THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE PRESIDENTS OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN GEORGIA

By

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(Under the Direction of Clifton Smith)

ABSTRACT

An employment disparity between men and women in top management positions is evident on college campuses in the United States. Although the number of female college Presidents has grown significantly since the 1990ʺs, the numbers are still not representative of the numbers of women in the regular workforce (56% in 2002; U.S. Department of Labor, BLS). Women hold about 29% of the presidencies in community colleges nationwide. Yet, they make up 31% of the Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia. Little research has been published on the development of existing Presidents and "even less on the development of women leaders in academia" (Madsen, 2007).

This study focused on the career experiences of female Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia including positive and negative influences on their career development. A basic qualitative research design was used to gather and analyze data. Data were collected mainly through semi-structured interviews. Inductive analysis using constant comparisons of data elements (statements, phrases, and passages) resulted in the discovery of themes from which conclusions were drawn.

It was found that the participants‟ formative experiences, key developmental factors, personal factors, and socialization factors all had an influence on their career development. Early in their careers most of the women in this study chose traditionally female-oriented occupations to pursue. Most of them studied an educational curriculum in college or got a teaching certificate upon graduating. All but one have doctoral degrees. When first arriving at the technical college level, they did not have a goal to be the President. They all took increasingly more complex positions in the college building confidence as they climbed the ladder to the presidency.

The rich description of the findings and the concluding discussion will assist women who aspire to be Presidents of two-year colleges as to the cultural and social factors that influence women‟s career development. It will also provide career nurturing information to college systems that foster leadership development of both women and men. The results of this study will be invaluable to the developers of those programs as most programs have been male-oriented, male-dominated, and led by males.

INDEX WORDS: Career development, Community college Presidents, Female college Presidents, Women‟s career development, Career pathways, Gendered leadership.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my best friend, Pat Lehn. For her patience as I studied and wrote during the past four years, I thank her. This is not just a professional accomplishment for me; it is a personal accomplishment as I have always strived to be better. Pat encouraged me to do this all along the way, even when I felt overwhelmed and depressed. With her support, I completed something I would have never thought I could alone.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since World War II, women have made up an ever-increasing portion of the workforce. Their skills have been praised from the factory floor to the office; however, not as many women as men have had the good fortune to provide leadership. Women‟s career development is very different from men‟s career development (Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998). Women are socialized differently from men with respect to career development. Joan Gallos (1989) stated, "Women construct their conceptions of themselves, their lives, and the world around them differently from men" (p. 110). Gender socialization does impact career development leading women to limit career choices (Schreiber, 1998).

Women have made strides into the male-dominated leadership positions of corporate America, but still manage to hit the proverbial glass ceiling. In 2008, *Catalyst Census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners of the Fortune 500* found that 15.7% of corporate officer positions at Fortune 500 companies were held by women, up from 15.2% in 2007. Women held 6.2% of top earner positions down from 6.7% in 2007. The number of companies with no women corporate officers increased from 74 in 2007 to 75 in 2008 (Catalyst, 2009).

In higher education the numbers of women in the top leadership position are higher than corporate America; however, they are still low compared to males in similar positions. According to the American Council on Education‟s 2007 report, women occupied 23% of presidencies of all colleges and universities in 2006 (Valdata et al., 2008). In 2008, women held approximately 29% of the presidencies in community colleges in the United States (Eddy & Cox,

2008). In Georgia, women make up 31% of all Presidents of two-year colleges (as confirmed by the websites of the governing bodies of the college systems in September, 2009). Within Georgia‟s technical colleges in 1994, there was only one female President in the 33-college system. Although these numbers have grown since the 1990s, they are still neither representative of the percentage of women in the workforce, which in 2002 was 56%, (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009) nor representative of the percentage of female students on the community college campus which is 58% (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009).

One resounding question is why so few women are in the top leadership positions in community colleges? One of the possible answers is the differences in their career development, its uniqueness and complexity. By studying critical development factors influencing the career decisions that these women make can, perhaps, increase the number of women Presidents. Studying women‟s career development, can lead to understanding how women are socialized. The next section describes gender socialization and its effects on career development.

Women's Socialization

Historically gender socialization has been studied by examining women‟s social, political, and economic disadvantages. Townsend (1995) in the introduction to *Gender and Power in the Community College* noted that gender is socially constructed and that gender socialization tends to stereotype women in ways that disadvantage them "because certain characteristics seen as feminine are viewed as less desirable than characteristics commonly viewed as masculine" (p. 2).

The social role of primary caregiver that women have been expected to fulfill is detrimental to (and often times means sacrificing) their careers. Research has also shown that marriage and parenthood, and a woman‟s career success are negatively related and that

interference from family with work is greater for women than for men (Schreiber, 1998). For men a family represents stability, but for women it is often a career liability.

All through her life‟s development, “a woman will encounter a multitude of issues related to sex role stereotyping, sex discrimination, and multiple role expectations that will significantly affect her [career] choice” (Schreiber, 1998, p. 6). Society‟s assumption that the woman who works a paying job is still responsible primarily for the maintenance of the home and the family creates “serious career obstacles in the form of overload, stress, and role conflict” (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995, p. 73) for women.

Women‟s career development experiences are unique because of the many roles women are expected to play, balancing work and family (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Traditional career development models do not account for women‟s gender socialization, their limited exposure to role models and mentors, and their efforts to balance demands of family and career (Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998).

Women's Career Development

The study of women‟s career development is fairly new. It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that serious research on women‟s career development began. Traditional career development theories were developed using white, able-bodied, publicly heterosexual, and ethnically homogenous men as the target group (Coogan & Chen, 2007). Research was conducted by males and concentrated on males, on traditional male careers and on traditional career pathways. Therefore, when studying the career choices, career decisions, and career paths of individuals in order to develop theories about career development, the research reflected the thoughts and feelings of a male majority.

Although the study of gender differences in career behavior was limited in seminal career development theories, Cook, Heppner, and O‟Brien (2002)

> suggested that current career development concepts continue to reflect male worldviews. These basic assumptions include a separation of work and family roles in people‟s lives; a reverence for individualism and autonomy; the centrality of work in people‟s lives; a linear, progressive, and rational nature of the career development process; and the structure of the opportunity. (Whitmarsh et al., 2007, p.225)

Predictable career paths for women have not been as linear as most men‟s have. They have interruptions in their work histories due to child rearing and other family role issues. Whitmarsh et al. (2007) suggest that organizations have equated a woman‟s temporary break in employment with low commitment to her career.

There are other issues with career choice in women‟s career development. Gottfredson‟s circumscription/compromise theory (1981), for example, says that young children choose occupations based on their gender. These are serious restrictions to be imposed on women based on gender stereotyping. Also, women have often compromised their career choices, choosing the traditional occupations over nontraditional ones, basically downscaling their aspirations (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Women historically have tended to choose gender appropriate careers such as teacher, nurse, or social worker.

O‟Neil, Bilimoria, and Saatcioglu (2003) investigated two important career constructs with regard to women‟s career development; career locus and career patterns. Locus of control can be external (linked to concepts of passivity and dependence) or internal (linked to concepts of planning, persistence, and problem solving). More women tend to attribute their accomplishments to external factors, to luck or being in the right place at the right time (O‟Neil, Bilimoria, & Saatcioglu, 2003).

A woman‟s second career construct in her career pattern is the path of work-related experiences engaged in over a lifetime. O‟Neil, Bilimoria, and Saatcioglu (2003) characterize a woman‟s career pattern as anchored by two poles, ordered and emergent. The ordered pattern is linear, sequential and ladder-like; and the "emergent pattern is reflective of unexpected twists and turns, serendipitous events, interruptions for non-career activities and designed to accommodate other aspects of one‟s life than traditional work" (p.2).

Researchers agree that a career development model for women that describes women‟s career development experiences currently does not exist; and they understand and recognize the need for a comprehensive theory that integrates multiple roles, sex role socialization, career choice, career experiences, and learning to describe women‟s career behavior (Bierema, 1998; Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996; Schreiber, 1998).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the Social Learning Theory and Social Cognitive Theory of Albert Bandura (1977; 1986) in which he explained the triadic reciprocal model of causality. Personal attributes (such as internal cognitive and affective states), external environmental factors and overt behavior each operate as interactive sets of variables that mutually influence each other (Bandura, 1986). Three important variables that are linked to personal attributes in the triadic model are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Bandura, 1977; 1986).

The first variable in the triadic model is self-efficacy, which is the belief in one‟s self that she is capable of performing the action required to be successful. Self-efficacy is acquired or modified through four primary informational sources: (a) personal accomplishment, (b) vicarious learning, (c) social persuasion, and (d) physiological states and reactions (Lent & Brown, 1996). Personal accomplishments exert the greatest influence on self-efficacy.

The second variable in the triadic model is outcome expectations, which refers to the consequences or outcomes of performing particular behaviors (Lent & Brown, 1996). Bandura held that behavior is affected by both personal capabilities (self-efficacy) and beliefs about the effects of various actions (outcome expectations). But he thought that self-efficacy was more influential in determining behavior, noting that there are many instances in which people hold positive outcome expectations about a given course of action, but avoid such action if they doubt that they possess the capabilities (Lent & Brown, 1996).

In addressing the third variable in the triadic model, Lent and Brown (1996) define personal goals as one"s intention to engage in a certain activity or to produce a particular outcome. By setting personal goals, people organize, guide, and sustain their own efforts, giving themselves personal agency (an individual"s capacity for self-direction) (Lent & Brown, 1996). Goals people set for themselves are affected by their self-efficacy and outcome expectations. For example, positive beliefs about one"s artistic capabilities and about the outcomes of artistic pursuits are likely to nurture personal goals (such as the intention to pursue training or a career in the arts) that are consistent with such beliefs (Lent & Brown, 1996).

Hackett and Betz (1981) first applied Bandura"s theory of social learning to women"s career development in the 1980s in their self-efficacy approach. They proposed that gender socialization influenced cognitive processes (particularly, expectations of personal efficacy), which in turn influences career decision-making and adjustment. They found that low self-efficacy resulted in traditionally female dominated vocational choices among women (Hackett & Betz, 1981).

Bandura (1977; 1986) and Hackett & Betz (1981) all influenced the Social Cognitive Career Theory of Lent & Brown (1996). It is a social cognitive framework for understanding

career interest, choice, and performance processes. The framework features the three main variables (self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals) and their effect on career and academic interests, choices and performances.

As this framework is applied to women, contextual factors (such as sex role stereotyping and discrimination) affecting the three variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals must be researched. The relationship of these contextual factors to the reciprocal model of causality generates obvious questions concerning a woman‟s career development, the principles of which are integrated into the discussions with the female Presidents in this study. Did any of the female Presidents experience stereotyping behaviors of others in their careers? Were they discriminated against due to their gender in their careers? Did they experience barriers to fulfilling their career goals due to their gender? How did this affect their self-efficacy; their outcome expectations; their career and personal goals? These and other questions revolving around the three variables will guide the interviews with the female two-year college Presidents.

Researchers have found that women who achieve executive positions in educational institutions must overcome barriers related to gender and role socialization (Townsend, 1995; Twombley, 1995). Based on the assumption that socialization processes (resulting in stereotyping and discrimination) influence women‟s career processes, researchers have begun to examine the roles of gender and social influences on women‟s career development (Bierema, 1999). Women‟s socialization experiences may skew their sources of self-efficacy (their belief that they can successfully perform). O‟Neil, Bilimoria, and Saatcioglu (2003) discuss Hackett and Betz‟s (1981) proposal “that women‟s performance accomplishments would be more likely to occur in the private sphere rather than the public sphere, that there would be fewer role models

for women, and that women would receive less encouragement for „non-traditional" career choices" (p. 1).

These theories serve as a strong framework for studying the career development of the female Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia researching the effects of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals had on their career decisions and how their socialization influenced their self-efficacy.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the developmental preparation of the female two-year college Presidents in Georgia using basic qualitative methodology in order to develop descriptions of the women"s lived experiences. Using elements of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1986), the Self-efficacy Approach of Hackett and Betz (1981), and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 1996) and to frame the study, four research questions focused on:

1. What are the formative experiences, such as family background, gender role socialization, and early work roles, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President"s career development?
2. What are the key developmental factors, such as mentors and role models, barriers, and developmental learning experiences, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President"s career development?
3. What are the personal factors, such as skills and abilities, self-confidence, and career-family conflicts, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President"s career development?
4. How did socialization experiences affect the self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals of the female Presidents?

Significance of the Study

Because of the eminent retirement plans of many baby-boomer-age college Presidents, the two-year colleges in Georgia may be faced with a critical transition in leadership. A survey conducted by Vaughan and Weisman (2003) in 2001, predicted that 79% of the Presidents in the United States were planning to retire by 2012 (Boggs, 2003). These vacancies are providing opportunities for fresh leadership; opportunities for women to become Presidents of two-year colleges and thus providing a more gender balanced workforce.

This study was designed to explore the nuances of female Presidents‟ career development experiences, especially the factors that influenced their career development. The results of this study may inform women who aspire to these positions of the cultural and social factors that influence women‟s career development. The results may assist in laying out career strategies such as career paths, training and education strategies, or mentoring strategies. The results may inform potential female leaders of the environment conducive to female leadership in a college. Women who aspire to be college Presidents may learn that certain critical experiences may affect their ability to reach that goal. The study results will be a significant guide for women who do not have the role models or mentors that men have to assist them, making this kind of career information invaluable.

It will also inform college systems who foster leadership development of both women and men. What do women need to be taught to be good college Presidents? How should the University develop its programs to produce great women leaders? The results of this study will be invaluable to those who develop those programs as most programs have been male-oriented, male-dominated, and led by males.

> It is imperative that the backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions of women Presidents be studied so that commonalities can be discovered. This will assist women in personal and career development, as well as the educators, administrators, and consultants who will be designing future leadership development interventions. (Madsen, 2007, p. 1).

The study also has implications for research. Researchers may use the findings of this study to help formulate a comprehensive theory of women‟s career development that takes into account sex role socialization, women‟s career experiences, and learning (Bierema, 1998; Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998; Schreiber, 1998).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To explore the career development of women in positions of the President in two-year colleges, it is important to understand the foundational as well as the more contemporary theories of career development. These theories help to explain the career development of women (in particular), as well as the career development of those women in positions of authority including positions in higher education. This review of contemporary literature provides some historical foundation which helps explain this study‟s important contribution to the research into women‟s career development and into women‟s acquiring positions of leadership. This chapter includes: a. Foundational and Contemporary Career Development Theory; b. Women‟s Career Development Theory; c. The Career Development of Women in Leadership. A Summary of the Literature concludes the chapter.

Foundational and Contemporary Career Development Theory

Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) categorized career development theories from the early 1900s to the present into five separate, but not so distinct areas. The following is a brief review of these areas.

Trait-factor theories.

Trait-factor theories are models for matching an individual‟s traits or attributes with occupations. Parsons (1909) was called the “father” of the trait-factor approach to career decision-making. Basically, individual abilities and/or interests are assessed and matched with vocational opportunities from which individuals are given a list of occupations that supposedly

match their abilities and interests. The vocational testing movement grew from this approach using instruments such as the Strong Interest Inventory, the Kuder Occupational Interest Survey, and the Differential Aptitude Test. Holland"s (1985) Self Directed Search is a more modern use of this approach also known as a person-environment theory (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). The United States government got involved in this type of testing. When the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) developed the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) for testing aptitudes and matching them with occupations in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, a classification of occupations was also published. These tools provided vocational counselors with what they needed to guide clients toward successful career decision- making (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Holland (1985) was probably the most famous trait and factor theorist. He organized occupations into six categories: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. He then developed an instrument called the Self-directed Search designed to enable clients to successfully choose occupations for which they were best suited depending on how they responded to questions on the instrument (Holland, 1985).

Society and career choice theories.

Society and Career Choice Theories are approaches based on the premise that societal circumstances which are beyond the control of individuals contribute significantly to an individual"s career choice. Other names for this theory are the reality or accident theory. Proponents of this theory have been Sewell and Hauser (1975), Sweet (1973) and, more recently, Gottfredson (1981), (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996).

Sewell"s research on socio-economic status and vocational behavior elaborated on a model that predicted occupational choice based on cognitive variables (such as intelligence and academic achievement) and social-psychological processes (aspirations, encouragement of

significant others, peer influences). This status attainment model and human capital theory has generated an enormous amount of empirical research (including his own Wisconsin studies), most of which has been strongly supportive of the theory at least for white men (Sewell, Haller, & Ohlendorf, 1970).

Developmental/self-conceptions theories.

Classic theories of Super (1957), Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrod, and Herma (1951), and Carl Rogers (1951) integrate a person"s development of self-concept with career development. Super for example, theorized that a person"s self-concept formation is similar to vocational self-concept formation. It involves the recognition of the similarities between self and others. As life experiences change our reality, our self-concept changes, developing as we mature. As people develop, their vocational maturity develops and they are able to make vocational decisions. Super"s theory has been called the life-span, life space theory (Super, 1957).

Vocational choice based on an irreversible process occurring in reasonably clearly marked periods in a person"s life is the theory espoused by Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrod, and Herma (1951). The theory is dependent on general concepts found in developmental psychology and is influenced by the Freudian model of personality development. Over time, the theory has come to assume that career decisions are made over a life time, not in earlier developmental stages as earlier espoused (Ginzberg et al., 1951).

Gottfredson"s Theory of Occupational Circumscription and Compromise is based on a developmental theory of occupational aspirations. In her four stages of cognitive development, (orientation to size and power, to sex roles, to social valuation, and to the internal unique self) a person develops positive images of occupations while young and aspirations are many. But as they get older, people"s preferences become circumscribed resulting in fewer and fewer acceptable occupational alternatives.

As reality occurs and an individual revises occupational aspirations, compromise occurs. Gottfredson stated that over time more people will change their occupational aspirations to correspond with their field of work than will change their field of work to match their occupational aspirations (Gottfredson, 1981).

Vocational choice and personality.

The personality approach to studying career development has been studied and practiced by such theorists as Hoppock (1957), Holland (1985), and Roe. They all studied personality factors involved in career choice and career satisfaction and conducted studies on the "personalities of people in various occupations, life-styles of various professionals, psychopathology associated with professional activity, and the specific needs of workers in particular industries or jobs" (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 10).

Psychological needs theory was the theme of Hoppock‟s (1957) approach to vocational choice. He theorized that occupational activities are related to basic needs and that the adequacy of occupational choice improves as people are better able to identify their own needs and the potential need satisfaction offered by a particular occupation. So, a person would be satisfied with a job that met his/her need for, say, food. Once the need for food was satisfied, he/she would find a new job to meet new needs (Hoppock, 1957).

Holland (1985) proposed that personality affects a person‟s occupational choice. Holland‟s theory is based on the personality orientations that are represented by the person‟s adjustment to his six occupational environments:

1. Realistic – aggressive, masculine, low on social skill and sensitivity
2. Investigative – thinking, organizing, avoid close interpersonal contact
3. Social – interpersonal relationships, supportive, intellectual problem solving
4. Conventional – conforming, power & status, great self control, structure

5. Enterprising – persuasive, manipulating, aspire to power & status
6. Artistic – esthetic, strong self-expression, dislike structure, feminine

By taking an inventory, the Self Directed Search, a person can be placed into one or more of these categories which can be matched to several occupational titles (Holland, 1985).

Roe‟s (1957) Personality Theory of Career Choice based on the theorist‟s research on artists and personality factors related to artistic creativity led her to investigate characteristics of eminent scientists and vocational choice. She concluded that major personality differences exist between physical-biological and social scientists, primarily in the type of interactions they have with people and things. And she concluded that such differences are in some part the result of differential child-rearing practices. The theory is that individuals inherit tendencies to expend energies in a particular way. The implication is what is inherent and what is learned from early childhood experiences influence vocational behavior. Rephrasing Roe, experiences of early childhood and the involuntary expenditure of psychic energy are influential in the development of the individual‟s abilities. Combined with the expenditure of psychic energy is the development of need. Genetic factors, early experiences, and need combine to influence the selection of a vocation (Roe, 1957).

Behavioral approaches to career development.

According to Ossipow and Fitzgerald (1996), the best example of a behavioral approach to career development is Social Learning Theory, espoused by Albert Bandura (1969) and associated with Krumboltz and associates Mitchell, Jones, Thoresen, Ewart, and others. This approach is defined in a book edited by Mitchell, Jones, and Krumboltz (1979), called *Social Learning Theory and Career Decision Making.*

Basically the theory says that people‟s behaviors are affected by the environment in which they live and, when applied to career development, says that people make career decisions based on personal and environmental events. The theory is similar to other theories in that it concerns itself with inherited attributes such as race, gender and physical appearances, and with special, apparently inherited abilities involving motor, intellective, and perceptual behaviors. It also concerns itself with environmental events and settings, dealing with the social climate for example, individual experiences, the job market, training options and opportunities, and social policies that affect career decisions, such as selection procedures, labor laws, union rules and retirement policies. The theory concerns itself with learning histories, such as associative learning experiences (where the individual observes relationships between events and is able to predict contingencies) and instrumental learning experiences, (where the individual operates on the environment directly with observable outcomes). Lastly, the theory concerns itself with task approach skills which result from unspecified interactions among the inherited attributes, environmental events, and learning histories (Mitchell, Jones, & Krumboltz, 1979).

Summary of foundational and contemporary career development theories.

The first major portion of this chapter reviewed foundational and contemporary career development theories. The work of Parsons, Super and Holland are particularly important to the field. From the beginning of the twentieth century through the 1980‟s vocational and career development theory has been influenced by the foremost social psychologists, psychiatrists, behavioralists, of the day including Freud, Rogers, and others.

The important aspects of these theories for women are:

1. Trait-factor theory of Holland (1985). Although the Self Directed Search has been normed for gender, research shows that more women than men still end up with occupations in the Social category than any other (Rees et al., 2007). They tend to self

select out of the attractive jobs, particularly those involving math and science; few women, for example, are found in Holland‟s Realistic or Investigative occupations, whereas an overwhelming majority is found in clerical and service occupations (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, Betz, 1995).

2. Life stages theories of Super (1957) and Ginzburg, Ginsberg, Axelrod, and Herma (1951). Unfortunately few women traveled through all the life stages usually interrupting their careers to get married, raise children, or keep house.
3. Gottfredson‟s circumscription, compromise theory (1981) is relevant to women as according to her theory at a young age children are typed into occupations based on gender. This poses serious restrictions on women based on gender stereotyping. Also, women will compromise their career choice, choosing traditional occupations over nontraditional ones, basically downscaling their aspirations (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).
4. Roe‟s 1957 theory of a combination of inherent traits, experiences and needs relates somewhat to social learning theory that suggests that behavior is learned from experiences in the environment. Sewell‟s work on socio-economic status relates as well. People make occupational choices in a social context. There is more on Social Learning Theory later in this chapter.

As the research progressed from the middle of the twentieth century to the present, the theories and models became more relevant to women and their development.

Women's Career Development Theory

The foundational and contemporary career development theories above have been researched by social scientists since the early twentieth century, but studies have been conducted

with male subjects. It was not until the late 1950s and early 1960s that any research into vocational behavior of women was conducted (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). But it was not until the 1980s that researchers began to understand the uniqueness of women‟s career development and models of career choice and work behavior began to develop. The 1980s began to recognize differences in career development variables as identified by gender. Based on these discussions on why women‟s career development is different from men‟s there are some insightful contemporary theories of women‟s career development.

Women's career development is different from men's.

"Women‟s career development is more complex than that of men due to a number of internal and external barriers, including early gender-role orientation, employment inequities, and family responsibilities, which both complicate and restrict women‟s career choices and advancement" (Coogan & Chen, 2007, p.191). Women faced more variables when making career decisions; had fewer opportunities when making career choices; and had fewer traditional, hierarchical career paths. "Women‟s career development is a great deal more complex because it must deal with a combination of attitudes, role expectations, behaviors, and sanctions known as the socialization process" (Schreiber, 1998, p. 6).

Traditional career development theories were developed using white, able-bodied, publicly heterosexual, and ethnically homogenous men as the target group (Coogan & Chen, 2007). Research concentrated on males, on traditional male careers and on traditional career pathways. When studying the career choices, career decisions, and career paths of individuals for the purpose of developing theories about career development, the research reflected the thoughts and feelings of a male majority.

Women are different from men developmentally. Joan Gallos (1989) states, "Women construct their conceptions of themselves, their lives, and the world around them differently from men" (p. 110). Rees et al. (2007) said:

> Developers of relational models of women‟s growth and development of personality propose that women‟s identity and values differ from men‟s… that women‟s identity and values are centered on relationships and connected self and that these values and bases for identity should be accepted and valued as much as men‟s orientation to the separate self. (p. 195)

She goes on to say that the connected self describes someone who holds central interdependence, connection with others, egalitarian interchange, and concern for individuals (including themselves). Men, on the other hand, hold central independence, separation, hierarchical organization of interchange, and justice (Rees, et.al.).

In the realm of career choice, gender role stereotyping has resulted in a majority of women in traditionally female occupations. Even with gender norming, Holland‟s Self Directed Search still produces a high number of women selecting social occupations (a type related to the relational identity of women) than any other type on the scale (Rees et.al., 2007).

A critical factor in career choice is the importance of a sound mathematics background (Betz, 2008). Math skills are needed for entrance to many of the best career opportunities in our society including engineering, scientific, and medical careers, computer science, business and the skilled trades. A lack of math background constitutes one of the major barriers to women‟s career development (Betz, 2008).

Central to the life of most women is the sense of family and the home (Coogan & Chen, 2007). Central to the development of a woman‟s career, therefore, is the balance of home,

family and work. The multiple-role barrier influences a woman‟s career choice and career path (Betz, 2008).

> Cook et al. (2002) concur with Betz‟s observations when they comment, „From early childhood throughout life, many women are exposed to pervasive messages that a woman‟s life should revolve around taking care of others and that their career plans are somehow superimposed on this primary obligation‟ (p. 298). (Coogan & Chen, 2007, p. 193)

As a result, two things occur: 1. girls do not place the same emphasis on pursuing a successful career as compared to boys, and 2. girls limit their career pursuits, discounting stereotypically male occupations in favor of traditionally female occupations (Coogan & Chen, 2007).

Low self-efficacy can affect a woman‟s choices and decisions throughout life. The concept of self-efficacy expectations has become one of the most important in helping to understand the career options women consider. Self-efficacy expectations as espoused by Albert Bandura (1977), refer to people‟s beliefs that they can successfully complete specific tasks or behaviors to reach goals (Betz, 2008). Individuals are expected to approach tasks, rather than avoid them, and to perform and persist to overcome obstacles. Unfortunately women have lower self-efficacy expectations than men (Betz, 2008).

Women also tend to have nonlinear career pathways. Assumptions that career paths are typically orderly, sequential, and continuous do not fit the nature of the career paths of women (Cook, Heppner, & O‟Brien, 2002). This too is due partially to the work-home balance problem. Women‟s career paths are nonlinear due to breaks in careers to raise or care for a child or a family member or other family responsibilities. These breaks in career paths have been

attributed to barriers in job promotions and job entry. Linear occupational advancement is too limiting a perspective for understanding women‟s careers (Gallos, 1989).

Other ways women‟s career development are different from men‟s are those events that happen to women while on the job that affect women‟s job choice, job entry, job promotion, and job satisfaction. These are external barriers with regard to employment: discrimination, lack of mentorship and sexual harassment (Coogan & Chen, 2007). Women earn 70% of what men earn and 35% of the wage gap can be explained by the fact that men are more likely than women to enter occupations that pay well (Coogan & Chen, 2007).

Coogan and Chen (2007) also report that mentorships are not readily available to women as they are to men and that it is these mentorships that increase job satisfaction, self-esteem promotions, and career commitment. Regarding sexual harassment, many women have their career paths compromised when they are forced to deal with unwanted sexual advancements from men both inside (supervisors and co-workers) and outside (clients and vendors) the organization (Coogan & Chen, 2007).

In summary, women‟s career development is much different than that of men‟s because it is both complicated and limited by a number of internal and external barriers, including gender-role stereotyping and employment inequities. There have been attempts at researching women‟s career development and researchers have theorized how women make career decisions, behave in careers, and move in and out of careers throughout life. The following section describes some of the contemporary theories researchers have explored.

Contemporary career development theory for women.

Joan Gallos (1989) describes five concerns that need to be considered when exploring women‟s experiences and their career development: career preparation; societal opportunities; the influence of marriage, pregnancy and children; timing; and age.

Also important is a consideration of women‟s distinctive developmental needs and voices. “Although less easy to observe, study, and distinguish from many cultural and institutional forces, their implicit power in defining how women see the world, their choices, and their opportunities makes developmental concerns a critical part of any attempt to build a comprehensive theory of women‟s careers,” (Gallos, 1989, p. 127). In order to understand the outcomes, it is perhaps important to see what some of these theories look like.

Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) describe four such theories developed by theorists researching women‟s career development:

Astin's sociopsychological model of career choice and work behavior (1984).

Applicable to men and women, Astin‟s model incorporates four major constructs: motivation, expectations, sex-role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. Basically she proposed that people have basic needs of survival, pleasure and contribution on which one makes career choices. She further proposed that those choices are made based on socialization and structure of opportunity. Finally, she proposes that women had shifted occupational aspirations because “changes in the structure of opportunities altered expectations concerning occupational accessibility and thus modified career choice and work behavior” (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995, p. 85).

Astin‟s theory was criticized for being too broad and hard to operationalize. When assessing the theoretical concepts, there were general difficulties in testing the model. It is best thought of as a general conceptual framework rather than an articulated theoretical statement (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).

Farmer's model of career motivation (1985).

To predict career and achievement motivation, Farmer combined background factors (gender, race, age, SES, and ability), personal characteristics (academic self-esteem, independence, values, and attributions), and environmental variables (parental and teacher support) in an individual differences-type model. Like Astin, she developed the framework to account for the vocational behavior of men and women (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).

Studies reveled that background factors were the strongest predictors of aspirations and personal variables (particularly independence) were the major predictors of the success drive. Career motivation was strongly predicted by personal variables, with background and environmental variables adding predictive power to the model. Overall, background variables were indirectly predictive of achievement and career motivation (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995). Some success in math and science for women was predicted as well. This theory has longitudinal aspects making it important to women"s career development research.

The Betz, Fitzgerald, and Fassinger model of career choice realism in high ability women (1995).

The original hypothesis by Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) suggest that:

> Experience with work and academic success, positive role model influence, and perceived encouragement influence women"s attitudes toward work, self, and gender roles; such attitudes in turn influence her life-style preferences (e.g., plans for combining work and family), and, ultimately, the realism of her career choice. (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 254)

Fassinger (1985, 1990, 1993) tested the model and in general her research supports the broad framework. Overall results of her program of research emphasized the importance of

ability and a sense of personal agency (such as self-efficacy) as influences on choice; another consistent factor has been gender role attitudes, particularly feminist orientation.

> The overall pattern appears to be one of mutually mediating, interactive influences of ability, agency, and gender role orientation on the development and expression of women‟s capabilities and achievements. In addition, the variable of career orientation, which presently includes indicators that tap family orientation as well, seems to reflect the current intention of most young women to consider career and family simultaneously. (Fitzgarald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995, p. 93)

Criticisms of the theory include operationalizing the realism of career choice and failure of a number of background variables (role model influences, perceived encouragement, and previous work experience) to exert empirical influence. Finally, Fassinger suggests studying the influence of mothers on women‟s career development (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).

Hackett and Betz's self-efficacy approach to women's career development.

Hackett and Betz (1981) first applied Bandura‟s theory of social learning to women‟s career development in the early 1980s. They posited that gender socialization influenced cognitive processes (particularly expectations of personal efficacy), which in turn influences career decision making and adjustment. "They postulated that low expectations of self –efficacy with respect to career activities that have historically been male dominated are a major source of gender differences in vocational choice" (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 255).

Empirical tests showed strong support for their theory. The most notable contribution being the promise it holds for facilitating (as opposed to merely describing or even explaining) women‟s vocational behavior.

> Self-efficacy can influence the degree to which individuals utilize their abilities, develop a range of interests, and consider an expanded rather than restricted range of career options. Self-efficacy may also be related to women‟s persistence in male-dominated careers. And because of the theoretical linkage of perceived self-efficacy to background experiences, it provides an excellent vehicle both for understanding one of the mechanisms by which gender role socialization influences subsequent career behavior and for designing programs of intervention that have as their objectives ability utilization, interest development, and the widening or restoration of options. (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995, p. 98)

The criticism of the theory is that the potency of self-efficacy in predicting behavior is perhaps moderated by outcome expectations; that is where quality of performance guarantees particular outcomes, self-efficacy is predictive, but where outcomes are only marginally related to performance quality, outcome expectations may make an important independent contribution to behavior. In women, this may be translated into behavior that rejects careers because they expect negative outcomes (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).

> For example, a woman with high self-efficacy expectations regarding math and science careers may reject them because she expects negative outcomes such as lack of support or home-career conflict. Such considerations have given rise to an attempt by researchers to construct a more integrative framework. (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 99)

Social learning theory, social cognitive theory, and social cognitive career theory.

Social cognitive theory has as its base social learning theory. Social learning theory focuses on learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one

another including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Among others Albert Bandura is considered the leading proponent of this theory. Its general principles include:

1. People can learn by observing the behavior of others and the outcomes of those behaviors.
2. Learning can occur without a change in behavior.
3. Cognition plays a role in learning.
4. Social learning theory can be considered a bridge or a transition between behaviorist learning theories and cognitive learning theories (Ormand, 1999).

Bandura‟s special bent on social learning theory gave rise to social cognitive theory.

The central elements of social cognitive theory (in 1994 expanded to social cognitive career theory by Lent) are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals and how these variables interact with other aspects of the person and his or her environment to help shape the course of career development (Coogan & Chen, 2007). The theory attempts to explain *how* career and academic interests develop, *how* career-relevant choices are made, and enacted, and *how* performance outcomes are achieved in terms of the construct of personal agency (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995). The theory is most notable for its incorporation of contextual factors (cultural, gender role socialization) which are critical in understanding the career development of women, people of color, working-class people, and others whose vocational behavior does not seem to fit into existing frameworks (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).

Coogan and Chen (2007) explain key tenets of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) as described by Lent and colleagues (2000, 2002). SCCT is anchored in Bandura‟s (1982, 1986) general social cognitive theory as described above.

> The cognitive-person variables enable people to exercise agency (i.e., person control), within their own career development (Lent et al., 2002). The key determinant for individuals to exercise control in this context is their correct beliefs about their self-capacity to successfully implement the life career developmental tasks, or career self-efficacy (Betz, 2001). (Coogan & Chen, 2007, p. 197)

Self-efficacy is defined as how confident one is in one‟s ability to learn and relates to women‟s academic, career and other choices. Women who eliminate nontraditional career opportunities because of low self-efficacy beliefs limit their opportunities of finding satisfying and well-paying jobs (Coogan & Chen, 2007).

SCCT has another distinctive feature relevant to women‟s career needs and experiences and that is its attention to the social and environmental contexts in which human agency and self-efficacy function. That is, SCCT considers physical attributes of the person (e.g., sex and race), features of the environment, and particular learning experiences, which influence career interests and choice behavior.

> These contextual variables encompass the unique barriers that women encounter in their career development, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, and lack of childcare support. This recognition of and emphasis on the contextual factors in individuals‟ career development appears to be relevant because…women‟s career development is especially affected and complicated by a range of dynamic interactions between social, societal, personal, and other related contexts. (Coogan & Chen, 2007, p. 197)

Summarily, these theories are evidence of the discovery of the differences in the emergence of women and men into the same leadership roles and the need for a different system for mentoring the differences. Only since the 1960s has "women‟s work" been taken seriously by some segments within psychology and society, and the concept of women actually having careers, vocations other than motherhood, have received serious study. Now the study of women‟s career development is an important field and women‟s careers are taken seriously (Betz, 2008).

What is also apparent is that men‟s career development is different from women‟s and that theories applied to men will not work for women. Research has concentrated on males, on traditional male careers and on traditional career pathways. It was time to study the ways of women and women‟s career development. "Gendered theoretical frameworks" explained in Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) were contemporary attempts to explain women‟s individual differences.

To better understand the relationship of this research to the study of women‟s development, the next section explores the career development of women in leadership positions with an emphasis on those women in positions of authority in higher education. As the experiences of women in these positions are explored, attempts to determine their career development and similarities among them provides strong preparation for fulfilling this study.

Career Development of Women in Leadership

This section will explore the career development of women who are in leadership positions. Women have emerged as leaders even in times when women are still segregated into typically female careers and the wage gap persists. Women still earn only 79.9 cents for every dollar a man earns (Catalyst, 2008). In 2008, there were only 6.2% women top earners in Fortune 500 companies down from 6.7% in 2007 (Catalyst, 2008). Although there are more

women in positions of leadership than in the past, progress has been slow. In 2008, women held 15.7% of corporate officer positions at Fortune 500 companies, up from 15.4% in 2007 (Catalyst, 2008).

"Systematic discrimination is prevalent in a work system designed and controlled by white males. The organizational culture benefits men more readily than women and rewards behavior emulating the prevailing male-dominated leadership" (Bierema, 1998, p. 97). It is in these environments that women have had to develop into leaders.

The literature is sparse on career development of women in positions of leadership. However, there have been some studies and dissertations that have provided some insight. First, studies on career development of women in private sector leadership will be described followed by studies on women in leadership in higher education.

Career development of women in private sector leadership.

There were compelling studies of female leaders in the private sector. These studies describe important factors influencing their career development, which include positive self-efficacy and support from family. Here are three such studies.

Richie, Fassinger, Prosser, and Robinson (1997).

In a qualitative study of the career development of highly achieving African American and white women, Richie, Fassinger, Prosser, and Robinson (1997) interviewed 18 prominent, professional women across eight occupational fields about their career experiences. They conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews using grounded-theory analytic strategies to describe the experiences. They explored well-documented, salient variables in women‟s career development such as background influences (e.g., family, socioeconomic status, education, and gender role socialization); self-efficacy and attributional factors; external challenges and

obstacles (e.g., sexism and racism); and factors related to individual personality and temperament.

In general the participants ended up being a group of relationally oriented women who were persistent in the face of obstacles and passionate about their work. These women did not mute their femininity in order to succeed in their careers as they displayed expressive characteristics (e.g., nurturance, relational orientation, and sensitivity). They achieved career success on their own terms, maintaining interconnectedness, valuing social support, and balancing their personal and professional lives. The women exhibited high levels of self-efficacy which contributed to their perseverance and persistence in the face of obstacles.

This study, although limited due to sampling restrictions, logistical difficulties, and biases in data interpretation, helped me determine expectations when interviewing subjects; specifically, that high achievers would have high levels of self-efficacy, resiliency, connection, and innovation; that they would seek support from colleagues, family, and other women; and, that they would be able to tackle external challenges and obstacles.

Marlow, Marlow, and Arnold (2000).

In this study, questionnaires were provided to 1000 women in upper-level management positions geographically dispersed throughout the U.S. with 170 usable responses returned. The women were to rate 18 criteria for career advancement from 1 to 5, 5 indicating "extremely important".

The results were not surprising. The number one criteria for career advancement was "ability to balance demands of home and career" which was ranked number 16 for men. Others more important for females than for males were:

- supportive corporate environment;
- supportive family members; and
- importance of interpersonal skills.

The means of only three of the criteria were less than 3.5, so the female senior managers considered almost all of the criteria to be important for women‟s career advancement. Women believe that it is more difficult for them to achieve career advances equivalent to those of their male counterparts. They also believe that women have to be better than men to achieve similar advances. They perceive that the "glass ceiling" is real.

This study is important to show the kind of obstacles women leaders face in their career development. The results of this study may imply that there are very different development programs that are needed by women than by men for career advancement.

Bierema (1999).

Laura Bierema (1999) studied executive women‟s learning and development through a qualitative, case-study approach. She interviewed eleven executive level women in Fortune 500 organizations between the ages of 33 and 62 who had a minimum of five years of company seniority. A continuum of women‟s development emerged from the data as women experienced progressive development across three stages: Compliant Novices, Competence Seekers, and Change Agents. As they developed in their careers they exhibited distinctive: a. learning tactics, b. negotiation strategies, and, c. transition characteristics.

The results of her study showed that, again, traditional career development theory (based on a male model) will not work for women, but that feminist pedagogy and new literature on women‟s development have offered alternative views of women‟s development in which connectedness and intentional knowing are stressed. Attention must also be paid to the

importance of relationships and interconnectedness among women learners, creating a democratic process for learning and cooperative communication styles.

This study is important in that it provides different stages of development of women in positions of authority. It also touches on the topic of gender consciousness and the lack of awareness of gender as a career variable. A question to pursue may be how do women reproduce power structures versus change them.

Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers, and Wentworth (2007).

This study examined the similarities and differences in the career paths of women in female-dominated careers in correlation to women who made career choices that were gender neutral. By eliciting a work history of full-time employment the researchers expected to gain an understanding of the significant issues facing women from their initial career decisions through to their current careers.

Twenty-seven women in teaching and social worker (female-dominated) positions and 17 with professor, physician and attorney (gender-neutral) positions, were interviewed to examine career paths, the factors that affected their initial choices, and current influences on their careers.

Six themes arose: Variations of career/family patterns; career encouragers; career obstacles; personal compromises; career changes (between and within careers); and career decision-making. Although all the women were professional and educated, their career development differed.

Women who chose gender-neutral occupations seemed to possess a more developed sense of their own career-related self-efficacy that enabled them to successfully complete their degrees and attain their careers. They received more messages of support from family and educators. Those in female-dominated careers were encouraged to pursue careers considered

acceptable for women, so their career options were much more constrained and their career efficacy was less developed.

Society also gave messages of support to women being more receptive to the idea of a career and family than it had been in the past. Even so, women still come home to a "second shift" of homemaking and child care chores. Even women with gender-neutral careers assumed responsibility for the management of family and home.

This study was important for its look at the development of two different types of careers for women: female-dominated and gender-neutral. There were commonalities but also differences in the way these women approached their careers: their career choice; their work-life balance; and their self-awareness. It had implications for my study of Presidents of two-year colleges.

Career development of women in public higher education leadership.

There were three studies of female Presidents in higher education. Some of the findings from these studies are significant to my study.

Madsen (2007).

Susan Madsen (2007) interviewed ten female university Presidents from all over the U.S. to determine their career pathways. She explored their lived experiences in developing their knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies required for successful leadership in higher education. Each had continuous learning and development experiences and enjoyed the challenges and change each job brought to them, but none had an official career path to the presidency. This study points out the value of an informal nonlinear career path so indicative of women‟s career development.

Sharon Vanhook-Morrissey (2003).

In this more recent dissertation, Vanhook-Morrissey (2003) interviewed female Presidents of community colleges in North Carolina to determine their career development. Her findings were organized into four components of a conceptual model of selected female community college Presidents‟ career development: formative experiences; key developmental experiences; multiple role challenges; and career achievement. She found that due to the socialization process, most of the women were first guided into traditional teaching careers and ended up in the community college due to unplanned events or circumstances during their early career experiences. Mentors were influential in their decisions to pursue advanced degrees and administrative positions in community colleges. In fact these mentoring relationships and formal and informal learning experiences influenced the women‟s career development. They were successful in developing networks with other female community college administrators. They purposefully pursued increasingly responsible administrative positions to increase their knowledge and understanding of community colleges, thus developing high levels of self-efficacy.

The women in this study found that maintaining a balance between family and career was a challenge. Some reported that their family responsibilities resulted in career interruptions that delayed their goal achievement. Shreiber (1998) contends this is typical of women, that linear, uninterrupted, planned career development is atypical of women‟s career development. In fact, women are viewed as less interested in their careers because of the interruptions, a stereotype that has thrown up barriers to career advancement (Wentling, 1998; Vaughn, 1989). Yet each expressed a high level of satisfaction with her role as President which was related to the

importance of work in her life and to her perception of herself as a nurturing and open leader on her campus and in her community.

Vanhook-Morrissey‟s study has many similarities to this study and there are parallels as far as the methodology. The findings are significant and comparisons are complementary with those that were found in this study.

Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown (2002).

These researchers studied career paths of community college administrators and compared the data to a study completed in 1985 by Moore, Martorana, and Twombly. In 2002, 27% of the Presidents in the study were women compared to 3.1% in 1985. That in itself was an interesting finding. Also, Presidents had more diversified paths to the senior leadership position than their counterparts in 1985, with 22% being hired from within their present institution and 45% serving more than ten years there. Over one third (37%) of the Presidents were in academic administration immediately before entering the presidency (Academic Dean, Provost, Dean of Instruction). There was not a significant gender difference between the career trajectories of male and female leaders as they all followed traditional paths to the presidency. An almost equal percentage indicated prior service as Presidents of community colleges (26%).

These results provide important insights into career pathways of Presidents which relate directly to this study. Multiple literary references indicate that a significant percentage of Presidents have come from academic administration.

To summarize, these studies have provided important insight on women‟s career development in the private sector and in higher education. Barriers confronting women during their career development have not only affected their advancement, but also their personal development and job satisfaction. The studies delineate the kind of obstacles women face in

their career development, the different stages of women‟s career development, what affects women‟s career choices, the stereotypes women still have to overcome, and, most importantly, how their career development differs from that of men.

The research into the career development of women in leadership positions has been sparse and little is known about professional women (Richie et al., 1997). Phillips and Imhoff (1997) describe how little is documented about a woman‟s efforts to enter the workforce and about what helps her negotiate these transitions well. We know even less about workforce exits, be they partial, temporary, permanent, or at retirement.

Summary of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore the career development of women Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia. Keeping in mind the tenets of the Social Cognitive Career Theory, personal interviews queried female Presidents about their personal (skills and abilities, self-confidence, and career-family conflicts), formative (family background, gender role socialization, and early work roles), developmental (mentors and role models, barriers, and developmental learning experiences) and socialization factors that influenced their career choice, path, and decision-making throughout their career development.

As indicated in this literary review, the traditional career development theory has its limitations when applied to women. The classical theories of Parsons, Super, and Holland were tested on male subjects only and applications towards women have consistently been interpreted to be stereotypical (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995; Rees, et al., 2007).

A few theories had been studied specifically for women in the 1980s that better explain women‟s career development (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). Significant among these theories was the work of Hackett and Betz (1981) on the self efficacy approach to women‟s career development. They applied Albert Bandura‟s theory of social learning positing that gender

socialization influenced the cognitive process and therefore self efficacy. As this theory grew in the 1990s and into the 21st century, it evolved into the Social Cognitive Career Theory of Lent (1994), a theory that attempts to explain how career and academic interests develop, how career-relevant choices are made and enacted, and how performance outcomes are achieved in terms of construct of personal agency. This theory has received strong support from researchers as being a theory very relevant in explaining women"s career behavior (Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995).

Women in leadership positions in the private and public sector witnessed barriers to their career development as they advanced to those positions. Studies have shown that discrimination and harassment still exists and that the workplace is still dominated by white males (Bierema, 1999). The studies illustrate that women value interconnectedness, balance of home and work, and social supports (Richie et al., 1997). Also the glass ceiling has been documented as real and that women have to be better than men to achieve similar advances (Marlow, Marlow, & Arnold, 2000). It was found that women still go home to a "second shift" of child care and home making (Whitmarsh et al., 2007). Women college administrators face the same challenges. The studies on them however focused on career pathways. Traditional paths of academic positions leading to the presidency were taken by most of the subjects in these studies (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002).

Women fill only 29% of all community college presidencies even though they comprise 57% of the student bodies of their institutions (Eddy & Cox, 2008). In the next decade, it is predicted that 80% of the current community college Presidents plan to retire; and the American Council on Education"s most recent survey of community colleges shows that 44% of Presidents are over 61 years old (Eddy & Cox, 2008). These statistics make this study all the more relevant.

Not only are women among the minority in leadership positions now, but the timing is right for women to advance into leadership positions as male Presidents retire.

Because much of the research has been done with college students, very little is known about the experiences of professional women (Richie et al., 1997). "A theoretically grounded, unifying „framework for understanding women‟s work behavior, that takes into account the complex aspects of career-family role integration for women, has been lacking‟ (Fitzgerald & Rounds, 1994, p. 329)" (Farber, 1996, p. 330). More work is especially needed in studying career trajectories to get a clearer picture of pathways to senior level administrations in community colleges (Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002).

Using social cognitive career theory as a framework and a basic qualitative method, this study brings added enrichment to the literature and, therefore, increased help to women aspiring to leadership roles. This study adds an important element to the literature regarding career development of women in leadership in two-year colleges, particularly with reference to the lived experiences of the female Presidents of those colleges in Georgia.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore women‟s developmental preparation for the two-year college presidency using basic qualitative research (Merriam, 1998) in order to develop descriptions of the women‟s lived experiences. Using elements of the social cognitive theory (Bandura 1986), the self-efficacy approach of Hackett and Betz (1981), and the social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 1996) to frame the study, the focus of the study centered around four research questions:

1. What are the formative experiences, such as family background, gender role socialization, and early work roles, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President‟s career development?
2. What are the key developmental factors, such as mentors and role models, barriers, and developmental learning experiences, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President‟s career development?
3. What are the personal factors, such as skills and abilities, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and career-family conflicts, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President‟s career development?
4. How did socialization experiences affect the self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals of the female Presidents?

In this chapter basic qualitative research design is discussed followed by a discussion of the participant sample. Then methods for collecting and analyzing data will be presented.

Internal validity and reliability and external validity will then be defined and then strategies used to insure trustworthiness will be identified. Finally this chapter includes a discussion of the researcher‟s biases and assumptions.

Design of the Study

Basic qualitative research was used in this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) defined qualitative research as,

> a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible…This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

From a constructivist epistemology, "according to which knowledge is construction resulting from the interaction between individuals and their social worlds" (Gelo, Braakmann, and Benetka, 2008, p. 269), and an interpretive theoretical perspective, the basic qualitative methodology was used to collect, analyze, and interpret data and to provide a rich description of findings before drawing conclusions. In basic qualitative research, the researcher (the key data collector, interviewer and/or observer) poses research questions that lead him or her to understand the meaning of a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives of people involved in the study (Merriam, 1998). "The basic qualitative study in education typically draws from concepts, models, and theories in educational psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and sociology" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). In addition to interviews and observations, some document analysis also took place. From a theoretical framework, the researcher‟s findings are rich in description and analysis. Such analysis resulted from categorizing the data

that recurs in the interviews of the subjects. These are neither case studies nor theory-building studies (Merriam, 1998).

The reason qualitative research was better suited for this study of career development of female Presidents is because it helps the researcher study the lived experiences of the subjects or "understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). "The strengths of qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people and its emphasis on words rather than numbers" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 22). Qualitative research is best suited when there are certain intellectual and practical goals in mind for the study. Maxwell (2005) describes five intellectual goals and three practical goals respectively:

Intellectual Goals

- Understanding the meaning, for participants in the study, of the events, situations, experiences, and actions they are involved with or engaged in.
- Understanding the particular context within which the participants act and the influence that this context has on their actions.
- Identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new, grounded theories about the latter.
- Understanding the process by which events and actions take place.
- Developing causal explanations.

Practical Goals

- Generating results and theories that are understandable and experientially credible.
- Conducting formative evaluation, ones that are intended to help improve existing practice rather than to simply assess the value of the program or product.

- Engaging in collaborative or action research with practitioners or research participants. (pp. 22-24)

These intellectual goals (focused on understanding something) and practical goals (focused on accomplishing something) were personal goals. Thus the qualitative method was best suited for this study.

Maxwell (2005) also explains that each researcher"s personal goals are important when deciding on a methodology and that attempting to exclude these goals from the design of the research is neither possible nor necessary. Researchers should have compatible reasons for wanting to do a qualitative study; they must like doing fieldwork, for instance, and have the personal interest and skills needed to do qualitative work (Maxwell, 2005).

These research skills and personal interests led this researcher to the qualitative method. More importantly, the analysis of research questions answered by this study suggests that the qualitative method was the better method.

Sample Selection

Maxwell (2005) defines purposeful sampling as the strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices. For example, when you select people because they are experts in the field or because they are all witnesses to the same event, you are selecting them purposefully (Maxwell, 2005). Maxwell further poses four goals for purposeful selection: (a) provide for representativeness of settings, individuals, or activities selected; (b) make sure there is heterogeneity of the population; (c) deliberately examine cases that are critical for the theories that you began the study with, or that you have subsequently developed; and (d) establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings and individuals.

Participants for this study were those female Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia. At the time of the study, there were eleven; ten Presidents of technical colleges under the Technical College System of Georgia and one President of a community college under the University System of Georgia.

The only criterion to be a participant in the study was that the President be female. She did not have to be in office for a specified length of time nor have to have been formerly employed by the college. The experiences of varying backgrounds gave the study richness.

The Presidents were selected from the Technical College System and University System websites. Each of these websites provided a list of colleges by name and a link to the college website. On each individual college website, a message from the President is accompanied by a picture and the name of the President. From this page, a list of the eleven participants was developed.

Each participant was sent a letter asking her to participate. The letter explained the purpose of the study and the importance of their participation. An example of the letter is attached as Appendix A. All but one agreed to be interviewed.

Data Collection

Data were collected by three methods: (a) using individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews; (b) collecting individual resumes from the participants; and (c) collecting demographic and other information from the participants on a short questionnaire. A personally developed short questionnaire and an interview consent form were sent to Presidents initially. The completed questionnaire was collected either prior to the interview by mail or collected at the beginning of the interview. Copies of the participants‟ resumes were harder to collect. Only five Presidents had recently updated resumes that were available for this study.

The main source of data was individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were semi-structured as they were guided by a series of predetermined questions; however, these questions were meant to guide the interview, not to totally structure it. The participant was encouraged to elaborate on her experiences to provide supporting information as well as delineating the level of importance of those experiences. This reinforces the concept by Ezzy (2002) who said, "The aim of a good in-depth interview is to obtain the story or interpretation of the person being interviewed" (p. 68)

Charmaz (2006) explains that the intensive interview allows the interviewer to gain an in-depth exploration of a particular topic with the person who has had the experience; thus, it is a useful method for interpretive inquiry. Because these interviews were semi-structured, the questions had to be consistent and focused. An interview guide was used to ask all Presidents the same questions relating to specific factors that influenced their career development. These questions were probing and offered each President a platform from which to elaborate on her experiences.

It is important to state that this researcher was careful not to translate research questions into interview questions. According to Maxwell (2005) the researcher should not convert his/her research questions into interview questions. He goes on to say that "your methods are the means to answering your research questions, not a logical transformation of the latter" (p. 92). He elaborates:

> Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding. The development of good interview questions (and observational strategies) requires creativity and insight, rather than a mechanical conversion of the research

> questions into an interview guide or observation schedule, and depends fundamentally on how the interview questions and observational strategies will actually work in practice. (p. 92)

It is the personal belief of this researcher that the interview questions were not a mechanical conversion of this study"s research questions but were creative and probing and solicited rich narrative which provides a clearer concept of developmental experiences.

The interview questions were developed following and based on a review of the literature. Formulated from examples from three similar dissertations (Vanhook-Morrissey, 2003; Smith, 2003; Wingo, 2007), two from North Carolina and one from Georgia, the questions probed the participants regarding their career choice, barriers encountered during their careers, relationships that influenced their careers, and others.

The interview questions were tested on three female college executives to determine the questions effectiveness, if they solicited the desired data, and if revisions were needed. Questions were revised as these practice interviews progressed to probe for additional information, to search beneath the surface of a topic, and to explore the participants" thoughts and feelings more in-depth (Charmaz, 2006).

The pilot test led to the combining of some of the questions because they led to the same outcome. Probing questions were modified to keep the participant on point to avoid getting off the subject. This pilot yielded the final group of questions found in Appendix B.

As Merriam and Simpson (2000) explain, "The interview starts with simple and interesting questions to engage the interviewee and to obtain a good response. If the interview entails several subsections or topics, each section or topic should flow from the simple to the more complex" (p. 153). The interview guide was structured to follow this advice. These two

authors go on to explain how the interviewer should carefully lead the interview because "the fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understanding in their own terms" (p. 153). The interview guide in this study was designed to allow the participants to do just that.

Although 10 Presidents agreed to the interviews, only nine were completed due to the declining health of the husband of one of the Presidents. All interviews were face to face at the President"s work location or (as with only one) at a convenient off campus location. Although there were opportunities to interview some of the Presidents at their President"s Council meeting in Atlanta the ideal location is the President"s college campus and being able to observe the President in her own habitat.

The interview guide consists of 14 open ended questions. The interviews, therefore, lasted from 40 to 90 minutes. The same questions were asked of all the Presidents for consistency in collecting the data and for data analysis. The Interview Guide is attached as Appendix B.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. A transcriber transcribed the interviews verbatim. Follow-up phone calls were not needed to clarify any statements or misunderstandings. A few field notes were taken during and after the interviews to record personal thoughts, observations, reflections, and feelings about the interview. Charmaz (2006) describes field notes as beneficial because they (a) record individual and collective actions; (b) contain full, detailed notes with anecdotes and observations; (c) emphasize significant processes occurring in the setting; (d) address what participants define as interesting and/or problematic; (e) place actors and actions in scenes and contexts; and (f) become progressively focused on key analytic ideas.

Following the transcribing of the interviews, the transcriptions were compared to the original taped recording to ensure the entire interview was correctly captured. A brief analysis of each interview transcription was written. Each President received a copy of the transcription and the analysis to confirm that it was an accurate portrayal of her experiences. Ezzy (2002) describes this process as a "useful strategy for checking the details of the interview" (p. 70).

The other sources of data were the completed questionnaires and the Presidents" resumes. The questionnaire, which was sent with the introductory letter to the President, asked for demographic and basic career information. These data were used to obtain personal insights of the Presidents which would help identify developmental experiences in each President"s life. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix C.

The President"s resume provided me with valuable career path information because it outlined each President"s job and education history. The five resumes received prior to the interviews held valuable information that influenced how the interview questions were asked. When received prior to the interview, both the resume and the questionnaire had a positive influence on the depth and effectiveness of the interview questions.

Data Analysis

> Data analysis began during the interviewing process. Ezzy (2002) concurs,
>
> Simultaneous data collection and data analysis builds on the strengths of qualitative methods as an inductive method for building theory and interpretations from the perspective of the people being studied. It allows the analysis to be shaped by the participants in a more fundamental way than if analysis is left until after the data collection has been finished. (p. 61)

Using the transcriptions, documents, and field notes, the data coding began. "The researcher first divides the text to be analyzed into units (sentences, phrases, or passages) and

labels them, using terms that should come from exact words of the participant" (Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008, p. 276). The similarly labeled units (responses to the interview questions) were grouped together into categories. This type of thematic analysis is more inductive as the categories into which themes are sorted are not determined prior to analysis. They are induced as the analysis takes place (Ezzy,2002), taking detailed data (e.g. the transcriptions) to the general (codes and themes) (Creswell, 2005).

The interview questions were assigned to a research question and put on a matrix with the research questions in the first column and the interview questions in the second column. In a third column were the Presidents‟ responses which were abbreviated. From these responses, themes arose. A table of themes follows. The data from the questionnaires was put in Table 2 and an analysis of that data is summarized in Chapter 4.

Table 1

Themes That Emerged During Analysis

Factors That Influenced the Career Development of Female Presidents	Themes That Emerged During Analysis
Formative experiences	Respect for education and work Traditional career goals
Key developmental factors	Mentors and role models Encountering barriers Developmental learning experiences
Personal factors	Skills, abilities and values Career-family conflict Likes and dislikes
Socialization factors	Self-efficacy Outcome expectations Personal goals

As the data were analyzed, constant statement-to-statement, text-to-text, and data-to-data comparisons were being made. "At first, you compare interview statements with incidents within the same interview and compare statements and incidents in different interviews" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). Charmaz (2006) further advised researchers to compare earlier interviews with later interviews of the same individual or observations of a routine activity at different times. These sorts of comparisons contribute new ideas to the collective data. Charmaz (2006) warns that whatever units of data are in initial codings, the researcher should use the constant comparison method. This study used data from only one interview.

> Devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967), this strategy combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed and coded. This means that as social phenomena are recorded and classified, they also are compared across categories. Thus the discovery of relationships, or hypothesis generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis proceed, and continuously feeds back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions as well as new relationships may be discovered. (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 256)

After comparing data, some re-coding occurred and further analysis occurred. The data were re-categorized into smaller themes for further analysis. Analysis across themes led to further explanations and conclusions about the research questions.

The resumes of the Presidents were reviewed and analyzed. Focusing on the career pathways of Presidents, years spent in each position, educational attainment, professional certifications acquired and organizations in which each participated. Similarities and

differences were analyzed. Although resumes were unavailable for all nine Presidents a background question in the Interview Guide collected their past career pathways.

Validity and Reliability

According to Maxwell (2005), validity should be looked at as a "commonsense way to refer to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account" (p. 106). For a study to earn credibility it must pass a test of validity. Threats to validity are often characterized as alternative explanations (Maxwell, 2005).

Merriam and Simpson (2000) explained the two types of validity threats, internal and external validity. Internal threats to validity are "those factors which affect the degree to which the research procedure measures what it purports to measure. External threats pertain to the extent results of a study are generalizable to other situations" (p. 59).

As Creswell (2000) stated, there are several things qualitative researchers can employ to relieve threats to validity: (a) triangulation; (b) member checking; (c) thick description; (d) peer reviews; and (e) external audits. "Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell, 2000, p. 126). To ensure internal validity, this researcher used triangulation through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, field notes of observations, questionnaires the participants will complete, and the resumes of the participants.

Another way to check the threats on validity is for the researcher to self-disclose personal assumptions, beliefs and biases; those biases and assumptions are disclosed regarding this study. Member checking is another way of ensuring validity of the data. The validity procedure shifts from the researcher to the participant in the study here. "It consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account" (Creswell, 2000, p. 127). In this study, the transcription of

the interviews were returned to the Presidents, and for added confirmation, it was accompanied by this researcher"s prose interpretation of the main elements of the interview.

To establish external validity, this study focused on the transferability of the findings, describing the settings, the participants, and the themes of the qualitative study in rich detail (Creswell, 2000). Creswell (2000) goes on to say:

> The purpose of a thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced or could experience, the events being described in a study. Thus credibility is established through the lens of readers who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation. (p. 129)

This study provided as many pertinent details as possible. Following the advice of Merriam and Simpson (2000), this study provided enough information/description "so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 103). It is a personal goal of this researcher to provide women who aspire to be a college President with enough valuable information to assist them in their career development; thus allowing the findings of this study to be transferrable to women across generations.

According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), "generalizability of findings is influenced by the degree a study is controlled through the research design" (p. 59). An example of a potential external threat is lack of representativeness within the sample group (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Since this researcher interviewed nine of 11 female Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia, external validity is less threatened.

Merriam and Simpson (2002) stated that reliability asks if the "results are consistent with the data collected" (p. 102). This researcher kept a journal and documented decisions and activities to ensure validity and reliability in the study.

Researcher's Biases and Assumptions

Qualitative researchers are concerned over the objectivity of their data. As Patton (1990) stated, in qualitative research,

> subjectivity is inevitable. The point is to be aware of how one's perspective affects fieldwork, to carefully document all procedures so that others can review methods for bias, and to be open in describing the limitations of the perspective presents. (p. 482)

Merriam and Simpson (2000) described the qualitative researcher's challenge; "Being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis carries with it a responsibility to identify one's shortcomings and biases that might impact the study" (p. 98). The experiences of this researcher as the observer and recognized in the documented experiences of the Presidents in this study have certainly brought a distinctive contribution to this study. All of these experiences have contributed to the richness of the narrative due to the probing that took place during the interviews.

Like most women currently holding an executive position in higher education, this researcher's career development began with few choices and limited opportunities. Obviously being female in the 1960s and in a high school with no vocational counseling, the only choices for the future were to be a teacher or a nurse. So when the opportunity arose to go to college on a grant, education was the acceptable major.

Unlike the Presidents interviewed in this study, this researcher witnessed sexual discrimination when applying for jobs, sexual harrassment on the job or other barriers to

promotional opportunities. These life experiences put this researcher in a unique position offering a worldview that was thought would be similar to the women that were interviewed.

From 1960s through the 1980s, this researcher witnessed the rise of the women‟s movement and some of the most important feminist events of the 20th century. To be a feminist and having supported women‟s rights throughout adulthood, the observed contrast between the liberated women seeking job equality and the typical southern conservative woman rising through the ranks in higher education may present environments and circumstantial questions for some of the career decisions the Presidents made during their career development. Again this probing brougt richness to the narrative.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore women‟s developmental preparation for the two-year college presidency using basic qualitative methodology in order to develop descriptions of the women‟s lived experiences. From a constructivist epistemology and an interpretive theoretical perspective, a basic qualitative methodology was used to collect, analyze and interpret the data and to provide a rich description of findings before drawing conclusions.

Data were collected from various sources mainly through interviews of nine female Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. Themes were developed from the coded data and conclusions were derived. Validity and reliability were assured through triangulation of the data, member checking, self-disclosure, and a rich description of the data. The writer‟s personal biases were recognized, and basic assumptions did not intentionally harm the study but actually enriched it.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore women‟s developmental preparation for the two-year college presidency using basic qualitative research (Merriam, 1998) in order to develop descriptions of the women‟s lived experiences. Framing the study by four research questions, nine sitting Presidents of two-year colleges were interviewed. This research analyzed their formative experiences, key developmental influences, personal factors, and how socialization factors influenced their self-efficacy.

The Participants

Table 2 contains the data from the questionnaires. Of the nine Presidents, one is African American and eight are white. The average age is 53 with the oldest being 64 and the youngest being 42. The average number of years in their positions is 7.33 with the longest being 14 years and the shortest being just 2 years. Eight of the Presidents have a doctorate degree. Four of them are first generation college graduates. Seven out of nine held Vice President of Academic Affairs positions immediately before becoming President. All but 1 are married and all but two have two or more children. All but two of the children were age 20 and up.

I do not refer to the Presidents by their given name, but have given them a pseudonym. I also changed all the names of colleges, towns, and colleagues that were mentioned in the interview in the attempt to maintain their anonymity. The following is a short profile of each President.

Table 2

Results from the Questionnaire

President	Highest Ed Level	Age	Ethnicity	First yr as President	Years as President	Job before President	Mother's Highest Ed. level	Mother's occupation	Father's Highest Ed. level	Father's occupation	Marital Status	No. Children	Age of children		
Alice	Doctorate	54	White	1997	13	VPSA	Masters	Librarian	BA	Self employed	M	2	20-up		
Bonnie	Ed.D.	52	African-American	2008	2	VPAA	MS	Educator	Some college	USAF	M	2	20-up		
Carrie	Masters	56	White	1996	14	Asst. to President	Some College	Housewife	Bachelors	Life Insurance	M	4	2,13-19 and 2,20-up		
Deana	Ed.D.	59	White	2005	5	VPAA	Some College	Financial officer	some college	agri-business	M	2	20-up		
Emily	Doctorate	44	White	2003	7	VPAA	9th grade	retired	11th grade	retired	M	0	NA		
Felicia	Ed.D.	54	White	2003	7	VPAA	12th grade	Housewife	12th grade	USAF	D	2	20-up		
Gina	Doctorate	42	White	2007	3	VPAA	Bachelors	RN	DDS	Dentist	M	0	NA		
Heather	Ph.D.	64	White	2004	6	VPAA	High School	Housewife	Bachelors	CPA	M	2	20-up		
Ingrid	Ed.D.	54	White	2001	9	VPAA and VPSA	Some College	Housewife	High School	Civil Service	M	3	20-up		
Average		53.2			7.333333							1.88889			

Alice.

Alice is President of a Technical College in the same town in which she grew up. She has been with the technical college system for 25 years, starting out as an instructor. She graduated college in Business Administration hoping to be a buyer in a department store. There were few job opportunities in the small town she moved to after getting married, so she went back to college to get her teaching certificate. She now has her Doctorate in Education. She is married with two grown children over 20 years old. She taught for 15 years in the K-12 system before taking a mid-management job at the Technical College of which she is now the President. Her mother and grandmother were teachers. Her jobs included Registrar and Vice President of Student Affairs. Her original goal was to be a Vice President, then when her President left she applied for the position.

Alice was mentored by a former female University President and a former female college professor. However, her mother, who ended up with a Masters in Library Science, was the biggest inspiration to her. Her mother was a very strong woman.

Alice was only 40 years old when she became President, young by comparison to other Presidents. Even though she was confident she could succeed as President, it took about three years before she became really comfortable in her position. She has community support and an executive team with whom she really likes working. She likes coming up with new ideas for new programs and buildings and seeing them to fruition. Since being President for 13 years she has had three new buildings built and one renovated. She feels like she has one of the best jobs in the world.

Bonnie.

Bonnie is a 52 year old President of an urban Technical College. She has been the President for only 2 years. Her early career goal was to be a lawyer so she majored in Political Science in college. And like many of her colleagues and at the urging of her professor, she got her teaching certificate. She taught for a while at a high school and at a university. She was also an administrator of a high school and Executive Director of a Charter School. Prior to becoming President she was a curriculum specialist at the Technical College System of Georgia and Vice President of Academic Affairs at the college she is President of now.

Bonnie came from a middle class family. Her mother was a teacher for some time before taking a civil service job. Her father was in the military. They expected Bonnie to go to college and to graduate school. Bonnie"s grandmother also influenced her to be the best she could be in whatever career she chose.

Bonnie planned to be a President of a college someday. She was encouraged by her mentors to apply for President positions. When sadly her President passed away, she was encouraged to apply for that position and got it. She loves the job especially watching the students succeed. Although she dislikes the politics involved she is very supportive of the community.

Bonnie believes in setting high standards and that you must understand your customer and the community. She also believes in fairness but can be tough if she needs to be. Her advice to other women aspiring to be President is to keep your eye on your dream.

Carrie.

Carrie has been President of her college for 14 years now. At age 42 she came into the position when her President resigned. As Assistant to the President she became very familiar to Presidential activities. The only President without a doctorate degree, Carrie not only works

long hours during the week, she works on her degree on weekends. She is the only President with children still at home so she struggles to balance home and work.

Carrie started at the college as the Marketing Director then advanced to Executive Director of Advancement before becoming the Assistant to the President. She did not have a goal to become the President but thought why not apply and she got the job. She got the Presidency when there was only one other female President in the system of 33 colleges. She thought it was very hard to navigate in the network of a majority of white males. Even the local Rotary Club was all men when she joined.

Carrie likes the intersection of business and industry and education. She has formed partnerships with business that have resulted in support for the college. Since she has been at the college it has grown tremendously adding several new buildings to its campus.

Carrie values integrity and has always been trustworthy. She loves her faculty and loves connecting business and industry with her students. She believes you have to know the culture of the organization before connecting with the community. And, she advises, maintain balance between family and career.

Deana.

Deana always loved administration. She likes the process, working with adults and continuous improvement initiatives. She likes systematic change that moves an organization forward. She worked in K12 administration, as Special Education Director, Curriculum Director, and Assistant Superintendent before moving to the college as the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Now as President for the past 4 years and at 59 years young she is where she belongs.

Deana grew up feeling very confident in her abilities. Although she did not have career goals in high school, she knew she wanted to go to the University of Georgia. Early in her career she knew she wanted to be an administrator. She believed in leadership and the impact that leadership can have on an organization. She values education, especially technical education. She believes that the strength of an organization comes from people working together and strong processes to get things done properly.

In the southwest Georgia area where Deana lived and worked most of her career, there were no female superintendents in the K12 arena. However, when she came to the Technical College arena the glass ceiling had been broken. There were several women Presidents of Technical Colleges.

Deana has a strong belief in her abilities. She does not shy away from responsibility. She has a strong work ethic as do most of the female Presidents that were interviewed for this study. She loves that the college is stronger and is growing. She advises other women to work hard and grow stronger with each position you take. Work in positions that cross over divisions in the college. Pay attention to strong leaders whom you really respect. Deana is a very good role model.

Emily.

Emily is second youngest of the nine Presidents at age 44 and has been the President of her college for seven years. Her parents, who did not finish high school, encouraged Emily to go to college and instilled in her a strong work ethic. Emily majored in Marketing in undergraduate school and got her Masters in Business Administration before getting her doctorate in Educational Leadership. She always knew she wanted to be the boss. She thought she would be an administrator in higher education one day; and she is. First she took several positions in mid-

management at colleges throughout south Georgia before taking the Vice President of Student Affairs position at a Technical College. Then at another Technical College she got the Vice President of Academic Affairs position. She applied for a couple of Presidencies before getting the position at her college.

Emily has had mentors during her career that taught her and guided her; a former female President, current Presidents both male and female, and her major professor for her doctorate degree. She has also had a negative role model that taught her what not to do. As a participant and board member in Leadership Georgia, she watched great leaders lead and interact. As far as barriers, she said only covertly has she run up against discrimination, such as not being asked to play golf, or sit on the bank board or the hospital board. Because there are no female peers in the small town she lives and the rural area the college serves, she has no network with which to interact. That seems to be the only barrier she sees. She always knew she wanted to lead. Until college she thought she would be the leader in a private corporation. During her graduate years, she decided higher education was where to be. Emily wants the college to grow and the people she leads to grow. As a President, she says you have to grow. You have to learn to be presidential.

Emily is very intelligent (as are all the women interviewed) and is confident in her abilities to do the job of President. She is creative, can talk in public, is decisive, kind, and humbled by being a servant of the people. Some days she says she is not as confident as she is on other days. But, she says, you say to yourself, "you know how to do this, you have been through battles, you can do this." She often makes public speeches and enjoys it. Her confidence shows in her demeanor, in the way she carries herself. She said, "I don't think that there is a recipe for how that confidence shows up, but I think that there has certainly got to be

the idea that you can do some good things for the state of Georgia and the for the people you serve and I love it."

Felicia.

Felicia was encouraged to go to college by her parents; mom, a housewife with a high school education and dad, a Colonel in the Air Force and Base Commander. She has been president for 7 years. Early jobs were History Teacher, Reading Specialist, owner of a gift shop, Psychometrist, Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, college adjunct instructor, Director of Curriculum at a Technical College and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Felicia had many mentors and identified one in particular that led her to the Technical College. He and others encouraged her to become a president. She did not encounter any barriers on her career path; she was not discriminated against in any way because she was female. She started out in pre-med in college, but soon changed her major to history with a minor in psychology. She got her Masters degree in reading and a doctorate in education. She taught history for some years in the K12 system and then reading. She learned from every job she had.

Felicia had many different skills from teacher to store owner to Psychometrist to Vice President. She was very confident in her abilities as she progressed to the Presidency. She has a strong self-efficacy. At one point in her career she stayed home for a while to take care of her two girls. Although rewarding, that did not satisfy her need to be useful and she went back to work buying and managing a gift shop.

Felicia has been President for seven years and is 54 years young. Felicia believes that Technical Colleges change lives through education, workforce development and economic development. She believes in what Technical Colleges do. She likes the way a college can

change things quickly. She makes things happen by determining a plan of action and seeing the fruits of that action. She likes to accomplish something.

Gina.

Gina is the youngest female President at age 42 and has only been President for three years. Gina grew up in a small rural town in east Georgia. Her parents were divorced; mom, a registered nurse and dad, a dentist. She was raised to be independent and she is independent. Her early work roles prepared her for the presidency. She started out teaching marketing at the same Technical College of which she is president. Then she became Director of Admissions, then Registrar/Director of Financial Aid after which she became Vice President of Student Affairs. Until she became President of that same school, she switched technical colleges to take a job of Interim President/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Gina had a mentor in the President of the Technical College to which she switched. That President taught Gina the ins and outs of the job. She gave Gina advice and ran documents, policies, and decisions by Gina before acting on them. Gina also identified her mom as a mentor. As a single mom, she taught Gina to be independent, to support herself. Another mentor or role model was the Vice President of Economic Development who supported Gina in her decision to apply for the presidency. The only barrier Gina mentioned was breaking into the "good ole boy" network at Presidents Council. She mentioned having doors shut in her face as she was trying to get in college for the first time. She said that things did not come easy for her and she would have to work doubly hard to get what she needed. She learned from every job she had. She got her BBA in Marketing, her M.Ed. in Adult Education, and her Ed.S. in Educational Leadership. When she worked at the other Technical College, she worked on her doctorate and graduated with an Ed.D. in Educational Administration.

Gina had the skills and abilities to perform as President. The first two years were filled with fixing what was not working; building relationships especially. Gina built confidence as she worked more and more with her mentor, the President of the other Technical College where she worked. She worked with her as somewhat of an Executive Vice President rather than the Vice President of Academic Affairs. That gave her more confidence. She was involved in every aspect of the college, giving her those skills and abilities needed to perform as President.

Heather.

Heather‟s mother was a housewife and her father an accountant who owned his own business. Her mother was quite the entrepreneur in taking her four children to audition for modeling jobs or TV commercials. The money the children made was put into their college fund. Heather was encouraged to go to college to become an elementary school teacher, but after two years of college, decided she did not want to be an elementary teacher. She wanted in the medical field, so she got a job as a lab technician, got a Bachelors in Medical Lab Technology, was offered a teaching position at XYZ Tech and never left. She was a Department Chair, Dean, Vice President of Academic Affairs, then President.

Heather thought she never had a mentor. Nor had she come up against any closed doors. Perhaps it is because she spent almost her entire career at XYZ Tech. She went on to graduate school in education and then for her Ph.D. From the classroom to the President‟s office she took increasingly more difficult positions within the college all in the academic affairs arena. Like other female Presidents, she got to the President‟s position rather serendipitously. She again did not plan early on to be the President of a Technical College. She was in the right place at the right time. She has been President now for six years and is the oldest at age 64.

Ingrid.

Ingrid was the youngest of 3 girls who planned to marry and raise a family right out of high school. She was the first in the family to get a college degree. Her mother was a stay-at-home mom and her dad worked in civil service on an air base. Their expectations of Ingrid were to get married. It was not expected that she go to college but she did after working for a while. She started technical education career by teaching Computer Information Systems at a tech school in South Georgia. She became department chair of that same department soon after before obtaining the position of Vice President of Administration. She then moved to take a position of Vice President of Instruction. The President at the time decided then to combine Instruction and Student Services into one Vice President‟s position and she took that. She began applying for President‟s positions before finally moving and taking an Interim President‟s position then President. She has been President of a small Technical College and now at a much larger one. She has been a President for nine years total and is 54 years young.

Ingrid felt she had a mentor in two Presidents she worked under. The first being the President she had worked for the longest and the second at the college of which she finally became the President. The only barrier she mentioned was that of trying to balance being a single mom and accomplishing her career goals. Ingrid went on to get her Masters degree, a Specialist degree, and then her Ed.D.

Ingrid believes in perseverance, hard-headedness and bulldogged determination. Shy by nature, Ingrid learned to work with the community and the boards although it is something that still challenges her. She had great confidence in her ability to run a campus as she did almost every job there was at a Technical College. She does however lack some confidence when it comes to dealing with the community and working with the board. She had trouble balancing

her home life with her career. After two divorces, she raised three children on her own and it was difficult sometimes. She moved a couple of times to take better jobs which disrupted her children‟s lives.

Formative Experiences Influencing Their Career Development

This section addresses the first research question: What are the formative experiences, such as family background, gender role socialization, and early work roles, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President‟s career development? The very first question on the interview and a question on parental influence brought out many stories about the background of these women. The following are some of those.

Respect for education and work.

Most of the Presidents came from working class families. Four of the mothers were housewives; only two were educators, a librarian and a teacher. Of the other mothers, there was a factory worker, a nurse, and a bookkeeper. Four of the fathers were business men, two in the military, one professional, one factory worker, and one self-employed. Four fathers graduated from college, one held a professional doctorate (DDS). Three of the mothers graduated from college; two with Masters degrees and one with a Baccalaureate.

In each of these women‟s families was the expectation for the children to go college, except one. That woman‟s parents‟ expectation was for her to get married and raise a family. She did, but then went on to college in her mid-twenties. All the women chose traditional career paths: six of the nine chose Education; one chose Medical Lab Technology; and two chose Marketing. Six of the nine have experience teaching in the classroom, in both college and K12 settings.

When talking about the influence their parents had on their career choice, most said the parents did not have much influence. The recurring theme here is that the parents instilled a good work ethic in their children. Emily said of her parents,

> Neither one of my parents graduated from high school. We lived in a little south Georgia town called Ellaville, Georgia, it's close to Americus. My mom worked in a shirt factory and my dad worked in a mobile home plant. Neither one of those places exist, almost don't exist at all. Two blue collar parents, was a good living, good benefits, they gave us good work ethic, so neither one said go in this direction. But as I thought about it a lot over the years, both said you will get up and work every day, you will work when you're sick, you work and then you do other things. Work and then work, and then work, and then you do other things that are fun.

When asked if her parents influenced her career decision-making, Gina said,

> Oh yea, definitely. Well, no, not about my career choice just the importance of getting an education. Not so much as getting an education in the field but when you finish your education that you find something that you love to do. You're going to be doing it for a long time and it's not about the money, it's about what challenges you. They said just love what you do. I've kind of followed that advice all along and I've done a lot of different things. I guess for the most part just bloom where you're planted.

In total, eight of the nine Presidents said their parents expected them to go to college. Even the parents who did not finish high school encouraged their children to go to college. Heather's mother would load her four children in the car and take them to do modeling jobs, TV

and radio commercials. Heather was one of the original Crest kids. “Look mom, no cavities,” is what she said in the TV commercial for a popular tooth paste. Her mother saved the money the kids made from these jobs for their college education. She was quite the entrepreneur.

The expectation of going to college was not the only influence on the careers of these women, the parents of most them told them they could be whatever they wanted to be. Bonnie‟s parents were very supportive of her.

> But no matter what I thought I wanted to do, they were very, very supportive and they always told me I could do whatever I wanted to do. There was never a question about whether I could do it or not. Also, in my house, there was never a question of „Are you going to college? Are you going to grad school?‟ It was always „Where are you going?‟ So, it was inevitable… I knew if I lived with them I was going to have to do certain things and that was one of them. So they were very, very supportive and instrumental in who I am.

Although they did not influence the career decisions of these women, the parents did have certain expectations: a college education and hard work. The parents also instilled in the women a sense that they could do what they wanted to do, be whatever they wanted to be. These expectations shaped the values that these women carried with them to presidencies of colleges.

Traditional career goals.

Many of these women did not have a goal to be President of a college. In their teen years their career goals tended to lean toward more traditional occupations, such as teacher, nurse, or secretary. One actually worked as a secretary before going to college. As Heather put it,

> You know as a teenager in the early 60s, career goals, parents expected their kids to go to college. And for those of us that were, again female, the expectation,

> general expectation was you‟re going to go to college and you‟re going to be an elementary school teacher and I tried to follow that path and decided early on that wasn‟t something I wanted to do.

Even the President who wanted to be an attorney was persuaded by a college professor to get her teaching certificate. One President was in pre-med but left college with a teaching certificate. Both of these women eventually taught high school. As mentioned earlier, one woman‟s parents expected her to get married and raise a family, which she did until her mid-twenties when she went to college and majored in computer science and upon graduating from college she began teaching Computer Information Systems at a technical college.

Alice wanted to be a buyer for a department store. She majored in Marketing, but ended up teaching for 15 years. Carrie also majored in Marketing, but she never taught. One of her career goals was to teach at a university. She never did, but did find a job in marketing at the college at which she eventually became President. She said,

> So I think that that whole adult learning thing must have been in my mind at some point. But both my grandmothers were teachers and my mother was a teacher, so to me that was like there had been too many of us already doing that and I wanted to try something different. My dad was in business and so I was more into that aspect than education I thought, but then it‟s interesting, some of the jobs I started taking were a mixture of education and business industry training, working for trade associations and I had some freelance clients that I worked with and they were colleges so I thought it wasn‟t in my blood, but I think it is. Now my daughter is a special ed teacher and one of my grandmothers was a special ed teacher, too, so I do think there‟s some genetic thing there.

Gina began her college career in nursing. She said, "My mom was an RN and my dad was a dentist and so I was drawn to do something in the medical profession. You know, I always knew in the back of my mind that I was going to be a nurse." She eventually graduated with a degree in Marketing and taught Marketing Management in a technical college.

Emily wanted to be in business. She said,

> But I knew I wanted to be involved in the administration of a business and I like to think about what we do as a business that we're trying to work every day. We just have a different set of customers. We're still a business.

She never taught. She earned a baccalaureate in marketing and her master's degree in management before getting her Ed.D.

These women did not have the role models that younger women have today. Except for teacher, nurse, or secretary, career options were limited. The only role model they had when they were making career decisions was their high school teacher. So, they too chose a traditional path.

Key Developmental Factors

This section addresses the second research question: What are the key developmental factors, such as mentors and role models, barriers, and developmental learning experiences, which influence a female Georgia two-year college President's career development? Although these women grew up in the last half of the twentieth century, they encountered few barriers, had mentors and role models in their career development, and had earned terminal degrees.

Mentors and role models.

These women spoke of people who have influenced them over the years; people who encouraged them and people to whom they could call on when they needed advice. College professors, mothers, other Presidents, all were named as mentors or role models. Emily said,

> Some college professors, my lead professor from my doctorate to this day I would call him and say „Does this sound right? What should we do here?" He was invaluable to me and I think if you got the right one in your program, then they, their wisdom is just beyond what you can find if you, if you have that it"s just a tremendous asset to you.

Asking what relationships influenced her career, Heather said she had varying degrees of connectivity with people at work and with those outside of work, but she never had any one person she could call a mentor; whereas Bonnie was quick to mention the name of the previous President as her mentor. Felicia recalled people who helped her along the way.

> Again I feel like I wouldn"t be a President if someone had not said that to me, that they felt like that was a road that I should go down. I wouldn"t have applied for the director of curriculum job had Bob Turner not said this is something I think you"d be good at. Because again, I just didn"t see myself in that role. So yes, I relied heavily on influences from others that have been in the system to help me to grow. And I still continue to do that with the relationships with the people that are in the system now. You know we learn every day from somebody else that"s in our system and what they are doing and how they do things.

Ingrid said a couple of former Presidents influenced her, while Deana said she relied on those she respected in leadership who see the big picture, but can work the details. She said,

> I always would have someone, maybe more than one person, male or female, it didn"t really matter, that I would watch and really pay attention to how they managed things, how they communicated things and how they worked. It might not have been a mentor relationship, but it was awfully important for me to have a model.

Carrie mentioned her former President and boss who mentored her along with a former Governor, and a CEO at a major corporation. Alice said her mother was an inspiration.

> I think that probably my mother was one of the biggest inspirations I had because she and her friends taught for a long time. I"m from here and we had a wonderful school system thanks to their commitment to their jobs and to the students and they always had extra-curricular, they were the ones that helped students with all their extra-curricular activities and the sponsors and that type of thing. They were just very involved and they really cared about the student and making the school system a great school system and that"s kind of what I"ve tried to do here even though we"re a small, rural area, we can still be quality. That"s one of the things that we really pride ourselves on. So I would say of all the people, probably my mother was my biggest inspiration.

Gina also mentioned her mom as an inspiration giving her unforgettable advice and encouragement.

> And of course there"s my Mom. My parents divorced when I was six so I was raised to be very independent and my Mom put herself through nursing school and worked very hard to take care of my brother and I. So she always told me to try to be able to support yourself.

Mentors and role models are key influences on most the Presidents I interviewed. Whether a former President, a current President, or a mother, these relationships helped encourage these women to be a President and/or taught them valuable lessons that they use on the job.

Encountering barriers.

All the women were asked if they had encountered any barriers during their career development. Generally the answer was no. The barrier that was most mentioned was breaking through the "good ‚ole boy" network that was the presidency when they came on as President. As Gina stated,

> But Professionally, I would say the hardest thing for me was trying to overcome the ‚good ole boy", the guy"s kind of world, the man"s world camaraderie. I don"t know if you remember back when Brown was here there was one female President, maybe two. Even as a VP going to those meetings and seeing the Presidents you could tell or you could see the camaraderie with the men and Dr. Brown but not so much with the women. And then, you know as a female in management there has to be a fine line that women have to walk that men don"t have to because if you"re too tough you"re considered a Bitch. If you"re too emotional you"re considered you"re not tough enough. I mean, if you talk too much you"re just whining. So, there are those stereotypes that you just have to be so careful especially in the South.

Another President mentioned being a single mom was a barrier. She said the long hours took a toll on her kids. Ingrid said, "I think just trying to balance being a single mom and

accomplishing my career goals was the major barrier." And the African-American President said she encountered sexism and racism.

> Racism, sexism… I can tell you this, Sue, the first Presidents council that I went to was all men and Becky Howard. I looked and I thought to myself, and I said it aloud, I said „I don‟t see me in that picture. I just don‟t see me in that picture. But they‟re making decisions about me.‟

She goes on to say that she still sees sexism and racism even among her peers.

Carrie also mentioned the sexism when she was first President. She walked in to her first Presidents Council meeting and was told by a staffer the meeting was just for Presidents. Before she could react, the Commissioner at the time quickly put the staffer in his place and invited Carrie in to the meeting. She went on to say,

> So that was not an easy transition because at the time I was 42, I was one of the only females, there were a lot of people, Pete Johnson, Charley Mason, all that vintage that were nice but just kept you a little bit at arm‟s length. So it was hard to know how to play that because you didn‟t want to be friendly because you didn‟t want to end up with the wild crowd that went out drinking, but you didn‟t want to be seen as a snob or whatever. It took a while to navigate that and probably the most comfortable I felt in this role, as far as the state system goes, has been since Felicia took over and Judy Stein took over at LMN Tech because they‟re both great friends. It‟s allowed me to have someone that I really feel like I can open myself up to.

Deana encountered the same barriers in the K12 system and was glad when she came to the technical college and the glass ceiling for women had been broken. She was an assistant

superintendent and she said at superintendents meetings the "suits" sat up front and the "skirts" sat in the back. "Then the suits would look back at the skirts, „You got that?" „Yes, we have that and we"ll manage and make it happen."

Emily thought barriers were encountered in a covert fashion. She said,

> I think because of the laws that exist where you can"t openly discriminate, there"s probably some covert things, meaning I may not be asked to be on the hospital board, I might not be on a bank board, I don"t get asked to be, go on golfing trips or hunting trips, so you get some of that when you"re in a small South Georgia community where you have no female peers. That"s probably it. So there are some of those barriers.

When asked what barriers they encountered, Felicia and Heather said none. Felicia said she "pretty much did what she wanted to do and the times she wanted to do them." Heather said she did not have any doors closed to her.

Although they encountered some barriers in their careers, these female Presidents basically worked their ways up their respective ladders. Barriers did not have a huge influence on their career development. Emily said due to nondiscrimination laws, she just did not think there would be any barriers anymore. But from being a single mom, the "good „ole boy" network, to sexism and racism even today, Emily may be right about that covert fashion in which sexism occurs.

Developmental learning experiences.

Most of the women stated that they had learned the ropes from their former President. Gina and Ingrid had been Interim Presidents at a time before they became President. Two had been Special Assistant to the President and worked with Boards of Directors for their colleges.

But for others, there was a learning curve. Felicia stated it was about two years into her presidency when she was comfortable with it. It was their increasingly complex administrative jobs that provided them with opportunities to learn how their colleges were governed, funded, and managed.

Just before getting the job of President, six of the women were Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs (VPAA) and one was Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA). One of the women was Assistant to the President and one was both VPAA and VPSA, a combined position. Three of the women began their careers in K12 schools teaching. One worked in administration for the public school system. Three began as an instructor at a technical college. One was a Marketing Director and one was the Admissions Director in Student Services.

Some of the Presidents had to learn new behaviors when they became President. When asked if she had to change her behavior in any way to be President, Gina said she had to learn patience and to delegate. "I didn"t have to be patient because I was doing the work and I was getting it done," she said. Now others had to do the work, and she had to be patient until it got done.

Alice said that she learned that you have to be more cognizant of your behavior in public. You are always in the public eye. "I live in a small town and certain people are very, very conservative and so you have to take that into consideration because I am representing the college at all times" she said. Felicia learned about politics. She said,

> I had to learn not to be so direct, I had to learn to go through the back door. I had to learn to swallow. I had to learn that every fight is not a battle that you need to battle right now. Sometimes you have to lose the battle in order to win the war.

Carrie said she learned to be more assertive. Deana stated you use a different skill set when you solve problems. You have "to think differently about how you process information, how you gather information, how you document what you're doing." Emily stated she learned she should only do what a President does. Look at the big picture and don't get bogged down in the minutia.

The key developmental experiences the Presidents incurred were with mentors and role models, learning to overcome barriers and learning through experience. All but one of the Presidents hold a doctorate degree. Emily thought it very important that you have a doctorate to be a President. This is an important point for those who aspire to the presidency.

Personal Factors

This section is focused on the third research question: What are the personal factors, such as skills and abilities, career-family conflicts, and likes and dislikes which influence a female Georgia two-year college President's career development? These women spoke of the importance of the skills, abilities, and values one needs to possess in order to be a President. Only a few had any career-family conflict. Their likes and dislikes provide valuable information to aspiring female Presidents.

Skills, abilities, and values.

A few of the Presidents thought that a background in teaching was very helpful. Six of the nine Presidents taught in the classroom at either a high school or a college. Alice said, "I think having a background in education and teaching and being in the classroom helped a great deal because I have a lot of empathy for instructors and for the students." She also pointed out that Presidents need to have a vision and trust in their staff. Bonnie said Presidents have to believe that everybody can learn. Also, be fair in all decisions. While Carrie and Heather

believe Presidents must have integrity. Carrie said, "I think it has to be you know your very core; integrity has to be that very core thing."

Deana believes Presidents need to love the work and the people you work with. While Emily stated,

> You‟ve got to be smart, I think you‟ve got to have your doctorate, I mean you‟ve got to be everything that is a minimum and more to be a President. The skills, the drive, the determination, the ability to talk in public, I think those are all just a given. You‟ve got to have all of those.

She also said that Presidents need to be creative and kind to people. And Felicia thinks that Presidents have to believe in what they do as a college. While Gina thinks Presidents must value people and relationships. Ingrid says to be hard-headed, persevere and have a bull-dogged determination.

Two of the Presidents said their background in business helped them in budgeting. But as far as skills, abilities and values are concerned, be smart, have a doctorate, value integrity and honesty, and put the students first. Having a background in teaching is also good to have. Most importantly, have faith in your abilities; which leads to the next section.

Career-family conflict.

Not many of the women mentioned any career-family conflicts. Carrie mentioned she put in such long hours during the week and went to school on the weekends and could not do all the things her children wanted her to do. She said,

> I won‟t say that it had a negative effect on the children. My kids have turned out fabulous and they‟re proud of the college and what we do. My marriage didn‟t make it. I don‟t know if that was directly attributed to the job or not but I do think

> it can put a strain on your closest relationships because it does demand so much of your time.

Ingrid‟s ambition also threatened her marriage. She wanted to move to take a higher position and her husband would not. So they divorced.

All the Presidents had children except two, but mostly their children had grown and moved out of the house. All but one is married, some for the second or third time, but married. Ingrid said it was hard on her kids; trying to be a single mom and a President was hard on them. Aside from those few conflicts explained above, there were not any career-family conflicts mentioned.

Likes and dislikes.

The women responded to what they liked and disliked about their job as President and some of the answers were similar. Alice and Felicia expressed the opinion that they both liked the creativity associated with the job. Coming up with good ideas for new programs and seeing them to fruition. Bonnie and Heather like seeing the students succeed and graduate. Carrie and Emily like the **i**ntersection of business and education with Emily expressing that it is also like running a business. She said,

> I love being in higher ed. I love that. I love the successes of our students. I love that we supply businesses with the employees they need. I love that you walk on any college campus, technical college campus, and you‟re running about 25 small businesses. You‟re running an air conditioning shop, you‟re running a cosmetology shop, you‟re running a welding shop, you‟re running a truck driving shop, you‟re running an accounting shop. There‟s all these businesses; automotive, automotive collision, neuromuscular, you‟ve got a radiology

> department, you‟re running all these small businesses essentially on your campus and that‟s really, really powerful to be a part of. If I ever think about leaving the technical college, I think „Where would, what would be better than this? What‟s better than what we‟re doing?‟

That enthusiasm was also expressed in Carrie‟s response when she said, “What do I love the most? I guess it would be the bringing together of the business leaders and/or industry leaders and connecting them with our students.”

Deana says she likes that the college has grown and the staff and faculty have also grown as they update their credentials. Gina likes that she can help change people‟s lives; getting them employed. Ingrid likes the feedback you get from the community.

Some of the dislikes were not so similar from President to President. Alice and Heather mentioned trying to manage with all the budget cuts. Alice also mentioned personnel issues being a dislike of hers, as did Gina who explained you cannot make everybody happy. Bonnie dislikes the politics saying,

> The politics is what I hate, I hate the politics, I hate that. But, I‟ve learned to do it and I think I do it pretty well, but I don‟t like it because the nature of politics means that you have to give and take and to some degree the nature of it is dirty. It‟s hard not to get in the dirt with them. I have to fight to stay out of the dirt and I don‟t like that part of it.

Carrie dislikes long meetings while Deana likes the details of the job the least. Emily dislikes people who think we are “votech or your daddy‟s trade school.” Gina says that having no privacy due to living in the same small town in which she works is what she likes the least. Ingrid surprisingly dislikes meeting new people due to her shyness.

Likes and dislikes fits in this category of personal factors that influenced the career development of these Presidents because it provides women who aspire to be President with honest information about the positives and negatives with which the job deals. It also shows the similarities and differences these women have in their natures.

Personal factors include these skills, abilities and values: be smart, have a doctorate, value integrity and honesty, and put the students first. It only took two Presidents a couple of years to get comfortable in their positions. Most of the Presidents were confident when they started the presidency. Very few career-family conflicts were mentioned. Their likes and dislikes provide valuable lessons to other women.

Socialization Factors

This section focuses on the last research question: How did socialization experiences affect the self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals of the female Presidents? Although there were no interview questions directly associated with this question, the women did mention how they were brought up and what affected their self-efficacy, expectations, and goals.

Self-efficacy.

The majority of the women in this study were socialized in a traditional southern, conservative, female manner. All but one was expected to go to college from high school. Ingrid was expected to get married and raise a family. She went to college later. The women chose rather traditional college majors; education, marketing, and nursing. Many of them taught in either K12 schools or colleges. A few had a variety of jobs outside of education, but as a rule they made their careers as teachers or education administrators.

Women are socialized differently from men and certain opportunities are not open them. This affects a woman‟s confidence in her abilities (Shreiber, 1998). A few of these women were

told by their parents that they could be what they wanted to be and do what they wanted to do. However, except for a few whose mothers were teachers or nurses, their parents did not influence their career decisions. Lent and Brown, (1996) identified self-efficacy and outcome expectations as factors that influence women‟s career choice behavior. The lower the self-efficacy, the more certain that women will choose traditionally female occupations.

In fact, the only role models these women had were in positions that are traditionally female jobs. There were few nontraditional role models as they grew in their careers. Alice had one role model who was the female President of a University in Georgia. Tina, Bonnie, and Gina had female Technical College Presidents as role models and mentors. Others said they were mentored by women in administrative positions, but most mentors were men.

The women in this study began their careers in traditional jobs, but as they climbed the administrative ladder their confidence was growing. When they finally became Vice President or Assistant to the President did they finally have the confidence to apply for Presidencies.

Outcome expectations.

Outcome expectations are what a person believes is the outcome of a certain behavior. Lent and Brown (1996) stated that a woman‟s negative or unfavorable outcome expectations will prevent her from choosing certain careers. The expectations of experiencing barriers or certain contextual factors (sexual discrimination, sexual harassment) or negative outcome expectations may also prevent women from choosing nontraditional occupations (Lent & Brown, 1996). As the women in this study grew professionally, their outcome expectations became more positive. For example, Gina and others said they experienced the barrier of the “good ole boy” network. As they became more confident in their positions that barrier was reduced.

Personal goals.

Personal goals can be defined as a determination to engage in a particular behavior or activity or to effect a particular future outcome. By setting goals a person can help to organize and guide their behavior (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). The women in this study set goals as their self-efficacy grew and their outcome expectations became more positive. For example, Heather did not know she wanted to become President until she was confident in her role as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Assistant to the President. The same thing happened to Alice, Carrie, and Felicia.

Alice was socialized as thinking she could do what she wanted. She set personal goals and went for them confidently. She had faith in her abilities to do a good job. Her confidence grew as she performed the duties of the President. Because of her experience as President, she has strong self-efficacy. Carrie was led to believe by her parents that she could do what she wanted to do. Uncertain of what she wanted to major in at college, she changed her major quite a few times at first. Her personal goals had not matured. Although she did not have the goal of becoming President, when she did get the job, her confidence quickly grew over the first couple of years.

Deana has a lot of confidence in her abilities. As a child she was constantly praised by her parents for her hard work. She developed a strong self-efficacy early on and built on her confidence to be a leader as she progressed through her career. She had personal goals to be a leader early on. Now in the years since she has been a President, she is comfortable in her position.

Emily was brought up as the oldest of three children by parents with less than a high school diploma in a small rural South Georgia town. College was always a goal for the children,

although her sister raised a family and her brother worked in manufacturing. Since childhood she always wanted to be the boss, the leader. That instilled great confidence in her skills and abilities. She had a strong self-efficacy and had personal goals that came to fruition.

Felicia said that she always had confidence in herself to accomplish her goals, however she did not feel 100% sure that she could do everything when she started her presidency. "So you build that confidence as you continue and grow and learn in the job," she said. She is very comfortable in her position now. Gina was raised by a single mom as her parents divorced when she was young. She was brought up to be independent and able to support herself. Her parents stressed getting an education and that you work at something you love and do it as well as you can. She worked hard for what she needed and, although a few doors were slammed in her face early on, she built self-confidence as she learned. Her expectations were for success in all aspects of the job, no matter what job it was. She set a goal to be President of the Technical College in her home town as a Vice President of Academic Affairs and she met that goal.

Heather was brought up as a model and an actress. She was socialized to believe as a woman your career goals were limited. However, it did not take her long to choose a career that was suited to her. College was not what she expected at first, so she dropped out to pursue a career in the health field. Through her career she has built a sense of confidence in her abilities to do tougher and tougher jobs. As President, she has a strong self-efficacy.

Ingrid was brought up with the expectation she would find a good man and get married. She was the only one of three girls to go to college; however, after a career of moving ahead she developed a strong self-efficacy. She had early goals of becoming a President and applied several times until the right position came open.

Summary.

Most of the Presidents were brought up thinking they could be whatever they wanted to be. However, most of them came out of college with an education degree and/or a teaching certificate. Carrie, Emily and Gina majored in Business Administration (Marketing) but eventually got higher degrees in education. Heather majored in Medical Lab Technology, but got her master‟s in Education. As mentioned earlier, six out of the nine women became teachers, a traditional career path for women. Eight out of nine have their doctorate.

All of the women have a strong sense of self-confidence, even though a couple of them said their confidence grew during their presidency. Almost all had a career goal as a teen, but only two knew at a young age they wanted to be President of the college someday. They just grew into the position taking tougher and tougher jobs in the college. They all built a strong self-efficacy over the years.

Advice to Women

One theme that came out of the analysis did not relate to any of the four research questions; that is the Presidents‟ advice they gave to women who aspire to be President. One of the last questions I asked, this question yielded some very good advice. For example, Alice said to understand the educational process, move up to mid-management, and know how to manage people. She said to have a good background in budgeting. Go to executive leadership training programs and get a doctorate. Also she said, as did Ingrid, work in different jobs at different colleges to get a variety of skills in a variety of environments. Bonnie‟s advice was,

> Find yourself in the picture. Place yourself there and know that you can be in the picture. If you don‟t have a good mentor, seek out a good mentor because I think that‟s critical too. One of the things that I‟m committed to doing and I

> haven‟t been able to do a whole lot of it, but I‟m committed to showing other women like me that they too can be in this picture and that all you have to do is have the desire and the academic preparation and you can do it if you really, really want to do it.

Carrie said to know your organization in and out. Deana and Emily said get a job in every department in the college - cross train. As Deana said, "If you‟re in academic affairs, volunteer to be on the college catalog committee that might be operated by student affairs. Somehow get yourself involved in something other than in your niche."

Felicia said to be conservative; weigh all the options; be fair. "Value each person for who they are and what they are. Try to put that together in a way that it works. Don‟t be afraid to move people around." Gina advised never give up, work hard, do not be afraid to ask questions, and do not be afraid of trying something new. Heather said to work really, really hard and expand the scope of your responsibilities. Volunteer to do more with less, be used to long hours. Then she said,

> I would say don‟t sacrifice principles for advancement because I think women will always have some sort of a stigma attached to movement up within an organization or particular career field. Moving up the career ladder, because covertly I think people will always look and say what did you do special to get where you are. And you know the honest answer should be I worked hard and I earned it.

And finally Ingrid said to be prepared to sacrifice. Give 95% of your life to your goals. Do things well and broaden your knowledge base.

This advice to women who aspire to be a President is invaluable. I am sure there is much more to say about how to get to the presidency but taking this advice will lead a woman closer to it.

Chapter Summary

The participants in this study were nine sitting female Presidents of technical colleges in Georgia. The 9 were part of 11 total USG and TCSG two-year colleges with female Presidents. Two of the Presidents chose not to be interviewed. The average age was 52 and the average years in the presidency was 7.33. Four are first generation college graduates. Six of the nine taught in the classroom. All but one have their doctorate degree.

These data were triangulated using interview transcripts, demographic questionnaires, and resumes. This basic qualitative study analyzed the transcripts of all the interviews and came up with themes. Table 1 shows the results of the questionnaire. With five printed resumes and information collected from the questionnaires and interviews, all of the research questions were answered. Most of the themes would fall under four research questions.

These women did not have the role models that younger women have today. Except for teacher, nurse, or secretary, career options were limited. The only role model they had when they were making career decisions was their high school teacher. So, they too chose a traditional path.

The key developmental experiences the Presidents incurred were with mentors and role models, learning to overcome barriers and learning through experience. All but one of the Presidents hold a doctorate degree. Emily thought it very important that you have a doctorate to be a President. This is an important point for those who aspire to the presidency.

Personal factors include these skills, abilities and values: be smart, value integrity and honesty, and put the students first. It only took two Presidents a couple of years to get comfortable in their positions. Most of the Presidents were confident when they started the presidency. Very few career-family conflicts were mentioned. Their likes and dislikes are valuable lessons.

All the Presidents seem to maintain a high degree of self-efficacy. Some of this was due to their socialization as young adults and some has been acquired over the years as the women took tougher and tougher positions within the college. All are very confident in their abilities and quite successful as Presidents.

The wealth of advice given by these women to other women aspiring to be President was invaluable. It was varied and succinct. They placed emphasis on knowing the organization by taking jobs in each department in the college. They emphasized that working at a variety of colleges would also benefit the women coming through the ranks. Taking their advice would make a woman‟s journey to a college presidency easier.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influenced the career development of female Presidents of two-year colleges in Georgia. This chapter includes a summary of the findings of the study with conclusions, implications for research and practice, and a conclusion.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings in this chapter are organized by sections focusing on the four research questions which guided this study. They include Formative Experiences which delineate the early experiences that influenced the career development of the participants; Key Developmental Factors which described the work roles, learning experiences and mentors and role models that influenced the participants and their career development; Personal Factors which described the skills and abilities, career-family conflicts and self-confidence that influenced the participant‟s career development; and Socialization Factors and their affect on self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Each of these categories is discussed with some concluding comments.

Formative experiences.

The first finding in this study was that formative experiences (early family and work experiences) influenced these women‟s career development. These women grew up in working class families with a work ethic that can be directly attributable to their upbringing. There was

an expectation from their parents that these women attend college although most of their parents did not. Additionally, most of the women were supported in selecting a profession or job that they wanted to do and encouraged to do it well.

But as teens, these women‟s career goals leaned toward more traditional occupations. Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell (1998) found that for most women, models of women in professional roles tend to be teachers, nurses, or social workers. Some of the women mentioned that their mothers and grandmothers were teachers or nurses and so they in turn majored in education and nursing in undergraduate school. These were the role models these women had grown up admiring. There were few nontraditional role models to influence these women. Morrissey (2002) refers to a study by Reddin (1997)who

> identified the lack of exposure to female role models in nontraditional careers as a factor in limiting women‟s career development, while exposure to professional female role models was a factor in enhancing women‟s career development. Reddin found that when women are exposed to females in professional careers, „they become aware of the meaning work can have in one‟s life, the various professions one can have, the ways one can combine work and family, and the availability of success‟ (p. 120). (Morrissey, 2002, p. 127)

With the average age of 52, most of the women in this study went to college in the 1970s and 1980s. Their career options were limited. The closest role models were their mothers or their female high school teachers. Although their parents had little influence on the women‟s career choice, their influence provided the women with the values of hard work and a good education that helped them become college Presidents.

Making the transition to the technical college happen rather serendipitously. They arrived on the technical college campus in various positions, including teaching positions, administrative positions, marketing positions, or positions in student services. The one thing they have in common is that they stayed in the college system, taking on increasingly responsible positions throughout their journey which led them to the Presidency.

The participants‟ formative experiences included socialization, early work roles and serendipitous movement throughout their college career. As young adults they chose traditional work roles for women (Shreiber, 1998). With few professional role models, their career options were limited (Morrissey, 2002; Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998). These women were able to grow beyond social expectations and move into career positions which were not modeled to them but which they can model for future generations of women who aspire to the position of college President.

Key developmental factors.

The second finding in the study was that key developmental factors influenced the career development of these women Presidents. First, the women were influenced by what they called mentors and role models. They were also influenced by some barriers they encountered. Their developmental learning experiences through formal education, work experience and professional development also influenced their career development.

The women in this study spoke of people who had influenced them over the years; people who encouraged them and gave them advice. They were mostly men in positions of leadership whom they admired. They were college professors, other Presidents, and in a few cases fathers and mothers. Betz (2008) says “One of the most crucial areas of support is that from families, especially parents and older relatives, and this has been found true for women of all racial and

ethnic groups" (p. 732). The primary influence these mentors had on the women was encouraging them to go to college and to apply for more complex jobs including that of President. But were they mentors, or just guides who provided them with encouragement to grow in their careers? Hansman (1998) described career-related mentors and psychosocial mentors. She states,

> Psychosocial mentors enhance protégés‟ esteem and confidence and are dependent on interpersonal dynamics and emotional bonds. Some studies suggest that women are more comfortable within psychosocial mentoring relationships (Kram and Isabella, 1985; Noe, 1988). Career-related mentors may also increase self-esteem and confidence, but these mentors may be more likely to sponsor protégés, introduce them to the "right" people, protect protégés from organizational climate, and help protégés prepare for advancement and obtain promotions. Career-related mentors are more likely to help protégés develop marketable skills, behaviors, and attitudes related to the workplace. (p. 64)

The men and women mentoring the female presidents in this study were mostly career-related mentors, but in at least three cases (Bonnie, Gina, and Felicia) they also may have been psychosocial mentors.

Barriers such as sex discrimination, sexual harassment and having to fill multiple roles have a direct influence on women‟s career development (Betz, 2008). The discrimination barrier is crucial in women‟s attempts to attain equity in the workplace (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). Betz (2008) states, "Sexual harassment also continues to be a major problem in the workplace, with serious consequences for both women and organizations" (p. 735).

Although most Presidents said they never encountered any barriers, they all, nonetheless, chose traditional careers. Nontraditional, male-dominated occupations were not an option for them. Yet, none of them mentioned having fewer career options as a barrier. Perhaps they did witness some barriers, but were not aware of them or ignored them due to their own paradigms or their own high confidence levels. Brown & Lent (1996) explain that the basic tenets of Social Cognitive Career Theory suggest that contextual factors (perceived barriers like discrimination) constitute the "perceived opportunity structure" (p. 354) within which career plans are developed and implemented. Even if people possess high levels of career self-efficacy, high outcome expectations, and interests that are congruent with those expectations, they may still avoid selecting a particular career if they perceive insurmountable barriers to career entry or career goal attainment. Brown & Lent (1996) add that, "…even persons with well-developed and differentiated interest in a particular career path will be unlikely to pursue that path if they perceive (accurately or inaccurately) substantial barriers to entering or advancing in that career" (p. 355).

It is this researcher"s belief that the perceived barriers to career development influenced the women in this study to choose traditional careers; that the "good ole boy" network proved difficult to break into and may have postponed the women"s career movement to the top; and that in the south, with more conservative attitudes, these women may have tolerated more discrimination and harassment than women in more liberal parts of the country. Also, the absence of nontraditional role models is a barrier. Role models may be especially important to women because a lack of female role models in nontraditional careers (e.g., engineering, science) has been identified as a barrier for women who choose to enter these professions (Quimby &

DeSantis, 2006). Only four of the Presidents (Alice, Bonnie, Emily, and Dawn) stated their role model was a female college President. Women need more successful women as role models.

Their formal learning experiences also influenced their career development. Three of the women said they thought it was imperative that a President have a doctorate degree. More informal learning was from their President in office just prior to them taking the position. They learned how to govern, fund, and manage a college through prior jobs as Director, Vice President, or Executive Assistant. They had worked in several departments of the college and knew what made the college tick. Most had been the Vice President of Academic Affairs, a position from which Presidents are often chosen (Amy et al., 2002).

A few of the women participated in leadership development workshops and seminars. One had gone through leadership training through the Chamber of Commerce and others went through The Leadership Institute of the League for Innovation. There the women met other women in leadership roles and began networking. As members of the Presidents Council, these women Presidents have the opportunity to participate in monthly meetings where they network and learn from each other.

These key developmental factors influenced the women‟s career development; their mentors and role models; the obstacles they met on their career journey; and the learning and development in which they engaged. The women in this study chose traditional occupations, and with encouragement from mentors and role models, overcame barriers to move into more complex jobs and eventually to the presidency.

Personal factors.

Another finding was that personal factors influence the career development of female college Presidents. Skills, abilities, values and beliefs, career-family conflict, and likes and dislikes influenced the women‟s career development.

Summarizing the findings, six of the Presidents thought that a background in teaching was very helpful. The women with majors in undergraduate school in business thought that gave them a good background in managing a budget. Creativity was described as an ability needed for the job. Others spoke about values like integrity, drive, and determination. Another of the women emphasized the importance of being fair in dealings with people. Another added that a President has to see the big picture but also know how to work the details.

All the women in this study had a deep commitment to their jobs. They were persistent, connected, and passionate. Richie et al. (1997) studied high achieving African-American and white women and their personal backgrounds, socio-cultural conditions, current context and core stories. They found that these women possessed certain skills that made them successful; persistence, connection, and passion. Betz (2008) describes it this way,

> Persistence is critical to succeeding in the face of obstacles, and strong self-efficacy expectations for one‟s career, self-esteem, and sense of purpose are essential to persistence. Connection refers to the essential part played by familial and peer/friend support in facilitating persistence in one‟s goals. Finally passion is, for some women, loving what they do; for others, it‟s feeling that they have made a difference in the world. (p. 738)

Work and family conflict arises when the demands of work interfere with family demands (Wentling, 1998). Work and family conflict is seen as a woman‟s issue and as long as

this remains to be seen as a woman‟s issue the workplace culture will remain unsympathetic to such conflicts. Marks & Houston (2002) discuss the nature of women‟s work and how women are relegated to lower paying jobs, reach a lower career achievement level, and have lower earning power. Some contribute this to women prioritizing their family role above their working role. Recent research shows that young people put a high value on both work and family roles, but they tend to take up traditional gender-specific roles (Marks & Houston, 2002). Wentling (1998) says that, "Women‟s successful career development will involve linking family needs to career decisions, so that work and family roles are in balance" (p. 21).

The women in this study spoke of career-family conflict very little. This is unusual since most of them had children at home as they progressed in their careers. Two of the Presidents did mention that the relationships with their children suffered from there not being enough time in the day. Some of their marriages suffered as well; most of the Presidents are in a second or third marriage. Playing multiple roles, (administrator at the college, wife, and mother) usually affects a woman‟s career development. Wentling (1998) states, "Constant interference of family with work responsibilities can hinder women‟s career progression, decrease satisfaction with work, interfere with concentration on the job, increase absenteeism, and perhaps eventually lead to turnover." It would be interesting to probe the women in this study further about this issue.

Skills, abilities, and values, and career-family conflict make up the themes that emerged for personal factors that influence a woman‟s career development in this study. Each participant in this study brought with her different skills and values; yet, the combination with the other factors influencing the development of these women have made them successful. Although conflicts with career and family may have added barriers, these women were successful in overcoming them and being stronger as a result.

Socialization factors.

This section summarizes the collected data on how socialization of these women influenced their self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Most of these women were reared in working class homes with a housewife/mother and a blue collar father. All but one set of the parents graduated from high school and seven sets had at least one parent who graduated college. A few of the women stayed in the area in which they grew up which were mostly rural areas or small towns with little job opportunities for them to return to after college.

The one consistent expectation in all these families was that the children would go to college. The women‟s parents were very supportive of their decision-making. Many of the Presidents were told they could be whatever they wanted to be and to follow their dreams. Their socialization, however, took a traditionally female approach. The most dramatic was the parental expectation of one of the women in this study to get married and have a family right out of high school. Most of the other expectations were more subtle when some of the mothers‟ choice of occupations influenced them to choose a traditional female-dominated career.

All of the women in this study have a strong self-efficacy which Bandura (1986) described as the belief in your abilities to perform. Albert and Luzzo (1999) look at how outcomes and goals play an important role in accomplishing their jobs. “Outcome expectations are personal beliefs about the probable outcome of a behavior and personal goals are determinations to engage in a particular behavior” (Albert & Luzzo, 1999, p. 432). “The higher the level of a person‟s vocational or career self-efficacy, the more competent and prepared the person is to handle career tasks and solve career problems” (Chen, 2006, p. 132). Brown &Lent (1996) are the fathers of Social Cognitive Career Theory which has its basis in Albert Bandura‟s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory. They suggest that “some persons may prematurely eliminate

potentially rewarding occupational pursuits because of inaccurate self-efficacy, outcome expectations, or both" (Brown & Lent, 1996, p. 355). Coogan and Chen (2007) more recently emphasized that "women who eliminate nontraditional career opportunities due to low self-efficacy limit their opportunities of finding satisfying and well-paying jobs" (p. 197). This could be reflective of the developmental transition that occurred in some of the women of this study. They may have had lower self-efficacy when they chose their college majors leading them initially into more traditionally female careers in education, marketing, and nursing. Their work experiences, growing self-efficacy, strength of character, and ensuing career opportunities created their opportunity to move into the nontraditional role of college President.

To reiterate the point, these women did not start with a career goal of being a college President. As they took successively more responsible administrative positions, their self-confidence grew. At a point in their careers (when they were Vice President or Assistant to the President), they reached a confidence level that they would be successful at the presidency. It was at this point that it became a career goal. As they developed skills along their path to the presidency they became more efficacious, expected more positive outcomes, and set higher personal goals. Self-efficacy beliefs and expectations of positive outcomes were determinates of these women‟s career choice to be President.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore the career development of female two-year college Presidents. The first chapter introduces the study, outlines the problem statement, and lays a theoretical foundation to the study. The second chapter reviews literature relevant to early career development theory, women‟s career development, and the career development of women in leadership. Chapter 3 describes the research method, sample selection, data collection and

analysis methods, and actions for validity and reliability. Chapter four presents the data as they relate to four research areas: 1. Formative factors that influenced the women‟s career development; 2. Key developmental factors that influenced their career development; 3. Personal factors that may have influenced their career development; and 4. Socialization factors that may have affected their self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings by those same research areas.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the findings. Key findings are that the participants‟ formative experiences, key developmental factors, personal factors, and socialization factors all had an influence in their career development. Early in their careers most of the women in this study chose traditionally female-oriented occupations to pursue. Most studied education in college or got a teaching certificate upon graduating, and most taught in either a K12 classroom or a college classroom. They discovered that their mentors and role models were men, most of whom were either college professors or Presidents. Most hold doctoral degrees, which they obtained after starting their career at the college level. They discovered that their goal to be the President came after taking increasingly more complex positions in the college and building the confidence they needed to be President.

One of the more interesting observations in this study was gleaned from the last question of the interview; is there anything more you wish to say to me about your journey to the presidency? Their level of accomplishment and personal satisfaction is expressed in their anecdotal comments. Most said it has been hard work, but they would not have done it differently; they love what they do; they would not have it any other way; and they are totally satisfied with their job. As Bonnie said, “I think I‟m in the very best place that I‟ve ever been in my life right now.”

The results of this study can be beneficial to women who have aspirations of becoming a college President. It is important to obtain the necessary credentials or degrees, become confident in the operation of a college through holding strategic positions, and seek a mentor. Strike a balance between home and work and seek out nontraditional role models. Also, get experience in the Vice President of Academic Affairs position prior to applying for the Presidency. These women think the rewards were worth the challenge.

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative study was conducted to increase understanding of the influences that different factors had on the career development of female two-year college Presidents. It was not done to formulate theory or to test theory. In discussing the generalizability of qualitative research, Merriam (2001) points out that in qualitative research a "small, nonrandom sample is selected precisely *because* the researcher wishes to understand the participant in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (p. 208). Its generalizability is a limitation of this study. The research sample is small and focused on a particular occupation. The participants were purposefully selected to include only those women who were Presidents at two-year colleges; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized for a larger population.

Another limitation was the length of the interviews. While one lasted an hour and a half, some only lasted for forty minutes. The average length was fifty-five minutes. Because of the Presidents" schedules, follow-up interviews with them were not an option. All of the Presidents received the transcript of the interview along with this researcher"s analysis of their interviews; none made any edits or changes to the transcript. The failure to clarify or probe key understandings was a limitation of the study.

Another limitation was that only five of the Presidents had up-to-date resumes requiring part of the interview time to record their career paths. Although the President‟s career paths were recorded, the resume would have been more thorough.

The last limitation was the research method itself. This was a qualitative study, making the results dependent on the interview and observation of the participants for the bulk of my data. Precautions were taken to make it as accurate as possible. After the Presidents were identified, written consents were obtained, questionnaires were mailed and resumes were requested. The interview was intended to pull all of the elements together in gathering the appropriate information that would be meaningful to the results of this study. The interview was the main source of data collection. In a few cases, the Presidents did not elaborate on their stories; they were very concise on many points, and with little probing additional information appropriate to this study was not readily forthcoming.

Implications of the Study for Research and Practice

The findings of this study and the related literature review suggest further areas of research. The study may be replicated to include a larger population of female executives, across different college systems, and representing a wider age variable. Additional research may bring new factors that influence a woman‟s career development.

The literature is inadequate in describing the multiple roles women play during their careers and the influence that fulfilling these roles simultaneously may have on them and their career development. Other barriers such as sexual harassment and sex discrimination were not found by this study to have an influence on most of the women interviewed.

The women reported that their significant mentors were mostly male. This was likely the result of there being so few women in leadership in education during the time these women were

developing their professional lives. Future research could explore the mentoring roles of women in leadership positions on other women coming up in the technical college system.

Even though the literature describes leadership traits of women to be different from men, more could be studied in terms of how women develop their leadership styles. What influences do other leaders and informal learning experience have on their leadership style?

In a practical application, this study has implications in the area of leadership development training. The skills, abilities, values, advice to other women, and the likes and dislikes these women shared can be used to develop the curriculum for such training. Also, many of the women in this study participated in a leadership development workshop or institute and found them to be quite useful in their careers. Other women aspiring to be a technical college President should consider participating in those workshops or institutes. Also, these institutes and workshops should be continued to be offered by the Chambers of Commerce, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), or the League for Innovation in the Community College.

> AACC has also catalogued thirty short-term, non-degreed leadership development programs (http://www.aacc..nche.edu). Many of these are offered by the councils affiliated with AACC, but others are offered by universities, states, and organizations such as the League for Innovation in the Community College (Executive Leadership Institute) and the National Institute for Leadership Development. AACC itself is offering a Future Leader Institute that began in 2003. (Boggs, 2003, p. 21)

The Technical College System of Georgia discontinued its internal leadership institute for budget reasons.

Another implication for practice is in the area of a formal education. Eight of the women hold a doctoral degree. Madsen (2007) in her study of ten female university Presidents found that 90% of them had their doctorate. All but one were encouraged to go to college by their parents. Getting a doctoral degree was a key developmental factor influencing the women‟s career development. This finding suggests that women who aspire to be President should be encouraged to obtain their doctoral degree.

Many of these women discussed the importance of having their previous President as a mentor. More Presidents need to be mentors especially female Presidents. "Some of the barriers that women face are the lack of women mentors" (Hansman, 1998, p. 63). The literature supports the fact that mentors are important to women during their career progression. As Hansman (1998) emphasizes,

> It is important for women to be involved in both informal and formal mentoring relationships. Informal mentoring happens through mutual discovery of common interests and relationship building. Formal mentoring is generally organization sponsored and focused on recruitment, retention, succession planning, and organizational change efforts. (p. 64)

Women who aspire to be a college President should seek out mentors throughout their careers.

Seven of these women‟s previous position was the Vice President of Academic Affairs. In her study Madsen (2007) found that 60% of the women came from the academic side of the house. This too has implications for women aspiring to be the President of a two-year college. At some point in their career path, women should get a job in academic administration.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

Dear President:

In fulfillment of the requirements for completion of the doctoral degree in Workforce Education at the University of Georgia, I am conducting a research study of female two-year college Presidents‟ career development processes. My research is directed by Dr. Clifton Smith, a distinguished professor at UGA.

The purpose of this dissertation study is to describe the personal, social, and environmental influences that affect female two-year college Presidents‟ career development. This research is important because little qualitative information is available that describes the lived experiences of women who rose through the ranks of the two-year college hierarchy and into the presidency. The descriptions of how female Presidents have made meaning of their career development experiences may help to inform other women who aspire to become two-year college Presidents about potential positive and negative influences on their career development. In addition, researchers who study career development see a need for a comprehensive theory of women‟s career development that takes into account gender, sex role socialization, career experiences, and learning. The findings of this study may result in propositions that will contribute to the development of such theory.

I will collect data for this study by in-depth interview, and I invite you to be considered for participation. I plan to conduct these interviews in April, 2010. I have enclosed a questionnaire that I hope that you will complete and send back to me along with a current resume and signed consent form.

If you do agree to participate, I assure you that information collected in the interviews will be kept strictly confidential, and no reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

I hope that you will consider being a participant in this research study. If you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call me at (404) 402-9447 during the day or (678) 615-6270 in the evening. I look forward to receiving the questionnaire, consent form, and your resume.

Sincerely,

Sue Chandler

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How did you come to be a college President?

2. When did you know that you wanted to be a college President? Was it a goal of yours? 3. What were your career goals as a teenager?

4. What role did your parents play in your career choice? Mother‟s work? Father‟s Work?

5. What personal characteristics (skills and abilities, beliefs, values) influenced your becoming President?

6. Looking back over your career path to the presidency, what relationships have been most important to you and why? Mentors? Role Models?

7. Did you have any negative role models that influenced you?

8. What barriers did you encounter in your career path? How did you overcome them?

9. Do you feel you had to compromise in any way to become a college President? Did you have to change your behavior in any way?

10. Did you have confidence in your abilities to become a college President? How did you build that confidence?

11.What did you expect after you got the job?

12 What do you like best about being a two-year college President? Least?

13. What advice would you give to other women who aspire to become community college Presidents?

14. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your journey to the presidency before we conclude?

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

For Female Presidents of Two-Year Colleges

Name: _____

Highest Education Level: _____ Age: ___

Ethnicity: ____ White

____ African American

_____ Hispanic

_____ Asian

_____ Native American

_____ Multiracial

Year first employed as President: _____

Job employed in immediately before Presidency: _____

Mother‟s Highest Education Level: _____

Mother‟s Occupation: _____

Father‟s Highest Education Level: _____

Father‟s Occupation: _____

Marital Status: __ M ___ S ___ D

Children: ___yes ___no If yes: Number_____

Age range: ____ 0-6 ___7-12 ___13-19 ___20-up