A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GENDER AND THE LEADERSHIP OF FEMALE ACADEMIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS

by

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF GENDER AND THE LEADERSHIP OF FEMALE ACADEMIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS
Under the direction of MELANIE CROFT, ED.D.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership. The theory guiding this study was Acker's theory of the ideal worker, as it offers a framework for examining the impact of worker gender in the workplace. The central research question of this study examined how the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership. This study utilized a phenomenological approach, conducting semi-structured interviews of female academic library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. The results were then analyzed via data coding to identify major themes across the participants' lived experiences. The study resulted in four major themes: (a) Relationships, (b) Service Orientation, (c) Identity, and (d) Emotional Labor. Overall, the identified themes center around women's lived experiences as communally-oriented leaders. Although this offers career satisfaction to these female leaders, it also puts them in the conflicting position of being expected to align with the agentic ideal leader paradigm on a university-wide level while being rewarded for behaving communally on a library level.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

For decades, scholars have explored the pervasive issue of gender inequity in the workplace (Gregory, 2003; Hang-yue et al., 2006; Ngo et al., 2003). Despite its long history of study, this issue has persisted even today. A 2022 study of over 810 companies found that women in senior leadership roles are leaving the workforce in unprecedented numbers. The researchers determined that this is due to three major experiences: (a) microaggressions from both male and female colleagues in the workplace, which leads to more difficulty for advancement compared to their male counterparts; (b) burnout due to assuming employee support tasks at greater rates than male managers; and (c) a desire for flexibility and better work culture that businesses are not meeting (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Women also report taking on more care tasks and household labor than men in the same position (Drago, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman & Caleo, 2018; Sallee, 2012; Sayer et al., 2004). The sum of these factors constitutes a growing problem, with two women in leadership roles leaving for every woman promoted as of 2022, creating a widening gap in the number of men vs. women in senior leadership positions (McKinsey & Company, 2022).

Unlike many workplaces, librarianship has been a profession dominated by women for the past few decades. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023), as of 2022, 82.2% of librarians and media collections specialists were female. However, the same cannot be said of director-level positions within the library field. While no

comprehensive survey of library director demographics has been conducted since 1999, Lynch's (1999) study found that 43% of academic library directors were male. In addition, as of 2015, only 58% of management positions in libraries that are institutional members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) were held by women (J. Martin, 2015). While this indicates that within the ARL members, female library directors are the majority, in a field of 82.2% women, men are disproportionately promoted into library director roles. This yields an important question: why are women not promoted to managerial positions at the same rate as men in academic libraries? Many factors, including caregiver responsibilities, biases in higher education, and gendered differences in management styles, have been cited in prior research (Dejean, 2015; Dominici et al., 2009; Easterly & Ricard, 2011; Falkoff, 2018; Fox, 2005; Gangone & Lennon, 2014; Ginther & Hayes, 1999; MacNell et al., 2015; Madera et al., 2009; Peterson et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2022; Weisshaar, 2017). However, no comprehensive study has been conducted on why women are promoted at lower rates and what factors affect their success once they achieve these roles post-COVID-19. This is especially critical as COVID-19 is a time that saw countless women exiting the workforce and a disproportionately slow rate of job recovery for women compared to their male colleagues (Capp, 2023; S. Johnson, 2022). Given this, this study focused on the following primary research question: how has the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership?

Background of the Study

This study explores the disproportionate number of women in academic library leadership positions compared to the overall population of the field by answering the question: how has the gender of female library directors at medium, nonprofit, private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership? However, before delving into the topic, it is essential to provide the historical context of the problem, its current state, theory and action related to the problem, and the need for further study.

Statement of the Problem

In today's libraries, there are a disproportionate number of women in academic library leadership positions compared to the overall population of the field (Lynch, 1999; J. Martin, 2015). This aligns with the overall trend of women in higher education leadership (Lennon, 2013). However, little research exists to explore this issue, particularly in the post-COVID-19 world, a time that saw significant changes in the number of women in the workforce (Capp, 2023; S. Johnson, 2022; Power, 2020). Given this, the problem this dissertation set out to explore was the disproportionate number of male library directors in a female-dominated field.

History of the Problem

Within the U.S., there are several types of libraries. The two primary types of libraries are academic and public libraries. Academic libraries are affiliated with an institution of higher education, such as a college library. These libraries focus on providing academic resources, such as academic texts and peer-reviewed journals. The other type, public libraries, are open to the public and typically run by a government

agency like a town or county. These libraries tend to focus on providing leisure materials like popular fiction and services like children's literacy programs to the community.

As discussed previously, the library field, including both public and academic libraries, has historically been dominated by women. This trend started in 1882 when the Boston Public Library hired the first female library clerk. Less than 30 years later, two in every three library staff members were female. By 1910, this number ballooned to 75% of the library workforce (R. E. Rubin, 2016), a trend that has continued to the modern day (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). There are many theories as to why this field continues to be dominated by women. Some point to how library systems began to expand rapidly in the 19th century and needed to increase their workforce while maintaining a tight budget. Women were often willing to work for a significantly lower salary than male employees and presented a valuable solution to library directors of that day, so they were hired to fill these roles. The library also offered a socially acceptable workplace for women, as they were seen as respectable institutions that promoted moral development, almost similar to missionary work (R. E. Rubin, 2016). As such, women were willing to enter these roles as they would not impact their social standing. However, despite the influx of women into the library field in the early 1900s, the growing number of women did not include admission to administrator-level positions, as women were "perceived as more delicate and unable to tolerate the rigors of administration" (R. E. Rubin, 2016, p. 287). This trend has continued to the modern day (J. Martin, 2015).

Current Status of the Problem

The library world may still be implicitly burdened with the perception of women being less capable leaders despite modern research supporting the capability of women to

hold library administrator positions (J. Martin, 2015). While more recent statistics are not available for the library field as a whole, 43% of academic library positions and 35% of public library positions were held by men as of 1999. Further, male directors reported higher compensation than their female peers in both academic and public libraries (Lynch, 1999). More recently, it was reported that only 58% of management positions in libraries that are part of the ARL are held by women, despite 83% of librarians identifying as female (J. Martin, 2015). Additionally, academia as a field also presents a history of male-dominated leadership positions. While women make up a majority of college students and 35% of full-time faculty, as of 2013, only 26% of college presidents were female (Brower et al., 2019). If gender equity is to be pursued, then the root causes of the disproportionate number of men in administrator positions and potential remedies for this discrepancy are essential areas of focus for exploration in the academic library community today.

Further, once women have achieved director-level roles, the issue of how to empower them to succeed emerges. Women in academic library director positions are routinely paid less than their male colleagues (Bladek, 2019; Lynch, 1999; L. B. Rutledge, 2020; Schiller, 1974). In addition, female faculty members regularly receive lower ratings and more harsh criticism in student reviews than their male colleagues (Falkoff, 2018; MacNell et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2019). Studies have also found that women in academia have a harder time accessing peer networks and take on a higher number of administrative tasks than their male colleagues. This limits the amount of time they have for scholarship and other essential tasks to achieve tenure (Hart, 2016). All of these factors combine to create an environment that hinders the success of women despite

their advancement into administrator roles. Identifying the causes of this environment, as well as suggestions for how to change it, is an important task to further gender equity in higher education.

Theory and Action Related to the Problem

The state of women in librarianship has been studied for decades, starting with Anita Schiller's (1974) groundbreaking paper entitled "Women in Librarianship." This study emerged at an important time during the women's movement and after the passing of federal sex-based discrimination laws (Bladek, 2019). Schiller's findings were bleak: while women composed a majority of the profession, they were often paid less, and men typically occupied higher-level roles (Schiller, 1974). This pattern has continued to be traced by scholars studying academic libraries up until 2019, most notably by Marta Bladek (2019) and Lorelei Rutledge (2020). Encouragingly, advancements in equity for women have been noted.

A 2015 article by Neigel offers another compelling argument for the importance of gender-based leadership research in libraries. In her article "LIS Leadership and Leadership Education: A Matter of Gender," Neigel (2015) argued that the existing body of literature surrounding leadership within libraries fails to account for the "feminized nature of the profession and the gendered practices that shape the roles of men and women who choose this field" (p. 521). She stated that defaulting to masculinized leadership practices as the standard furthers the devaluation of the so-called "women's work" that traditionally defines the field (Neigel, 2015). This women's work includes support and administrative-type tasks and a focus on service. Her article presented an excellent perspective for questioning leadership practices within the library field within

the context of gender as well as calling for further gender-informed research and education on the topic of library leadership.

While Neigel's (2015) call for further gender-based research into library leadership is well-founded, additional research has offered evidence of several differences between the characteristics of women and men in academic library director-level positions. A 2003 study of public academic library directors found that men perceived themselves as significantly more assertive, competitive, directive, dominant, forceful, stern, and tough than women in similar roles (Voelck, 2003). In contrast, women described themselves as significantly more appreciative and sensitive and significantly more approachable, democratic, and intuitive (Voelck, 2003). Further, in 2015, J. Martin found that in a study of leadership styles among academic library directors, deans, and librarians, women tended to be more closely associated with transformational leadership, while men were linked to transactional leadership. Women reported that they often relied on techniques like idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration, all of which are skills of transformational leaders (J. Martin, 2015). Men tended to rely on direct and assertive behavior, with less focus on the feelings of staff members (J. Martin, 2015). In 2018, Lombard published a survey of academic library staff, which revealed that while staff did not perceive female and male leaders differently, female staff did believe that male leadership received more support from the institution's administration than women in similar roles. All of this work provides a starting point for continuing to examine the differences between male and female leadership practices, as well as exploring whether women in leadership roles adopting more masculine traits see greater success.

Need for Further Study of the Problem

Although studies exist regarding the state of library leadership, no recent studies have emerged post-2020, a time period which has seen increasing leadership challenges for academic libraries and a trend in women leaving the workforce (Capp, 2023; Connell et al., 2021; Grams, 2022; S. Johnson, 2022; Tosaka & Weng, 2022). This study attempts to fill that gap in research and continue the long-standing body of knowledge by exploring the lived experiences of female leaders within academic libraries.

In addition, while some work has been done to address the issue of gender diversity in libraries, the current trend in the field's scholarship appears to be on promoting racial and cultural diversity. Hyle et al.'s (2016) review of higher education leadership development trends found that gender was not explicitly referenced, with subjects such as social justice or diversity taking the foreground. Further, a review of all active director-level academic library positions on the American Library Association's (ALA) job board in March of 2023 revealed 17 active positions. While all postings referenced diversity, equity, and inclusion, 94% referenced race or culture explicitly, while only 71% explicitly referenced gender (see Appendix B). Additionally, the program preview for the 2023 ALA annual conference had nine out of 31 sessions advertised with topics like sexual orientation, race, and disabilities, while none explicitly referenced gender (ALA, 2023). While all diversity topics are important, the gender disparity issue among academic library leaders has not been solved or sufficiently studied. Thus, this study hopes to bring attention back to the issue of gender in librarianship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of female academic library directors and how their gender affects their leadership. By doing so, I hope to inspire more women to seek and remain in leadership roles in academic libraries and the library field as a whole. Further, by encouraging the development of women in academic libraries, this work may motivate change-makers in additional areas of academia to empower women as well as to support their career trajectory toward leadership positions and provide the resources for them to excel in these positions.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The related research question asked:

1. How has the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership?

Theoretical Framework

The theory that served as the framework for this study is Acker's theory of the ideal worker. The ideal worker refers to a theoretical individual who exists solely for the purpose of work and fulfills all responsibilities of a role within an organization, free from any outside distractions or responsibilities (Acker, 2006). The ideal worker is not a real person, but the idea of the perfect candidate is constructed by individuals as they build a job description for a role. Acker (1990, 2006) posited that the ideal worker is usually envisioned as a man because this perfect worker typically takes the form of a man with a wife at home to attend to all domestic responsibilities.

Approach of the Study

Given the research purpose of exploring how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership, the research approach was a phenomenological study employing semi-structured interviews. The phenomenon of study was female academic library leadership. A phenomenological approach was selected for this study as this methodology aims to determine the essence of an experience by examining lived experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Procedures

The study followed a qualitative, phenomenological format comprised of 10 semi-structured interviews of female academic library directors. The questions utilized in each interview were based on several prior studies on the success of female librarians and academics in leadership, with some modifications made to consider environmental factors within higher education and to ensure they remained open-ended and focused on the participants' experiences rather than their thoughts or opinions. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed to identify a diverse pool of individuals in academic libraries. Once these data were collected, interview transcripts were analyzed via data coding with the assistance of coding software to identify recurring themes and patterns.

Significance of the Study

This study set out to explore how the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership. As discussed previously, there has been no further publication on the topic during or after the COVID-19 pandemic, a time that significantly impacted women in the workforce. In

addition, prior studies have primarily relied on quantitative surveys. This study offered a richer narrative of these women's lived experiences by utilizing a phenomenological format via semi-structured interviews.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Due to the size of the academic librarian population, this study was delimited to female academic librarians in the U.S. who are directors or deans at medium-sized private institutions of higher education. I selected this population due to my existing connections among that population, which allowed for easier access to potential participants.

The study has several limitations. First, due to its volunteered participant group, the participants may have included librarians with strong interests in management and leadership. This could have resulted in a biased sample, as the participants had a preexisting interest in the topic discussed. Further, there is the potential for a homogenized group of participants, as referrals were used to recruit participants.

Additionally, the study relied on interview data, which may be subject to inaccuracies in self-reporting and personal biases, as participants' interpretations of their experiences are influenced by their career experiences. The research only included current library directors, excluding former directors and those hindered from becoming directors due to difficulties locating these individuals. Finally, as a non-director librarian, I acknowledge a potential outsider perspective that could have affected data analysis due to a lack of understanding of taken-for-granted norms within director roles. I aimed to mitigate this influence and address social confirmation bias during interviews by being mindful of stereotypes and personal biases.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, I relied on self-reporting of the participant's gender identities. In addition, the responses of the participants were assumed to be truthful.

Definitions of Terms

Academic Library: A library that exists under the governance of an accredited university, college, or other degree-granting institution. This includes community college libraries, college libraries, and university libraries. Libraries may be generalized for the entire institution or comprised of several specialized libraries within the organization (R. E. Rubin, 2016).

Career Success: Career success has been defined utilizing a variety of measures as the workplace has evolved over time. However, the framework offered by the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) will be utilized to define this term (Shockley et al., 2016). This includes:

- Job success
- Interpersonal success
- Financial success
- Hierarchical success
- Life success
- Personal satisfaction level

Success also includes creating organizational change to help others in the field following after the individual.

Class: "Enduring and systematic differences in access to and control over resources for provisioning and survival" (Acker, 2006, p. 444).

Development: Development is the process of improving one's own knowledge and abilities, and it can be accomplished via a wide range of activities (Mackenzie & Smith, 2011). For the purpose of this study, we will focus on the categories listed below (Mackenzie & Smith, 2011; L. B. Rutledge, 2020).

- Mentorship, both formal and informal
- Master in Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree programs
- Non-MLIS degree programs
- Networking
- On-the-job learning
- Engaging with professional literature such as studies, articles, books, and podcasts
- Organizationally sponsored management training
- Seminars, conferences, and/or workshops
- Self-led management training

Director: An individual who oversees an entire library and or library system. This may include positions with titles such as dean, director, or university librarian. Depending on the institution, a director may be faculty or administrative staff and may or may not be eligible for tenure (Moran & Morner, 2018).

Emotional Labor: The work of identifying, regulating, and expressing emotions, particularly in the workplace (Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 2009).

Equality: When individuals have the same access to the same resources and opportunities (Acker, 1992, 2006; P. Y. Martin, 2020; Unterhalter, 2009).

Equity: A distribution of resources that allows all to have the opportunity to achieve the same outcomes. This may not be an equal distribution of resources based on pre-existing barriers to success, such as race, class, and gender, but allows all the opportunity to achieve the same outcome (Acker, 1992, 2006; P. Y. Martin, 2020; Unterhalter, 2009).

Female: For the purpose of this study, the term female will encompass all participants who self-identify with this gender identity (Acker, 2009).

Gender: "Socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality" (Acker, 2006, p. 444).

Ideal Worker: A theoretical individual who exists solely for the purpose of work and fulfills all responsibilities of a role within an organization free from any outside distractions or responsibilities (Acker, 2006).

Inequality: "Systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations" (Acker, 2006, p. 443).

Leadership: The action of aligning, inspiring, directing, and supporting other individuals within an organization to achieve a common goal (Moran & Morner, 2018; Northouse, 2019).

Librarian: A library worker holding a position the organization has classified as a librarian. This may or may not require a Master of Library Science degree. Further, this position may or may not hold faculty status and be eligible for tenure (R. E. Rubin, 2016).

Summary and Forecast

In summary, this study explored how the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership. Chapter 1 has provided a general introduction and overview of the study. In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework will be examined in greater detail. In addition, Chapter 2 contains a literature review of relevant themes and topics pertaining to this study's research question. Chapter 3 offers an in-depth explanation of the methods employed by this study. Chapter 4 reports the data found in this study. Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation with an analysis of the data collected, a discussion of findings and implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 2 of this study offers a comprehensive literature review of the existing research surrounding how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership.

Organization of Review

The purpose of this study was to explore how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership. Given this objective, the research question asked, how has the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership? This chapter reviews literature addressing research and theory related to the study in the areas of women in academic library leadership; the state of libraries and library leadership development, factors impacting women's career success in both libraries and higher education; and Acker's theory of the ideal worker. A summary analysis of prominent themes and findings within the reviewed literature is presented at the end of the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

Review of Research and Theory about Acker's Theory of Gendered Organizations

This study utilized Acker's theory of the ideal worker as a framework to examine the experiences of female academic library directors. Acker introduced the concept of the ideal worker in her 1990 article "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." Within this work, Acker posited that organizational structures are not

gender neutral. She examined previous scholarship on women and organizations (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979; Kanter, 1977; MacKinnon, 1982), scholarship investigating organizational structure and process (Izraeli, 1983; P. Y. Martin, 1985), and studies of women using traditional organizational ideas (Dexter, 1985; Wallace, 1982). However, none of this scholarship had been brought together to create a systematic feminist theory of organizations (Acker, 1990). It is this goal that Acker set out to achieve in her work.

The key assumption that Acker uncovered in her 1990 work, which reviewed the growing body of literature studying organizational structure from the decades prior, is that organizations are typically led by men, and these men assume that their behavior and perspectives are the standard for all humans. Because of this, organizational structures are set up in a gendered manner, which typically favors men. Previously, an assumption of organizational logic was that because jobs are abstract ideas with no occupants, they cannot have gender. However, when these jobs are created and defined, those writing the job imagine them filled by the "ideal worker." This worker has no outside responsibilities or needs and exists for the purpose of work. As such, no outside obligations are considered when defining a job. This means that when the organization then goes to fill a role, an individual with too many responsibilities outside work would be considered unsuitable for the role. The ideal worker is able to devote themselves entirely to their work with no outside distractions or responsibilities, often due to a spouse supporting them and raising any children in the home (Acker, 1990). As a result, in both Acker's day and the modern world, roles are often filled by men who typically have fewer outside responsibilities such as caretaking or household labor and are therefore able to devote themselves entirely to their careers (Drago, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman &

Caleo, 2018; Sallee, 2012; Sayer et al., 2004). Acker (1990) thus concluded that organizational structures are inherently gendered because they are established in a way that unintentionally assumes men are better able to fulfill roles within them. Acker (1990) also commented within her work that jobs traditionally filled by women are often devalued because of the assumption that these workers cannot fulfill the demands of other roles and are thus not ideal workers. These jobs are often service roles, like a female secretary for a male executive or one that serves a male public, like a librarian (Acker, 1990; Hochschild, 1983).

Prominent feminist scholar Joan Williams (2000) later revisited the concept of the ideal worker in her book *Unbending Gender*. In this work, which draws from extensive interviews conducted by Acker, J. C. Williams restated Acker's position that the workplace was built around the concept of "ideal workers" who are always available due to their lack of responsibility for housework or caregiving. Even with the women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s encouraging more women to enter the workforce, women still face significantly greater barriers to success in these roles due to their responsibilities outside of the workplace, such as caregiving and housekeeping (Heppner, 2013; J. C. Williams, 2000). More recently, a 2012 study by C. L. Williams et al. (2012) argued that gender disparities due to the concept of the ideal worker have endured into more recent times and the "new economy." This new economy is defined as one where employees frequently change jobs, and advancement is not determined by longevity but by networking, adaptability, and flexibility (Brody & Rubin, 2011; Brumley, 2014; Vallas, 2015). Despite the new economy and feminist progress in some areas, employers

still expect employees to prioritize work over family and other outside responsibilities (C. L. Williams et al., 2012).

The concept of the ideal worker has not been applied extensively in the field of libraries and is typically mentioned in passing when discussing strategies for management or career success based on demographics (Bedoya et al., 2015; Gallin-Parisi, 2017; Munde, 2010). Only one work that formally utilized Acker's ideal worker within libraries was located: Exline's (2014) master's thesis entitled *Gender Composition and Salary Gaps in Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Institutions*. In this thesis, the author compared the gender composition and salary gaps of library positions utilizing data from the ARL's survey ranging from the years 1985 to 2010. Exline utilized the ideal worker as a way to explain gender segregation in library jobs. Despite the increased role that information technology (IT) plays in the field of libraries, there still remains a female majority in ARL member libraries between 1980 and 2010 (Exline, 2014). This may be due to the perception of libraries as female-gendered organizations, with the work being stereotyped as service-based and a hobby rather than a career, thus not needing to be filled by an ideal worker (Acker, 1990; Exline, 2014).

While the ideal worker is not extensively utilized within libraries, it has been regularly applied in higher education. Often, the ideal-worker norm is applied to the pipeline issue. This phenomenon, also referred to as pipeline shrinkage, refers to the occurrence where an equal number of men and women enroll in graduate school, but women are less likely to enter and find success in academia (Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Camp, 1997; Olsen et al., 1995; Windall, 1988). Indeed, despite the increasing rate of women earning PhDs, men still dominate many academic professions (Ahmad, 2017).

For those women who successfully enter the field, they must consider the impact on their careers when deciding to have children (Flaherty Manchester et al., 2013; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Pregnant academics often find themselves considering ideal worker norms when choosing whether and when to announce a pregnancy in order to cause the least disruption to their own careers (Ollilainen, 2020). Even when women with caregiving responsibilities establish themselves in their academic roles, several studies have found that many have chosen not to pursue leadership roles due to their inability or unwillingness to conform to ideal worker norms that would keep them away from their families and home lives (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2016; Wilk, 2016).

While all women are affected by these norms, research suggests that ideal worker norms may have stronger consequences for early-career women, minority women, and those in STEM fields, such as a delay in or not achieving tenure, failure to advance into administrative roles, or forcing them to leave the higher education field (Kachchaf et al., 2015; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2015). In addition, Sallee flipped this concept of how ideal worker norms affect women, finding that the ideal worker structure also penalizes men in higher education who are more involved at home, making family planning choices even more challenging for dual-career academics (Sallee, 2012, 2014; Zhang & Kmec, 2018). However, women do experience more consequences due to ideal worker norms than their male counterparts, and dual-career academics often end up prioritizing the male member's career over the female's (Zhang & Kmec, 2018). Overall, the ideal worker norm has serious consequences in higher education and is an important theory to consider when exploring how to increase gender equity in academic roles at every level.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Ideal Worker

Characteristic	Source
Free from external responsibilities, particularly caretaking; available at all times and able to remain undistracted at work	Acker, 1990, 1999, 2006; J. C. Williams, 2000
Highly rational and analytical	Acker, 1990
Able to set aside emotional considerations	Acker, 1990
Excels at independent problem-solving and decision-making	Acker, 1990
Does not distract other workers via sexuality or emotion	Acker, 1990
Able to easily engage in the existing organizational culture	Acker, 1990
Strong technical skills	Acker, 1990, 1999
Able to travel or relocate	Bailyn, 1993

Summary of Findings and Themes within Reviewed Literature

The State of Libraries

Technological Advancement

In order to understand the system within which female academic librarians operate, a review was conducted of current issues and trends within libraries. One important trend is the technological evolution of the library. The modern library is far removed from card catalogs and other manual practices; rather, libraries are now centers filled with technology. Most academic libraries provide access to an online database of

scholarly works and provide computer access and support (Huber et al., 2020). In addition, many academic libraries administer their own content management systems to increase accessibility to electronic resources (Connell, 2013). Further bringing technology into the library, maker spaces are another popular feature of many modern academic libraries, providing access to technology like 3D printers, laser cutters, and virtual reality software. However, these spaces are often funded with a grant or other one-time funding source, leaving libraries scrambling to find room in their shrinking budgets to maintain the resources and train staff to assist users with these resources (Moorefield-Lang, 2015; Slatter & Howard, 2013). In addition, these technological services offered by libraries require highly trained staff who are adept in their use in order to provide and maintain these offerings for students and faculty.

Budget Concerns

Budgetary concerns are another important issue that influences the decisions and evolution of modern academic libraries. A 2020 survey of academic library directors found that 75% of libraries experienced a budget cut in the current academic year, despite rising prices of resources like databases and journals (Frederick & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). This follows a long continuing trend of academic library budgets remaining stationary or being reduced despite inflation (Halliday, 2001). In addition to reduced or stagnant budgets, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the pressure on libraries to invest in more electronic resources, which have an ongoing maintenance cost compared to the one-time cost of purchasing physical materials (Frederick & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020). All of these factors have strained stagnant academic library budgets and created increasing pressure for libraries to provide a host of innovative services on a shoestring budget.

Libraries Outside the Building

A final trend is that academic librarians are starting to move outside the walls of their physical library. One emerging practice is embedded librarianship, where librarians support students directly within a course instead of waiting in the library at the reference desk where many students may not seek them out (Charles & DeFabiis, 2021; Delaney & Bates, 2015; Franzen & Sharkey, 2021; Lemley, 2016; Shumaker, 2009; Talwar, 2014). In addition, many librarians are engaging in outreach to both their students and the broader community in which the institution is located (Blummer & Kenton, 2019; Bopegedera, 2021; Eden, 2016; Flash et al., 2017; Santiago et al., 2019; Schneider, 2004; Swanberg et al., 2022; N. A. Williams, 2022; Wittek & Rust, 2021). This has the added bonus of garnering goodwill for the university with the community. Overall, these trends and issues require existing staff to develop and engage in more activities despite shrinking budgets. Librarians must rise to these growing challenges to continue meeting expectations despite a lack of resources to do so.

The State of Academic Librarians

The academic library is a library associated with an institution of higher learning. Librarians within these institutions often face unique challenges due to their environment. The largest of these is the concept of faculty status and tenure. Academic library positions vary greatly regarding tenure and faculty status. In a survey of academic librarians, the researchers identified three primary position types: tenure-eligible faculty, which refers to faculty members who are awarded indefinite appointments and can only be fired for cause; non-tenure-eligible faculty, where the individual is considered a teaching employee but not eligible for tenure; and non-faculty staff, where librarians are

not classified as teaching employees and are also ineligible for tenure (Hartnett et al., 2019). Sometimes, institutions will employ multiple classifications of librarian positions within the same institution (Hartnett et al., 2019). This variety in classifications creates a spectrum of barriers for academic professionals to succeed, as tenure-eligible faculty librarians have the requirement to produce research as part of their success measures in addition to their day-to-day tasks of operating a library (Hartnett et al., 2019; J. D. Rutledge, 2023). Further, some researchers argue that the nature of an academic librarian position is at odds with tenure and faculty status, given the day-to-day operational responsibilities of librarians that faculty typically are unburdened with (McGowan & Dow, 1995). This is further exemplified by how traditional faculty have credit-bearing courseloads, but often library faculty do not. Obtaining faculty status additionally impacts both the visibility of librarians on campus via their ability to be present in faculty-only spaces as well as their ability to obtain political power due to the perception of faculty as having higher status than staff (Welch & Mozenter, 2006). This can, in turn, affect librarians' ability to advance by building relationships with key decision-makers about leadership positions that may become available (Welch & Mozenter, 2006).

The State of Library Leadership Development

Historically, there appears to be a lack of management and leadership development within the library field (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; McClure, 1980; Riggs, 2001). A clear indicator of this is that the administration and management competency for accredited MLIS programs was not added by the ALA until 2009 (ALA, 2009; Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009). Given that the MLIS is typically the required education for professional librarians and a basis of professionalization of the field, this

means that many librarians prior to 2009 had little to no exposure to leadership development within their academic program (H. Chu, 2006; Gerolimos, 2009; Gordon, 2005; Hall, 2009; R. Irwin, 2002; Mackenzie & Smith, 2007, 2008, 2009). Even with this standard added today, students are often not required to take management and leadership courses beyond a low-level overview, and these courses often fail to cover more complex interpersonal and operational issues, leaving new library managers feeling unprepared for these challenges (Feldmann et al., 2013; Mackenzie & Smith, 2011; Phillips, 2014; Saunders, 2015; Shin & Shelton, 2020; Singh & Vorbach, 2017).

This lack of education in library management and leadership is part of a larger trend of library practitioners viewing the MLIS degree as a "ticket to get punched" that offers limited applications in the field once completed and may not even be necessary as a requirement for librarians (Caspe & Lopez, 2018; Condic, 2022; Freeburg & Vera, 2021; Goodsett & Koziura, 2016; Gorman, 2004; Inskip, 2017; Mehra et al., 2010; Mullins, 2012; Stevenson, 2020; C. V. L. Thomas & Urban, 2018; Torres et al., 2022; Westbrock & Fabian, 2010). While some librarians may engage in theoretical study, many librarians spend their day "in the weeds," handling anything from checking out books to plunging the bathroom toilet (Freeburg & Vera, 2021). A large-scale study of over 500 MLIS program graduates found that the students feel they would have benefited from less emphasis on theoretical work and more hands-on experience opportunities, an increased focus on technology and instruction, and opportunities for mentorship by librarians working in the field (Goodsett & Koziura, 2016). Many library hiring managers agreed, noting that students struggle to transition to the day-to-day realities of roles and wishing students were required to work in a paraprofessional role or undertake

internships as part of their MLIS program (Torres et al., 2022). Ultimately, this question of the future of the MLIS is still uncertain. Still, it is one factor influencing the readiness of librarians, including their ability to manage staff and library operations.

In addition to a lack of management education, many managers struggle to find adequate development opportunities both prior to and after achieving a management role. In her book, *The Accidental Library Manager,* Rachel Singer Gordan (2005) reported that in a 2003 informal study of 244 library managers, many reported that they did not set out to become managers and felt underprepared when the role was thrust upon them. Further work supports this finding and posits that leadership development has not been standardized across the library field (Budd, 2003; Gazan, 2007; Line, 2002; Rooney, 2010; Wittenbach et al., 1992). This has resulted in a broad range of experiences regarding library manager development. A 2011 study by Mackenzie and Smith indicated that sources of management preparation for library directors include 59.2% reporting being self-taught; 38.8% attending seminars, conferences, and workshops; 26.5% through mentors; 22.4% by seeking out coursework other than their MLIS degree; 18.4% drawing on experience in other fields; and 18.4% learning through on-the-job training (Mackenzie & Smith, 2011). Further research mirrors these categories of development opportunities and highlights that various librarian roles may have disproportionate opportunities to develop these skills (Farrell, 2014; Golian, 2003; Golian & Galbraith, 1996; Harris-Keith, 2015, 2016; Jantti, 2012; Mason & Wetherbee, 2004; Murray, 2007; L. B. Rutledge, 2020; Sears, 2014; Wong, 2017). Overall, the literature points to a need to advocate for library manager development across the field and promote initiatives to help fill this gap.

Library Leadership Role Demographics

The data surrounding leadership demographics in academic libraries are sparse and poorly documented. However, limited data exist to base this dissertation's research on, which is summarized in Table 2 below. As of 2017, 81% of members of the ALA identified as female (Rosa & Henke, 2017). However, Lynch reported in 1999 that 43% of academic library director positions and 35% of public library director positions were held by men. This study also found that men's salaries were reported as higher than their female counterparts (Lynch, 1999). Additionally, a 2015 survey of libraries that were part of the ARL reported that only 58% of management positions were held by women (J. Martin, 2015). These findings present a disproportionate promotion of men into academic library leadership roles. This pattern, first observed by Schiller in 1974, is long-standing in the library field. While there certainly has been progress in closing the gender gap, the proportion of men in leadership roles in academic libraries compared to women in the field indicates that additional barriers exist for women wishing to advance into leadership roles.

Table 2

Summary of Leadership Demographics in Academic Libraries

Statistic	Source
81% of the ALA members were female as of 2017	Rosa & Henke, 2017
58% of management positions in ARL member libraries were held by women as of 2015.	J. Martin, 2015
43% of academic library director positions and 35% of public library director positions were held by men as of 1999.	Lynch, 1999
Male academic library directors report higher salaries than female academic library directors.	Lynch, 1999

Women in the Workplace

There has been a plethora of research on the differences between genders in the workplace and how behavior varies between the sexes. Several studies have found that women are more risk-averse and prefer to engage in collaborative work rather than competition in the workplace (Croson & Gneezy, 2009; Filippin & Crosetto, 2016; Neelim, 2023; Niederle, 2017). In addition, women tend to exhibit more empathetic and altruistic behaviors and take on more non-promotable volunteering tasks (Neelim, 2023). However, women tend to demonstrate less confidence in the workplace (Neelim, 2023). A 2007 study found that while 75% of male participants expected to be ranked in the highest performance group in their workplace, only 43% of females expected to do so (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007). In addition, women tend to do less self-promotion than their male counterparts due to social expectations, though they do engage in an equal amount of promoting others (Exley & Kessler, 2019; Mancuso et al., 2017; Neelim, 2023; Smith & Huntoon, 2014).

Neelim (2023) summed up one key difference between men and women in the workplace:

> From the psychology literature, we know an ideal man is associated with having agentic qualities, such as being assertive, boastful, independent and ambitious, and an ideal woman is associated with having communal qualities, such as being selfless, other-regarding and modest. (p. 107)

This finding is a key theme in the literature surrounding gender in the workplace. Men tend to be more agentic, which refers to the tendency to engage in actions that require aggressiveness, assertiveness, independence, and self-confidence. These behaviors may include directing activities, speaking assertively, and influencing others (Madera et al., 2009). Women, in contrast, are more communal. This refers to a tendency to engage in behaviors concerned with the welfare of others, such as aiding others, accepting directions, and building and maintaining relationships with others (Madera et al., 2009).

This concept of men being more agentic and women being more communal is repeated broadly throughout the literature (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 2002; Suh et al., 2004). However, when women attempt to adopt more agentic characteristics in order to advance in the workplace like their male counterparts, they are viewed as less hireable and offered lower salaries than their male counterparts who engage in the same workplace behavior (Hoover et al., 2019; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 2002). This is problematic, as the ideal leader is typically considered to be one with more agentic qualities (Neelim, 2023), thus forcing women to balance the expectation that they behave in a communal manner while being seen as less successful leaders for doing so.

Women in the Post-COVID Workplace

The COVID-19 pandemic was a time that saw countless women exiting the workforce at a higher rate than their male counterparts (S. Johnson, 2022). In addition, in

the post-COVID world, there has been a disproportionately slow rate of job recovery for women compared to their male colleagues (Capp, 2023; S. Johnson, 2022; Power, 2020). This is likely due to a broad range of factors, including women leaving their employment to take on caretaking responsibilities and the prevalence of women in high-stress front-line roles that they voluntarily separated from as a result of increased stress and infection risk during COVID-19 (Carli, 2020). Further, the COVID-19-triggered recession has a higher impact on women, varying from previous recessions which have typically affected men at a greater rate (Bluedorn et al., 2021).

Beyond the impact on employment rates, women also saw a disproportionately negative impact on their psychological well-being due to COVID-19 (Almeida et al., 2020; Thibaut & van Wijngaarden-Cremers, 2020). This psychological impact has resulted in the accentuation of existing gender disparities, particularly when it comes to domestic and caretaking tasks (Almeida et al., 2020). Women have had to take on previously outsourced domestic responsibilities at a higher rate than their male counterparts, which adds significant stress to their day-to-day lives (Almeida et al., 2020). Overall, the pandemic created an environment that led to many women experiencing higher stress levels, more domestic caregiving responsibilities, and an increased rate of leaving the workforce from which they have yet to fully recover.

Women in Higher Education

The role and status of female librarians in higher education is one fraught with complexity. Many faculty members outside the library remain unaware of exactly what work librarians do on a daily basis and may devalue their work and status as researchers and instructors (Babb, 2021; Becksford, 2022; Colantonio-Yurko et al., 2020; Divay et

al., 1987; Fagan et al., 2020; Kotter, 1999). Despite this lack of understanding of the role of librarians and their work, library directors are frequently hired not by library staff members but by higher education administrators (Fitsimmons, 2008). While librarians may have the opportunity to participate in the hiring committee, in many cases, the committee is primarily composed of non-library faculty and administrators, and the final decision is made by an administrator external to the library (Fitsimmons, 2008). As such, it is critical to review the trends of gender equity in higher education as a backdrop for this study rather than simply gender equity trends in library hiring.

Higher education is no exception to the rule of a male majority in leadership roles, with women representing only 26% of college presidents (Lennon, 2013). One important phenomenon mentioned throughout the literature that reflects this trend is pipeline shrinkage. Pipeline shrinkage refers to the occurrence where an equal number of men and women enroll in graduate school, but women are less likely to enter and find success in academia (Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Camp, 1997; Olsen et al., 1995; Windall, 1988). For example, in the 2020–2021 academic year, 85,367 men were awarded doctoral degrees, compared to 108,692 women, following a long-growing trend of women achieving this terminal degree at higher rates than their male counterparts (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). However, as of 2021, there were double the amount of male full professors in the U.S. as females, and women are less likely than men to receive tenure and full professorship and take longer to do so (Fox, 2005; Ginther & Hayes, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2022; Weisshaar, 2017). This demonstrates that despite their academic achievements, women are not entering academia at the same rate as their male counterparts nor advancing at the same rate.

One factor contributing to this trend of pipeline shrinkage may be the academic hiring process itself. A 2009 study found that women were described as more communal and less agentic than their male counterparts in reference letters, key factors in the academic hiring process, and that those communal characteristics women are described with have a negative impact on higher education hiring decisions (Madera et al., 2009). Additionally, studies have found that hiring managers in higher education often engage in affinity bias, a tendency to hire individuals of the same race, gender, and of similar cultural background to themselves (Dejean, 2015; Easterly & Ricard, 2011; Russell et al., 2019). This is aggravated by the tendency to hire from social networks, of which women are less likely to be members (Dominici et al., 2009; Gangone & Lennon, 2014). Another commonly considered factor in academic career hiring and advancement is student reviews of faculty. However, several studies have indicated that these ratings are typically lower for women and minorities despite similar performance outcomes (Falkoff, 2018; MacNell et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2019). All of this literature indicates that the ecosystem in which academic library director hiring occurs still has progress to make toward uncovering implicit gender biases, which may affect hiring outcomes for women seeking these roles.

There are many other trends that persist in higher education, including lower salaries for women, lower likelihood of female faculty achieving tenure, and lower frequency of women the higher they climb in the hierarchy (H. L. Johnson, 2017). Teague and Bobby (2014) proposed that this may be because women are more reluctant to self-promote, less likely to be geographically mobile due to their loyalty to their institution and commitment to their partner's career, and often lack leadership

experience, particularly in financial areas. Further, women are more likely to have caregiving responsibilities that may impact the prime years of their careers (Armenti, 2004; Hardill & Watson, 2004). While many women do report working the same number of hours as their male colleagues, women also are more likely to spend more time teaching, mentoring, and participating in university service than their male colleagues, which may lessen their time to focus on development opportunities and publishing, both of which are essential for achieving tenure (Misra et al., 2011). In addition to time constraints, women also have less access to mentors to aid in their development (Bowyer-Johnson, 2001; Gangone & Lennon, 2014; Moss-Kanter, 1993). All of these factors come together to make higher education administration a "male-normed" workplace that is inhospitable to women seeking to climb the ladder and achieve career success (Acker, 1990, 2012; Longman & Madsen, 2014; Priola, 2007).

Women in Academic Library Leadership

While the concept of gender and its interaction with leadership advancement is somewhat understudied in the context of academic libraries, the literature review did yield valuable data to provide context and a starting point for the intended research. The history of gender-based research in libraries extends back as far as 1974 with Schiller's "Women in Librarianship." Schiller's (1974) paper provided a strong basis for other authors to continue exploring the evolution of gender and its impact on the careers of librarians through early 2020.

Two major works exploring the state of women in academic library leadership roles emerged during the literature review process. The first is "From Women-Staffed to Women-Led: Gender and Leadership in Academic Libraries, 1974-2018" by Marta

Bladek (2019). Bladek offered a comprehensive literature review of women's leadership in academic libraries, starting with Schiller's (1974) seminal paper "Women in Librarianship." Bladek then delved into an examination of topics such as leadership style, perceptions of men vs. women as leaders, and the disproportionate number of men in academic library leadership roles. She also highlighted the importance of gender-based leadership research, emphasizing that in a female-dominated field, the masculine nature of traditional leadership practices devalues the women who have worked to advance librarianship as a profession (Bladek, 2019). Measuring women's leadership using the values and norms typically utilized by men puts women at a disadvantage in achieving success. This also creates an implicit bias that men are better leaders because they more closely align with commonly accepted leadership standards (Bladek, 2019). Bladek's paper offers a solid background on the topic of women in academic library leadership and how this has been studied historically.

The second major work on the state of women in academic library leadership is L. B. Rutledge's (2020) publication "Leveling Up: Women Academic Librarians' Career Progression in Management Positions." This study offered a survey of 224 female academic librarians and a comparison of career progression between managers and nonmanagers (L. B. Rutledge, 2020). The researcher then conducted interviews with 37 participants to provide further context for the survey results. These results offer a clear snapshot of barriers facing women seeking to advance into leadership roles within their academic library as well as factors that aided their success. The survey results indicated that the most frequently occurring barriers included learning new management skills, balancing work and family life, learning to think of themselves as managers, and

navigating politics (L. B. Rutledge, 2020). While overt sexism was not commonly identified as a factor, age discrimination and workplace norms favoring male advancement were mentioned. Success factors most commonly identified fell into the category of personal characteristics, with exceptionally high results surrounding emotional intelligence and relationship building (L. B. Rutledge, 2020).

Overall, the literature exploring career progression and success factors surrounding U.S. female academic library directors is somewhat sparse (Bladek, 2019; DeLong, 2013). This pattern emerges despite the intriguing disproportionate gender demographics of academic library directors (J. Martin, 2015). Further, academic library career success and barriers to it are highly understudied within the context of gender. With the study of library management becoming a popular field of study as recently as 2009, it is understandable that the body of knowledge needs further development and examination, as it is a relatively new area of study (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009). This dissertation further expands this body of knowledge and provides data to examine the present state of female academic library directors.

Career Success Factors

Several factors recur throughout the literature that contribute to the career success of academic librarians. A 2013 study found that career progression in libraries strongly depends on librarians' willingness to advance into management roles and acquire the appropriate skills to manage effectively (Matteson et al., 2013). According to Harris-Keith (2015), librarians typically advanced from other administrative roles or from reference and instruction roles into these management positions. She reported that few library directors reported background in Archives, Special Collections/Rare Books and

Manuscripts/Preservation, Information Technology, and Digital Library Services. This is because administrative, reference, and instruction roles offer more opportunities for the development of leadership skills (Harris-Keith, 2015). In addition, to achieve and succeed in these management roles, such as library director, there are several characteristics and common themes that librarians report. L. B. Rutledge's (2020) survey indicated that female academic library managers cited a broad range of factors, including management skills, personality, support from employees, support from a network of peers, prior experience as a manager, confidence in management ability, mentorship, stress management skills, political skills, organizationally sponsored management training, and self-led management training. All of these factors contributed to the overall success of the library director, both in achieving and succeeding in their role.

Career Success Barriers

In addition to the factors reported by female academic library directors that aided their success, the body of research also indicates barriers to achieving these roles. These barriers include a lack of political acumen (K. M. Irwin, 2021; L. B. Rutledge, 2020), lack of development opportunities (Kendrick et al., 2013), personal responsibilities (Eva et al., 2021; L. B. Rutledge, 2020), inability to relocate (Braunagel, 1975; L. B. Rutledge, 2020), discrimination (L. B. Rutledge, 2020), and a lack of skills necessary to obtain a management role (L. B. Rutledge, 2020). In alignment with these reported factors, women in leadership positions were less likely to have children and more likely to serve in a lower-level management role than their male counterparts (Eva et al., 2021). All of these barriers present significant hurdles to advancement opportunities.

Finally, caregiving responsibilities are an essential consideration when it comes to women's career success. The challenges of caregiving, particularly for children, are inherently at odds with the demanding requirements of an academic career (J. C. Williams, 2005). However, this particularly impacts women due to societal gender norms, as women still bear the majority of caretaking and home responsibilities despite entry into the workforce (Drago, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman & Caleo, 2018; Sallee, 2012; Sayer et al., 2004). In addition, women who take leave to fulfill caregiving needs are far less likely to achieve full professor status and tenure (Fox & Gaughan, 2021). Further, while pre-tenure men report little to no disruption to their careers after having children, pre-tenure women responsible for caregiving are more likely to leave their jobs and report lower job satisfaction (Moors et al., 2022). All of these factors add up to create additional barriers for women looking to advance in higher education.

Women and Emotional Labor

Arlie Hochschild (1983) first coined the term "emotional labor" in her book *The Managed Heart*. In this work, Hochschild used the term to refer to a specific type of work expected of those in service industries, where individuals engage in managing their feelings to create publicly observable facial and bodily displays. Hochschild illustrated this concept with airline attendants smiling and acting happy even when facing an angry or upset passenger, nurses being expected to show compassion and empathy, and funeral service staff needing to present themselves as somber and serious (Hochschild, 1983).

Building on Hochschild's (1983) work, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) added a caveat to their definition, stating that emotional labor is governed by display rules, not feeling rules, as employers can only regulate how employees present themselves, not

what they feel internally (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). The authors define emotional labor as "the act of displaying the appropriate emotion" (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 90). Further defining the term, Ashforth and Humphrey identified three major forms of emotional labor: (a) surface acting, where one fakes emotions that do not match their internal feelings; (b) deep acting, which involves summoning up the appropriate feelings one wants to display; and (c) the expression of naturally felt emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Humphrey et al., 2011).

Later, Morris and Feldman (1996, 1997) defined emotional labor as not just the act of performing emotion, but "the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions" (Yang & Chen, 2021, p. 481). They proposed four dimensions of emotional labor: "frequency of appropriate emotional display, attentiveness to required display rules, a variety of emotions to be displayed, and emotional dissonance" (Yang & Chen, 2021, p. 481). The fourth dimension, emotional dissonance, refers to (a) when an individual's internal feelings are not matched by what they display externally, which is achieved through surface acting, or (b) when emotions do not match the environmental display requirements, which is called emotion-rule dissonance (Grandey et al., 2013; Holman et al., 2008; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; R. S. Rubin et al., 2005). Many studies have linked emotional dissonance with significantly decreased individual well-being (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Bono & Vey, 2005; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2011).

After a review of the evolution of the term, this study has defined emotional labor as identifying, regulating, and expressing emotions, particularly in the workplace

(Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Wharton, 2009). However, the next question to emerge is how to measure emotional labor. Several researchers have presented models to do just this, including Kruml and Geddes' (2000) 10-item scale to measure emotive dissonance, emotive effort, and emotional attachment; Brotheridge and Lee's (1998) Emotional Labor Scale (ELS), Glomb and Tews' (2004) Discrete Emotions Emotional Labor Scale (DEELS), K. H. L. Chu and Murrmann's (2006) Hospitality Emotional Labor Scale (HELS), and Cukur's (2009) Teacher Emotional Labor Scale. All of these have been successfully implemented across a range of studies to measure emotional labor.

Who, then, bears this burden of emotional labor in the workforce? Overall, studies have found that across a range of fields, women are more likely to experience negative effects due to emotional labor in the workplace, particularly when they engage in surface-acting (Erickson & Ritter, 2001; H.-A. M. Johnson & Spector, 2007). In addition, service jobs, which tend to require a higher level of emotional labor, tend to be staffed by women (Khunou et al., 2012; Leidner, 1991, 1999). Further, studies have also shown that men in these female-dominated industries may enjoy a "status shield," where they are protected via social norms from the emotional abuse that many women in the service industry are subjected to and thus enjoy a diminished need to engage in emotional labor (Cottingham et al., 2015). Overall, the research indicates that women bear a higher emotional labor burden in the workplace, both due to the fields in which women tend to be employed and the societal expectations placed upon them that men do not have.

This increased burden on women is present in higher education, where studies have found that female professors are expected to be more nurturing, receive more

requests for favors and friendship behaviors, and overall engage in more emotional labor than their male counterparts (El-Alayli et al., 2018). However, this labor is frequently overlooked and goes unrewarded for female academics (Rickett & Morris, 2021). In addition, engaging in emotional labor does not help academics further their career or obtain tenure; rather, it actively consumes time for activities they might use to pursue these goals (Misra et al., 2011). Despite this, untenured and early-career professors tend to engage in a higher level of emotional labor, which was found to be a large stress factor for female professors (Tunguz, 2016).

Amongst leaders, the pattern of women taking on a disproportionate emotional labor burden continues across a variety of fields (Bibi, 2020; Boucher, 2016; Vial & Cowgill, 2022). Vial and Cowgill (2022) found that women in leadership roles both use their power in a more prosocial manner, in addition to engaging in more emotional labor than their male peers. As discussed above, this increased pressure on women to engage in emotional labor leads to higher burnout rates and other negative outcomes (Erickson & Ritter, 2001; H.-A. M. Johnson & Spector, 2007). Whether in a leadership role in higher education or in another field altogether, women bear a disproportionate burden to engage in emotional labor without a significant benefit for doing so.

Forecast Chapter 3

Overall, this literature review indicates that while some studies exist surrounding the lived experiences of female academic library directors and how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership, there is still substantial opportunity for additional research in this area. While gender in academic librarianship has some background, there is no additional research post-2020 looking at women in leadership

roles. Further, there are several major gaps in the literature surrounding female academic library directors. The starkest is the lack of consideration of the ecosystem within which the academic library operates. Library directors are typically hired by higher education administrators outside of the library. However, most studies of academic library directors fail to consider the impact of operating within the higher education institution as a whole rather than focusing only on the library as a separate unit. By failing to consider how trends and cultural factors in higher education may affect advancement opportunities for prospective library directors, researchers ignore critical cultural factors. This dissertation will seek to continue and expand upon the work of L. B. Rutledge (2020) to gain further insight into this topic in a post-COVID world. Chapter 3 will provide an in-depth overview of the methods this study will employ to answer the research question.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership. Given this, the major research question for this study asked, how has the gender of female library directors affected their leadership? A phenomenological approach was selected for this study as this methodology aims to determine the essence of an experience (Creswell, 2013). By identifying this essence of female academic directors' lived experiences, I hope to inspire more women to seek leadership roles in academic libraries and the library field as a whole and support their future career trajectories by documenting the experiences of those coming before them.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership. The related research question is as follows: How has the gender of female library directors affected their leadership?

Research Design

The research methodology employed to resolve the question addressed by the study was that of phenomenology.

Nature of the Methodology

In its broadest definition, qualitative research refers to “research that produces descriptive data—people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior " (Taylor, 2015, p.18). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), this type of research allows the researcher to gain an understanding of people from their own perspective and frame of reference, thus “experiencing reality as they experience it” (Taylor, 2015, p. 18). The researcher examines environments and individuals holistically, recognizing the context in which people act (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Tracy, 2013; Yin, 2011). The ultimate goal of this type of research is to examine how individuals act and experience reality (Taylor, 2015).

Within the realm of qualitative research, a phenomenological perspective revolves around “understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it” (Taylor, 2015, p. 18). The phenomenological researcher aims to uncover embodied, experiential meaning in order to develop a rich, complex description of lived phenomenon (Finlay, 2012). In order to accomplish this goal, the researcher collects first-person reports of life experiences (Moustakas, 1994). By gathering and analyzing these reports, the researcher attempts to understand the meaning and essence of the experience by identifying commonalities between the subjects (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological researcher does not seek to build theories; they set out to report often taken-for-granted experiences in everyday life (Finlay, 2012).

The application of phenomenology is somewhat diverse, and previous scholarship has widely debated what constitutes a phenomenological study and not merely a study focusing on experience. To narrow this definition, Finlay (2012) suggested five common

attributes in the phenomenological research process. First, the researcher must embrace a phenomenological attitude. Second, they must enter the lifeworld of others through descriptions of experiences. Third, the researcher must dwell on horizons of implicit meanings. Next, the researcher should explicate the phenomenon holistically. Finally, the researcher must integrate frames of reference. By engaging in these practices, phenomenological researchers can avoid the pitfall of engaging in experiential research that is not truly phenomenological and move past subjectivity to find the essence of experiences (Finlay, 2012).

The first element of phenomenological research proposed by Findlay (2012), embracing a phenomenological attitude, is a recurring theme throughout the literature exploring how to conduct phenomenology. Often, phenomenological research emerges from a deep passion in the researcher (Finlay, 2012). Given this, there is a strong potential for bias in the researcher due to their past experiences and preconceptions surrounding this topic. This presents a significant challenge: how can the researcher remain open to new phenomena in order to expand their knowledge on the research topic beyond their existing experiences and preconceptions? Finlay and others present the phenomenological attitude as a solution to this. This attitude invites the researcher to have an attitude of noninterference and wonder (Finlay, 2012). Additionally, it helps the researcher to recognize their own biases and set them aside to understand and represent the lived experiences of others more accurately.

One effective practice in order to achieve this phenomenological attitude is via an epoché. The epoché is a written reflection whereby “everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings are set aside, and phenomena are revisited, freshly, naively, in

a wide-open sense, from the vantage point of pure or transcendental ego" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). For this study, the epoché is presented in the role of the researcher section of this chapter. By engaging in this reflection, I suspended my own judgment to more fully engage in a true analysis of the subjects' experiences (Peoples, 2021).

Once the researcher has done the work to set themselves up for successful data collection and analysis, the next challenge that many phenomenological researchers encounter is allowing participants to express themselves so that the researcher can capture their lived experiences. This body of experience is often referred to as the lifeworld: "the matrix of meanings inherent in our ongoing relations with the world" (Finlay, 2012, p. 180). The researcher must remain aware of the lifeworld of their subject and recognize how the individual and their environment are fundamentally intertwined (Finlay, 2012). To achieve this, Findlay (2012) offered two suggestions: inviting description of experiences rather than just opinions and engaging in empathetic listening that reveals not only the intellectual content of an interview but also the emotional and implied content. By engaging in these practices, the researcher can draw out deeper meanings and intricacies that lend richness and deeper understanding.

The next step after data collection is data analysis. According to Finlay (2012), the phenomenological researcher often makes the mistake of spending most of their time and energy on data collection when the most significant part of the research is the data process and analysis. Further, many may rush the categorization of data and only consider what was explicitly spoken rather than what was implied during interviews. A key factor in combating this is selecting an appropriate analytical method (Finlay, 2012). For phenomenology to be conducted properly, the researcher must select a method that

allows them to dwell in the data, seeking to "progressively deepen understandings as meanings come to light" (Finlay, 2012, p. 186). The methods explored and selected for this study will be further discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Appropriateness of the Methodology to the Research

In seeking to explore the lived experiences of individual female library directors, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to step into the shoes of the subject and view reality as they do without the need to attempt to quantify this data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Taylor, 2015). Further, qualitative research is highly indicative and allows researchers to gain insight from emerging patterns in data rather than collect data with the goal of proving or disproving a preset hypothesis (Taylor, 2015). Because very little research has previously been conducted on female academic librarians' perceptions of their own development and career success, this flexible approach to identifying themes and trends allowed for more rich, descriptive data and enabled unexpected insights to emerge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Phenomenology aims to determine the essence of the research population's experience (Creswell, 2013). Ultimately, the goal of this study was to document the experiences of female academic library directors rather than develop a theory based on their interviews. Due to this end goal, phenomenology was selected as the most appropriate research method. An additional consideration in selecting phenomenology for this study was its history of use in feminist research. A literature review revealed that the phenomenological format was commonly employed in feminist research preceding this study (Taylor, 2015). It offers the potential for vibrant, complex data that can determine the essence of a shared phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This is well suited to address the

issue of female academic library directors' perceptions of their own development and career success. Phenomenology does not begin with a set of hypotheses to be proven or disproven but rather a shared experience to be explored (Moustakas, 1994). Common factors are allowed to emerge from the data rather than be preselected beforehand. This practice ensures that unexpected findings and unique insights are allowed to emerge as the data are analyzed (Moustakas, 1994). In addition, phenomenology sets out to provide descriptions, not explanations (Creswell, 2013). Because of the nature of the research question, which is explored through gathering subjective data, it is immensely challenging to determine objective causes. However, phenomenology allows for the reporting of patterns in female academic library director development and career success without the need to attempt to determine causes.

Research Plan

Population and Sample

Selection and Description of Population

As discussed in Chapter 1, the disproportionate number of women in library director roles compared to their prevalence in the general population of librarians has been a topic needing further study for decades. However, several decisions had to be made to narrow this study's scope to a reasonable size. First, academic libraries were selected because academic libraries as a whole have a lower percentage of women in leadership positions compared to public libraries in the most recently reported data (Lynch, 1999). The data indicate that academic libraries may present more barriers to success for women seeking director roles. Given this, I determined that this was the best path to begin narrowing the scope of this study.

Further, there are many different types of colleges within the U.S., each with its own unique culture and attributes. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education offered several defining characteristics to help classify colleges. The basic classification system is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

Classification	Criteria
Doctoral Universities	"Includes institutions that awarded at least 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees during the update year and also institutions with below 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees that awarded at least 30 professional practice doctoral degrees in at least two programs. Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).
Master's Colleges and Universities	"Generally includes institutions that awarded at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees during the update year. ... Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).
Baccalaureate Colleges	"Includes institutions where baccalaureate or higher degrees represent at least 50 percent of all degrees but where fewer than 50 master's degrees or 20 doctoral degrees were awarded during the update year. … Excludes Special Focus Institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	"Includes four-year colleges, by virtue of having at least one baccalaureate degree program, that conferred more than 50 percent of degrees at the associate's level (but excluding special focus institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and institutions that have sufficient master's or doctoral degrees to fall into those categories)" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).
Associate's Colleges	"Institutions at which the highest level of degree awarded is an associate's degree. Excludes Tribal Colleges and Universities" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).
Special Focus Institutions	"Institutions where a high concentration of degrees is in a single field or set of related fields. Excludes Tribal Colleges and Universities" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).
Tribal Colleges and Universities	"Colleges and Universities that are members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, as identified in IPEDS [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System] Institutional Characteristics" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).

An additional factor that the Carnegie system employs is size. These size criteria rely on the undergraduate student body size. The size classifications for four-year colleges are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Carnegie Size Classification of Colleges

Classification	Criteria
Very Small	"Full-time enrollment of fewer than 1,000 degree-seeking students" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023b).
Small	"Full-time enrollment of 1,000–2,999 degree-seeking students" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023b).
Medium	"Full-time enrollment of 3,000–9,999 degree-seeking students" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023b).
Large	"Full-time enrollment of at least 10,000 degree-seeking students" (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023b).

A final classification I considered when narrowing college type was the control, or funding and governance source, of each university. These include public, not-for-profit private, and for-profit private (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2023a).

I needed to narrow the scope in order to make the sample size manageable for this study. Due to my past employment and professional network, I determined that I had the most access to medium not-for-profit private college librarians as well as more understanding of this demographic due to similar professional experiences. Given this, I determined that this was the best population with whom to begin my research, with expansion to other types of libraries and a comparison of emerging results as a goal of my

future research. Currently, no baccalaureate/associate's colleges, associate's colleges, or tribal colleges and universities fall under the medium not-for-profit private classification. Further, the five special focus institutions that fall into this category were excluded due to the potential for their institutional focus on a singular subject to impact the dynamic and demographics of the librarians employed. This resulted in the inclusion of only doctoral universities, master's colleges and universities, and baccalaureate colleges in the studied population. Finally, colleges outside the 50 U.S. states or Washington, D.C., were excluded due to the potential for significant cultural differences affecting the study outcome.

Selection and Description of Sample

According to Englander (2012), "When it comes to selecting the subjects for phenomenological research, the question that the researcher has to ask themselves is: do you have the experience that I am looking for?" (p. 19). Thus, in qualitative studies, "sampling is not about reaching numerical significance, nor does the sample size underpin what researchers interpret as significant" (Conlon et al., 2020, p. 947; see also, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Pope & Mays, 2006). Rather than employing traditional random sampling techniques, phenomenological studies intentionally seek participants whose backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews can help explain the explored phenomenon (Cleary et al., 2014). Further, the sample size in phenomenological research tends to be quite small, around 10, to allow the researcher to spend the appropriate time to obtain a deep, rich understanding of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Gentles et al., 2015).

Given the small sample size, purposive and snowball sampling are two of the most common sampling techniques utilized in qualitative, phenomenological research (Peoples, 2021). Purposive sampling refers to a sampling approach whereby the researcher intentionally selects participants who they believe will offer valuable information to help illuminate the phenomenon being studied (Farrugia, 2019). Snowball sampling is a practice where participants are asked to refer the researcher to other potential candidates (Farrugia, 2019). This study employed a combination of these two techniques to select participants who would yield valuable insight and expand the pool beyond my own personal network.

To begin the sampling process, I obtained a list of all medium-sized not-for-profit, private doctoral universities, master's colleges and universities, and baccalaureate colleges from the Carnegie Classification website. This portal uses IPEDS data to classify institutions. The resulting list of 182 institutions was exported to a spreadsheet, and each institution's library website was reviewed for the gender of their library director. When multiple campuses existed for each library, the dean overseeing all libraries was utilized if their position was primarily the oversight of libraries. If not, the highest-ranking library staff member at each location was utilized. If available, organization charts were used to make this determination or the library was contacted via email. In the case of a vacant position, the gender of the interim director was used. If there was no interim director, the library was contacted via email; if no response was received, a phone call was made to determine the gender of the previous director. This process was not perfect, as not all directors had their pronouns or gender identity listed on their directory entries. In these cases, I based their gender on their gender presentation in the library website directory or

LinkedIn photos, understanding that this may lead to some margin of error. I also noted any female directors with publications, education, or a listed interest in gender studies and contacted these candidates first as potential participants. Participants were also asked for suggestions of others who may be interested and have insight into the studied phenomenon.

Communication with Sample

All pre-interview communication with participants was conducted via my university email. A template was used for each initial inquiry, and a sample of the recruitment email sent can be found in Appendix C. After receiving a signed consent form, answering questions, and scheduling an interview, I emailed each participant a secure video conferencing link for the interview. These interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participant.

Response Rate. I contacted 24 female academic library directors currently employed at medium not-for-profit private colleges with a request to interview them. Of these, 11 individuals agreed to participate, yielding a 46% response rate.

Data Collection

Within a phenomenological research methodology, this study employed the technique of semi-structured interviews to generate data relevant to the research question.

Nature of Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary data collection method employed to explore the lived experiences of female academic library directors was semi-structured interviews. Each interview was conducted via video conferencing, and while questions were developed to guide the conversation, other emerging topics and themes were discussed and explored as well

during the interview. Semi-structured interviews refer to a format where questions are outlined prior to the interview as a guideline for the interviewer, but the interviewer still retains the discretion to reorder the questions, reword them, or ask follow-up questions during the interview (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This format of interview questions enables in-depth analysis of variables and allows for contextualization of the data while answering the research questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Cox & Salsberry, 2012; Hannum et al., 2017; S. Thomas, 2021; Yin, 2012). In addition, semi-structured interviews allow for elaboration on key topics and new ideas that emerge and allow the researcher to seek clarification of intent and meaning instead of interjecting their own interpretations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Taylor, 2015).

Appropriateness of the Technique. Within phenomenology, interviewing is the primary method referenced across the literature (Finlay, 2012; Moustakas, 1994; Peoples, 2021). According to van Manen (2016), these interviews have two purposes: "(a) as a means to explore and develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon; (b) to develop a conversation around the meaning of experience" (p. 97). To achieve these two goals, the researcher can select from three interview formats: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Unstructured interviews may seem beneficial when generating conversation, but it becomes easy for the researcher to become sidetracked and not explore each angle or point of their study. Alternatively, structured interviews have rigid questions to follow, which inhibit the second goal of promoting conversation. Thus, semi-structured interviews have emerged as the most common type of interview in phenomenology as they are the best-suited method to balance these two goals (Finlay, 2012; Moustakas, 1994; Peoples, 2021; van Manen, 2016).

When utilizing semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepares open-ended questions but remains open to follow-up questions and discussing any additional paths of inquiry that emerge (Moustakas, 1994; Peoples, 2021). The benefits of this format are that the predetermined questions ensure that the researcher addresses the major components of the study, while the ability and willingness to deviate from these questions allow flexibility to explore other paths and insights as they emerge during the interview (Peoples, 2021). This stays true to the design of phenomenological research, which is meant to allow data to emerge spontaneously (Giorgi, 1985).

Development of Reliable/Valid/Trustworthy Materials/Instrument(s). The primary instrumentation of this study was qualitative semi-structured interview questions designed to assess professional characteristics and other factors that impact female managers' career success in libraries, as well as how the overall environment of higher education may impact their outcomes. Interview questions were partially adapted from several prior peer-reviewed studies of female academics and librarians' career success in management roles, including L. B. Rutledge (2020), Hannum et al. (2017), and S. Thomas (2021). In alignment with phenomenological methods, the questions were designed to be open-ended and ask about experiences rather than feelings or perceptions (Peoples, 2021). Questions were tested in three pilot interviews and then adapted to better guide the participants to discuss the phenomenon of interest. This is further discussed later in the pilot study section of this chapter. A table containing the final interview questions, literature sources, and coordinating secondary data can be found in the appendix.

Procedure. Primary data was collected via 1-hour-long video conferencing or

phone interviews. I first obtained consent to record each interview and informed the participants that recordings would be transcribed utilizing Microsoft Word and then destroyed after the transcription was complete. Second, I conducted each 1-hour interview, ensuring that no identifiable information, such as names or institutions, was referenced during the interview, in the transcript, or in the file's metadata. Third, I transcribed each interview recording utilizing Microsoft Word. If the interviewee did reference this identifiable information, it was redacted from the transcript. Last, I arranged for the storage of the transcripts, ensuring that no identifiable data was tied to the interview notes or the metadata of the notes' file. All transcripts and notes were stored in separate, secure files in my university Google Drive account.

Data Analysis

Data generated by techniques previously described were subsequently interpreted through the analysis technique of data coding.

Nature of Data Coding

Data coding is a data analysis method that helps identify themes and patterns throughout a data set. This process helps to group ideas to reduce the researcher's bias and maintain a more objective approach to identifying patterns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the coding procedures outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) were utilized. First, the relevant text from each interview transcript was identified and nonrelevant topics culled. Coding software was also utilized in this phase to identify commonly recurring words, then weeded through by me for relevance to the research question. These repeating ideas were grouped into themes. These themes were then grouped into larger, more abstract themes referred to as theoretical constructs.

This process helped to group ideas in a way that reduced my bias and maintained a more objective approach to identifying patterns (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Application to the Data. During the data collection portion of this study, interview answers were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then theoretically coded to establish patterns that could be matched to survey response data (Hart, 2016; Vaughn & Turner, 2016). Themes were identified both via my review of interview transcripts and qualitative coding software to help enhance the objectivity of theme determination and to avoid any preexisting biases and expectations I had (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

Following Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) process, the relevant text from each interview transcript was identified, and nonrelevant topics were culled. During this process, I noted repeating ideas surrounding career success and development that emerged. Coding software was also utilized in this phase to identify commonly recurring words, which were then weeded through for relevance to the research question. Next, I grouped these repeating ideas into themes and then grouped these themes into larger, more abstract themes referred to as theoretical constructs. From there, I was able to write a description of the phenomenon that reflected the common experiences across participants' own lived experiences.

Trustworthiness. There are several methods that Iemployed in order to ensure the trustworthiness of this study. First, I utilized well-established research methods within phenomenological research, namely semi-structured interviews and data coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Peoples, 2021; Shenton, 2004). However, coding can be highly subjective if the researcher is not careful to remain objective throughout the process. Using coding software as a tool helped to ensure that I remained objective, as the

software identified recurring words to determine relevant themes without the contextual bias that a researcher might have.

In addition, by engaging in reflection ahead of time, I remained aware of my own biases and worldviews to remain conscious of how they might affect my coding (Creswell, 2014; Peoples, 2021; Shenton, 2004). This is often referred to as reflexivity. I made a list of my potential biases prior to conducting the interviews and kept this list in front of me during the interview process.

An additional method I employed was peer review. This study was closely supervised by my dissertation committee chair and reviewed by two other experts in the field prior to acceptance. By asking a peer to review and question the study, I ensured that the study would resonate with others beyond just myself and added validity to my findings (Creswell, 2014).

Finally, I employed thick descriptions throughout Chapter 4 in order to bolster trustworthiness. Detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, particularly quotes from the interviewees, helped to ensure that the reality of their lived experiences were conveyed rather than just how I perceived their experiences (Creswell, 2014; Shenton, 2004). I was careful to offer multiple perspectives surrounding themes and highlight shared experiences across the sample in order to boost trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014).

Role of the Researcher

Qualifications. I hold a Master of Library and Information Science as well as a Master of Organizational Leadership and was employed in libraries for 10 years. This experience included 2 years as a part-time library student worker, 3 years as a full-time academic library employee, and several roles in public libraries. This background ensured

that I had the appropriate knowledge of the field to engage with the terminology and common assumptions underlying the discussion during the interview. In addition, my membership in the library field created a sense of commonality with the interviewee and established a baseline of trust. Regarding data collection and storage, I am currently employed in the legal industry as a records manager and holds an active Information Governance Professional certification. This has equipped me to understand how to safely and securely store data to prevent participants' identities from being released.

Biases. It is important to note that my background and worldview are highly relevant to conducting data analysis, as they offer the potential to introduce bias (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). I have worked in public and academic libraries as both a paraprofessional and librarian. Given this, I am deeply grounded in higher education and libraries' culture and preexisting assumptions. I have first-hand experience with how academic libraries function and have had many conversations with colleagues across academic libraries about how administrators interact with libraries. Further, my background and personal values are highly influenced by feminist theory and equity principles. I was exposed to feminist theory at a young age and continued studying relevant theories and figures throughout my education. I am also part of many communities locally that hold equity as one of their key principles. Given this, I attempted to remain strongly aware of these biases during this study to avoid influencing the data collection and analysis to match my own preexisting assumptions about trends and patterns, which is a critical component of a phenomenological study. This took the form of writing down potential biases prior to engaging in interviews, as well as

reflecting on how these biases may have affected my perception of the conversation afterward.

Responsibilities. I was responsible for all steps of this study, including developing procedures, data collection and analysis, data security, and writing this dissertation. Of particular note was the responsibility to identify preexisting biases and suspend judgment in order to avoid influencing the data collection or analysis.

Timeline

This study required 1 hour per interview for a total of 13 hours, including pilot studies. The interviews took place across three semesters, with pilot studies occurring in the Spring of 2023 and interviews occurring during the Fall of 2023.

Chronology of Events and Procedures. I began each interview inquiry with an email to the potential interviewee (Appendix C), attaching a consent form for each potential participant to review (Appendix D). Upon agreement to participate, the interviewee was asked to return a signed consent form, and a video conferencing interview invite was sent. During the 1 hour recorded interview, I followed the semi-structured questions, elaborating on topics as they emerged. Each interview was then transcribed using Microsoft Office. Participants were also asked for recommendations for additional interviewees upon the conclusion of the interview. The transcriptions were uploaded to Atlas.ti, a coding software. The software was utilized to identify major recurring themes, and I manually reviewed each transcript.

Summary/Coherency of Design

Validity/Trustworthiness

Within qualitative research, validity can be a complicated topic. Unlike in quantitative work, there is always some level of subjectivity in any qualitative study (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). There is no mathematical formula to determine that the results are valid. However, several approaches can be used to ensure that the qualitative researcher remains as objective as possible in their data analysis. This study utilized coding software to identify frequently recurring words and themes objectively. Further, this study does not propose a theory but simply reports the lived experiences surrounding a phenomenon. By engaging in reflection via an epoché and remaining conscious of my preexisting bias, I helped increase the data's trustworthiness. Finally, this dissertation reports findings with transparency (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), including not just the top-level themes but themes occurring at every level along the coding process. These practices helped produce a higher level of trustworthiness for the study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with three academic library directors utilizing the procedures outlined in this chapter with two minor changes. These included sending the interview questions to participants prior to the interview and the specific questions used in the interview. While all three conversations were fruitful and yielded some insights into the targeted phenomenon, I observed that sending the interview questions to participants beforehand led them to come prepared with scripts or predetermined answers and prevented natural conversation. As such, this was removed from the methods of this study. Further, I found that my initial questions were not experience-focused and

primarily resulted in a conversation surrounding feelings and opinions. While valuable, these were not in the intended outcome of this study, nor phenomenological studies in general. As such, I modified the questions to be more open-ended and focus on lived experiences.

Limitations

One major area of research limitation was that because interview participants were self-selected, the results may have yielded a high response rate from librarians who are heavily professionally involved or have a personal interest in management and leadership topics and thus were more likely to have spent time intentionally developing their leadership skills. The sampling technique also introduced the risk of only interviewing a homogenized group of individuals who may share a common sociocultural background due to leveraging referrals. Because of this, the initial sample was drawn from both network connections and responses to the call for participants to broaden the sample pool before requesting referrals to others. In addition, librarians at larger institutions may have had more free time to participate in the survey than librarians at smaller institutions with lower staffing levels. I attempted to intentionally select librarians from various academic library types and sizes to combat this.

Ultimately, interview research holds the risk of participants not self-reporting accurately or having an objective view of their own characteristics (Bickman & Rog, 2009). In addition, the responses of interview participants were influenced by their career goals or personal meanings of career success and development. Inevitably, their interpretations of their past experiences were molded by their future goals. Finally, because this study only included current library directors, it did not consider former

directors who had left or those who had attempted to become a director but were hindered from doing so due to various barriers (Hart, 2016). This was due to the extreme difficulty in locating and identifying these individuals.

Finally, as a non-director librarian, I was positioned as an outsider of the research group, potentially impacting coding due to my lack of understanding of unspoken norms and expectations of director-level roles (Hart, 2016). I attempted to remain conscious of this when coding results in order to mitigate the effect. In addition, I needed to be aware of the risk of social confirmation bias when conducting interviews. By actively remaining aware of this risk and attempting to remain mindful of stereotypes when developing questions, I hoped to avoid influencing outcomes via my own biases (Dumont et al., 2003).

Forecast Chapter 4

Overall, Chapter 3 provided an overview of the methods to be employed. This phenomenological study explored how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership within the context of medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. Participants were selected via a combination of purposive and snowball sampling to ensure the appropriate experience relevant to the phenomenon being researched. I conducted an hour-long semi-structured interview with 10 participants. Before these interviews, a pilot study was conducted with three participants to ensure the interview questions yielded an appropriate understanding of the librarian's lived experiences. I analyzed the results of these interviews via data coding with the aid of coding software to determine common themes and experiences. Chapter 4 will report the findings of this study, as well as a description of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership. Given this, the research question asked, how has the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership? The study's design was phenomenological, employing the data collection method of semi-structured interviews. The study also provided a literature review of related research and theory in the areas of libraries, leadership within libraries and higher education, career success trends and factors, and the state of women in both academic libraries and higher education.

Presentation and Summary of Data

Description of Sample

I contacted 24 female academic library directors currently employed at medium not-for-profit private colleges and requested to interview them. Of these, 11 individuals agreed to participate. Table 1 provides a demographic overview of each participant. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. To determine generational considerations, the birth years outlined by the Pew Research Center were selected: Silent Generation (1928–1945), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), Millennials (1981–1996), and Generation Z (1997–2012; Dimock, 2019). The participant sample is outlined in greater detail in Table 5.

Table 5

Overview of Participants

Participant	Highest Level of Education	Region of the US	Title	Tenure in Current Role	Number of Employees	Generation
Abigail	MLIS	Midwest	Director	3 Years	15	Gen X
Beth	MLIS, 2nd Masters	West	Dean	7 Years	22	Baby Boomer
Claire	MLIS, 2nd Masters	Midwest	Director	2 Years	8	Gen X
Diane	MLIS, 2nd Masters	Northeast	Director	1 Year	14	Gen X
Emma	MLIS	South	Dean	2 Years	15	Gen X
Florence	MLIS	Northeast	Director	9 Years	4	Millennial
Grace	MLIS	South	Director	10 Years	11	Baby Boomer
Hannah	PhD	West	Director	5 Years	8	Gen X
Isabel	PhD	South	Dean	9 Years	13	Baby Boomer
Jane	MLIS	Midwest	Director	3 Years	19	Millennial
Kate	MLIS	South	Dean	6 Years	9	Gen X

Findings Related to Research Questions

All 11 directors participated in semi-structured interviews via a recorded Zoom video call. The initial interview questions included the following: (a) Tell me about your career in librarianship and how it led you to become a director. (b) What is it like being a female director in higher education? (c) How do you grow professionally as a director? (d) Are there any experiences you'd like to address that we haven't had the chance to

discuss? The call was then transcribed via Otter.ai transcription software and manually reviewed for accuracy. I then coded each transcript utilizing ATLAS.ti software. These codes were grouped into themes and then into four major theoretical constructs.

Data coding of the 11 interview transcripts yielded four major themes: Relationships, Service Orientation, Identity, and Emotional Labor. Relationships encompass how the participants built relationships with other directors, employees, faculty members, students, and campus administration. Service Orientation included all references to how they centered service into their daily practice as library leaders. Identity included discussion of the participant's identity as a librarian, identity as a woman, and, when relevant, identity as a wife and mother. Finally, Emotional Labor covers references to both how they engage in emotional labor and the perceived expectations that they do so.

Findings about Relationships

Overall, the participants in this study frequently discussed the concepts of relationship building and management when reflecting upon their leadership practices. The participants were highly aware of their interactions with others and how they both perceived and were being perceived. This awareness and emphasis on relationships greatly impacted how these women engaged in leadership. Overall, five major categories of relationships were discussed: relationships with other library directors, relationships with employees, relationships with faculty, relationships with students, and relationships with administrators.

Relationships with Other Library Directors. Of the 11 participants, nearly every

director indicated that engaging with other women, particularly other female library directors, is the most important way they learn and find support. This might take the form of attending conferences, volunteering with librarian professional associations or consortia, or simply sending an email or picking up the phone to contact individuals in similar roles. Many reported that they benefitted from both soliciting advice and hearing about solutions other libraries have implemented as well as from the overall feeling of camaraderie. Florence remarked, "I think that the most important thing for me has been having other directors to talk to and see what their experience was like, doing that, and trying to go from there." Abigail similarly recounted, "I've figured out that it's okay to go to other directors and say, I don't know what this is. Can you help me? Everyone is very supportive and encouraging." Isabel emphasized the roles of other female library directors in her own growth, stating, "There are the things you learn as a director that you would never have on your radar as a librarian, not until you're in a director's position. And these aren't things I learned from men."

Despite the support from peers, many directors reported feeling isolated as the only library director on campus and noted that engaging with other peer library directors helped to alleviate that sense of isolation. Kate remarked that she felt this way when she first became a director:

> I contacted every single Dean and Director within an hour's drive of [city]. I emailed them, and I just said, help. And the response from the library community was amazing. Every single one of them reached back and said, what do you need- and these are people I'd never met before.

Kate still stays in touch with many of these peers and regularly seeks advice. Other directors similarly reported attending regional directors' meetings or reaching out to their network to help them connect with others in their role and feel less isolated.

Relationships with Employees. Of those interviewed, nearly every participant was highly conscious of their interactions with their employees and the relationships they had built with staff. Many stated that this was because most of the participants felt they had an obligation to serve and advocate for their employees. Emma stated, "As a leader, I am so invested in making sure that everyone has a voice, especially because some of us are introverts." Diane remarked, "I'm personally involved in my coworkers' lives, I'm interested in their lives, and I think that goes a long way." In addition to caring about their employees personally, others commented on how they helped their employees grow professionally as well. Abigail commented:

> I love empowering people to be able to do the best job that they can. I really do see myself as a director, as a dean, as a leader clearing the way for people and, and enabling them to do the best job they can do. I don't see libraries as places where people come and sit for a long time, in terms of employees, not patrons. I enjoy providing a lot of professional development and encouraging growth and then watching them go and move on to bigger and better things.

Others also reflected this sentiment, such as Grace, who stated, "I try to put [staff] in places where their strengths are and [assign] things that they would enjoy doing." In addition, many voiced their concern for ensuring employees felt supported and were not overwhelmed despite limited resources. Claire remarked, "I spend a lot of time thinking about how do we solve this problem without making it one individual's problem, and how do we provide this service without overwhelming anyone?" Similarly, Diane commented on encouraging employees to not work when on vacation, stating, "I've had people respond when they're on vacation, or say I'm gonna get the Wi-Fi package on my cruise so I can take that meeting, and I said no, don't do that. I don't want to see you there."

For those promoted from within, the question of managing the change in power dynamics was frequently addressed. Many worried about gaining the respect of their former colleagues and ensuring they maintained friendships despite the change in power dynamics. Kate remarked:

> One of the hardest teams to lead is a team that you inherit. So I did all sorts of things. I had somebody come in and do a StrengthsFinder workshop with us. I did, you know, notes and gifts on desks, I sent encouraging emails, I scheduled one-on-ones every single week. I did all the things.

Overall, like Kate, all the directors interviewed seemed to care deeply for their staff and felt that it was their job as leaders to ensure that they were cared for and treated well.

Relationships with Faculty. The participants reported a broad range of experiences when discussing their relationships with faculty. Many stated that they had good, collegial relationships with faculty on campus. Others felt a sense of tension due to the debate over whether or not librarians should have faculty status. Isabel stated:

> In this particular institution, as a dean, I'm the odd dean out because all the other deans oversee graduate schools here or the undergraduate school. So they're actually designing curriculum, teaching courses, hiring faculty. Those are not things that you do in the library. And yet, because my librarians here are faculty, I'm included on the Dean's Council.

Similar tension existed for several non-dean library directors, who reported feeling like the odd one out in meetings with other faculty leadership. Kate remarked:

> Leadership in the library is a little different than leadership in another academic unit. I see my people every day, and I talk to them every single day, whereas a dean may not see his faculty but once a month or once a semester. But I'm right here in the center of it all. And, you know, the relationship [with library staff] is different. So it was important that I asked librarian directors and deans to help me because I don't know that anybody else in an academic unit quite understands how different we are.

Of those interviewed, many remarked that they intentionally attended all faculty meetings because they had to remind faculty of their status and what they had to offer.

Florence recounted that she constantly had to remind the faculty on the curriculum committee of the importance of informing the library of any curriculum changes so that they could ensure all the library resources needed for a new program were available. Overall, this sense of faculty's lack of understanding of the challenges faced by librarians, and library directors in particular, was present in most interviews.

Relationships with Students. The majority of participants indicated that relationships with students were both a strong priority for them and a significant source of job satisfaction. Several suggested they enjoy engaging with students outside the library by attending campus events, sponsoring campus organizations, or eating lunch with them. When asked how they decide to implement new services, the majority stated that they listen to what the students say they would benefit from, whether checking out blankets due to the cold temperature in the building or adding beanbags to study spaces. Kate stated that when faced with hiring three new librarians, her first consideration was the type of relationships they would build with the students, remarking, "I needed a certain kind of librarian who could relate well with students and who could understand that we speak a different language and they don't know it." Multiple directors hosted regular social events for student employees, often providing food. All participants indicated that building student relationships was a strong priority for them, and many engaged in activities that ensured their staff also were actively building these relationships with students.

Relationships with Administration. All participants interviewed were quick to express their strong understanding of the power disparity between themselves and the college's administration. While some reported positive relationships with their

administrators, others felt that the library was not valued by their administration, often due to a lack of understanding about the mission and inner workings of the library. Abigail remarked:

> It's hard being an academic library director because we're not a revenue center. We don't bring in money; we are seen as sort of outmoded and outdated and almost a burden. Schools have to have [libraries], but they're just eating up all of our money. And, you know, what are they actually giving back? And what are they? What are they helping us do? And so, man or woman, I think the library leader in an academic institution is going to be in that precarious position of trying to prove worth. And I think it's doubly hard as a woman to do that.

Several participants felt that the administration took them less seriously than their male counterparts in equivalent roles, though this was not a universal experience. Hannah remarked, "It certainly feels like you really want to be in that 'we play basketball on Tuesdays at 2:00, and here are photos from our latest Ironman' kind of crowd in order to be in the decision-making processes."

As the head of the library, several participants commented on the importance of advocating for the library to the administration, particularly to ensure the library maintains the budget it needs to operate and receives the resources it needs to meet the demands of the university community. This often led to the discussion of another common theme among the directors interviewed: advocacy fatigue. Emma commented, "A lot of the suggestions and a lot of the things that I send out are kind of sent out into the void." Later in the conversation, she stated she was exhausted from "how much effort I put into beating down the door again, to try to get them to see us." Several others commented on burnout and the need to maintain strong work–life boundaries in order to avoid feeling overwhelmed by their responsibilities. Beth remarked, "It's critical … being very selective in what you're advocating for."

Findings about Service Orientation

In this study, every participant interviewed placed a strong emphasis on the importance of serving others. This was especially clear in how participants spoke about their work. Nearly every participant viewed her career as a way to find meaning and purpose. Grace stated, "I think we look at it as more than just a job. It is a little bit of like a mission for us of who we are." Similarly, Jane remarked:

> I decided to pursue librarianship because I wanted a job that made me feel a little bit more happy in life, but also more meaningful and connecting with others and feeling like I'm making a positive difference in the world.

Many participants also spoke about the values of the profession and how they appealed to them. Beth stated, "I will say the values of our profession are very critical for me. So access, affordability, ethics, all of that, that transcends everything that shapes me as a leader." Overall, the participants indicated a sense of morality through their work, emphasizing advocacy for what they believed was right and how this contributed to their overall sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Aligning with this value placed on service, every librarian interviewed was involved in professional volunteering with library professional organizations, whether on a local, regional, or national level. Most said they preferred serving on a regional level via state or region-wide library consortia or other regional professional organizations. Others published or edited professional journals to further the profession. Many were involved in committees and other voluntary faculty groups on campus. Several even sponsored student groups, such as the chess club, after work hours.

The participants' emphasis on service orientation also extended to their role as leaders. Many commented on a sense of obligation towards their employees due to their

position, as discussed previously in the employee relationships section. Abigail stated: “I really do see my job as a leader as clearing the way for people and enabling them to do the best job they can do.” Overall, these women spent a significant amount of time and effort in pursuit of supporting and serving others as a central aspect of their work as leaders.

Findings about Identity

Many participants reported a crisis of identity when they moved from librarian to director roles. These identity struggles fell into three major categories: their identity as a librarian, their identity as a woman, and their identity as a wife and mother.

Identity as a Librarian. Overall, many participants indicated that they struggled with the concept of their professional identity upon entering their leadership roles. As discussed in the previous section, librarianship is a mission, not simply a job, for many. However, upon becoming directors and deans, many participants found themselves experiencing an “identity crisis” resulting from no longer engaging in much of the work that traditionally defines librarianship. Diane commented:

> It really is a lot more operational than you think it is. So in some respects, that’s a little disappointing. I spend more time than I would like talking to housekeeping and talking to maintenance and reporting leaks and finding where did our trash cans go and things like that.

Others similarly remarked on their current role being far more administrative than librarian work. When asked how she would currently sum up her identity, Beth, who edits a professional library journal and frequently contributes journal articles as part of her own professional development, stated, “I would say higher ed administrator. And I would also say, writer and editor, more than librarian.” Abigail made a similar comment, stating:

> I think at this point, I'm a leader first. I haven't felt like a librarian in a long time. I still have a shift at the reference desk, I still try to do some collection management. But I feel removed from it. … It's like growing up in a country and then moving away. I can still speak the language, but I don't necessarily feel like I live there anymore.

Many of those interviewed remarked that they missed the day-to-day librarian work. Kate stated, "Yes, I hate, hate, hate sitting at my computer and being on a screen all day. I miss students!" Florence similarly missed portions of her former role as a librarian, commenting, "I really enjoyed the research part of my job a lot. And that's what drew me into [librarianship] and then I was like, oh, I do none of that now, 0% of that as in my job." However, others felt they were better suited for an administrative role. Isabel recounted:

> When I sat down with a psychologist … he said the last thing in the world you should be is a librarian, which I found very interesting. But I also understand most librarians are in the job because they tend to be on the introverted side; they like to just work in their little cubby, no pressure, no stress, leave their work there when they go home, and just do what they're asked to do. And so the counterbalance for that is you have to have department managers, department heads, or directors or deans who are not that necessarily, but who have the ability to assess, look forward, see what's coming down the pike, and have a good sense of personal interactions among their staff. I don't miss doing the day-to-day, hands on, repetitive types of things that I was doing as a staff person previously.

Several others commented on this difference in responsibilities, noting the additional pressure and need for perspective in their director role. Many attempted to stay involved in their former librarian work but later had to step back due to the demands of their director position. Grace recounted:

> I actually stayed the Health Sciences Librarian for almost 2 years after I became director. But I finally just told the president I can't do both of these well, and so now we have a full-time Health Sciences Librarian that's in the library.

Over one third of participants reported that they have considered stepping back into a librarian role in the future.

Of those interviewed, only one entered the field intending to pursue a director role. The remainder found themselves advancing due to various factors, including being good at librarian work and recognition of that work by their superiors. Several remarked on this, stating that while they were grateful to be recognized, they were unprepared to enter their roles as a result. Isabel said:

> There are pieces that if I had realized in advance that I was going to be directing a library, I would have gotten training in some areas that I was woefully lacking in and had to pick up on the fly, financial management being one of those.

She went on to state that finding the education she needed was also tricky, recounting, "There isn't necessarily any one location or website that says if you're a library director, these are the things you should be looking at." Overall, nearly every woman experienced some form of struggle with their professional identity as a part of transitioning into their leadership role.

Identity as a Woman. Many women interviewed reported a struggle with their identity as a woman upon entering their director role. Many struggled with wanting to present in a traditionally feminine manner, including how they dress and acting in a more communal way, but feeling pressure as a leader to embrace traditionally masculine characteristics like directness and other agentic characteristics. Abigail stated:

> The women that I worked for 20 years ago were hardened women, there wasn't mentoring there. There was sort of taking under a wing and an encouraging, but there was a hardness and there was a brittleness, and then also this sense that to succeed, you had to emulate this masculinity, you have to be tough.

Diane recounted a similar experience where she felt pressured to change how she presented her gender, stating, "The leaders that I've seen, the leadership qualities that we praise, are male leadership qualities. So I hope that I'm leading from a way that's

authentic to me and not trying to conform to something that isn't." Kate similarly felt pressured to remain conscious of how she presented herself, recounting:

> Women have to think about what we're wearing when we go to meetings and how we're sounding. I don't know that a man goes through all of that before a meeting. But what runs through our minds before every meeting is sit up straight. Make sure you've got your pen in your hand, make sure you don't sound stupid. Make sure you're wearing a certain outfit. There's a lot of thought that goes into sitting at a leadership team when your voice is the minority.

Abigail also noted a shift in her behavior, remarking, "It's interesting, as I spent more time in leadership positions in higher ed, I am less concerned with being nice." However, she did not explicitly connect this to the concept of gendered performance expectations. While many felt the need to present in a more traditionally masculine manner, others also needed to balance that with meeting expectations of how women should behave. Jane reflected:

> Men are encouraged to be self-advocates. Now, I think that tone is shifting with our society, but even when I was in retail and customer service, when I would advocate for myself to my male supervisors, it was kind of a shock to them.

A term frequently occurring in the data was the concept of being perceived as a "nag." Diane recounted:

> I was talking about with [male supervisor] about maintenance and that I can't get anybody to come and take care of a problem. And he said, "Well, you know, you have to be careful about not being seen as a nag." In hindsight, I should have stopped and said, "Well, if you were putting in tickets and not getting a response, would you ever worry that you were being a nag? Or is that just something that's coming into play because I'm a woman?"

Hannah similarly reflected on this concept of being perceived as a nag, remarking:

> I think probably there is at least a strong element of gendered thought pattern in how I decide to advocate well for resources without a sort of hobbling myself with the concern that people will find me annoying or naggy, which, if there is a word I hate, it is nag. It's all of the connotations of that that are like a hideous old crone or annoying people. The sense of what does it mean to advocate well and confidently without hindering the clarity of my advocacy with concerns about

> interpersonal perception. I don't know how differently I would think about that if the people in control of resources were women. Part of the way I think about gender in relation to that is the dynamic that is I'm asking men for resources. The CFO is a man, the provost is a man, our president is a man. Do I advocate differently because they're men than I would if those roles, or at least some of those roles, were held by women? I think the answer is yes. And then I obsess a little bit about whether that is strategic on my part, to realize that I need to advocate differently because they're men and may perceive me in certain ways depending on my approach? Or am I sort of layering my own supposed attitudes on them in ways that are undermining myself?

Others similarly commented on how their interactions with a largely male administration in higher education forced them to make decisions on how to present themselves when making requests for the library.

However, not all women felt that their gender identity significantly affected how they presented themselves as leaders. Diane thought that this concept of engaging in gender performance to be taken seriously was more of an issue of the past, remarking:

> The female library director that I had previously, it felt to me that she led in a very male way. And was that a way for her to get respect. She was older than I was, so she came up in a different world, and that meant her dressing a certain way, acting a certain way, leading a certain way, as part of getting respect and being respected.

Overall, Diane felt that she was able to present herself authentically in her current director role. Beth similarly commented, "I would say if there's anything that compromises me, it would be more my self-confidence, or attributes like that, and not gender." However, others disagreed with this assessment, viewing this as a public performance of equity and diversity rather than a genuine cultural shift. Abigail stated, "While I think that there's a lot of conversation about how far we've come with equity and diversity, behind closed doors, the conversations haven't changed at all. The snide comments, the observations about women, those continue."

A pattern that emerged amongst the interview data is that younger library directors reported feeling less respected than the older colleagues interviewed. Nearly every director who reported not feeling the effects of gender bias in their workplace was over the age of 50. Florence recounted how she leveraged this observation, stating:

> My associate director is an older male colleague. So when I felt like I don't have a voice, I will ask him to do what I call "mansplaining." I will bring him to the meeting and just have him say everything. There was one point when we were talking about a big change at the university and to everything that came out of my mouth, [male administrator] was like, I want nothing to do with what you're saying. So I brought [male associate director] at the end of the meeting to say the same things I had been saying. [Male administrator] ended the meeting saying I just want to thank [male associate director] for coming in here and really doing all this hard work. I had been saying the same thing for a year now, but he just listened to him say it and it was completely fine.

Others similarly commented on feeling they were taken less seriously due to their age.

Identity as a Wife and Mother. Of those interviewed, over two thirds of the participants were mothers, and some felt that their role as leaders conflicted with their families' needs to some degree. Diane remarked:

> I do feel like being a working woman, particularly a working mother in this country, means that when you're at work, they want you to pretend that you don't have children, and when you're at home, they want you to pretend that you don't have a job.

Others stated that they had stayed in their current roles specifically because of the support they experienced from their university when balancing children and work. Many of those interviewed had to relocate for their roles and worried about how this would affect their children as well as their spouses' careers. Two delayed their entry into the library field due to relocating for their husband's careers into an area with few librarian jobs available. Isabel started her career as a librarian after her husband retired from the military and her children were older, stating that she couldn't have been so successful without the support

of her spouse at home. Others similarly remarked that their career was only possible due to a supportive spouse to split child-rearing responsibilities. Overall, almost every participant did not engage in traditional female caretaking roles, either having their spouse step into this role, waiting until the kids were grown, or not having children at all.

Notably, Abigail believes that her identity as a mother has made her a better leader. She stated:

> The primary focus of my identity really, is being a mom. And so I do find that that comes into play a lot with my leadership in terms of making sure people have what they need, making sure people feel heard, making sure that people are in the right place for them … I know that being a mother really does contribute to how I lead. As my child has grown and my parenting has changed over time also really affects it. When she was a toddler, I was not a very good leader. It was mostly about telling people to take stuff out of their mouth. But now that she's a young adult, being able to see how the world impacts her and how I would like the world to impact her, I think has made me a more empathetic leader.

This is consistent with the values many of the women interviewed cited as part of their success as leaders, including empathy, compassion, and a willingness to listen. Overall, every female academic library director struggled to some degree with their identity upon entering their leadership role, whether as a woman, a wife, a mother, a librarian, or a leader.

Findings about Emotional Labor

Overall, women are likely to engage in a higher level of emotional labor in the workplace than their male counterparts. This was clearly reflected in the interview participants' experiences. One area that was particularly rife with references to emotional labor is staff management. Grace stated that her biggest priority was "just taking care of the librarians and the staff." Similarly, Emma said, "I push myself to stand and talk and

check in. I definitely check in and make sure people know I'm paying attention to them as people." She remarked about her staff meetings:

> For me, as a leader, I am so invested in making sure that everyone has a voice, especially because some of us are introverts. So, if I lead a meeting, I'll say, "I didn't hear from you; what are your thoughts? Or do you want to get back with me? Do you need time to think on it?" I think that's such an important quality that doesn't necessarily happen with male-dominated meetings that are led.

Others pay close attention to their staff's reactions when offering feedback. Claire recounted when asked how she handled staff failure: "If we did it wrong, then we learned from it. Or, if we did it wrong, and someone gets upset, we'll just say sorry and do it again. I think that I'm pretty flexible with how I approach things." Almost all of the others interviewed used similar language, referring to their staff as "we" instead of "them."

Many directors remarked on emotional labor not being a part of their predecessor's leadership practice. Diane, whose predecessor was female, recounted:

> The previous library director would always make a big deal if somebody cried about something. I, myself, am a crier. I had a librarian whose aunt died come into my office to tell me what happened and that she was going to be taking time, and she started to cry. And she kept saying, "I'm sorry, I'm just so sorry." So I said, "Please, don't be sorry about crying; we are humans, we have emotions, we cry, it's not a big deal. I don't think less of you."

She then recalled a similar experience with prior leadership not being in tune with staff and their human needs. She recounted:

> I'm very lucky. I have a great staff, but I've worked with them for a lot of years, and I have their trust. We had some instability, sort of personality and emotional-wise, with our previous director. Since I've been director, the staff have said things like, "We're just so happy that you're here," or, "It's [Diane]; we don't have to worry about it because it's [Diane]." I'm bringing some sort of stability and calm to the role, which is great.

Several others interviewed also seemed to take pride in their leadership's ability to change the library culture and better support the human needs of their staff members.

While there was an overall positive perception of the outcome of their emotional labor, several participants remarked on the amount of work this placed on them. Grace remarked, "I would say the hardest thing for a director is people issues." Along the same line of thought, Claire stated, "I spend a lot of time thinking about how do we solve this problem without making it one individual's problem, and how do we provide this service without overwhelming anyone?" In Hannah's experience, "there's a very positive sense of investment in the place, both of the library and the institution. But that also means that when you're a family member, you have all the family drama." Many reported some level of burnout due to their leadership role, particularly the people management component. Overall, the female academic library directors interviewed appeared to engage in a high level of emotional labor as part of their leadership responsibilities.

Summary of Results

The research question addressed by this study asked how the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership. The purpose of a phenomenological study is to determine the essence of a phenomenon. Overall, the essence of the identified themes centered around the lived experiences of women as communally-oriented leaders who placed a high value on building and maintaining relationships. They also felt an obligation towards their academic community, demonstrated through their strong commitment to service. When faced with losing their identity as a librarian, a service-based role, participants struggled to deal with this shift in responsibilities. Further, they felt pressured to balance caretaking

in their home and professional lives. Finally, as part of this communally-focused leadership, participants engaged in a high level of emotional labor daily.

Forecast Chapter 5

In summary, four major themes emerged from the interviews with 11 female academic library directors. These themes are that female academic library directors (a) place a high value on building relationships as leaders, (b) display a highly service-oriented approach to their leadership and work, (c) struggle with the concept of their identity upon entering their leadership role, and (d) engage in a high level of emotional labor as part of their leadership responsibilities. These themes relate to the critical idea that women both feel and are highly aware of emotions and engage in significant emotional labor as part of their leadership. This comes into play when choosing to advance in a service-oriented profession, determining how their identity as a librarian makes themselves and others feel, and building and managing relationships with others. Overall, it points to how women in leadership roles within academic libraries engage in communally-oriented leadership behaviors. In Chapter 5, these themes will be further explored and expanded within the framework of Acker's theory of the ideal worker.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore how the gender of female academic library directors affects their leadership. The research question guiding the study asked, how has the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership? This chapter presents a discussion of findings and conclusions related to this research question.

Summary of the Study

This phenomenological study investigated how the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership. Chapter 1 introduced the research through a description of the background, purpose, approach, significance, delimitations, limitations, and vocabulary of the study. Chapter 2 reviewed literature about theory and research related to the study in the areas of the current state of libraries, leadership within libraries, the demographics of leadership within libraries, women in the post-COVID-19 workplace, women in higher education, women in academic library leadership, career success factors, and career success barriers. It also offered an in-depth exploration of Acker's theory of the ideal worker, which was utilized as the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter 3 detailed the design of the study through a description of phenomenology, semi-structured interviews, and data coding. Chapter 4 presented and summarized data generated by the

study design in alignment with the study's research question. This final chapter will summarize the findings related to the research purpose and the reviewed literature. Chapter content will also discuss the conclusions and implications of the study for practice, leadership for the advancement of learning and service, and research.

Summary of Major Findings

Four major themes emerged from the data analysis of the 11 interviews collected. These four themes were (a) a focus on relationships, (b) service orientation, (c) identity, and (d) emotional labor. When considered as a whole, these themes reflect the tendency of female academic library directors to engage in communally-oriented leadership. This aligns strongly with the existing literature, demonstrating that women tend to engage communally rather than agentically in the workplace (Neelim, 2023). While this offers career satisfaction to these female leaders, it also puts them in the conflicting position of being expected to align with the agentic ideal leader paradigm on a university-wide level while being rewarded for behaving communally on a library level. The following section will explore these findings and conclusions in greater detail.

Conclusions Related to Research Purpose

Conclusions about a Focus on Relationships

The participants in this study frequently discussed building and maintaining relationships as a core component of being leaders. This aligns with the existing literature exploring gender differences in both the workplace and leadership practices. Past studies have shown that women tend to engage in more communal behavior and value relationships more than their male peers as well as preferring to collaborate rather than compete with colleagues (Croson & Gneezy, 2009; Filippin & Crosetto, 2016; Neelim,

2023; Niederle, 2017). In addition, women in library leadership roles who focus on relationship-building tended to have more success in their roles (L. B. Rutledge, 2020). Overall, the participants interviewed had experiences consistent with the existing literature about women in leadership roles and their tendencies to emphasize relationship building as part of those roles (Croson & Gneezy, 2009; Filippin & Crosetto, 2016; Madera et al., 2009; Misra et al., 2011; Neelim, 2023; Niederle, 2017).

Given the finding that the participants tended to emphasize relationship building and engage in more communal behavior as part of their leadership, they do not fit the mold of the ideal worker presented by Acker (1990). According to Acker (1990), the ideal worker takes a highly rational and analytical approach to the workplace and eliminates emotion and feelings. These women, in contrast, intentionally focus on building relationships with consideration of the needs and feelings of others. According to the ideal worker framework, women should experience negative workplace consequences for not conforming with the ideal worker mold. However, the participants gained significant benefits from relationship building. Relationships, particularly with peer library directors, offered vital development opportunities for the participants and a source of support. Many drew strong job satisfaction from their relationships with students, faculty, and staff. Participants also stated that their ability to build those relationships helped them fulfill their obligations as leaders and lead their staff more effectively. While not a traditionally rewarded trait in leaders, relationship-building skills played a critical role in the career satisfaction and success of the participants.

Even with the critical role that building relationships played in the participants' careers, many struggled to develop relationships with faculty and administrators outside

the library. This may be because while libraries are female-dominated workplaces, higher education has historically been male-dominated (Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Camp, 1997; Olsen et al., 1995; Windall, 1988). It also may be because librarians typically hold a master's degree and not a doctoral degree like their faculty peers and often do not teach credit-bearing courses. As such, non-conformity with the ideal worker paradigm is punished in higher education, unlike within the library. Despite this, participants seemed unwilling to change their focus on building relationships, given the value and fulfillment it offered them within the library and their professional community.

Conclusions about Service Orientation

The participants in this study placed a high level of importance as a leader on serving their staff, their academic community, and the profession as a whole. They were frequently involved in volunteering both on campus and with professional organizations. This aligns with prior research, which has indicated that women tend to behave more communally and engage in more volunteering in the workplace than their male counterparts (Neelim, 2023). This is true, particularly in higher education, where many studies have shown that women engage in more university service and mentoring than their male colleagues despite receiving no career benefits for doing so (Misra et al., 2011). Overall, participants found a deep level of satisfaction and felt they were better leaders due to their service.

Despite the value and satisfaction participants felt due to their service, like their previously discussed focus on relationships, this trait as a leader does not align with Acker's profile of the ideal worker. According to Acker (1990), service work is typically devalued, as the individuals in these roles are frequently assumed not to be able to fulfill

the demands of other roles and, thus, not fit the profile of the ideal worker (Hochschild, 1983). This was reflected in the fact that there was no career reward at the university level for the participants who engaged in service. Rather, service was engaged in for personal fulfillment and due to the participants' internal sense of obligation. Because of this, a key component of the participant's identity as a leader is not rewarded beyond personal satisfaction. This means that participants still felt pressure to meet traditional leadership expectations aligning with the ideal worker while continuing to serve their community and profession.

Conclusions about Identity

The participants in this study struggled with their identity as women, mothers, and librarians in relation to their leadership roles. In terms of their identity as a librarian, many participants felt a sense of loss after stepping away from their previous service-based roles and into an administrative position. This aligns with prior research indicating that women tend to behave more communally and are more likely to seek service-based careers than their male counterparts (Acker, 1990; Hochschild, 1983; Neelim, 2023). This loss is primarily due to the change in responsibilities in their new administrative role. As leaders now reporting to non-library administrators, the participants felt more pressure to align with the ideal worker paradigm and forgo service opportunities for more agentic responsibilities like budgeting and facilities.

In addition to losing their identity as a librarian, several participants discussed the difficulties they have had in balancing their home and work life. Most either did not become directors until their children had grown, did not have children, or had spouses who could take on caretaking responsibilities. Only one participant currently handled the

majority of childcare and home responsibilities. This aligns with the current literature, which indicates that women with caretaking responsibilities are less likely to advance in their careers (Armenti, 2004; Hardill & Watson, 2004).

Overall, most participants found that they had to compromise some of their identities to align with the ideal worker paradigm, particularly when transitioning from librarian to a leadership role. As librarians, many found meaning in service work and found that they engaged in far less of this work as leaders. In addition, almost every participant did not engage in traditional female caretaking roles, either having their spouse step into this role, waiting until their children were grown, or not having children at all. Some felt pressured by the higher education environment to act more masculine and embrace directness and other agentic characteristics, though this seemed to affect Millennial and Gen X directors more significantly than Baby Boomers. Given this, aligning their professional identities with the ideal worker was rewarded, as there was a notable absence of women within academic library leadership who chose not to embrace these traits.

Conclusions about Emotional Labor

The participants in this study all engaged in a high level of emotional labor as part of their leadership roles. This aligns with prior research, which indicates that women tend to shoulder the majority of emotional labor in the workplace (Erickson & Ritter, 2001; H.-A. M. Johnson & Spector, 2007). In addition, the participants remarked on the large amount of pressure this placed on them and the significant increase in their workload due to managing emotional labor. However, they persisted in managing this workload due to their sense of obligation towards their staff. This is consistent with the research indicating

that women are more communal than their male workplace counterparts (Hoover et al., 2019; Neelim, 2023; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 2002; Suh et al., 2004).

Overall, the participants' experiences with managing emotional labor as leaders indicate that women in leadership roles may experience demands beyond that of the ideal worker. In many ways, the participants felt the need to embody the traits of the ideal worker from their university and administration but also felt a seemingly contradictory internal pressure to engage in emotional labor and communal practices. Balancing these two conflicting demands is challenging, with many participants reporting behaving one way with staff, typically engaging in a large amount of emotional labor, and changing their behavior around administration to present in a more agentic way that more closely aligns with the ideal worker paradigm.

Notably, many participants stated that their female predecessors engaged in far less emotional labor. While the root cause of this trend is beyond the scope of this study, there may be a generational component to both the pressure to engage in emotional labor and the need to align with the ideal worker paradigm. Future researchers should investigate the interplay of age and alignment with the ideal worker to determine if the pressure to perform as an ideal worker has subsided over time. An overview of this study's findings and how they relate to Acker's (1990) ideal worker is included in Table 6.

Table 6

Findings Aligned with Characteristics of the Ideal Worker

Ideal Worker Characteristic	Study Results of Participants' Lived Experiences
Free from external responsibilities, particularly caretaking; available at all times and able to remain undistracted at work	Most participants did not advance into leadership until they no longer had caretaking responsibilities or could have their spouse handle caretaking.
Excels at independent problem-solving and decision-making	All had to engage in independent daily problem-solving and decision-making.
Does not distract other workers via sexuality or emotion	Some struggled with presenting as women and felt pressured to behave more masculinely.
Able to easily engage in the existing organizational culture	Most aligned with library culture.
Strong technical skills	All had to develop these skills, like budgeting and facilities management, due to moving into leadership.
Able to travel or relocate	Many relocated to obtain their current role.

Table 7

Findings Not Aligned with Characteristics of the Ideal Worker

Ideal Worker Characteristic	Study Results of Participants' Lived Experiences
Highly rational and analytical	All were focused on relationships and emotions and engaged in high levels of service work.
Able to set aside emotional considerations	All were focused on emotions and engaged in emotional labor.
Does not distract other workers via sexuality or emotion	All engaged in emotional labor.
Able to easily engage in the existing organizational culture	Most struggled to align with higher education culture.

Discussion of Implications

The findings of this study further inform fields of study and behavior associated with gender and leadership in academic libraries. Study findings have particular implications for practice and research as well as related leadership, learning, and service.

Implications for Leadership Practice

Overall, this study's findings demonstrate that female academic library leaders still face barriers in the workplace when advancing into and being seen as successful in leadership roles. While many participants' leadership styles did not naturally align with the ideal worker paradigm presented by Acker (1990), they still felt pressure from the university environment to present themselves as the ideal worker to the university administration while benefiting from engaging in more communal practices within the library. This conflict in which behaviors are rewarded in the library versus at the university level increased the workload and stress felt by these leaders. Ultimately, the gender of the participants seemed to significantly impact their experiences as leaders, as they felt pressured by their higher education environment to conform to both male and female norms. Female academic library leaders must be aware of these conflicting pressures and should take care not to overwork themselves or burn themselves out trying to meet these conflicting expectations.

Conversely, higher education leaders should be mindful of the unique ecosystem they are overseeing when supervising the library and library director. While higher education appears to remain governed by the ideal worker model, administrators should remain aware of the pressure this places on library directors operating in two ecosystems: male-dominated higher education and female-dominated library science. By remaining

aware of these conflicting expectations, administrators can provide support for library directors beyond holding them to the existing status quo in higher education. Despite these challenges, I hope this work will inspire more women to seek and remain in leadership roles in academic libraries and the library field as a whole.

Implications for Research

Overall, this research utilized a small sample size to investigate a narrowly selected group of female library leaders. The findings of this study would significantly benefit from replication, both with the same and an expanded population. In addition, this study offered new insight into Acker's (1990) theory of the ideal worker in the unique ecosystem of academic libraries. While the ideal worker may not be the expectation at a library level, the paradigm is undoubtedly still present at a higher education level. This places academic library directors in unique positions where they are pulled in multiple directions and rewarded for possessing both agentic and communal qualities, typically viewed as being at odds with one another. This unique dynamic that occurs within academic libraries offers ample opportunity for future study and expansion.

Future Research

Overall, there are several areas for improvement upon this study. It would be highly beneficial to duplicate this study with male and non-binary library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. to compare the findings. Finally, expanding this study to include additional subjects would help verify that the findings and conclusions apply to a larger sample of the population.

In addition to opportunities for improvement, this study offers several opportunities for future research. Future researchers should consider duplication of this

study with populations outside of medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. This could include both private and public universities of various sizes in various countries, as well as public, school, and special libraries. In addition, this study briefly touched on generational differences in the impact of gender on female academic library director's leadership. Those in the Millennial and Gen X generations appeared to feel a stronger impact on how they were perceived based on their gender and particularly commented on how both their age and gender affected how they presented themselves and felt they were perceived on a university level. While this differed from the research goals of this study, it offers an important insight into which future research should delve. Other researchers may consider the examination of other female-dominated fields and how the gender of women affects their leadership in those fields. Finally, there is the opportunity for a comparison of the leadership of women in female-dominated and non-female-dominated fields. All of these topics offer the opportunity for additional insight into gender and its effect on leadership in the workplace.

Conclusion

In summary, this study explored how the gender of female library directors at medium nonprofit private universities and colleges in the U.S. affected their leadership. The study engaged a phenomenological design via semi-structured interviews to elicit the lived experiences of the participants. The resulting interview transcripts were coded, and four major themes emerged: relationships, service orientation, identity, and emotional labor. The major conclusion of this study based on these themes was that female leaders engage in communal leadership due to their gender. Further, despite this being their natural leadership style, participants still felt pressured to align with Acker's (1990)

concept of the ideal worker when engaging with administration and on a university-wide level. Overall, this study offers ample opportunity for expansion, and future research should continue to explore female leadership in higher education, in various types of libraries, and across both female-dominated and non-female-dominated industries.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your career in librarianship and how it led you to become a director.

2. What is it like being a female director in higher education?

3. How do you grow professionally as a director?

4. Are there any experiences you'd like to address that we haven't had the chance to discuss?

APPENDIX B

RESULTS OF JOB POSTING REVIEW

Position	Institution	DEI	Race or Culture	Gender	Posted
Director of Library University Librarian	John Carroll University	Yes	Yes	Yes	2-Mar-23
Director of the Library	Purchase College	Yes	Yes	Yes	6-Feb-23
Director of Library and Research Services	Olivet College	Yes	Yes	No	27-Feb-23
Library Director	Texas A&M International University	Yes	Yes	Yes	15-Feb-23
Director of Library Services	Southern Connecticut State University	Yes	Yes	Yes	13-Feb-23
Director of the Bowdoin College Library	Bowdoin College	Yes	Yes	Yes	6-Feb-23
Director of Library Services	South Dakota School Mines	Yes	Yes	Yes	22-Feb-23
Library Director	Fort Lewis College, John F. Reed Library	Yes	Yes	No	15-Feb-23
Dean of the Library	University of Massachusetts Dartmouth	Yes	Yes	Yes	3-Feb-23
Dean of the Libraries	Tulane University	Yes	Yes	Yes	3-Feb-23

Assistant Vice President and Dean of the KSU Library System and Librarian Professor of Library Science	Kennesaw State University	Yes	Yes	Yes	1-Mar-23
Dean, Library	Regis University	Yes	Yes	No	24-Feb-23
Dean of MSU Libraries	Michigan State University	Yes	Yes	Yes	28-Feb-23
Dean of University Libraries and School of Information Sciences	Wayne State University	Yes	No	No	15-Feb-23
Dean of Library	University of South Carolina Aiken	Yes	Yes	Yes	21-Feb-23
Dean of Western Libraries	Western Washington University	Yes	Yes	No	17-Feb-23
Dean of the Libraries	Tulane University	Yes	Yes	Yes	3-Feb-23

APPENDIX C

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Call for Participants

An Examination of Factors Impacting Female Academic Library Director's Development and Career Success in the United States

Dear ******,

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine factors impacting female academic library directors' development and career success in the United States. We are recruiting current female U.S. academic library directors.

This study is being conducted by Julia Davis, MLIS, MSOL under the supervision of Melanie Croft, EdD. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign an informed consent agreement and participate in a one-hour interview discussing your career, professional experiences, and professional development.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain anonymous.

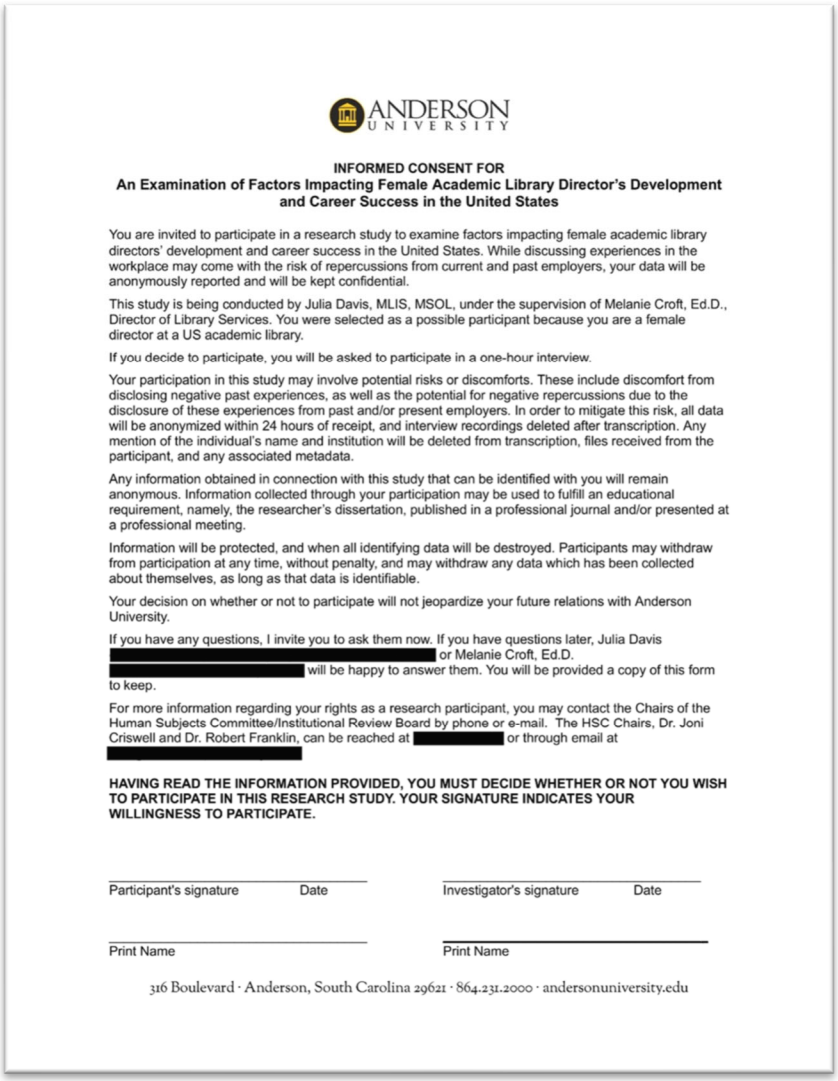
If you have any questions Julia Davis or Dr. Melanie Croft will be happy to answer them.

Thank you again for considering this research opportunity.

Julia Davis MLIS, MSOL

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM



ANDERSON UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FOR
An Examination of Factors Impacting Female Academic Library Director's Development and Career Success in the United States

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine factors impacting female academic library directors' development and career success in the United States. While discussing experiences in the workplace may come with the risk of repercussions from current and past employers, your data will be anonymously reported and will be kept confidential.

This study is being conducted by Julia Davis, MLIS, MSOL, under the supervision of Melanie Croft, Ed.D., Director of Library Services. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a female director at a US academic library.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one-hour interview.

Your participation in this study may involve potential risks or discomforts. These include discomfort from disclosing negative past experiences, as well as the potential for negative repercussions due to the disclosure of these experiences from past and/or present employers. In order to mitigate this risk, all data will be anonymized within 24 hours of receipt, and interview recordings deleted after transcription. Any mention of the individual's name and institution will be deleted from transcription, files received from the participant, and any associated metadata.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain anonymous. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, namely, the researcher's dissertation, published in a professional journal and/or presented at a professional meeting.

Information will be protected, and when all identifying data will be destroyed. Participants may withdraw from participation at any time, without penalty, and may withdraw any data which has been collected about themselves, as long as that data is identifiable.

Your decision on whether or not to participate will not jeopardize your future relations with Anderson University.

If you have any questions, I invite you to ask them now. If you have questions later, Julia Davis [redacted] or Melanie Croft, Ed.D. [redacted] will be happy to answer them. You will be provided a copy of this form to keep.

For more information regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chairs of the Human Subjects Committee/Institutional Review Board by phone or e-mail. The HSC Chairs, Dr. Joni Criswell and Dr. Robert Franklin, can be reached at [redacted] or through email at [redacted]

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant's signature Date	Investigator's signature Date
Print Name	Print Name

316 Boulevard · Anderson, South Carolina 29621 · 864.231.2000 · andersonuniversity.edu

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL

Anderson University
Human Subjects Committee (HSC)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

To: Julia Davis

Proposal Number and Title: AU2023-0155 An Examination of Factors Impacting Female Academic Library Director's Development and Career Success in the United States

Date: 4/11/2023

The Human Subjects Committee (HSC) received the above-titled research proposal. The following committee members reviewed the proposal: Dr. Kim Whitehead, Robert Franklin. The HSC decision is indicated below:

__x__ **Approved via Expedited Review**. The study may be conducted during the timeframe outlined in the proposal. Should you find it necessary to make any adjustments to the study as approved, please contact the HSC/IRB Chair in advance of implementing such changes.

If you need clarification regarding the committee's decision, please contact Dr. Robert Franklin, Chair at [redacted]

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Dr. Robert G. Franklin, Jr
Chair, Human Subjects Committee

APPENDIX F

IRB MODIFICATION APPROVAL

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY

knowledge for your journey

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Dear Julia O. Davis,

After a thorough review of your submitted IRB Modification form on the topic, "An Examination of Factors Impacting Female Academic Library Director's Development and Career Success in the United States", I am pleased to inform you that your request has been approved, and your research can continue. Your new IRB protocol number is AU2023DSIRB.

Please be reminded that if at any point during the research, the risk level to any human subjects involved changes significantly, you will be required to submit another IRB Modification form.

We wish you well in your research.

[redacted]

Gilbert Eyabi, PhD
Professor of Mathematics
Assistant Provost
IRB Chair

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