias and being discriminatory because they directly benefit from this environment. Women and minorities are frequently assigned heavier teaching, advising, and serving loads while being eliminated from prestigious committee assignments (Aguirre, 2000). Also, this biased system of rewards offers unequal pay scales for women. Meyers (2012) notes that gender bias never exists in isolation; it is coupled with race, class, and sex discrimination in an environment that offers privileges to White, heterosexual males with middle-class beliefs and behaviors. For females, gender oppression, in this environment, reflects the marginalized status they experience while attempting to advance into leadership roles. So, if the academic environment structurally contains inequalities coupled by bias, examining the workplace environment for female CFOs and CAOs will offer insight into their roles.

Pathways into Leadership

Administrative career mobility is fundamental to women achieving executive senior level positions in higher education, but mobility is not just simply applying for the positions and moving forward (Twombly & Rosser, 2002). There are multiple dimensions of career mobility for women seeking administrative positions. Many females entering into the institutional culture

are faculty members seeking upward mobility as well as tenure. Tenured positions offer instructors and researchers autonomy to do their jobs without fear of potential repercussion if their opinions or research do not agree with the view of administration or influential donors (Moses, 2009). Amey and Eddy (2002) contend that promoting women into full professorship occurs less quickly than their male colleagues and for those seeking advancement, slows down their access into leadership roles. For females, a typical career pathway into leadership is from faculty to full professorship to department chair to dean to vice president of instruction, and then, if desired, the presidency (Eddy, 2009).   So, if fewer females are able to obtain full professor status, then this potential avenue for advancement lessens.

Many four-year institutions are seeing changes in the role of faculty. Moses (2009) estimates that by 2015, "over one half of America's professors will be eligible for retirement" (p.183). He also notes that retiring members of the faculty are being replaced by more adjunct or part-time faculty. Additionally, he explains that these demographic trends create another challenging barrier for female faculty seeking advancement because these positions are often the pathway into upper-level academic leadership positions. As these tenured positions diminish, the underrepresented female faculty members are in essence losing another potential avenue for advancement (Moses, 2009). Amey and Eddy (2002) describe the tenured position as a prerequisite for senior administrative positions for women in higher education.

At community colleges, the instructors are considered to be more diverse than those at four-year institutions (VanDerLinden, 2002). Also, instructors are more likely to be female.   In 2002, approximately one-half of community college faculty were women compared to 34% at four-year institutions (VanDerLinden, 2002). Before 1970, women leaders in the community college were nearly nonexistent. Early female presidents of two-year colleges seemed to have

been marginal figures nationwide which established a male domination of administrative positions (VanDerLinden, 2002). Higher education is considered big business. There are 2.7 million people employed by higher education: 1.8 million professional and 0.9 million nonprofessional staff (Glazer-Raymo, 2002). Women hold 45% of the professional staff and 64% of the nonprofessional staff positions (Glazer-Raymo, 2002).

As institutions grow and individuals are hired, it is evident that gender bias has not been eliminated for women in positions of leadership and at the senior levels (Glazer-Raymo, 2002). Baez (2002) makes the argument that women are still viewed as marginal in many areas of higher education; additionally, higher educational institutions have been effective in avoiding and winning law suits. Also, Baez explains how women have benefited from changes in the law, and that it is very evident in "faculty employment, affirmative action and sexual harassment" (p. 229). Similar to other institutional environments, women desiring to advance into senior-level leadership positions in community colleges may face certain barriers. Due to the predicted leadership crisis in the twenty-first century as well as the changing landscape of the community college environment, career advancement for females into this sector may develop a new importance (VanDerLinden, 2002).

Amey, VanDerLinden, and Brown (2002) explain that significant administrative experience is now considered the norm, even including non-academic positions within higher education. Additionally, many administrators build their careers in the community college environment, suggesting that movement from two-year to four-year colleges is possible. Nidiffer (2010) indicates that when women are able to obtain senior level leadership positions, they tend to be within the less prestigious departments, such as student affairs, as transitioning to a university may not always be possible. Also, Sagaria and Rychener (2002) explain that women

have increased their representation in higher educational administrative positions, but in many cases they remain midlevel managerial positions. These midlevel positions are described as being a part of a structured system in which career paths are often not defined (Sagaria & Rychener, 2002). As women attempt to progress into leadership roles through various avenues, they often appear to reach lower-level positions and seem to stumble when seeking to break into the higher-level, more prestigious ones.

Women and the Glass Ceiling

During recent decades, women have begun to receive significant gains in educational attainment, entry-level positions and multiple aspects of the labor market (Bain & Cummings, 2000). Owens (2009) explains that women face several barriers that are exclusive to them within the workforce and higher education. The glass ceiling metaphor is used to illustrate how policies and practices within all higher educational institutions have inserted barriers that influence the advancement of women into administrative roles (Wood, 2009). Women and minorities are regularly assigned heavier teaching loads and excluded from prestigious committees (Aguirre, 2000). In addition, a recent study concluded that women earn an average of 6.9% less than men in similar academic positions and the average full-time salary for women is $56,100, more than 18% less than the average $68,900 for their male colleagues (Jaschik, 2011).

Yet, Benokraitis (2014) explains how since the 1980s, women have begun enjoying success in some organizations. For example, women now hold more than half of all management and professional positions nationwide but represent only 2% of *Fortune* 500 CEOs. Eagly and Carli (2007) argue how the glass ceiling belief of denying women positions of power because of their gender does not adequately explain the multiple barriers and stereotypes that women face. The Bain and Cummings (2000) study of 10 university systems found that women

31

make up one third of all academia. Yet, of full professors, females constitute only one in every ten. Additionally, they note that the educational environment is more receptive to hiring women in comparison to more male-dominated fields, such as business, medicine, law, engineering, and the military.

Bain and Cummings (2000) explain barriers that women face in higher education as intrinsic to the organizational setting and professional community, which do not enable them to always break through the glass ceiling. The organizational system which has been developed in academia requires varying degrees of involvement, but the general rule for advancement tends to be less flexible (Bain & Cummings, 2000). These structural procedures were developed long ago and have remained more conducive to males (Bain & Cummings, 2000; Dean, 2009, Eagly & Carli, 2007). The second- or third-tier of institutions and adjunct/part-time staff have become more inundated with females. These part-time, adjunct positions are described as having poor pay with low job security, accompanied by a lack of prestige in comparison to the tenure track positions (Wolfinger, Mason, & Goulden, 2009).

These marginal positions and organizational settings make women less likely than their male colleagues to obtain the higher level positions. Smith, Caputi, and Crittenden's (2012) study on the connection between a female's career success and her beliefs about the glass ceiling presented evidence that women still consider themselves hindered by the glass ceiling. The quantitative study included 258 female participants that completed the Career Pathways Survey (CPS) which accesses four sets of beliefs about glass ceilings: denial, resilience, acceptance, and resignation. The study found a significant relationship between each of the glass ceiling factors and the subjective success constructs. Denial had the strongest positive association with subjective success while Resignation had the most negative associations. It was recommended

that more research is needed to clarify the relationship between glass ceiling beliefs and optimism/pessimism in everyday life (Smith, Caputi, &Crittenden, 2012). However, one certainty that emerged is that the glass ceiling, a transparent blockage, is extremely noticeable to women who have been adversely affected by it.

As women still hit the glass ceiling, feminist theory argues that these organizational barriers reflect stereotypes about gender roles. For instance, when surveyed, senior-level United States male and female executives usually describe women as "better at stereotypically feminine 'caretaking,' such as supporting and encouraging others, and men as exceling at stereotypically masculine 'taking charge,' such as influencing superiors and problem solving" (Benokraitis, 2014, p. 113). Since numerous promotions are based on taking charge rather than caretaking skills, Benokraitis (2014) contends that women are often overlooked for salary increases and promotions.

Leadership/Leadership Styles

Harrow (1993) explained that, "leadership, when dominated by one segment of society, suffers from a narrow perspective, a lack of richness of ideas and ideals" (p. 146). According to the research conducted on gender roles and leadership by Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller (2003), women's leadership styles are more effective in terms of team-based organizational structure. Additionally, while the association of masculinity to leadership is recognized, the interactive leadership styles used by women can be beneficial in moving both genders and the organization forward (Appelbaum at al., 2003). Young's (2006) study found that women leaders tend to identify more with the male standard created within the environment than their male colleagues. Females demonstrated both transformational and transactional leadership styles and the women saw themselves as disciplined, formal, normative, evaluative and objective.

The gender disparity in higher education leadership is mainly due to some women having lower aspirations for upper-level positions compared to their male colleagues (Eckel, Cook, & Cook, 2009). Lepkowski's (2009) study of deans and other administrators (excluding presidents) from the Minnesota State College and Universities System revealed no difference in the career aspirations of male and female participants. The results specified that females and males did not differ in their desire to advance and move into higher administrative leadership positions within academia. In terms of leadership, the study found that males and females did not differ in their need to change their leadership style to advance into an upper-level administrative position. The study, however, did reveal women felt more constrained in terms of career mobility. This would indicate that women could be slightly more controlled in their mobility, which could play a role in the blockage of the academic "pipeline" while experiencing more societal and institutional barriers (Lepkowski, 2009).

Oakley (2000) argues that typically there is a double-bind for females in leadership roles. A double-bind is a "behavioral norm that creates a situation where a person cannot win no matter what she does" (Oakley, 2000, p. 324). Women are required to be tough and authoritative (like their male colleagues) to be respected. However, they are perceived poorly for managing too aggressively. Also revealed by Oakley (2000), double-binds are particularly challenging for women and their cultural behaviors within the organization. For example, they need to speak assertively, but not too assertively, and dress like women without being perceived as too feminine. Yet, adopting a male linguistic style does not eliminate the double-bind of leadership for females. Golombisky (2012) explains the double-bind as forcing women to perform as women and then finding fault when they do so or punishing them for leading like a man. As a

result, Sullivan (2009) explains that women leaders are often high achievers who place a lot of pressure on themselves to do well.

One could assume that society is of the opinion that a woman would not be an effective leader. Yet, according to Northouse (2010), when comparing the effectiveness of female and male leaders, men and women were equally effective leaders. He notes that women were considered less effective only in masculinized leadership roles, such as military positions. Eagly (2007) notes that in the United States, women are increasingly admired for their excellent skills for leadership and, in fact, women more than men develop leadership styles associated with being an effective leader.

Eddy (2009) explains while male and female leadership styles differ, both are effective, but women focus on transforming themselves into meeting the institutional goals. Thus, upon reviewing the research, one could conclude that women are effective and demonstrate the necessary skills for leadership. While it is noted that females tend to be more transformational in their style of leadership compared to males, transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to reach for new heights and to accomplish more than what is typically expected of them. They are also able to develop an understanding of the needs of their subordinates (Northouse, 2010).

According to research, women are effective leaders even though they communicate quite differently from their male colleagues. Females communicate in gendered ways in which males serve as the norm (Tannen, 1994; Meyers, 2012). The male norms of communication follow a directive, assertive, and in control norm while females are expected to be pleasing and not provoking. Meyers (2012) notes that by applying the gendered speech community theory to higher education, it is observable that academia has a masculine speech community. This

developed community represents status, hierarchy control, and competition which are institutionalized within the structural environment of hiring, promotion, tenure, salary, publishing, research awards, and resource allocation. Wood (2007) explains that conversations during meetings and interactions are used to establish status as well as control. Within higher education institutions, individuals who have obtained positions of power and authority are able to establish policies and standards for others (Wood, 2007). The values and goals of a masculine speech community remain ingrained into the institutional structure and policies (Meyers, 2012). As a result, this hierarchical system of dominance places women and minorities at a disadvantage.

The Samovar and Porter (1995) study illustrates that women tend to switch from their natural language once they spend some time in college. Their communication patterns generally elicit cooperation and create rapport. Yet, men would use conversation to discuss status or complete verbal competitions about topics that were delivered in a definitive as well as forceful fashion. Women tend to ask more questions whereas men are less likely to ask questions in unrestricted situations because the lack of knowledge may appear to others as inferior. Thus, as many females strive to adapt to the norms within academia, their communication patterns will either follow the male norms of assertiveness and directness or otherwise will be scrutinized for exhibiting female communication patterns. Many women attempt to communicate and self-promote like their male colleagues; however, women face significant gender biases and social impediments if they self-promote (Northouse, 2010). Females are expected to communicate and work like their male colleagues without giving up their feminine uniqueness, yet they are still expected to perform the normal duties of professionals, mothers, and wives.

Females and Family Obligations

During the past 40 years, working women with children have steadily increased (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). This fact remains true for higher education as Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2006) reveal that 32% of part-time female instructors have children while 49% of full-time female faculty at varying ranks have children. Today, as more and more women continue to obtain positions in academia, there is a growing need to develop a better understanding of the personal and institutional challenges that women who have young children must attempt to balance on a daily basis (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Women with young children and family obligations face multiple challenges; according to Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden, "Women are more successful in obtaining academic careers if they delay or forsake marriage and children. Single women fare better in academia" (2009, p. 401). Female faculty with family responsibilities may experience slower career progress. This is of particular importance since faculty positions for women are considered to be their pathway into administrative roles (Eddy, 2009).

In addition, women with spouses who have equal careers will face burdens not experienced by their male colleagues because men more often have a wife who does not work outside the home (Eddy, 2009). Therefore, their male counterparts can be more flexible for travel, conferences and promotions (Eddy, 2009). At times, a promotion may involve relocating which may not always be possible for some women with children and other family responsibilities, such as taking care of an elderly parent (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). Since leadership roles in higher education for women often begin within the ranks of faculty before advancing, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) found that women tend to cautiously strategize when to have children. Some women feel pressure to time childbirth during the summer when the

academic demands are fewer. The delay could potentially result in women not having children in order to pursue a leadership role in academia (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006).

Women who delay children and seek advancement must ascertain that in the higher educational environment, they are essentially married to their work with little or no time for having children (Williams, 2000). However, our society encourages and expects women to have the larger role with regard to family (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004).   Eagly and Carli (2007) explain how women are expected to continue spending more time than men doing housework and caring for the children. In addition, they provide the communication interaction between the immediate and extended families. Female administrators could face more challenges than their male colleagues when balancing their workload and family since women spend from 33 to 40% more time than men on child care and household duties (Benokraitis, 2014). Many women describe how they are expected to be the caretakers of their families and that they feel it is their responsibility (Slan-Jersulim & Chen, 2009).

Due to cultural changes, more educated women are especially critical of their parenting and feel the need to spend more time with their children in comparison to their less educated counterparts. Since job demands often take time away from their personal lives with phone calls, emails, and weekend work, it is critical for females in leadership roles to learn how to balance family and work (Eagly & Carli, 2007). With the ever increasing demands of the workplace and home, the result is role conflict, which creates stress for women and men. This stress can affect job performance; for example, having a sick child at home could hinder a women's focus while at work (Slan-Jersulim & Chen, 2009).

The Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2009) study find that women are 43% more likely than their male counterparts to become adjuncts after completing graduate school. Also, a

female with a child under the age of six is 26% more likely to be employed in an adjunct position (2009). However, a male with younger children is 36% less likely to become an adjunct instead of a tenure-track professor. As a result, having children can have different effects on the career paths of women, particularly in pursuing tenure tracks that can potentially move them into higher-level positions in academe (Wolfinger et al., 2009).

Community College Culture and Leaders

The culture of an organization is important to understand since it exhibits the actions of its leaders as well as the specific strengths (Schein, 2004). Community colleges serve almost half of all undergraduates nationwide and represent the largest sector of higher education while serving a diverse population (Hegedorn, 2009). According to Townsend (2009) the culture of an organization is established in various ways: the dominant belief structure that reflects in "values, rituals, technology, styles, and customs; norms for 'proper' behavior and criteria for success; a degree of monoculturalism or pluralism of the approved culture; standards for the allocation of rewards and sanctions; and 'rules of the game'" (p. 737). The community college culture as described by Locke and Guglielmino (2006) is viewed in a "one-size-fits-all sense" (p. 109) rather than a collection of multiple assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, and views of many unique sub-groups. As the powerful members of the institution construct their beliefs and definitions of cultural norms, often these spoken and unspoken beliefs and assumptions guide the daily practices of the organization (Medina, 2012).

The organizational climate is a factor in determining the ability of women to advance within the higher educational institution. Researchers have determined that the cultural climate for women and minority faculty is better at two-year in comparison to four-year colleges (Hagedorn & Laden, 2002). In an effort to further expand on the climate for faculty members

on community college campuses, Hagedorn (2009) interviewed 15 female and 10 male faculty members from various disciplines in different states. All participants were full-time faculty with more than three years' experience. Both males and females feel as though gender continues to play a role in the community colleges, but its importance has been decreasing. All respondents feel as though the climates at community colleges are warmer compared to four-year counterparts due to the large numbers of women on campus (Hagedorn, 2009). However, it could be questioned if just having more numbers, in terms of gender, actually creates a warmer climate for individuals.

The two-year college is still considered an environment in which women and minority faculty encounter barriers, such as discrimination, glass ceiling, or academic funnels (Townsend, 2009). Leaders generally reinforce the existing culture that surrounds them. Community college and university cultural norms continue to discriminate against females in terms of pay scale. Townsend (2009) explains how full-time male employees typically earn more money than their female counterparts. Even though the community college organizational climate is described as slightly more positive for women and minorities, the culture is deeply embedded and difficult to change. The organizational culture does not offer equal pay for equal work, equal access to high-level positions, or affirmative action in hiring (Townsend, 2009). Townsend (2009) explains how the norms of the culture have manifested certain practices that have allowed the dominant group to remain in power. The organizational structure, policy and/or practices reflect male dominance. Consequently, female faculty members have fewer opportunities for advancement and experience salary discrepancy in comparison to their male colleagues.

When the cultural norm is inequality, a negative perception of the minority culture becomes inundated within the environment creating a distressing workplace for them (Rios,

2012). In the community college environment, one is more likely to find males in positions of

power and females in less lucrative, more subordinate roles, which ultimately lead to the

marginalization of women within the organization and an atmosphere of resistance (Rois, 2012)

because community colleges rely heavy on part-time faculty or adjuncts. Hagedorn (2009)

reports that 68% of women at public two-year institutions work part-time.   Also, full-time

professors at two-year institutions receive 60% of the compensation compared to a four-year,

similarly ranked professor at a doctoral institution.

North Carolina Community Colleges

The mission of NCCCS is to provide available educational opportunities to residents of

the state and to minimize obstacles to post-secondary education (Okpala, Hopson, & Okpala,

2011). The NCCCS has a board of directors, selected and appointed by the governor and state

legislature. There are 58 community colleges that offer associate degrees, college transfer

programs, literacy programs, job training, and basic adult education programs to all 100 counties.

The presidents, CFOs and CAOs at each of these colleges are instrumental in the day-to-day

operations and in the implementation of programs.

The NCCCS is the third largest in the United States based on the actual number of

colleges in the system. Community colleges in North Carolina offer a cost-effective way to earn

a college degree (Okpala, Hopson, & Okpala, 2011). According to the NCCCS website, during

the 2011-2012 academic year, an estimated 826,471 students were enrolled at one of the 58

community colleges. Nearly all residents in North Carolina have a community college located

within 30 minutes of driving time from their homes.

Moreover, North Carolina community college students are often first-generation students

who may have difficulty finding the direction and guidance needed to feel engaged and

successful in the community college environment (Staley, 2010). One in nine citizens in North

Carolina is enrolled at a community college (Staley, 2010).

CFOs and CAOs

According to Keim and Murray (2008), many CAOs are retiring from the system and

community colleges are finding it difficult to replace them. They further explain that the

pipeline to the presidency and CAO positions is dwindling, so community college leaders need

to begin developing strategic plans for replacing these individuals. CAOs provide a link between

faculty and the administration. In fact, these individuals have a greater impact on the academic

affairs of the institution than the president (Keim & Murray, 2008). The CAOs need to be

leaders and managers of the academic mission as well as the protectors of academic excellence.

Additionally, they have the obligation of "managing academic programs, which includes

curriculum management, curriculum development, and program assessment. They are

responsible for seeing to it that faculty members and curricula adhere to high academic standards

and accreditation requirements" (Keim & Murray, 2008, p. 122).

Keim and Murray contend that CAOs need to be acquainted with legal mandates,

discrimination issues, harassment, workplace safety, and student affairs. Additionally, they need

to "understand workforce education, job retraining, economic development , enrollment

management, management of instructional technology, conflict resolution, budgeting, grants

acquisition and management, resource management, and planning" (Keim & Murray, 2008, p.

122).

CFOs, similar to CAOs, need managerial skills. They are responsible for the financial

side of the organization and must be willing, when necessary, to take calculated risks while

solving problems (Konstans, 2013). Konstans (2013) explains that having a willingness to take

risks is an attribute that CFOs need to improve if they desire to lead a large organization. Similarly, Riggs (2009) contends that community colleges resist change so administrators need to understand the value of taking risks and their potential benefits to the organization. CFO duties often extend to compliance, human resources, administration, and risk management as well as information technology (Konstans, 2013). CFOs require a strong business sense in an effort to avoid continually making decisions solely based on the numbers. Furthermore, they need experiences to development leadership and management skills while establishing valued networks and contacts (Riggs, 2009).

Mentors

The word "mentor" was recorded some 3,000 years ago in Homer's *The Odyssey* when Odysseus left his friend Mentor in complete charge of his household and his son (Telemachus) while he traveled for 20 years during the Trojan War. Mentor took care of, advised, aided, and protected Telemachus while he was developing into a man; his assistance and counseling influenced his social, emotional, and intellectual development (Dean, 2009). Mentors are typically viewed within organizations as powerful individuals who can assist with career advancement (Darwin, 2000). In the higher education culture, a mentor takes a personal interest in the development of the protégé and helps to guide him/her while serving as a role model.

Kram (1988) describes how mentors assist their mentees with career and psychosocial development. In essence, mentors offer sponsorship, exposure and visibility within the institution, coaching, protection from criticism and from the consequences of mistakes, and challenging work assignments to assist in preparation for advancement. Psychosocial functions include helping the mentee develop self-confidence and sense of competence, counseling, role modeling, friendship, and providing acceptance and confirmation (Kram, 1988).

Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) describe how traditional mentoring involves a hierarchical relationship in which a senior person who advises and guides a junior or less-experienced colleague. However, mentoring relationships that grow informally, out of ordinary interactions between the mentor and the protégé, are commonly more favorable than formal relationships where the mentor and protégé are placed together through an official mentoring program (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). It can be difficult for a woman new to administration to find a suitable mentor of a higher rank, especially if she seeks a female mentor due to the lack of females in upper-level administrative roles (Dean, 2009; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Eddy, 2009).

For approximately thirty plus years, research has documented the importance of mentoring for women to remain successful in corporate careers. In one of the first studies Hennig and Jardim (1977) studied female executives' mentoring interactions with their male bosses and the lack of support, encouragement, professional development, and strength these women received in the organization. Harrow (1993) and Tinsley (1984) explained that hard work, outstanding academic and administrative achievements, and dedication were not enough for women in academe to obtain promotions or to secure their jobs. More recently, Catalyst (1996) studied corporate America while Dean (2009) studied academe; both researchers found within these male-dominated environments (cooperate and academia) that mentoring was important for the development and advancement of women.

According to Dean (2009), mentoring is essential to women's success in corporate careers, and in higher education, scholars consider mentoring a decided and possibly critical career advantage. An assortment of factors influences the effectiveness of the mentoring process. Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) reveal that mentoring works best when mentor and

44

protégé have numerous similarities, such as "values, background, experiences, and outlook" (p.17). Furthermore, women may need to seek other women to serve as mentors, and minorities may find someone of the same ethnicity to give them needed guidance.

American higher education history is a tale of irony: "the great catalyst of opportunity for multitudes while harboring inequity within" (Dean, 2009, p. 131). Dean (2009) explains how organizational structures are not equally obtainable for all individuals within them so people and networks become the critical components for career mobility. This imbalance within the structure is particularly harmful for females seeking to advance into senior administration positions. For women seeking advancement and upper-level administration positions within higher education, researchers and scholars consider mentoring an important career advantage (Bierema, 2001; Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2009). Unquestionably, women in academia can obtain some of these assets from other means, such as networking and professional development programs, but mentors connect with their protégés and care about their success, growth, and development, which results in a relationship that opens the door to a pathway of potential advancement (Dean, 2009). According to qualitative research by Dean (2009), female presidents agree that mentoring played an important role in their own careers and that more and better mentoring would help more women advance into presidential leadership positions.

The significance of mentoring is prevalent in numerous research studies and is essential in the life of females striving for advancement (Dean, 2009; Rios & Longnion, 2000). Female faculty members frequently view themselves as outsiders, feeling isolated as well as constrained by the structure of academics, family relationships, and obligations from outside responsibilities. Too often there is no one ready to assist in gaining access to the informational networks and organizational systems that are required for success in higher education (Gibson, 2006; Rios &

Longnion, 2000).   According to Gibson (2006), establishing institutional structures, such as

mentoring committees or cross-institution mentoring programs, has the potential for

transforming higher education in ways that could have a long-term impact on the experiences of

women who have chosen leadership roles as their career path.

In an effort to compare female faculty relationships with their male colleagues, Gersick,

Bartunek, and Dutton (2000) interviewed 37 faculty members who were at a Bufrom six

management schools (equally divided between tenured and untenured) located on the East Coast,

West Coast, and Midwest locations. Both men and women depicted relationships in networking,

mentoring, and career development. However, the relationships differed in terms of career help

and harm. Male faculty were three times more likely to receive help from colleagues whereas

female faculty were four times more likely to report career harm. Jones and Palmer (2011)

contend that women have a strong need for relationships and intercommunications found in

mentoring. Participants included 934 female professional staff from public community colleges.

Due to varying ages, females from the first, second, and third wave of feminism participated.

The younger generation did not feel a need to be "male" and could be "feminine" but the older

generation was not accepting of these individuals (Jones & Palmer, 2011, p. 194). Numerous

participants stated that women in positions of authority or power demonstrated more aggressive

male traits than their female assistants. In a mentor relationship, support is needed. Once

females were promoted, their female colleagues were not always supportive, due to jealously and

competition (Jones & Palmer, 2011). The value and need for mentors has been established.

However, research is needed to determine, since some women are not supportive of other

females, and the landscape is changing, does the need for mentors still exist for females

attempting to advance in higher education.

Professional Development

Historically, one of the most significant parts of a functioning organization has been the role of leaders and leadership (Amey, 2006). Since women remain underrepresented in academic leadership roles, there is a focus on professional development. Due to their lack of leadership experience and other factures, women face obstacles that constrain their ability to advance into the hierarchy of higher education. Therefore, females are encouraged to look for professional development opportunities (Turner & Kappes, 2009). However, less than half the United States colleges and universities have leadership development programs for women (Dean, 2009). Nevertheless, professional development is a critical component for women seeking advancement in higher education (Turner & Kappes, 2009).

Professional development for community college employees has historically been on-the-job training, graduate education, short-term unconnected leadership training opportunities, and some workshops (Piland & Wolf, 2003). Professional development as an effort in the community college began in the early 1970s as a result of rapid growth (Watts & Hammons, 2002). Romero (2004) details how increasing student enrollment caused by population growth has increased the complexity of community colleges and the population they serve, yet professional development has not increased equally. As the landscape of community colleges change and expand, leaders will need to be willing to move beyond the traditional hierarchies and transition into a more collaborative structure. In addition, leadership responsibilities are becoming more complex "as our society has moved from an industrial to a knowledge age and as knowledge has become more specialized" (Romero, 2004, p. 32).

Thus, there is an existing leadership gap due to the lack of appropriate professional development for community colleges (Riggs, 2009). However, they now have an opportunity to

take advantage of this professional development gap that exists between campus led professional development activities, university graduate studies, and professional organizations (Piland & Wolf, 2003). Piland and Wolf (2003) explain, "the leaders we need – in terms of quality and quantity – will result only when the institutions themselves make leadership development a high priority, invest in appropriate programming, and work cooperatively with other suppliers" (p. 94). Community colleges must determine the needs of their organization in terms of leadership and then find the appropriate programs. Therefore, women within the community college system will need to advocate for the programs best suited to fit their individual needs for advancement.

Community colleges are facing challenging and changing environments directly related to the large number of retiring faculty and administrators (O'Banion, 2007). As a result of this changing environment, community colleges are creating in-house programs for staff development (O'Banion, 2007; Watts & Hammons, 2002). These programs are designed to help individuals develop a better understanding of the community college culture and how to perform their roles more effectively within this culture. Yet, these programs only improve the skills of faculty and administrators. O'Banion contends that universities need to design programs to prepare individuals for community college administrative leadership roles. Amey, VanDerLinden, and Brown (2002) question why, given the significance of their societal role, community colleges adhere to such a narrow view of leadership and the needed skills causing a lack of diverse upper-level administrative positions.

Organizations such as the League for Innovation in the Community College, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the National Chair Academy have designed leadership development programs (Phelan, 2005). In addition, many states have developed their own programs associated with doctoral-granting institutions as well as universities establishing

48

professional development programs that offer a degree in higher education administration, community colleges, or other related areas. These programs are designed to prepare individuals for leadership positions in higher education. For example, the doctoral degree in educational leadership with a concentration in higher education administration offered at East Carolina University assist students in developing leadership skills through analysis, self-reflection, and best practices used to solve real problems at community colleges and four-year universities through practical application.

As a growing number of community college leaders continue to retire, these higher educational institutions will still value strong leadership in order to maintain complete effectiveness (Watts & Hammons, 2002). According to Watts and Hammons (2002), the three main options for providing leadership development are graduate programs, in-house programs, and institutions and workshops. They explain various professional development institutions at a national level. For aspiring presidents, they recommend the League for Innovation in the Community College, incorporated with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) programs. Watts and Hammons (2002) argue that no single program will address all leadership development. Therefore, they propose a strategy with a combination of "pre-service and in-service programs" (Watts & Hammons, 2002, p. 62). Additionally, these researchers contend that the model created by the League for Innovation in the Community College should be redesigned to include individuals seeking senior-level positions.

Recently, Stolzenberg (2002) surveyed 615 randomly selected faculty from thirty-one two-year colleges in Alabama to determine their professional development needs. The faculty reported instructionally related, technology related, and organizational issues. The organizational issues for some individuals involve their desire for advancement within the

community college setting and a lack of leadership programs. Dean et al. (2009) explain how female leaders that follow the professor, department chair, dean, provost, or president pathway can meet male norms of leadership through professional development.

Overcoming Barriers

Dean et al. (2009) explain how women in higher education seeking leadership roles must acquire and adhere to the characteristics expected by their professional academe culture. Also, they identify the academic culture as having gender expectations and inequitable rewards. Thus, it is important to find a mentor program or a senior administrator who will assist with bridging the gap between faculty and administrative careers (Moses, 2009). This relationship should develop and help construct a deliberate pathway into leadership.

Moses (2009) points out that selecting the right institution is a critical first step. Also, performing research on the culture of the environment to determine available positions as well as advancement opportunities will enable the individual to decide if that particular institution will be the right fit (Moses, 2009). Once a female finds an institution that fits her needs, it is important to develop a supportive network of colleagues within and outside of her department (Dean, 2009; Moses, 2009). Women should locate other females who have similar interests and care about the same issues. This networking enables women to advise each other and keep up-to-date on advancement opportunities. When organizational structures are not equally balanced with obtainable opportunities to all members, networking becomes a critical component for career mobility (Dean, 2009). Dean (2009) explains women are often excluded from informal networks and placed at a disadvantage within the organizational structure.

Sandberg (2013) acknowledges that women are still competing against one another for positions. She explains how men are focused on how to manage a business and to seek answers

whereas women are focused on managing a career and seeking permission and help. She notes that within some atmospheres, women are not "focused on changing the social norms for the next generation but simply trying to get through the day" (Sandberg, 2013, p. 169). In addition, she offers advice for women to challenge the stereotypes, to not feel threatened by others, and to break the cycle of resentment of others due to their accomplishments.

Another good networking source is professional develop programs as well as workshops (Dean, 2009; Moses, 2009) which are critical for women seeking leadership positions in higher education (Turner & Kappes, 2009). These programs will give individuals the opportunity to interact and make connections across disciplinary lines. These programs also assist females in developing and demonstrating leadership skills. Mastering leadership skills can provide a significant improvement to one's power and authority among colleagues within the institution (Moses, 2009). Additionally, participating in leadership training and networking will assist in building self-confidence, which is an essential component of governance.

Summary

This review shows how the ideology within the academic culture causes women to face challenges socially, personally, and professionally, all of which hinder their full acceptance into the structured culture of higher education. Research has established that females are at a disadvantage within many areas of leadership, not exclusively education. It has been proven that women are effective leaders and are capable of running successful organizations. Yet the prejudicial barriers that females face cause them to struggle more than their male counterparts. The male-dominated patriarchal culture within higher education creates gender inequality and stereotypes.

While women continue to encounter obstacles, their presence on college campuses continues to increase. Females lack mentors and the networking to which males are privy; however, they are still capable of successfully navigating the leadership labyrinth. This does, however, place them at a slight disadvantage with their male colleagues. To course-correct for this disadvantage, women must strive to create their own networking system and seek out mentors. Ideally, a female mentor is best since there are so few females in actual leadership positions. Networking and widening the social circle of acquaintances and contacts should be encouraged with all colleagues without prejudice to gender or race.

Women as well as men can learn from others in given situations, and diversity helps all educational institutions move forward. As many present academic leaders begin to retire, opportunities to advance will be created for others. Realizing that leadership roles in academe are based on male norms, women must contradict the expectation of the role. Women's roles within society are continuing to change to meet cultural demands. As society strives to move toward gender equality, women should carefully navigate through this leadership maze and break gender barriers and stereotypes while redefining the leadership role in higher education.

Leadership positions reside at various levels within the hierarchical system of institutions, not just within the presidential suite. Studies have focused on the presidential suite and the role it plays in the culture of the organization. Yet very little information has focused on the career path and needed leadership skills for those serving in the second-tier of the institution. Sullivan (2009) explains that very little research has been conducted on the different ways in which women obtain on-the-job learning and how effective their learning strategies are within the organizational culture.

Therefore, females should prepare themselves for future leadership roles by building a positive support network, comprising with a suitable work environment, connecting with an exceptional mentor and participating in professional development. Being underrepresented is nothing new for women nor is dealing with multiple challenges while trying to advance into a leadership position in higher education.

The research revealed in this section emphasizes the marginalized role some females in higher education are experiencing. Quite frequently these studies illustrate this information based on the actual number of females in leadership positions. Consequently, research is needed to determine if the perception of females in the NCCCS is similar or if their experiences have been different. As women have progressed into leadership positions, research is needed to determine the actual role of a mentor. Due to experiences in the workplace environment, some females may perceive the role of a mentor differently. Research is needed to evaluate the role of a mentor as well as professional development. Some researchers state the value of professional development, but do females perceive professional development as a necessity for advancement or preparation for leadership? The literature yielded the value of a supportive workplace environment, mentors and professional development. This study contributes to the literature by examining how these factors and evaluating them for future females serving as CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods utilized in this study. The purpose of this study was to examine how women who advanced into senior-level administrative positions of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Academic Officer (CAO) in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) perceive the role that workplace environment, mentoring and professional development played in achieving their positions. This chapter explains the methods being implemented for this study. The goals and research questions for this study are presented along with a description of the data collection and analysis methods that were used. Additionally, trustworthiness, reliability, and limitations of the study are discussed in this chapter.

Research Questions

The research questions provide guidance for the data that the researcher will be collecting, analyzing, and interpreting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The following research questions examined a phenomenon experienced by female CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS:

RQ1: In the perception of the leaders, how has the community college workplace environment affected their advancement into senior-level executive positions?

RQ2: In the perception of the leaders, how has the relationship of a mentor (formal/informal) affected advancement into senior-level executive positions?

RQ3: In the perception of the leaders, what role has professional development played in their advancement into senior-level executive positions?

RQ4: In the minds of the respondents, which of the three variables seemed the most and least important?

The first research question inquired about the community college workplace environment. This open-ended question focused on the participants' perceptions of how the workplace environment affected their advancement. Participants were given an opportunity to share an example to illustrate their experiences. The second research question gave participants the opportunity to express their perceptions and experiences with mentors. These perspectives examined the need for mentors. The third research question focused on the role of professional development. These responses determined if professional development experiences were beneficial. The fourth question gave the participants an opportunity to rate variables between least and most important to their advancement. These open-ended research questions were designed to probe deeper into the perception of the participants and to evaluate the workplace environment, mentors, and professional development.

Participants

As of March 27, 2013 there are 18 female CFOs and 23 female CAOs in the NCCCS (S. Morrissey, personal communication, March 27, 2013). Presently, there are 27 female CFOs and 26 CAOs in the NCCCS (B. Schneider, personal communication, January 14, 2014). The words, experiences, and perceptions from currently serving females CFOs and CAOs will assist in preparing others as well as shed light into the workplace environment, mentors and professional development. In qualitative research, decisions will need to be made about whom or what will be included in the study. The concept of purposeful sampling means selecting individuals that can offer information about the research problem and phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) contends that a narrow range of sampling is better for a phenomenological study. There were five individuals selected from each job title category. Therefore, a total of ten females were

interviewed, five CFOs and five CAOs with more than two years of experience in their present position.

Typically, CFO administrators supervise multiple business services for the college which include budgeting, accounting, payroll, purchasing, financial reports, audits, and insurance. Characteristically, CAO administrators provide leadership in areas of the college that include curriculum services, program development, class scheduling, distance education, credit and non-credit instructional planning, faculty recruitment, instructional staff development, instructional department chairs, Curriculum Committee and Academic Standards Committee. According to the NCCCS website, North Carolina has the third largest community college system in the nation based on the number of colleges. The NCCCS employs a total of 35,093 personnel: 319 senior administrators; 13,968 curriculum faculty; 4,230 staff; and 16, 576 other professionals (B. Schneider, personal communication, April, 5, 2013). There are 58 community colleges each of which has both a CFO and CAO (B. Schneider, personal communication, April, 5, 2013).

Research Design

This study was concerned with female senior-level administrators in CFO and CAO positions in the NCCCS. More specifically, this research study focused on addressing how these administrators perceive the role of workplace environment, mentors and professional development in achieving their positions. Qualitative research is conducted when a problem or issue needs to be explored as well as when there is a need to develop a comprehensive understanding of a subject (Creswell, 2007). Creswell characterizes qualitative research as a written report that includes the voices of the participants describing their experienced issue or problem. A qualitative research method is typically used to answer questions about complicated phenomena in an effort to describe and develop an understanding of the phenomena (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2005). A phenomenological study, a specific type of qualitative research method, describes the genuine experiences of a particular concept or phenomenon and seeks to understand while describing the meaning of that certain experience as it relates to a specific group of people (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). In addition, feminist standpoint theory was used to analyze their lived experiences and develop an understanding of how power is exercised within organizations as well as females' capacity to change their power structures (Harding, 2004).

The research design of this study utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to gather the necessary data. First, due to the information that was revealed through a phenomenological approach where an emphasis is placed on the experiences of the selected group, this approach was needed to accurately capture the perceptions of female CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS. Creswell (2007) describes a phenomenon as a central concept that has been experienced by the participants. The phenomena for this study included workplace environment, mentoring and professional development to explore their impact, perception, experiences, and value based on the participants' views. Phenomenological studies deal with experiences and meanings within the context of the participants' experiences (Smith, 2003). In addition, I selected a phenomenological approach due to the type of interview open/ended questions needed to address this issue. By reviewing multiple perspectives on the same circumstances, the researcher is able to generalize about the process from an insider's perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). A qualitative methodology was needed to understand the experiences and professional struggles as well as the achievements of female administrators as they revealed, in their own words, their experiences. I was interested in developing an understanding of the perceptions of females regarding the meanings they assign to and roles they

associate with the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development as it relates to their career advancement.

Methods and Procedures

This study was approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB) at East Carolina University (ECU) and followed all university guidelines (see Appendix A). In accordance with these guidelines, the NCCCS was contacted to obtain written consent to begin this study (see Appendix B). The research participants were telephonically contacted and given the details about the phenomena being studied as well as procedures being used. According to IRB guidelines along with Leedy and Ormrod (2005), participants were given a choice to participate along with their right to withdraw at any time during the study. The participants were assured confidentiality and informed about the actual measures that were used to protect them. Creswell (2009) and IRB explain how I must recognize the participant's autonomy by giving her adequate information about the study and allowing her the opportunity to participate. The following measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of the study participants:

1. Data (interviews, recordings, and resumes) collected during the study were stored in a location where only I had access.

2. The identities of the respondents were coded and pseudonyms were used when the findings were recorded.

3. The name and location of the institutions in which the participants are employed were not be revealed in the data.

4. Any data that could potentially compromise the confidentially of the participants were destroyed upon completion of the study and approval of this dissertation.

5. Interview appointment times were undisclosed.

58

Once the participants confirmed their participation, face-to-face interviews were scheduled during a time that was convenient to the interviewee. In qualitative research, researchers serve as the main source of data collection, and due to the inductive and constructivist process, they obtain an understanding of the phenomena by talking directly to people or observing their behaviors (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenological researchers depend on interviews with participants who have directly experienced the phenomena being examined (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

For this phenomenological research study, participants were interviewed and each session was electronically recorded. Questions were prepared in advance, and all of the participants were provided a written consent form permitting the interviews to be recorded on a digital voice recorder in accordance to IRB guidelines (see Appendix C). Patton (2002), asserts that "qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories" (p. 141).

Potential participants were contacted by telephone; one female CFO declined to participate due to the timing of this study and was replaced with another having similar years of service. When each participant agreed to participate, dates and times for the interviews were immediately scheduled. During these conversations, each participant was asked to email a copy of her resume for the interview. Six emailed them, two presented them on the day of the interview, one refused to release a resume because of outdated information, and one did not comply.

Data was collected from open-ended questions which are derived from the four research questions (see Appendix D). Bogdan and Biklen (2003) determined that, "The goal of

59

understanding how the person you are interviewing thinks is at the center of the interview"

(p.98). Typically, interviews are similar to informal conversations in which the researcher is

listening while the participant is doing the majority of the talking (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Participants were allowed to speak openly and freely without interruption in an attempt to

create a more relaxed, informal interview. The interviews lasted approximately between 20

minutes to one-hour each. The interview questions I asked were open-ended questions that were

intended to elicit the participant's perception and opinions of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

Some responses did merit an additional follow-up question. Questions were clarified, restated or

rephrased, at various times. The interview data collected in this phenomenological study

examined and gave an understanding of the actual experiences of the participants through their

perception and understanding of the situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

Data Analysis

Face-to-face interviews were conducted and then converted into written words,

transcribing the interviews verbatim. After the recorded interview was transcribed, each

participant was emailed her transcript to ensure accuracy as well as to add comments or

clarifications (Creswell, 2007).   During this process, modifications were made to ensure

accuracy of the obtained information.   The transcribed information was read looking for themes

as well as similarities that existed within the information. In addition, each transcription was

double-checked against the digital recording to ensure accuracy. In data analysis, meaning was

essential (Smith, 2003). Once data collection was completed, I analyzed the information.

Synthesizing the data followed four stages. First, following the transcription of the

interviews, the coding process began. During this process, the identified themes with codes,

categories, or subcategories. The coded data was then grouped according to themes that evolved from interview responses (Creswell, 2009; Smith, 2003).

Secondly, the coding was linked between collecting the data and developing a growing scheme to explain the data (Smith, 2003). These initial codes contained a wide variety of topics that helped separate the data into categories. Bogdon and Bilken (2003) describe this process as "You are putting together a puzzle whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine parts" (Bogdon & Bilken, 2003, p. 7). According to Creswell (2007) from the obtained data, the researcher will be able to develop "clusters of meaning" from the consistencies within the themes discovered during the interviews (p. 61). The focus was on common experiences of the participants. The main goal was to "make sense of the experience of all people in all categories in the study, or explain the conditions under which exceptions occur" (Green et al., 2007, p. 548). These concepts were reduced into themes and subthemes refining a connection to the phenomena being studied. In addition, while reviewing the transcriptions for themes, I evaluated the participants resumes for institutional employment history, titles, locations, professional development, and experiences related to the phenomena.

After establishing a logical direction through coding, focused coding emerged. According to Creswell (2007), the researcher will move in logical circles rather than using an immobile linear approach. Focused coding requires making decisions about which initial codes make sense and assist with categorizing the data accurately (Smith, 2003). The related themes were refined to form the next level of themes. The researcher will then categorize the themes making them as conceptual as possible. The themes were identified and verified by quotations from the participants. The main objective of a phenomenological approach is to identify

common themes relating to human experiences as articulated by a range of participants in a study (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, the data collected built and clarified the categories as well as reflected the participant's responses, concerns, and actions about the workplace environment, mentors and professional development.

Lastly, conclusions were verbalized and I provided a transparent and detailed account of the formulated data. The data discovered in qualitative studies occurred in the form of words or phrases which are imprecise, often descriptive and context-based that can lead to possibly multiple meanings (Neuman, 2003). The themes were then used to write a description of the phenomenon as attested to by participants who actually experienced it personally (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The final stage transformed the themes into a narrative version where the themes and resume data were expanded and explained (Smith, 2003).

Trustworthiness and Replication

Creswell (2003) explains that qualitative research presents challenges in establishing trustworthiness and replication. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is dependent on an outlined protocol for data collection, allowing the study to be replicated in another setting (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, in qualitative research, studies are able to capture details concerning the subject being investigated. Creswell (2009) explains the manner in which a qualitative researcher follows procedures and documents research findings. Additionally, trustworthiness indicates the findings are an accurate account of the phenomena told by participants and are without researcher bias. Creswell (2007) aids in giving trustworthiness to a phenomenological research study when the researcher addresses five essential questions:

1. Does the researcher understand the philosophical views of phenomenology?

2. Does the researcher have a clear "phenomenon" to study?

3. Does the researcher use procedures of data analysis in phenomenology?

4. Does the researcher convey the essence of the experience and include a description of the participants?

5. Is the researcher reflective throughout the study?

In reference to questions one and two, I have addressed these components previously in this chapter. In addition, this chapter explained data collection and procedures associated with analyzing the information for question three. In order to insure the essence of the participant's experience, question four, the participants' words were recorded. Trustworthiness in the study strengthens the impact and accuracy or truthfulness between the themes and collected data (Neuman, 2003). There are essentially two types of threats to external trustworthiness involving the selection of participants and the location of the study (Creswell, 2009). In order to minimize these threats or bias, ten females, five CFOs and five CAOs with more than two years of experience in the workplace environment were interviewed. I traveled to their workplace environments to complete these interviews. Prior to beginning these interviews, I was interviewed to evaluate any bias.

<center>**Summary**</center>

This study utilized phenomenological qualitative research methods in order to understand how women who advanced into senior-level administrative positions (CFO & CAO) in the NCCCS perceive the role of workplace environment, mentors and professional development in achieving their positions. A phenomenological approach allowed the participants to express their views and gave the researcher an opportunity to acquire knowledge and report the phenomena through the words of the participants. The goal of this study was to address the research questions by acquiring data through telephone interviews and transcription to

understand how each participant's experiences impacted her advancement. In this chapter, I

outlined the rationale for using a phenomenological qualitative approach as a means of

addressing the research questions.   Additionally, I provided information about the participants

and detailed how I compiled and analyzed the data. I provided the results of this

phenomenological qualitative research study in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Nationally, significant numbers of the community college leaders have retired or are considering retirement (Strom, Sanchez & Downey-Schilling, 2011). Consequently, according to Wiessner and Sullivan (2007), "there is great concern that the pipeline is not producing new leaders rapidly enough to fill all the resulting vacancies" (p. 88). Therefore, as individuals leave their positions, many females seeking advancement in the NCCCS may seek to position themselves for upward mobility. Thus, conducting research or a study on female leaders in the third largest community college system in the nation (based on actual number of colleges) may provide insightful knowledge about their experiences. Smith (2003) describes using phenomenological studies to reveal experiences and meanings within the context of the participants' experiences. To achieve this insight, a phenomenological qualitative methodology was employed to learn from females serving in the NCCCS who had ascended into executive CFO and CAO leadership positions. This examination included views from both CFOs and CAOs on the role of workplace environment, mentoring and professional development. Their voices may reveal the "why and how certain administrative paths evolve, or what organizational strategies might be appropriate for developing and supporting alternative trajectories" (Amey et al., 2002, p. 574).

The process of data collection began with a search for female CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS with more than two years' of experience in their present positions. As of April 2014, there were 28 female CFOs and 28 female CAOs in the NCCCS. The search for two or more years of service in these positions yielded 17 CFOs and 20 CAOs. From this population, 10 females with varying years of service were identified for this study, consisting of five CFOs and five CAOs. The years of service for this study population ranges from 2.5 years to 28 years of

service. The college headcount enrollment for those institutions represented in this study ranges

from nearly 3,000 to slightly over 13,000 students. Geographically, these community colleges

are located across the mountain, piedmont, and coastal regions of North Carolina.

On the day of the interview, a reminder email was sent to the participant. All participants

were interviewed on their respective college campuses. While nine of the interviews occurred in

the participants' offices, one was conducted in a college board room adjacent to the

interviewee's office. The interview questions enabled participants to provide details about their

personal experiences and perceptions related to the research questions. The participants were

numerically coded and any information that would identify a respondent has been suppressed in

order to maintain anonymity. The interviews were recorded and field notes were taken to

memorialize body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal communications by the

participants. The descriptions of the participants in Table 2 provide context and meaning to the

data the participants provided.

Qualitative Data Analysis

In phenomenological research, the central focus is to develop an understanding about the

shared experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Through interviews, a description can

give account to "what" the participants' have experienced and "how" they experienced it

(Moustakas, 1994). After interviewing each participant, I transcribed the interviews and

composed Word documents containing all of the collected information.   Data collected from the

interviews provided a description of the perceived and defined roles of workplace environment,

mentoring, and professional development among the participants. From the transcribed data, the

initial coding process began to identify emerging themes. Seven themes and 17 subthemes

emerged during the interviews (see Figure 1).

Table 2

Participant Information

	Title	Age	Years of experience in the NCCCS	Years of experience in this position	Total student enrollment	Education	Married	Children
001	CFO	53	28	9	3,000	MBA	Yes	Yes
002	CAO	55	15	8	3,000	MA	Yes	Yes
003	CFO	53	3	3	4,000	BS/ Renewing CPA	Yes	Yes
004	CAO	47	2.5	2.5	3,000	PhD	Yes	No
005	CAO	46	11	3	10,000	PhD	Yes	Yes
006	CFO	62	18	5	10,000	AAS	Yes	No
007	CAO	55	24	6	4,000	EdD	Yes	Yes
008	CFO	62	26	25	13,000	MBA/ CPA	Yes	Yes
009	CFO	41	9	8	3,000	BSA/MSA CPA	Yes	Yes
010	CAO	53	25	6	3,000	Pursing EdD	Yes	Yes

I.   Changing Environment
      A. Flexibility
      B. Benefits
      C. Timing
II.   Leaders' Perceptions
III.   Advancement is not without sacrifices.
      A. Stressful
         1. Budget issues
         2. Managing projects
         3. Dealing with different personalities
      B. Need Supportive families
      C. Willing to move
      D. Establish your worth and appearances
IV.   Work experience
      A. Mentorship
      B. Females are not always supportive
V.   Pressure to have degrees
VI.   Valued Resources
      A. North Carolina Association of Community College Business Officials/North Carolina Chief Academic Officer's Association
      B. Professional Development Officer
      C. Serving on community boards
VII.   Non-Barriers/Gender

Figure 1. Themes and subthemes.

Theme I: Changing Environment

With varying years of experience, the participants explained how, at one time, the senior level administrative environment consisted of all males. During that time, the participants explained struggles, but the present environment has dramatically changed. As a result, the landscapes of the 58 community colleges in the NCCCS are transitioning into organizations in which females are viewed as potential leaders. Within the theme of changing environment, other important subthemes were revealed. The data noted flexibility, good benefits, and timing by the participants as reasons for seeking advancement and remaining within the system. Nearly all participants detailed how the workplace has changed for females over the years and how it now offers various opportunities to females interested in community college leadership. Participant 001 remarked:

> I've been in the system for 28 years and I've seen quite a difference, quite a change over those years. It used to be all white males, and it's gotten far more diverse and there are a lot more females… I initially started in the system, again it was all white males, it was very unusual for women to be in high level positions, whether it was VP or Presidents, or whatever, but I think I kind of came in at a good time because it began to shift sometime in the late 80s.

Participant 002 explained:

> It has greatly changed over the years that I have been involved in the community college system. It used to be that when you would go to meetings or to the system office you would see a lot of males. But now it's more females. I really think that the doors have opened up for females in the community college system. It has been a drastic change over the years and I've been involved in it.

According to participant 005:

It truly would be a perception, I tell you, of all the jobs in the institutions and

corporations that I've been involved with I think that NCCC is probably one of the most

female friendly. You look around at the number of presidents, you look at the number of

vice presidents, chief academic officers, student development administrators, we are very

well represented.

This change has not only been noted at the participants' institutions as well as NCCCS.

Participant 002 stated:

It was more male oriented, so he kind of started opening the doors for females during his

reign as president. Then our current president, she is a female. And so she's opened the

doors to all, everybody, male, female, and different races as well, which has been very

good.

Enthusiastically, participant 009 revealed "I'm the first female person…in this position at the

college". Another participant (006) was the first females in this position, she revealed:

I was really the first, it's not really funny, but the original Chief Business Officer, I can't

think of his name, he was here a long time and he passed away I think maybe in the mid

80's. They brought in a fellow, he worked two years, he was fired. Brought another

fella, he worked two years and he was fired. And I was forewarned, don't go to

[college], you are liable to get fired too, but I been here 21 years, so I must be doing

something right. I haven't gotten fired yet…But, in the beginning, some of the male

leadership and instructional people thought that the relationship they had with the VP and

the President made me and whatever I had to say worthless, because they felt like he had

the back door, the front door, whatever, to anything. And I didn't quite know how to deal

with that particular VP. I thought well if I say something, make him really mad, he could

really hurt me professionally. And then one day I was meeting with [the president] which

he was here until a couple of years ago he retired. He asked me, are you afraid to say

something. Why are you being so nice? I went, okay. So I took the hint, so I started

being more, you know, assertive. [The president] said give them hell. I said, thank you.

And I knew right then that the President had my back, and gave me the flexibility to do

my job and enforce a policy. As the only female, it was even more important, I think

anybody can be successful in their job if whoever they report to, and especially the

President, has their back. If the President doesn't support their Vice president's, I don't

care how great and wonderful you are, you are going to fail.

Subtheme 1A: Flexibility. In discussing the workplace environment, the data were

significant in revealing the flexibility of their schedules. Participants expressed their value and

appreciation for having this flexibility. Participant 007 explained how her administrative

position provided much-needed flexibility:

I've balanced having a husband with major health issues and a career as an administrator,

not as a faculty member, but as an administrator. So, you know, in some ways it's been

quite helpful because there were a number of times that he was in the hospital that I

would go sit with him all day and then come here at night to do my job. And so it would

give me some flexibility in being able to do that. And flexibility to be able to come and

work in the mornings, leave to meet doctor's appointments or other things he had to do

and then come back. So it has been able to give me some flexibility that maybe a

classroom would not have been able to give me. So that's been a real plus for me.

Subtheme 1B: Benefits. Another significant factor noted by the participants was good benefits, more specifically, the opportunity to earn annual leave and sick days. These benefits were directly associated with participants' transitioning into or remaining at their institutions. Participant 008 explained:

I came over here from the [pervious profession], I came over just about laterally. I moved over because I had a child, and with [pervious profession] you were traveling a lot. And I needed to take my child to the doctor; I had to take the day off. Where I knew if I was here, if I needed to run to the doctor I could do it within an hour or two and then be back to work. I could earn days to take when needed. Plus, functions at school and just different things, it just gave me more time with my family to be close by. This is a good work environment in that the conditions are good. You know we have the benefit of vacation and sick days; we are able to, as women, take care of families and childcare situations.

Subtheme 1C: Timing. Participants repeatedly expressed having the right experience to put them in the right place. In many cases, the participants were able to advance, simply due to a natural progression within the institution. In other words, they attributed their advancement to remaining in the organization, gaining knowledge, and waiting on an opportunity. Participant 003 explained, "It was a natural fit for me to move up…I was just at the right place at the right time and it fit well." Participant 006 noted "they just wanted someone who understood the financial processes of the community college and since I'd been around for so long and I had done just about everything…I got it." In addition, participant 008 explained:

I came into a situation that the individual who was in the, at that time the CFO position, was getting himself into some trouble. And I was the next person who had, the only

72

person really, that had the ability to kind of step into that job…So, by doing that I was

able to advance and able to continue advancing and I think my background of being a

state auditor before I came over to the NCCCS. I had audited at the community college.

It wasn't totally new to me. Budgets I had not worked with much, but I had worked with

a lot of general ledger accounts and some internal controls and things like that, so that

was definitely a plus. So, again, I was kind of in the right place at the right time to be

able to afford some advancement.

Theme II: Leaders' Perceptions

Another theme that emerged was the importance of how leaders, most notably the

president, perceive females in leadership positions. Participants repeatedly described

circumstances in which the president made the decision about advancement for females in the

institution. In some institutions, the president, not a committee, has the sole responsibility of

hiring senior-level administrative positions (participant 003,005, 006, 007, 009, and 010).

Therefore, their perception of females, in regards to advancement and capabilities, is considered

a critical component for upward mobility. Participant 001 noted "I think the president at each

institution sets the tone, and when I first began, the president was opposed to having women in

higher places. But he retired and the next person that came in was very receptive to a lot of

diversity. So I saw a lot of change then." Participant 002 explained that the environment she left

"was a male dominant environment…a female president come in when I was there, which

changed a lot of things. I think seeing more females getting in as the president has really

changed the environment a whole lot."

Theme III: Advancement is not without Sacrifices

While referring to advancement, overwhelmingly the participants noted how these leadership positions have sacrifices or "trade-offs." Participant 010 describes it as:

A lot of grief…a lot of uncertainty…a lot of anxiety, and it manifested itself in some very verbal ways. I had some very angry faculty because we were having to change what they had always been comfortable in and I'm not sure that I always approached those situations in the best way. Just because of my emotions, dealing with their emotions, and trying to get beyond the emotions to the issue at hand.

Within this theme, several subthemes emerged from the data reflecting the participants' leadership stresses, need for supportive families, a willingness to move, and proving one's worth.

Subtheme III-A: Stressful Participants noted that these leadership roles are stressful. Participants frequently expressed how stress, at times, seemed to be manifested in multiple areas of their lives. Participant 004 divulges:

You have to be willing to give up a lot to be in these jobs, and you have to give up a lot more if you want to be successful in them. And that's not always an easy thing. I have a very poor work/life balance. I admit that openly. I don't know anyone in my position, or in the presidency, I don't know that any of us have great work/life balance. I don't think it's really possible. It doesn't work that way. You give up a lot. Some people who are willing to give up less, move up less. Or more slowly. And that's okay. It's all about what's important to you… we get these degrees, we do these jobs, we get this work, not just for the fun of it; I mean we are driven to do it…but the tradeoff is not always fabulous…yet I wouldn't trade anything about it.

Sub-subtheme III-A-1: Budget issues. Participants repeatedly explained how budget issues are considered a major source of their stress. They expressed sadness about recent budget cuts and how they have negatively impacted their institutions, from cutting programs (participant 005) to losing needed personnel (participant 010). Participant 010 commented "that because of the economic impact on employees in 2008, everyone in this country is waiting for the next shoe to drop." While participant 005 revealed:

> I struggle with is the metrics. I did not, and I probably need to take a class on it if I could
>
> figure it out, but I do not have any of that data background on how to do my job. Now, I
>
> know statistics, because I had to take that for dissertation and doctorate stuff. I should
>
> know that entire piece on how to run and balance the budgets but all of that was totally
>
> missing for me. And it's very hard to find. Even if you do a google search on how to
>
> calculate FTE, you can't find it. So all of those metrics have been my biggest gap, and
>
> I'm still trying to fill it up.

Sub-subtheme III-A-2: Managing projects. Other participants explained the stress of dealing with managing projects. Participants described feeling inadequate when managing construction projects, dealing with contractors, and leading campus-wide activities. According to participant 009, "I didn't have the management qualities at the level I needed. That's where I knew I needed to improve…trying to manage for all college wide." Participant 002 revealed "project management...is hard to learn. I've worked on putting together a better way to manage all these projects that we have going on." Candidly, participant 006 divulged:

> The challenge was absorbing facilities…construction facilities maintenance. I mean I
>
> don't know what makes a roof work, or I don't know "diddly" about plumbing or
>
> electrical, so that was a big deal...if you go take accounting or business, you are not

studying construction. You are not studying how to network, networking, or Ethernet

switches, and all that stuff…you have to hire very knowledgeable people.

Sub-subtheme III-A-3: Dealing with different personalities. Another issue that caused

stress for nearly all the participants was dealing with different people, different opinions, and

quite unique personalities. Participant 008 stated "dealing with people is the most difficult thing

there is…how to live among people and deal with people and work with people and share with

people." Participant 007 explains her experiences as similar "to herding cats…they all have

different personalities and they don't always walk the way you want them to walk…so you had

to learn to love the cats as they are."

Subtheme III-B: Need Supportive Families. Participants constantly explained the need

for support families, more notably, having a spouse who was willing to share the responsibilities

of parenting. Participants openly expressed appreciation and value for their spouses, noting the

hardships and sacrifices they endure daily. Participant 005 noted:

> If I did not have an amazing, supportive husband it would be impossible. Absolutely I
>
> could not have done this career path. I have a daughter that is in college this year, and a
>
> daughter that will start high school next year. As they have gotten older, it has gotten
>
> easier. But, I think for me personally, things are really good at work, or they are really
>
> good at home. Very rarely do you have both.

Participant 008 explained "I spend a lot of weekends, down in the basement in my office

working, but the good thing is my husband was so good and he would take care of our child and

tend to him." Later, she explained because "at night trying to do financial statements and

balance books and so forth because there was not enough time in the day."

Subtheme III-C: Willing to move. Participants noted, at times, individuals must be willing to move for advancement opportunities, which is stressful. Participant 004 revealed:

 I really wanted to move up, but there was nowhere for me to move up into, because there were people that were really good at their jobs, and they weren't going anywhere. So I knew I had to make the transition out of [college] and it broke my heart… within four months of having the PhD in hand, I had a deanship. But I worked very hard to get that and I feel like I really struggled and it was hard just to break through because nobody knew me…It is the most painful thing, and we've done multiple moves in the same city, which I don't recommend for anyone.

Participant 006 described "[president] knew what my job offer was down here salary wise, and so basically he reduced it $100 thinking I wouldn't move over $1200 and it really made me mad…but I left on really good terms." Additionally, participant 005 noted:

The environment played a huge part in my decision to come here because where I left was the "good 'ol boy."   I was the only female that was at the leadership level that I was at, and I had to adapt considerably to be successful at that level. I had to learn how to talk sports, I had to learn how to leave my emotions at the door. It was a much more cut throat area…women got paid less… it was kind of perceived that the men would be the researchers and have the real faculty jobs, and the women would kind of fill in.

Subtheme III-D: Establish your worth and appearances. Interestingly, participants revealed a sense of needing to prove their value or worth. Notably, the participants wanted to be respected and felt a strong need to establish themselves in the institution.   Participant 008 believed:

Unfortunately, females might not be taken quite as serious as males…It seems that

females have to maybe work a little harder to prove their worth. Maybe a little harder

than males…I think it's just maybe, kind of like the private sector in certain degrees that,

again, a male is having to support his family so he needs more money than a female

which, is normally married with a husband. We all seem to still have that same opinion

that the male is the primary breadwinner but that is not always the case. So, again, I

think females have to work hard to prove their worth.

Participant 006 explained "You need to learn everything you can, you will make yourself more

valued. It's important for women. I was always a team player. I did whatever [the president]

said, and so it was definitely the best advice I ever got and I advanced."

Openly, participants revealed the need to look and speak in a particular manner while

working. In the interviews, participants spoke candidly about needing to be professionally

dressed in business attire at all times. Participant 007 explains:

You know I think women, we like to talk about our kids, we talk about our spouses, we

talk about, you know, things that maybe the guys don't talk about so much, but so

sometimes you kind of filter some of the things that you do at meetings or something like

that…When I come to work, I am dressed, you know; there are no bad days for me. I'm

not coming in capris and dressed down one day or whatever. There is no such thing as a

casual day because I feel like as a female in a leadership role, I have to have that

persona…cause there is a measuring stick. And I don't know that it's a measuring stick

to men, but there's just a measuring stick, period…I've got to look the part, be the

part…I wear high heels every day…I will have my jacket. So if I go to meet with the

president, there's a jacket on.

Theme IV: Work Experience

Notably, in terms of advancement, participants expressed the value and importance of their previous work experience. Participant 008 explained "I think that my background helped me as much as anything." Participant 010 detailed:

I think my working experience prepared me for my job…you know [college] prepared me for this because they gave me tons of opportunities to grow. I was given the opportunity to start their surgical technology program. So I developed that from 13 course descriptions, that was before we converted to the semester system, so each college had its own set of course descriptions. I also had the responsibility of overseeing 7.6 million dollars. The faculty for that division there were 28 full-time faculty and the programs for continuing education that tagged to curriculum programs like criminal justice, culinary, hospitality management, I was over the children's center, the childhood program and I did not have a background in none of those. I was a nurse with a surgical technology program. What [college] afforded me was the opportunity to grow in my management leadership. And I think the two overlap. From there, very quickly that next year I was promoted to department chair to division chair. Then that lead me to choose to explore other opportunities.

Participant 003 illustrated "a lot of it is learning on the job." Similarly, participant 004 notes what prepared her the most was simply "being a Dean at a really, really, really big school and working on 13 different campuses."

Subthemes revealed from this data noted the absence of mentors and supportive females.

Subtheme IV-A: Mentorship. Participants described mentors as "someone who guides you and kind of keeps you out of trouble, and keeps you from making a huge misstep"

(participant 001), " a good role model" (participant 009), "someone who sees potential and gives you good advice, is very encouraging and supports you and defends you" (participant 006), "someone to help develop skills" (participant 002), and "someone that is there for you, no matter what, they are going to be there for you , no matter how big or how small the situation might be, they are there for you" (participant 008).

Interestingly, participants noted that mentors were not needed to advance into their leadership positions. Participants explained how their previous work experience led to their leadership positions. Participant 010 stated "I think a mentor can help…maybe that's a necessity for some people; it's not for me…I think it's important to surround yourself with greatness." According to participant 002 "it wasn't absolutely necessary, but it would have been a great advantage if I had had one and I think today, there are so many changes that are going on in the system, that it would be even harder today to advance without a mentor, because it is just constantly changing."

Conversely, participant 008 explained about her mentor:

He was a much older, mature individual who – he knew people well. And I think that's one of the hardest things for someone growing up to learn is leadership skills. I mean you can learn how to operate a computer, you can learn to do a spreadsheet. Or you can learn how to balance accounts, but dealing with people is the most difficult thing there is, and leadership is different than management. He always taught me that leadership is people, management is things. And a leader is someone who knows how to deal with people, and get them to do what you want them to do because they want to do it. That being able to deal with them and help them understand that's really what they want to do is quite a skill and he helped me to see that and helped me to see that things were not so,

80

everything is not so critical. That if you make a mistake its okay, cause mostly any

mistake can be corrected. It's better to do than not do because you are afraid of doing. So

he, it's not exactly, I don't know if you'd call it professional development, but he gave

me a lot of, I developed professionally a lot by looking at him, following him, kind of

learning what his style was and seeing I could develop those qualities and characteristics.

And I feel like I did develop some of them, and that it's helped me in understanding

people better…I guess that a mentor has been the greatest factor in me gaining

confidence in myself and my abilities to do what I feel I need to do.

Participant 009 noted:

Our previous president was my mentor when I got in this position because he hired me he

trusted me to do it, and he is just an excellent leader and had excellent management skills,

so I feel like with my background in the finance area and the budget area, I had that but I

didn't have the leadership management qualities at the level that I needed. That's where I

knew I needed to improve, and he had all that.   Because things change here, but they

don't change nearly as fast as they do in the [government agency], in the [government

agency] world…I needed a mentor.

Subtheme IV-B: Females are not always supportive. The data revealed that females

are not always so supportive. Participants expressed a feeling of disbelief concerning why other

females were not supportive. Participant 004 explains:

I've seen it too many times; women do not support other women. And I don't get it. I

think it's mean. And I'm like, really, we don't have enough going on. And I have seen

women purposely go after other women because they were threatened or what have you,

and I think that's just not a way to do it. And least of all in an institution of higher

81

learning…It's not nice, and you feel hurt. And the one thing that I think people don't

realize when they go into this type of work is how thick your skin has to be. Because

with every step you make, the target gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger. And bullets get

bigger. And it's "gonna" be men, it's "gonna" be women, it's "gonna" internal and

external. People, it's just a fact of life. And if you can't handle it, this is not for you.

This is not for the weak hearted….And I mean, sometimes some of the women that you

really think you trust, and you are like, how is it possible that that knife is in my

back…right before I left [college] there was a woman retiring. And she was not a very

nice person. She was on my team and I was not terribly sad to see her go…she loved to

stir the pot, and I think she enjoyed a lot of the drama that comes with that, which is

awful. And when she was unwrapping her first gift, and I thought this was horrible, in a

way I kind of chuckled but I thought about how mortifying it was for her. Someone had

wrapped a little gift in a little pen box, and they had put a knife inside the box, and they

had written in a real swirly computer/printer font…I took this out of my back because 'I

figured you'd need it for your next position.'

Theme V: Pressure to have Degrees

Notably, the data revealed participants felt pressure to improve their educational status

with additional degrees. Participants explained to achieve their goal of advancing into leadership

roles, experience and additional educational degrees were required. Furthermore, participants

noted feeling inadequate during college events, such as, graduation and conferences, which led to

them seeking additional educational degrees. Participant 010 explained:

I am pursing my doctorate degree, because you are viewed differently when you are

sitting at a table…when someone wants to know your background and where you went to

82

school or what degree you have, there's a different feel to the conversation. Especially

when you are dealing with the university system faculty there is a little arrogance there

when you are trying to have a peer to peer conversation and you don't hold a doctorate

degree and they do. Now, I think presidential leadership opportunities most require a

doctorate or a terminal degree...it would also give me a competitive edge if I wanted to

make a lateral move to...South Carolina or the Virginia system…There's also a little

arrogance there when you are trying to have a peer to peer conversation and you don't

hold a doctorate degree and they do.

Another participant illustrated this theme by stating,

"I think probably the fact that I'm a female made me want to make sure that I had a

doctorate, you know. One, my president did stress that the vice president for academics

would have a doctorate. He felt like that was key for this role…I can remember my

president asking me to attend an education alliance. I happened to be the only female

other than the administrative assistant to the provost at that meeting, and while they were

all sitting around the little table, the table with their doctor, doctor, doctor tags and mine

had "guest" and so, I'm looking around at these things, and I'm thinking I will be that

person, I will be that doctor. So it was a real incentive that I would have that as well so

that anytime he needed me to go do something for him, I would be equal in stature, you

know" (participant 007).

Theme VI: Valued Resources

The sixth theme focused on the data revealing that participants clearly valued

professional development experiences and resources made available to them. Participant 005

noted "without a doubt, the best professional development I ever did was getting my doctorate. I

83

probably grew more in that process than anything." Subthemes that emerged include the importance of the North Carolina Association of Community College Business Officials, North Carolina Chief Academic Officers Association, professional development officers, and serving on community boards.

Subtheme VII-A: North Carolina Association of Community College Business Officials/North Carolina Chief Academic Officer's Association. Once an individual becomes a CFO or CAO in the NCCCS, they are able to attend statewide conferences and regional meetings held by the CBOs and CAOs association organized by the NCCCS. A particularly noteworthy subtheme was the constant devotion, in regards to needing their services, by participants to the North Carolina associational meetings held for CFOs and CAOs. Participant 005 explained "the North Carolina CAO association is so valuable, because it really helped me get the history…and find out some of the budget information a little bit better, and network and find some people I could go to and ask stupid questions that didn't care." Participant 007 stated "statewide organization and my local regional organization… is so key." Additionally, participant 009 explained "our business officers association…brings in speakers, whether it's sales tax, whether it's the state auditor's office, whether it's what we do every day...it helps."

Subtheme VI-B: Professional Development Officer. Participants valued having a professional development officer to assist with training college wide and concentrated on meeting the needs of varying levels of employees. Participant 001detailed:

> I was working at a really rural area, so there were things that I learned later on that other colleges had, that our college didn't. Like a professional development officer and just having somebody that was focused on all types of training for employees in general, that didn't happen where I was at but now we have that here. And the various departments

84

will put together ideas of things that they think are needed for groups of employees, and

so it's worked out pretty well. To try and educate everyone about different things…

definitely makes a difference.

Participant 002 explained "when the new president came on, she reorganized the college. And

we have a VP of Organizational Development and she is responsible for bringing professional

development to the college. So we are having a lot of opportunities now, internal, for

development." Participant 007 noted "we have a person in charge of a professional development

grant and now we all have an iPad and tablet. My tablet is my computer. Each year she does

training…she looks for different tools. I actually went through the training with the faculty…the

iPad is the base tool…we make sure that the faculty get the training."

Subtheme VI-C: Serving on Community Boards. Participants noted serving on

community boards as an asset. Participants described how serving on community boards enabled

them to meet individuals connected to the college. Participant 003 explained:

Our president, is always looking at the senior management level he wants to have and

strives to have, a representative population sitting around the table that reflects our

students who come here, so he likes to see men and women, and different backgrounds

and nationalities…we knew each other from being on boards here in the community… he

was able to see how I work and you know, see how I think, and how committed I was to

the boards I was on, so it was good to get that friendship going beforehand. And he does

a good job about trying to meet people out in the community, and keeps an eye out for

those people that he thinks could be a good fit here…I was asked to come almost 3 years

ago now.

Participant 010 noted

I think to be a great leader you have to be a great manager and you can't manage people without leading them. So, I think it was that progressive growth experiences serving on committee boards, it was interacting with the hospitals and the executive leadership at the hospitals. That helped prepare me to be ready to step into this position… I've been in the community college system long enough to know that we are all so consumed with the day to day, that sometimes it's hard to think beyond the next thing to do. I'm connected locally with the Salvation Army, I'm connected directly with the workforce development board, but from a North Carolina Association of Adult Educators, I'm connected with that, but that is more of an information sharing organization.

Theme VII: Non-Barriers/Gender

The seventh theme revealed that the community college environment is not perceived to have barriers for females seeking advancement. Participant 007 explained "I haven't seen any barriers for females in the administrative role." Yet, participant 010 revealed:

It wasn't that I wasn't effective; it wasn't that I wasn't loved by my people. It wasn't that I wasn't contributing, but it was, I wanted more. And I think at that point at [college], I had been pigeon holed as that, as division chair for public service technologies. And there wasn't an opportunity to take that next step…I think it's real easy in organization if you are not careful, to pigeon hole people into slots. And I think sometimes it's hard for leadership to think of moving someone up when they're doing such a wonderful job where they are. They don't want to lose that great leadership there, and the short sidedness of that is, if you don't give the people that want that opportunity, that are really qualified for whatever that next is, that opportunity, you are gonna lose them.

86

Unanimously, the subtheme that emerged was how the participants did not feel as though their gender affected their advancement.

None of the participants indicted that gender affected their advancement or opportunities. In fact, participants identified numerous opportunities for advancing into leadership roles. Participant 004 noted that "I don't think gender actually had anything to do with it. For me, I've known for a while the direction I've wanted my career to head in, and I think it was more difficult for me to become a dean the first time than it was for me to land a vice presidency." Also, participant 005 stated "whether you are male or female, it just was not an issue. I have never felt my gender was ever an issue, positive or negative." Similarly, participant 006 explained "whether you are male or female, you just have to set your sights and what you want to do career wise, and work hard to get there." Participant 007 emphasized that "there's never been anything that's ever been mentioned, you know about whether I was male or female. It was on my work performance and the degrees which I held." Participant 010 remarked "gender, for me, has not been an issue. I've been embraced lovingly and supported and given opportunities to advance both at [college] and here in different ways." Additionally, participant 008 noted "I was really the only person there who had the right background and had the aptitude at the time; my gender didn't get in the way." Participant 003 remarked "personally I don't think me being a woman has mattered tremendously here, one way or another."

Ranking

In addition to interviewing the participants, they were asked to rank, based on their perceptions and experiences, the importance of workplace environment, mentoring, or professional development for their advancement into an executive leadership position. Each participant stated what she perceived as most important, second in importance, and then least

important in terms of advancement. Table 2 illustrates how each participant categorized these components based on her experiences and Figure 2 clarifies the ranking of these components. Figure 3 illustrates the varying views of CFOs while Figure 4 notes the unanimous views of the CAOs. Based on these findings, the workplace environment was ranked as the most important element in terms of advancing into an executive leadership position, followed by professional development, and then mentoring as the least important.

Summary

The findings in this study answer the research questions posed in chapter one. Female CFOs and CAOs discussed their experiences related to the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development. From these discussions, participants revealed, based on their perceptions and experiences, seven main themes: changing environment, leader's perception, advancement is not without sacrifices, work experience, pressure to have degrees, valued resources along with non-barriers.

The information from the participants gave importance to the changing community college environment for females while noting the value of flexible schedules, good benefits, and the timing for advancement. The participants also believed that the leader's perception needs to be supportive of females advancing into executive leadership positions. Leaders do influence the behaviors, opinions, or attitudes of others (Henslin, 2010) and leadership is considered a crucial dimension to institutional advancement, improvement, and change (Fleisch, 2004).

The participants openly acknowledged that advancement is not possible without sacrifices. These sacrifices include dealing with stressful issues such as budgets, managing projects, and people. The sustainability of an organization depends on the leadership's ability to

Table 2

Ranking of Workplace Environment (WE), Mentoring (M), and Professional Development (PD)

Most Important in Terms of Advancement for Your Position

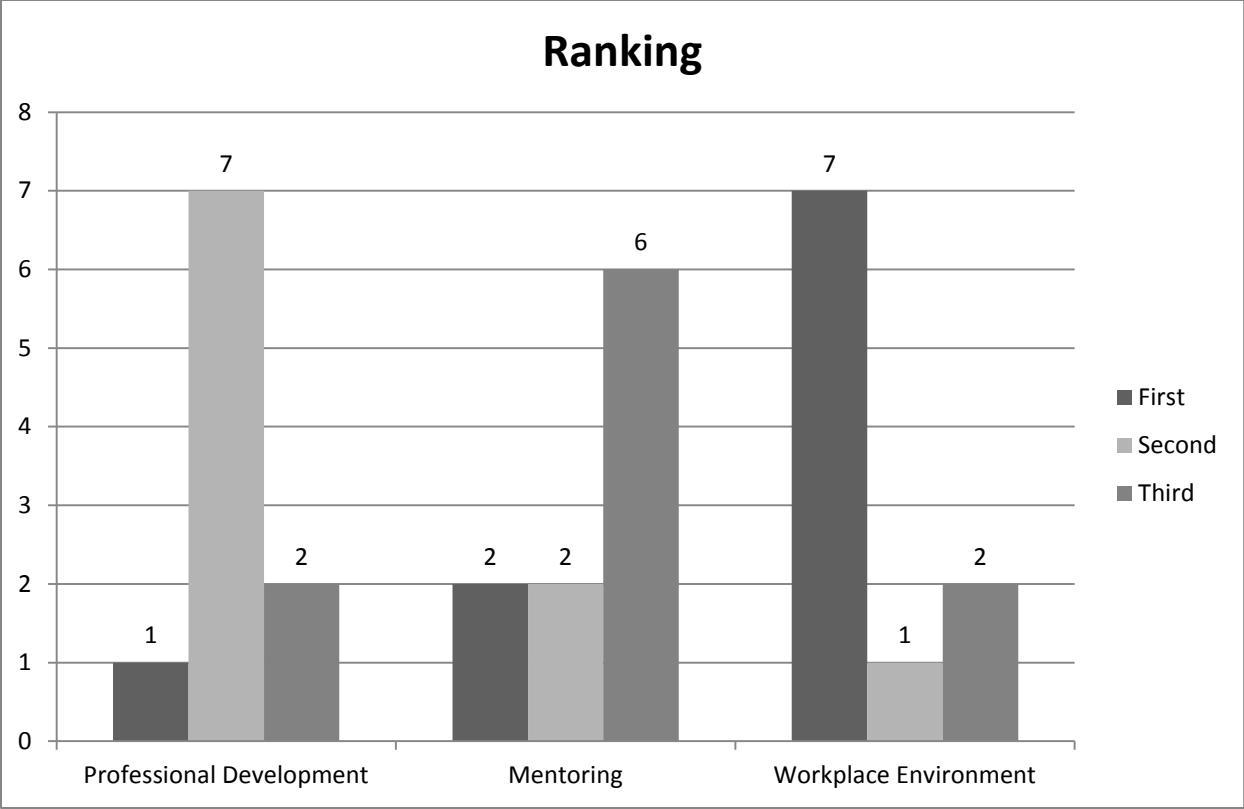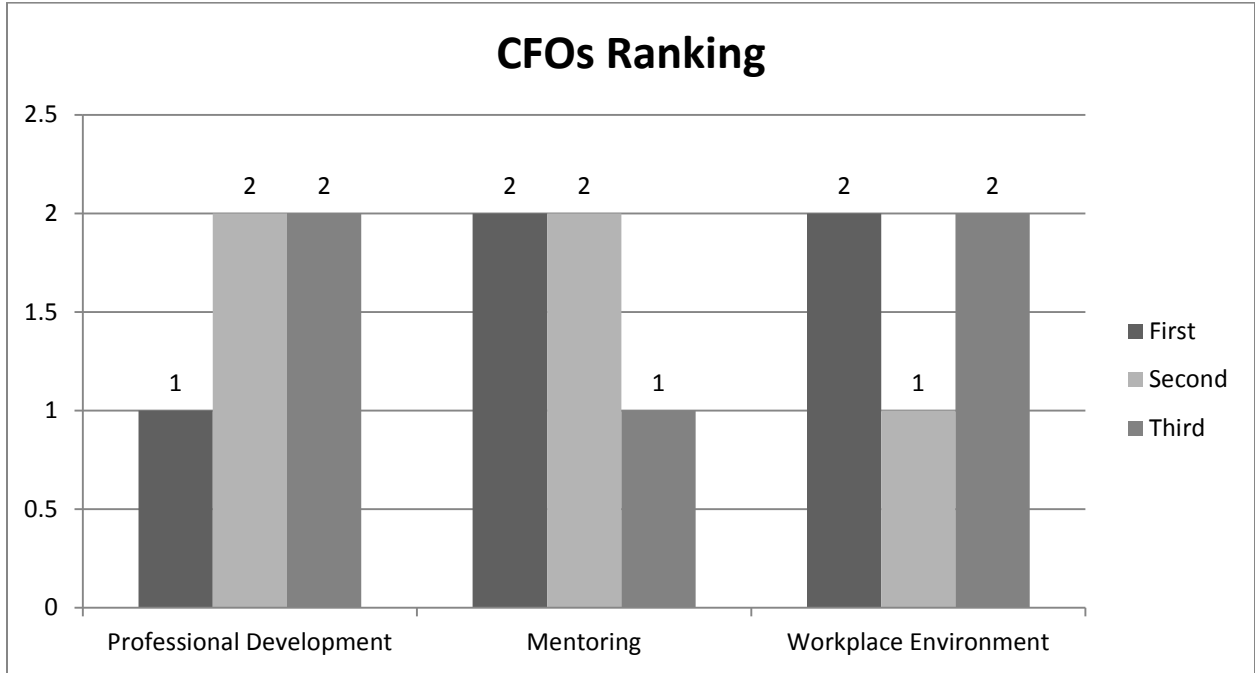|	First	Second	Third
Participant 001	PD	WE	M
Participant 002	WE	PD	M
Participant 003	WE	M	PD
Participant 004	WE	PD	M
Participant 005	WE	PD	M
Participant 006	WE	M	PD
Participant 007	WE	PD	M
Participant 008	M	PD	WE
Participant 009	M	PD	WE
Participant 010	WE	PD	M

Figure 2. Ranking.

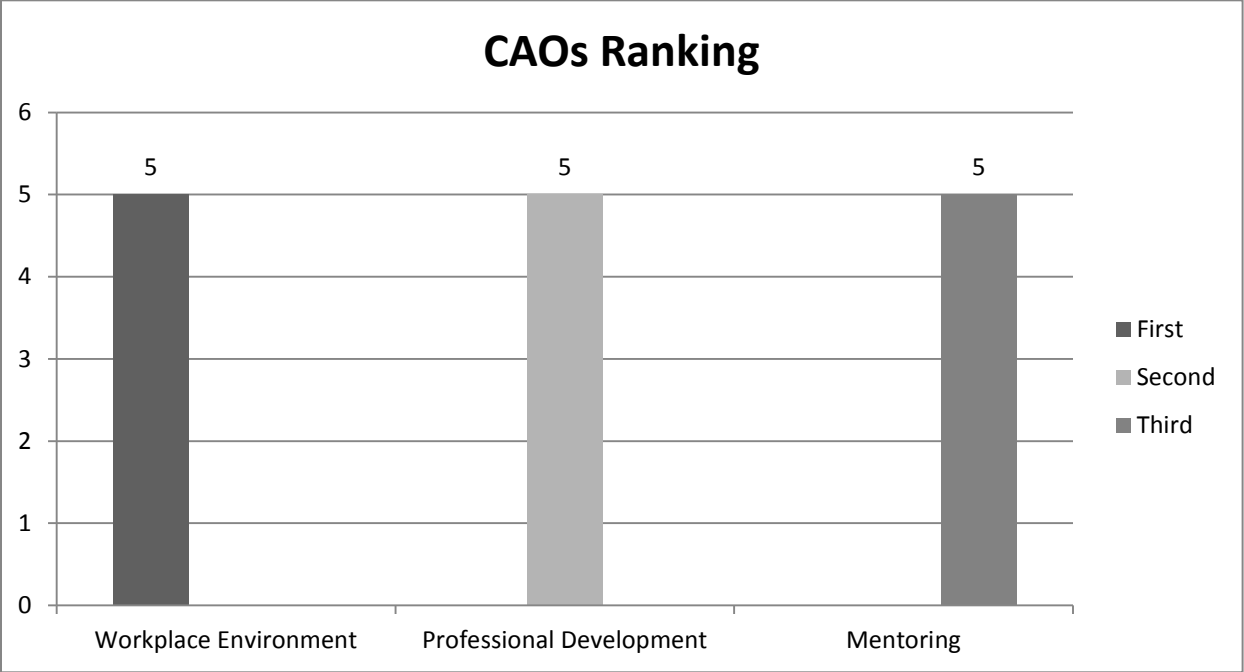*Figure 3*. CFOs **r**anking.

CAOs Ranking

Figure 4. CAOs ranking.

prepare, anticipate, and manage change (McConnell, 2006). Participants explained how the CFO and CAO positions offer new and different challenges each day. However, they did not always feel adequately prepared to manage some of those challenges.

Additionally, they noted how they, at times, need a supportive family. Sandberg (2013) explains how a supportive family and husband are considered critical factors in advancement for females. Participants explained numerous challenges associated with creating a good work/home balance. Also, participants continually mentioned their willingness to relocate but the sadness they felt when leaving some institutions. Furthermore, they expressed how relocating affected their families and the stress associated with findings daycare, schools, housing, and employment for their spouses.

Participants revealed information about establishing their worth within the institution along with the need to look and speak in a certain manner. Also, they strongly believed their previous work experience was notably important to their advancement but a mentor was not needed. In addition, they noted that other females have not always been supportive of their advancement efforts. Interviewees noted the pressure within their environment to pursue more educational degrees, to obtain their doctorate or other professional certifications, if they desired to advance or to simply appear as an equal. Notably, they valued certain resources such as NCCAO, NCACCB, or having a professional development officer employed at their institution. In terms of advancement, they viewed serving on community boards as an asset. The consensus among the participants was that gender did not affect their advancement or leadership opportunities.

When ranking the importance of workplace environment, mentoring, or professional development in terms of advancing into an executive leadership position. The findings revealed

workplace environment was valued the most, followed by professional development and lastly, mentoring. The answers to the research questions are significant and Table 3 illustrates how the themes and subthemes connect to the research questions. Therefore, various conclusions were drawn because of these participants sharing their experiences and will be discussed further in chapter five.

Table 3

Themes and Subthemes Connecting the Research Questions

Theme/Subthemes	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	Emerging outcomes
Changing Environment	X			
Flexibility	X			
Benefits	X			
Timing	X			
Leaders' Perception	X			
Advancement is not without scarifies	X		X	
Stressful	X			
Budget issues	X			
Managing projects	X		X	
Dealing with different personalities	X			
Need supportive families				X
Willing to move	X			

Table 3 (continued)

Theme/Subthemes	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	Emerging outcomes
Establish your worth	X		X	
Appearances				X
Work experience	X			
Mentorship		X		
Females are not always supportive	X	X		
Pressure to have degrees	X		X	
Valued Resources	X		X	
North Carolina Association of Community College Business Officials/North Carolina Chief Academic Officer's Association			X	
Professional Development Officer	X		X	X
Serving on community boards				X
Non-Barriers				X
Gender	X			X

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This phenomenological qualitative study investigated the perceptions of female CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS concerning the role of workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development. The data collected from the senior-level female administrators who participated in this study yielded several common themes. This chapter discusses these themes within the study's theoretical framework, provides a summary of the findings, and considers potential areas for future research on leadership contexts for female administrators in higher education.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on feminist theory and feminist standpoint theory. Feminist theory emerged during the twentieth century along with the women's rights movement, and collectively they led to a different method of understanding social institutions by directly placing gender and the changing roles of gender as the focus for analyzing attributes of society and organizations (Ferris & Stein, 2014).   Feminist standpoint theory is a method for reviewing and authenticating women's lived experiences; this method pays particular attention to the tensions and resistance that accompany these experiences as they evolve (Jaggar, 2004). The root of feminist standpoint theory is that females (as the repressed group) have different lives from males (the dominant group) and these differences play a role in shaping females' reality (Wood, 2005). These differences, frequently lead to gender inequality, which creates disproportional access and unequal participation in higher education (David, 2009).

Feminist theory was used to evaluate the results of this study and to assist with developing a better understanding of the evolving role of gender within social institutions. The

participants in this study divulged information about their changing roles as the culture around

them progressed. Systematically, the more experienced participants explained witnessing an

environmental transition for females, when females, in particular, advanced into the community

college presidential positions. This leadership transition resulted in a cultural changed

environment that is advantageous for females. Additionally, feminist standpoint theory

connected well with feminist theory to explore and explain the participants' positions, noting

dependence on the perception of leaders, mainly community college presidents, in controlling

their advancement. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

RQ1: In the perception of the leaders, how has the community college workplace

environment affected their advancement into senior-level administrative positions?

RQ2: In the perception of the leaders, how has the relationship of a mentor

(formal/informal) affected advancement into senior-level administrative positions?

RQ3: In the perception of the leaders, what role has professional development played in

their advancement into senior-level administrative positions?

RQ4: In the minds of the respondents, which of the three variables seemed the most and

least important?

Summary of Findings

The four research questions were answered using responses from five female CFOs and

five CAOs in the NCCCS. Five major themes emerged relating to the role of workplace

environment: changing environment, leaders' perception, advancement is not without sacrifices,

pressure to have degrees, and non-barriers (gender). There were 10 subthemes that emerged:

flexibility, benefits, stressful, budget issues, managing projects, dealing with different

personalities, need for supportive families, willing to move, establish your worth, and

appearances. Results indicated that the majority of the participants perceived the present day workplace environment as being favorable for female advancement. Most of the comments were supportive explaining how the workplace environment has dramatically changed for females and offers more opportunities. Liff and Ward (2001) suggest that female careers often evolve uniquely different from the organizational career experience of their male colleagues. Clarke (2010) explains that advancing and being successful in the workplace is often associated with career motivation and directly related to personal choices (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). This study showed that in the perception of current leaders, it was important to take advantage of changing the environment and seize opportunities for advancement.

Participants with more years of service were able to elaborate on these changes specifically by identifying how the perceptions of leaders, particularly college presidents, have shifted through the years. Feminist standpoint theory analyzes the lived experiences of females to develop an understanding of how power is exercised within organizations and females' capacity to change their power structures (Harding, 2004). This study illustrated through the perception of the leaders, the North Carolina community college environment has been able to evolve through individuals retiring, being promoted, or developing a renewed sense of openness within the institution, all of which have enabled females to advance. It is important to note that the participants identified the role of the president as critical for change and the potential for advancement within the institution; feminists focus on gender and power relationships, highlighting the constructions that exist due to the gendered environment (Jocoy, 2002). Within the institution, as revealed by the participants, the president directly controlled the opportunity of those within the organization. Feminist standpoint assists with uncovering essential relationships that may erect barriers for females seeking advancement, by noting, in particular the perception

of leaders in the organization because of their power and control within the system (Collins, 2004). The study's participants were unanimous in their perception that gender did not impede their advancement. However, this was inconsistent with many participants' that demonstrated barriers within organizations. Participants revealed experiencing difficulty advancing when the perception of the president was not positive towards females advancing professionally. In such situations participants reported seeking advancement opportunities at other institutions within the NCCCS that were more favorable for females to advance. If the participants were not willing to relocate, then advancement may not have been possible. Additionally, a lack of respect from male colleagues, directly relating to their gender, was noted. Nonetheless, participants still did not acknowledge their gender as an issue within the workplace environment. Even though the community college climate is described as favorable for females to advance, it is questionable if the workplace environment promotes equity (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Although the participants in this study did not acknowledge gender as a barrier to their professional advancement, their perceptions may be attributed to the fact that they had achieved a high level of professional advancement. As a result, they had become so integrated into their institutions' cultures that they may no longer perceive the gender inequalities in their institutions.

As these dynamics change and opportunities for females become available, those seeking advancement will need to actively pursue these openings. In an effort to be proactive and purse advancement opportunities, participants explained setting goals, seeking additional education, and working diligently to move forward. As opinions about females began to change within the system, Eddy (2009) attributes these new opportunities to females becoming more accepted in college leadership roles and positions of responsibility throughout the college environment. Consequently, females are attempting to transition into leadership positions due in part to new

100

opportunities, benefits, and flexible work schedules. The participants explained that these advancement opportunities were not without challenges and struggles, such as budget, managing, and personnel issues. For example, the participants clearly indicated how their positions have become increasing stressful due to budget changes. The problem often came from the fact that some participants were not adequately prepared to calculate FTE and manage campus-wide projects. Therefore, the results of the study support Keim and Murray (2008) and Riggs (2009) in their descriptions of these essential components for senior-level executive administrative positions. Data collected supported O'Banion's (2007) argument that some programs are inadequate for preparing individuals for leadership roles and that universities need to design programs to prepare individuals for community college administrative leadership.

Data collected from this study supports Wolf-Wendel and Ward's (2006) argument that as a growing number of females obtain positions in academia, institutions will need to develop a better understanding of issues related to women who have young children. The participants constantly noted the flexibility of their work schedules and how this assisted with meeting their family needs. As the participants transition into leadership positions, feminist theory illustrates the changing roles of gender in society and how females can be affected. The varying roles of females in society resulted in participants seeking the NCCCS for leadership opportunities due to the benefits, such as earning leave time and sick days. These benefits assisted them with reducing role conflict between work and home.

Transitioning to executive leadership positions, whether CFO or CAO, has resulted in some challenges for this study's participants. Ropers-Huilman (2008) explains how women face unique dilemmas in negotiating their multiple roles while adjusting to various identities, which impede their role expectations within the organization. The participants openly revealed the

strain they feel between balancing their work/home lives. Data collected supported Eagly and

Carli's (2007) argument that balancing the demands of family and the workplace environment is

crucial for females seeking leadership roles. Participants explained that having supportive

families, notably spouses, enabled them to focus on their careers and seek advancement.

Developing a sense of equilibrium between the roles of mother, wife, community college

executive, community board member, school board member, and others are possible due to

having supportive families. Slan-Jersulim and Chen (2009) explain how women are expected to

be the caretakers of their families and that they feel it is their responsibility. Researchers

Wolfinger, Mason, and Goulden (2009) note that, "Women are more successful in obtaining

academic careers if they delay or forsake marriage and children" (p. 401), data collected from

this study conclude that females with both children and spouses were able to advance. In fact,

these female executives credited their spouses with supporting them, which often entailed the

spouse adjusting his career, invoking premature retirement, or moving, all while also assuming

an increasing amount of the home responsibilities.

Rois (2012) argues that in the community college environment, one is more likely to find

males in positions of power and females in less lucrative, more subordinate roles, which

ultimately leads to the marginalization of women within the organization and an atmosphere of

resistance to advancement. However, data collected from this study do not support this

argument. There are 58 community colleges in the NCCCS with 28 female CFOs and 28 female

CAOs, constituting 48% of the CFO and CAO positions. These statistics demonstrate

considerable social change in NCCCS environment. The changing environment within the

NCCCS has resulted in women becoming more visible in positions of power. Because females

are moving into these leadership roles, barriers will begin to diminish (Eagly & Carli, 2007)

creating an environment that offers equality in advancement opportunities. Females have

ascended into leadership positions in higher education and now lead five of the eight Ivy League

institutions: Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, and University of Pennsylvania (Cook,

2012).   Also, nationally, females hold 49% of chief diversity officers, 41% of chief academic

officers, 72% of chief of staff, 28% of deans of academic colleges, and 36% of executive vice

presidents (ACE, 2013), but the percentage of female college and university presidents has only

risen to 26% (Benokraitis, 2014).

     Inquiry into the role of mentors yielded one main theme, work experience, and three

subthemes: mentorship, timing, and the perception that females are not always supportive.

According to Dean (2009), mentoring is essential to women's success in corporate careers and in

higher education; scholars consider mentoring a decided and possibly critical career advantage.

Similarly, Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) explain that without mentors, females are not as

successful in obtaining leadership positions in the higher educational environment. However,

data collected from the majority of the participants indicated that mentors were not needed to

advance into leadership positions in the NCCCS. However, it is important to note that a

consensus emerged from the CAOs in that mentors were perceived as the least important in

terms of their advancement; whereas, CFOs had varying opinions about the importance of

mentors. Conversely, several participants described their work experiences from previous

organizations, educational institutions, and community leadership roles as vital preparation for

them obtaining their current positions. Equally important, according to the participants, was just

being positioned correctly for the promotion; several participants attributed their advancement to

being in the right place at the right time. Sandberg (2013) explains the importance of experience

gained in the workplace and how these learned skills can be used to prepare females for

advancement. She concludes that embracing "stretch assignments" (Sandberg, 2013, p. 62) along with seeking diverse experiences, whether internally or externally, are useful in preparing for leadership roles within the organization.

Participants also revealed that while seeking their positions of leadership, other females were not always supportive. Females often view other females as competition. Instead of bonding together, some women will undermine and sabotage other females seeking upward mobility (Sandberg, 2013). According to Sandberg (2013), "it makes no sense for women to feel that we are competing against one another anymore" (p. 163), but participants revealed some still do. Participants explained seeking out individuals that support and encourage them. Females can benefit from relationships with other females. They may gain needed information about the workplace environment, social support, or role modeling (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Participant 010 described surrounding herself with "greatness," because the workplace offers so many opportunities to learn, whether accidently, incidentally, or due to affiliation.

Questions relating to determining the role of professional development revealed two major themes: pressure to have terminal degrees and their perception of valued resources. Three subthemes emerged from the perception of the leaders: their participant in the North Carolina Association of Community College Business Officials/North Carolina Chief Academic Officers' Association, having professional development officer, and serving on community boards. Evidence from this study suggests that females felt pressured to obtain additional educational credentials due to a high degree of scrutiny and wanting to be viewed respectfully. According to Sullivan (2009), female executives are described as high achievers who place pressure on themselves to perform and serve as role models for others. In some cases, the participants noted understanding that in order to advance, more formal educational requirements were expected.

Yet, others revealed a sense of feeling inadequate and desiring to appear as an equal within their environment. This supports the argument advanced by Tomas et al. (2010) that many women often feel as though they are not united with the normative of the university. Consequently, some females do not feel connected with the power structure and value associated with the culture.

Feminist standpoint theory discloses how the oppressed group has a different view or perspective of the culture as opposed to those in power or the ruling class because the ruling class is considered to be too close to the situation (Scholz, 2011). The collected data supported this argument. Participants revealed a felt need to often dress professionally and prove their worth to the institution. In order to meet the cultural and social expectations of leadership roles within organizations, females often feel as though they must perform at a higher level than their male colleagues to establish an equal level of legitimacy and acceptance (Dean, 2009; Sullivan, 2009; Wood, 2009).

Once in leadership positions, the participants reported relying heavily on the North Carolina Association of Community College Business Officials and the North Carolina Chief Academic Officers' Association to assist them with addressing budget and curriculum issues that arise. Data collected supported Piland and Wolf's (2003) explanation about community college leaders: "The leaders we need – in terms of quality and quantity – will result only when the institutions themselves make leadership development a high priority, invest in appropriate programming, and work cooperatively with other suppliers" (p. 94). The collected data reveal that a small number of community colleges have employed a professional development officer to assist with providing campus-wide activities, such as job related training, leadership institutions, new technology training, and distance learning classes.

Due to multiple retirements in higher education, there is a growing need to prepare females for assuming senior-level administrative positions (White, 2012). However, it is important to note the absence of comments relating to the NCCCS preparing leaders for future advancement. Community colleges are facing changing and challenging environments directly related to the large number of retiring faculty and administrators (O'Banion, 2007). The NCCCS offers workshops, conferences, and lectures in an effort to assist CFOs and CAOs with daily task only after they have obtained these leadership positions. There was no evidence of professional development opportunities being offered to assist with filling the potential leadership gap that is forthcoming.

Leadership development programs remain a critical component for females to effectively prepare for advancement in higher education institutions (Madsen, 2012). Professional development for community college leaders transpires in an assortment of settings (Eddy, 2013) and is needed at varying levels within the institution (Madsen, 2012). Therefore, administrators can utilize the professional development officer as an opportunity to prepare future leaders. It is important to note that, in regards to progression, the participants did not reveal being involved in an organization that was critical to their advancement, but did value serving on various community boards. Additionally, participants with their PhD, EdD, or CPA described these additional educational degrees and professional certifications as their most important professional development.

Participants were given an opportunity to rank the components being studied: workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development. Amey (2004) describes the community college culture as male oriented in terms of leadership styles, working relationships, and expectations. Eddy and Cox (2008) describe community colleges as gendered organizations in

106

which the hierarchy and positional power remains with the male population. Furthermore, Sullivan (2009) argues that females in academia have often been "denied opportunities to learn leadership competencies on the job" (p. 104). However, participants ranked the workplace environment as the most important element in terms of advancing into an executive senior-level leadership position, followed by professional development, and then mentoring as the least important. It is important to note how unanimously the CAOs ranked these components. Yet, the CFOs had varying opinions with two participants ranking workplace environment, two ranking mentoring and one ranking professional development as the most important component for advancement.

Females no longer face immovable barriers while seeking access into upper-level positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Evidence from this study notes who the changing workplace environment has resulted in cultural shifts opening pathways for female leadership. Although feminist theory places gender at the center of the analysis and suggests that gender is a "primary organizing characteristic in society" (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 668), participants did not view gender as affecting their advancement or opportunities.   Lester (2009) identifies how gender issues often go overlooked and devalued in community colleges. He concludes that research was needed in community colleges to develop an understanding of the perception females have about the workplace environment and if gender inhibited their advancement. Data collected in this study revealed that gender did not impede the participants' progression but barriers were erected, by individuals in the presidential positons and male colleagues; however the participants did not view their gender as the actual issue.

The participants in this study repeatedly noted remarkable changes in the workplace environment resulting in new opinions about leadership along with advancement opportunities

for females. These innovative developing viewpoints have expanded the multidimensional perspectives of leadership (Eddy, 2009).   Thus, challenging the engrained perspectives of leadership and creating a degree of gender authenticity.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The purpose of this study was to examine females serving at the senior-level CFO and CAO administrative positions in the NCCCS in order to develop an understanding of how the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development have affected their advancement.   Additional research is needed to continue examining feminist standpoint theory in the NCCCS and other systems across the nation. Wood (2005) suggests that females have different lived experiences from males and these experiences play a significant role in shaping their realities. Therefore, a comparative study may provide insight into male/female CFOs and CAOs leaders with similar years of service to determine if the same themes evolve.   In addition, Eddy and Cox (2008) describe community colleges as gendered organizations in which the hierarchy and positional power remain with the male population.   This study could be expanded to evaluate the power based on the perception of females CFO and CAO positions compared to their male colleagues.

Hagedorn (2002) contends that the cultural climate or environment for women is better at two-year colleges in comparison to four-year institutions. To examine this concept, a replication of this study could be conducted with female senior level administrators serving in four-year institutions to identify themes that emerged and ultimately comparing those results to the conclusions drawn from this study.

This study could also be replicated within a different level of management in the NCCCS or another state system. This study focused on executive senior level females. However,

additional research could focus on structurally lower level positions within the community college, such as female deans and/or department chairs. Typically within the community college system, leaders advance from the role of faculty member to department chair, dean, and then to a senior-level leadership position (Drake, 2008). Since these levels of management have different roles and responsibilities at the college, research could identify different themes.

The third wave of feminist theory focuses on diversity and argues that any system needs diversity (Ferris & Stein, 2014). Any system that separates itself from diversity in the environment tends to weaken and lose its complexity and distinguishing nature (Morgan, 2006). This study could also be replicated using females with different backgrounds and ethnicity. Females with a different ethnicity and background might have a different perception of the environment. Such a study could, therefore, yield different results.

Summary

Leadership within higher education exists not only at the presidential position but at various levels throughout the institution (Ummersen, 2009). Vaccaro (2011) explains how women with different roles face completely unique and different struggles. Previous research by Dean (2009) and Eagly (2007) explains higher education institutions as maintaining a male-dominated culture in which females remain underrepresented in academic leadership. Females are now playing a vital role in community colleges as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and presidents (Drake, 2008). The purpose of this study was to examine females serving at the senior-level CFO and CAO administrative positions in the NCCCS in order to develop an understanding of how the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development have affected their advancement.

Feminist theory places gender at the focus of our study (Roper-Huilman & Winters, 2011 and feminist standpoint theory reviews and authenticates female's lived experiences by exposing the tensions and resistance in which they evolve (Jaggar, 2004). Feminist standpoint theory analyzes how females (as the repressed group) have different experiences from males (the dominant group) and these differences shape their reality (Wood, 2005). The research participants were five female CFOs and five CAOs in the NCCCS with more than two years of experience serving in their present position. These participants shared their "lived experiences" about the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development.

The glass ceiling has been broken and shattered numerous times and it "no longer makes sense to use this metaphor to portray the barriers that women encounter in the workplace" (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 183). From feminist standpoint theory, the results of this study illustrate that females have advanced within the workplace environment. However, their advancement, at times, was impeded by male presidents who were not in favor of females advancing into leadership roles within the institution. However, participants produced compelling evidence that the workplace has changed for female leaders; thus reducing impediments that once existed. It is important to note that there is an increasing number of male administrators supporting and welcoming change for females within the institution.

Notably, from the perception of participant's, the workplace environment is the most important component when seeking advancement. According to Henslin (2013), when hiring individuals, leaders look for people with similar characteristics as themselves. Therefore, as more females advance into leadership roles other females seeking employment in academia may potentially have an advantage in the workplace. This could prove to be a critical component for females seeking employment and advancement in academia.

From the perspective of the leaders in this study, mentors were not needed for their advancement. Notably, they revealed the value of work experience. In addition, the data revealed that participants placed more significance on educational degrees than actually participating in professional development programs. Moreover, as females take advantage of new opportunities in academia the dynamics of the organization will evolve, due to the various experiences and perceptions which arise from a diverse environment (Benokraitis, 2013). The third wave of feminism has emerged noting the importance of diversity (Henslin, 2013). Consequently, institutions may benefit from diversity in leadership along with embracing multidimensional differences that facilitate advancement for equality. Female leaders will continue to develop, grow, and change their organizations and assisting in removing barriers for others seeking leadership roles.

Conclusion

Results of this study concluded that the workplace environment has changed and now offers more opportunities for females seeking advancement. This study's findings suggest that the workplace environment is the most critical component in terms of advancement for female CFOs and CAOs in the NCCCS. The experiences gained in the workplace are valuable resources. Therefore, females seeking upward mobility should take advantage of every opportunity or new challenge at their institution. Since serving on community organizational boards was correlated with advancement and promotion opportunities, females should also pursue these opportunities.

Professional development was ranked second by the female CFOs and CAOs. The study revealed that educational and job requirements are changing for these positions. Accordingly, the pressure to obtain advanced degrees coupled by the significance and respect once acquired,

111

prompted participants to obtain such credentials. These additional degrees were described as the most significant component of their professional development and beneficial for upper mobility.

Finally, the evidence revealed mentoring was less important and not a necessity for advancement; this study's participants ranked mentoring as the least important element for their advancing into an executive senior-level position. For the participants in this study, advancement was largely based on a willingness to relocate, work experience, and educational attainment. The results of this study yielded three main areas of weakness identified by the participants, which included: budget issues, managing projects, and dealing with different personalities. Therefore, the NCCCS, universities, professional development officers, and others responsible for planning, creating, and implementing professional development activities now have an opportunity to be responsive and proactive. By utilizing the experiences of those currently serving this these roles, program leaders are able to conceptualize a program designed around adequately preparing leaders with these skills.

Due to the changing environment within the community college system, gender did not affect advancement opportunities for these females. In the past, leaders' perceptions of females in leadership positions played a role in advancement. However, the changing workplace environment has opened the doors for more females to enter into executive senior-level positions.

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APPENDIX A: EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · **www.ecu.edu/irb**

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB

To: Angelia Adams

CC:
          Cheryl McFadden

Date: 3/31/2014

Re: UMCIRB 14-000334
          FEMALE CFOs AND CAOs IN THE NCCCS

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 3/29/2014 to 3/28/2015. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Adams.consent form	Consent Forms
Adams.Dissertation	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Adams.Interviewdata	Data Collection Sheet
Dissertation Interview Questions	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Telephone recruitment script	Recruitment Documents/Scripts

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONSENT FORM

NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
CREATING SUCCESS

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
R. Scott Ralls, Ph.D.
President

March 5, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

The North Carolina Community College System Office does not object to Angelia G. Adams contacting female Chief Financial Officers (CFO) and Chief Academic Officers (CAO) to participate in a study. The purpose of this study is to examine females serving at the senior-level CFO and CAO administrative positions in the NCCCS in order to develop an understanding of how the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development have affected their advancement.

The data will be collected from women currently serving in these positions within the NCCCS. The knowledge obtained from this study will offer information to females achieving this status as well as others seeking these roles.

Signature: _____ 3/5/14

East Carolina University

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT, MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FEMALE CFOs AND CAOs IN THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Principal Investigator: Angie Adams
Institution/Department or Division: East Carolina University/Higher, Adult & Counselor Education, Department of (Higher Education Administration)
Address:P. O. Box 605 Lilesville, NC
Telephone #: 910-410-1857

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study problems in society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. Our goal is to try to find ways to improve the lives of you and others. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why is this research being done?
The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn how the workplace environment, mentoring and professional development have affected the advancement of female Chief Financial Officers and Chief Academic Officers in the North Carolina community college system.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?
You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a female Chief Financial Officer or Chief Academic Officer in the North Carolina community college system with more than two years of experience.
If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about 10 - 15 people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?
I understand I should not volunteer for this study if I have less than two years' experience.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?
You can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?
The research procedures will be conducted at your community college. I will travel to your institution for your interview. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is one to two hours over the next three months.

What will I be asked to do?
You are being asked to do the following:

- Answer interview questions where you define your feelings and experiences with the workplace environment, mentoring, and professional development while advancing into your present position.
- The interview will be recorded. All data collected in this study is private. Your name and institution of employment are not linked to data. Only the researchers in this study will see the data.
- You can choose <u>not</u> to answer any question that you feel uneasy about answering.

What possible harms or discomforts might I experience if I take part in the research?
It has been determined that the risks associated with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life.

What are the possible benefits I may experience from taking part in this research?
We do not know if you will get any benefits by taking part in this study. This research might help us learn more about females advancing into the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Academic Officer positions. There may be no personal benefit from your participation but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?
We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

What will it cost me to take part in this research?
 It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?
To do this research, ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Angie Adams, researcher; Dr. Cheryl McFadden, Dissertation Chair; Dr. Maria Clay, Methodologist.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff, who have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research, and other ECU staff who oversee this research.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?
That data collected from this study will be secured in a locked cabinet where the researcher is the only person with access. The audio-recordings, transcriptions, and coding process will be stored for three years and will not be used for any other purposes than this research.

What if I decide I do not want to continue in this research?
If you decide you no longer want to be in this research after it has already started, you may stop at any time. You will not be penalized or criticized for stopping. You will not lose any benefits that you should normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?
The people conducting this study will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at 910-410-1857 (Monday- Thursday, between 8:00am -4:00pm)

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office for Human Research Integrity (OHRI) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director of the OHRI, at 252-744-1971.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?
The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

_____   _____
Participant's Name (PRINT)   **Signature**   **Date**

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

_____
Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)   **Signature**   **Date**

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Protocol Questions

Interview Questions

1. Please provide:
   - Your name
   - The name of your institution?
   - Your current position?
   - The year you were born?
   - What race do you consider yourself to be?
   - The number of years you have served in your present position
2. Describe, from your perception, the workplace environment for females in the NCCCS?
3. In your perception, how has the organizational environment and your gender affected your advancement? Can you give an example?

   Follow-up Question (if not explained):
   a) If the participant has changed institutions:

   According to your resume, you have changed institutions from_____ to _____ (and so forth if necessary), could you please compare the workplace environment for females related to advancement.
   b) If the participant has remained and advanced:

   Could you please explain how you were able to remain within the same institution and advance?
   c) If the resume was not made available, where you able to advance and remain within your college?

Then go to either question A or B.

4. What is your perception of a mentor?
5. From your perception, was a mentor needed to assist you with advancement? *If not, move to the next question.*

Follow-up Questions (if not explained):
   a. How was the mentor selected?
   b. What role did your mentor play in your achievements?

6. From your perception, how would you describe your professional development experiences?

Follow-up Questions (if not explained):
   a. Where the majority in-house or attended at external organizations?
   b. Where you involved in any organizations that assisted you with advancement? If so, please explain.
   c. Has your professional development experiences prepared you for your present position?
   d. What professional development have you benefited from the most?
   e. What professional development opportunities were lacking as you progressed through your career?

7. In your experience and perception, which phenomena (workplace environment, mentoring, or professional development) would say was the most important to your advancement? Please explain why?