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Motivations for Women in STEM Pursuing Higher Education

Karin Moore
Pepperdine University

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Women Police Chiefs: A Self-perception of Women Officers in Law Enforcement

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Motivations for Women in STEM Pursuing Higher Education

Karin K. Moore
Pepperdine University & Greenside Consulting

Introduction

Many professional women who have majored in STEM-related undergraduate degrees contemplate continuing their education to further their careers or to reach a higher level of self-actualization. This research will discuss, by learning from those who have, whether it is worth the time and effort for women to create space in their lives to pursue higher education. A quick search in higher education libraries returns over 500,000 scholarly sources (over a 10-year span) on the topic of “advantages of graduate degrees”. It is the aspiration of this study to provide data on the merits of such pursuit.

Aim

- This presentation will discuss the pros and cons for continuing education, leveraging available public data as well by analysing interview data of women who have pursued their advanced degrees.
- The attendees will be exposed to the expectations of a graduate student – from time commitments to rewards (both intrinsic and financial)
- By the end of the presentation, the attendees should have additional clarity if this is a path they would like to pursue in the near term, long term, or ever.

Materials and Methods

The analysis behind this presentation is built on research from available public data. It is complemented with Qualitative research from a population of 10-15 STEM women who have pursued graduate degrees and their experiences and learnings. Levering Malcolm Knowles’ Adult Learning Theory, this study will follow the five principles (Knowles, 1978):

1. Self-concept. An adult will often not need to be reminded to learn or need to be convinced the importance of learning, and hounded to do their homework. They like to choose how they learn, be it the tools they use or the timing of when they learn. Adults wish to be the master of their destiny when it comes to learning.
2. Learner experience. Adults bring forward a set of experiences that can be integrated into their learning. They must not ignore their backgrounds and abilities. Instead, it is best to build off them. It is critical to acknowledge these experiences as the curriculum is built. These are what are referred to as "lived experiences."

3. Readiness to learn. Adults want to learn things that will help them do more, be more, and be more relevant. As such, it is imperative to build in the “what's in it for me?” upfront.
4. Orientation to learning. Adult learners typically will build upon their knowledge with tangible new skills versus picking up subject knowledge. The goal for an adult learner is to build additional problem-solving skills.
5. Motivation to learn. Adults are looking for internal motivations to learn. They are less concerned about external motivations. Personal growth, self-actualization, and enlightenment are adult learning goals.

Women Police Chiefs: A Self-perception of Women Officers in Law Enforcement

Jesse Llamas
Pepperdine University

This paper focuses on the self-perception that U.S. women police chiefs have on their female officers. The researcher dives into the many challenges and strategies to overcome those challenges that women police officers have in their career advancement. The researcher uses a phenomenological approach and qualitative theory to gather data through direct observations and interviews from a sample size of six women police chiefs to establish similarities and differences (Corbin et al., 2014). The literature review provided that women face multiple barriers in their career growth and have a negative perception of having to outperform their male counterparts (Chu, 2013; Haarr & Morash, 2013). The study found that women officers face many challenges, such as overcoming internet stigmas, shortness of women role models, and external factors. Also, the study found that women officers are very sought after in law enforcement recruitment because of their soft skills, problem-solving skills, and their ability to help with police-community relations. While conducting this research, a few questions arose that were left unanswered, such as what changes in law enforcement help to increase the number of females in leadership positions.

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Police Officer De-escalation Ability: A Case of Nature Vs. Nurture.

Michael Llamas
Pepperdine University

This paper examines the perceptions that U.S. Police Chiefs and Sheriffs have on female officers in their de-escalation strategies and techniques. In addition to the self-perceptions, this study builds on existing multi-disciplinary systematic literature that finds female officers are more likely to avoid physical force and use de-escalation tactics such as communication instead (Deveau, 2021), and how female officers use certain tactics more often than other officers (White et al., 2019). This paper employs a phenomenological approach with grounded qualitative theory. The study examined the perspectives of police chiefs and sheriffs from different regions in the U.S. and what they believe to be the strategies and techniques of female police officers in de-escalation situations. The research study has a sample size of 17. The phenomenological approach is conducted to collect data through direct observations and interviews. The findings indicate that police leaders believe that female officers have a better ability in de-escalation situations due to their emotional intelligence, empathy, and caring demeanor. Future research can be conducted to show what other factors go into de-escalation, such as having a mental health professional present, the citizen's perspective in a de-escalation encounter, the education, and years of de-escalation training that the officer has.

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