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Leadership Qualities of Female Presidents Serving the Tennessee Colleges of Applied

Technology System

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership,

concentration in Higher Education Leadership

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by

Kelli Kea-Carroll

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Dr. James H. Lampley, Chair

Dr. Jill Channing

Dr. Hal Knight

ABSTRACT

Leadership Qualities of Female Presidents Serving the Tennessee Colleges of Applied

Technology System

by

Kelli Kea-Carroll

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine the leadership styles

and characteristics of leadership of 11 female presidents in the Tennessee Colleges of Applied

Technology system. The administrators' perceptions of successful leadership, desirable outcomes

of institutional leadership, and improvements resulting from perceived successful leadership

styles that guided each participant's work as a technical college president were examined. Using

the research questions guiding this study, data were collected from individual, in-depth

interviews with each female, technical college president. The analysis of the interviews identified

the leadership styles of democratic, situational and participative as being the most common

among the female presidents. Also, the leadership characteristics of communication and vision

were identified as being the most common leadership characteristics. These results may benefit

women in evaluating effective leadership styles and characteristics that were displayed by

successful technical college presidents.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my family for their constant support throughout this study. To my husband, Mark, daughter, Katelin, and son, Chase, whose love and encouragement have kept me grounded and focused throughout this journey. To my parents, Larry and Norma Kea, who have always encouraged me to reach for the stars and never to give up until I have achieved my goal. To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because of You, I can do all things through You, who strengthens me.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

According to Wolfe (2018), women face many challenges, including discrimination and are often paid less than men for doing the same job. But there are some industries where women are competing and even dominating. Knowing where women are succeeding can assist females in future career decisions and in identifying obstacles in male-dominated arenas (Wolfe, 2018).

Females lead several top performing companies in the United States such as the Huffington Post, Thrive Global, Ellevest, and chair of Ellevate Network (Belanger, 2017). Belanger (2017) contended cultural factors influence fewer women to pursue leadership roles. Belanger also noted more diversity in leadership roles in companies would result in more products and more services being accessible to everyone. Women lag behind in leadership roles in business with only 26 women in CEO roles at Fortune 500 companies, making up 5.2%. The statistic virtually remains unchanged in Fortune 1000 companies demonstrating little movement in women composing positions in high-ranking positions as leaders (Forbes Council, 2018).

While pushing to the top, women face a range of challenges their male CEO counterparts do not understand. Many of the issues prevent women from achieving their leadership goal and diminishing ability to get ahead. The Forbes Council (2028) identified 15 biggest challenges women face in pursuit of leadership roles.

The challenges include: (1) being treated equally; (2) building a sisterhood of support; (3) generating revenue resulting in freedom and choices; (4) being confident in purpose and goals to achieve; (5) speaking up confidently to help shape policy and workforce perspective; (6) building alliance with decision makers by building healthy relationships with advocates, establishing guidelines before each project and positioning themselves as an expert in the field; (7) become a member of the C-suite by being prepared in equivocation; (8) asking for money by

mastering skills to price properly in all facets of services gaining respect; (9) standing in success confidently and deservingly allowing voice to be heard; (10) tackling imposter syndrome by developing leadership skills; (11) overcoming perfectionism and managing tendencies; (12) trusting their own voice; (13) shifting their word choice to reconcile the challenge and internal conflict between being perceived as a respected leader vs a bossy woman challenge; (14) dealing with negative thoughts and replacing them with positive; and (15) re-entering the paid workforce by combating ageism, rebuilding confidence, reconstructing a network, developing old and new skills and catching up technology. (p. 5)

Channing (2020a) noted women in higher education facing ethical challenges of many concerns from personnel issues in hiring, to gun violence, and most recently related to COVID-19. Women business owners and working women face certain challenges and obstacles that men do not. Many women struggle with finding better ways to balance work and life and guilt originating from outside sources of pressure from husbands, families, and friends. Wolfe (2018) asserted that working women who have children experience even more demands on time, energy, resources, and women face gender discrimination in business and on the job, but women are not less successful. In fact, statistics reveal women are starting businesses at more than twice the rate of all other businesses. Women are resourceful and able to succeed despite many challenges (Wolfe, 2018).

According to Cullen and Luna (1993), women in leadership confront barriers or obstacles that men do not realize exist. Some myths suggest women cannot discipline older students, particularly males; females are too emotional; too weak physically and males resent working with females. After myths are dispelled, the "glass ceiling barrier" limiting women from achieving high ranking position must be overcome. Marilyn Loden coined the term "glass

ceiling" when she spoke on a panel at the 1978 Women's Exposition in New York concerning

the inability of women to advance within a company not having to do with skill set or

temperament (Vargas, 2018). The glass ceiling, that invisible barrier to advancement that women

face at top levels of the workplace remains intractable as ever and is a drag on the economy

(Bertrand, 2018). New research from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business found

that sexism has prevented many talented women from achieving full potential at work. There are

factors beyond gender discrimination in the workplace holding women back. Bertrand (2018)

found three key reasons why the glass ceiling persisted in excluding women from top paying

jobs: (1) "women with college degrees often choose to work in fields that offer lower incomes;

(2) women are more risk-averse than men hindering the willingness and ability to compete for

higher paying jobs and negotiating higher salaries; and (3) women remain disproportionately

responsible for the demands of home and child care resulting in the most prominent factor

holding back women's earnings at the executive level" (p. 233).

When women are not involved in leadership roles, the loss to higher education extends

far beyond the lack of role models for students, both men and women. Several studies have

affirmed that the skills and perspectives that women bring to leadership enhance workplace

culture and improve decision making (Belephant, 2017; Helgesen & Johnson, 2010; Page, 2007;

Reynolds, 2014; Rigglo, 2013). Gerzema and D'Antonio (2013) concluded that many of the

qualities of an ideal modern leader are considered feminine. In focusing on the contributions of

women leaders to higher education, Kezar (2014) identified strengths in the areas of

consultation, participation, team-building, integrity, empowerment, and harnessing multiple

perspectives. Given the array of challenges and complexities facing institutions of higher

education the perspectives brought by women represent value added to the effectiveness of

senior-level teams. Fewer women than men have served in senior administrative roles leading to an underrepresentation of women. Due to this underrepresentation of women and a recent significant increase in number, far less is known about the characteristics and experiences of effective female leaders in higher education (Dunn et al., 2018). College presidents, both male and female, traditionally shape the educational philosophy, direction, and culture of their institutions (Blumenstyk, 2014). Until recently, most scholarly work on leadership was conducted by men and focused on male leaders. As a result, male behaviors and characteristics in leadership roles have been the standard against which female leaders are assessed (Kruse & Prettyman, 2008).

The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) are the technical arm of higher education in the Tennessee Board of Regents system. The Tennessee Board of Regents is the largest higher education system in Tennessee, enrolling over 118,000 students statewide (TBR Website, 2020). There are 27 technical colleges and 13 community colleges within the Tennessee Board of Regents system. The 27 Colleges of Applied Technology are the state's premier providers of technical training for workers to obtain the technical skills and professional training necessary for advancement in today's job market (TBR Website, 2020). The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology were previously recognized as Tennessee Technology Centers until a legislative name change in 2013 (Tennessee Code Annotated, 2013).

Having some form of education or training beyond high school is a must for getting ahead. Whether graduating from high school or an adult looking for a fresh start, a degree or certificate from one of the technical colleges can be a first step toward career readiness leading to greater earnings potential and a better quality of life. With 27 technical colleges across the state

offering diverse programs of study, the campuses and programs create the opportunity for all Tennesseans to attend college, regardless of age or income (TBR Website, 2019).

Over the last four years, the number of female administrators in the position of president at TCATs has doubled. As of 2019, eight of the 27 TCATs had female presidents. Less than a decade ago there were only two females who were the top executive administrators in the technical college system. Both of those female administrators served in medium-sized technical colleges and remained in those positions until retiring. Following retirements both positions were replaced with male administrators (TBR Website, 2020).

The research base in the field of higher education has traditionally been defined in male terms and based on male models of leadership (Bornstein, 2008). It was not until the 1970s that scholars began to consider gender differences in leadership (Hoyt, 2007). Hoyt (2007) attributed the absence of gender-related issues in leadership literature to methodological hindrances, a predominance of male researchers largely uninterested in the topic, and an assumption of gender equality in leadership. The absence is also reflective of women's invisibility in organizational leadership roles in U.S society (Ely et al., 2011). Women constituted less than 5% of U.S. college presidents in 1975, 9.5% by 1986, and represented 26% of all college presidents in 2011 (Wheat & Hill, 2016).

Moody (2018) reported in a 2017 survey conducted by the American Council on Education that women comprised only 30% of college presidents across the country in 2016. Women of color make up far lower portion of college presidents at 5% (Moody, 2018). William & Mary, founded in 1693, an alma mater of three United States Presidents, appointed its first female leader after more than three centuries, naming Katherine Rowe the President of the second oldest university in the nation in May of 2018 (Moody, 2018).

Leadership has many meanings. There is no clear-cut agreement on the meaning of leadership because the emergence of leaders is sometimes situational, sometimes temporary, and sometimes permanent (Spotts, 1976). Michener et al. (1990) defined leadership as a process that takes place in groups in which one member influences the behavior of other members toward a common goal. Key elements for successful group performance include the leader's ability to plan, organize, and control the activities of the group (Michener et al.,1990). According to Wolverton (2009), leaders possess certain innate personality traits or particular skills that make them leaders. Despite many definitions, all leadership theories have one element in common, the leader usually exerts more influence within a group than any other member.

As many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership (Fleishman, 1991). Bass (2008) proposed the classification system where leadership may be viewed as the focus of group processes whereby the leader is at the center of group change and activity and embodying the will of the group. Leadership may also be conceptualized from a personality perspective as a combination of special traits or characteristics that the individual or leader possess enabling them to influence or induce others to accomplish tasks. Another approach is to defined leadership as an act or behavior enabling the leader to bring about change in the group (Bass, 2008).

Northouse (2019) identified the following components as central to the phenomenon of leadership: (a) leadership is a transactional interactive process occurring between both the leader and followers; (b) leadership involving influence concerned with how the leader affected followers; (c) leadership occurs in a group context involving influencing the group for a common purpose and (d) leadership involves goal attainment with the leader directing a group to

accomplish a task or reach and end goal (p. 126). Based upon the components, leadership may be defined as a process where an individual influences a group to achieve a common goal.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine what qualities and characteristics of leadership, and career development that the female presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology system attribute to their success in their leadership positions. This phenomenological study explored the administrators' perceptions of the leadership characteristics and styles related to the value of leadership, desirable outcomes of institutional leadership characteristics and improvements resulting from perceived successful leadership styles guiding each participant's work (Creswell, 2014, p 126). I examined the leadership qualities and characteristic associated with institutional leaders as well as examine the influence these perceptions may have on the institution. First, I sought to determine how and if female Presidents perceive leading in a different manner from their male counterparts and if there are perceived gender differences in their perception of leadership style. The second purpose of the study was to identify and describe areas of common or differing perceptions of leadership qualities held by the female technical college administrators. Special interest was placed on examining the personal beliefs and values underlying their perceptions of success as sitting college presidents.

Research Questions

I examined leadership styles and characteristics of female presidents of Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology. The questions used to guide the research were:

Research Question 1. What are the self-described leadership styles of female presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

Research Question 2. What leadership characteristics are associated with female presidents of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

Research Question 3. What characteristics do the female presidents perceive to be similar or different between female and male leaders in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology system?

Research Question 4. Is there a difference or commonality in the leadership characteristics of the female technical college presidents?

Research Question 5. How is the institution influenced by the female administrators' perceptions?

Significance of the Problem

It is important to understand the perceptions of female administrators involved with the leadership of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology and their leadership characteristics due to much of the literature on leadership in higher education focusing on the perspectives of older White males (Holmes, 2008). However, some research surrounding career development and leadership styles of women in higher education has surfaced (Enke, 2014) to include strategies for success for women college presidents (Madsen, 2006). The college presidency requires a variety of thought, innovation, and divergent perspectives to address the needs of a dynamic technical college campus. This research may be significant in revealing the extent that core occupational perceptions and leadership characteristics of college administrators vary between presidents and how these variances influence the institutional leadership. In identifying general categories of perception my present study may also provide a context within which the

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leadership characteristics can be re-examined, modified, and adapted to determine viable and objective traits of female leadership. Because of increasing focus on successful leadership attributes associated with institutional leadership, it would be in a college's best interest to assure that leadership efforts yield positive results (Greenberg, 2001).

This qualitative phenomenological study may lend significance in several areas. The study may provide a source for women to better critically examine and objectively analyze leadership styles and characteristics of successful college administrators. The possibility that women and men differ in typical leadership behavior is important because a leader's behavior is a major determinant of their effectiveness and advancement. Claims about distinctive leadership styles of women abound, especially in treatments by writers of trade books (Book, 2000). Academic writers have presented a range of views concerning differences and similarities in leadership styles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), but have most often maintained that female and male leaders do not differ (van der Leedan & Williamson, 2001) or have minimized the importance of any differences researchers have reported (Kuchynková, 2015). Additionally, the conclusions may encourage other females to consider the way administrators are prepared and trained.

Statement of Researcher Perspective

For the past four years, as the President of a Tennessee College of Applied Technology, I have had the administrative responsibility of maintaining all facets of institutional leadership and coordinating campus-wide efforts to sustain the credibility and reputation of one of the 27 TCATs. This position provided a first-hand perspective as to the variety of leadership characteristics of successful administrators.

Additionally, I served as a vice president for 14 years and have participated in leadership development initiatives of the Tennessee Board of Regents. Many of the current female TCAT presidents participated in the TBR Leadership development initiatives. Participation in the TBR TCAT Leadership was required and highly encouraged if someone desired to hold a TCAT Leadership position. The training included interactive discussions about the duties and responsibilities of leadership and how to address functional and operational concerns. During these workshops, many conversations with future administrators about their institutions took place.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are essential to an examination of perceptions of the characteristics of female presidents of Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology.

Leadership: defined as a process whereby one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2019).

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT): the technical colleges of the Tennessee Board of Regents College System of Tennessee (TBR Website, 2018).

Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR): Governing board for the 13 community colleges and 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology in Tennessee (TBR Website, 2018).

Overview of the Study

This study is composed of five chapters. Chapter 1 (Introduction), provides background information as well as an overview of the connection between leadership qualities and female presidents of TCATs. It includes the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, definition of terms, and organization of the dissertation. Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), details background information on leadership characteristics of male and

female leaders held in similar positions of higher education. Chapter 2 is a review of the development of the TCAT college system, the relationship between leadership qualities and performance. In Chapter 2, the association between leadership characteristics and gender in TCAT leadership is explored, as well as the implications for educational leadership. Chapter 3 (Research Method) provides a discussion on the methodology. Chapter 4 is a description of the findings of the interviews. Chapter 5 (Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations) is a presentation of the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and further research.

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

This literature review provides a framework of current research that applies to various aspects associated with institutional leadership, gender based leadership, leadership styles and leadership characteristics of female college presidents, both as a process and a position. Leadership styles and characteristics were examined from a value perspective and female leadership characteristics as a vehicle of institutional leadership effectiveness.

For my study, the review of the literature was focused on leadership styles, characteristics and practices, female leadership styles, history of the technical college system, and current challenges facing female leaders in higher education. The purpose of this initial part of the review was to provide the reader with historical and social context of the female leadership practices currently in place in today's educational settings and management roles.

Challenge and Female Leaders

The Glass Ceiling Commission was created by President Clinton in 1991 (Wylie, 1996). The Commission was charged with studying common barriers to the advancement of women in United States corporations. Barriers to successful advancement in leadership positions included recruitment practices corporate climates that isolate and alienate and pipeline barriers. Pipeline barriers were identified as differing standards, counterproductive behavior by colleagues, and lack of access to networking systems. Wylie (1996) contended women needed to recognize their individual strengths and weaknesses and compensate for weaknesses by building a well-balanced team around that addresses all aspects of leading and managing.

Ryan et al. (2007) proposed the Glass Cliff, in contrast to the Glass Ceiling, as a shift in from discrimination to large percentage of women choosing to leave their high-powered posts due to a change their priorities, rejection of the workplace, and voluntarily leaving high level

positions as a strategic response. The response was because women had an unwillingness to sacrifice their family life or being less aggressive than their male counterparts. In her research of Gender–blind sexism, Channing (2020b) noted women being viewed as maternal in their career leadership choices, often having to make sacrifices to fulfill the societal role of a mother. Hewlett and Luce (2005) surveyed almost 2500 professional women and found nearly 40% had voluntarily taken time out from work compared to only 24% of men. Moreover, 44% of women did so for family reasons such as needing to take care of an elderly family member, compared to 12% of men. Explanations for women's decisions to leave the workplace also focus on their differences from men on key dimensions such as drive and ambition, but further research showed 70% remained in full-time employment with increasing numbers as entrepreneurs (Patton, 2015).

Channing (2020a) asserted many women leaders in higher education find themselves as being caught between the expected traditional aspects of feminine leadership and being more directive and authoritative. This double bind often places women administrators in circumstances of adversity. As a result, women leaders described encountering many systematic inequalities of unfair and differing expectations, unequal family responsibilities, and a lack of support or encouragement. A recognition of gender blind-sexism led the leaders to be mindful of the challenges women may face as a factor of gender (Channing, 2020b).

Heller (1982) noted several myths in a study concerning women as leaders. Women are too focused on people and man are too focused on procedures. Women are too emotional while men are too remote and inaccessible. Women are more humane, egalitarian, efficient, and organized and need to be more assertive. Men are more relaxed, able to separate work and social role, think more categorically and work more independently. Many of these myths are

perpetuated along gender lines and can be barriers to success for women interested in pursuing leadership roles (Heller, 1982).

Men being seen as leaders is accepted as a role culturally (Channing, 2020b). Society's attitude toward appropriate male and female roles is another obstacle identifying women as not task oriented enough, too dependent on feedback and evaluations of others, and lacking independence (Cullen & Luna, 1993). Women receive little encouragement to seek leadership positions while men are encouraged to enter administrative positions to a greater degree. The lack of encouragement exists even though women earn doctorates are more likely than men to desire an academic career, but are not hired at equal rates (Growe & Montgomery, 2018). The cumulative disadvantage resulted in women leaving educational administrative positions in greater number as well. There also exists a lack of role models and mentors because there are not a large number of women in administrative positions (Growe & Montgomery, 2018). Wolfe (2018) contended that two of the most effective tools in overcoming challenges women face in the work world include networking and finding a mentor. In addition, to having a mentor, many women find reading success stories, tips, and advice from other successful women leaders helpful and inspiring (Wolfe, 2018).

Leadership from a Female Perspective

Is there a feminine style of leadership? This may be the most moot question in the millennium according to Tappin and Marinovic (2017) and Wolfe and Werhane (2017). There is growing indication that an androgynous style of leadership is developing as a matter-of-fact style of leadership for the new millennium (Jacobs, 2007). Currently, gender perceptions about leadership styles persist (Saint-Michel, 2018). Female leadership styles are typically described as agentic with behaviors associated with nurturing and facilitative behaviors (Jacobs, 2007).

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The literature supports the following inventory of female leadership qualities: openness, flexibility, empathy, relational strength, inclusiveness, and a preference for collaboration (Greenberg & Sweeney, 2017).

Researchers have found that women tend to have a distinct leadership style that shapes how they run their teams (Edwards, 2020; Chaluvadi, 2015). Specifically, these studies demonstrate women tend to use the transformational leadership style. Transformational leaders aim to enhance the motivation, morale and job performance of followers by working with teams to identify needed change, to create a shared vision and to guide through inspiration (Edwards, 2020). Women in leadership can leverage their natural inclination toward transformational leadership by using the following strategies:

1. Development over goals: Setting and achieving goals is important for success; however, success may be achieved by developing their team by seeking to be a role model to inspire subordinates; investing time in coaching team members in professional development; and emphasizing teamwork and communication as the key to success.

2. Do not be transactional: Avoid focusing only on results by issuing orders and commands and receiving progress updates from other employees and not personally.

3. Banning bossy: Encouraging females to speak up and taking charge at an earlier age to develop leadership skills and pursue leadership roles.

4. Strength-based tasks: Engage followers by assigning tasks according to strengths, rather than delegating work based on time or workload and learning what each member is good at and enjoys.

5. Over communicate: Verbally continue to communicate to achieve success allowing team members to feel comfortable and transparent from when an issue arises resulting in a reduction of major problems (Edwards, 2020, p. 33).

Tappin and Marinovic (2017) studied 150 top female executives to better understand barriers facing female leaders and identified four different types of female leadership:

1. Female pioneers: Generally, late generation X and baby boomers, who act more in the manner of alpha male leaders. They are often power dressers with a leadership style of no nonsense, as this has been proven to make a difference in the male dominated environments.

2. Feminine leaders: Generally, Generation X who have been exposed to more equality. They have confidence to bring feminine qualities to work and operate more in the construct women are equals. They possess the qualities of being able to listen, care, understand, and communicate well.

3. Integrated woman: From all generations, who gained strong leadership and influence through their ambition and drive to succeed personally and support equality in the workplace. They have integrated life experience and developed leadership philosophies that are used as a guiding compass.

4. Women of inspiration: From all generations, embodying all other leadership styles. They are driven by a higher purpose, often globally recognized and have broken free from male dominant leadership constraints. They are inspiring other females from their positions. p. 4

Other research findings demonstrate many females do not like to discuss the differences between male and female leadership because they desire to be considered on similar footing. The

interviews highlighted that discussing female leadership qualities may be seen as unnecessary and even as a point of weakness in some environments (Tappin & Marinovic, 2017).

Leadership is a process and requires continued commitment to growth and improvement (Bright & Cortes, 2019). The study of all of the theories demonstrates, there is not a "one size fits all" to leadership. Leadership theories may help leaders understand their leadership styles and preferences which may attribute to an excelling positive work environment and assist in a better ability to adapt and be more flexible in leadership roles. Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992) described behaviors characterizing women's leadership behaviors in 6 cluster patterns identified as empower, restructure, teach, provide role models, encourage openness, and stimulate questioning. Gillet-Karam (1994) identified 4 behaviors related to women in leadership as vision behavior to take appropriate risks to bring about change; people behavior providing care and respect for individual differences; influence behavior acting collaboratively; and values behavior to spend time building trust and openness (Getskow, 1996).

Northouse (2019) also noted women being underrepresented in major leadership positions. The invisible barrier limiting women from elite leadership positions has been labeled the glass ceiling. Eliminating the glass ceiling will afford more equal opportunity, access to the greatest talent pool, and result in more diversity. He also contended that women are primarily prone to utilize democratic and transformational leadership styles.

Additionally, Northouse (2019) wrote that the leader must understand the culture in which he or she is leading. Research and findings concerning culture can help leaders understand their own culture biases and preferences. Understanding your own preferences is the first step in understanding other people, of other cultures, may have different preferences. Secondly, different cultures have varying ideas concerning expectations of leadership and leaders must

adapt their style to be more effective in different cultural settings. Further understanding culture may assist leaders in communicating more effectively across cultural and geographical boundaries.

Ethics are of a main focus of successful and effective leadership. Leaders have an enormous ethical responsibility for how they affect other people and followers. In order that leaders may accomplish shared goals, leaders need to treat followers and followers' ideas with respect and integrity. Leaders also are primarily responsible for establishing an ethical climate in the workplace, which requires sensitivity to the values and ideals the leader promotes Research suggests that women are more sensitive to ethical issues than men are (Rigglo, 2013). As ethical behavior is expected of leaders, leaders must realize and embrace leadership as a moral process (Bright & Cortes, 2019).

> Gross and Trask (1976) identified capabilities of women in educational leadership as: having a greater knowledge and concern for instructional supervision; superiors and teachers preferring women over men; students' academic performance and teachers' professional performance rated higher under women administrators; women as being more effective administrators; supervisors and teachers preferring decision-making and problem-solving behaviors of women; being more concerned with helping deviant pupils; and placing more importance on technical skills and organizational responsibility of teachers as a criterion for evaluation. (p 3)

Porat (1991) stated that good school administration is more attuned to feminine than masculine modes of leadership behavior. Female attributes of nurturing, being sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, caring, cooperative, and accommodative are increasingly associated with effective administration. While these characteristics are innate and valuable,

women possessing the qualities of a good leader still face higher attrition and slower career mobility particularly in higher education. Data on equality of opportunity in education administration reveal that gender, more than age, experience, background, or competence determines the role an individual will be assigned in education (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). Management seeks to fill ranks at the highest level with persons who best fit the existing norm (Wesson, 1998). In 1997, the typical president of an American institution of higher education was Caucasian, male and 54 years old (Phelps & Taylor, 1997). The traditional model has remarkable staying power, despite concerns in increasing diversity, hiring outside academe and impending retirement, with the college presidents continuing to be aging White males, with an average age of 61.7 years in 2016 (Seltzer, 2017).

Lewin (2016) suggested that the female advantage perspective is beginning to mitigate the barriers to female leadership. If true, the masculine styles of leadership are being discarded and new millennial models synchronous with feminine ways are becoming desirable (Fries, 2018). This emerging new millennial model perspective has significant implications for further research, specifically for a study on leadership competencies. If a feminine leadership dynamic is synergizing with traditional leadership models, the implication is that feminine qualities, values and skills, cumulatively defined as competencies can be identified and learned (Catalyst, 2007).

Leadership

Leadership defined as a process means it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader but a transactional event occurring between the leader and followers. In the process the leader affects the followers and followers affects the leader involving influence (Northouse, 2019). Definitions of successful leadership vary and are patterned by gender in

two key ways: (1) women and men who are effective leaders are expected to demonstrate different behaviors and leadership styles, and (2) male and female leader's assessments differ as to what it means to be successful in their roles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990 p. 133).

Northouse (2019) stated that leadership is a highly sought and valued commodity with the public fully fascinated with leadership resulting in bookstores have hundreds of books about leaders, leadership and how to become more effective leader. Development of leadership skills was believed to be a way to improve how one presents themselves to others and a means of advancing in employment and society as a whole. Corporations desire to hire people who have leadership ability believing they provide valuable assets to their organization (Northouse, 2019). Academic institutions continue creating leadership programs throughout the country regarding leadership studies. In the past half a century, more than 65 different categorization arrangements have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership (Wheat & Hill, 2016). Bass (1990) proposed leadership was defined from a perspective as the focus of group process where the leader embodied the will of the group as the center of group change and activity. According to Edwards (2020), leadership may be defined as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. The phenomenon of leadership involves of four central components: (1) leadership is a progression; (2) leadership involves power; (3) leadership occurs in a group situation; (4) and leadership involves objective accomplishment (Northouse, 2019)

Rath and Conchie (2008) assembled a team of experts to review decades of Gallup data on leadership to initiate a study of more than 10,000 followers around the world to describe why they follow the most influential leader in their life. Three key findings emerged from research: (1) The most effective leaders are always investing in strengths; (2) The most

effective leaders surround themselves with the right people and maximize their team; and (3) the most effective leaders understand their followers' needs. The possibility that women and men differ in typical leadership behavior is important because a leader's behavior is a major determinant of their effectiveness and chances for advancement.

During the 18th and 19th centuries philosophers proposed the "Great Man" theory in which personal characteristics of great leaders was included in determining the course of history (Spotts, 1976). Wheat and Hill (2016) noted the "Great Man" theories of leadership imply women do not possess necessary attributes for leadership or there is only one model of effective leadership. Prior to the 1930s, it was believed leadership was a property of the individual and only a limited number of people could possess the ability and was thought to be inherited rather than acquired. Stogdill (1947) proposed that superior genes make one an inherently capable leader. He used his theory to explain why ruling families continue to rule and marriages among aristocracy produced offspring who were biologically more capable to lead than others born of other classes.

Leaders need followers and followers need leaders (Hollander, 1992). Although closely linked, the leader often initiates and creates the communication linkages and carries the burden for maintaining the relationship. Leaders have an ethical responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns of followers. Burns (1978) suggested that discussions of leadership sometimes were viewed as elitist because of implied power and importance often ascribed leaders to leaders in the relationship. Some people emerge as the leaders because they were appointed to a formal position within an organization. Others emerge as leaders because of group members respond. Team leaders, plant managers, department heads, directors, and administrators are examples of assigned leadership.

Assigned leadership may not determine the leader when others perceive another individual within the group or organization as being more influential. Emergent leadership may be realized through other people in the organization who support and accept that person's leadership behavior through communication. Successful leadership emergence behavior includes positive communication by being verbally involved, being informed, seeking others opinions, initiating new ideas, and being firm but not rigid (Fisher, 1974).

Researchers have also found personality playing a role in leadership emergence. In a sample of 160 male college students Smith and Foti (1998) found certain personality traits were related to leadership emergence. Individuals were more likely to be identified as leaders by their task group if exhibiting traits of being more dominating, more intelligent, and more confident about their performance.

Gender-Biased Leadership

Channing (2020b) stated that bias or discrimination may be discussed on the basis of gender-blind sexism. Women live and work in a male-controlled culture where many characteristics related to the construct of being "feminine" may be undervalued. Channing (2020b) also noted several types of gender-blind sexism themes that contribute to an oppressive culture of systematic gender bias. Gender-bias perceptions may affect leadership emergence. Watson and Hoffman (2004) found that women who were urged to persuade their task groups to adopt high-decisions succeeded with the same frequency as men with identical instructions. Although women were equally influential leaders in their groups they were rated significantly lower on leadership than comparable men. The women were also rated less likable than the comparable men. These findings suggested that there continues to be barriers to women's emergence as leaders in some settings (Watson & Hoffman, 2004).

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Wolfe (2018) found gender lines are drawn early and exclusions for women continue throughout adulthood. Gender bias begin in elementary school continuing on into college. Even though more women hold higher degrees than men, they are still passed over for positions given to less-educated and less-qualified males and also receive less-compensation than men in the same position (Wolfe, 2018).

Wheat and Hill (2016) noted research indicated that gendered perceptions and expectations of women leaders present women with a double bind between appearing over feminized if assuming a stereotypically feminine leadership style or under feminized if adopting a masculine leadership style. The double-bind expectation is consistent with the research findings of Channing (2020a) noting similar expectancies of female leaders. Growe and Montgomery (2018) found one reason so few women are hired for educational administrative positions is due to the gender bias. Three models of gender gap have been used to explain the under representation of women in educational leadership positions. The first is the meritocracy model or individual perspectives model looking at women for cause. The model introduced a belief that women are not assertive enough, do not want the power, do not aspire for line positions, and are unwilling to play the game or work the system and do not apply for the jobs.

Growe and Montgomery (2018) identified the second model, the organizational perspective or the discrimination model, as focusing on the educational system limiting opportunities for women accompanied by a systematic gender bias in organizational structures and practices. In this model men tend to advance to higher levels due to being favored in promotional practices with women being unable to advance even if choosing to do so.

The third model Growe and Montgomery (2018) discussed was identified as woman's

place or social perspective model. The model emphasized cultural and social norms encouraging discriminatory practices. The model claimed social norms and society socialize patterns that channel women and men into different areas of work and differential pay and status.

As more women have occupied positions of leadership inquiry as to whether they lead in a different manner from men and whether men or women are perceived more effective has become more of a focus as opposed to the abilities of females to lead. Book (2000) asserted that there are differences in gender leadership styles and in contemporary society women's leadership may be more effective. Academic researchers argued gender has little or no relationship to leadership style or effectiveness (Engen et al., 2001; Faizan et al., 2018; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

Much of the information on male and female leadership styles derives from research conducted prior to 1990, and typically examined two style approaches to leadership with regard to differences in gender focused on comparison of either interpersonally oriented or task style or democratic and autocratic styles. Task-oriented style being defined as a concern with accomplishing assigned tasks by organizing task-relevant activities and interpersonally oriented style defined as a concern with maintaining interpersonal relationships by tending to others morale and welfare (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). The distinction between task and interpersonal styles was introduced by Bales (1950) and developed further by leadership researchers at the university. A number of studies explored leaders' behaviors based on leaders who exhibit democratic behavior and allow subordinates to participate in decision making versus autocratic behavior leaders who discourage subordinates from participating in decision making. This leadership dimension termed democratic versus autocratic leadership or

participative versus directive leadership followed early studies of leadership styles (Vroom & Yetton, 1973).

Before 1990, conventional definitions and theories of leadership were based on the experiences of men college presidents. Characteristics and behaviors commonly associated with leadership represent masculine ideals, such as task orientation, aggression, authority, determination, confidence, courage, independence, strength and vision. The emergence of literature from fields of women's studies, organizational behavior, and higher education leadership in the 1990s and 2000s pointed the ways in which conventional conceptions of masculine leadership complicate women's ability to be recognized as leaders. Feminist argue male imagery associated with the college presidency creates an inherent advantage for men and disadvantage for women (Wheat & Hill, 2016).

Eagly and Johnson (1990) also discovered in a research synthesis of laboratory experiments that styles were somewhat stereotypical in studies that investigated leadership styles of employees and people not selected for occupancy of leadership roles. Women tended to manifest interpersonally oriented democratic styles and men, more than women, adapted to task-oriented and autocratic styles. In contrast, sex differences were more limited in organizational studies assessing managers' styles. The only demonstrated difference between female and male managers was that women adopted a somewhat more democratic or participative style and less directive style than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Male and female managers did not differ in their tendencies to use interpersonally oriented and task-oriented styles (Eagly, 1990). Van Engen et al. (2001) published similar research regarding male and female behavior with people reacting more negatively to women than men who adapted autocratic and directive leadership styles. Women when compared with men, less frequently

adopt the autocratic style producing particularly unfavorable evaluations of their behavior.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) found that contrary to stereotypic expectations women were not found to lead in a more interpersonally oriented and less task-oriented manner than men in organizational studies except in settings where behavior was more regulated by social roles. The only gender difference was a finding that women tended to lead in a more participative, democratic manner than male leaders (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

Social role theorist argued that leaders occupy roles defined by their specific position in a hierarchy and simultaneously function under the constraints of their gender roles. Social gender roles are generally shared expectations applying to persons occupying a certain social position or are members of a particular social category, with gender roles being consensual beliefs about attributes of men and women (Biddle, 1979). To the extent gender roles influence leaders, female and male occupants of the same leadership role would behave somewhat differently. Gutek and Morasch (2010) argued gender roles spill over to organizations, and Ridgeway (2001) maintained gender provides an implicit background identity in the workplace, departing from traditional belief that male and female leaders occupying the same role display the same behaviors.

Leadership roles should be of primary importance in organizational settings the roles lend occupants legitimate authority and are usually regulated by relatively clear rules about appropriate behavior. Research in natural settings suggests some gender stereotypic differences erode under the influence of organizational roles (Eagly, 2000). Moskowitz et al. (1994) examined the simultaneous influence of organizational role and gender roles in a field study and found agentic behavior was related to the relative status of the interaction of partner participants behaving most obediently with a subordinate and less comparably with a boss.

Wheat and Hill (2016) noted woman are penalized by shifting criteria used to evaluate those who are agentic, meaning women who display characteristics of independence and single-mindedness typically associated with masculinity.

Because there are similarities in leadership behavior, social role analysis maintains that leadership roles provide norms that regulate the performance of many tasks within organizational roles for both male and female leaders. Though there are pressures to conform to norms, discretionary aspects of leadership beyond formal boundaries of one's role may vary between men and women, and are susceptible to gender-specific norms of leadership.

Eagly (2000) contended that the influence of gender roles on organizational behavior occur due to people reacting to leaders in terms of gender expectations and because most people internalized their gender role to some extent. Ely et al. (2011) found women and men differed in their expectations for their own behavior in organizational settings as a result of differing social identities. Self-definitions reflect an integration of social and gender roles and influence behavior through a self-regulation process.

The demands of female gender roles and leader roles may be contradictory fostering differing behavior in female and male leaders. An inconsistency often exists due to differing implications for male and female leader between predominantly communal qualities perceived to be associated with women (friendly, kind, unselfish) and predominately agentic qualities generally perceived to be necessary to succeed as a leader (assertive, masterful, instrumentally competent). Research on women leaders demonstrated that women's leadership styles tend to be relationship oriented, consensus building, and reflect on the ethic of care. Shein (2011) demonstrated beliefs about leadership are similar to beliefs about men and women in her "think manager, think male" study. Perceived incongruity between leader role and female

gender role depend on many factors, including the definition of the leader role and gender role in particular situations (Heilman, 2001). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders was defined by Eagly and Karua (2002) notes a perceived incongruity between the female gender role and role of leadership.

Perceived incongruity between typical leader roles and female gender roles may cause bias toward female leaders and potential leaders causing in a negative assessment of capabilities of leadership. This is due in part to the conventional leadership capability of males and uncomplimentary appraisal of women's agentic leadership behavior because is perceived as less desirable in women than men. The concept of glass ceiling and first form of prejudice are consistent with women facing more stringent requirements to attain and retain leadership roles favoring men (Bachman, 2018).

The second preconception occurs when women's leadership behavior is viewed as less favorable than the comparable stereotypic equivalent male behavior as observed in men. Women may encounter negative consequential reactions when behaving in a clearly agentic manner, particularly if the leadership style entails exerting control and dominance over others (Eagly, 1992). When female leaders do not temper as agentic required by the leadership role with sufficient displays of common behavior, they can incur backlash possibly resulting in being passed over for hiring or promotion (Channing, 2020b; Heilman,2001). Belephant (2017) contended due to pressures, many managerial women manifest language and communication styles that are more collaborative and less hierarchical than that of their male counterparts, and more consistent with communal requirements or female gender roles. Leadership roles constrain behavior among occupants of opposite genders with the same role with considerations of social norms and gender roles which influence organizational behavior.

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Leader's gender identities may also influence their behaviors consistent in a manner to their own gender role (Wheat & Hill, 2016).

Differences in leadership styles of men and women may be due in part to men seeing leadership as leading and woman seeing leadership as facilitating with both performing many of the same tasks (Zenger & Folkman, 2012). Conner (1992) stated that women embrace relationships, and the sharing and process. They interact more frequently than men with teachers, students, parents, non-parent community members, professional colleagues, and subordinates (Conner, 1992). Women educational administrators are vision-oriented, and are focused on analyzing needs, resources, understanding governance, instructional supervisory practices, student's needs, teaching method, and accomplishing the mission to impact the community served (Macomber, 2018). Women lean toward facilitative leadership, enabling others to make their contributions through delegation, encouragement, and nudging from behind (Porat, 1991). Many women support contributive, consensual decision making and emphasize process. Women are more interested in transforming people's self-interest into organizational goals by encouraging feelings of self-worth, active participation, and sharing power and information (Eakle, 1995). Wheat and Hill (2016) noted research on women's leadership style as reflecting an ethic of care to be relationship-oriented and consensus-building.

According to Getskow (1996), men tend to use a traditional top-down administrative style of leadership. Men stress task-oriented accomplishment and tend to lead through a series of concrete exchanges involving rewarding employees for a job well done and punishing for inadequate job performance (Geskow, 1996). Men tend to lean toward the majority rule and emphasizing the end goal. Men focus on completing tasks to achieve goals and hoarding

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information to win. Men in leadership positions tend to lead from the front and have answers for subordinates (Porat, 1991).

According to Ryder (1994), women spend more time in unscheduled meetings and being visible on campus to observe teachers considerably more than male administrators. Women administrators are more likely to interact with their staff and spend more time in the classroom discussing curriculum areas of instruction and attempting to influence teachers to utilize more desirable teaching methods.

Jogulu and Wood (2006) explored how leadership theories had had either helped or hurt the profile of women in management and leadership position. The findings revealed earlier leadership theories excluded women and exacerbated the problem to not being seen as an appropriate fit in management or leadership roles. Earlier reports of gender differences in leadership styles reported female managers as being seen in participative and democratic roles. The findings described the transformational style of leadership that women exhibit are required by the organizational structures of today. Therefore, a more positive outcome for advancing to senior management or leadership positions may be observed in the future.

Norton (2019) termed the leader as the positon articulating an organizational vision. Chliwniak (1997) defined leaders as individuals who provide vision and meaning for an institution and embodies the ideals toward with the organization strives. Traditional scholars like Birnbaum (1992) viewed leaders alike and genderless. Standford (1995) determined there was an insignificant amount of empirical into the leadership style-gender debate with the majority of contemporary literature being purely conceptual.

Leadership approaches play an important role in the qualities a leader possesses and how those qualities are displayed with the various leader's approach in regard to employees, as well

as subordinates and dealing with various situations. An understanding of one's leadership style may assist a leader in better utilizing his or her talents and qualities (Tappin & Marinovic, 2017).

Maxwell (1999) introduced 21 desired attributes ascribed to a successful leader. Maxwell (1999) contended becoming a leader is a process which is not achieved within one day, but develops daily. Learning the tools which teach leadership and implementing them are part of the daily process. A leader is effective because of who they are on the inside, the qualities or characteristics that compose the person. To achieve the highest level of leadership, the leader must develop these traits from the inside out. A leader, people aspire to follow, must recognize, develop, and refine the character qualities and personal characteristics needed to truly be an effective leader. Maxwell proposes if one can become the leader as intended on the inside, he or she will be able to become the leader as desired on the outside.

Of the 21 traits in concern to higher education, two qualities were critical to a higher education institution: focus and vision. Truly effective leaders focus on priorities and concentration. Maxwell (1999) suggested leaders who reach potential focus on strengthens and on what they do well seventy percent of the time. To keep improving, leaders need to step into new areas related to strengths, and minimize weakness by delegating. Secondly, vision is necessary for any type of institutional leadership and advancement. A leader without vision offers no direction for the institution he or she is serving. A leader's vision begins with the leader's past, but is far reaching, and extends beyond what a leader accomplishes. If vision has value, it does more than include others, it adds value to those who follow. Leaders strive to continually improve in order to lead. To become a leader a person must develop "within" to lead "without."

Fiore (2009) noted leaders will need multiple theories to determine how people are best motivated. Effective leaders understand theory can provide an awareness of how followers are motivated. Successful educational leaders are well-informed of leadership styles that are impactful and motivational. Many leadership theories and approaches consist of two underlying assumptions (Northouse, 2019). First, the personality characteristics of an individual, deeply ingrained, are very difficult to change in any significant manner. Therefore, an effective leader would accept their personality traits, understand the effect they have on followers and equally, accept those of the followers. Secondly, leaders and followers possess feelings and motives that are beyond immediate awareness, which are held within one's unconscious. The unconscious mind contains our biologically based instincts for primitive urges, which need to be kept from awareness as they are too threatening to fully acknowledge, but exert significant influence (McLeod, 2009). Instincts of past experience stored in the conscious and subconscious are prevailing influencers of our decisions, motives, and feelings. Therefore, a leader or follower's behavior is resultant from both observable actions and responses, but from emotional responses from prior experiences as well.

The approach makes no assumption about moral or immoral traits or preeminent style, but contends there may be some personality types better suited to certain conditions, situations or positions. The goal of the approach is to raise the awareness of leaders and followers to their own personality types and the implications of the types on work and the work relationship. It is important for followers, as well as the leader, to know their own personality types as a particular type of leader may not satisfy followers' needs and they may need to fulfill their needs elsewhere.

Leadership Styles

Autocratic/Authoritarian Leadership

Autocratic leadership is a management style where the leader dominates decisions from a management perspective and allows very little input from organizational or group members (Cherry, 2020). Leaders using an authoritarian style type of leadership may often disregard the views, suggestions and advice of others. This leadership style requires the leader to dictate and control all tasks, processes and group decisions. In decision-making, the leader maintains a high level of structure and discipline while commanding workflow through decrees and demands (Cherry 2020).

Authoritarian leaders assume full accountability for project completion and are deliberate and purposeful in communication with followers. Autocratic leadership tends to be associated with lack of motivation and optimism with little input or participation from the employee or workers (Root, 2016). Authoritarian leadership may be found more often within the business world where operations are based upon profitability and cost effectiveness. Autocratic leadership is not customarily associated with education or institutions of higher education or the educational setting where employee involvement is necessary (Root, 2016). Though the authoritarian style is generally not referred to in a positive manner, there are some gains related to this style such the leader's capability of making an immediate decision and well-defined, clear oversight of an organization. Autocratic leadership is successful in environments where immediate actions and decisions need to be made with no need for group consensus or in situations lacking leadership and the leaders is knowledgeable (Cherry, 2020).

Leader–Member Leadership

Erdogan and Bauer (2015) introduced the leader–member exchange (LMX) theory as a relationship-based theory of leadership, where leadership exists in the relational quality developed between leaders and their followers. The theory assumes the leader influences the followers or employees, as opposed to what leaders do. Relationships between the leader and follower vary in degree or quality based upon a social exchange rationale. Leaders provide resources to benefit employees in "high quality" relationships to promote reciprocation of loyalty, motivation, and commitment in work place environment (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Trust and mutual respect are prominent in high exchange relationships. The "quality" of the relationship may mimic the manner the leader acts toward employees as an evaluation of how supportive the leader is toward the members which encourages the relationship positively or negatively.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leaders allow group members the freedom to fully participate in the decision making process and instills confidence in the members' abilities to make a decision. This style does not adhere to strict policies or procedures nor does the leader tend to participate in or make all the decisions (Wong, 2018). Gill (2015) noted the leader's belief in assembling a strong team and after established, the leader allows the team the freedom to develop steps to succeed. Laissez-faire leadership style works well for organization where the employees are motivated and confident, as the leader may rarely offer an opinion as long as the job is accomplished (Carlin, 2019).

Transformational Leadership

Channing (2020a) asserted transformational leaders have self-sacrificing motives and live their beliefs and vision to influence followers. Bouchard (2019) noted transformational leadership as the leader's ability to inspire and elevate group members with outreaching effects that transform members as they become situationally aware. Leaders give rise to new ideas that promote growth and prosperity for the group or organization. In developing a connection, the leader raises the level of motivation of the follower to make fundamental changes through vision to enable and prepare an organization to move in a new direction and strive toward optimal performance (Bouchard, 2019). Transformational leaders intentionally inspire followers and foster them through change. The approach encompasses multiple dimensions of how leaders may initiate and develop substantial change in organizations (Burns, 1978). While leading, transformational leaders attempt to rise above personal gain and self-interests, for the sake of the greater good. Transformational leaders also exhibit developed moral values to create change.

Charismatic Leadership

The charismatic leader may be similar to transformational leadership. A charismatic leader possesses a special gift of persuasiveness allowing a unique connection with followers resulting in an influential capacity to accomplish goals. In this style, the leader desires followers to adopt values and beliefs and tends to articulate goals with moral overtones (Northouse, 2019). Charismatic leaders communicate high expectations for followers and they exhibit confidence in their followers' abilities to meet these expectations (House, 1976).

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership allows input from all members while balancing decision-making accountability between the group and the leader (Carlin, 2019). Democratic leadership or

participative leadership is based on inclusion and mutual respect between the leader and group (Choi, 2007). Democratic leaders share decision-making opportunities with team members, but participate and remain up-to-date in the process (Gill, 2015). Employee input allows participants to feel invested and involved in the success of the organization while improving output (Root, 2016). Carlin (2019) claimed this style of leadership to be more positive, creative, and inclusive. Woods (2010) found many effective educational leaders using the participative or democratic style. Although the leader may apportion responsibilities and tasks with group members, the leader maintains responsibility for the final or group's decision (Carlin, 2019). The democratic style supports high- levels of worker confidence (Carlin, 2019).

Team Leadership

Team leadership defines the leader's role as taking whatever action is necessary to help the team perform and be effective, as may be observed with sports teams. The leader or coach engages in evaluating team performance by determining whether to continue with a present strategy by monitoring progress. While observing progress, the leader may conclude the team's functioning is satisfactory, with no action required, but to continue monitoring the environment. If action is necessary, the leader must determine what intervention or level of action is needed, internally or externally, to meet the needs of the team (Day, 2004).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership originates from the effective schools movement as it relates to the management of teaching and learning in schools (Halverson & Clifford, 2013). Instructional leaders are directly engaged with teacher or group members by providing observation-based instructional feed-back, articulating instructional goals, and being present in the educational setting. Indirectly, leaders build relationships with teachers and create strong working conditions

for teachers while promoting collaboration. They actively support adequate resourcing of instructional areas. An instructional leader models by example and promotes a positive environment by displaying support with a noticeable presence on campus (Halverson & Clifford, 2013). Instructional leaders improve instructional learning by concentrating on successful recruiting and professionally developing instructors (Center for Educational Leadership, 2015).

Psychodynamic Leadership

The fundamental concepts of psychodynamic leadership are based on an individual's personality and relationship of the leader and followers. This leadership style was derived from the works of Sigmund Freud to make sense of the leader-follower relationship (Kets de Vries et al., 2013). The leader's first leadership experience begins at birth and continues to develop in early years through parental involvement and the parental relationship. Ingrained adult character patterns of behavior and feelings are rooted in our childhood experiences (McLeod, 2007). As the leader develops psychologically, the leadership personality is produced. This approach analyzes the human personality as it relates to leadership types and relationship between the leader and followers.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leaders are most often found in organizations with a structural focus of controlling and organizing (Bouchard, 2019). The leader's power lies in their formal authority and responsibility to the organization to maintain status quo (Bouchard, 2019). The leader motivates followers through a system of earned rewards and punishment whereby followers must obey the orders (Raza, 2015). They require total compliance to strict protocols and precise rules in accomplishing goals that are clearly defined. Generally, interaction with followers is limited with the leader intervening when standards are not met or when performance is not meeting

expectations (Richards, 2020). This leadership style is found to be effective in systematic

focused operations such as the military. Transactional leaders normally communicate only to

give commands or to maintain accountability for mistakes. The exchange between the leader and

follower is mainly to assess routine performance (Edwards, 2020).

Situational Leadership

Blanchard and Johnson (2015) described the situational leader as changing or adapting

the leadership style to the team member's situation based on their need and ability to perform

specific tasks. Leaders may need to be more supportive or more direct, but adapt their style to the

employee, whether experienced or new, responding to individual maturity level (Meier, 2016).

The leader does not rely on any specific leadership style, but is adaptable dependent upon the

need. Situational leadership is effective according to Gandolfi and Stone (2018) as it allows

employees to receive unique support and coaching essential to completing responsibilities. If a

new employee is introduced to the work team, more direction is required, but after acquiring new

skill and confidence, direction and support lessen with employee maturity (Meier, 2016).

Coaching positons are viewed as situational as they strategically develop a team and adapt their

style to both the team and individual player needs (Meier, 2016).

Servant Leadership

According to Greenleaf (1977), the leader is a servant first experiencing a natural

inclination to serve, and then aspires to a conscious choice to lead, which is different from one

who is a leader first. The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (n.d.), proposed the servant

leader leads by serving others, above self–interest, to create a caring environment to build better

organizations. Servant leaderships comes from within the leader with an undeniable compassion

for humanity. Servant leaders invest in their workforce by providing professional development

opportunities to increase knowledge, skill, and proficiency. Through service to others, the servant leader seeks to achieve organizational goals (Ingram, 2016). Leaders place a priority on serving in positions and organizations where they can make a positive impact on society (Schwantes, 2016). Servant leaders are effective at understanding the needs of others and resolving conflicts within the organization (Marzano, 2005).

History of Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology

As a result of industrialization in the early in the 19th century, the need for technically trained agricultural workers motivated Congress to pass the Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 (Library of Congress, 2021). The early land acts articulated to each state the appointment of a minimum of one land-grant college that resulted in a series of culminating events to produce our present system of secondary and higher education institutions of today. Early federal acts that contributed to the establishing vocational education include the Nelson Amendment of 1907, providing aid for land grant colleges; the Adams Act of 1906, increasing allocated aid to agricultural experiment stations and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, resulting in establishing state cooperative agricultural extension services and programs (Roberts, 1971).

Because of a national interest in industrial related vocational education from many organizations and influential individuals, the U.S. Congress recognized the need for a national system of vocational education and passed the first comprehensive federal vocational education law, commonly referred to as the Smith-Hughes Act (Hanford, 2014). The landmark act provided a program of federal funding to vocational education as a matter of national interest to prepare for employment and national welfare by providing federal funds to assist states in making necessary provisions for vocational education (Hanford, 2014).

The passage of the Smith-Hughes Act (1917) marked the beginning of federal funding for vocational education by mandating the establishment of a federal board for vocational education with a requirement each state also establishing a state board with submittal of detailed plans for implementation of vocational education. The Smith-Hughes Act also subscribed that states must match funding dollar for dollar and schools that funding be under public control with students spending half of their time in practical hands-on activities (Moore, 2017). Following the Smith-Hughes Act, there were several more prescriptive federal vocational education laws and amendments with vocational education related provisions, such as the Smith-Sears Act of 1918 to assist disabled veterans in their efforts to return to civil employment (Brush, 2016).

A few notable acts include the George-Ellzey Act of 1934 replacing the George Reed Act to provide funding for trade and industry programs. Following, the George-Deen Act (PL 74-673) replaced the expiring George Ellzey Act to include distributive education in the federal program and in 1943, the Barden-LaFollette Act provided vocational rehabilitation for disabled armed forces men. Between 1946 and early 1960s, there were several acts further contributing to vocational education efforts (Keller, 1976).

In 1963, the Vocational Education Act (PL 88-210) was introduced and was the most complete and comprehensive vocational education act since the Smith-Hughes Act (The Vocational Education Act, 1963, 1965). This act demonstrated a total federal commitment to vocational education and authorized federal grants for construction of area vocational schools. The Vocational Education Amendment of 1968 cancelled legislation except the Smith-Hughes Act and designated funds for the disadvantaged and handicapped. Additionally, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (PL 93-203) took over responsibilities of the Manpower Development and Training Act (Comprehensive Employment Training Act, 1973). In

1976, the Vocational Education Amendment extended the 1963 and 1968 acts (Finch & McGough, 1982). The Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act (PL 98-524) amended and expanded the 1963 Vocational Education Act and established the mechanism for promoting increased school/community collaboration (American Vocational Association, 1985). The aforementioned federal acts evidence the historical depth and involvement of the federal government's role in assisting states to establish systems of vocational technical education programs or institutions. The acts also demonstrate the support of the federal government for vocational education over the years (Brush, 2016).

In an effort to plan for increased equality of opportunity and means of preparing Americans with job skills, President John F. Kennedy appointed a blue ribbon federal vocational committee composed of 22 individuals from a diverse range of occupations to begin the task of evaluating the needs of vocational education and man power throughout the United States (Area Redevelopment Act, 1961). The report recommendations provided the foundation for the National Vocational Education Act of 1963 that President. Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law Public Law 88-210 on December 18, 1963 (Vocational Education Act, 1963). In relation to this study, Law 88-210 noted provision of funds for construction of area vocational schools to construct new buildings, expand or remodel existing facilities, improve vocational school sites with multiple occupational areas, to include vocational departments of community colleges, or university providing five different occupational fields leading to non-baccalaureate employment (The Vocational Act of 1963, 1965)

To address national economic conditions, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Area Redevelopment Act 1961 (PL 87-27), approving appropriations annually to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, United States Office of Education, to cooperate with state

boards to conduct vocational education training and retraining programs for the areas designated

as depressed (Tennessee State Board, 1961). The public law was specifically established to

alleviate conditions of unemployment and underemployment in certain economically distressed

areas (Area Development Act, 1961). Forty counties in Tennessee were designated as depressed

"Redevelopment Areas" making the areas eligible for assistance from a number of provisions

under the act (Tennessee State Board of Vocational Education, 1969).

Prior to the Vocational Act of 1963 and the Area Redevelopment Act, Tennessee had

supported vocational education primarily through of resolutions and acts passed by the State

General Assembly. According to State Board of Education records, the State Board for

Vocational Education adopted a resolution in November of 1961, to submit to the State General

Assembly in support of cooperating with the various agencies in taking advantage of provisions

of the Area Redevelopment Act (Boles, 1987). The legislative acts designated the State Board for

Vocational Education as the agency within the state to sponsor and administer the approved

training programs (Tennessee State Board of Vocational Education, 1969). The Tennessee State

Board for Vocational Education appointed a committee on area vocational-technical schools to

review the applications with members of the Department of Education concerning data on the

population, labor force, high school enrollment, graduates, and dropouts for all Tennessee

counties (Boles, 1987).

To meet the state agency cooperative requirement, the committee requested the

Department of Employment Security to provide an estimate of the need for training, and

proposed areas of the state for concentration. As defined by the Vocational Education Act, the

committee discussed the requirement of an area school providing vocational and/or technical

training programs of a broader scope, to meet the employment needs of youth and adults, within

commuting distance of every citizen of the state, be tuition free to those who would profit by enrollment in such occupational training programs of occupational grade in various occupations of work. Additionally, the vocational technical programs should offer preparatory or supplementary training for gainful employment in the occupation trained; and offer supplementary training for employed adults, apprentices, and other workers to better prepare for advancement, upgrading, or more continuous employment (State of Tennessee Vocational Education, 1969).

The committee established that locations of an area vocational-technical school must be near a populated area with a concentration of 16-25-year-olds, with transportation or highway access with an employment opportunity of considerable variety with a demonstrated business and industrial growth (Tennessee State Board for Vocational Education, 1969). With three meetings the basic framework for the system development was established (Boles, 1987).

In response to the recommendations, Governor Frank G. Clement recommended legislation on January 22, 1963 to establish a system of area vocational-technical schools and regional technical schools to assist Tennessee in matching the needs for jobs to needs of industry for skilled workmen (Secretary of State, 1963). Through the passage of House Bill 633 in March 1963 area schools began the organizational and administrative framework of appointing key personnel for a central office staff with satisfactory progress (Secretary of State, 1963).

To begin the facility building phase, on August of 1963, J. H. Warf, Executive Director, presented the recommendations to the members regarding location and foundation of the area vocational-technical schools in relation to the criteria of: (a) employment opportunities within the area; (b) interest of existing industry, business and public general; (c) the number of students

within commuting distance; (d) interest in training of potential students; (e) ability of the local level to assist financially with construction, equipment, provide a minimum of 15 acres of land, with necessary utilities, road access and ample population with a positive outlook for business and industry growth. Based on the criteria, the State Board recommended locations of area vocational-technical schools in the following Tennessee locations: Tri-Cities area, Morristown, Elizabethton, Knoxville, Athens, Oneida, McMinnville, Livingston, Crossville, Shelbyville, Hartsville, Hohenwald, Dickson, Crump, Jackson, McKenzie, Memphis, Covington, Newbern, Ripley, and Nashville (Boles, 1987)

With funding assistance, Tennessee's progress of construction and equipping the system of schools was unparalleled. The other remaining area schools were completed within the next few years to result in the system of today. Architecturally, the three urban vocational schools were designed to serve a larger student enrollment due to location. Each of the remaining rural area technical schools were constructed across Tennessee with use of a state-wide standard design. By January 1968, the Tennessee's system of area vocational-technical schools had 17 schools in operation across the state (Tennessee State Board for Vocational Education, 1969).

Legislatively, the Tennessee State Board of Education was designated the State Board for Vocational Education and appointed solely to conduct the affairs of the state area vocational-technical school system (Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Education 49-11-101, 2021). With the Tennessee State Plan, the State Board of Education for Vocational Education, was composed of the governor, an ex officio member; the executive director of the Higher Education Commission, an ex officio member; the commissioner of education who is

executive officer of the State Board; and 12 members, four from each of the three grand divisions of the state, appointed by the governor (State Department of Education, 1979).

With the report of the governor's jobs skills task force, Governor Lamar Alexander merged the state's job-training programs into the State Board of Regents pledging use of the system as a new federal job-training program to address job skill needs statewide. He proposed legislation of the Job Training Partnership Act to replace the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) of 1983. As a part of his comprehensive education plan, Governor Alexander asked the General Assembly to appoint the State Board of Regents to oversee all the state schools training Tennessee adults for specific jobs (Job Training Partnership Act, 1981-1982).

As a result, by act of legislation, on July 1, 1983, the 26 vocational-technical schools and four technical institutes joined the six state universities and 10 community colleges under governance of the State Board of Regents to form the State University and Community College System of Tennessee (Tennessee Board of Regents Website Enabling Legislation, 2021). The transfer of governance for the new system became effective on July 1, 1983. Chapter 181 of the Public Acts of 1983 for state area vocational-technical schools from the State Board of 'Education (State Board for Vocational Education) to the State Board of Regents (Tennessee Board of Regents Website, 2021). The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was formed to achieve better coordination and unity in the programs of public higher education in Tennessee (Tennessee Higher Education Website, 2021).

The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology began as an act of state legislation in 1965 as the system of State Area Vocational Technical Schools that were selectively placed across the state of Tennessee. Many were located in rural areas with the intent that no

Tennessean would have to commute more than a forty-five-mile radius to reach an institution of education. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the system expanded to 27 schools, across Tennessee. In 1994, there was an act of legislation to change the name of the State Vocational Area Technical Schools to the Tennessee Technology Centers. At the time, legislators and system leaders determined the system name change was necessary to better reflect the technical offerings of the schools as a part of the Tennessee Board of Regents. In 2013, the Tennessee Board of Regents experienced another name change of the system, from Tennessee Technology Centers to the title change of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology with the location designation. The name change was suggested in response to other post-secondary technical institutions of similar nature being referred to as colleges better identifying the level of technical education offered and received instructionally. The name change was also enacted to better identify and allow the technical colleges to compete for grants and other forms of state and federal assistance. The name change marked the progression of an advancing technical education system (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2013).

Summary

This literature review contains a summary of current research that applies to various aspects concerning leadership styles, female leadership characteristics involved in college presidency process and position and a historical review of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology. Leadership characteristics were examined from a value perspective and female leadership characteristics as a vehicle of institutional leadership effectiveness.

Chapter 3. Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of the leadership styles and characteristics of female Presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology and to provide a description of their personal perceptions attributed to their underlying success in pursuing the position of presidency. The leader's perspective of successful leadership characteristics and the influence that these perceptions may have upon their leadership style was explored. Qualitative research methods are useful in discovering the meaning people give to events they experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). My role was to comprehend how individual make sense of their experiences. Qualitative research seeks to analyze the behavior of individuals in their own setting by allowing a construct of reality within their social world or work environment (Merriam, 2009). I employed the process of inductive reasoning in belief that number of perspectives of the women administrators would be revealed in the research process (Lodico et al., 2010). A qualitative research approach is warranted when the nature of research questions requires exploration (Stake, 1995). Qualitative research questions begin with "how" or "what" for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of what is taking place relative to the topic (Patton, 2015). My study focused on describing female presidents' perceptions of their leadership styles and characteristics in the position of the technical college president.

Qualitative Research Design

The intent of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how people make sense of happenings around them. The topic was appropriate for a qualitative phenomenological study. The examination of perceptions of female administrators of their leadership styles at the Tennessee's Colleges of Applied Technology were a focus of this

study. Data were gathered by semi-structured, open-ended interviews with a purposefully selected sample of former and current technical college administrators.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted the purpose of qualitative research is to study lived experiences of group in a specific environment. Creswell (2009) earlier described the purpose of qualitative methodology as "means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individual groups" (p. 4). Qualitative research was also considered an ideal method for "understanding something, gaining insight on what is going on and why it is happening" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 21). Knowledge was gained from the responses regarding the college administrators' perceptions about their leadership styles and traits necessary to be a successful technical college president. Inquiry involved a determination of how the identified characteristics and perceptions of such influence the leader's style and success of the institution as college. This methodology allowed for the development of common themes and categories (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative research methods employed in my study included: purposeful sampling, semi-structured interviews, and systematic and concurrent data collection and data analysis procedures. To discover and analyze data, the constant comparative method was used (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Qualitative methodologies are anchored in a concern for developing in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon and a construction of meaning that individuals attribute to their experiences (Jones et al., 2006). The intent of qualitative research is to illuminate and better understand the lives of human beings and the world they live in through an in-depth examination (Jones et al., 2006).

In 2017 at the June Tennessee Board of Regents meeting, Chancellor Tydings proposed a name change of the top leadership position from Director to President (TBR, 2017). The

name change was an effort to better reflect the duties of the executive leadership position of

the technical colleges and better align the top position of the colleges within the Tennessee

Board of Regents System across the 40 institutions.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological research attempts to describe or interpret the study of lived

experiences giving meaning to the way they occur and as defined by perception, language,

cognitive and non-cognitive feelings and preunderstandings and presumptions (Adams & van

Manen, 2012). Phenomenology may explore unique meanings of any human experience or

phenomenon. A phenomenological study approach allows the researcher a methodology to fully

explore a phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 2009). This phenomenological qualitative design

was appropriate to examine women presidents who may have similar or different experiences on

their individual college campuses. Creswell (2013) stated: "I think metaphorically of qualitative

research as an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and

various blends of material" (p. 13). Because the research involved interviewing female presidents

of technical colleges in Tennessee, the assumption was made there would be "lived experiences"

to explore within the leadership positions throughout their professional careers (Adams & van

Manen, 2012).

Creswell (2015) described a phenomenological study as reporting the meaning of lived

experiences with a focus of what all participants have in common. Creswell (2013) proposed

qualitative research should be appropriate in particular research studies when:

(a) the nature of the research question in answering how and what; (b) in exploration of a

topic; (c) presenting a detailed view of the topic; (d) the ability to study individuals in

their own setting; (e) having an interest in writing; (f) having time and resources to collect data and analyze data; and (h) being an active learner in the research process in telling a story from another's view. (p 205)

Research Questions

The question that is central to this study is: "What are the leadership styles and characteristics of female presidents of Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?" I addressed the following general research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the self-described leadership styles of female presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

Research Question 2: What leadership characteristics are associated with female presidents of the of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

Research Question 3: What characteristics do the female presidents perceive to be similar or different between female and male leaders in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology system?

Research Question 4: Is there a difference or commonality in the leadership characteristics of the female technical college presidents?

Research Question 5: How is the institution influenced by the female administrators' perceptions?

The Role of the Researcher

With use of a qualitative methodology, the researcher is the primary instrument of gathering information for data collection within the environment of the technical college system (Creswell, 2014). The researcher's role is to be an active participant in the study while collecting

data by interviewing the female technical college presidents. After the interviews were finalized, the researcher analyzed the interviews to determine common themes resultant in conclusions (Creswell, 2015). To ensure trustworthiness to the study, the researcher should remain objective through the interview and investigative process of the women leaders' perceptions of their roles as technical college presidents.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to beginning this research, I obtained approval from the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to investigate the perceptions of leadership styles and characteristic of female college presidents in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology system. Participation in the study was voluntary. After each president agreed to participate in this study, I arranged a meeting time to discuss the project. Participants were emailed an informed consent agreement prior to agreeing to participate in the study with the leaders being granted confidentiality (McMillian & Schumacher, 2014). As the researcher, I maintained the privacy of each the presidents by taking care not to discuss the study with the presidents outside my role as the researcher in efforts not to influence the data.

Participants

My interest lies in leadership styles of female presidents of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology that are governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. There were three criteria for the selection of the administrators to be included in the study sample. These criteria were: (1) the administrator must be a current or recently retired president of a Tennessee College of Applied Technology; (2) have at least one year of experience as the senior administrator or president, and (3) be female. Nine current presidents and 2 recently retired presidents met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Patton (2015) indicated there are no clear

rules for the size of qualitative samples.

It was also an interest in exploring the size of the college the female presidents presided over to determine how the positions were distributed. The TCAT institutions were assigned to one of three size classification categories—small institutions, medium institutions and large institutions—based on student full-time-equivalency enrollment. Small institutions had enrollment below 300; medium-size institutions had enrollment of 301 to 600; and large institutions had enrollment over 1600 (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2016).

The 11 present and former technical college presidents were chosen for study, and because of the small number of participants, efforts were made to protect the identity of the participants. Participants were assigned pseudonyms. It is also important to note that the names of the institutions have been changed to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants in this study. For this reason, the descriptions of the college president are devoid of specific details that may serve to identify their locations.

Sampling Strategy

Qualitative sampling is always purposeful with a deliberate selection of the sample, and specific criteria to provide the most informational rich data possible (Morrow, 2005). Patton (2015) described numerous purposeful sampling strategies to identify sampling size with the main strategy designed to identify good exemplars of the phenomenon to be studied. The intention of purposeful sampling in qualitative research was not to generalize as the sample size is not important in qualitative research. The intent was to answer the research questions with a contextual understanding in a rigorous and ethical manner to understand meaning and significance (Ravitch & Mittenfelner, 2016).

By purposeful sampling, the researcher can document the personal and lived

experiences of the female leaders, where patterns may be examined. For this study, I chose an interview strategy to study the practices and experiences of the female leaders of technical colleges and to explore the interpretive meanings and aspects of the lived experience related to leadership and leadership styles. This included barriers each faced in obtaining and maintaining their leadership positions (Adams & van Manen, 2012).

The interview strategy was designed with a format to resemble a conversation of purpose with opened-ended questions that allowed for change to ensure an emergent design sensitive to the body of data (Morrow, 2005). I conducted all interviews as the researcher. Each subject was interviewed in a one-on-one virtual, private setting with the use of Zoom or Teams due to COVID-19 travel protocols. The interviews ranged in length from 60 to 90 minutes. Ravitch and Mittenfelner (2016) suggested the interview should take place in a quiet comfortable location free from potential distractions. Interviews were recorded with a transcribing application and a check was employed to ensure transcriptions were accurate. Kvale (1996) identified criteria for interviewing that included using short interview questions designed to glean correspondingly long answers; the importance of interpreting, verifying, and clarifying answers during the interview.

Description of Data Analysis

To examine female leaders' perceptions toward leadership and the leadership styles associated with their executive positions in the technical college system, I employed a variety of data collection methods. With the role of the researcher as the instrument of data collection, I conducted interviews with the participants, kept a journal of hand-written notes based upon the interviews and observations, and gathered documents to identify the size of the technical college based upon the enrollment of the college (Creswell, 2014; Patton,

2015). The process of reduction was used to discover the experiential lifeworld of leadership through bracketing (Adams & van Manen, 2012). Lifeworld is defined as how life is experienced within and through the body in the stages of the life course (van Rhyn et al 2019)

Information was gathered using a process described by Lincoln and Guba (1981) using interview transcripts resulting from the tape-recorded subject interviews and abstracted onto index cards. General concepts were developed as identical or similar information derived from each interview occurred. From these general concepts, a list of prevalent leadership styles and characteristics was established (Merriam, 2009). I began by creating categories and themes that describes the information collected from the leaders. These principles reflected the administrator's perceptions of the leadership styles and are predicted to fall into projected similar descriptive common themes involving leadership style and characteristics to include (1) the value of leadership; (2) desirable institutional leadership characteristics and (3) improvements resulting from perceived successful leadership styles and characteristic guiding each participant's work. However, I remained open and receptive of other themes and commonalities or differences that may be revealed through data analysis.

Interviews were coded and reviewed for the purpose of recoding as needed. I employed member checks to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and presentation of data (Patton, 2015). The perceptions were analyzed at an individual level. Results from the analysis of each president was compared and contrasted. The objective of the analysis was to accurately present the perceptions and descriptions of experiences of the participant leaders in common themes as drawn from the sources (Creswell, 2014).

Trustworthiness and Consistency

Trustworthiness and consistency were defined as being balanced, fair and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, multiple interest and multiple realities (Josselson, 2013). I employed the practice of thick description resultant from the interviews (Creswell, 2014).

My own influence as a technical college leader in the same system of colleges held the potential of creating reliability issues through the interview process and required attention to reflexivity (McMillian & Schumacher, 2014). The reliability of a qualitative study is a measure of the study's consistency of the results obtained from the data. Research techniques to enhance the study's trustworthiness included triangulation, articulating the researcher's position, and outlining an audit trail.

A degree of internal validity existed within the study that represented the extent to which "research findings match reality" (Merriam, 2002, p. 201). Patton (2015) integrated standards of quality and credibility as acknowledging and embracing subjectivity. Patton also identified dependability, a systematic process to be followed, and triangulation, capturing and respecting multiple perspectives as important components of quality study with the researcher understanding how his or her own experiences and understandings of the environment and culture affect the research.

Researcher's Bias

Patton (2015) stated that any personal or professional information that may affect the data collection, interpretation and findings should be reported. Studies that employ a human researcher in a qualitative methodology may be open to the criticism of researcher bias (Creswell, 2014). Specific safeguards were built into the data collection and analysis of the

research to minimize the effects of this bias. During the interview process, I kept in mind that I was both a researcher and a colleague of the participants in the technical college system. Because I was familiar with some of the interviewees, it may have impacted the way information was communicated. To mitigate and document the dynamics, I kept a journal to document insights about the process to ensure intended meanings originated in the data collection and analysis. As Channing (2020a) suggested the researcher should take care to ensure accurate accounts are reflective of the participants. Interviews with administrators were recorded and transcribed by an independent third party to assure impartiality. Data collected from interviews were compared to written documents to discover inconsistencies, and the interview protocol was reviewed prior to data collection to avoid the use of leading or ambiguous questions.

Summary

The phenomenological framework used in this study support the examination of the perceptions of each technical college administrator toward their leadership styles and characteristics in their present positions. A qualitative methodology requires the researcher to be fully immersed in the field to experience and collect data to examine the phenomenon of interest through the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2015). Consistent with qualitative methodology, I wanted to understand "how" and "why" the female presidents identify with the leadership styles as they lead their institutions, and to examine any commonalities or themes that might emerge from the data.

Chapter 4. Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of female presidents in the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) system about leadership styles, qualities of leadership, and career development. This phenomenological study included types of leadership, desirable outcomes of institutional leadership characteristics, and changes resulting from perceived successful leadership styles guiding each participant's work (Creswell, 2014). I sought to gain a better understanding of the leadership qualities and characteristic associated with female college leaders, as well as examine the influence these perceptions may have on the institution. First, I sought to determine how and if female presidents perceive leading in a different manner from their male counterparts, particularly in their perceptions of leadership style, and if there are perceived gender differences in their perception of leadership styles or roles for TCAT presidents. The second purpose of the study was to identify and describe areas of common or differing perceptions of leadership qualities held by the technical college female administrators. Special interest was placed on examining the values underlying their perceptions as being successful technical college presidents.

Data were collected from 11 interviews, nine current female TCAT presidents and two retired TCAT presidents. Individual interviews were conducted with the 11 presidents in an online format using Teams. The participants answered open-ended questions based on a semi-structured interview protocol. The college presidents responded to the interview questions by describing their experiences and perceptions of their leadership roles in successfully leading their technical colleges. They shared their specific perceptions concerning leadership qualities and characteristics important to them personally in leading their college. They discussed their specific leadership styles and how their leadership styles directly affected their colleges,

particularly in respect to faculty, staff, and students. They discussed their strengths as college leaders, and perceived differences and commonalities between male and female leaders in their leadership capacity. They shared their specific professional development of their leadership skills and how their leadership skills were developed. The presidents discussed their greatest leadership challenge and barriers in becoming or maintaining the position of technical college president.

Five research questions were developed to guide this study. The open-ended interview questions were designed to obtain in-depth information about the experiences and perceptions of the presidents to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the self-described leadership styles of female presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

2. What leadership characteristics are associated with female presidents of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

3. What characteristics do the female presidents perceive to be similar or different between female and male leaders in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology system?

4. Is there a difference or commonality in the leadership characteristics of the female technical college presidents?

5. How is the institution influenced by the female administrators' perceptions?

Participants

I requested and received permission to conduct this study within the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) system, as the technical college arm of the Tennessee Board of Regents. Purposeful sampling was used to gain insight into the perceptions of female technical college presidents. Female presidents were invited to participate in this study based on the

criterion of being a female technical college president within the TCAT system and having served as a president for more than one year. The participants were invited to participate in this study by an email. Each participant received a digital copy of the Informed Consent Form within the initial email that allowed time to review the purpose of the study along with the procedure and if they chose to participate. Each interview was scheduled and conducted individually at a time that was comfortable for participants and allowed for the anonymity of participants to be maintained.

As a component for agreeing to participate in this study, no identifying information was shared regarding individual participants. There were 11 present or recently retired female, technical college presidents employed by the same post-secondary system in this study. As a level of protection for all identities, pseudonyms were used throughout the reporting of the study's findings. The pseudonyms for participants are identified as President 1 through President 11.

Results

The transcribed recorded interviews were reviewed, and re-listened to, in an effort to accurately analyze data prior to coding. I also used member checking prior to the coding process. The credibility of this research was supported by the presidents' interview responses and member checking. The following is a summary of the data collected through interviews and identified commonalities of the leaders' perceptions. The results are organized by the study's research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the self-described leadership styles of female presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

When participants were asked to self-describe their leadership style, all 11 presidents

voluntarily identified with a particular leadership style with all of the presidents having

knowledge of various leadership styles from participation in varying leadership programs, past

educational opportunities, in-services, and training. The leaders did not have to be given prompts

or lists to identify with a style, but responded self-describing a style within moments of being

asked the question. Among the 11, there were three most common leadership styles self-

described by the female leaders: democratic, situational, and participative. Among the three

styles, the female leaders were evenly divided with three presidents identifying with democratic

leadership, three presidents identified with situational leadership, and three identified with

participative leadership. One president self-described her leadership style as authentic leadership

and one president identified with servant leadership.

Leadership Style

President 1 stated:

> Situational. I don't have one broad stroke for everything. I think there's always a reason
>
> why people do certain things and think certain situations call for me to make the decision.
>
> Certain situations call for me to pull everybody together to talk. We talk about it and
>
> make that decision. I think women may be more situational. I'm going to go with
>
> situational because I think women have a more of an innate trait to separate different
>
> things out, to look at each area. I know, I do this in this in particular situations, and I can
>
> do this in another situation.

President 2 stated:

> Probably democratic. Democratic, I do a lot to try to present whatever it is that we're
>
> participating in or leading them leading and to get the input from others. That is not

necessarily always what we do. It is the majority is what we do, but there's input and feedback from everyone. Then we, as a group, try to decide what's best for the college. I do that on different levels, depending on what it is we're deciding. It may be that that democratic leadership style is only with a small group, maybe the administrative group, if the decision determines that. But then at times, it might be all of the faculty and staff that's involved in what we are discussing, whatever it is, and trying to decide as a group, what is best for the college. I'll lean that way because I do like to seek the input of others and to try to determine what's best for the overall of the college based on their input.

President 3 stated:

I would say participatory. I believe in management by walking around. I believe that what gets investigated, gets done. You can't know what's been done if you don't see for yourself. If you don't ask the questions, if you don't follow up and you can't do those things, if you're not participating in what they're doing. So I try to participate so I can test or judge or assess per se. It's just, I don't want people to make a wrong turn and then keep going. And then I find out later and then we have to go back and unravel and redo. So to prevent that from happening, if I'm there right along with it, we're going to catch them and save everybody, some, some headaches. I believe that I'm probably more participatory. I'm very relational. What I do feel like, I always worry that I am not being transformational enough. I feel much more comfortable when somebody tells me what they'd like to see and then I'll make it happen. I worry about whether or not I'm seeing what needs to be done.

President 4 stated:

Situational. I think women are good cross managers. I had an interim president tell me this. I didn't view myself that way. That was very eye-opening for me. He told me I was a really good cross manager, calm and composed during whatever rolls, our way. We had an incident at my former college. I didn't realize until that moment, that situational management and adaptability, with the ability to think on your feet. I didn't realize I had that until it was over. Women tend to have the ability to rally people. Situational and adaptability is crucial.

President 5 stated:

If I identify with one in particular style, authentic. Authentic leadership style that, is who I am. I am the same person outside of here as I am on campus. I had the same way of getting up every morning as everybody else. There's nothing, any different for me. I share my struggles. I share what brought me to where I am so that others would know. I was raised by a single parent. I've been divorced. I'm remarried. I struggle, you know, there was days that, you know, when I was in college, I might've had $2 in my pocket. I was lucky to have that someone who saw something in me and continued pushing me to where I am.

President 6 stated:

I am for the most part democratic until we get outside of the lines and then that's when I pull the autocratic card. I believe everybody has to have input. We spend too many hours together not to have input. I look at all of our female presidents right now at the TCAT level. We've all got a different breadth of knowledge and different backgrounds. I would

have to say for most of us we are strategic or strategic planners too. That's a quality I

value. I may project that, but, I think we always have to be formulating.

President 7 stated:

Participatory for sure. I really think most female leaders that I've dealt with are autocratic.

Because they typically think they have something to prove.

President 8 stated:

Democratic. When you look at my leadership style, I'm not an autocratic leader. I like

input and let my people do their work. I'm not the person who has their thumb on people

all day and all night, where they can't feel uncomfortable. I'm going to be there to support

you. If you have questions, I'm there to try to answer them, but I'm not going to take you

by the hand and lead you all the way down the road. It's always been said, if we all do

great things, we all get the credit, but when something goes wrong, I must be able to

stand and take that hit. We can all bask in the glory, but when it comes down to a bad

thing, somebody has to be the one that takes the brunt of it. I haven't had too much of

that, but, you need to let people do their job and be supportive.

President 9 stated:

I would describe myself as a participative leader, kind of being a part of the team. But

knowing that if there's difficult things that have to be accepted, then that's my

responsibility. I give my team the ability to try new things and support them doing those

things. I think Banner has been probably my greatest example of supporting. Sometimes

with the Banner Team that does not make sense and is not what I think we need to be

doing in order to best serve our students. Participative, but the buck stops at my desk. I've

had to have a couple of uncomfortable conversations concerning transcript processes.

When I first got my first administrative role, many years ago, I was more on that Myers Briggs style that was supportive and intuitive, kind of a thinking kind of person. I'm not sure that I would say that there is a leadership style that lends itself more to females. I think it's more of how those leadership styles are in the same organization and work together. I think women, not particularly in a leadership style, but women tend to do well in teams. I think we have those characteristics that help us work well in different teams, with different personalities. I don't think there's a leadership style that totally fits females, but an ability.

President 10 stated:

Situational, cause most definitely depends on the situation and what you are you dealing with at that particular time. I don't think there are inherently any female leadership styles. I think it's just the brain. It depends on the person. I know men who are just nurturers by nature. I know men who are emotional. I know some women who show no emotion at all. It just depends on the person. I don't think it has anything to do with whether you are male or female. It's just the person.

President 11 stated:

I think for me, I'm just that leader that wants to bring everyone to the table to make sure I hear all the voices. I want to make decisions, hearing all the voices being a part and letting them know that I care about what they think. Although the decision is mine, I do care about what others think. And I want to make sure that they feel like their voices are heard and they're able to have input or say in any way in the way we move forward. I think just having that type of philosophy of inclusion and including others because I do rely on their strengths and their expertise. I really don't like the dictatorship type of

leadership style. I don't think that works in a TCAT very well, especially in our environment. But I have worked for some dictator leadership style leaders in the past, and I always vowed that if I were ever given the opportunity I wanted to be the example for others to follow.

Being a servant leader is how I'm made. I think that's very, very important to me, especially working when you have limited faculty and limited staff. That they know that you are there for them and they know that you believe in them. You're right there with them through the good and the bad, and that you're very supportive. To me, that's what a servant leader is. They're in the trenches and they're listening. You're in there with your students or with your faculty or with your staff. I think my greatest attribute is being that servant leader. I do think we have, if you look at female presidents and you look at male presidents, our perspective. Although they may be similar, how we get to those perspectives are different. We actually have compassion first, that is we make decisions, we're looking at the total. How it affects not only the person sitting in front of you. Because we are women, we think strategically, and then we also look at the outcomes. We're not as quick to move because we really think about what we do before we do move.

Each of the participant interviews was interpreted using transcription with an initial listening of each recording and a re-listening of the recording. Transcripts were created for each of the 11 participant interviews to accurately reflect the meaning of the presidents' responses. Codes were developed to explain the categorization of themes. I identified themes by scanning for words and phrases used by the participants (Dudovskiy, 2018).

While listening to the recordings of the self-described leadership styles, the common themes that appeared in repetitive wording were democratic, situational and participative. There were three main repetitive themes were evenly distributed among three presidents who identified as democratic leaders, and three presidents who acknowledged a situational leadership style and three women presidents who noted their style as being a participative leadership style.

I was also interested in exploring if there were leadership styles related to size of technical college or years of service of the technical president. The following trends were noted when examining presidents' leadership style, size of institution, and years served as president. All 3 of the democratic leaders served at medium sized technical colleges. Two of the three presidents that described themselves as situational leaders were located at a large technical college. The two presidents with the longest tenure were at medium size institutions and use a democratic style of leadership. There were no other identifiable trends. See Table 1 for a complete list of all presidents that participated in my research.

Table 1

Presidents' Leadership Style, Size of Colleges, and Years of Experience

Self-Described Leadership Style	Size of Technical College (Small-Medium-Large)	Years of Experience As President
Democratic	Medium	8
Democratic	Medium	13
Democratic	Medium	16
Situational	Large	8
Situational	Large	2
Situational	Small	7
Participative	Large	8
Participative	Medium	5
Participative	Small	6
Authentic	Medium	3
Servant	Small	6

Note: Small = 300 or less FTE; Medium = 301 to 600 FTE; Large = 601 and over FTE

Research Question 2

What leadership characteristics are associated with female presidents of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

When participants were asked to describe their leadership characteristics, all 11 shared a common theme of their leadership characteristics and how they related to communication and vision. Communication was identified by all interviewees as a necessary characteristic in relationship to the leader's ability to communicate to her faculty and staff, ability to assimilate Tennessee Board of Regents information to communicate to respective parties, and ability to

communicate and promote the needed public relations information to the general public. The leader's perception of vision of the institution was reported as necessary to assess the present state of the institution and forecast the institution's needs related to programs to be added to institutional offerings, and project workforce needs of the area's industries, businesses, and employers. Educational needs may be related to industry specific needed training or specific equipment as used by particular companies.

An additional characteristic that emerged in the interviews was the presidents' abilities to lead the faculty and staff "by example" and to participate or serve as an example of leadership to promote "buy-in" of institutional initiatives. The characteristics of serving and leading by example were a perceived perception of the female leaders of demonstrating care of faculty, staff, and students.

Leadership Characteristics

President 1 stated:

> I think that a good leader is a person who can lead beyond the right here and now. They have vision. And not only have the vision but that they can plan the route to achieve whatever it is they're trying to achieve. They must have a vision. They've got to have passion. I've never seen a good leader yet, that didn't have passion. Certainly, they need be a good communicator. A person with high standards and knowledge, if you're going to be a leader you just can't halfway do things and then expect somebody else to move a mountain. You've got to set that example.

President 2 stated:

> The first thing that I feel that a leader needs is a servant's heart. I think that to be successful in leadership you have to be willing to serve. While you are leading a group

you also have to serve in some capacity. You have to be willing to do what you ask of the people that you're leading. Another quality, a successful leader must have vision. They have to be able to look at where their growth of the college is currently, assess as their skill sets, strengths, weaknesses, and look where that organization is, whether it be a school or a community group. You must see where you want to go, because you have to have that clear vision as the leader to be able to lead that group to obtain that vision or that goal. Then I think there's charisma. Not that a leader has to have some charisma, but I think they have to be able to communicate and motivate. It can't be a person who's very introverted and quiet. I think they have to have that ability to interact with people and to bring out that excitement and the motivation. Those three are probably my top three.

President 3 stated:

I think in order to be successful, the very first quality has to be a relational individual. You have to be able to communicate with others so that you know what their needs are, what their desires, and what they're thinking. As a leader you generally have two ways that you're trying to do this. One is your colleagues and those that you're actually leading, I have to hear from TBR, from the students, and the workforce concerning what is it that you need. Then doing the same with the staff. I feel like I have to be that relational person. Then once I understand these things, I've got to be able to assimilate that and communicate back to them. This is what your audience [TBR, students and the community] says I need. Now, can I communicate that to the staff in such a way that they understand it. You have to have relationships to do that. That's the first thing. I think you have to be willing to jump in and participate with your team. You can't just be the leader. You also have to be willing to work alongside your faculty and staff.

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President 4 stated:

> To be successful you have to create your following and you do that by being trustworthy
> and leading with integrity. Two of the most important things, creating your following and
> surround yourself with people who get it. Hire the right people, at the right time, for the
> right position. It's just super important if you have the wrong person in the wrong
> position not only are you doing a disservice to your leadership, but you're doing a
> disservice to that person.

President 5 stated:

> I believe leaders must have high integrity. They must be visionary, and be a great
> communicator, not just one that does all the talking, but is also a great listener, have
> emotional intelligence to know when to get involved and to know when they should let
> those they're leading to take the lead. I lead by getting out of the way. As a leader, I feel
> it's my responsibility to train future leaders. How you do that is you give them
> opportunities just like I've had over my career to succeed as well as fail. To be
> compassionate and understanding, whenever those that you're leading do fail, to know
> how to come in and hold them accountable compassionately.
>
> I think it just comes with being authentic and predictable. Those that you lead,
> you need to kind of get in a rhythm with them and they need to be able to be predict,
> what you're going to do. I don't believe in keeping the environment like a tornado. I think
> it goes back to having a high level of emotional intelligence to know when your team is,
> needing a change or change in direction. I truly believe in keeping morale up and
> knowing that people have lives outside of here. I believe in your health and your family

comes first. Just being authentic and letting my team know who I am, what I expect. I hold them accountable and they hold me accountable.

President 6 stated:

I think that a successful leader in our environment is a strategist. A person that can look at the past, but yet forecast the future. Sometimes the future is unknown, but we've got to take all the little parts and pieces from our community and put it together where we can match potential job seekers with jobs and jobs of today to jobs of the future. I think knowing the history of where we have been and guiding toward the future of where we're going. I think that has a lot of impact to it, but I also think having a technical mind and ability helps, along with a healthy respect for finances and having the ability to speak up when things need to be said and voice concern.

President 7 stated:

Objectivity. A leader must be able to look at all sides. The only way you can do that is if you've lived on the sides, really, if you've been in a prestigious occupation all your life, you might not be able to understand that somebody that is at a different level. I think being objective and independent are super important.

To be well rounded. To be a technical person is very important, but to also be able to understand the accounting side of it. I came from a different background than some. I was a student at the area vocational school, early on. I worked seven days a week and was a student. I understood work. Then I went to work for the Tennessee Technology Centers right after college. Frankly, it just wasn't exciting enough for me, so I left and opened an accounting practice for 11 years and then realized that the TCATs really do great work and went back. I think different experiences make a difference.

President 8 stated:

You must be flexible because you never know what's going on, what you may base decisions on down the road. All situations are not the same. They don't require the same actions or the same way of getting to the root of the problem. You've definitely got to be flexible in whatever you do. You can't know everything. You got to have people around you that know you can rely on and gain insight from.

You got to have the right team. Most importantly build a good team that you can communicate with. One you can all have open conversation when it comes to the work. Everyone has their specialty. Flexibility, I think is probably the biggest thing. Everybody brings to that to the table their specialties, I've got to know when to call on those folks and when to make decisions about their decisions. Flexibility and building a good team with a good comradery among that team.

President 9 stated:

I think my thoughts about those qualities have changed over the years. One of the things when I interviewed for this job, I said that I was tenacious. Because that was one of the things I do. I stick to it until it's done. I am an outside the box thinker. Sometimes we get so stuck in the way we do things that we can't see better ways or new ways to explore. I think a leader has to be empathetic. The part of being a leader I don't like is trying to lead people where I think we need to go versus dictating where we need to go. I don't want to be the leader that kind of sets the parameters and tells everybody what to do. I've found when I came into this role, we had a lot of staff that were very senior staff as far as their longevity in the system. They kind of get set in their ways and this is why we've always done it kind of things. Some of those, the individual started retiring, and we were

replacing those positions, we've now got a younger group of instructors on board. That's

one of the pluses of that is having that blend of the new, enthusiastic versus the

knowledgeable seasoned veterans. But it also creates a new dynamic as a leader to be

able to work with those different groups. I've got some millennials that look at things

differently. Many times, there is a work that extends beyond job responsibilities.

Number one would be communication and communicating our vision. Being able

to communicate that in a way that gets faculty and staff wanting to share that vision. I

like to set the role and unless someone asks for assistance I'm going to think that they've

got the tools they need to move forward. They will let me know when they need

assistance. I think sometimes I've always been more of a behind the scenes worker,

regardless of the position.

President 10 stated:

I think a good leader must have compassion. I think they also must have good listening

skills and they have to have vision of where they want to take the organization. They

have to have a strong belief system in what they're doing and sometimes they have to be

willing to take a chance. Anytime you're dealing with people, I think the most important

thing you can have is compassion. Once again, good listening skills, because I think in

working at a TCAT, students as well as faculty and staff, you have to be able to listen and

hear, actually hear, what they are saying. I believe in the TCAT mission. I think those

were my leadership characteristics walking into the work world of the TCAT system. I've

learned more things, but I think those are the strong ones.

President 11 stated:

I believe the quality that a leader must possess is organization and excellent

communication skills. Being able to listen and being able to strategically think, process

the information and be a problem solver. Communication is very important. Being able to

communicate, listen, to solve problems and connect. To make connections with vital

partners is a very important attribute that a president would have to have in order to

embody a TCAT and oversee a teacher. Workforce development is included in our

partnership because for us creating those vital partnerships and relationships with the

industry is vital. But I'm also thinking about our campus as you work with your faculty

and your staff. I think that is as important because they have the connection with the

student base that flows out into the community and working with not only local

governments, but all of our community leaders.

There were several differences in leadership characteristics noted as well, such as two

presidents noting a leadership characteristic of being tenacious, which was not mentioned by

other respondents and one president noted "objectivity" and another "flexibility" being a

strength. In analysis of the leadership characteristics, President 9 made a statement that was

likely applicable to all presidents by stating: "I think my thoughts about those qualities have

changed over the years."

Research Question 3

What characteristics do the female presidents perceive to be similar or different between

female and male leaders in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology system?

When participants were asked what characteristics are perceived to be similar or different

between female and male leaders, all nine 9 shared common perception of differences in

leadership characteristics. The most common female leaders' perception of difference was that females are more likely to reach out and seek the guidance of peers, collaborate, and that males are more formal, procedural, and not open to the input of others. A second noted perception of differences was that females may "jump in" and "roll up" their sleeves and are more likely to work harder and longer than their male counterpart. Two presidents did not perceive differences based upon gender in consideration of leadership characteristics.

President 1 stated:

> I think sometimes male leaders assume that they're right all the time. They're not as open to talking out situations. It is rather, this is the way we are doing it and the way we have always done it. That has been some of the experiences I have had. I don't think women do as much of that. I think men sometimes think more with their egos and women don't. I know that sounds horrible, but that is true. Maybe it's just the men I've worked with, I don't know.

> Attitude. At a TCAT, I think females are more apt to roll up their sleeves and get in there and get it done. If somebody needs to greet students and walk them to a class. I see more female presidents doing that and being involved with the students in participating than I do male teachers or male presidents. They usually delegate a little bit more.

President 2 stated:

> Male leadership sometimes is more procedural, operational, and more about outcome. Sometimes female leadership is more about the personal aspect of getting where you need to keep it. Not that we don't focus on operation because I think we're good in the

operational and the procedural too, but I think sometimes that personal aspect that caring, that compassion. I just think that's a trait that a little bit different.

Female presidents just jump in and do it and spend time even in student enrollment. I think that the female presidents are more hands-on and spend more time than the males. Males can let it go, walk in and do their day. They have the ability to let it go. What I see among the females, is that the female presidents don't, we take it to heart. We take it with us 24/7.

President 3 stated:

I think that may be women rely on the whole person, the whole being of who they are. I look at individuals that I'm working with as a whole person, not just the one that came to work. That is, what else is happening that's not really a part of this scenario in this person's life. When you encourage that faculty member to go back to college and get a degree, so you can promote them because they're at the top of where they are. I always try to think about that upper story and what else is going on in life and how all of these things are going to work together because people bring their upper story to work. I don't know that some of the male bosses I've had really looked at the upper story. They're very focused on the here and the now and the mission at hand. Again, this is an opinion, but I just feel like men are more focused on the here and the now. Then they go home and then the women are always trying to look at co-leading home life with the work life. That home-life to work-life linkage is very important to me.

President 4 stated:

I think right off the top of my head, I feel that women have to work harder and smarter than men. But leadership qualities, I know that I'm way more tenacious than most of my

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male counterparts. I tend to look at things from a business lens. For the difference in

leadership qualities, I'm going to go back to my mentor from a community college, the

longtime president. He was like this gentle giant who was soft-spoken. Everyone loved

him. He tried to see the good in people, but when he had something tough to do he gave it

to a woman. I don't mean that in a critical way. I hope it doesn't sound that way. When

there are serious things to get accomplished, I think women rise to the occasion faster. I

would label myself a fail-forward kind of leader. I'm willing to try it, even if it means

failing. I'm willing to give it a try. Sometimes I think women will take risk because we've

had to. Men don't necessarily take those risks. They're more status quo. That may sound

terribly critical. The biggest leadership difference is I think men are more formal in their

presence of leadership. I think women have to be deliberate in cultivating that perception

at the same time. I think that is also how women are more approachable.

President 5 stated:

I think they differ based on their own experiences. Some of it is born in us, but a lot of it

comes from experiences. Those that have mentored you, and what you have seen others

do. Experiences they've had, either as being led or to lead. I really don't think it's a matter

of if you're a male or a female. I think it's just a matter of what has been your experience.

What are the values that you have, and do you bring those values to the workplace as a

leader?

I think females tend to work harder, longer. We tend to probably sacrifice more of

our free time than a male does. I think we're harder on ourselves. We sometimes are held

to different standards, even those that may be evident and some of them that may not be

evident. I think about the president that goes out and plays golf. I don't know when they

have time to do that. We as females have many responsibilities outside of work to our families. Sometimes males are not held to the same [standards].

President 6 stated:

I felt like male leadership is more autocratic. And I think they carry an air with them that they're more confident overall than sometimes females are. I feel like there are males that can more easily put in more hours than the females can. That has to do the nature of raising children. I think that's a big thing. That doesn't necessarily mean that we don't put in the time. Even before the pandemic and the work at home atmosphere, I think many of us were working on the weekends, always carrying something home with us. It just didn't stop. But the perception is if you're not at the office, then you're not working.

President 7 stated:

I think males seem to think because they say something, that it is gospel. I think females seem to look for justification rather than I just think that. I think we want people to agree with what we have to say and if they don't, then we want to justify what we've done. Males just don't do that.

I think overall that people listen to men more. If I said something in a group sometimes it might be overlooked, but if a guy said the same thing it would be latched on to as important. I saw that a few times more inside of the TCATs than outside the TCATs. I had instructors who would come to me even before they would go to my male VP at times. The VP was really even keeled and easy to work with but people like to know that you're going to answer their questions. Among my instructors, I had no problems. The people that worked for me I really didn't have any issues. They knew that they could disagree with me without any reprimand or any problems, but not inside of the

TCAT leadership group. With the other presidents sometimes when a man says

something, it is listened to more than a female.

President 8 stated:

I think it's individual. I can't say that they differ per se. It' just depends on how you are as

an individual. How you were taught. In how and what you believe. I think men can be

democratic. Men can be autocratic. Women can be both as well, but it just depends on

how and what you believe in. Things are situational. Leadership styles are also

situational. It depends on what the issue is as to how you're going to lead in that aspect.

Because you can't be democratic on everything. Everything requires situational

leadership.

President 9 stated:

With who I have worked closely with, I think our female counterparts tend to reach out to

our peers and seek guidance. Sometimes I think our male counterparts, and it may be not

so much being male, but from having more experience maybe, but they do things initially

and then tell about it. I think the female leaders are more prone to seek guidance and

collaborate.

President 10 stated:

I think it depends on the person. I don't think it's gender based. I've seen both. I've seen

some good leadership techniques and styles on both sides of things. Some not so good

techniques on both sides. For the females, the crying, when they get chastised or when

they do something wrong. All of that, I didn't like. I don't like throwing a fit. We all cry.

I'm not saying you're not to cry. I'm not that hard. I cry, but just to cry over nothing or

over anything like silly stuff, whether he likes me, or I don't think she likes me.

Conversely, I don't like males who are demeaning to females or to people whose

strengths that males think are not as strong as theirs.

President 11 stated:

For men, they see black and white where women, we see black, white and gray. I think

it's being able to critically think. Because we do it in so many facets of our life. We're

able to build, we're able to grow, and we're able to see the big picture. We're all about the

details. With men, of course, there just is right or wrong. There's no maybe. I think the

biggest difference is we have added value where they just have value.

I think the comradery with other females, as presidents, we seem to come

together. We want to assist one another. Whereas males are more in a controlled

environment and they they're more competitive. They don't reach out as much to help

because it's all about, they want that shining star, or they want that light where we don't

necessarily have to have that light shining on us. I don't like a light to shine on me. I want

the institution to shine.

The most common perceived difference, between male and female presidents, was the

women's opinion that they were more likely to collaborate and seek the guidance of other

presidents. The reoccurring theme related to the females' perception of difference in male

presidents were that the male leaders were more formal, procedural, and not open to the input of

others. A second and third noted repetitive word or phrase was the perception of a difference that

females may "jump in" and "roll up their sleeves" and are more likely to work harder and longer

than their male counterpart.

In the analysis of data, I also noted that two presidents did not perceive any leadership differences based upon gender in consideration of leadership characteristics. This is consistent with some of the research findings.

Research Question 4

Is there a difference or commonality in the leadership characteristics of the female technical college presidents?

There were two leadership characteristics that were voiced by four presidents as being important to their leadership, which were the leadership characteristics of integrity and compassion. The four presidents who responded with the characteristic of the leader's integrity noted integrity as being important in creating a standard of trust with those you are creating a following. The four presidents who responded with compassion felt it was a characteristic necessary to lead with an ability to demonstrate care, be empathetic, and serve as an educational leader. Another characteristic of commonality among two presidents was a characteristic of the leader's ability to be "tenacious" as important to successful leadership, with an ability to not be afraid to fail-forward and to follow through until a task is complete.

When interviewing the participants, a difference in perception of the leadership characteristics was discovered among the 11 college leaders. Two differences in perception were noted as "being confident" and "being transparent" with one president voicing each. One president responded with being confident as important in leading her faculty and staff. She perceived campus personnel were not likely to follow a leader that was not prepared with a plan for success. The other president responded with being transparent with all parties concerned, to include faculty and staff, as a means of creating trust in higher education and eliminating any questions in regard to campus operations.

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When interviewing the participants, a commonality of participation in system leadership development programs was discovered among the 11 college leaders. Each of the 11 female presidents had participated in a Tennessee College of Applied Technology Leadership Program or Maxine Smith Fellows Leadership Program sponsored by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) or a Tennessee Higher Education Commission Program, such the THEC Fellows Program. Additionally, many of the presidents had participated in at least one of their service area or county of residence leadership programs, with some attending multiple leadership programs.

President 1 stated:

> I've participated in state leadership and TCAT program with Dr. Lynn Goodman. I did Complete Tennessee. Locally, I did county leadership program. I learned the importance of the networking and really realizing that no one has all the answers and that we're always going to be learning, just listening to different industries, talk about how they problem solve. They really helped me understand some of our situations and how to solve those problems. It was a good networking and sharing in a safe environment about the challenges that you face as an administrator, whether you're in a business and industry, or in education. I think that one area I handled was the accreditation area because in my involvement with programs and approval and working with their accreditation, which was COE (Council on Occupational Education). I felt very good about sharing that information. I also felt very good about, about talking about the importance of having trust and teamwork in your staff. Those were fun, fun sessions that I got to lead along with, the importance of community involvement. I think I was the one that set those up. So that was fun.

President 2 stated:

I did the TCAT leadership program and then I've also done a couple of the regional ones and the County Leadership Programs. I did one for Tennessee Technology Center Tennessee Board of Regents for TCAT. It was probably the first or second, we were young. Then, I've also done the community leadership, the ones that are local chambers for our local groups, and I've been to two of those and then one regional. I needed to build those relationships and learn more about the counties I was serving. That was even before I was president. That was one of the opportunities that the previous director guided me and let me do it. It helped me prepare as the college, Public Relations to provide the services for that county. I would have some knowledge about the operations that county. It was very beneficial to be in that group. Then one is a more regional approach, where that leadership group looks at the overall community economics, work force of the region and how the region, collectively, can promote tourism, economic development, education and government. We went to different counties, with different leaderships groups. Different leaders from those counties help us to be able to prepare for roles that are regional versus just county.

President 3 stated:

I participated in TCAT Leadership 2007. I am advocating to re-establish a TCAT Leadership Program. TBR has a community college leadership program they are talking about re-establishing. I asked about TCAT leadership. TCATs have some very specific needs. What's going to happen when we start retiring at some point if they're not planning for the future? TCATs are a little bit different than the community colleges. The community colleges are pulling people in from all across the country. The TCAT are

built mostly by people within their communities. TCATs are very unique and unlike anything else. It's hard to find people that can come from outside the system and really just be effective in short order. I'm hoping that we get that re-established for continuity beyond the ones that are in place now.

President 4 stated:

The leadership development program that has been super valuable to me was the THEC Fellows Program. The THEC Fellows was an innovative leadership program. I went through that program last year. It was the program that brought all of my experiences from years past to a crescendo. The THEC Fellows Program is where I developed the formula for the IDP, the individual development plan for myself and all of our employees. They all have one. The coaching sessions through THEC Fellows Program were incredibly valuable to me as a newcomer. Basically having that network being developed through that leadership program. It was super valuable to me. The IDP and coaching were awesome. One of the other outcomes of that program is my entire staff is going through the four disciplines of execution. For me, that has been the most valuable thing.

President 5 stated:

I've done the THEC program. It's the THEC Innovation and Leadership Fellows Program. It was an inaugural year for it. We met in person probably three times and then we had to move everything online. It was really good. This was the first leadership program that included TCATs. Most of the time it's university led, but this time it included TCATs and community colleges. I did that program. I've done the local county community leadership

programs. I also went through the Gattis Leadership. I went through that in 2013-14. It

was the 13 counties and they had buy-in from about 10 of counties.

President 6 stated:

I participated in Tennessee Technology Center Leadership. We did the team building

ropes course at Fall Creek Falls. For me, it was probably at that time more about

connecting with other people, than actually the curriculum itself. Then, I also went

through RALLI (Regents Academic Leadership Institute). It was the first time, maybe the

last time, that TCAT personnel were invited because it was typically a community

college program. I was in that course with three TCAT administrators.

President 7 stated:

I did participate in Tennessee Technology Center Leadership as an assistant director. We

all went through leadership with different people coming in, conducting various sessions.

We did several weeks of leadership, when I was an assistant director.

President 8 stated:

Yes, I have. I was part of the inaugural group of TCAT Leadership, then the Tennessee

Technology Center Leadership. It was great. I learned a lot from that. We took each of

the departments and pretty much broke down what a director at that time needed to know.

Obviously, it was beneficial because you're where you are and I am here. I think

everyone who went through that has become a president within the system.

President 9 stated:

I did participate in one of the last, I don't know if we were TCATs yet. I was in a group

with some great people. Dr. Brad White and Jerry Patton were our facilitators that year. It

was a great learning experience. In fact, I was working on finishing a course and we used

the same book in one of my master's courses. It was about leadership styles. We were all

assistant directors at the time in that group. I think there were 14 or so total.

President 10 stated:

I participated in three. All the programs I've participated in were great. They had a great

Maxine Smith Fellows Scholars and RALI (Regents Academic Leadership Institute).

Both of those were best. I also went through TCAT leadership. All of the programs were

good.

President 11 stated:

I participated in Tennessee Trained in the system and another one inside the system,

which was Maxine Smith Fellows. Outside the system. I recently went through SCORE

or CLTI, Complete Leadership Tennessee Institute. I've also gone through all of the local

county leadership programs. I also went through West Star.

In providing analysis of the responses, the most repetitive theme the presidents included

as being a part of their administrative success was participation in a leadership program either in

the technical college system or as a related opportunity of the Tennessee Board of Regents

(TBR) or a Tennessee Higher Education Commission Program.

The presidents seem to place value in being provided with opportunities to participate in

one or more educational leadership programs in preparation for their roles as presidents. All of

the presidents indicated their participation as being beneficial.

Research Question 5

How is the institution influenced by the female presidents' perceptions?

When interviewing the female presidents, there were several themes discovered among

the 11 college leaders. Each of the 11 female presidents influenced their respective institutions

by "creating the right team", and "leading their institution by example" and "a belief in the mission of the education." Each of the president voiced a commonality of a perceived barrier in entering the president's position, which had been primarily a male dominated field. Also, many of the presidents experienced a similar career pathway leading to their respective positions as technical college presidents. Finally, the female college presidents exhibited a commonality in concern for their respective campuses related to "creating a buy-in" of the faculty and staff.

Lead by Example

President 1 stated:

> I try every single day to keep morale up and keep people doing what they want to do. When, you know, (the faculty & staff) are really quick to say "we've never had to do it this way before. If everyone is busy, somebody needs to greet students and walk them to a class. I do it.

President 2 stated:

> When I'm in the position of leading the faculty and staff, they know it's not somebody presenting a vision or a procedure or something that has no idea about what's going on. They know that if I'm talking about something, I want them to implement in the classroom, that I understand the challenges. That I've been in their position. I think it made it easier in some ways. The president really actually understands where we are and what we're facing, and she can relate to that. I can do that in multiple aspects on campus, and do that with instructors because I've been in the classroom. I still teach. I was also in student services, and understand what their challenges are too.

President 3 stated:

>I believe in mentoring the coordinators that are hired. Everything I've ever learned I try to share with them upfront. I spend time mentoring those new coordinators and I give them copies of resources. I have things that I keep and I share with them. I teach them what it means to lead people, because I don't want them to make the same mistakes I have made. But I also have shared many times with my children. Some of the best lessons I ever learned was what not to do by watching a bad leader. I didn't like working for this person or I didn't like the way this person treated me, but if you learned what you didn't like then you know never to do those things to other people. It's great to have a good boss, but I think it is even better sometimes to have a not so good boss because you will be a better person because of it.

President 4 stated:

>From a leadership standpoint, my administrative team and the senior chain all the way down to the instructors and the maintenance crew, know I care deeply about their success. We do that through an individual development plan. I shared with my team early on my arriving early in my career, I did not have an IDP, an individual development plan, but I had someone kind of guiding me. I want our people to know that we don't succeed as a college unless they succeed personally and professionally. It is my job as the president of the college to get our people where they want to be. I think the individual development plan is something that I bring to the table that is personally important to me and professionally important to me. It was brand new to my TCAT. Frankly, they probably thought I was a little crazy when I said, I need to know what your goals are. I

also know that my people know that I care deeply about what happens to them and their future. We've had some courageous conversations about the directions we want to go.

President 5 stated:

Individual leadership plan. My biggest thing that came out in my plan is to learn how to hold people accountable. I, as a new president, as a female, know helping those that you lead have goals and hold them accountable to those goals, just like Dr. Tydings does for us, as presidents. When we submit our goals and plans, she holds us accountable. The last evaluation period, I moved mine to the spring during the time that we do promotion and tenure and we spend a lot of time. I sent several of them back. To say, let's think about these goals and revise them and make them measurable and something that you're going to know a year from now, if you've met it or not. That was big for me, because before that I didn't have the confidence. I didn't feel confident enough to help them do that.

I am, the TCAT representative for Women in Higher Education in Tennessee and fully support that organization. I facilitated a couple of sessions with women leaders and emerging leaders. I mentor a couple of female leaders. I try to make a point of checking on them just sending a text and email, to give them a call, and check in with them. Sometimes that's very important. There's a lot of female mentors and leaders in my career that saw something in me that I didn't see in myself and encouraged me.

President 6 stated:

We had two weeks were basically me and another person were the only ones on campus. Then we opened up for January. We had a meeting with our support staff and our administrative staff and gave them the option to work a set staggered schedule so that we

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still had coverage, they could rotate from home or not, everybody chose to stay on

campus because they felt safe and that they worked better on campus

President 7 stated:

Since I had been in industry, and manufacturing and aluminum products, and I've been in

the food industry, I really had a lot of manufacturing knowledge. I could talk the talk with

almost any industry and if not could bring someone else in. I had a really good group of

instructors who worked with me and they all had great backgrounds.

President 8 stated:

Learn all you can. Even though it's not your job, make it your job to know what it's about,

because you never know when you might have the opportunity to do that job. You can

never know too much. You must know the people you deal with, know all your

departments, and how they flow. You can't know too much.

President 9 stated:

You need to lead by example. If I tell them I think we should try this, or there's this new

policy and we've got to implement it. I understand that parts of it may not be easy, but we

will tackle it, knowing that we're in it together. I think is something I'm working on trying

to do better because there's so much stuff anymore. There's so few of us to share and all

of those almost overwhelming responsibilities. I can't ask them to do something that I

wouldn't be willing to do. I also need them to know that I understand that there's

challenges. I don't care what the task is. If I'm given a task, I'll get it done, because that's

just the way I do things. I guess the way I was raised. I may not like it, and it may not be

easy, but just go for it and then ask for assistance if needed.

President 10 stated:

> Sometimes you just, be quiet and listen, and really listen to hear. And of course, what our positions have always felt that that job to me, every job I've had is at the TCAT It was really a ministry. It wasn't a job to me. It was more like a ministry. And I think that helped me to navigate through there.

President 11 stated:

> I'm just that leader that wants to bring everyone to the table. To make sure I hear all the voices. I want to make decisions, hearing all the voices and being a part and letting them know that I care about what they think. I do care about what others think. I want to make sure that they feel like their voices are heard or that they're able to have input or say in the way we move forward.

In the identified repetitive them and commonality of "leading by example", there were many repetitive stories occurring in interviews that contributed to that shared common theme. President 1 indicated, "if everyone was busy, I walk students to class." President 2 indicated faculty know she understands their position because she has been there. President 9 plainly stated, "You need to lead by example."

Barriers – Male Dominated Culture

Each of the female presidents voiced a commonality of a perceived barrier in entering the president's position, which had been primarily a male dominated culture and field

President 1 stated:

> Sometimes it's male instructors in programs or male shop foremen. If you, as a female in this business, you're going to have to be knowledgeable and be able to talk the talk and know the difference. They're going to expect that you don't. You've got to always be one

step ahead. When I got ready to leave the first time in 2012, he came to me and said, and

I quote, You know what? You weren't bad for a female. He said, I never had a female

boss. I was the nervous wreck he said, but honestly, you've turned out to be the best boss

I've ever had because you really did act like you knew what was going on. You came to

visit me and could talk my program. And I'll never forget that. I guess that's something

that we always have to remember as females, that you're going to be dealing with a lot of

male instructors and male students. I just never forgot that comment he made, which

made me very sensitive that there might be other people just like him that are kind of

wondering, because most of our folks come straight out of factories. Most of their bosses

were not women. To me, it wasn't negative. I didn't take it as negative. It was just an eye

opening experience for me.

President 2 stated:

Many of our programs are technical in nature and by default, many of those are male

careers. You have a lot of faculty who are males. This is just my opinion, but I think

sometimes that males have a hard time with a female being in a position of leadership.

For them many times, males want to work for and follow a male versus a female. I think

the biggest challenge that a female has in his position is earning the respect, trust and the

backing of the faculty, because it's predominantly male.

President 3 stated:

I feel very fortunate that when I took on my first role at a TCAT, a lot of people tried to

tell me that the men are not going to follow you. I didn't see that. Or that the men are not

going to think your ideas are very good. I did not see that.

President 4 stated:

From the female perspective, I would say that most often people do not look at females as being technically educated, meaning your welders, your electricians, your automotive people. Your knowledge about that particular area may be small because you are female. I was technical education trained, and then I was community college graduate. That launched my career in a whole different way. Technical education is a game changer and women are perfectly suited to lead that charge. Often times our students are already challenged when they come into technical education, not all of them, but some of them. , women have a strong sense of knocking out problems. As a female leader in technical education, I would say the biggest barrier might be that women are perceived to not know about the typically male dominated fields. I purposely think that is absolutely backwards.

President 5 stated:

Time is a barrier because we do lead a lot of males, whether that be, faculty or students, and being a female, you've got to take that time to make them understand that you know what you're doing. You can't just come in and expect that they're all going to follow you just because you have that title. It means spending time with your faculty, with your students, finding out what they care about. Why they're there. What passions they have and let them know that you share those passions. If you're not talking about this you can't expect them to follow you as a female. They live, they talk a different talk than we do. It just takes time. It's just an understanding that you're going to have to have as you're coming into the job as a female in a male dominated profession of technical education.

President 6 stated:

It's kind of a phrase that I've adopted in my mind is, I have earned my seat at table. Then I'd also like to say that with our history of chancellors, I think it's made a difference we have a female chancellor. It's getting in my mind that I've earned the spot. It wasn't given to me. And that my opinion matters.

President 7 stated:

The barrier for me was a female community college president who was just always talking down about the TCATs and she could do what TCATs do. How great her school was and how they could do everything we did. I'll never forget when, Dr. Tydings decided to call us president. She literally laughed out loud at it in a meeting. My other barrier, I trusted people to do the right thing too much. There were a couple of instructors who just didn't have the right mind set. It was all about progressing personally with them and they would do anything to make that happen. I just probably trusted people too much and didn't look for the worst in folks.

President 8 stated:

When we started there was that good old boy system. You had to be an agriculture person, had to come up in the ag world to be considered. I know that's not the case now. It's breaking the traditional mindset with these positions. TCAT has done a wonderful job in that. I think it will continue that way. Also, the tradition, it's always been done this way.

President 9 stated:

I think that there's still somewhat of a stigma. I have some faculty that probably related much better to my male predecessor, than they feel like they do to me. They have a whole

lot more experience in their field than I could ever have. I think sometimes that's the

challenge is to kind of break that down to communication.

President 10 stated:

I think when a female is in that role [president], I think people are watching. They want

to see how you are going to lead. In our situation, we had students that we had to model

by example to help mold them. We wanted them to strive for our positions.

President 11 stated:

The misconception that females do not hold these types of positions or may not be as

qualified. I think that of course is a huge misconception especially based on the number

of female presidents that we currently have and that some are at the top, [best TCATs]

and most profitable. It is just this misconception because probably many years ago that

you did not see many females occupying these types of positions, but I do think we have

raised the bar because not only for our intellectual ability, but for our organization or

communication, the way we're able to relate and respond. The way we're able to organize,

the way we're able to critically think, and strategically plan.

Career Pathways

In the common theme of the female presidents' perception of encountering barriers

related to the president's position, all of the women leaders identified with an associated stigma,

primarily due to the positon being more commonly thought of as a male role, or the

misconception that females may not hold the position because of required qualifications and

technical knowledge need as mentioned by Presidents 4, 9, and 11. President 10 even noted when

a female is in the college president's role a perception of being "watched" to see how she would

lead in that role The other contributing factor as noted by several presidents is the male to female

ratio of both faculty and staff, as well as the student population as being more traditionally male and associated with male dominate career programs. Interestingly to note, many of the participating female presidents have technical backgrounds with expertise in either education or industry.

Many of the presidents experienced a similar career pathway leading to their respective positions as technical college presidents. Eight of the technical college presidents served as assistant directors. The other three came from community colleges or the Tennessee Board of Regents.

President 1 stated:

I want say that probably one of the people that I worked with early on in my career at an electric corporation. She was just an awesome person to work with and was a wonderful example to me to be working in with predominantly men in an electric cooperative. I would say honestly, I've had good bosses in the system and at the board office.

President 2 stated:

After I got out of college, I was a business major. I started in our business department at that time in Office Occupations. I taught for four years in instruction. Then, I moved into student services as the student service coordinator. I worked on a master's and my Eds. while I was student service coordinator. And during that time, I served basically in about all the different roles. I served as financial aid counselor during that time when we had a switch in financial aid counselors, and was the job training counselor, when I was student service coordinator. I had an opportunity to learn all aspects of student services. In addition, we switched student record systems. I had an opportunity to really learn the previous system we had and understand the data recording. Then I moved into the assistant director position and while in that position, I worked on my doctorate degree.

Over those years, I learned all the aspects of the campus to include instruction, off

campus, human resources and personnel. It was all comprehensive. The director gave me

great opportunities to be able to be involved in all aspects and operations of the school as

an assistant director. That was my path. I went from instructor to student services to

assistant to director. Now, president.

President 3 stated:

I taught for 13 years. My first position was in student services as a recruiter outside the

classroom. After one year, my Director sent me to another location as a campus

coordinator. I was there two years. Then I went to another TCAT campus as an assistant

director three years. Then I went to another TCAT as Director and was there two years.

Now, I'm at another TCAT and starting my sixth year. To me, first, your forming. The

first year of storming, second year is sort of norming or reforming. T third year, you start

really norming what you've been doing for the past two. Then you get in years four and

five, and you're performing. People know where you're going. You built this case. People

that weren't on board with you, they've jumped off, they've gone away.

President 4 stated:

Being technical education, trained and community college trained in the beginning, I was

that student fresh out of high school that did not like college and hell bent on not going.

My family was blue collar, small business entrepreneurs. My father owned a gas station.

My grandparents ran a small country grocery store. I learned a lot of things early in my

life through entrepreneurship. Those were some tough lessons. I always wanted to be in

business for myself, so I went to our local community college where I got an applied

technology degree. Then I got an associate's degree. from there I finished my bachelor's

degree in business administration. At that point, I went to work in a family business as an

accountant and worked there for quite some time. Then I started my own business. Then

life threw me a curve ball. I wasn't an entrepreneur. I ended up closing my business after

the curve ball and went to work for a law firm as their business person. But it was

through a state university where I got my bachelor's degree and my master's degree who

called me up and said, we have a position at the small business develop the center area.

That's where higher education began for me. I was at Small Business Development

accountant and general consultant for them. It was there that I met a local banker who

was the CEO of the bank. From there, I took the job at the bank and became a branch

manager. It was there that I realized I was more of a change agent and more of a change

manager than anything. Leadership was my thing.

I saw an ad for the entrepreneur center director position. It was a nice little step up

for me that I really needed at that time in my life. The rest is history. I started at the

community college as entrepreneur center director. From there, I became the coordinator

of community and economic development, and later the director. Then through four

interim presidents where I learned a lot about leadership and learning to lead in adversity,

I was promoted to dean of the technical programs and workforce development. That's

where I finished my career prior to my present position. I had an entrepreneurship

background, a banking background, all squirreled into one and then education for the last

15 years.

President 5 stated:

I started in higher education and my first job, I made $14,000 a year. I was lucky to have

that someone that saw something in me and continue pushing me to where I am. I was

real lucky in my earlier career, being in customer service. You try to define something

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that the customer has in common and you start there. You let the faculty know that you

share, the common goals that they do. Always trying to raise that bar to be better. That

the status quo is not acceptable and I'm here to support them. I'm a big proponent of

professional development and education. In the technical field, there's always something

to learn and add.

President 6 stated:

My first degree was in engineering. As a female engineer, I feel like I've been very

encouraging to women who have sought out non-traditional fields. I started out, as a

contract instructor for laid off workers. I was an adjunct instructor and after that contract

ended I stayed on as an evening school instructor still adjunct in Computer Operations

Technology, back when we had big floppy disks, all of that sort of stuff. There was an

opening for a related math instructor, evening school coordinator that was a full-time

position. After that, I became assistant director. Then, in 2008, I became the director, and

later president.

President 7 stated:

I was a student at the area vocational school way back. Then I went to work for the

Tennessee Technology Centers right after college. I left and had an accounting practice

for 11 years. Then I realized the TCATs really do great work and went back there. I think

different experiences made a difference. Not just staying in academia, not just staying in

an industry not just worker based. All those things worked together. I felt like that was a

positive for me. As an accountant I was working a lot of overtime during tax season. I

decided to go into industry as a plant controller. I worked for a food company and

worked in manufacturing for 10 or 11 years before I went back to the Tennessee

Technology Center. The company where I was working downsized. That very same

week, the TCAT had an opening for a Business Systems Technology instructor. I applied

for it and the TCAT hired me.

President 8 stated:

I don't think anybody came right into the TCAT presidency. Most of us served under

someone else prior to becoming the president. We learned some good and bad from our

predecessors. As a result, we know what works and what doesn't. I think we were all wise

enough to realize a lot of those dates and times have changed and added to them. I think

we as females, we're very intuitive.

President 9 stated:

I'm getting ready to finish up 13 years here. My path prior to that was as the director of

workforce development for Workforce Investment Act. I was a Director for three years

and an administrator for six. I moved up the ranks from being a data entry clerk to a case

manager to a program manager. I spent 20 years was just kind of working all aspects.

President 10 stated:

I actually came into the system teaching. I taught. I came in to the Office Occupations

Class, Business System Technology class. Then I also taught IT, Computer information

Technology after that. I came into the system and teaching. Then in 1994, I started the

computer information technology program at a TCAT. Then in 1997, I left the system

altogether. I went to work for health care. I came back after to the retirement of an assistant

director. There were two or three employees that asked why I didn't apply for the position,

because someone else had gotten it. They asked me why didn't I apply? I looked at them

and I was kind of stunned because I didn't even think about it. It never crossed my mind. Actually, the employees are the ones who planted the seed in my mind.

President 11 stated:

When I graduated from college I had a bachelor of business administration degree with a minor in sociology. I just loved dealing with people. I think that's really important. When I graduated, I was not able to find a job. If it doesn't come to you, you go to it. So I started in banking actually as a teller in a local community bank. I quickly moved from being a teller to an administrative assistant, to a compliance officer, to a branch manager in a very short period of time. From that, I learned how to create revenue and balance. With that the community college had an opening where you had to make money, which was in the continuing education department. I worked with business and industries developing programs for the community, which ranged from industrial electricity to college for kids. I learned how to tie revenue generation with operation. From there, UT, as their first extended campus in an area of Tennessee, where I met a former director. While I was here, I was truly amazed about the TCATs because I had never heard of and didn't know what they did. I had limited information, but my experience with him was so impressive. He said, you need to look at TTC, we have outcomes. We're outcome-based, we're, competency-based. We are more direct. I did start my first extended campus in that area that quickly moved to the top producing campus in a year. I was there maybe five or six years doing that. Then I was offered a position at a community college as a vice president for institutional advancement and continuing education and workforce development. I learned fund raising, continuing education offerings, and program alignment. I did all alumni. I was responsible for all the marketing public information for

the college. I was responsible for everything. It was a huge opportunity for me to really

embrace all the skills that I had learned in the past and put them into action. Again, I can

say, I was successful in that endeavor. Then a position came open at the TCAT. I applied.

Here I am. Not long after, I was also given the opportunity preside over another

institution.

Many of the female presidents experienced a comparable career pathway, with the most

common theme of having served as a vice president or assistant director prior to being hired in

the president's positon. The women leaders perceived serving in that capacity better prepared

them for the role they are in today and allowed the leader to again experience that they would

either incorporate into their leadership styles. Several of the women presidents noted

instructional backgrounds in the system. Several leaders had instructional experience in the

system prior to becoming the assistant director or vice president. The most common instructional

beginning being in either Office Occupations or Administrative Office or Computer Information

Technology. Three leaders also had community college and workforce backgrounds with similar

pathways to the role.

Creating and Getting Buy-in

The female college presidents exhibited a commonality in concern for their respective

campuses related to "creating a buy-in" of the faculty and staff. Many of the female leaders

voiced a similar theme of "creating your following and surround yourself with people who get

it", such as President 4. President 2 commented on her ability to "create buy-in' of long-time,

faculty and staff, and consensus and relationship building as mentioned by Presidents 3, 4 and 6.

Many women leaders noted current changes with COVD-19 protocols as being related to this

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theme particularly given unknown circumstances with the leader ultimately responsible for providing direction and creating consensus.

President 1 stated:

> Each student that I have, each faculty member that I have, I have a passion for that person to succeed. To be a good leader in an educational environment, whether that is a post-secondary institution or an elementary school or high school, you truly have to have that passion to want to help people better themselves.

President 2 stated:

> The promotion tenure policy change right about the time I got to be president, the educational requirements were put into policy. We moved from a technology center to college and, there were many changes. We have a campus with a lot of long-time faculty here. They were very used to a time when education was not an emphasis for professional development among our faculty. They had a really hard time accepting implementing the new policy and an ideation that education was important to the college. It was a big challenge for me to implement, to let them know, that she's just not doing that. But it really wasn't something I changed, the policy had to be implemented. There were a lot of males that were great instructors and they had great experience, but they didn't understand the change. With my leadership style, I was trying to get them to buy-in and participate, to do professional development that would help them in their professional educational career.

President 3 stated:

> My ultimate strength is that I really believe in working from a consensus. I want people to come together. We have a senior staff meeting every Monday morning. The meetings

are generally an hour and a half long. We share schedules and everybody knows what everybody's doing. One person may think, what the health careers coordinator is doing has nothing to do with me, but you'd be surprised how they end up interacting in some way. Then everybody reports what's going on in their area or what they're doing. Everybody is aware of what others are working on. We can all have input into what's going on. When a decision needs made, I don't want to make the decision. I want the senior staff to come to an agreement as a group, as to which direction we're going. And when we have consensus, the goal is that everybody says I'm going to support it a hundred percent, even if I had another opinion. However, as the president, if we can't come to a consensus, then I am obviously willing to make that decision. I can probably count on my one-hand, the number of times I've had make a decision. I think overall knowing my own weaknesses, relying and trusting my staff and then working towards consensus.

President 4 stated:

I think my greatest strength is relationships with people. And I think building those relationships, whether it is inside the organization or with external constituent. It is super important that relationships are managed and cultivated. Two of the most important things, creating your following and surround yourself with people who get it. Hire the right people, at the right time, and for the right position.

President 5 stated:

I would say definitely through this whole COVID situation. Back in March it was very clear that we were in unchartered waters and a lot of decisions were having to be made very quickly with very little information. We met at least weekly, if not daily. They knew in our meetings that each one of them would have time to say what's keeping them up at

night. What the leadership team or I can do to, to help them with whatever it was keeping them up at night. Those leadership qualities of communication that was phone calls, emails, meetings, not just for the sake of having a meeting, but having something that they knew on a weekly basis. They knew they could get what they needed, along making sure that all your constituents hear from you, whether that be faculty, staff, students, community, supervisor, as far as the chancellor.

President 6 stated:

One of my strengths is consensus building. We've been through so much change lately and we've had to re-examine our duties and sometimes change is hard for people. I've had to do a lot of consensus building. One of the first times, I feel my leadership style became evident to others was the first Council on Occupational Education preparation after I became assistant director. That was really my first big project that involved everybody, where everybody had a role in the piece.

President 7 stated:

My assistant director wanted to put in a cosmetology program. I was dead set against it. I thought it was too expensive. I didn't think that there were enough jobs in area. I listened to him and he talked me into it. I pretty much turned it over to him. I said, if it goes well, it's your baby, if it fails, it's your baby. It was a big success. I think if I had been an autocratic leader, I would have said, absolutely not.

President 8 stated:

Most importantly, build a good team that you can communicate with. You can have open conversation when it comes to the work. Everyone has their specialty. Everybody brings their specialties to the table. As a leader, you must know when to call on those folks. Building a good team and having a good comradery amongst that team. An example is

when we decided to take upon ourselves to renovate our campus. Most would think that

maintenance would do it. We all jumped in there, myself included. We all jumped in

there and did it all. We were there on weekends and even nights.

President 9 stated:

Being a part of the team, but giving my team the ability to try new things and supporting

them and doing those things.

President 10 stated:

When you're dealing with education, especially in a rural area, that's like where I was. A

lot of these students, as well as sometimes faculty, academic staff, are dealing with issues

that need that compassion and nurturing those emotions. They need to see an emotional

side of you. They need to see who you really, really are. Sometimes, and that you can be

real. You have emotions and you can show them.

President 11 stated:

I take every day as a learning experience. I try to take every challenge, every obstacle,

even every reward as something that's molding me for the next day for the next

experience. I really take to heart things that happen when they're good or whether they're

bad. I continue to mold myself so I'm relevant. I think that's very important, especially

working in a teaching environment. To be driven, to be evolving and always on the

cutting edge. I think we must evolve to be able to meet the challenges, whether it's on the

student side, community side or administration side. You just have to be able to. I think

that's what I've done just to remold myself and to be better.

The analysis of the leader's perception of their influence on their technical college

resulted in several themes being identified among the 11 college leaders. The primary and

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secondary themes expressed as being most identifiable were the female presidents' perception of their influence of their ability to "create the right team", and "lead by example" by instilling a belief in technical education and/or college mission. Another noted repetitive theme was each woman president experienced a perceived barrier in entering the president's position. This perception was based on the technical college system and field having been historically male dominated field.

Notably, eight of the woman presidents experienced a similar career pathway leading to their respective positions as technical college presidents serving in either an assistant director or vice president capacity before being hired in the president's positon.

Chapter 5. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand the leadership styles and characteristics of female Presidents of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) and to provide a description of their personal perceptions attributed to their underlying success in pursuing the position of president. I explored the presidents' leadership styles and characteristics related to their roles as the top administrator at the TCAT institution. I sought to gain a better understanding of the leadership characteristic associated with female college leaders, as well as examine the influence these perceptions may have on the institution. Also, I sought to determine how and if female presidents perceive that they lead in a different manner from their male counterparts, particularly in their perceptions of leadership style. Another purpose of the study was to describe areas of common perceptions of leadership qualities held by the technical college female administrators and influences on the institution as a result of the leader's perceptions. Special interest was placed on examining the values underlying their perceptions as being successful as sitting technical college presidents.

Discussion

The analysis of data collected from interviews led to identifying common themes regarding the presidents' perceptions of their leadership styles and characteristics in leading their respective colleges. The following common themes emerged from the data.

Common Self-Described Leadership Styles

This theme refers to the manner the female presidents perceive and understand their self-described leadership styles based on their experiences of leading their respective technical colleges. Participants shared a common theme of primarily three leadership styles described as; democratic, situational and participative. Concerning the three leadership styles, nine of the

female presidents were evenly divided with three presidents self-identifying with democratic leadership, three presidents self-identifying with situational leadership, and three presidents self-identified with participative leadership. For the other two female leaders, one self-identified with authentic leadership and the other self-identified with servant leadership. It was also of interest to explore if the presidents' leadership styles were associated to size of technical college or years of service for the presidents. The 11 female presidents displayed no pattern in leadership style by size of institution or years of service.

These female leaders felt strongly about how their leadership styles played a role in effectively leading their technical colleges in a positive direction. Participants shared that input from all campus parties, to include faculty and staff, was necessary to create a "buy-in" of the campus to effectively lead their institutions in a mission-driven effort to meet the educational needs of the students and supply quality trained graduates for the area employers and industries. A continued effort of the leaders to meet students' higher education needs and workforce development needs was noted by the participants.

This theme is consistent with many research findings indicating that many effective educational leaders used democratic leadership (Woods, 2010). The female leaders described several examples, such as preparing the campus for an accreditation visit, where the democratic leader would be willing to distribute responsibilities to team members to successfully complete the campus self-study by documenting and encouraging input from all stakeholders in decision making processes (Gill, 2015). This sharing of responsibilities and collaboration among team members are also true of the participative leaders. Root (2016) contended that employee input builds morale and improves productivity. In relation to implementing new policies such as

promotion and tenure on a technical college campus, the democratic leaders cited collaboration among colleagues through teamwork as being necessary to achieving success (Gill, 2014).

Leadership Characteristics of the Female Presidents

This theme referred to female participants identifying their individual leadership characteristics in successfully leading their technical college. A common theme among the presidents emerged related to the leadership characteristics of communication and vision. Communication was identified by all interviewees as a necessary characteristic of the leader's ability to effectively articulate to her faculty and staff the vision of the technical college and to promote her public relations responsibilities to the general public. The characteristic of vision for the technical college was identified as necessary to assess the current state of the college and predict the institution's needs related to the educational workforce needs of area industries and employers related to technical education, specific industry training, or re-training of the existing workforce. These educational leaders felt strongly about having a solid understanding of leadership practices that are necessary for effective communication and a vision to be implemented at their institutions.

This perception of communication as a focus, coupled with vision, was consistent with the research of Maxwell (1999), Maxwell found these two qualities were critical to a higher education institution. Maxwell suggested vision was necessary for any type of institutional advancement. A leader without vision offers no direction for the institution he or she is serving. A leader's vision is far reaching extending beyond what the leader accomplishes to include and add value to those who follow. To become a leader a person must develop "within" to lead "without" (Maxwell, 1999).

An additional characteristic that became evident in the interviews was the leader's ability to lead the faculty and staff "by example" and to participate or serve as a demonstration of leadership to promote "buy-in" of institutional initiatives. The characteristics of leading by example was a perception of the female leaders of demonstrating care for faculty, staff, and students.

Perceptions of Similar or Different Characteristics between Female and Male Leaders

This theme refers to the leadership characteristics perceived by the female presidents to be similar or different between female and male leaders. Nine of the presidents shared a common perception of differences in leadership characteristics of female presidents compared to male presidents. The most common perception of difference was that females are more likely to reach out and seek the guidance of peers and collaborate compared to the perception that males are more formal, procedural in operations, and not open to the input of others. This difference was supported by the work of Eagly and Johnson (1990) who found the gender difference was that women tended to lead in a more participative, democratic manner than male leaders. A second noted perception of difference was that female presidents may "jump in" and "roll up their sleeves" and are more likely to work harder and longer than their male counterpart.

Two of the female presidents did not perceive differences based on gender in consideration of leadership characteristics. The perception of the two presidents is consistent with the view of traditional scholars such as Birnbaum (1992) who viewed leaders alike and genderless. Eagly and Johnson (1990) noted women were not found to lead in a more personal or less task-oriented manner than men except in settings where behavior was more regulated by social roles.

Commonality in the Leadership Characteristics among Female Presidents

This theme refers to the educational leaders identifying commonalities in the leadership characteristics among the female presidents. There were several commonalities in the leadership characteristics of the female leaders. Three leaders voiced a common leadership characteristic of integrity. Four female leaders identified with the leadership characteristic of compassion and two female leaders identified the leadership characteristic of being tenacious. A difference in leadership characteristics was also noted in one female technical college president who responded with 'confidence" and one who noted "transparency" as a characteristic.

A common theme of participation in a leadership program was discovered among the female presidents in developing leadership characteristics. All 11 female presidents participated in either a TCAT leadership program or a Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) affiliated leadership program. Many of the presidents participated in their technical college service area leadership program or county leadership programs.

Influences of Female Administrators on the Institution

This theme refers to how the perceptions of the female presidents of the technical colleges influence their respective colleges. There were three influential themes of commonality discovered among the female college presidents. The first common theme related to the leaders' ability to "create the right team", and "lead by example." The second common theme that emerged was perceived barriers in entering the president's position in a previously male dominated field. This finding of barriers to women entering the top administrator position of a technical college was noted in the research of Cullen and Luna (1993). Cullen and Luna noted leadership myths of women not being able to discipline older students, particularly males; females being too emotional or too weak physically, and the myth that males resent working with

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females. Many of the presidents experienced a similar career pathway leading to their respective positions as technical college presidents. Eight of the 11 technical college presidents served as assistant directors or vice presidents before becoming a technical colleges president. Of the remaining three presidents, two of the technical college presidents served in the area community college system and the other president came from an out-of-state community college system.

The female college presidents exhibited a commonality in concern for their respective campuses related to "creating a buy-in" of the faculty and staff. Each of the 11 female presidents influenced their respective TCAT institutions with a concern for "creating the right team", and "leading their institution by example." All the female presidents expressed a belief in technical education. These characteristics align with the research of Gillet-Karam (1994) who identified four leadership behaviors of females concerning vision. The behaviors are: taking appropriate risks to bring about change; people behavior providing care and respect for individual differences; influence behavior acting collaboratively; and values behavior to spend time building trust and openness.

Research Question 1

What are the self-described leadership styles of female presidents at the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

Among the 11 female technical college presidents participating in the study, there were three most common self-described leadership styles by the female leaders as democratic, situational and participative. Of the three leadership styles, 9 of the female presidents were evenly divided with 3 presidents each identifying with democratic leadership, 3 self-describing with situational leadership, and 3 identified with participative leadership. The two other female leaders identified with authentic leadership and servant leadership.

Research Question 2

What leadership characteristics are associated with female presidents of the of the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology?

When participants were asked to describe their leadership characteristics, all 11 shared a common theme of communication and vision. Communication was identified by all interviewees as a necessary characteristic in regard to the leader's ability to communicate to her faculty and staff, her ability to assimilate Tennessee Board of Regents information to communicate to respective parties, and her ability to communicate and promote her institution to the general public. The leader's perception for vision of the institution was reported as necessary to assess the present state of the institution and forecast the institution's needs related to the institution, programs to be added to institutional offerings, and projected workforce needs of area industries, and businesses.

Research Question 3

What characteristics do the female presidents perceive to be similar or different between female and male leaders in the Tennessee College of Applied Technology system?

When participants were asked what characteristics are perceived to be similar of different between female and male leaders of the presidents, nine presidents shared a common perception of differences of in leadership characteristics. and two presidents did not perceive differences based upon gender in consideration of leadership characteristics. A commonality among the female leaders was the belief that male leaders were more autocratic and operational in their leadership roles and less likely to collaborate with others. The female leaders perceived they were more caring and nurturing in their leadership roles, more likely to seek advice and collaboration with other female presidents, and work as a team to achieve institutional goals.

Research Question 4

Is there a difference or commonality in the leadership characteristics of the female technical college presidents?

There were several commonalities in the leadership characteristics of the female leaders. Three leaders voiced integrity as a leadership characteristic that was most important. Four female leaders identified with the leadership characteristic of compassion and two female leaders identified the leadership characteristic of being tenacious.

When interviewing the participants, a commonality of participation in system leadership development programs was discovered among the 11 college leaders. Each of the 11 female presidents had participated in a Tennessee College of Applied Technology Leadership Program or Maxine Smith Fellows Leadership Program sponsored by the Tennessee Board of Regents or a Tennessee Higher Education Commission program, such as the THEC Fellows Program. Additionally, many of the presidents had participated in at least one leadership program in their service area or a county leadership programs. Some of the female presidents attended multiple leadership programs.

Research Question 5

How is the institution influenced by the female administrators' perceptions?

When interviewing the female presidents, there were several commonalities discovered among the perceptions of the 11 college leaders. Each of the 11 female presidents influenced their respective TCAT institutions by having a concern of "creating the right team", "leading their institution by example," and "a belief in technical education". The female college presidents exhibited a commonality in concern for their respective campuses related to "creating a buy-in" of the faculty and staff.

Conclusions

The focus of this study was not the changes brought about because of COVID-19. However, the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology system, along with all other educational systems across the nation have been significantly affected by the global pandemic. As a result, the ability of the president to lead his or her college has never been more important. The global COVID-19 pandemic caused a disruption in educational operations on a global scale resulting in a drastic educational shift from the traditional in-person (brick and mortar classrooms) to a fully online, distance education environment (remote learning environment). An environment where many technical colleges were not prepared. The presidents of the colleges were forced to lead in the new COVD-19 environment. The presidents led their institutions to adopt new and innovative methods of instruction fully online in a virtual environment.

Because of these unprecedented challenges, effective leadership has never been more important and the need more evident. The response by leaders and systems across the county to adapt to the extreme and unprecedented circumstance will likely result in continued educational change for years to come. The intent of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of female technical college presidents in leading a technical college. This was especially interesting because the top administrator's position in the Tennessee technical college system has been a male dominated role since its inception.

The results of this study identified several common themes that leaders may consider when leading or when future leaders are preparing to lead technical colleges. First, leaders should have knowledge of effective leadership styles that are associated in successfully leading a post-secondary technical college. The participating leaders self-identified several leadership styles that have effectively worked for the female presidents over their careers. The leadership

characteristics shared in commonality of the female presidents were the characteristics of vision and communication.

The participants' perceptions of differences in leadership characteristics between female and male leaders were evidenced by the commonality of the female leaders in the belief that male leaders were more procedural and operational and not as willing to "jump in" and assist to accomplish tasks. Additionally, there was a perception that the male leaders were not as sacrificing of time and were more prone to completing their work within their normal work hours with an ability to leave the institution, "not carrying work home." Conversely, the females perceived they were more caring, and nurturing, and more apt to seek advice and collaboration from peer female presidents and work as a team to achieve institutional goals.

There were several commonalities in the leadership characteristics among the female leaders. Three leaders voiced a leadership characteristic of "integrity.". Four female leaders identified with the leadership characteristic of "compassion" and two female leaders identified the leadership characteristic of being "tenacious". A difference in leadership characteristics was also noted in one female technical college president who responded with 'confidence" and one who noted "transparency" as a characteristic.

A common theme of developing leadership skills and characteristics through participation in a system leadership development programs was identified among the technical college presidents. Eight of the presidents participated in a Tennessee College of Applied Technology Leadership Program, with the remaining presidents participating in other system related leadership programs. Many of the presidents also participated in one or more of their service area or county leadership programs, with some attending multiple leadership programs.

Another identified commonality among the female administrators was the perception of how they each influenced their technical colleges with a concern of "creating the right team", and leading their institution by example to influence a belief in technical education and the college mission." The female presidents also shared a common belief of a barrier to entering the technical college president's position because it had been previously a male dominated culture in the higher education field. Another noted commonality among the female presidents was that they had experienced a similar career pathway leading to their respective positions as technical college presidents. Eight of the technical college presidents had served as assistant directors or vice presidents at one of the technical colleges before being hired as a technical college president. Lastly, there were similarities found in the influence of the female college presidents of "creating a buy-in" of the faculty and staff.

The findings of the study revealed that by combining an effective leadership style and use strong leadership characteristics, the female technical college leaders felt prepared to successfully lead their respective technical colleges with a vision for the future.

Recommendations for Practice

Findings from this research study may benefit the Tennessee Board of Regents and technical college system leaders in the development and implementation of professional development programs for presidents of technical colleges that are more effective in supporting leaders in the leadership practices to continue successful administration of institutions and meeting educational institutional needs of the 21st century. The success of the technical colleges begins with the president, so it is critical to provide relevant and effective professional development options to meet the needs of the existing and future needs of technical college leaders. Because well-qualified future leaders will be needed to continue the success of the

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology as a system, the following are recommended for practice:

1. Educational opportunities and professional development to support and enhance women leaders in higher education positions particularly higher level senior positions.

2. Professional development to support and enhance various leadership styles in effective leadership of technical colleges.

3. Establish a leadership development program specifically for each the technical colleges based on their size, programs and mission.

Recommendations for Further Research

This phenomenological qualitative study suggests the need for future research in several areas. The study may serve as a resource for women to better examine and objectively analyze leadership styles and characteristics that are perceived to contribute to successful female technical college administrators. The female presidents' perceptions of how women and men differ in typical leadership behavior may lend importance because a leader's behavior is a major contributing factor of their effectiveness and advancement. The research is mixed about distinctive leadership styles of women, my research revealed several self-described leadership styles to include democratic, participative, situational, authentic and servant. This finding of the female perceptions differentiated from the research views concerning female and male leaders do not differ (Van Engen et al., 2001). The research findings and conclusions may encourage females in the future to consider the pursuing top-level administrative positons and may be helpful in the way females are encouraged to prepare.

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The following further research is recommended:

1. Conduct a qualitative study of male technical college presidents to examine their perceptions of their leadership styles.

2. Conduct a quantitative study to compare leadership styles of all of the technical college presidents, both male and female.

3. Conduct at qualitative study to compare the leadership styles of female presidents of community college system to female presidents of the technical college system.

4. Conduct a study to explore the professional development needs of technical college presidents.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. In general, what qualities do you believe a leader must possess to be successful?

2. In your position, what leadership characteristics are most important to you to be successful at leading a TCAT?

3. What do you view as the greatest barriers to females assuming the position of president at technical colleges?

4. What strengths do you bring to your leadership position?

5. What additional strengths do you bring to your leadership position as a female?

6. What do you believe is your greatest strength or leadership characteristic?

7. How have you developed your leadership qualities?

8. Are any leadership styles inherently female?

9. How would you describe your leadership style?

10. Have you had others who acted as a mentor to you in developing your leadership skills? If so, was the mentor male or female?

11. How do you believe leadership qualities differ between males and females?

12. What has been your greatest leadership challenge?

13. From your experience, what are the greatest differences in the way you see male and female leaders work in the president's position?

14. Have you participated in a leadership development program within the system?

15. What advice would you give to a female desiring to pursue a presidential position?

Appendix B: Recruitment Email to Potential Participants

Hello,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University (ETSU), and I am conducting a research study that involves examining female leadership styles and qualities of technical college presidents. I am looking for females who are serving as presidents in the technical college system of Tennessee, who have one or more years of experience in the president's position. This study involves a one on one interview which should take about one hour of your time. The interview will take place at your technical college or online at your convenience.

Please think about participating. Participation is voluntary. If you have any questions, please contact me at ███████████████████████ or by email at ██████████████████████████ I appreciate your consideration of participation.

Sincerely,

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VITA

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