Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE MAJOR SUPPORTING MECHANISMS FOR SUCCESSFUL SINGLE WORKING

MOTHERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

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June Schmieder-Ramirez, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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DEDICATION

To those who sustained, loved and SUPPORTED me through this seemingly eternal educational pursuit, I dedicate this dissertation to you. God, you brought me to it and you certainly brought me through it! Mom, words cannot describe how much "behind the scenes" work you did to make this possible. Dr. Mesfin Mengesha - my soulmate, my love, timing is everything…and so are you! Brandon, thank you for being patient while I hogged Mom – Love you! Tyler and Kami – little loves of my life. You helped me find my purpose and made my topic "real" in so many ways. Naomi – our tie that binds; you made sure I birthed you BEFORE the dissertation. Justen – I had to give you more to aspire to. I'll be waiting to hood you one day. Dr. Julie Manz – My unwavering friend, you heard more about single mothers than anyone ever should. Dr. Adrian Manz – You explained the doctoral process in ways that only you could. Dr. Kimberly Skeens – You supported me emotionally, and taught me how to be "like a dog on a bone." The Group – I love you all! You helped me grow in ways I never knew existed. Dr. Tom Whitney – for being the first Ph.D. in my life and for rooting me on.

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GRANT PROPOSALS FUNDED

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ABSTRACT

Single mothers are commonly characterized as low-income welfare recipients. In 2010, close to

30% of single mother households were below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a)

conversely leaving 70% of single mothers above the poverty line. Being a married working

mother is challenging and comes with the need of several supports. With the growing divorce

rate and the introduction of women choosing to become single mothers, the numbers of single

working mothers are growing rapidly. In order to be a successful single mother certain factors

need to be accounted for. This study focused on single mothers who are in high profile

professional positions and looked at what supports it took; both internally and externally, to

sustain their situations. Some highly regarded, prestigious positions that fell into this category

include, but are not limited to, school administrators, writers/authors, successful entrepreneurs,

attorneys, doctors, professors, upper level managers/supervisors, and executive directors. Also,

this study looked at character traits of the identified mothers to see if there was an inner

predisposition that positions them to be able to thrive in difficult situations. The findings suggest

that in order for single mothers to succeed they need to establish a strong support network, have

a flexible career and demonstrate strong leadership skills ranging from a Lazier Fair approach to

a transformative one with a strong mentoring influence and affinity.

The results from this study indicate that this population identified as resilient, passionate,

and focused about their professional and personal lives. These single mothers are motivated by a

high level of passion for both their work, and parenting their children, including providing a

comfortable lifestyle and rich involvement in their children's lives. Their use of support varied

and formed a naturally occurring continuum spanning from "no support", to "support is

essential". This population reported their relational style either increased or decreased in their

willingness to seek out and accept assistance from others. In leadership style, this group of

single mother professionals scored extremely high in having tendencies towards

Transformational leadership and surprisingly, even higher in having tendencies towards Laissez-

faire leadership.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In industrialized countries, single mothers who are caring for dependent children are increasing in proportion of the population. In all of the industrialized countries, single mothers outnumber single fathers. Typically, the role of single motherhood is categorized by poverty and in most cases, dependent on state benefits. However, there are women who break the mold and excel as a worker and as a mother. These women attain above average income and leadership roles at their place of employment or in their own self-employed business (Duncan & Edwards, 2013). This study intended to elucidate the factors and support mechanisms that were in place for these women to break-through the status quo.

Stay-at-home mothers report that being a mother is a full time job. On the other hand, working mothers report that they desire to be able to stay at home with their children but realize the necessity to contribute financially to the family. Many families experience the necessity of having a two-parent working household. In two-parent households where both parents work, outside help is often necessary to support the infrastructure; this help may be daycare, after school care, hiring a nanny or babysitter, or relying on family, friends, or neighbors to fill the gap when both parents are unavailable due to work schedules. The problem for single working mothers is even more intense as often times there is little to no division of labor with the other parent. By default, being a single mother and having to work is almost always unavoidable. Public perception of working single mothers is that it is always a struggle. The perception is that these mothers are living in poverty, barely making it, working in low paying jobs and struggling to keep their households afloat (Dodson, Freeman, & Sattar, 2012; Duncan & Edwards, 2013;

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Noble, Eby, Lockwood, & Allen, 2004; O'Neil & Hill, 2003; Son & Bauer, 2010; Walz, Knowdell, & Kirman, 2002).

This study intended to look at the other side of being a working single mother. It focused on single mothers who are in high profile professional positions and looked at what supports it took; both internally and externally, to sustain their situations. Some highly regarded, prestigious positions that fell into this category include, but are not limited to, school administrators, writers/authors, successful entrepreneurs, attorneys, doctors, professors, upper level managers/supervisors, and executive directors. Also, this study looked at character traits of the identified mothers to see if there was an inner predisposition that positions them to be able to thrive in difficult situations.

Background of the Problem

Perceptions of single mothers as impoverished, struggling, and depressed not only dominate popular thought, but also are well documented in the literature (Duncan & Edwards, 2013; Noble et al., 2004; O'Neil & Hill, 2003; Walz et al., 2002). In spite of popular perceptions, many people have sympathy for single mothers (Burke, Sugawara, & Katsurada, 1996). When single mothers speak of their situations to non-single mothers, a common response is, *awe that must be so hard* (Burke et al., 1996). Most single mothers will state that the job indeed is difficult, however, the common perception of poverty, struggle and doom is not the reality for a large number of single mothers (Duncan & Edwards, 2013).

Recent statistics. In the 1960s a majority of children were born into two parent homes and the majority of couples stayed married (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984). In the 1980s marriage and family were the cornerstone of the American

lifestyle (Popenoe, 1993) as evidenced by "over 90 percent of women and 85 percent of men over the age of 30 [having] been married at least once" (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 1). Over time, the sanctity of marriage weakened from 40.5 in 1000 marriages ending in divorce in the late 1960s to 2011 statistics of 877,000 marriages ending in divorce or annulment (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Simultaneously the numbers of children being born out of wedlock rose from 5% in 1960 to 24% in 1990 (Popenoe, 1993). In 2010, close to 30% of single mother households were below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b) conversely leaving 70% of single mothers above the poverty line. In the 2010 US census, it was found that there were a total of 11,686,000 families headed by single parents, of those, 84.9% were headed by single mothers, totaling 9,924,000 households.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010b), 64% of single-mother-headed households were above the poverty line, earning at least $30,000 a year or more. Of the 9,924,000 single mothers in the United States, 2,514,000 earned over $50,000 annually (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2010). These statistics indicated an interesting dichotomy among single mothers. There are single mothers who have found themselves to be in that position as a result of divorce, abandonment, or death. There was also a newer sub-population of single mothers who elected that role by choice. These single mothers decided to move forward with having children, but without finding a suitable life partner.

For the purpose of this study, single mothers were sorted into three different categories, by *chance*, by *choice,* and *cohabiting*. Single mothers by chance were those who did not purposefully end up as single, but were single either because of divorce, death, or a severed

relationship (Stonesifer, 1994). Some by chance single mothers transpired as single mothers as a result of a relationship never materializing.

Single mothers by choice were those who consciously chose, before conception, to have a baby alone and without a partner. Single mothers living in cohabiting relationships are a third category, where a single mother was either cohabiting with the child's biological parent or by a non-biological parent and that parent was contributing to the financial household where the child and mother lived. Single mothers by choice and those cohabiting were not the focus of this study as they have different dynamics than single mothers by chance, and were filtered out by the participant criteria. Cohabiting and by choice single mothers were, however, included as reference points throughout the study, as they helped paint a more complete picture of the situation. The mothers who became single by chance, as defined above, were the focus of this study and were further sorted into two sets of major categories - newly single mothers versus established single mothers, struggling single mothers, versus high profile single mothers. The results of this study were categorized according to the preceding categories.

Single mothers in the media. In American literature and media single mothers are often portrayed as constantly challenged, devoid of resources, emotionally unstable, strong willed and usually poor (Esan, 2012). There are countless examples of the difficulties and poverty that ensue as a result of being a single mother. Popular opinion often mimics these same sentiments.

Traditional viewpoint. Hester Prynne from the classic novel, *Scarlet Letter,* became an outcast for being pregnant outside of the sanctity of marriage (Harding, 1998). Jenny from the movie *Forrest Gump* struggled as a single mother as a result of her decision to not tell Forrest of the child he fathered until much later; when she allowed him to play a role in her life and that of

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the child, they were in essence saved (Zemeckis, Groom, & Roth, 1994). Annie Johnson from the *Imitation of Life* was portrayed as a homeless woman hanging out on the beach with her child scouring for work as a domestic to provide shelter for her child. On the television show *Alice,* the single mother showcased was a hard working waitress, Alice Hyatt. Alice was newly widowed, working in Mel's Diner to support her son while waiting on her big break as an actress. Ann Romano from *One Day at a Time* was recently divorced and was beginning her new life with her teenage daughters and the help of the apartment building superintendent Schneider (Tripper, 2012). Even the title, *One Day at a Time*, suggests living moment to moment with uncertainty. All of these media sources depict the orientation of deficit thinking regarding single mothers either representing or shaping the view of the populous.

  Changing viewpoint. Angela from *Who's the Boss,* which aired on ABC from 1984 to 1992, and the titular character from *Murphy Brown,* which aired on CBS from 1988 to 1998, represent professionally achieving single mothers, which was the focus of this study. The decision of Murphy Brown to become a single parent by choice created a huge controversy in its time. It was unheard of for a well-educated woman with a high profile career to consciously choose to become a single parent, a category previously reserved for those who were impoverished. Likewise, Angela, a single mother in a high profile position, was able to afford a live-in *manny (*a male version of a nanny). This situation was also outside of what was typically believed of single mothers challenging social norms. "Mannies perform the same child care duties and must meet the same expectations as their female nanny counterparts, with the only difference being gender" (McClure, n. d., para.1).

Online media. In terms of virtual support, well-established blogs and social networking sites that deal with the issues facing single mothers, offer advice on specific single mother concerns, such as dating, custody, organizing, and more. The focus is on the challenges, adding to the perception that single mothers as a population live in constant struggle and overall poverty. Although programs designed to help single mothers exist, they tend to have a narrow range in scope. Most existing programs focus on finances and employment assistance. The available programs are often designed to fulfill a gap in immediate needs, not on developing potential, building upon strengths, teaching self-sufficiency, or attaining self-actualization.

A focus on empowerment for this group has been slow to emerge. Studying women who are thriving as single mothers and who are in high profile professional positions began to uncover the determining factors that aided in their success. It is hoped that this new information will bring about a positive ripple effect among this traditionally at-risk category. With the numbers of single mothers rising to new heights, a paradigm shift in reference to this population to positive thinking could only add to the greater good (Dowd, 1997).

Single Mothers by Choice, an organization founded in 1981 has been working towards improving the image of single mothers, yet makes it clear that their group is comprised of a different type of single mother (Engber, 2011). According to Engber, the members of Single Mothers by Choice are not divorcees, widows, or mothers who might struggle with common single mother issues, by self-definition, they are affluent, college educated, stable women who are single and choose to have babies by themselves through various methods and are not victim to many of the negative characteristics and experiences of traditional single mothers. The Single

Mothers by Choice website highlights literature and hosts discussion forums that are of particular interest to this group.

Becoming a mother naturally highlights innate strengths and capabilities. Shifting the focus to assisting single mothers by recognizing and focusing on strengths and skills can change the perception of an entire growing population that has been traditionally viewed as deficient. By examining internal and external supports available to high profile single mothers, through sharing and training, these supports could assist newly single mothers on the journey with which many have struggled. When observing the innate strengths and capabilities of mothers in support groups, in networking groups, and at the playgrounds, a certain skill-set often arises synonymous with traits seen in professionals in the workplace. If our social services/supports focused more on developing these traits, the public perception and deficit based thinking towards single mothers could change.

Exploring the traits of high profile single mothers gave insight into what traits and supports could be developed in those that are hopeful of a better situation. This exploration could be thought of as an uncovering of secrets. How do some women emerge as successful in spite of parenting alone? What supports are in place to aid in their success and what are the essential elements that lead towards their success?

Purpose of the Study

This study had the objective of exploring how high profile women professionals maintained or achieved successful high profile careers in spite of the traditional confines that being a single parent carried. The exploration was designed to determine what support factors led to these women overcoming situations that usually tended to lead to poverty. The hope was

to find what significant relationship(s), pivotal moments, supports, and character strengths led them towards being leaders. It was presumed that, if these properties were identified in these women, it might be possible to provide structure and training for other single parents to help eliminate the trend towards poverty within the single mother population.

This study explored the experiences of mothers in high profile professional positions. Methodologies from phenomenology and/or possibly ethnography were utilized. This was a qualitative study designed to look at the lived experience of high profile single mothers and it sought to explain how they were able to achieve professionally while being single parents. The use of ethnography came in while examining the cultural commonalities of the participants.

After identifying women who were single mothers in high profile professional positions, through interviews the key supports and/or significant relationships that led towards their success or sustained their successes achieved before becoming single parents were identified, then the results were organized in an inspirational and useful way to assist organizations that work with single mothers as well as individual single mothers seeking self-help motivational techniques to move into a better personal and financial situation. The results gleaned from this study contributed to the body of existing literature on single mothers and single parents but were focused on the positive traits of single mothers. The results from this study could have an impact on the perceptions of single mothers and can be used to advocate for change in the way they are serviced. This exploration helped identify character traits of single mothers in high profile professional positions who exceled professionally in spite of living a reality full of challenge.

Research Questions

This study was designed to solve an over-arching question; what support mechanisms do single mothers in high profile professional positions use to create and sustain success? To answer this question, the following five research questions were used:

1. How do single mothers identify themselves?

2. What motivations drive single mothers in high profile positions?

3. What supports do single mothers use to adapt to their personal and professional roles?

4. What relational styles do single mothers in high profile positions possess?

5. What is the leadership style of single mothers?

Questions 1 and 2 illuminated external supports that single mothers rely on for operational success at work and home. Question 3 illuminated the internal support structure and character traits that drove this success. Question 4 yielded varied results. Question 5 highlighted the leadership styles of the participants. These questions had an assets based orientation, which allowed stakeholders to view single mothers from a position of competence and strength.

Significance of the Study

This study looked at the experiences of single mothers in high-profile professional positions, and made a contribution to the existing literature on single mothers.   In addition, this study added to the literature of women studies, by providing a description of the phenomenon that has led women to their achievements, which transcended traditional expectations for single mothers. All women interviewed had socially desired professional accomplishments to their credit.

This information was intended to support and enhance the experiences of the category of newly single mothers as well as future generations of single mothers, so that their situations might not be a sentence to poverty as it often had been historically recorded. The findings derived from this research were intended to provide significant information that could create greater awareness of how single mothers can have more empowered experiences and attain professional achievements, while honoring their innate character strengths.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms and definitions were used in this research study.

Absent parent. A biological parent who may or may not have a percentage of custody or established visitation rights that is absent from the child's life by choice or due to circumstances which remove him/her from the child's life, such as military deployment or incarceration.

Child visitation. "A plan for how the parents will share time with their children" (Los Angeles Superior Court, n. d., para. 4).

Co-parenting. Both parents sharing in the responsibility and decision making of raising a child despite the ending of or the non-development of a relationship between the two parents.

Court order. A legal document that establishes physical custody, legal custody, and other necessary arrangements regarding the welfare of the children. If there is no court order in place, either parent has a legal right to the child. Without a court order, the person with custody at the time is the presiding custodial parent.

Custodial parent. The parent with whom the child or children reside a majority of the time.

External criteria of support. Support coming from outside of the single mother. These supports can range from job supports, employment perks such as a Results Only Work Environment (ROWE) and flextime among others, paid support systems, social support systems, support groups, financial supports, incentives, discounts, social services, and so forth.

High profile professional position. A position that is highly regarded in today's society bringing about prestige in most social circles; including, but not limited to school administrators, writers/authors, successful entrepreneurs, attorneys, doctors, professors, upper level managers/supervisors, and executive directors.

High profile single mother. A high profile single is a single mother who manages to be the primary caretaker of her children as well as holding a high profile professional position.

Internal criteria of support. Traits within the person that supports one through difficult times.

Legal custody. A legal term identifying the parent(s) who can make legal decisions about the child's welfare including medical and educational decisions. It is typical for parents to share 50/50 legal custody (Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 2012).

Paid support systems/caregiver. After school programs, daycare providers, babysitters, nannies, day camps, and other paid systems that provide childcare when single mothers cannot be with their children, or need a break from caretaking, or provide other services that assist the single mother in completing the necessary tasks of maintaining a family (concierge services, personal assistants, administrative assistants).

Physical custody. A legal term referring to actual placement of the child by time usually expressed as a percentage. Two common custody arrangements are 85/15, which is colloquially

referred to as every-other weekend when children spend a majority of their time with the

custodial parent (generally the mother) and every other weekend with the non-custodial parent

and 50/50 where the child spends one or two weeks with one parent then switches (Los Angeles

Superior Court, n. d.). A newer method of implementing 50/50 custody that allows more

frequent contact with each parent is termed 5/5/2/2. This arrangement is commonly used in

situations involving young children. The child spends five days with the first parent, then five

with the second parent, then two with the first parent, then two days with the second parent, and

then the cycle repeats. It seems confusing, but it allows for two days during the week to always

be consistent with each parent and weekends alternate. For example, the children might always

be with dad on Mondays and Tuesdays and with mom on Wednesdays and Thursdays. In this

example each parent would have the child two weekends out of the month.

Primary caretaker. The parent who does the majority of the hands-on parenting with the

child/children. This is usually the parent with the greater part or all of the physical custody.

Significant moments/pivotal experience. A specific occurrence that was the impetus for

changing one's thinking in a concrete identifiable way.

Single mother. A mother who is raising or has raised a child or children outside of

marriage either by choice or by chance (Engber, 2011). Public perceptions of single mothers are

often negative portraying the entire population to be a drain on society. Single mothers are often

thought of as being "poor, welfare-dependent, and frequently minority women who lack

adequate education, employment skills, and the motivation to acquire them" (Haleman, 2004, p.

770). A plethora of works refer to the negativities associated with single mothering (Biblarz &

Gottainer, 2000; Debell, Yi, & Hartmann, 1997; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Haleman, 2004; May-Stewart, 2000)

Single mother by choice. Women who purposefully have a child outside of marriage by choice either through donor or adoption. This unique population is generally over 30 years old, mostly college educated and do not deal with issues of custody and child support. Single mothers by choice are described as "non-adolescent women raising children from birth without a male partner" (Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995, p. 29)

Single parent. "Also called - solo parent - a person who has a dependent child or dependent children and who is widowed, divorced, (or) unmarried" ("Single Parent", n. d., para. 1) or abandoned. *Single parent* is a term that is mostly used to suggest that one parent has most of the day-to-day responsibilities in the raising of the child or children ("Single Parent", n. d.). This person can be remarried, but has *parented* a child alone for a significant amount of time and understands from an insider's perspective what it is to live as a single mother. In this study, all parents will have parented singly for a minimum of 3 consecutive years.

Social support systems. Networks of unpaid support that single mothers come to rely on which includes friends, neighbors, family, and/or support group members.

Support. Assistance that a single mother might receive in a variety of forms ranging from but not limited to financial, emotional, childcare, or schedule flexibility.

Key Assumptions

The primary assumption of this study was that if self-motivated single mothers or organizations that work with single mothers are presented with success factors of single mothers who have attained professional achievement then those traits can be transferred (through possible

trainings, workshops, classes, support groups) to help decrease the negative statistics currently plaguing single mothers. Another assumption about the population was that the single mothers interviewed shared some similarities in their leadership styles and that they shared an innate drive to pursue their dreams. It was assumed that somewhere in their background or present, there existed a pivotal experience, or a positive role model, either a mother, father, teacher, supervisor, parental figure, grandparent or other family member encouraging their achievement in spite of their challenging situation. It was anticipated that the women to be interviewed were college graduates and beyond in order meet the qualifications for their professional positions, however, educational level was not a determinant of eligibility to participate in this study. It was also anticipated that single mother participants in this study were over the age of 30 in line with being in a professional position that might have taken time to establish. Another key assumption was that these women shared a natural resilient predisposition that could be explained and categorized by analyzing their leadership styles.

Limitations

This study was limited in that it focused on single mothers in high profile positions. If the focus had been on single mothers who held a steady job for a long period of time, other traits and trends might have emerged. Likewise if this study included single mothers in middle-income positions there might have been findings that could be more easily transferred to those starting from a lower income bracket. If the information was to be useful to all single mothers, including single mothers with stability, representing several different situations might have allowed for more single mothers to relate to the results. For example, a single mother on welfare

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might have related better to hearing the story of a single mother who was now achieving

professional success and who started her journey in the welfare system.

Additionally, the definition of a high profile professional position was broad in its scope

as a result, the women interviewed had a wide range of positions as well as salaries. There was

no information taken about current salary, however, the participant salaries in this study ranged

from several million to just under $100,000 annually. A more specific definition of high profile

professional position as well as parameters on salary could impact resulting data.

A temporal limitation of this study was that some participants were in the active stage of

parenting while others were reflecting back on what it was like to be a single parent. Both

positions gave valuable perspectives and depth to the experience, however it would be interesting

to see the two perspectives disaggregated. The two perspectives also seemed to focus on

support differently. Those actively parenting could speak clearly to the variety of different

strategies they need to utilize on a daily basis. Those reflecting back seemed to focus more on

what worked best in the end.

Summary

In this study a paradigm shift was proposed encouraging the thought that single mothers

were not solely a population filled with women in crisis, living below the poverty line, and

draining social resources. This group was much more than a group to be pitied. The research

proposed intended to shed light on a group of single mothers who had worked hard to parent

their children as well as obtain professional achievement. Their internal and external support

structure as well as their leadership styles were evaluated. The hope was that this study would

add a new perspective of single mothers to the body of literature and would assist organizations

that work with single mothers to incorporate an added perspective into the work that is done with this population.

This was a 5-chapter research study. Chapter 1 was the introduction which provided the context of the study, background of the plight of single mothers, the problem, the purpose of the study, basic statistics surrounding single mothers and single mothers in high profile positions, the research questions, significance, definitions of important terms used in the study, key assumptions and limitations. Chapter 2 took a comprehensive look at the literature that exists regarding the issues presented in the study. Chapter 3 provided the research design of the study, qualitative phenomenology. This chapter guided the actual research ensuring well thought out methods and results. The results of the research were presented in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 presented the actual research, results, and findings achieved from the study. Chapter 5 presented linkages between the hypotheses, the data collected, and resulting findings and conclusions from the study. The chapter further discussed the limitations of this study, and provided topics for further study and research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter was a review of the literature. It began with a discussion of the myriad of issues that needed to be addressed before a real understanding of the internal and external supports sustaining single mothers in high profile professional positions could be attained. The beginning of this discussion outlined America's historical orientation to family, changes to American families from the 20th to the 21st century; it examined what families of today look like in an attempt to show how families in America have evolved over time. The discussion progressed into a look at the history of single mothers, the public perception of them and the traditional supports that are available for this population. Next, a discussion of issues revolving around women and work transitioned into a discussion about women in leadership positions. Following this, a discussion ensued around support for working mothers as well as single mothers. In addition, the chapter discussed the intersection of the topics as they relate to single mothers in high profile professional positions. Finally, the chapter examined the characteristics of successful people and connected the ideas to make a clear case for the need to explore the research questions upon which this study was based utilizing the Life Course Framework (Elder & Giele, 2009).

Life Course Framework

Through the Life Course Framework, support mechanisms for single mothers in high profile positions were explored using the four themes: identity, relational style, drive and motivation, and adaptive style (Giele, 2008). The phenomenological approach coupled with the Life Course Framework used in this study allowed for an understanding of the participants' career experiences, need for support, leadership style, and their capability to attain a leadership

role. In addition, participants' perceptions of the factors leading to focusing on their career

goals, career history, family goals, strategies for balancing home and work, family expectations,

duality of roles, and professional and individual development undercurrents were analyzed.

The Evolution of the American Family

The traditional American family, often referred to as a nuclear family, consisted of a

mother in the role of the homemaker, a father who was the breadwinner (breadwinner is a

colloquial term defining the primary income earner in a household), and multiple children

(Elkind, 1995; Evans, R., 1998). The family offered safety and warmth in a collectivist

atmosphere where the good of the whole was placed before that of the individual (Elkind, 1995).

Traditionally most Americans married. Over the last half century, the decline of marriage can be

clearly seen quantitatively as well as in a shift in what American families look like (Coontz,

1997). In the 1960s, a majority of children in the United States were living in two-parent

households with the exceptions of those who lived in homes where one parent had died (Evans,

R., 1998; Evans, L., 2010; Ganong & Coleman, 1999). Between 1950 and 1980 the average age

of a woman at the time of her first marriage rose from 20.3 to 22.1 years old. "In 1980, over 90

percent of women and 85 percent of men over the age of 30 had been married at least once"

(U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 1). In the year 2000, the

age of women at the time of their first marriage rose even higher to 25.1 and then to 26.8 in 2010

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). By 2007, the median age for women at the time of a first marriage

was 25.6 and 27.5 for men (Wilcox, 2009). Fifty years from the baseline date of 1960, in 2010,

the total percentage of adults that were married dropped to 54.1% down from 57.3% in 2000; just

a decade prior to that (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). Previous research presents 1960 and 1980

as years that mark changes in American families (Popenoe, 1993; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a).

Popenoe notes that shocking changes to the family structure began in 1960. Likewise, the U.S.

Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses compares family data from 1960 and

1980 and shows marked differences indicating three major factors that changed families as they

were previously known: (a) a decline in marriage, (b) delays in childbearing, and (c) smaller

family size (Census Information Center, 2010).

Popenoe (1993) argues that families are not only changing, but are experiencing an

"unprecedented decline… as a social institution. Families have lost functions, social power, and

authority over their members. They have grown smaller in size, less stable, and shorter in life

span" (p. 528). Given this, Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie (2006) caution that, most of what is

known about changing family life is based either on small observational studies of unknown

generalizability, or on surveys that measure market work but provide relatively little information

on other spheres of life, such as family care giving and leisure activities.

So why are families said to be declining? According to Popenoe (1993),

It may be that societies are asking less of family members because functions the family

has traditionally carried out are no longer as important as they once were, because family

members are less motivated to carry out family functions, because other institutions have

taken over some of these functions. (p. 529)

Although Popenoe (1993) states that the rising divorce rates and the falling fertility rates

began before the 1960s, they have rapidly accelerated and decelerated respectively since 1960.

Regardless of the changing attitude towards marriage and divorce, while single, many women

still perceive that marriage at some point in their life brings about social acceptance and they continue to idealize marriage and the idea of child rearing (Sharp & Ganong, 2011).

In 1980, 92% of all women who had ever been married were mothers by age 40. At that time, if someone wanted children, marriage was seen as the proper avenue for making this dream a reality (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). In the 1980s, women began to delay marriage and childbearing as a result of pursuing education. Today, the numbers of women attending college finally surpassed the numbers of men thus delaying women's desires to have children during the college years. With more education leading to more employment opportunities, today's women are populating the work force in greater numbers. Simultaneously the birthrates among single women began to rise from 1.6% in the 1950s to 2.5% in the 1970s. In 1979, more births of African American children occurred outside of marriage than within (U.S. Bureau Of The Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984). "The higher a woman's educational attainment, the fewer births she has had or expects and the greater the likelihood that she plans to have no children" (p. 8). By 1980, women began expressing the desire to have fewer children than two decades before and some even expressed wanting to stay childless (Popenoe, 1993). As a result of new attitudes towards children, family size experienced a decline.

In addition to this major change to families, the structure of families also began changing. Whereas the nuclear family was typical and gender roles were clear, the changing times and sentiments brought about changing family structures and roles. No longer were men the sole financial providers and mothers the expected domestic caregivers for the home and children. Women began to step out into the workforce managing jobs as well as the home. According to studies, 79% of American adults believed that it was necessary to have dual earning households

and only about a quarter of the population desired a return to the old notion of one parent staying home to raise children (Coontz, 1997; Mass Mutual American Family Values Study, 1989; Popenoe, 1993). Consequently, as rates of women in the workplace rose, so did the rate of marital dissolution.

      The role of divorce. Rising divorce rates, lower fertility, and delays in first marriages altered the structure of American households (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984). In 1974, the balance shifted to divorce outweighing death as the ender of marriages involving children (Popenoe, 1993). At the beginning of the 20th century, the numbers of children living in a single parent home were extremely low. 2% of children in single parent homes were due to divorce and 3.4% were due to having parents who had never married (Gordon & McLanahan, 1991). In 1969, Ronald Reagan, in the capacity of California's governor, signed a no-fault divorce bill into law making divorce much easier to obtain (Wilcox, 2009). Several studies agree that as time progressed, divorce became more socially accepted as it became more prevalent in society (Heaton, 1990; Popenoe, 1993; Thornton, 1989). With time, between the changing laws and the social acceptability, the sentiment became that "Parents are freer to end a marriage – fully half of the nation's first-graders can now expect that before they graduate their parents will divorce" (Evans, R., 1998, p. 2). Simultaneously, the rise in the number of children being born out of wedlock rose drastically; increasing the number of single-parent households. In 1960, the rate for all births beginning without a marriage was 5%; by 1990 that number was an astounding 24%. Those numbers were dramatically higher for African American babies, 22% in 1960 and 62% in 1990 (Popenoe, 1993). According to Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura, (as cited in Romo & Segura, 2010) "compared to White women, out-of-

wedlock birth rates are highest for Latina women, followed by African American women" (p. 173). "The real force behind family change has been a profound change in people's attitudes about marriage and children" (Bane & Jargowsky, 1988, p. 246). As the American culture became more focused on developing the individual with more education and with greater career goals, thoughts of having large families and finding self-worth in the reflection of family life began to fade.

Modern families according to Elkind (1995) act as a hub for a flurry of activity, a place to utilize technology in isolation, and a place that centers on individuality. Possibly as a result of changing families, parenting styles that promote the individual are becoming more desired by those who do have children (Daly, 2000). "Parental authority has weakened appreciably and is now often at best mutual, a matter of constant renegotiation with children, even the very young" (Evans, R., 1998, p. 2).

Historically single motherhood came into existence for two major reasons. First, single motherhood occurred because of the death of a husband, leaving a wife to be a widow and second, due to divorce. Divorce had a rate of 34.5 in 1,000 in the 1860s and only rose to 40.5 in 1000 a century later in 1960. In these times, it would also be common for there to be a presence of the extended family helping to raise and care for the children. Divorce rates continued to rise until it was estimated that about half of the marriages taking place in the 1970s would eventually end in dissolution (Cherlin, 1981; U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984).

Despite rising divorce rates and lower first marriage rates, even in the 1980s marriage had not lost its position as the predominant form of living arrangements during at least some

period of a woman's life (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984).

Possibly, this was due to social conditioning of the time period. As women progressed, and were able to attain salaries that, in past years, had only been attained by men, there was less of a need to find comfort in the confines of marriage. With rising numbers of women being educated and working, the age of first marriages rose for women, as there was less of a need for women to be supported by a husband at an early age.

In more recent times, "the percentage of children under 18 living with two married parents declined to 66 percent in 2010, down from 69 percent in 2000" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, para. 2). "The percentage of households headed by married couples who had children under 18 living with them declined to 21 % in 2010, down from 24 % in 2000" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, para. 4). Fewer people are staying married and fewer people are having children.

Several studies attempt to show the long-term effects of divorce on children. One of the more positive studies found that "twenty years after parental divorce, most men and women who had grown up in divorced families and stepfamilies are functioning reasonably well" (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002, p. 253). Another study with mixed results found that:

> Adult children of parental divorce are suggested to have lower levels of sense of control due to partly their disadvantaged socioeconomic status, they may actually have higher levels of sense of control than those who grew up in two-parent families. (Kim & Woo, 2011, p. 1054)

Conversely, the families focused on in this proposed study are single parent families; yet, they are of high socioeconomic status. In this case, the socioeconomic status might outweigh the

family type in predicting sense of control, making it possible that the children focused on in this study may not suffer from a lack of sense of control (Kim & Woo, 2011).

The changing definition of family. In addition to the structure of families changing, the definition of family is evolving and can include single-parent families, stepfamilies, non-married and homosexual couples and all other family types in which dependents are involved (Popenoe, 1993). Some advocates for the changing definition of what a family is would like to include homosexual couples living together. The definition matters as it has weight on determining benefits such as housing, health care, and sick leave. Family is also a bit harder to define as cohabitation has become more popular. As divorce rates have risen and second marriage rates have declined, cohabitation rates have increased dramatically. Between 1960 and 2007 the number of cohabiting couples has risen from 439,000 to 6.4 million. It is estimated that 40% of American children will live in a cohabitation situation at some point in their youth and 20% of American babies will be born into a cohabiting family (Wilcox, 2009).

According to Raley, Frisco, and Wildsmith (2005), data from the National Survey of Families and Households indicated poor adjustments in children in cohabitation situations as opposed to those with remarried mothers or divorced single mothers. "And because cohabiting unions are much less stable than marriages, the vast majority of the children born to cohabiting couples will see their parents break up by the time they turn 15" (Wilcox, 2009, para. 12). Adult children from families that experienced divorce are 61% more likely to approve cohabiting and 47% more likely to be in a cohabiting relationship than those who grew up in intact families. Trends show that children raised by single mothers may result in lower education levels, yet Biblarz and Gottainer (2000) indicate that if extrapolation occurred around the various types of

single mother households and mother's education, the differences might be accounted for with these variables.

History of Single Mothers

As of 1980, "the composition of female family householders has changed in recent decades; as a group they are now younger, more often divorced or separated rather than widowed, and more often have young children present than was true in 1950" (Ross & Sawhill, 1975; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1955, 1981a, as cited in U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 11). "Whereas in 1950, a little over a third of female family householders had the responsibility of caring for dependent children, by 1980, almost two-thirds of female-maintained families included their own children under 18" (p. 11).

The Centers for Disease Control (2013) report a rise in the percentage of births to unwed mothers to 40% of all births in 2007 as opposed to 30% five years before. Many demographics make up single mothers, yet the perception of single mothers as a whole is usually quite negative and the research to date is mostly focused on issues of welfare, poverty, and struggles in relation to single mothers and poor achievement in children being raised by single mothers (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Debell et al., 1997; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Haleman, 2004; May-Stewart, 2000). Consequently, there is a need for more research reflecting the various types of single-mother, headed families.

In modern times a new group of single mothers is emerging; classified as single mothers by choice. These women consciously choose to have a baby without a partner by either adoption or a pregnancy with the assistance of a donor. In 2000, 33% of foster care children who were adopted were adopted by single parents (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

Single mothers by choice are described as "non-adolescent women raising children from birth without a male partner" (Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995, p. 29). Their stress level is often lower than that of traditional single mothers and their demographics are also different. These women are often college educated and beyond and are older at the time of having their first child. As a result, they go into this process alone, they do not struggle with many of the typical issues that are concerns to most single mothers. They do not deal with custody, visitation, or child support issues. Most do not have to struggle with financial stressors as they go into this willingly, usually when they have the financial means to do so. Although deciding to be a single parent by choice seems to be a relatively new concept, in fact, the organization Single Mother by Choice (SMC), celebrated its 30th anniversary in October 2011 (Engber, 2011). SMC has two major functions: helping women to decide if single parenting by choice is right for them and supporting them once they have joined the ranks of being single mothers by choice. In spite of this new category of single mothers, most women do not arrive at being single mothers by choice. The majority of single mothers become so by chance, meaning as a result of divorce, death of a spouse, or having a child out of wedlock.

As numerous studies exist examining the negative aspects of single mothers, there is a gap in the literature addressing single mothers who exhibit traits of success. In an effort to add to the body of literature that recognizes positive aspects of single mothers, this study focuses on single mothers by chance not living below the poverty line as popular belief characterizes single mothers. This study focused on single mothers by chance that were in high profile professional positions that were making a solid living and providing well for their child or children. There were numerous high profile women who experienced divorce and maintained successful careers

while mothering their children. There were also countless successful individuals who have been raised by single mothers due to divorce, abandonment, or death that were not doomed to a life of dropping out of school or prison dwelling (Chambers, 1997).

Perceptions of single mothers. "The phrase 'single mother' often conjures images of poor, welfare-dependent, and frequently minority women who lack adequate education, employment skills, and the motivation to acquire them" (Haleman, 2004, p. 770). A plethora of works refers to the negativities associated with single mothering (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Debell et al., 1997; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Haleman, 1999; May-Stewart, 2000). The danger here is that this conditioning to think of single mothers as impoverished and needy can affect the way this very population views itself (Haleman, 2004). In a study entitled "That's Not Who I Am": Contested Definitions of Single Motherhood, the researcher, looked at narratives from 10 single mothers who were post-secondary students as well as welfare recipients. In the study the women were presented with four historical classifications of single mothers: economic, radial, scientific, and moralistic. In the personal interviews the women's portrayals of themselves presented a much different view than the public perception portrayed them (Haleman, 1999).

Politician Mike Huckabee once said, "Most single moms are very poor, uneducated, can't get a job, and if it weren't for government assistance, their kids would be starving to death and never have healthcare" (McKinney, 2011, para. 2). A public proclamation like this coming from a former governor can shape popular opinion (McKinney) and can be a detriment to the population to which it is in reference. In this interview, Huckabee did not address the disparity found within the single mother population as found in the current census data (U.S. Census

Bureau, 2010b), nor did he credit the majority of single mothers living above the poverty line for successfully providing for their children's needs.

According to a National Public Radio (NPR) transcript from February 24, 2011, interviews were conducted on 3,000 Americans looking at changes from recent demographic trends such as single sex couples raising children, women deciding to live childless, and single mothers by choice (Morin, Pols, & Conan, 2011). Morin et al. reported that the majority of interviewees were tolerant to all except the single mother by choice issue where over 99% said it was bad for society. This outcome is not surprising since single mothers are perceived as a drain on societal resources and perceptions of outcomes for children from single parent families include increase of dropout rates, increase in poverty rates and increases in children who will end up with an unwed teen pregnancy (Letendre, 2010). When politicians and media continue to focus on the negative statistics, these perceptions are reinforced in the populace.

According to Haleman (2004), "Negative images of single motherhood abound and single mothers are blamed for social ills ranging from growing inner-city crime rates and drug use to nothing less than the demise of the American family" (p. 769). This negative mindset is a detriment to many single mothers who are in the beginning stages of mothering singly (London, 1996). The first few years are a time when support is greatly needed and resiliency needs to be fostered as opposed to creating feelings of shame, doubt, and doom (Sakraida, 2005). It is for these reasons that this research study and others like it are necessary. As with other minority populations, hearing inspirational stories of similar situations with positive outcomes can increase self-belief that success is attainable (University of Pennsylvania, 2006).

Single mothers in higher education. Studies show that the achievement of children is linked directly to the mother's education (California State Legislature Assembly & California State Legislature Senate, 1988; Caulfield & Thomson, 1999; Dawson, 1997). Information and statistics with this sentiment offer single mothers incentives to increase their education to ensure educational soundness for their children. There are a great number of single mothers who obtained a bachelor's degree prior to having children (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984). Following the rationale that women are delaying child bearing, many women might also have over a decade of work experience before having children. For many mothers, reentering the workplace is just a matter of updating their resumes and accounting for the time lapse between the job search and the last stint of employment.

Haleman (2004) collected data that indicate single mothers often view secondary education in a positive light as well as a way to transcend the poverty line and move into the middle class. Additional education will increase the earning potential of single mothers. The difference in lifetime earning potential between some high school and five or more years of college in 1981 was from $500,000 to $955,000. Mothers enrolled in school while parenting serve as a positive educational role model to their children (Haleman, 2004). The welfare to work reform makes it more difficult for single mothers in pursuit of their college education to complete their degrees while receiving assistance as the goal is to transition recipients into the workplace expeditiously.

Romo and Segura (2010) studied the effects of pathological negative thoughts regarding single mothers and its effects on achieving higher education goals. It was suggested the focus needs to shift to the developmental assets framework (Benson, Mannes, Pittman, & Ferber,

2004), which takes into account support and internal resiliency factors that will allow for school success. According to Romo and Segura (2010), "The greater the number of developmental assets possessed by young mothers, the more resilient they can become and the greater the likelihood of their educational success" (pp. 174-175). Along these same lines, single mothers can benefit from the developmental assets model.

Emotional impact of divorce on career and control. In a study exploring the role of work identity on divorce adjustment, Bisagni and Eckenrode (1995) found that there was a significant relationship between work identity and self-esteem and distress. Women who saw work as an extension of themselves regardless of status seemed the happiest. "Provided that work identity was high, women of moderately low status were not disadvantaged emotionally," (Bisagni & Eckenrode, 1995, p. 580) yet women who were in a very low-income job seemed to not be able to escape the "deleterious effects of poverty" (p. 580). Women in jobs with a "future-oriented work identity" (p. 580) seemed not to be happy with the present as they were looking forward to the possibilities that might one day be available to them. This issue is also illuminated by, "Work identity related positively to self-esteem and inversely to distress," (p. 583) suggesting that rewarding work can help single mothers with forward momentum.

"There seemed to be an income threshold below which work could not buffer the deleterious effects of poverty" (Bisagni & Eckenrode, 1995, p. 583). Essentially, single mothers should be encouraged to aim high in career selection in order to avoid being affected by the confines of poverty. Specialized career counselors can guide single mothers towards careers with upward mobility that are friendly to their situations offering a chance to meet financial goals as well as having schedules that allow for child rearing and all of its surrounding activities.

It is suggested by Miller, Brincko, Krichiver, and Swan (2002) that career counselors should be aware of the specialized need that divorced parents might have concerning career development. Divorce laws have changed policies limiting financial responsibility in marriages that last shorter than ten years to only half of the time married. In this case many women with children may find themselves in a position where they must find employment.

While joining the workforce can be liberating for mothers; doing so as a result of divorce can produce:

> self-doubt and anxiety about their futures and in particular, their job-related skills. In addition, they are faced with the pressure of finding either full or part-time care for their children while they are riddled with guilt and/or worried about the well-being of their children who are usually feeling particularly vulnerable and insecure. (Miller et al., 2002, p. 21)

Miller et al. (2002) suggest that a career counselor working with a divorcing woman might wish to include other professionals working with the client on "mental and/or physical health, financial status, and family issues" (p. 22) that may impact the career guiding process.

History of Women in Work and Leadership Roles in the United States

The notion that women are cared for by men, first by their fathers and later by their husbands, has perhaps never been a very accurate picture. But now, more than ever, the training, labor force participation, and earnings of women are important because of women's increased need, as well as preferences, to rely on their own resources at different stages in the life course. (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 12). This is the shift where it became really important for women to work and be able to sustain their own households

with or without children. The move towards independence became self-propelled and changed

the way things were done in America. Between 1947 and 1980, the number of women in the

labor force increased by 173% (from 16.7 to 45.6 million), while the number of men in the labor

force increased by only 43% from 44.3 to 63.4 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special

Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 15; U. S. Department of Labor, 2012).

In 1980, women were proportionately overrepresented in clerical and service

occupations. Women constituted 44% of all workers in March 1980, but filled 81% of clerical,

97% of private household, and 61%t of other service occupations. Working women were

underrepresented in managerial occupations (28%), among operatives

(34%) and greatly underrepresented in crafts (6.3%), laboring (11%), and farming (17%)

occupations" (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 19). The

issue continues with, "Between 1950 and 1980… the proportion of professional women

increased from 12 to 16%," (U. S. Department of Labor, as cited in U.S. Bureau of the Census &

Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 15) which is a relatively small growth rate. At that

time, it was difficult for women to fill jobs that were traditionally reserved for men. In reference

to the workforce, "The greatest increase in participation rates in the 1960s and 1970s was among

women aged 20 to 44, women with childrearing responsibilities," (p. 17) both in marriages and

in single family households.

In 1988 the number of women in the workforce totaled 55,000,000 of these 30 million

were wives. Two thirds of married families had reported two wage earners. The rising numbers

of women in the workforce coupled with the number of single mothers caused a greater need for

childcare (Norwood, 1992). "A majority of adult women jointly maintain a household with a

husband, making the economic role of wives important to the financial status of a large share of families" (U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 24).

Bianchi et al. (2006) claim that:

The group for whom it is clearest that market work has increased is women, especially mothers. To fit the pieces together requires trend evidence on the paid and unpaid work of those at the busiest stages of the life course, when workers are mired in both parenting young children and working for pay. Two groups seem especially susceptible to overwork – single parents and dual-earner married parents. (p. 40)

As time has progressed, the need for women to work within families has remained necessary for two parent households and essential for single mother households.

Moving into leadership positions. In the 1980s women began advancing into higher positions that were not previously available to them (Sharma & Givens-Skeaton, 2010). From 1979 to 1989, the percentage of women in upper level leadership positions only rose from 0.5% to 2.9% within Fortune 1000 companies (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998). In the early 2000s, in the United States, white males made up 37% of the workforce yet held 95% of upper management positions, whereas women made up 46% of the workforce and held 5% of the upper management positions (Carr-Ruffino, 2005). In 2010, it was noted that, "women earn 57% of all undergraduate degrees, 60% of master degrees, and 50% of doctorate degrees" (Sharma & Givens-Skeaton, 2010, p. 2). Even with these advancements in education, women still receive lower pay, and fewer advancement opportunities. "Overall, there is a concerning lack of gender diversity in the top 100 firms" (p. 1) in reference to women in upper management positions within Fortune 100 companies.

According to Schein (2001), "Barriers to women in management exist worldwide" (p. 675). When looking at why women might not advance, Heilman (2001) found that even when identical tasks are performed, women's work is often devalued in comparison to men in performance appraisals. The lack of women advancing in the workplace is largely due to gender stereotyping (Agars, 2004; Heilman, 2001; Schein, 2001). Even though a small percentage of women attain high profile positions, the ambiguity of advancement can leave room for devaluation (Heilman, 2001). Ninety-two percent of women executives reported the existence of a glass ceiling that prohibited their upward mobility beyond a certain point. The glass ceiling is "a natural consequence of gender stereotypes and the expectations they produce about what women are like and how they should behave" (Heilman, 2001, p. 657). "Gender stereotypes have been under-examined as a causal factor although they, in fact, play a powerful role in maintaining the glass ceiling" (Agars, 2004, p. 103). A woman's competence in work does not ensure that she will advance in the same manner as her male counterpart (Heilman, 2001). According to Heilman, women have a difficult time advancing in leadership due to the nature of many executive jobs having a male sex-type. However, even with the existence of the glass ceiling, some women were able to break through and rise to positions of high profile leadership (Ragins et al., 1998). "Leadership does not take place in a genderless vacuum" (Yoder, 2001, p. 815). "There is a continually growing body of literature demonstrating empirically that effective leadership for men in masculinized contexts is not necessarily effective for women" (p. 817). "Because social status and power are confounded with gender, the playing field is tilted for women leaders before they even begin to act as leaders" (p. 818). Women must prove themselves to be superior to their male counterparts in order to gain attention. (Yoder, 2001)

Even with recent findings, the truth is, "there is no single formula for making women more effective as leaders, because there is no singular definition of leadership" (p. 825).

The psychological view of women as leaders in the eyes of men has made very little progress since the 1970s. In a comparison study done on male and female leaders, thoughts of women in management, male leaders in 2000, held very similar thoughts to those in 1970, whereas women leaders "no longer sex-type the managerial position" (Schein, 2001, p. 678). The notion of "'think manager-think male' is a global phenomenon, especially among males" (p. 683). Similarly, "According to national surveys worldwide, women's share of management jobs rarely exceeds 20% and the higher the position, the more glaring the gender gap" (Manjulika, Ashok, & Rajindar, 1998, p. 679). Even in the medical field, women constituted 50% of medical school graduates and are only 14% of surgeons (Jonasson, 2002). Jonasson found that "women construct their careers in different ways from men, both by choice and by necessity. Specifically, women with families tend to make choices for careers that provide time in preference to career advancement and positions of influence" (p. 674). "Child-bearing years may coincide with tenure track demands. Thus their academic progress is slowed" (p. 675).

Riad (2011) explores leadership from a historical perspective by examining Cleopatra. Major findings were that leadership exists within a cultural construct. The definition of leadership is cultural and our culture dictates how we perceive it. Even with all of the political implications of Cleopatra's leadership, what is remembered of her most is her relationships with her two powerful lovers exemplifying her femininity rather than her leadership (Riad, 2011). A recent study on stereotypes has shown that "leaders who are 'androgynous' will be perceived as most transformational by their followers" (Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012, p. 623).

According to Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003) women in general possess innate leadership styles that are associated with success. Even so, there appears to be a glass ceiling, which prevents more women from entering leadership positions. As explained, "As newcomers, women likely reflect contemporary trends in management, which feature many themes that are consistent with transformational leadership" (Eagly et al., 2003, p. 586). Even with contemporary trends working in favor of women, statistics of women in senior leadership positions and board seats hover at 5% and 12% respectively according to Agars (2004).

While some believe that men and women have different leadership styles, if hiring managers or hiring executives hold those beliefs then it can lead to limited opportunities for women. Further, if the limiting beliefs revolve around a set leadership style or approach, then it can effectively bring a woman's career to a halt because she can be perceived as ineffective, even though the individual has the skills set and knowledge base. (Vinkenburg, Van Engen, Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011).

Vinkenburg et al. (2011) found that women who play to these stereotypes may be able to win more promotions. In style of leadership, "women display more transformational and contingent reward behaviors, and fewer management-by-exception and Laissez-Faire behaviors than men" (p. 18) which is consistent with what the research finds to be successful leadership.

Women in leadership positions. Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008) researched the effects of social and emotional intelligence upon predicting the success for male and female executives. The results of this study found that the most successful men and women actually are more similar than different and that there are distinctions between the most successful of them and their typical counterparts. Even with this finding, there were several characteristics of successful

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women leaders that were pointed out. High levels of emotional intelligence and social

intelligence as explored by Goleman in 1998 and 2006 have been found to be characteristic of

effective leadership in today's society. Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008) set out to answer

questions surrounding the issue of differences in social and emotional intelligence between

effective male and female leaders.

> Perhaps executive women are more similar to, than different from, executive men due to
>
> their socialization into leadership roles. It is likely that males and females in this
>
> category have assimilated into their leadership roles and become more homogenous than
>
> dissimilar. (p. 27)

Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008) continued, "Four emotional and social intelligence competencies

significantly separate the most successful male and female leaders from their typical

counterparts. Self Confidence, Achievement Orientation, Inspirational Leadership and Change

Catalyst are the four competencies that distinguish the most successful leaders" (p. 27). These

characteristics seem to suggest that the most effective leaders might exhibit traits of

transformational leadership, which suggests the desire to promote capable employees into

positions that allow them to work to their fullest capacity rather than maintaining status quo

because it makes things easier (Leithwood & Poplin 1992). An achievement orientation has

more frequently been associated with men, demonstrating a drive to accomplish goals, whereas

this behavior in women has not necessarily been rewarded. A need for achievement confirms the

gender role expected for males and is contrary to the gender stereotype for females (Leithwood

& Poplin, 1992).

Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008) have reported that the role of leadership in the minds of most is reserved for males. "Their legitimacy in leadership positions has been established throughout history" (p. 28). It was found that men are hired into high positions of leadership whereas women are more likely to get there by climbing the ranks and overall, it takes women longer periods of time to get to upper level management positions (Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008). Therefore, when women take time off from work to stay at home and raise children it puts them at a disadvantage career wise. Also, it would be more difficult for a divorced woman who took time off from work to raise children to attain a high profile position. Women in pursuit of leadership positions also have to contend with institutionalized remains of sexism. In one study, 99% of female executives surveyed cited a main career strategy for success as consistently exceeding performance expectations (Ragins et al., 1998). Since emotional and social intelligence are perceived as soft skills, there is a higher expectation for women to exhibit higher levels of them, yet they are valued less for having equal amounts as men in their same position, and it is thought that if women were void of these competencies they would be judged harshly for their lack of social-emotional skills (Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008). When analyzing what it took for women to become executives, it was found that "(t)he most successful female executives had more tenure in the company than the most successful male executives" (p. 25). The most successful males had 19.23 years of tenure within the organization as opposed to the most successful females with 27.17 years of tenure.

In personal interviews, women executives reported their top strategies for achieving success in spite of the barriers (Ragins et al., 1998). The top four strategies were: consistently exceeding performance expectations, developing a style of leadership that men were comfortable

with, seeking difficult or highly visible assignments, and having an influential mentor. Seventy-seven percent felt that exceeding expectations was critical to their success and another 22% felt that it was fairly important. In order to exceed expectations, the "executive women described workdays that begin at 4:00 a.m. with several hours of predawn reading before the children awake, late night business calls and faxes to homes fully tele-connected to the office, and travel schedules and after-hours business obligations that keep them away from home several evenings a week" (Ragins et al., 1998, p. 30).

Sixty-one percent felt that developing a style of leadership that men were comfortable with was critical to their success while 35% felt it was fairly important. Achieving a style that was acceptable was a challenge, "if their managerial styles [were] feminine, they run the risk of not being viewed as effective managers, but if they adopt masculine styles viewed as appropriate for managerial roles, they may be criticized for not being feminine" (Ragins et al., 1998, p. 30). Over time, what was learned translated into messages like "Don't be attractive. Don't be too smart. Don't be assertive. Pretend you're not a woman. Don't be single. Don't be a mom" (p. 30). All of these traits were seen as negative characteristics at the turn of the century, yet for all single mothers, most were inescapable. At the upper level of leadership there is a need for gender-neutral behaviors. One executive reported "Whether you're male or female, by the time you get to a senior management position, you've learned a different style of leadership anyway" (p. 38). "Although the intention may not be deliberate, the spillover of cultural expectations of women's roles into the corporate boardroom creates a unique set of challenges for women seeking leadership positions" (p. 31).

Women seeking leadership positions need to learn what strategies promote success in spite of the status quo. Fifty percent felt that seeking difficult or highly visible projects were critical to their success and 44% felt that this was fairly important. Thirty-seven percent felt that having an influential mentor was critical to their success and 44% felt that this concept was fairly important. Ninety-one percent of those interviewed reported having a mentor at some point in the formative stages of their career (Ragins et al., 1998). The strategy of having a mentor often works in the favor of the mentee as the mentors will often ensure that the mentee is given projects of importance, reinforcing the second most valued strategy. The women found different value in mentors of each sex. Female mentors were of value in that they understood the real challenges involved in being the minority trying to break through the glass ceiling. Male mentors were of value in that their influence could propel their mentee through the invisible barriers.

Mentors may play in a role, "Individuals with mentors receive more promotions, have more career mobility, and advance at a faster rate than those lacking mentors" (Ragins et al., 1998, p. 32). It is for this reason that it is imperative for single mothers wishing for upward mobility to attach themselves to mentors. Time is of the essence when they are in the workplace. They need to move up as quickly as possible to make a stable home for their children. On the other end of the spectrum, very few female upper level executives felt that gaining international experience was vital to their success, with 51% reporting that they did not use this strategy at all and 24% saying that it is not important. Along the same lines, 45% did not utilize the strategy of relocating and 17% said that relocating was not important. One interviewee reported that women "haven't been prepared to make the same sacrifices as perhaps men are.... they're not apt to

move or relocate" (p. 34) suggesting that women are more tied to the stability of the family and less towards doing what it takes to achieve success in the workplace.

Support for Working Mothers and Single Mothers

Working mothers may have the odds against them, "The working mother is located in the context of history, gender issues, collective experience, emotions, and politics as well as other interlocking variables such as age, race, sexuality, and socioeconomic status" (May-Stewart, 2000, Abstract). Being a working single mother adds even more variables to this paradigm. Working mothers and working single mothers naturally need a great deal of support from several different avenues. This support can come from national organizations such as the National Organization of Women (NOW), which is an organization sensitive to the issues faced by women in the world of work. Support can come in the form of laws supporting women's rights and providing protections from harm in the workplace regarding gender issues. It can come in the form of social support, which includes family, friends, and local or national support groups. Mocha Moms, Berkeley Parent Network, and Peachhead are examples of groups designed to help mothers with day-to-day issues, which might seem trivial to outsiders, but are important concerns for those in the trenches of mothering. Weblogs, print and online magazines such as Working Moms Magazine, Mamapedia, and thesupermomsblog.com can also provide support with questions, ideas, activities, and concerns. Another important source of support for working single mothers is paid support such as daycare, nannies, and personal assistants, which are resources often necessary for the single mother to maintain employment.

Working Mother Magazine has been a social support for working mothers for decades and claims to be the go-to national magazine of mothers that are also committed to their careers

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(Working Mother Magazine, 2012). For the past 25 years it has produced a well-researched

segment for the 100 top companies for working moms and women. The online portion has

features to help a busy mom keep organized such as life organizers and checklists. The articles

all pertain to the specific interest of working mothers, and is a valuable resource to many in this

position.

Mothers have created social networks to share important parenting related information

with one another. Large organized networks such as Mocha Moms and Peachhead exist to

support mothers with day-to-day activities, concerns and questions. Mocha Moms is a national

nonprofit organization originally designed to support stay at home mothers of color with raising

their children (Mocha Moms Inc., 2012). As time has evolved, Mocha Moms has changed with

its population. The national economy tanked and it became increasingly necessary for families

to have two incomes. When more mothers needed to work, they created a division that catered

to the working mother as well as the mompreneur.

Mocha Moms has also implemented a division called Mocha's in Transition catering to

Mochas going through significant life changes such as the death of a spouse, divorce and

deployment (Mocha Moms Inc., 2012). Each of these support groups gives great benefits to its

members. Every year, Mocha Moms has regional and national conferences for its members to

meet, fellowship, and learn from each other. There is also a marketplace where vendors sell

products of value to mothers of young children. The structure of Mocha Moms consists of a

support group meeting once a month that members are required to attend at least three per year,

weekly playgroup meetings, which allow the children to play and the mothers to socialize and

learn from each other in an informal way, an extensive website, and an interactive and

personalized local list serve. Peachhead is an online and offline support community originally created for families in the Los Angeles area. The group began in 1997 with 15 members and has now grown to over 10,000 families (Perry, 2006). Support groups allow mothers to troubleshoot and ask advice of other moms on questions and issues that they might have with parenting. Some issues are simple like getting children to eat their veggies while others are more specialized like weaning an infant or finding a pediatrician, nanny, or daycare placement. Whatever the issue, there is a wealth of knowledge and advice. Groups like this offer mothers an invaluable resource (Lashley, 2010) in terms of allowing members to learn additional skills in a supportive setting and in building support systems to help with practical issues that are a part of the everyday lives of moms.

A major support for most working moms is paid childcare. Some are fortunate to be able to leave their young children with a family member, but for those who are not, paid childcare is a priceless resource. Without childcare, working for most mothers would be an impossibility (Naccrra, 2011). In 2011, the average annual cost in California for full time childcare for an infant in a childcare center was $11,276 and $6,854 in a home childcare. The average full time cost for care for a 4 year old was $8,237. Before and after care for school aged children averaged $2,736 (Child Care Aware of America, 2012). Some working mothers opt for hiring a nanny especially when the mother works nontraditional hours. The average cost of a live out nanny is $600 per week and $500 per week for a live in nanny. The average nanny works between 40 to 50 hours per week (Online Nanny, 2008).

Although Single Mothers as a group intersects with working women, they are looked at in a much different light, and consequently different supports have been created for this group.

"Policy decisions that influence the lives of single mothers and their children are frequently based on stereotypes of single motherhood rather than on the lived experiences of single women and their families" (Haleman, 2004, p. 770). This is a problem because different types of single mothers need different kinds of supports (Traustadottir, 1988). Low income single mothers might have a great need for financial support whereas those who are employed might need more social supports or even supports to help them continue to work, or they might need emotional or psychological supports to keep them going when things get difficult. In the complex life of a single mother it is difficult to delineate between work and non-work stress, as the lines often blur (May-Stewart, 2000).

Childcare assistance exists for low-income mothers also. This support usually requires a mother to be involved in school or work. Childcare will not be paid if there is not a compelling reason according to Ms. Diaz at the Crystal Stairs Agency (personal communication, October 10, 2011). The supports offered for single mothers are designed to aid with the deficit-based problems that single mothers are perceived to have. From the gap in the literature pertaining to single mothers, there appears to be a lack of support and/or resource offerings to single mothers above the poverty line as well as a lack of knowledge pertaining to what this group might need. Through the interviews conducted in relation to this study the intent was to uncover what supports would be ideal and essential for single mothers living above the poverty line.

Social supports. In a study looking at the impact of a co-parent relationship, results showed that when the mother and the co-parent had a good relationship, the child benefited (Shook, Jones, Forehand, Dorsey, & Brody, 2010). A co-parent is classified as another adult that helps to parent the child. Although the biological father can be a source of support, oftentimes

single mothers do not turn to them due to issues of post marital conflict. In that study the most

common "co-parents were the child's maternal grandmother (31%), biological father (26%),

maternal aunt (11%), and adult sister (11%), or a broad range (e.g., another relative) of other

individuals (21%)" (Shook et al., 2010, p. 244). "Mother-coparent support was associated with

child competence, whereas mother-coparent conflict was associated with adjustment difficulties"

(p. 248). Good supportive relationships can help with parental warmth, which adds to a child's

social and cognitive competence (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2012).

Social support in the form of reciprocal relationships involving giving and receiving of

child care and other supports can be valuable to single mothers of all income levels (Nelson,

2000). It is important for the mothers to feel as though they have a sense of independence even

when relying on others, which is why reciprocity is spoken of frequently. Even in informal

support systems, it is found that desire is to give as much as one has received. "Sustained one-

way flows are often preserved for children and for those who are disabled" (Nelson, 2000, p.

297). These systems can occur between women in similar situations. A few examples of this

concept are (a) two or more mothers with children at the same schools dividing school drop off

and pick up responsibilities, or (b) dyads of single mothers that each have something of value to

offer to one another. For example, a mother with small children might have her mother keep her

children while she works and in return, she might do her mother's errands for the week. These

social support networks have unspoken rules that are important for the participants to uphold.

Failure to do so could result in the dissolution of the network (Nelson, 2000). It was discovered

that when women had a greater number of well-established members in their network, they

found that it was a bit more difficult to attain reciprocity especially when assistance would come

in the form of large sums of money. In cases like this in order to not feel dependent, single mothers found reciprocity through "repaying material goods with gratitude, emotional support, and loyalty" (p. 304). An important finding of this study was that it was crucial to the sustainability of the social networks that the single mother did not feel dependent. When support comes in the form of unpaid daycare, it was found that the receiver was able to "minimize the cost" (p. 304) of the care by justifying that the provider loves taking care of the child and seeing it as a part of what that person does naturally.

Support in the workplace. On the job support can include any number of alternative work schedules. Flex time is one way of allowing employees to value their personal lives while still getting their work done. Flex time can allow for an employee to work non-traditional hours in a five day week or work longer days in order to have a shorter work week to be available for outside activities (McKay, 2010) such as caring for family. A results-only-work-environment, commonly referred to as ROWE allows the employee flexibility in hours and in days worked; employees in ROWE situations are not bound by hours or location. The idea of a ROWE "is to judge performance on output instead of hours" (Conlin, 2006, para. 20). Temporary or contract positions can also allow working mothers flexibility. Mom Corps is a national staffing firm dedicated to matching flexible forward thinking companies with talented moms who desire flexible schedules and/or short-term project based employment. Mom Corps' tag line is *Good for Corporations*. Good for Working Moms. They have a pool of over 60,000 professionals who are not in the traditional talent bank (Mom Corps, 2011).

Employers valuing work-life-balance provide excellent opportunities for mothers seeking employment (Kane, 2012). Several variables play a role in the effectiveness of work-life

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balance, such as the type of work, the possibility for flexibility, familial needs, and pay structure. According to the Bowden (2010) dissertation, women leaders in the aerospace industry rely heavily on setting priorities, taking breaks, prayer and meditation, time management, and supportive environments to help them achieve work-life balance. Working Mother Magazine has a database of companies that are ranked high in providing an environment conducive to working mothers. The magazine allows companies to apply to be on the list.

The 2011 Working Mother 100 Best Companies application includes more than 650 questions on workforce representation, child care, flexibility programs, leave policies and more. It surveys the usage, availability and tracking of programs, as well as the accountability of managers who oversee them. (Working Mother Magazine, 2012, "The Application," para.1)

In addition to niche companies being created to accommodate working mothers, many mothers now embark on creating their own companies. According to the Center for Women's Business Research (2009), "10.1 million firms are owned by women (50% or more), employing more than 13 million people, and generating $1.9 trillion in sales as of 2008" (para. 1). The creation of a new word, mompreneur, signifies the growth of mothers now in the ranks of entrepreneurs.

Psychological support. According to D'Ercole (1988), financial strain is big for single mothers. "Social support appeared to function as a protector in the face of stress" (p. 41) and "support from co-workers and friends rather than family was positively related to well-being" (p. 41). This study produced two distinct findings; "money is very important to the well-being of this population" and "there are positive ways in which single mothers cope with stresses" (p. 41) which she suggests mental health professionals become familiar with in order to help clients

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struggling with psychological distress that often accompanies the first 2 years post-divorce known as the "crisis stage" (D'Ercole, 1998, p. 42). From this study, D'Ercole found that the most pressing stressors for single mothers were "low income, low standard of living and role overload" (p. 46). It was found that support from friends and coworkers were helpful in contributing to wellbeing. The support received from these sources did more for the single mothers than support from family. "Exchanges with friends may be less obligatory and more spontaneous, characterized perhaps by a sense of mutuality" (p. 50). The variation in support preference was attributed to personality differences, need, availability, and consequences for use. It was also discovered that women in higher paid positions had an adverse reaction to support from co-workers. It may be that women who earn more money are likely to hold more demanding jobs which require more formal and less dependent relationships with co-workers or that women who earn more money are likely to be in positions of power where relationships are competitive rather than supportive. "For a single mother absorbed with the care of her family, work may be a welcome relief from familial demands, as well as a source for recognition and a feeling of competence" (p. 51).

Numerous websites now exist to support single mothers on a variety of topics. The National Organization of Single Mothers has been working to support single mothers for 20 years. This organization is open to helping both single moms by choice or chance. Their online website promises to offer

years of expertise to help you deal with the day to day challenges of single parenting – articles, tips and advice from the award-winning publication Single Mother and Andrea

Engber's weekly syndicated column, Single with Children, plus a place to vent your

feelings. (Engber, 2011, para. 5)

Another support for single parents is the school. Many schools offer school counselors

and programs that can help children of divorce cope with the family's changing situation

(Crosbie-Burnett & Newcomer, 1990). In the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD),

some schools offer the IMPACT program, which helps students deal with emotional difficulties.

Middle and high schools offer divorce support groups for students to attend. The IMPACT

groups offer a supportive confidential environment for students to share and work through

personal concerns. This can be a valuable resource in that studies have found that the effects of

divorce can cause adjustment issues in children for up to 6 years after the divorce (Linder,

Hagan, & Brown, 1992). Some schools also offer parenting classes or parent support groups

through the school itself or through the local adult school (Cline, Crafter, De Abreu, & O'dell,

2009). Parenting classes offered to single mothers can provide an enormous amount of help by

way of information as well as emotional support. Often times in parenting classes the value is in

hearing other parents with concerns that are similar indicating that the parent is not alone in their

concerns (Keller & McDade, 2000).

Parents And Children Together P. A.C.T. is a parenting class offered through the court

system. These classes are designed to teach parents the importance of co-parenting hoping to

minimize the possible negative psychological effects of divorce on the children (Superior Court,

2012). Parents taking this course and/or other parenting certification courses often times gain

favor in the eyes of the courts for family law concerns.

Single Mothers, Economics, and Work

When researching the literature on single mothers, a majority of scholarship on the topic referred to single mothers paired with welfare, minimum wage, and welfare reform. Even in 2011, after performing multiple combinations of search words, only one dissertation surfaced addressing single mothers and middle and high income (Kjellstrand, 2011). Traditionally homes headed by single mothers have ranked lower on the pay scale average than other family types, mostly due to single parent households, having only one wage earner. Single mothers who had put career and/or school on hold to have children will most likely have a low rate of pay when entering or re-entering the workforce. Various studies document that those who bear children early most likely do not have college degrees and will end up in a low wage job (O'Neil & Hill, 2003; U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984). In 2001, only 4% of single mothers earned minimum wage or less while the average earned an hourly rate of $11.60 (O'Neil & Hill, 2003). Post welfare reform, increases were seen in single mother employment as well as in income. For those who needed welfare assistance, their incomes rose to 50 to 70% above the poverty level after only two years of leaving the system. In 2010, the poverty guidelines for the U. S. according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2010) were low (see table 1).

The participants of this study reside in the greater Los Angeles or San Francisco Bay Area. The minimum wage in California has been $8/hr. since January 1, 2008 (United Employees Law Group PC, 2011), which is over 10% above the $7.25/hr. national minimum wage (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). This rate would only allow a single mother with one child to live just above the poverty line if employed every week out of the year earning a salary

Table 1

The 2010 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia

Dependents	Annual Income
1	$10,830
2	14,570
3	18,310
4	22,050
5	25,790
6	29,530
7	33,270
8	37,010

of $16,640; with two children, she would be below the poverty line. Los Angeles has adopted a

living wage, which increases the minimum pay for workers (Glasmeier & The Pennsylvania

State University, 2011). The current minimum living wage in Los Angeles is $11.55 per hour

(City of Los Angeles, California, 2010), which translates into $24,024 annually, which would

allow a single mother with up to 3 children to live above the poverty line. In the last US Census,

it was found that there were a total of 11,686,000 families headed by a single parent, of those,

84.9% were headed by single mothers, totaling 9,924,000 households. Of the total number of

single mother households, 4,448,000 were never married, 3,134,000 were divorced, 1,950,000

were separated, and 392,000 were widowed. Income distribution among those households vary

greatly, but the never married show a strong cluster of incomes under the poverty level, with

23% of them with a family income of less than $10,000. Yet among single mother households,

the never married group also has the largest representation of households with a family income

of greater than $100,000. This is most likely due to the inclusion of single mothers by choice in

this demographic information, which is a group that tends to be more affluent. This variance is

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consistent with the notion that "different routes to single parenthood have varying economic implications for families" (Lino, 1994, p. 29). Distributing for family size among single mothers indicates 4,187,000 were two member families, 3,306,000 were three member families, 1,485,000 were four member families, 548,000 were five member families, and 395,000 had six or more members (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). The age of the mother followed a proportional bell curve as evidenced by the chart below.

When single mothers are referenced in the literature it is frequently in regard to the poverty line, however, the latest census shows that more single mothers live at or above the poverty level than below, 6,325,000 and 3,598,000 respectively. Of the 9,924,000 single mother households, 4,626,000 (63%) earned above $30,000 per year, 2,514,000 earned above $50,000 (25%) per year, 1,155,000 (12%) earned above $75,000 per year, and 592,000 (6%) earned above $100,000 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). Although the higher income figures are a small percentage of the whole, there are still substantial numbers of single mother households that are not living in poverty, which is a direct contradiction to what the existing body of research focuses on.

A significant and growing number of all households are maintained by single women (Lino, 1994). As the proportion of households maintained by women has increased, the relative economic status of these households has declined. Nowhere is this more evident than in the poverty figures and, indeed, the feminization of poverty is a term used to describe changes of the past 2 decades as noted by McLanahan and Kelly (n. d.). Female-maintained families rose from 14.8% in 1959 to 25.5% in 1980 among whites and from 24.4% in 1959 to 58.6% in 1980 among

Table 2

Distribution of Single Mother Households by Age in 2010

Age of Single Mother	Number of Households
Under 20	233,000
20 to 24 years	1,185,000
25 to 29 years	1,624,000
30 to 34 years	1,701,000
35 to 39 years	1,783,000
40 to 44 years	1,458,000
45 to 54 years	1,683,000
55 years +	256,000

Note. Taken from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a data.

blacks (McLanahan & Kelly, n. d.).   According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (as cited in

U.S. Bureau Of The Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984):

> Women supporting families face two serious economic problems: women generally earn
>
> much less than men, so they frequently do not have sufficient earnings to support a
>
> family and secondly, mothers raising children by themselves often receive no support
>
> from the absent father. Estimates are that only three-fifths of women with dependent
>
> children are awarded or have an agreement to receive child support. Of those three fifths,
>
> only one-half received the full amount to which they were entitled during 1978, and 28
>
> percent received no payment at all. (p. 26)

Another concern for single working mothers is that of the children's well-being. "Past research has shown sons in single-parent families are more likely to have conduct problems than other children" (Perry-Jenkins & Gillman, 2000, p. 142) Given a study done on mother job satisfaction revealed that when mothers view their work in a positive light, "sons report greater self-restraint" (p. 138). Another interpretation of the same study is that as sons experience better behavior, mothers are able to relax and find enjoyment from their work. Other findings from the study show that there is a link between parental job satisfaction and the well-being of the children. Especially in the single mother families, their "jobs, however, are far from optional activities, and when they are perceived as negative experiences, they simply may hold more salience for single mothers and lead them to feel more depressed" (p. 143).

Work is important for single mothers on more than one level. "For a single mother absorbed with the care of her family, work may be a welcome relief from familial demands, as well as a source for recognition and a feeling of competence" (D'Ercole, 1988, p. 50). Although earning enough money to care for the entire household is important, it is also important for the mother to feel the self -worth that can come as a result of work that is rewarding. Yet although a majority of single mothers work and maintain household incomes above the poverty line, the perception of single mothers is that their households are usually impoverished. In 2010, close to 30% of single mother households were below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). Conversely 70% of single mothers were above the poverty line. In cases where single mother families reside in poverty, the need to rely upon social supports may exist.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps now delivered through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), Free and

Reduced Price Lunch, and Women Infants and Children (WIC) are all financial and food

programs that can assist families in need. TANF provides cash aid to families with financial

need. Food Stamps, Free and Reduced Price Lunch and WIC provide food benefits to needy

families, and GAIN provides assistance to help providers get on their feet in the form of child

care assistance, transportation allowances and other supports to help parents find work and/or

attend school to prepare for work (Los Angeles Department Of Public Social Services, 2011).

These supports are generally systemic supports; in addition to this many mothers may receive

support in the form of financial support from the biological father in the form of Child Support.

In the case of single mothers without low-income status, there are little to no traditional

supports. If a single mother is not low-income, she must provide for the cost of child-care, after

school care, school lunches for her children, and all other expenses that accompany child rearing.

Subsidized childcare in Los Angeles is largely provided for those on the Los Angeles Centralized

Eligibility List (LACEL); those who meet the eligibility criteria of the organizations providing

subsidized care. The LACEL list is a database of families seeking assistance (Los Angeles

County, n. d.). Although working families are eligible for assistance, with recent budget cuts,

most facilities are only approving those who are on government assistance according to Ms. Diaz

at the Crystal Stairs Agency (personal communication, October 10, 2011).

Conclusion

While there are numerous studies on Single Mothers existing in the current literature,

there was a large gap in the research pointing to the positive traits of the single mother

population. The truth is that a majority of the single mother households earn incomes allowing

their families to live above the poverty line, yet the research focuses on welfare and poverty.

Noble et al. (2004) allude to this in their development of a tool to measure attitudes towards working single mothers; it is their hope that the tool might be used to guide future research that focuses on this unique group. If there were to be a shift in the research towards analyzing positive trends within this population uncovering keys to prosperity and/or stability under the circumstances, inspiration might be achieved for those struggling in similar situations. Also, the supports that exist for single mothers are very different in nature from the ones that exist for working mothers. There is an intersection between the two groups with areas of overlap, yet support is needed in different ways. These areas offer opportunities for future research to be done as well as opportunities to offer further services to single mothers as well as working mothers. In this research study, single mothers in high profile positions were interviewed in hopes of uncovering what supports, both internal and external, allowed for their success at home and in the workplace.   The results from this study could possibly be the beginning of a new and necessary dialogue that can result in efforts designed to help single mothers of varying demographics move toward higher profile professional positions and overall resilience factors.

When looking at single mothers in high profile positions, the view is actually of an intersection of several traditionally discriminated populations. First she is a working woman who has had to fight for equality in the workplace (Norwood, 1992), second, she is a single parent which has always had a negative stigma in this society (Anderson-Kulman & Paludi, 1986; Elkind, 1995; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Kendall et al., 1981; Linder et al., 1992; Morin et al., 2011; Noble et al., 2004; O'Neil & Hill, 2003; Walz et al., 2002), and third, she is a working mother without an in-home support partner (Betchen, 1988) making her job one of a constant juggle unless she has the financial means to hire built-in support to care for the children.

The single mother has been looked at through a lens clouded with negativity (Romo & Segura, 2010) and deserves a paradigm shift employing fair research methods that generate gender sensitive findings (Harding & Norberg, 2005). Clearly there is a need to utilize pieces of feminist theory in the proposed study which will allow for an understanding of the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and other structural features of societies; about phenomena that are both socially constructed and fully 'real'; and about the apparent impossibility of accurate interpretation, translation, and representation among radically different cultures, especially in the glare of today's dangerous media politics (p. 2011). In the case of this study, the researcher and those being researched are of similar situations eliminating power differences, which often skew the research and results according to feminist.

Summary

In the beginning of this chapter, the evolution of the American family was discussed. A traditional two-parent multi child family was a group that the majority of Americans belonged to and valued. Over time, starting families became delayed for most young Americans and others refrained completely. With new legislation, divorce became easier and the American family began to change form completely. Understanding these changes in family helped us to understand where the large single mother population of today originated. Initially single mothers only existed because of the death of a spouse, but as the American family declined, single mothers arose due to divorce, and from never being married at all. Society has traditionally looked at single mothers through a lens of negativity as being impoverished and as being a drain on social resources. Later in this chapter, we learned that over time some women began taking on positions of leadership at work. The numbers of women in positions of leadership have never

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reached those of men, however, the numbers have increased over time. We looked at the supports necessary for women to be able to work and to be able to be in positions of leadership. Then we looked at single mothers in leadership positions, which was the intersection of single mothers, and women in leadership positions. All of these viewpoints help to inform the overarching research question, which asked: What supports do single mothers in high profile positions use to create and/or sustain success?

This study sought to identify supports utilized by single mothers in high profile professional positions with the understanding that the knowledge gained could then be transferred to other single mothers allowing for them to set higher goals and attain more in terms of career and education. Also, those findings would further add to the body of existing research as well as be shared through social media, publications, helping organizations, and in political arenas in hopes of advancing the agenda of viewing the entire single mother population in a better light (Harding & Norberg, 2005).

The process of obtaining research for this literature review showed that there is an overwhelming amount of research depicting the negative statistics associated with single mothers. Conversely, there is very little data reflecting positive attributes associated with single mothers. The Kjellstrand (2011) dissertation was the only one found that looked at resilience among the single mother population. There is a need for further research reflecting positive achievements of single mothers, such as being middle and upper income levels, being fully employed, and being well educated. To date, the majority of the existing literature focuses on single mothers being mostly minority, living below the poverty line, having low educational achievements, and having children that struggle in school and have poor educational

performance. There is a small amount of literature that highlights positive statistics of this population, but more is necessary to tell the whole story.

Chapter 3 examined the research methodologies used in collecting, analyzing, and presenting the research for this study. Participant selection, research protocol, and the other data gathering tools were presented and defined. Procedures for obtaining informed consent from participants were clearly outlined. Ultimately chapter 3 discussed analysis procedures, reliability and validity. The chapter concluded with plans for the data analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This section provided the integral steps of this study. A review of the research questions, detailed descriptions of the research methodology, the process for selecting participants, analysis, instrumentation, and data collection techniques were presented. In addition, confidentiality of participants was discussed in this section.

Scope of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study utilized interviews as well as data obtained from administering the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Avolio & Bass, 2004) to assist in filling in the gap in understanding how some single mothers were able to obtain and maintain high-profile professional positions when parenting alone. While traditionally single mothers have struggled financially, or held common jobs, earning salaries providing just enough to hover above the poverty line, the women selected for this study all held high-profile professional positions. The main research questions guiding this study helped to uncover how these women superseded the usual societal expectations that define single mothers as impoverished, and drains on public resources.

Review of Research Questions

The research questions looked at supports, both internal and external, that have allowed for the success of the identified group of single mothers in spite of the usual statistics for single mothers. In addition to exploring supports, the questions uncovered the innate leadership characteristics that these women possessed that might have contributed to their aggregated lived experience. Having analyzed both their natural dispositions and supports, it became possible to identify trends that led toward success. Identification of trends could inform organizations that

work with single mothers and contribute to possible training, classes, and support groups

designed to assist this population. There is one overarching question guiding this study: What

supports do single mothers in high profile positions use to create and sustain success? This

question was answered by the 5 research questions:

1. How do single mothers identify themselves?

2. What motivations drive single mothers in high profile positions?

3. What supports do single mothers use to adapt to their personal and professional roles?

4. What relational styles do single mothers in high profile positions possess?

5. What is the leadership style of single mothers?

Qualitative Design

Qualitative research allowed for the exploration and understanding of the meaning

individuals or groups project on social and/or human problems (Creswell, 2009) primarily

utilizing open-ended questions. Although this study utilized a survey (MLQ) in addition to the

interview questions, it did not constitute a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2009) as a result,

the survey served as a means of comparison. This study, by using a phenomenological approach,

sought to understand the lived experience of single mothers and their complex dynamics of

raising children while being single and holding high profile professional positions. By the very

nature of this study it was most fitting to utilize qualitative research design (Morse & Richards,

2002) as opposed to quantitative.

The phenomenological approach. Furthermore, this study aimed to understand the

perception of single mother's in high-profile professional positions and what it meant to live the

experience, which further leaned toward a phenomenological study. According to Van Manen,

(1990), in a phenomenology, there are generally four guiding aspects or existentials of lived experience, which all fit this particular study. They are: "temporality (lived time), spatiality (lived space), corporeality (lived body), and relationality or communality (lived human relation)" (Van Manen, 1990 as cited in Morse & Richards, p. 44). Temporality was explored through the personal interview gaining an understanding of the participants lived experience before, during and beyond single parenting. Some participants were in the active stages of parenting while others might have already raised their children, therefore a range of the single parenting experiences were explored. Spatiality was explored metaphorically as the participants' professional space and leadership style. This was addressed through the results from the MLQ. Corporeality was explored through the understanding of participants' strategies for managing self and stress through information gained from the individual interviews. Relationality was explored through questions asked in the eligibility survey, the MLQ, and the individual interviews. The lived experience of the interview participants is meaningful, and with this group, likely contradicted the common perceptions of what it is to be a single mother, as expressed in Chapter 2, therefore, giving great value to understanding the telling of the lived experience.

Phenomenology is a method of inquiry as well as a method "in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by its participants" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). The idea is to look at the possible shared experiences these individual women might have had that can lead to informing the

Table 3

Phenomenological Existentials Matrix

Guiding Existential	Lived Experience	Where Addressed	Facet of life…
Temporality	Lived Time	Interview	Before, during, and beyond parenting single.
Spatiality	Lived Space Metaphorically – Professional Position	MLQ	Leadership style
Corporeality	Lived Body	Interview	Stress Management Self-Management
Relationality	Lived Human Relations	Eligibility survey, MLQ, and interview	Co-parenting, familial relations, support providers, professional and personal relations

Note. Table 3 the four guiding existentials of a phenomenological study and how each of the parts of the experimental design addresses which part of the phenomenology.

body of research as to how other women in this experience can overcome the odds.

Nieswiadomy (1993) suggests the importance of a researcher being able to containerize their

own experience in order to focus on and understand that of the participants in phenomenological

research. In this study, the researcher made every attempt to be aware of her-own lived

experience and keep it separate from data interpretation within this study in an attempt to deliver

non-biased research. The following strategies to decrease researcher bias employed by

Rajendran (2001) was incorporated in this study. The first is creating a common language

between researcher and participants by providing a list of operational definitions as included in

Chapter 1. The second was recording and taking notes verbatim and separately recording

personal thoughts, reactions or observations. The third was to record the interviews in their

entirety, which provided an objective record of interviews and allowed for an outside researcher

to code independently to check for inter-rater reliability. The data collected from the participant

interviews was utilized to create a theoretical perspective on single mothers with high profile

professional positions and the supports necessary to form the infrastructure that holds their

personal and professional lives intact. Although one researcher performed this study, an inter-

rater reliability process was implemented to assure reliability in data coding as in the Morton

(2013) dissertation. The second researcher who coded the data holds a doctorate degree and is a

skilled researcher with decades of experience. When sample coding was complete, both

researchers compared their results to ensure that the coding had been done in a similar

manner. If discrepancies arose, modifications in the coding process were discussed and

implemented in further sample coding.

     Previous experimental designs for studying single mothers. The framework of this

study used the Westrup (2007) dissertation as a lens to view single mothers in high-profile

positions, and looked to the Kjellstrand (2011) dissertation for content focusing on strengths

within the single mother population. Single mother professionals are a subset of the already

marginalized single mother population. Using previous experimental designs was integral for

adding to the literature and using validated methods.

     This study sought not only to bring a voice to this population, but also to shed a positive

light on the group as a whole. Qualitative research has the potential to have a life changing

impact on a group; such research is said to have an advocacy or participatory worldview

(Creswell, 2009). This is the direction that this study took, and the interview questions were

chosen purposefully to assist in uncovering the lived experience of the interview population (Morse & Richards, 2002) in order to have an impact on how work is done with the single mother population.

      Self as Instrument. In qualitative data gathering, it is important for the researcher to be self-aware and conceptually understand the role of the *Self as Instrument* and be cautious about biases around personal lived experiences. In the case of this study, the researcher was a single mother by chance who by self-identification did not fit into the confines of what a single mother is traditionally believed to be. It was important to address this, and to become aware of personal biases, and in turn, not to lead participants in responses or have skewed interpretations of the data. For this reason, the researcher had a non-single mother review the data and coding to check for inter-rater reliability and make sure that there was an absence of personal bias. The researcher was skilled in research methods with a long history of utilizing qualitative data gathering techniques from experiences with previous employment. Comfort with research, intuition, and experience can be useful tools in this type of research and can become a part of the guiding force for the study (Fetterman, 2001; Morse & Richards, 2002). Beyond being a qualitative study, this study is more specifically a phenomenological study.

Sources of Data

      Purposeful and snowball sampling were used to identify participants in this study. Purposeful sampling occurs when participants are purposefully chosen to participate in a study (Morse & Richards, 2002). Snowball sampling is a method utilized when beginning with already identified candidates for the study and gaining further participants by asking referrals from those initially identified.

The researcher utilized these techniques to collect possible participants from two distinct populations. The first consisted of specific women, known by the researcher to meet the identified criteria. The second consisted of women identified by recommendations of colleagues, coworkers and other possible participants.

Sampling method. The researcher contacted potential candidates already known to meet the eligibility criteria and invited them to participate in the study. A follow-up email was sent explaining the parameters of the study. If interested, the researcher conducted the short eligibility survey to confirm the potential participant met the parameters of the study in a short phone interview. If answers confirmed eligibility, the researcher then informed the candidate and scheduled an interview date and time. The candidate chose to meet in person or through teleconference.

Participants fit the following criteria:

- Participants were single mothers by chance. Although one can become a single mother by chance or by choice, this study required participants be single by chance, not by choice. Becoming a single mother by chance happens when a relationship comes to an end by divorce, abandonment, separation, death, deployment, incarceration, or by not ever solidifying as a unit for various reasons. Although ethical arguments could be made that divorce and separation are choices made by couples, previous research on this topic places single parenting as a result of divorce in the by chance category as these avenues towards single parenting are not usually part of the initial conception plan (Engber, 2011). Note: if couples remain a couple, but do not marry, the individuals are not considered single parents for the purpose of this study.

- Participants had at least three consecutive years of parenting as single mothers. They could be currently single or married but have spent at least three consecutive years parenting as single parents. The time as a single parent need not be in the preceding three years.

- Participants were classified as the primary caretaker of one or more children.

- Participants worked in a high profile professional position. As defined in this study, a high profile professional position is highly regarded in today's society bringing about prestige in most social circles. Positions exemplifying this include, but are not limited to a school principal, a writer/author, an attorney, a doctor, a fulltime professor, a fiscally successful entrepreneur, an upper level manager/supervisor, and an executive director.

The researcher expected to be able to select anywhere from 10 to 20 participants who met all of the selection criteria. The identified participants may have remarried in time, but have done the majority of parenting, in the child's youth, on their own, or at least for a minimum of 3 consecutive years. Participants took part in this study by their own will and no compensation was received for their participation. All participants lived in the greater Los Angeles or San Francisco Bay Area and were able to participate in one-on-one in person or teleconference interviews. This reduced possible differences between subjects due to regional characteristics or demographics.

Sample size. In qualitative studies, it is common to have small sample sizes. This is especially true in phenomenology where samples can be as small as one to three participants allowing the researcher to delve into the lived experience of each participant (Morse & Richards,

2002). In the case of this study, the sample size was somewhere between 10 to 20 participants

with the belief that this number allowed for a range of diversity within the category of single

mothers in high profile professional positions. The goal was to have variation within the

positions held, demographics, leadership styles, as well as supports used in maintaining and/or

establishing successful careers.

Data Collection

The initial data collected came from the eligibility survey. Once participants were

identified, the researcher contacted them and ensured that they meet the eligibility criteria. The

researcher then scheduled an interview date and time. The interview protocol was developed to

yield information in line with the focus of the research questions of the study. Interviews were

scheduled to take place in person when possible. If an in person interview was not feasible,

interviews took place via videoconference. The interview protocol was administered on a one-

on-one basis in an environment free from distraction allowing at least three hours of

uninterrupted time. Whenever possible, participants were served refreshments. Participants were

asked permission for the interviewer to digitally voice record the interview and were asked to

sign a consent form. The researcher recorded each interview and took notes. The Interview

Protocol (see Appendix A) questions were asked in order with clarifying questions asked as

necessary. The main interview questions gathered the bulk of the data for the study. At the

conclusion of the main interview questions participants were invited to add any information they

felt was useful to the study. Immediately following the face-to-face interview, participants took

the MLQ. MLQ results were e-mailed to the researcher upon completion and scoring. The

researcher

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Invitational e-mail and self-│
│ screening                    │
│ Appendix B                   │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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              ◇ ──────────────────────▶ ( Exit )
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Eligibility Survey          │
│ Appendix C                  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ◇ ──────────────────────▶ ( INTERVIEW )
              │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Interview Protocol          │
│ Appendix A                  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Schedule Interview          │
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│  INTERVIEW                  │
│                             │
│ Informed Consent            │
│ Agreement                   │
│ Appendix D                  │─────────▶ ┌──────────────┐
│                             │           │   MLQ        │
│                             │           └──────────────┘
│ Interview Protocol          │
│ Appendix A                  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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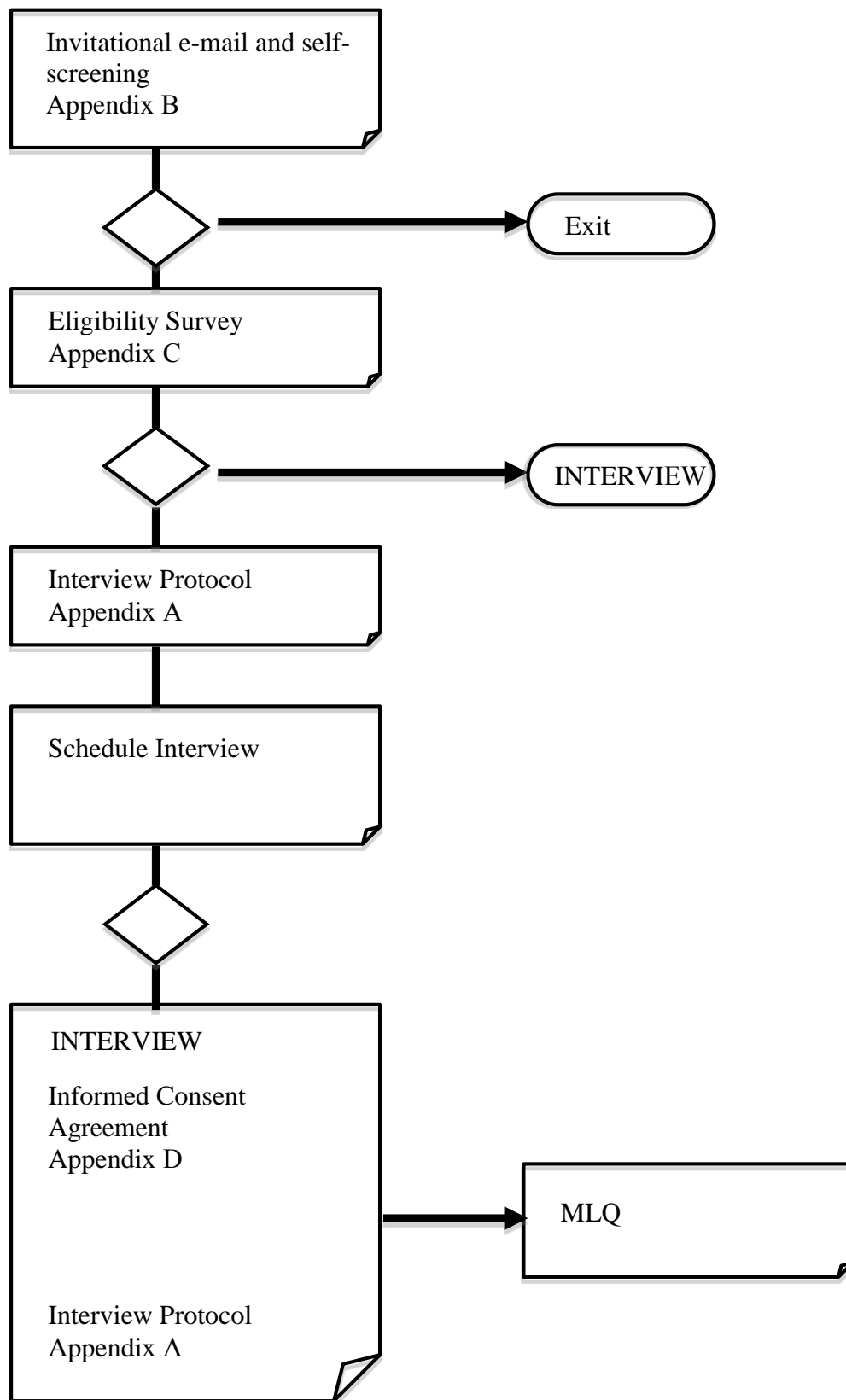
Figure 1. Participant flow chart.   69

transcribed each interview response immediately following the interview by listening to the

recording at least two times. The first review of the recording and transcription served to fill in

any missing data. The second review of the transcription and recording served to check for

accuracy. Once all interviews were completed and transcribed the data was coded question-by-

question utilizing a data table allowing for the researcher to sort for naturally occurring major

themes. The interviewer had a subsequent meeting with each participant either in person or via

videoconference or telephone call for member checking purposes, sharing major themes, and

reviewing MLQ results and analysis. All data was handled carefully and in accordance with

Pepperdine University's protocol. Paper data is kept in a locked file cabinet, electronic data is

password protected and all data will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study.

Interview process. The interview protocol was based on the life course framework

(Giele, 2008). This is an appropriate framework to use when looking at passages in one's life.

This framework was used in the dissertation of both Krymis (2011) and Almestica (2012). The

interview protocol was as follows:

1. Tell me about yourself as a single mother in a high profile position?

2. What is your motivation for being in the career you are in now?

3. What kind of supports have helped in your role as a single mother in a high
   profile position?

4. How has being a single mother in a high profile position impacted the way
   you interact with and/or rely on others for support?

5. What is your leadership style as a single mother?

Life Course Framework	
Identity	**Motivation/Drive**
RQ1-How do single mothers identify themselves? IPQ1. Tell me about yourself as a single mother in a high profile position. Code Words - Work Role - Family Role - Age and Education - Relationship Status Probes Please elaborate on: - Your work role? - Your family role? - Your age and education? - Your relationship status?	RQ2-What motivations drive single mothers in high profile positions? IPQ2. What is your motivation for being in the career you are in now? Code Words <table><tr><td> - Mentor/Coach - Money - Personal fulfillment - Leadership - Schedule - Autonomy </td><td> - Confidence - Job satisfaction - Professional accomplishments - Success with children - Educational achievement </td></tr></table> Probes Probe for other motivation possibilities that have not been addressed.
Adaptive	**Relational Style**
RQ3 - What supports do single mothers use to adapt to their personal and professional roles? IPQ3. What kinds of supports have helped in your role as a single mother in a high profile position? Code Words - Support from work - Support from friends - Social support - Paid support - Internal support - Support from other parent Probes Probe for other adaptive supports not addressed.	RQ4 - What is the leadership style of single mothers? IPQ4. How has being a single mother in a high profile position impacted the way you interact with and/or rely on others for support? Code Words - New relationships - Reciprocal relationships - Paid relationships (Nanny, Babysitter, Housekeeper, afterschool programs, pay for play venues) - Child Care Probes Probe for relational style supports that have not been mentioned RQ5. What is your leadership style as a single mother? - Answered by MLQ results

Figure 2. Life Course Framework – the interview protocol. Adapted from "Life stories to understand diversity variations by class, race, and gender." By J. Z. Giele, 2008. In G. H. Elder, Jr. & J. Z. Giele (Eds.), *The craft of life course studies* (pp. 236–257). Copyright 2008 by Guilford Press.

The dimensions of the Life Course Framework (Fig. 2) are the interview protocol

questions, code words and probes into four quadrants. In the Identity quadrant, tell me about

yourself, as a single mother in a high profile position was the interview question. The code

words that manifested are Work role, Family role, age and education, and relationship status. If

any of the possible Identity codes were not mentioned in the participant's responses, the

researcher probed for the missing possible identity code words. In the Motivation/Drive

quadrant, what is your motivation for being in the career you are in now, was the interview

question. The code words that manifested are mentor/coach, money, personal fulfillment,

leadership, schedule, autonomy, confidence, job satisfaction, professional accomplishments,

success with children, and educational achievement. If any of the possible motivation/drive

codes were not mentioned in the participant's responses, the researcher probed for the missing

possible identity code words. In the adaptive quadrant, what kinds of supports have helped in

your role as a single mother in a high profile position, was the interview question.

The code words that manifested were support from work, support from friends, social

support, paid support, internal support, and support from other parent. If any of the possible

adaptive codes were not mentioned in the participant's responses, the researcher probed for the

missing possible identity code words. How has being a single mother in a high profile position

impacted the way you interact with and/or rely on others for support was the first interview

question in the relational style quadrant. The code words that manifested are new relationship,

reciprocal relationships, paid relationships, and childcare. If any of the possible codes were not

mentioned in the participant's responses, the researcher probed for the missing possible

Relational Style code words. The single mother's leadership style was the second question in the quadrant; this was answered by the participant taking the MLQ.

Confidentiality of Human Subjects

It is the ethical concern of the researcher to ensure that all subjects are comfortable answering the research questions. Prior to beginning the research process, this study underwent Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Pepperdine University. It is the policy of Pepperdine University that all research involving human participants/subjects must be conducted in accordance with accepted ethical, federal, and professional standards for research and that all such research must be approved by one of the university's Institutional Review Boards (Pepperdine IRB, 2009). According to federal law researchers have an obligation to protect participants from harm resulting from participating in the study. Federal code (45 CFR 46.112) mandates the IRB process be followed, protecting human subjects and ensuring human rights. Upon completion of the IRB process (see Appendix E), the interview process began.

Prior to each interview, participants were informed of the nature of the questions to be asked, they were informed that the study is voluntary, and were asked to complete and sign a participant informed consent form. Participants were notified that data gathered are intended to help other single mothers and are not intended to bring them harm in any way. Although completion of interviews was appreciated, if for any reason the participant was uncomfortable answering the questions she may stop at any time. This study did not intend to bring any harm to the participants nor their families and all information is presented in a way that protects participant confidentiality. Names of the participants have been changed to help assure

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anonymity. Data collected during the research process was handled in accordance with Pepperdine University's protocol.

Data Gathering Instruments

The process of gathering data in a qualitative study most frequently involves observations and/or interviews. In this case, one-on-one interviews were used. In addition to the interview protocol, the eligibility survey provided basic information about all interested participants and helped to ensure that possible participants met the eligibility requirements. Results from the selected participants were utilized as data in this study. All data was handled in a secure manner and was used for research purposes only. All written and audio files were stored in a locked file cabinet, which only the researcher has access to. Electronic files were password protected. All files will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

Participant eligibility to be included in the study. Potential participants were solicited (see Appendix B). They were granted access to participate in the survey only if they met the criteria through the eligibility survey (see Appendix C). The eligibility survey questions were:

1. Given the definition of single by chance, do you consider yourself a single mother by chance?

2. How would you classify your relationship status at this time?

3. While a single parent, were/are you the primary caretaker of the child or children?

4. How long have you been a single parent?

5. What is your current occupation?

6. Do you reside in the greater Los Angeles or San Francisco Bay Area?

Based on the results of the single mother eligibility survey, they were given a letter that they met the criteria or that they did not meet the criteria (see Appendix F and G). The interview process began with the participants being asked to complete an informed consent agreement, (see Appendix D). The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was administered following the signing of the informed consent agreement. After completing the interview, the MLQ survey was administered.

The overarching research question was what supports do single mothers in high profile positions use to create and/or sustain success? This question was answered by the following five research questions.

1. How do single mothers identify themselves?

2. What motivations drive single mothers in high profile positions?

3. What supports do single mothers use to adapt to their personal and professional roles?

4. What relational styles do single mothers in high profile positions possess?

5. What is the leadership style of single mothers?

The research questions 1 through 4 are reflected closely as open-ended questions in the interview protocol. They were followed up with probing questions as necessary. Question 5 was answered by the results of the MLQ. These questions were designed to get a sense of the commonalities of experiences and to try to get a sense of what supports were utilized to achieve and/or maintain success. Participants were able to talk freely after answering the set interview questions allowing for additional information to inform the study.

Table 4

Research Question Matrix

Research Question	How Studied?	How Obtained	Phenomenological Existential	Appendix
What are the strongest support mechanisms associated with single mothers at work that have enabled them to be successful in their career?	Phenomenological Qualitative	In Person Interview	Temporality	A
What are the most utilized family supports that have enabled single mothers to be successful?	Phenomenological Qualitative	In Person Interview	Temporality Relationality	A
What are the top internal traits that single mothers rely upon most to successfully navigate their personal and professional life?	Phenomenological Qualitative	In Person Interview	Temporality Corporality	A
What role have these supports played in the success of single mothers?	Phenomenological Qualitative	In Person Interview	Temporality	A
What is the leadership style of single mothers?	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire	In Person Survey following interview	Spatiality Relationality	

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked to take the MLQ (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The MLQ was used as a data-gathering instrument in this proposed study. The MLQ is a well-used tool in leadership research and has been proven to be valid. In considering which survey tool to use for this study, other tools such as the SPELIT power index survey (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007) and the VIA (University Of Pennsylvania, 2006) were considered. It was determined that due to the type of comparison necessary; the MLQ would best fit this study. The version used was the online format that was scored and analyzed by the distributor, Mind Garden. In order to utilize the MLQ, a license was purchased. The purchase of this license occurred immediately following the approval of the IRB process (see Appendix H).

The results from the online MLQ were considered along with the responses to the third interview question to provide a comprehensive view of the top internal traits of successful single mothers in high profile professional positions. In order to guarantee completeness of the data set, participants were asked to complete this survey during the interview time slot and not at a later date or time. The MLQ manual, created by Avolio et al. (2004), allows for researchers to "review the validity of a broader and fuller range of leadership styles using the most commonly employed measure of transformational and transactional leadership" (p. 1). The MLQ is frequently utilized in dissertation and thesis studies as it provides "a concise computerized feedback form" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 3). The MLQ "includes items that measure a leader's effect on both the personal and intellectual development of self and others. Leaders must develop themselves in order to effectively develop others" (p. 4).

In this study, the MLQ (5X-Short) form was utilized, as it is now the only version in print. A license to administer the MLQ was purchased from Mind Garden. "The MLQ contains 45 items that identify and measure key leadership and effectiveness behaviors shown in prior research to be strongly linked with both individual and organizational success. Each of the nine leadership components along a full range of leadership styles is measured by four highly inter-correlated items that are as low in correlation as possible with items of the other eight components" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 12). "Few leadership instruments include both leadership and outcome items. The inclusion of both allowed [the researcher] to compare leadership on the one hand with performance outcomes in the same instrument" (p. 9). Results of the MLQ were forwarded directly from Mind Garden to the researcher. The researcher then analyzed the results looking for trends, similarities, and differences amongst the participants. As a gesture of thanks, participants were given their MLQ results as well as the researcher's analysis as feedback.

Validity of Data Gathering Instruments

In qualitative studies, validity refers to the carefulness of the researcher in ensuring accuracy, which is done by following procedures with precision (Creswell, 2009). Creswell proclaims that there are eight main strategies for ensuring validity in qualitative research: triangulation, member checking, the use of rich, thick description, clarifying bias, presenting negative or discrepant information, spending prolonged time in the field, using peer debriefing to enhance accuracy, and employing the use of an external auditor. In the case of this study, the researcher utilized 5 of the 8 strategies. First, member checking during the MLQ results sharing occurred after the interview data are analyzed. Second, the use of rich, thick description is of the essence in setting the stage for a non-single mother to be able to fully understand the lived

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experience of the participants. Because the results were intended to shed light on a typically

misunderstood uncharacteristic segment of a marginalized population, more stories will aid in

achieving understanding. Third, clarifying bias was a very important element in this study in

respect to self as instrument as the researcher had the lived experience of being a single parent.

While it is impossible to not be influenced by biases, when researchers are in touch with their

own possible bias and share what is influencing their view, trust is formed between the audience

and the researcher assuring the reader that the author is aiming for an honest account of the

issues at hand. Fourth, sharing negative or discrepant information, if any, will show that the

researcher was honest with data reporting and not simply trying to push an agenda. This further

builds the trust relationship between the researcher and the reader. Fifth, peer debriefing

occurred with at least two peers not belonging to the single mother population. Academic

discussion regarding a work in progress allowed the researcher to think deeply about the subject

and be able to better relate to readers of different orientations possibly making the information

useful to a wider population (Creswell, 2009).

   According to Krymis (2011), "codes are short-hand terms (such as identity, relationships,

and family) that are used to categorize units of texts". Also in line with the Krymis (2011)

dissertation, the data was entered into the NVivo software along with the emerging codes and

were sorted accordingly. Similarly to the Almestica (2012) dissertation, this phenomenological

study also follows life course framework presented in the works of Giele (2008) and Elder and

Giele (2009) for interview protocol design and data collection. In following with the Evans, L.,

(2010) dissertation, this study used an expert panel of experienced researchers all holding

doctorates to review and validate the interview protocol questions. They were asked to look at

each of the four interview protocol questions and rate if they are individually effective or ineffective needing modification.

Reliability of Data Gathering Instruments

The reliability of interviews in a qualitative study lies in the carefulness of the researcher. It is important to check the interview transcripts to make sure no glaring mistakes are present skewing or tainting the data in any way. It is important to make sure that coding procedures are clear and consistent (Gibbs, 2008). It is possible for researchers to introduce inconsistency by not referring to coding measures throughout the coding process. In this case, there was a single researcher who maintained reliability in the data by being careful about coding data, referring to code throughout the process and by taping each interview and transcribing immediately after the interview, playing each tape back at least two complete times checking for accuracy. Transferring data to an online survey tool allowed the researcher to utilize the embedded coding tools. The researcher also conducted a mock interview before the actual interviews began to make certain that the interview protocol was streamlined and in an effort to avoid any mid-process changes. The mock interview was performed on a single mother in a high profile professional position, who does not qualify for this study due to geographical location.

The MLQ is complete with its own reliability. The number of raters can vary from leader only, 3 to 10, or more. "The MLQ (5X short), contains 45 items that identify and measure key leadership and effectiveness behaviors shown in the prior research to be strongly linked with both individual and organizational success" (Avolio, Yammarino & Bass, 1991, p. 12). "Currently, except for a minimum number of three raters, no specific optimal size for the rater group can be suggested for evaluating a single leader" (Avolio et al., 1991, p. 12). However,

"there is more variability in MLQ ratings of a designated leader as the number of the leader's raters increases" (Avolio et al., p. 12).

"Preliminary findings suggest that while age is unrelated to MLQ results, female leaders tend to score higher in transformational and lower in transactional leadership than their male counterparts" (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996 as cited in Avolio et al., 1991, p. 13). "There has been no evidence to indicate any systematic difference in ratings as a function of race or ethnicity of the rater group or target leader" (Avolio et al., p. 13).

The MLQ was used in one study to determine if there is a correlation between emotional intelligence (EQ) and transformational leadership. Barling, Slater, and Kelloway (2000) found that EQ is associated with the use of transformational leadership particularly according to idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration.

> Leaders in collectivist cultures have a moral responsibility to take care of their followers, to help them in their career plans, to attend their birthday parties, funeral ceremonies, and to counsel followers about personal problems. In turn, followers have a moral obligation to reciprocate with unquestioning loyalty and obedience. (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 39)

"Generally, prior evidence indicates that women leaders are more transformational than their male counterparts, accompanied by greater satisfaction and rated effectiveness" (Bass, Avolio, and Atwater, 1996 as cited in Avolio et al., 2004, p. 40).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using NVivo10 software. This software has been used in similar dissertations (Almestica, 2012; Krymis, 2011) to look at subtle connections between the coded data. In addition, the data was analyzed using the themes generated from the life course

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framework: identity, relational style, drive/motivation style and adaptive style. Each of the themes corresponded to a question used in the interview protocol.

Summary

By utilizing qualitative research methods, this researcher performed a phenomenological study utilizing interview protocol and the MLQ to explore the lived experience of single mothers in high profile professional positions. The four open-ended interview questions provided new data about the supports single mothers in high profile professional positions used to obtain and/or maintain success. By following proven research strategies, the researcher strives to present a valid and reliable phenomenological study highlighting the lived experience of the participants. Resulting information answered the intended research questions as well as added to the body of research on single mothers and began to fill the vast gap of information that exists on single mothers in positive economic situations. The resulting data can also be of use to organizations providing service delivery to single mothers and to policy makers on local and federal levels.

Through the IRB process and researcher ethics, every precaution was used to ensure that human subjects are protected during the data gathering process. Through each step of the data gathering process, participants were asked to provide their informed consent by filling out the Single Mother Leadership Study Consent Form prior to the one on one interview. All data obtained from this study were utilized to add to the body of knowledge on single mothers in high profile professional positions, were protected while in use, stored securely, and disposed of safely 5 years after the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the findings of the one-on-one interviews with 18 single mother participants holding high profile professional positions. The 18 women were from diverse professions, including two Hollywood writer producers, two professors, a nurse, three school administrators / specialists, two consultants, a court official, five private sector Executives, and two entrepreneurs. All participants in this study identified as being highly educated. Seven had Bachelor's degrees, six had Masters degrees, five have Doctorate degrees or are working to achieve them, one has a Law degree, several have multiple degrees and other industry related certifications. The identity of each participant was protected in the data sharing as to maintain anonymity.

The results were presented according to the five research questions, which are aligned with the life course framework presented by Giele (2008). Through the data analysis process, this study aimed to present single mothers in a more positive light than the traditional view. All of the single mothers interviewed are professionals as well as the primary caretakers of their child(ren). The stories shared help to present a phenomenological view of what it is like to be a single mother in a high profile professional position. During the interviews several of the mothers shared words of advice to provide encouragement to single mothers who might not find themselves at the same level of economic stability.

RQ1: How do single mothers identify themselves?

This single mother population self identified as resilient, passionate, and focused about their professional and personal lives; each consciously schedules, plans and devotes herself to obtain her individual standard of excellence in both areas. The first research question is aligned

to the Identity theme of the Life Course framework. The interview question is: Tell me about

yourself as a single mother in a high profile position? From the results, nine naturally occurring

codes emerged and were entered as nine nodes into the NVivo Software.

Table 5

Identity Theme (NVivo Software): Identity Nodes, Sources and References

Identity Nodes	# Sources	# References
Primary Parent	11	15
Relationship Status	11	13
Resilient	11	15
Work Role	10	17
Provider	9	12
Educated	8	11
Scheduled	8	9
Parenting Style	4	4
Role Model	3	6

The nine nodes for Identity are Primary Parent, Relationship Status, Resilient, Work

Role, Provider, Educated, Scheduled, Parenting Style, and Role Model. The Primary Parent,

Relationship Status, and Resilient nodes tied for having the most sources, with 11 each. The

node with the most references was Work Role, with 17 references from ten sources. Each node

was discussed below in order of the number of sources and references.

In the Primary Parent node, participants spoke of their experience of being the primary parent. Participant 17 indicated, "From day one I did most of the parenting. Not that he was a bad parent; he just didn't know how to be a parent. I did most of everything in regards to her" (Participant 17, personal communication, January 24, 2015). Some spoke of their current stage of motherhood or position in the parenting cycle. Participant 6 stated,

I am the mom and the dad and am always taking the time to be conscious of how I am dividing that time and making sure that their needs are being met, especially since their dad is not involved, I am always consciously trying to create opportunities for them to spend time with men. (personal communication, December 29, 2014)

Some spoke of the age they became a mom, such as teen mom, young mom, and older mom. This node had 11 sources with 15 references. Some also referred to relationship status, which was addressed in more detail later. Personal details are not included with participant comments, as participants need to remain anonymous. The following comments are a good representation of participant responses for their experiences as the primary parent.

The Resilient node represents a participant's drive to move forward with work and/or parenting regardless of the other parent's influence/involvement. Such as, "So I have found a way to create a tribe in my life and I have dedicated resources to it" (Participant 11, personal communication, January 20, 2015). Many spoke of pushing past fear, taking control of finances, and internal traits that helped foster resiliency. Participant 13 illustrates it best,

The biggest struggle that I had to deal with was financially going from a double income to single income plus providing for childcare and working as an administrator in a school where I had to worry about dropping my kid off early in the morning and then picking

him up in the evenings with no additional support or help to do that, so it was a big

adjustment for me. (personal communication, January 21, 2015)

In the Relationship Status node, participants spoke of how they became a single mother.

This included divorce as with participant 18 who shared the following:

I was married and never thought I would be a single mother, although when I was

married, I felt like a single mother as I always had the primary responsibility of taking

care of the children. Their father worked very long hours and was mostly absent during

the week and chose to be absent during the weekends. I became single officially when

the children were very young. (personal communication, January 16, 2015)

or becoming a widow as with participant 13, who states: "I became a single mother with the

death of my husband" (personal communication, January 21, 2015) or other more complicated

relationship issues such as a relationship never materializing, or personal choice which was the

case with participant 10, who shared the following: "I got pregnant, I wasn't married. Decided

not to marry my son's father. We have a very amicable relationship. He sees him a couple of

times a week and he is remarried" (personal communication, January 19, 2015). It was in this

node that the other parent was spoken of most. Throughout most of the interviews most

participants rarely referenced the other parent and spoke mostly of personal experiences.

In the Work Role node participants spoke of how they came to their current work role,

the path they followed to get to where they are now, and the changes they had to implement upon

becoming a single mother. Participant 10 shares:

I was fortunate enough to get a couple of positions where I was not required to be on site

every day so I was able to spend much more time at home parenting, which was really

important to me and I also understand that those decisions that I made also impacted my professional trajectory so I wasn't able to really work in my given profession in the capacity that I desired like a lot of my male colleagues because I made a choice to take positions that allowed me the flexibility without necessarily the status. (personal communication, January 19, 2015)

Some mothers spoke of the challenges they face in their work role and the relevance to them being a single mother. For example:

I work in an environment that is wildly disproportionately male and the vast majority of my colleagues are married men most of whom have children in the home and almost every last one of them is married. It is interesting – I try to minimize that I am a single parent – everyone knows that about me in the workplace, but I try not to call attention to myself for that because I don't want it to be a factor of how people relate to me in the workplace, but I am kind of aware as I interact with these guys that they have a far more reliable and stronger support system than I do. (Participant 5, personal communication, December 22, 2014)

Throughout the responses, there was an element of personal reflection. Challenges were faced, but then out of those stories, you could see how changes occurred, some slower than others, but ultimately some reflected on how their career was able to change as the children grew older.

In the Provider node, participants spoke of their role as being the primary provider for their child/children. While providing can be seen strictly from a monetary perspective, it can also impact other areas. One participant addressed this in her response:

Mainly, I am the bread-winner. I make significantly more money than he does, so the

financial responsibilities of raising the child 99% of the time fell on my lap. I took the

ball and ran with it and did everything that I needed to make sure that I provided for my

son, to make sure that he was in a stable environment with me, even though his dad

wasn't always stable, but one thing for sure, he knew what stability looked like on my

side. He lived in the same place all his life, the same home, same school district from

preschool to high school, and then my family is very much involved in his life on my

side. (Participant 2, personal communication, December 8, 2014)

Many references were financially based, however, many looked at time, experiences,

stability and moves they made to be able to better provide. Being the primary provider also

influenced career decisions and those elements that would require time and resources. Participant

10 briefly speaks of this: "So I chose to go into positions that would pay me what I needed to be

paid and to give me the flexibility to be a mother for the first four years of my career" (personal

communication, January 19, 2015). Being able to be the provider had a myriad of facets, not just

financial. Resource allocation played a major role throughout the course of their lives and as it

pertained to the varied decisions needed to be made. In the Educated node participants spoke of

their education. It was clear that in some instances, obtaining an education was a significant

accomplishment that came with some challenges and feelings of guilt. For example:

I started an adventure as a doctoral student at USC. I tried to talk myself out of it,

because how would I get to school and pick up my child, how would I deal with getting

his education together and being all that he needed and going to school at the same time

and to be honest, I felt like it was selfishness on my part, because as a doctoral student it

wasn't only the classes that were in the evening, I worked all day, but I had evening

classes that started at 4:30 and ended about 10:30 at night. (Participant 13, personal

communication, January 21, 2015)

Some spoke of the completion of their education goals as giving them permission to have a child

as a single mother. Their education provided them with a sense of control, they knew where they

were, where they were going and thus allowing for the challenges that could potentially arrive.

Participant 7 further explains:

I had her when I was 29.5 although that is considered young, that is old in mom years. I

had completed undergrad. I was doing some graduate studies at the time of her birth.

That is why I decided to have her because of where I was in my life. Six months from

turning 30 - so I didn't feel like the option to not have her was one that I could make

responsibly as I was a real grown up. My age and education had an impact on my

decision to keep her, knowing that I would be a single parent. I had a job, was working

within my career, I knew academically I was where I wanted to be in my life. (personal

communication, January 15, 2015)

Other respondents spoke of education as a way to provide more for their child/children. It

allowed for them to move beyond the perceived stigma of being a single mother to someone that

could face challenges and overcome obstacles.

In the Scheduled node participants spoke of time, schedules, priorities, and the busyness

of being a working single mother. One respondent simply indicated that "It required me to be

very well organized" (Participant 16, personal communication, January 23, 2015). Further

comments within this node range from how this group of single mothers organize themselves,

what pressures they face, to creating systems of redundancy. The most common issue that arose

in this node came from the lack of time, participant 3 states: "Really busy is an understatement.

My days started between 4:30 and 5am and I wouldn't get home until 7pm. This was really

challenging for myself and my son" (personal communication, December 13, 2014), while

participant 7 states the following: "Schedule… Normally time works against me. There is never

enough time" (personal communication, January 15, 2015). Through these conversations it

became evident that although these women are accomplished in their own right, they still require

the necessary supports in order to maintain sanity in their day-to-day activities.

In the Parenting Style node, participants spoke of their priorities of motherhood. In most

cases, the mothers had very strong opinions about their own roles and priorities, Participant 11

especially spoke of her own abilities and choices, she states:

> I am a great mom and I am a very hands on mom and I love my kid a lot. I have worked
>
> hard to schedule my life so that I can be in her life, so that I can take her to school and so
>
> I can have dinner with her every night and that said, the way that I do that is that I have a
>
> huge amount of help. I just had a meeting with my accountant and he said you know your
>
> only really big indulgence is childcare. (Participant 11, personal communication, January
>
> 20, 2015)

Participant 11, in her response speaks to her ability to be present to her child, however, imbedded

in her response is the idea that her focus and priority is solely to her child as noted by her

accountant. Further some other respondents alluded to how they manage to do everything and

still be the type of mother they want to be. This is noted in the previous respondents answer but

also is a choice based on outside circumstances and choices; for example participant 18 also

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speaks to motherhood in terms of choice and timing she goes on to say: "I mostly worked on my own and taught at nights, so it didn't interfere much with my time with them. This was by design. I felt that I waited so long to be a mother that I really wanted to be present for them" (personal communication, January 16, 2015). Her choice in career paths along with the previous respondents was driven by her want to be present to her children.

In the Role Model node, participants spoke of being a role model at home with their children, one respondent in particular wrote about wanting to set the example for her son, she wanted him to see beyond the challenges and establish positive example, she elaborates further:

> I wanted to be a good example for my son so he could know that even though you have to
>
> go by yourself sometime, this is what mommy does. I want him to know about work
>
> ethic. I want him to know that it takes hard work. I want him to know that you just don't
>
> come by things. They are just not handed to you. (Participant 3, personal
>
> communication, December 13, 2014)

Others focused their responses on the career facet of their lives, they sought out opportunities to mentor others and give back. They derived a sense of accomplishment and had growth opportunities by serving in mentoring capacities. Participant 17 expands on this idea, she states:

> to lead these efforts and also to mentor and guide people that were coming up behind me
>
> and the people that work for me so there is more of a knowledge transition so mentoring
>
> and training people that work for me as I am doing this job is great. It is rewarding from
>
> that perspective. (personal communication, January 23, 2015)

Respondents looked at this question from a varied perspective. Where some looked internally at how they could be mentors, others also thought about personal development. They spoke of

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seeing out potential role models for themselves, individuals that they then could model or pattern themselves after. The goal being to achieve growth and success in motherhood as well as business.

RQ2: What motivations drive single mothers in high profile positions?

The single mothers in this population are motivated by a high level of passion for both their work, and parenting their children, including providing a comfortable lifestyle and rich involvement in their children's lives. The second research question is aligned to the Motivation dimension of the Life Course framework. The interview question is: What is your motivation for being in the career you are in now? Answers to this interview question flowed naturally for participants. From the results, four naturally occurring codes emerged and were entered as four nodes into the NVivo Software. The four nodes for motivation were, Conducive to Being a Single Mother, Intrinsic, Lifestyle, and Value. The node with the most sources and references was Conducive to Being a Single Mother. Each node is discussed below in order of the number of sources and references.

Table 6

Motivation Theme (NVivo Software): Motivation Nodes, Sources, References

Motivation Nodes	# Sources	# References
Conducive to Being a Single Mother	15	24
Intrinsic	14	26
Lifestyle	6	8
Value	4	5

In the Conducive to Being a Single Mother node, participants related their experiences around their work schedules and expectations. In most cases their decisions were based on outside factors, such as career demands, relationship situations and parental priorities. Participant 11 felt driven to change her career at a significant financial impact as a result of the relationship she had with her ex, she goes on to share the following:

It has changed. I went from running network television shows. I took a huge pay cut in order to just consult on shows and write pilots and work from home so I could be with her. When I was running that show and I was married, I never was able to pick her up from school or drop her off even one day. After my divorce, I pretty radically changed my career. I left (a top television show) so that I could be with her more. It was my utter motivation that I wanted to be a more hands on mom, especially in the wake of the divorce. It was like I can't have him, he who now hates me, that's not the case anymore, but at the time, I can't have him be the primary influence in her life. When you are partnered with someone and you love each other and you have the same lessons to teach and same skillset and same whatever for you child, then it is one thing to be at work all the time and come home just before bed, but when you guys have split and it is like there are caretakers that are paid taking care of her when she is in your house, but daddy is going to be with her in his house and now he hates you, it's like, it doesn't work. [Laughing]… So yeah, that was the primary reason I left that job. (Participant 11, personal communication, January 20, 2015)

Where participant 11 spoke of having to make a significant shift in her career as a result of becoming a single mother, the change that others spoke of were similar in that they required

flexible work schedules, overall flexibility, low travel, being able to be available for kids, deliberate design of time, and advancement. In contrast to that, participant 17 indicated that she had a lucrative career and as a result of that career she was able to provide in a way that otherwise wouldn't have been possible. She adds the following:

> The field that I am in is a very highly recognized position within aerospace. It is one of the best-kept secrets. The programs that I support have been on the incentive bonus plan and I've been on it for 15 years. Where you get 15-40% target bonuses based on your performance and I have always performed in the top 5% and continuously have done that for the last decade plus so it has afforded me the opportunity to be able to have things that I probably wouldn't have had had I not been in this position and to be able to be self-sufficient and not have to be worried about where the next meal is coming from or how she is going to get through the next semester of school it was a factor to stay in this field.
>
> (Participant 17, personal communication, January 24, 2015)

It should also be noted that respondents also indicated that as their children got older, and their needs began shifting, overall work situations began to change. They focus when from being a single mother and taking care of the children, to that of a career minded individual focused on growth and development.

In the Intrinsic node, participants referred to being naturally driven, passionate, being able to utilize their skill set, and being good at their job. In some cases respondents indicated that their children were a driving forces, as the focus has shifted over time, they realize that their contribution is their own, while their children serve as a vehicle for motivation. Participant 7 further expands on this:

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My motivation as I get ready to embark upon 40 has changed. It is for me. Of course it

is to succeeded and show my daughter you can do it. I admire sometimes my own

strength and that is driven by her, my need and necessity to take care of her and to not let

her miss out or feel that she is missing out on anything. (personal communication,

January 15, 2015)

Additionally, where some respondents attributed their motivation to their children, others just

really liked the job, such as participant 17 who states "I am good at what I do. I have negotiated

multi-billion dollar contracts and it is a good feeling to have been in charge" (personal

communication, January 24, 2015). The satisfaction received from the work she does is the

intrinsic motivator that allows her to feel accomplished. While that is the case with participant

17, participant 15 has a different approach in that she wants to give back through her work. It

isn't about personal gain, profit margins or setting an example for her children, in her case it is

about advocating for those who cannot do for themselves. She further states the following:

I have a passion for working in the field of public policy and making sure that resources

reach communities that don't always have the most high profile or most effective

advocates. My background is public policy and organizational development and

management so being able to use that skill set to help communities that are important to

me inspires me to do the things that I do. (Participant 15, personal communication,

January 22, 2015)

As demonstrated in the varied responses, the motivating factors were intrinsic, how they

manifested though were very different. While some leaned more towards the job being

personally rewarding, other participants showed pride in being able to help people, be role

models, and have influence. Something they all shared was their ability meet personal goals and use their education in order to do what they loved doing.

In the Lifestyle node, participants spoke of being able to provide for kids in various ways. However, the predominant thought was around money and having enough of it to do what was needed at the time. In some instances, becoming a single mother meant that changes needed to be made, as with participant 13 who states:

I needed to make more money, because now I was head of household. And as much as I loved the classroom and teaching, being a single parent, I had a mortgage, car note, childcare, I needed more funds to help me do that. So I was able to augment the income by going into administration. (personal communication, January 21, 2015)

Being able to provide often times meant making the necessary changes in that moment. However this too was impacted as the children go older. Participant 10 adds: "I can now make the money that I want to make. I don't have to work a full time job, so I am able to be flexible and available. And that opportunity came as he got older" (Participant 10, personal communication, January 19, 2015). Money is an important factor because it allows for the additional resources to provide experiences, allows for the mother to be a role model and fosters a healthy environment through job security, benefits and career longevity.

In the value node, participants spoke of their work being important, being able to affect change and having influence in their work role. As single mothers, the duality between being a mother and a career professional provides for a blending of roles. Participant 6 demonstrates this in her statement:

Part of why I have gotten all of these degrees is that because in education you don't have

the luxury to mess up. Kids really need as much as you can give them. There is no area

for error. They are already behind. Now that I have my own, I can see the huge

difference of what I've offered to my kids through experience and taking them places and

all of that stuff that I see that isn't happening. (personal communication, December 29,

2014)

They can further see how their impact has a trickle-down effect, it is through this lens that values

begin to manifest into action. As Participant 13 also states: "I wanted to effect change rather

than be affected by it and I wanted to have some influence on the decisions in education and

teaching in my school" (personal communication, January 21, 2015). As change begins to occur

it demonstrates the level of importance that the respondents influence has within their work

settings.

RQ3: What supports do single mothers use to adapt to their personal and professional

roles?

The single mothers in this study all utilized some sort of support. Although they wove

their support networks differently from a variety of sources, they all used support in some way.

The degree to which they utilized support varied and formed a naturally occurring continuum

spanning from "no support", to "support is essential". The third research question is aligned to

the Adaptive dimension of the Life Course framework. The interview question is what kind of

supports have helped in your role as a single mother in a high profile position? Answers to this

interview question flowed naturally for participants and very few probes were necessary. From

the results, 16 naturally occurring codes emerged and were entered as 16 nodes into the NVivo Software.

The 16 nodes for Adaptive (supports) were, Family, Friends, Internal, Paid Support, Work Support, Formal and Informal Support Groups, Mother, the Other Parent, Reciprocal Support, Spirituality, Upbringing, Therapist, Government, Mentors, Self-Care, and the Child(ren). The node with the most sources and references was Family with 12 sources and 16 references. Each node is discussed below in order of the number of sources.

In the Family node, participants spoke of how family was used as support. Specifically, the respondents talked about how they felt about the familiar support they received, for example Participant 10 indicates that "My family is the greatest support" (personal communication, January 19, 2015). It was through the support of their family that many were able to maintain their career while still providing for their children. Participant 17 expands on this as well, she states: "I traveled a lot for work and I had a lot of good friends and family who were able to be there when I wasn't there so that she wasn't a latchkey child" (personal communication, January 24, 2015). It becomes evident, that the more family support that exists the more the respondents were able to do thus significantly contributing to the participants overall success.

In the Friends node, participants spoke of relying on existing friends for support as well as forming new friendships through their kids' activities and kids' friends to form new supports. The idea that it takes a village to raise a child is felt in the various support functions of those that surround single mothers. In many cases, women rely on the support of a significant group of people, whether that is family, friends and/or colleagues. The support can be minor or it can be significant, but support in general is what helps establish these participants. In the case of

Table 7

Adaptive Theme (NVivo Software): Adaptive (Support Nodes), Sources, References

Adaptive (Supports) Nodes	# Sources	# References
Family	12	16
Friends	11	13
Internal	11	13
Paid Support	11	16
Work Support	9	10
Formal & Informal Support Groups	8	11
Mother	8	12
Other Parent	8	10
Reciprocal Support	8	12
Spirituality	5	6
Upbringing	5	7
Therapist	3	3
Government	2	2
Mentors	2	2
Self-Care	2	2
The Child(ren)	2	2

Participant 15, she states:

> I have girlfriends when I have situations when I needed help with, they didn't hesitate.
>
> They were there either by phone or in person just to step in and help. I have a very strong

network of friends who stepped in and helped in ways that I didn't even know I needed.

They just see the need and make it happen. So I have very, very strong network of

friends and family that helped me as a single mom. (personal communication, January 22,

2015)

It is through this situational understanding that single mothers work in collaboration with their

support structures to make sure that their varied needs are met.

In the Internal node, participants spoke of being naturally driven, being leaders, being

independent, having determination, being innovators, relying on one's own strength and self.

This is also the area where self-knowing becomes critical. You need to understand your own

strengths and limitations. As Participant 11 states:

The mom that I want to be is different than the mom that some people want to be. I don't

have any need to go to a grocery store. I want to sit and play a game with her, so I pay

other people to go to the grocery store and to go to the bank and to do all of those things

that stress moms out. I don't have any tasks other than my job and playing with my kid.

Other people do everything else. And that is what makes me the super fun, super patient

mom that I am, because I know myself and patience is a thing that I struggle with in my

life. Instant gratification is my primary disease. And so if I am overwhelmed with tasks,

if I were the mom that had to get all of the shopping done and the cleaning done and

balance the checkbook, I would fail as a mom. I would be impatient and so I have the

resources to have a lot of help. One of the things that is required in order to set life up the

way I have is in addition to the financial resources or the physical space is I had to give

over control issues. I can't be one of those moms that has to control every aspect of her

day and every influence of her life. I cannot be a helicopter mom I can't need to be all up

in her shit all the time the way some moms do. I have had to bring in people that I love

and respect and trust and trust that even if they are doing something differently than I

would do it that they are doing it with love. I have had to let go of control in order to

have sanity and peace and serenity and joy in my everyday life. (Participant 11, personal

communication, January 20, 2015)

While Participant 11 knew what her limitations were, participant 18 fell on the other side of the

spectrum. Having a certain level of expectations about herself and her wants and needs created a

completely different dynamic as it pertains to her internal precepts. As she states "Internally, I

never saw failure as an option. I just did what I had to do to make it through. I rarely slept. I

would go from early morning until I passed out at night. I had a drive that wouldn't quit"

(personal communication, January 16, 2015). This isn't to say that one is less than the other, only

that different perceptions, interpretations and needs exists across the demographic.

In the Paid Support node, participants spoke of different means of facilitating their busy

lives through supports they pay for. This yielded a very interesting response from one

participant, in her case she states:

The support I do have is that in a given year when the problems of childcare come up or

whose going to watch my daughter, I can throw money at it and not think of it too much.

Activities – her doing stuff and being parts of teams be it volleyball or swimming, I can

afford it, so that is the upswing. When you are in a high profile position, the one thing

you have is money. The thing you don't have is time. So the down slope to that is

sometimes you just can't throw money at the problem and it just becomes a war of your

time that you just don't have. So it is finding a place where you are okay at failing at

something. (Participant 7, personal communication, January 15, 2015)

The implication in this response is that often times having the monetary resources isn't enough.

There are other constraints that impact the necessary supports such as time. However, in a

previous section, another respondent indicated that she had someone else do the day-to-day tasks

in order to afford her more time. So if structured appropriately, it stands to reason that time is

something that can be impacted through paid support services. Some of the paid supports that

were mentioned were childcare, after school programs, team sports, a nanny, housekeeper, a

personal assistant, organizations such as the YMCA, and pay for play establishments like

Giggles & Hugs and Under the Sea. According to Participant 18, "Pay for play establishments

where my children could play and be supervised by myself and the play assistants while I

worked" (personal communication, January 16, 2015) and while this was the case for some,

others were in different situations where no paid support was necessary due to the extensive

support structure as noted by participant 17, who states that "No paid support – I never had to do

that – she was either at my parents or my best friend's home" (personal communication, January

24, 2015).

In the Work Support node, participants spoke of flexible work environments, flexible

schedules, supportive bosses, and supportive coworkers. It became evident through the

responses of the participants, that having the work supports had a significant impact on their

ability to meet the needs of both their professional career but also their personal needs. As noted

by Participant 10, who states the following:

Having a position that is flexible has helped. Working for employers that are

sympathetic… So for example if my son was sick or if he needs to go to the doctor, or to

the dentist for his braces, working for employers who are flexible enough to say I

understand there is no one else to do that, and honestly as a single mother, there is no one

else that I want to do that. (personal communication, January 19, 2015)

As a result of these varied needs, it is critical for work support to be conducive and

understanding to the very specific needs of working single mothers. An organization or work

environment needs to allow for flexibility and individualized consideration. While some take

those attributes for granted, when it comes to single mothers they are critical to the success of the

individual. As noted by participant 5, she fully acknowledges the additional support mechanism

inherent in her work environment.

Work environment is also a support. I know that worst case scenario, someone on my

team will be able to cover for me at the meeting or pick up an additional bit of workload

or babysit a project until I am able to get back online in a couple of hours. If I didn't

have my team that reports to me here, it would be a different can of worms. Much

greater tension in the workplace. (Participant 5, personal communication, December 22,

2014)

As more organizations develop a consideration for work-life balance, more and more

opportunities exist for working single mothers who rely on flexibility, consideration, and other

work supports in order to be successful.

In the Formal / Informal Support Groups node, participants spoke of finding support in formal established support groups for mothers like Mocha Moms and Jack & Jill. Participant 2 specifically cited the following;

> Being in Jack and Jill was wonderful for my son – he got a lot of experiences and learned a lot, but it was a good experience on me because I was a young mother in my 30's and most of the mothers were in their 40's and 50's and I was able to learn so much from them. They have no idea how they have touched my life, (personal communication, December 8, 2014)

Because the respondent had access to a wider array of experienced women she was able to learn from them which was directly tied to the environment she was in. This was also a way of creating an informal support group through her continued participation in the group.

As with anything, there is also other forms of learning groups. This node also identified informal groups that came together through friendships with other single moms or natural gravitation to other single mothers. As participant 15 noted:

> If I go back to my support network, there are just other women that have gone through other situations that they have been able to share with me. So that network combined with the experience that I have – has given me a sense of confidence or a circle of confidence that helps me do the other things that I do. (personal communication, January 22, 2015)

When you look at the various groups combined, it affords a sense of community that allows for continued growth, a sense of learning and a system of support that has contributed to the success of these women.

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In the Mother node, participants spoke of the support found in their own mothers. It spoke to the support received, the implications for their success and achievement as well as their overall attitude towards the support received. As noted with Participant 1, it is clear that the respondent clearly attributed her success to her mother's support.

> Certainly if it wasn't for primarily my mother's support, I probably wouldn't have been able to – well, I just think it would have been harder to maintain my job, or I would have had to put my daughter in daycare and would have been more stressed out dropping her off, picking her up and that sort of thing. (Participant 1, personal communication, December 5, 2014

This node is separate from family because mothers were spoken of almost as an extension of one's self. Many participants only relied on their mothers for primary support as noted by Participant 4, who states "My mother has been my number one support" (personal communication, December 13, 2014), because it did not feel like they were asking for help. Their mothers had helped them all of their lives so it was a very natural type of support.

In the Other Parent node, participants spoke of the support that came from the other parent. None of the participants that mentioned the other parent relied heavily on this type of support. As noted by Participant 1 who states:

> The other parent, there is some support, some financial support, there is court ordered child support. And, he does spend time with our daughter, but honestly it is more like a well, it is visitation, he is a visitor. He is not a… he doesn't do much parenting; he doesn't make any decisions about anything really, honestly. No direction, no guidance.

So he just visits, a couple times a month. So …some support – minimal. (personal

communication, December 5, 2014)

Some were able to enjoy the support that came from the other parent, as the relationship is

amicable. Two of the participants that were able to rely on the other parent for time support also

happened to have compensated the other parent well through settlements after the divorce

occurred and/or through child support. Most participants that spoke of support coming from the

other parent referred to money, time, and visitation, as is the case with Participant 10 who states:

Other parent… He has been supportive in some ways. I get every other weekend off and

that has been wonderful. He has been financially supportive in that way. I am very well

aware that I have had more support from the other parent than a lot of other single

mothers. (personal communication, January 19, 2015)

 The other parent, when involved had minimal impact on the overall support to the single mother,

except perhaps as it pertains to the notion of time off. Percentage of custody was not mentioned

in this study.

In the Reciprocal Support node, participants spoke of creating a tribe or village to help

with raising the child/children. Participant 2 noted the following: "I collaborated with other

moms and worked out our schedules and supported each other, carpool and we would pick up

each other's children" (personal communication, December 8, 2014). In establishing a

community with other mothers they were also sharing their home with housemates, carpooling,

play dates, and sharing responsibilities with their kids' friends' parents. Support can come in

from many directions looking very different to every person. For example participant 5 gives the

following example:

I've been lucky over the last 4 years ever since I started this corporate job about 4 years

ago, I have been having a friend living with me – in the last few months, my best friends

have moved in both of who have needed a place to live for free for an extended period of

time, so when I have my kids, there is almost always another adult at home, which really

has significantly lightened my load and has lightened the pressure to run home. (personal

communication, December 22, 2014)

Although her house guests aren't mothers themselves they still benefitted from the relationship

and provided support and help as needed thus allowing for the extended sense of community and

mutual support.

In the Spirituality node, participants spoke of having faith, spiritual focus, church, yoga,

exercise, and meditation.

Internally I am a woman of faith. I gather a lot of my strength in my faith. My faith in

God to give me peace, my faith in God to strengthen me, my faith in God to just calm my

spirit as well as hers and have clarity. (Participant 7, personal communication, January

15, 2015)

It is evident that faith can have a significant impact on a person's outlook. It allows for the

strength and resilience to persevere and move forward.

In the Upbringing node, some participants spoke of being raised by a single parent as a

roadmap and others spoke of their personal upbringing as a support and inspiration. In instances

where participants wrote of being raised by single moms, it was clear that the respondents held

their own mothers in high regard. They understand how difficult it truly was, even though they

were made to feel as though it was effortless.

I was raised by a single mother, so being a single parent wasn't foreign. I didn't know

how hard it was, my mother made it look easy with her three children. I did one and

thought, 'this is just ridiculous.' So I saw a mother who did it all, who had a career and

went back to school and got a degree and switched careers, who washed clothes and took

the car to the shop. So I saw that, so in turn, it wasn't my desire for this to happen, but it

wasn't foreign, so internally, a part of me had a blueprint in a sense, and so achieving the

things that I wanted to achieve and being there for my son, there was no choice, it was

not an option. (Participant 10, personal communication, January 19, 2015)

However, it should also be noted, that not all of the respondents come from single parent homes.

And those who came from two-parent homes had impactful experiences themselves that have

helped them shape their parenting style and parenting decisions.

In the Therapist node, participants spoke of utilizing a therapist to maintain and/or

achieve mental health during their time of transition, as well as to support themselves through the

child rearing stage. Seeking assistance from a therapist was essential to the ability of the

respondents to process their situation and move beyond any limiting behavior or thoughts.

Participant 11 goes on to share the following:

I have had 16 years of different kinds of therapy now. Ten years of group therapy, 12

years of talk therapy and 4 -5 years of different types of healing modality therapies. And I

prioritize that every week. (personal communication, January 20, 2015)

While some would see no value in its use, many find that seeking assistance is helpful and

readily work at growing and looking beyond the immediate challenges. As noted by Participant

4:

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I also have a therapist that I have gone to for 3 years now and she makes me look at things from a different perspective because I have a tendency to say it would have been better if my husband were here. And you don't tend to give yourself credit for the things that you do so she makes me stop and say so he is not here, but look at what I have done. For me, I feel like I am being arrogant but I have to realize that that is not the case and it is okay to build myself up. (personal communication, December 13, 2014)

In the Government node, 3 participants spoke of utilizing government assistance in their early stages of being a single mother. While some utilized public assistance, it is clear that it wasn't easy. Participant 8 shares the following:

Government Assistance… My mother dragged me down to the county building and made me get public assistance, which really ended up being a blessing because it assisted in every way. I got childcare and more financial aid to help support my daughter. I don't know how, but they helped push me through school and I was only on it for 5 months. But once you have that status, they really assist you. They see that you are trying to do it as a single mother and they help. It was kind of dehumanizing at times because of the way they talk to you. You have certain priorities, so you get your classes. I never got section 8, but I got food stamps, medical, extra financial aid, and childcare. My regular college advisors knew and they made sure that I got out on time. I received the support well beyond the 5 months. The summer job came through being on AFDC which ultimately led to teaching. (Participant 8, personal communication, January 17, 2015)

Having the necessary assistance at the time it is needed is critical for further development and growth. Utilizing the available services allowed for the participants' subsequent growth and ultimate success.

In the Mentors node, participants spoke of finding mentors to serve as a model of how to parent in a way that was appealing to them.

> I looked at her as a role model in life, as a woman, as well as my sister, who is an attorney. These were two very powerful women who did a lot of stuff. My mom escaped from Germany during the war. Her life is very different from the type of life that I have lived. (Participant 6, personal communication, December 29, 2014)

One found other happy single mothers, others searched for older mothers, mothers that they want to pattern themselves after, as well as successful mothers. Although many sought out supports by way of similar experiences, not all did. Participant 2 states the following: "None of the mentors I sought out for myself were single parents" (personal communication, December 8, 2014). Ultimately the mentor node is relevant as it pertains to multiple areas and has overlap in the support functions as well as career implications.

In the Self Care node, participants spoke of ways they took care of themselves outside of therapy and spirituality over the years of being a single parent. The responses range from making sure to get enough sleep as indicated by participant 11 who openly admits that she prioritizes sleep and knows that it is just as important to her parenting as it is to her job (personal communication, January 20, 2015) to maintaining balance through exercise and spirituality (Participant 16, personal communication, January 23, 2015). There wasn't a significant

divergence in response to this node, as much of it aligned with the focus and time constraints inherently associated with single mother parenting.

In the Child(ren) node, participants spoke of the unconditional love that comes from the child that keeps them going in spite of what might be going on. It is through this interaction with their child that the participants create meaning and value in their daily lives. Their careers and life decisions are all impacted by the implications of the relationship with the child.

RQ4: What relational styles do single mothers in high profile positions possess?

The population of this study reported their relational style either increased or decreased in their willingness to seek out and accept assistance from others. The fourth research question is aligned to the Relational Style dimension of the Life Course framework. The interview question is how has being a single mother in a high profile position impacted the way you interact with and/or rely on others for support? Answers to this interview question required probing for most participants. From the results, six naturally occurring codes emerged as well as a support spectrum, which ranged from Received Little Support to Support Being Essential. All were entered as nodes into the NVivo Software.

The six nodes for Relational Style were, Opposite Effect, Planning and Back-ups, Mentoring and Giving, Interacting with Those Who Understood, Delegate, and Internal Strength. The Support Spectrum is discussed separately after the six nodes for Relational Style. The node with the most sources was Opposite Effect.

In the Opposite Effect node, participants spoke of how becoming a single mother made them rely less on others than they did before becoming a single mother.

Table 8

Relational Style Theme (NVivo Software): Relational Style Nodes, Sources, References

Relational Style Nodes	# Sources	# References
Opposite Effect	4	4
Planning & Back-ups	3	3
Being a Mentor & Giving Back	2	3
Interacting With Those Who Understood	2	3
Delegate	1	1
Internal Strength	1	1

I would say – it is almost a negative. I have gotten to the point where I am very independent. It can be to my detriment. If something is bothering me, I will stifle it and deal with it as opposed to talking to my friends about it, which would make me feel better. Someone will offer to help do something and because I have gotten the reaction from others that single mothers need a handout, I want to make sure that people realize I don't. Whereas it would be a lot easier to accept the help, I might not to prove that I can do it. The other side of it is that as I am getting older, I am realizing that people's issues are their issues, so if people think I need a handout, who cares what they think and I am beginning to form relationships with others to pick up each other's kids from (activities). I'm learning to let others do things for me as opposed to being so independent. I can put a positive spin on this where I am teaching my kids to be independent and responsible. (Participant 14, personal communication, January 21, 2015)

Becoming a single mother made participants realize the depth of their inner strength thus contributing to their personal sense of independence. They also became critically aware of the fact that they were now responsible for another human being; thus requiring a certain level of maturity that goes along with it.

> It wasn't easy to rely on anyone. A lot of times I felt awkward about it or I felt helpless when I had to rely on others and I wasn't in control. I didn't like that feeling. Other than my parents… so I tended not to rely on folks except my parents. (Participant 9, personal communication, January 17, 2015)

In addition to allowing for the additional responsibly of raising a child, respondents also noted that they had no control over the assistance and/or support provided which at times could create more anxiety than the initial need for help. Ultimately leading participants to seek out assistance even less.

In the Planning and Back-ups node, participants spoke of carefully planning everything out and creating several back up plans so that things go smoothly. Contingency plans become essential in order to ensure that things go as planned or required. As demonstrated by Participant 7:

> I live by my calendar. I have a back-up written calendar. I do everything with extreme and an almost anal sense of organization. If it is not on my calendar, it doesn't happen. So I think my position in my career actually prepared me to be a single mom, because there is just not enough time to waste. I never waste time wasting time. I am anally organized but I have to be. I think I excel at my job as well as being a single mom because there is nobody else, there is just me, my mentality has been programmed to

think it's just me, it is sink or swim and I can't sink - ever. (personal communication,

January 15, 2015)

In many cases, it is clear that single mothers rely on lesson learned on the job and implement

them accordingly within their personal lives to account for unexpected circumstances as noted by

Participant 5:

I consciously build redundancy in my childcare plan. I learned this concept in an

organizational theory class in undergrad, the idea of redundant systems. If system A

fails, System B will take over. For some reason at 19 that concept stuck in my head and I

use it all the time. When I lose my key babysitter and I move to plan B, I'm looking for

plan C and D already. I fill the pipeline deeper than needed so I am never without a plan.

(personal communication, December 22, 2014)

It is through a varied approach that single mothers have achieved various levels of success in

integrating their work and the parenting.

In the Mentoring and Giving node, participants spoke of the importance of giving back

and helping others navigate a path that they have had some success with. Participants shared

how they found themselves in situations that allowed them to have some impact in the lives of

those in similar circumstances. Being understanding and considerate so that they had an

example of someone who was relatively successful coming from a similar place. Participant 13

(personal communication, January 21, 2015) was able to speak so young women who were in

similar circumstances about her past as an example of what the future could hold. While

Participant 8 (personal communication, January 17, 2015) is able to assist through her childcare

center, providing assistance and support in cases of domestic violence, issues of low self-esteem

and appropriate parenting practices, all of which are supports that they remember needing at some point in their collective pasts.

In the Interacting with Those Who Understood node, participants spoke of limiting their social interactions to people who understood their situation. As noted by participant 6, given the context and necessity that being a single mom required, it was critical to surround yourself with individuals who knew what you were going through. Participant 6 further elaborates:

I joined a group of moms that all happened to be single moms. When it was in tack, I had some women who understood what I was talking about; there was camaraderie. The silly things you have to balance that most people don't think about, they got it. Not only were we balancing what we do with our kids, but also the exes, and all of us had special exes. Sometimes you want to hurt them, and sometimes you wanted to cry and sometimes you just wanted a glass of wine. (Participant 6, personal communication, December 29, 2014)

While it was best to surround yourself with like-minded individuals, it isn't always that easy to do, especially in a work environment where those who have children can understand. Participant 17 states the following:

It is not intimidating, the people that I interact with were all in similar careers and they had kids. They understood because they had the same things. My peers understood what it took to raise a child and have a high profile position and the ones that didn't get it, I didn't associate with. (personal communication, January 24, 2015)

In the instances where co-workers were not empathetic, participants considered it best to just avoid them.

In the Delegate node, participants spoke of the skill of delegating assignments to others as a way of alleviating some of the time constraints and responsibilities. In doing so, it provided an opportunity to create stronger bonds with co-workers, develop leadership skills and still maintain some level of sanity around parenting. "Everything is in accordance to act… scripting things out to a tee" (Participant 7, personal communication, January 15, 2015).

In the Internal Strength node, participants spoke of internal traits that helped them support themselves through their journey. As noted by Participant 13, "I'm not any different. I had the same choices before me and they were tough but I broke through and if I hadn't had that education to fall on I would still be standing where I was" (personal communication, January 21, 2015). Having the internal strength to persevere is the difference between success and not.

Table 9

Support Theme (NVivo Software): Support Spectrum Nodes, Sources, References

Support Spectrum Nodes	# Sources	# References
Formed Reciprocal Relationships	6	6
Don't Rely on Support	5	7
Small Trustworthy Support Network	4	4
Support is Essential	4	4
Village Concept	3	3
Mother Only	2	2
Learned to Use Paid Support	1	1

The Support Spectrum naturally emerged as participants shared the degree to which becoming a single mother impacted their need for support. Ironically, in this group of women, it appeared that most of the participants ended up relying less on others as a single mother than they did before becoming a single mother. The Support Spectrum divided nicely into the following seven nodes: Formed Reciprocal Relationships, Don't Rely on Support, Small Trustworthy Support Network, Support is Essential, Village – Tribe – Always have support, Mother Only, and Learned to use Paid Support. The degrees of support are represented below in the following table in the order of most sources and comments representing each node follow:

Formed reciprocal relationships/became more trusting. As a support function, formed reciprocal relationships and/or becoming more trusting are critical when dealing with the areas of ongoing support. This allows for shared resources and time considerations that mutually help the single mother, but also those within an expanded circle. This is illustrated by Participant 18's response, "I formed relationships with other single mothers and we helped one another. I would keep my friend's kids in the summer when she went to school and she would stockpile my groceries" (personal communication, January 16, 2015). In some cases it is a natural extension of the day-to-day experiences. But in others requires time and trust. For example, Participant 14 indicated the following: "I'm learning to let others do things for me as opposed to being so independent. I can put a positive spin on this where I am teaching my kids to be independent and responsible" (personal communication, January 21, 2015), which is indicative of the need for trust and the need to allow others to provide assistance.

Don't rely on support. Contrary to reciprocity and trust, there are some who prefer not to rely on any support, whether it make sense or not as whole, it is what has worked in certain

instances. For example, Participant 1 states: "I try not to really rely on people for support, I try to handle everything myself" (personal communication, December 5, 2014). And she isn't the only one, Participant 14 states

> I have gotten to the point where I am very independent. It can be to my detriment. Someone will offer to help do something and because I have gotten the reaction from others that single mothers need a handout, I want to make sure that people realize I don't, whereas it would be a lot easier to accept the help, I might not to prove that I can do it. (personal communication, January 21, 2015)

Both of these examples demonstrate a larger issue in the perception that others have of single mothers, thus impacting how single mothers have chosen to proceed when it comes to support structures.

Small trustworthy support network. Support systems were obviously important to the success of single mothers, however, the support systems varied amongst the respondents. Where some might say that they relied on a large network of extended family, others were very selective of the support network. In some cases, it really came down to two or three actual individuals such as Participant 18 shares:

> I made sure to only lean on people that I knew were 100% trustworthy. I did not have time for anyone to interrupt my systems. Because of this, my support network was small. My mother was completely trustworthy, along with my two sitters. (personal communication, January 16, 2015)

While some of the women had more expanded support systems, the issue of trustworthiness was always central to their decision-making process.

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Support is essential. Given the nature of the situation, a single mother would need to expand her network in order to accomplish all of the day-to-day tasks in maintaining a career and raising a child. As such, external support is critical. In many instances, highly independent woman had to learn how to reach out and build stronger relationships with those around her in order to maintain ongoing success. Such is the case with Participant 3 who indicated the following:

> If I didn't have support, I don't know how I would do it. There are those days where I just could not get to him so I am just thankful for those who have opened their doors and their car doors to him and I – My mocha moms, my friends, I don't think that I would be able to do what I do without their assistance. If I had my husband, we could just tag team, but the way it is everybody's assistance has helped so much. (Participant 3, personal communication, December 13, 2014)

Ensuring that contingency plans exist for the never-ending possibility that they might need additional assistance is a contributor to their overall success, as Participant 5 plainly states, "One thing is that I am consciously cultivating my support network always, because I never know when I am going to need it" (personal communication, December 22, 2014). By planning ahead, they are always prepared, and by being always prepared they can avoid difficulties in the short and long term.

Village concept. The old adage: It takes a village to raise a child is very true in the case of single working mothers. For the more independent women, the village might just be smaller, but the truth is that this aligns with the notion of support. Whether the network is small or large,

having others to support a single mother's ongoing success in parenting is critical. Participant 16 speaks to this in her statement:

> I just do what I do…I think I have always had to rely on other people, it is just the nature, especially as an African American, I never thought that you do this on your own, I just wasn't raised like that. It took a village. Family was very involved. His mother, my mother, some of the aunts, my whole family, but I think it would have been family oriented anyway, but not as much. That's just the way my culture is. (personal communication, January 23, 2015)

Family was central to the notion that it takes a village, in many cases having friends and/or family come live with them to help them in some way while at the same time helping themselves through hands on support with the child. Such was the case with Participant 18 who stated: "I also took in (my family member) – allowed him to live with me for a year and a half and he would help me with the kids" (personal communication, January 16, 2015).

Learned to use paid supports. While many relied on family and friends, others also learned to rely on the use of paid supports, whether through child activities, baby sitting or group membership, these resources were critical, with one Participant saying as much "I don't have a problem that $15/hour can't fix" (Participant 5, personal communication, December 22, 2014). By having the means necessary to take advantage of paid support, the overall support network grows and makes single motherhood more accessible.

RQ5: What is the leadership style of single mothers?

This group of single mother professionals scored extremely high in having tendencies towards Transformational leadership and an even higher in having tendencies towards Laissez-

faire leadership. The fifth research question is also aligned to the Relational Style theme of the

Life Course framework, but looks at the participants Leadership Style as indicated by the MLQ.

This question was answered by analyzing the results from the MLQ.

According to benchmarks identified by Mind Garden, if a participant scores between 3.0

and 3.75 they have a tendency towards Transformational Leadership. Thirteen of the eighteen

participants had a tendency towards Transformational Leadership, of the five that did not meet

the benchmark on the five indicators of transformational leadership, one was very close only

missing the mark on one of the five indicators, another missed the mark on 2 of the 5 indicators,

and the other three missed the mark on 4 of the 5 indicators. Of the three that missed the mark

on 4 of the 5 indicators, they were all in socially acceptable, well-paid positions, but required

little leadership as the positions were mostly independent. Two of the participants had a

tendency towards Transactional Leadership and of those, one also had a tendency towards

Transformational Leadership. The benchmarks indicating a tendency towards Transactional

Leadership are scored between 2 and 3 on Contingent Reward and between 1 and 2 on

Management by Exception. Sixteen of the eighteen participants had a tendency towards Laissez-

faire leadership. The benchmark score for Laissez-faire Leadership is a score between 0 and 1.

Seven of the eighteen participants scored high on all three Outcomes of Leadership, which are

Extra Effort with a benchmark of 3.5, Effectiveness with a benchmark of 3.5, and Satisfaction

with a benchmark of 3.5. One scored high on 2 of the 3 indicators and one scored high on only

one of the indicators.

Table 10 looks at the 18 participants' leadership styles and relational styles.   The

majority of participants (13), had a tendency towards Transformational Leadership. The five

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Table 10

Leadership Style and Relational Style

Participant #	Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-Faire	Relational Style Support Spectrum						
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1			X	X	X	X			X	
2	X		X	X					X	
3	X		X	X			X			
4		X							X	
5	X		X				X	X		X
6	X		X		X				X	
7	X	X	X							X
8	X		X						X	
9	X			X	X				X	
10			X				X			
11	X		X					X		X
12			X		X				X	
13	X		X	X		X			X	
14			X	X	X				X	
15	X		X				X	X	X	
16	X		X					X	X	
17	X		X			X			X	
18	X		X	X		X		X	X	X
Totals	13	2	16	7	5	4	4	5	13	4

Note. A - Formed Reciprocal Relationships- Don't Rely on Support' C - Small Trustworthy Support Network; D - Support is Essential - Village /

Tribe Concept; F - Mother & Family; G - Learned to use Paid Support.

participants who did not score in the benchmark range on all five of the indicators of

Transformational Leadership scored high on some indicators and were not far from meeting the

benchmarks. The number of single mothers that had a tendency towards Laissez-fair leadership was surprisingly high with 16 of the 18 participants falling within the benchmarks. One possible reason as to why so many participants had this tendency is that often mothers are concerned with teaching their children how to become independent, which would lead them towards a hands off approach to leadership at times in their home life. Many participants spoke of how their mothering style sometimes crossed into the workplace. Only two participants had a tendency towards Transactional Leadership.

Summary

This chapter summarizes the one-on-one interview data from the 18 single mothers in high profile professional positions as well as the MLQ results. The data collection techniques allowed for this study to take a phenomenological qualitative approach while still incorporating some quantitative data. The data in this study was organized and analyzed utilizing the Life Course Framework developed by Giele (2008). Each of the four themes of the Life Course Framework resulted in nodes that were entered into the NVivo qualitative analysis software. Identity resulted in nine nodes. Motivation resulted in four nodes. Adaptive (Supports) resulted in 16 nodes. Relational Style resulted in six nodes as well as a Support Spectrum that exhibited seven categories of support utilized.

All of the participants identified as being the primary caretaker of their child/ children. They were all in professional positions that they loved, worked hard to achieve either before or after becoming a single mother, and that they felt had a sense of value or purpose. Support might have come in different forms for the participants, but it was all support that these single mother professionals knew they could count on. The topics participants did not speak poorly of the

absent parent, yet just spoke the facts; they were not bitter or angry. They rarely spoke of child

support and visitation and only did so when it complimented the story. All had a sense of

resilience and in their closing remarks most gave poignant words of advice to other single

mothers who may not be in such a positive space.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the supports single mothers in high profile professional positions used in their personal and professional lives to create or sustain their success; this was done by collecting data and extrapolating themes in order to answer the five research questions. The literature review in chapter two discussed the factors that have led to the high numbers of single mothers in this country, the different types of single mothers, and the leadership styles including transformational, transactional and laissez-fair leadership. Eighteen single mothers in high profile professional positions were interviewed one-on-one and were given the MLQ to obtain the qualitative and leadership data for this study. This chapter presents a summary of the study, limitations and findings according to the literature review, implications of the findings, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

Summary of the Study

In this qualitative phenomenological study, 18 single mothers in high profile professional positions were interviewed one-on-one in order to answer 4 of the 5 research questions. Following the interviews each participant was given the MLQ to answer the fifth research question about leadership style. The resulting information gave a comprehensive look at the supports it takes for this population to create and/or maintain success. What was gleaned from this study is that it takes an enormous amount of support to sustain the infrastructure at home and at work. Depending on drive, passion, resources, choice, and comfort level these women all built their support networks differently. Even with different degrees of necessary support all participants relied on some sort of support. Most were like-minded in that they maintained

systems of redundancy to protect their professional lives from suffering if one or more means of support failed.

When looking at leadership styles, there seemed to be high numbers of participants who exhibit more transformational and Laissez- Fair leadership characteristics while the lowest was the tendency towards transactional leadership. Of the 18 participants 16 participants had a tendency towards Laissez-Fair leadership while 13 had a tendency towards transformational leadership and two had a tendency towards transactional leadership. When broken down there was an overlap in the participants' leadership styles between transformational and laissez-fair. The possible rationale for the high numbers of laissez-fair leadership is that these participants are all raising children, which could imply that single mothers require a level of free thinking, choice and autonomy. Several spoke of how the skills of parenting learned at home often follow them to the workplace in terms of mentoring and leadership. One participant said,

> Being able to raise a child that is very strong, very disciplined and focused herself and maintained her own personality and social skills, I feel that it has enabled me to be a better person in respects as to how to interact with different people, other children, other adults to give advice to lead them and guide them in work skills as well as in their personal lives. Spanning the work role – it is not like I look at the people that work for me as my children, but being able to separate your professional career to being able to relate to them on a personal level. People go through things every day and just because you are somebody's boss or manager, you don't have to wear that hat every day. You can be a person's friend as well as the boss and separate the two because you have a tender side – you have raised children and being a single mother knowing that and having

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that protective spirit about me - you tend to carry that on to your professional life. And to

lead these efforts and also to mentor and guide people that were coming up behind me

and the people that work for me so there is more of a knowledge transition so mentoring

and training people that work for me as I am doing this job is great. It is rewarding from

that perspective. (Participant 17, personal communication, January 24, 2015)

The data that resulted from the interviews and MLQ helped to paint a picture of what

support and leadership looks like in this unique group of single mothers. Implications are

addressed in accordance with the findings. The findings from this data along with participant

comments were initially shared in chapter 4 and is looked at in terms of the literature review in

this chapter. Following this section is a look at the implications of the findings for other single

mothers with similar demographics as well as the greater single mother population.

Recommendations for future study will follow and the study is brought to a close with the final

conclusion.

A major assumption of this study is that if a participant held a high profile position they

could afford to raise their child/children alone and not suffer from minimal to no support from

the other parent. This assumption was substantiated for this participant population. Only a small

minority of participants spoke of receiving any financial support for the child/children and it was

consistently thought of as extra not what was necessary to support the child's basic needs.

Another assumption was that if the mother is the primary parent, that the father is mostly

absent in the child's life. A few of the participants mentioned that the father did play a

significant role in the child's life, yet they clearly were not the primary parent, meaning, they did

not make any major decisions, help with daily routines, provide necessities. They were classified as more of a visitor than a parent. Two participants commented on this.

>The other parent, there is some support, some financial support, there is court ordered child support. And, he does spend time with our daughter, but honestly it is more like a well, it is visitation, he is a visitor. He is not a, he doesn't do much parenting; he doesn't make any decisions about anything really, honestly. No direction, no guidance. So he just visits, a couple times a month. So, not …some support – minimal. (Participant 1, personal communication, December 5, 2014)

Whereas the previous participant noted some but minimal interaction, more so of a visitor than a parent, the second comment is more aligned with consistent interactions.

>Other parent? I have been very lucky in that respect. She has time with him each and every week; even still, I am the primary parent. I am responsible for her schoolwork and making sure that she has all the clothes that she needs and being on top of knowing what it is that she needs. That is a particularly draining experience when someone else should also be doing that, but I have reached a point where I am more of a leadership development person to help guide that person and not even take it personally any more. Even though I am primary, he is involved in her life in a significant way. (Participant 15, personal communication, January 22, 2015)

This study produced several interesting and important findings about this participant population. The findings discussed in the next section will add to the body of literature on single mothers as a whole, and will increase the limited data that exists on single mothers in the middle to upper income brackets. Overall, the findings of this study will inspire the researcher to

continue work that adds to what is known about single mothers in high profile professional

positions as well as to find ways to use data like this to help foster resiliency in lower income

single mother populations.

Findings and the Literature Review

The findings in this study address one of the recommendations made from the Kjellstrand

(2011) dissertation,

> qualitative research with single mothers could provide a richer description of the lived
>
> experiences of single mothers and expand on the possibly unique factors that single
>
> mothers identify as having provided them with the ability to be resilient amidst their
>
> challenges. (p. 96)

This study took a qualitative phenomenological approach and as a result produced a rich

description of the single mother experience from the perspective of those with high profile

professional positions. This study unveiled the supports utilized by the participant population to

create and/or maintain success. The focus of this study was not resiliency as in the Kjellstrand

(2011) research, however, the participants showed strong qualities of resiliency. This study

looked at means of supports single mothers used to create and/or sustain success. Through the

participants' stories, other results surfaced about this population. If more Americans were

exposed to studies like this one, public perception of single mothers could be influenced or

possibly changed. The findings for this study were presented according to the literature review,

and organized by the Life Course Theory themes accompanied by the research questions.

Identity – The research question for the Identity theme is how do single mothers identify

themselves? All of the participants in this study identified as single mothers by chance, that are

successful in their high profile professional positions while being the primary caretaker of their child/children. The information from this study helps to fill the gap that exists in the literature regarding single mothers with positive traits and successful outcomes. The informal demographics that emerged from the one-on-one interviews revealed that there was ethnic variation, a large income range, and even a range in education obtained among the participant population. At least seven of the participants mentioned being raised by single mothers. All of these women spoke of learning skills from their mothers, and viewed them as very strong individuals. This study also found that the participants all seemed positive about their situation and did not blame the other parent; there was no inherent stagnation due to anger with the absent parent.

Nine participants identified as being divorced, five as never having been married, two widowed, and two having more complicated relationships. These statistics challenge the historical reasons cited for women becoming single mothers (Popenoe, 1993), which were being widowed followed by being divorced. Statistics show that single mothers are more often divorced, than widowed and have children still in the home (Ross & Sawhill, 1975; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1955, 1981a, as cited in U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984, p. 11). This is also true in this study. Six participants told their story from the perspective of looking back, as their children are now grown.

At least seven participants grew up in single mother homes, and all are successful. This is consistent with the findings of Hetherington & Kelly (2002) that most adults that have grown up with a single parent are likely to perform adequately. One participant also commented that growing up with a single mother provided a road map that was helpful in her own experience.

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Another participant mentioned that having watched her own single mother overcome great obstacles made the challenges she faced seem small in comparison. These memories made her stronger in her own situation.

Seven of the participants gave birth to their children while unmarried. This is consistent with the Centers for Disease Control (2013) findings that there is a rise in the numbers of births to unwed mothers. These seven participants included the five never married participants as well as the two who were in more complicated relationships. This study also included one participant that began as a single mother by chance, and almost a decade later made a choice to have a second child by choice. This participant is interesting in that she challenges the information presented about the single mother by chance and by choice populations, that are usually posited as being one or the other, (Engber, 2011; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995).

As presented in the Chapter 2, the adverse statistics associated with single mothers are abundant (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Debell et al., 1997; Gringlas & Weinraub, 1995; Haleman, 1999; May-Stewart, 2000). The findings in this study suggest that the adverse perception and statistics associated with single motherhood served as a motivating factor, making them less likely to accept support in an effort to prove that they can do it alone. Haleman (2004) mentioned that these adverse statistics could impact the way this population views itself. This was reflected in one participant's comment about not wanting to accept help since it would make her look weak. She found that she would go out of her way to do things herself, proving capability and independence, when accepting help would have been easier. As cited in Weatherspoon-Robinson (2013), the African American female leaders studied also had to combat negative stereotypes, and show peers in the workplace their excellence. Like the single

mother population in this study, they strived for self-actualization and were internally motivated to achieve on a grand scale.

Inevitably, when asked about their situation many nuanced responses were given, particularly in relation to education and career opportunities. Almost all participants in this study identified as being highly educated. However, as a result of their circumstances many chose not to advance further in their careers or took a step back while actively parenting. Likewise, when their children were older, many went forward with advancing to more prestigious positions within the existing workplace or in their chosen profession. One participant took a step back from a demanding administrative job in education to be able to be available for her son during his early elementary years. Her rationale was that her credentials are forever, but her son will only be young once and she will have time to pick up her demanding position once he is older. She is still in a position of leadership, just not as high of a position. Another participant took a job within her company that had more prestige and required more travel once her daughter was settled in medical school. Another participant made more aggressive career moves once her son was in high school and did not need her to the same degree as when he was younger. This allowed her to get into positions that make more money and that are also sought after by her male colleagues. These choices are consistent with the notion that "women construct their careers in different ways from men, both by choice and by necessity. Specifically, women with families tend to make choices for careers that provide time in preference to career advancement and positions of influence" (Jonasson, 2002, p. 674).

A few participants identified as experiencing sexism as a result of being a single mother in the workplace. One had a comment that was very consistent with needing to appear

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androgynous (Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012) to be seen as a good leader. This same participant noted that while it was known that she had a child, not complaining about being a single mother was of utmost importance so that it wouldn't be perceived as a limitation or weakness amongst her male co-workers.

     Motivation - The research question for the Motivation theme is what motivations drive single mothers in high profile positions? According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census & Special Demographic Analyses (1984) many single mothers have already obtained their bachelor's degrees prior to becoming a single parent. The majority of the participants in this study already had their degrees before becoming a single parent. Three were in the process of obtaining their doctoral degrees before becoming single parents, and were already established in their high profile careers. At least 5 of the mothers in this participant population made a conscious decision at some point to further their education so that they could enter a higher profile position to be able to support their children better. One of the participants was aware of her impending divorce and went to school in preparation for becoming a single parent. Two of the participants were widows. One of the widows went on to school because it was part of the life plan that she and her husband had together. The other widow went on to obtain her doctoral degree because she knew she needed to increase her income after the death of her husband. Part of the mothers' motivation for being in their respective careers, increasing education and achieving success was to be role models to their children. This is consistent with a finding from Haleman (2004), which says that mothers who enrolled in school while parenting serve as a positive role model to their children. Another reason these mothers are motivated to increase their education and be successful is to increase their earning potential. Haleman also found that the additional

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education would increase their lifetime earning potential. The literature supports the sentiment that the mother's higher education has an impact on how the children will achieve in the future.

The participants in this study naturally presented an asset based framework. They all appeared to be positive in nature about their personal and professional lives. This supports the research of Romo and Segura (2010), which claims that single mothers can benefit from the developmental assets model. All of the participants viewed their work as an extension of self, which results in happier single mothers, which is consistent with the work of Bisagni and Eckenrode (1995).

None of the participant population joined the workforce as a result of divorce or being widowed. All participants were already existing members of the workforce at large, either in their present career or they were in the pipeline leading to their present career. As a result, none of the participants spoke of self-doubt, anxiety, or other feelings of pressure from entering the workforce after a time of absence (Miller et al., 2002). Although all of these women were seasoned in the workforce, many were still motivated to construct their careers differently by choice and/or due to necessity. This was true of several of the participants. Some changed their work hours, some entered alternative positions that would allow them more flexibility, and others became consultants or took positions that allowed them to be in control of their time.

All of the women interviewed loved their work and/or found value in what they did. The self-worth that comes from working on something that has personal value is priceless for these women. D'Ercole (1988) reported on the importance of work being of value to single mothers. All of the mothers in this study commented about their passion for their work and noted how important their work is to them.

Supports - The research question for the Supports theme is what supports do single mothers use to adapt to their personal and professional roles? In chapter 4, supports utilized by the participant population were categorized into 16 categories. This alone indicates that support was vital for this single mother population. These women all used supports in ways that were unique to their situation and personal belief systems, however, the commonality was that they all utilized some form of support and most used a combination of supports forming their support network.

The most common type of support used seemed to be support from a co-parent. According to the literature review, the co-parent can be any other adult that cares for the child, such as the maternal grandmother, family members, the other parent, and even other individuals. According to Shook et al. (2010), the additional adult helps maintain stability with the child. Participants in this study mentioned at least one other co-parent that helps with raising their child. The maternal grandmother was the number one co-parent mentioned which is consistent with findings from Shook et al. (2010). However, in the Shook et al. (2010) research, the number two co-parent was the biological father. In this study, only four participants mentioned the biological fathers having a significant relationship with the child/children. Other family members, and friends generally played a more significant role in this study.

Many participants in this group also utilized formal and informal social support groups. Mocha Moms and Jack and Jill, were specifically mentioned, however, other informal groups were also seen as equally important. In addition to using support groups, the use of reciprocal relationships was also mentioned quite a bit, usually in the form of a best friend relationship that formed around parenting activities. Dyads, as mentioned in the works of Nelson (2000) were

very common. These relationships of reciprocity helped the mothers to maintain their feelings of independence while accepting and giving help.

Three participants used paid childcare on a consistent basis; these were the women in the higher paid and more time intensive positions. Three others mentioned that they used paid childcare periodically or as a backup. Many participants spoke of not using childcare at all and viewed this as a proud accomplishment which is consistent with the other thematic findings.

Almost all participants used work supports in some way. Even those that did not mention their personal situations at work were able to use flexible work schedules and work at home situations to be able to be available as a parent when necessary. Only one participant spoke of her company offering a formal 9/80-work schedule, which offered every other Friday off. Most were able to negotiate a suitable schedule with their employer. Several of the participants created situations that worked for their lifestyles either by becoming consultants working independently or by negotiating flex time or work at home days that allowed for them to be available for parenting (McKay, 2010). A few participants even mentioned taking their children to work with them when situations necessitated. According to Bowden (2010), even women in leadership roles in the Aerospace industry seek out supportive environments when managing multiple roles. The population in the Bowden study were not specifically single mothers, but viewed the workplace as a support when juggling multiple roles much like the single mothers in this study.

Three participants mentioned their therapist as a necessary psychological support. Two of the three had a pre-existing relationship with their therapist and one sought therapy after having a hard time adjusting to becoming a widow. Although D'Ercole (1988) found social

support to be very important and related to well-being, all three of these participants mentioned getting something out of therapy that could not be achieved by simply talking to a friend or being a part of a support group.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census (as cited in U.S. Bureau Of The Census & Special Demographic Analyses, 1984) had two major problems regarding single mothers and income. First, the lower income of women compared to men makes raising children alone difficult and second, most women raising children alone receive little to no child support. The first problem of lower income populations does not pertain to this participant population as these women earn high salaries allowing them to properly care for their children on their income alone. The second finding of little to no child support is true for a majority of the participants in this study. Two of the women in this study had the opposite situation of having to compensate the ex-husband after the divorce. Six participants spoke of being awarded child support from the courts, of those, two receive regular payments and the other four mentioned that payments are sporadic or don't come at all, which is also consistent with the U.S. Bureau of the Census findings.

Relational style. The research questions for the Relational Style theme are what relational styles do single mothers in high profile positions possess and what is the leadership style of single mothers? As stated so well by May-Stewart (2000), "The working mother is located in the context of history, gender issues, collective experience, emotions, and politics as well as other interlocking variables such as age, race, sexuality, and socioeconomic status" (Abstract) .The relational style of these women revolve around all of these factors. All of these women fall within the context of being a working mother as well as a single mother. The single mother aspect adds the need for additional means of supports as opposed to those required of

married working mothers. All of the participants formed their support network according to their specific needs; they also related to others in their own unique ways. Mentoring seemed to be a commonality among a few participants. Some felt that their mothering spirit transferred over into the workplace and they fell into mentoring relationships with subordinates or clients naturally as they would do with their own children. According to Morton (2013) when successful women politicians were asked what traits, characteristics, and skills contributed to their success, they spoke of the ability to create positive relationships that supported their goals, much like the women in this study.

The overlapping leadership styles were found in the results of the MLQ. The results showed what leadership style(s) the participants had a tendency towards. The participants had high numbers of Transformational and Laissez-Faire leadership styles. Vinkenburg et al. (2011) found that "women display more transformational and contingent reward behaviors, and fewer management-by-exception and Laissez-Faire behaviors than men" (p.18). The results from this study combat this finding, with 13 of 18 participants having a tendency towards Transformational Leadership, Two having a tendency towards Transactional or Contingent reward behaviors, and 16 of the 18 having a tendency towards Laissez-Faire leadership.

Implications of the findings

All studies carry implications as a result of their findings. Implications can serve as opportunities for the use of the data and specifically for the application of the findings. As in the case of successful single moms interviewed for this study, inherently it is known that single mothers have been successful in their careers and overall lives since that was a consideration for being chosen for the study, however, it also stands to reason that the learnings and findings of the

study can have an impact on those in similar situations whom are seeking that same level of success.

Implications of demographic data. This study did not collect formal demographic data, however some demographic data arose as a result of Research Question 1, which asked participants to tell us about themselves as single mothers. Most participants interviewed referenced race, class, or gender when answering the research questions. One participant had very specific comments regarding gender, sexism, and their impact on her career.

> I also understand that those decisions that I made also impacted my professional
> trajectory so I wasn't able to really work in my given profession in the capacity that I
> desired like a lot of my male colleagues because I made a choice to take positions that
> allowed me the flexibility without necessarily the status. (Participant 10, personal
> communication, January 19, 2015)

As a result of the findings, it should be noted that gender, class and other socio-economic demographics have an impact on the success of single mothers. In understanding how these factors impact single mothers directly, more headway can be made in assisting in their success.

Implications for single mothers who do not have the support of the other parent. This study found that participants with absent co-parents found strategies to move on without expectations from the other parent and without holding on to residual anger. Mothers with amicable relationships with the other parent were able to appreciate the support given, even though it did not measure up to what they were providing. Mothers with completely absent co-parents (regardless of the reason), were less likely to express negative emotion. They were able to see themselves as the only resource. This isn't to say that support wasn't necessary. It was

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just a different type of support. One of the widowed mothers sought therapy to learn how to parent alone without feeling inadequate for not having her late husband as a co-parent. Through therapy, she realized that things are different than they would have been, but still she is an amazing parent. Ironically, the two participants with the most support from the other parent, in terms of time, both had to compensate the other parent well in the separation of assets and/or in terms of child and spousal support following their divorce. It is critical to consider that although women find themselves as single parents, they are able to overcome their circumstances both on a material basis as well as an emotional and psychological one.

Implications of income on single mothers. Kjellstrand (2011) found upper to middle-income single mothers (Grall, 2009), are generally resilient and have sufficient social support from family, friends, and significant others. This implication, combined with other strengths-based research on single mothers (Atwood & Genovese, 2006; Dowd, 1997; Zhan & Pandey, 2004; Zhan, 2006) can help to shape the conversation around single mother families. The findings of this study echo this finding. Contrary to popular belief, all single mothers are not a drain on society. The participant population within this study all work in high paying high profile positions. Although three participants utilized government assistance early on, it was short lived and the assistance was the boost they needed to get on track and begin the career that they are now in. These women are strong, resilient, and are living life to their full potential. Through this participant population, it was found that purpose and passion of career was strongly present. One implication for this group is that this study and more like it can inform public perception and break stereotypes associated with what it means to be a single mother.

Implications for Employers. Single mothers do well when they love what they do and have the necessary flexibility to be available for their child/children. All of the participants felt a passion for their job or they felt that there was value, which allowed their work to fit into their lives rather than being an obstacle to be overcome. Based on this finding, companies could benefit from providing career interest inventory tests and internships. This would benefit both the organizations interested in hiring a more diverse workforce and the greater single mother population. Organizations working with teen mothers, low-income single mothers, and single mothers on college campuses, and social services could all offer career planning to help their clients strive for working towards a career they are passionate about. Likewise, organizations could bring in women with similar backgrounds to the participant population to share and mentor others. The participant population had a strong affinity to mentoring at home and at work, and utilizing their experiences in a formal way might be cathartic and add value to their own lived experiences.

Implications for support services organizations. All single mothers in this study utilized some sort of support network. Social Services or other programs working with this population can help clients to identify their possible support resources and create an individualized support network. Organizations can also create support groups to help connect single mothers and provide group activities for them to do with their children so that they feel less alone. Organizations working with this population can create brochures with possible sources of local supports, childcare options, and other supports provided by public and private agencies. The participant population made it clear that their network of support was essential to their success. To think that you are going to parent all alone is just not realistic. Whether the

support network is small or large, the use of support is essential. Likewise, the participant population would benefit from having a means of connecting with other single mothers like them to share life experiences and support each other.

Implications for single mothers and their ability to network. Successful women not only used people and services already in their support network, but they actively sought resources and people to support their parenting network. They essentially expanded on the skill of networking that comes with being a successful businessperson. One participant noted that she went out of her way to get to know other parents on the baseball team that might be able to help with her son if she could not get there on time. This is something she would not have done prior to becoming a single parent. Just as in business, identifying key players is necessary to being successful and moving up within organizations, this skill transfers into being a successful single parent. This is true of both individual single mothers and organizations working with the general single mother population; they could teach networking as a skill for single parenting.

Implications for the children of single mothers. The adult children of the participants were all reported to be successful. This could be explained by the mothers having a high income, being driven to succeed, and/or having high expectations. In either case, these children have had a mother that serves as a strong role model for success and for making and achieving goals. Organizations could use this by having goal setting workshops and classes on creating realistic steps towards achieving goals. This is further supported by findings from Hetherington, and Kelly (2002), which found that "twenty years after parental divorce, most men and women who had grown up in divorced families and stepfamilies are functioning reasonably well" (p. 253). This also supports studies that linked children's achievements with the mother's education

(California State Legislature Assembly & California State Legislature Senate, 1988; Caulfield & Thomson, 1999; Dawson, 1997).

Most of these implications point towards strengthening the single mother population through strengthening them as individuals in the working world. Helping them to identify careers that will bring passion, and purpose will most likely land them in careers that have a higher earning potential and will allow them to serve as a positive role model to their children. The implication is that programs already offering services to the single mother population have a unique opportunity to provide goal setting, networking, and career planning. It seems these areas are also key to being a successful single parent. These skills provide the foundation to be successful in both professional and parenting roles. While these skills are important for everyone, they seem to be especially important for the single parent population.

Recommendations for Future Research

Three of the participants in this study moved to Los Angeles for opportunities that were not available in their hometowns. They all had very little to no physical family support due to their distance from family. They expressed how difficult it was to be away from family. They also discussed how being away from family forced them to find support from other sources that they might not have utilized had they had been near family. It is recommended for a study to be done on a larger population with limited family support due to proximity.

Another suggestion for future research is to investigate if salary range has an impact on how support is used or needed. Similarly, it is suggested to investigate single mothers in high profile professional positions with comparable positions of leadership or with similar leadership

responsibilities to see if they rely on support in similar ways and if their leadership style is more or less similar than in this participant population.

Three of the participants in this study mentioned that they utilized government assistance at some point in their early days of single parenting. Even still, they are all now in high profile positions, excelling in career and motherhood. In future research it is suggested to look at single mothers in high profile professional positions who started on government assistance to learn how they transitioned off and entered into their current field of work. The results of a study such as this could be extremely valuable and motivating to low income single mothers as well as programs designed to help that specific population.

Two of the participants in this study were young parents. They were both late teens and also early in their college career. In future studies, looking at single mothers who began as young parents who worked their way up to a high profile professional status could be beneficial to numerous teen parents as well as programs designed to help this population.

Several of the participants in this study were already in their position of leadership before becoming a single mother. Some were already on track for their current career. In future studies, looking at single mothers who were leaders before becoming single parents versus those who worked towards leadership after becoming single mothers could shed light on what types of support are most important for each of these different populations.

All of the mothers in this participant population were single by chance. One participant decided to have a second child alone making her a single mother by choice also. In future studies, it would be interesting to look at the difference in support mechanisms utilized between single mothers by choice and single mothers by chance with comparable status in their careers.

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Also, if there is a large enough population, it would be fascinating to look at single mothers by chance that also went on to become a single mother by choice. These women would be a valuable resource in sharing the difference between the by chance and by choice experience.

Based on the findings of this study, several questions for further discussion arose that would make for better understanding of single mothers in high profile professional positions that can help this population as well as the greater single mother population. Those questions are as follows:

- How do children's personalities and independence levels factor into a single mother's success at home and at work?

- Does the age of the children at time of divorce have an impact on the mothers need for support and resulting success at home or work?

- Does the number of children impact a single mother's need for support and success at home or work?

- Does the child's/children's activities and/or need to be active impact the single mother's need for support and success at home or work?

- Does a single mother who was raised by a single parent have an advantage over those who were raised by two parents?

- Does the degree to which the other parent participated in parenting before a divorce have an impact on how a single mother adjusts to becoming a single parent?

- How does spousal support/child support being awarded to the father factor into the degree to which the father gives accommodations to the ex-wife who was the higher wage earner?

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- Does the reason for becoming single have an impact on how the single mother adjusts? Why did the spouse leave? Was becoming a single parent a shock? Was becoming a single parent expected? Was the primary parent prepared or preparing for becoming a single parent?

- Did becoming a single parent by divorce make parenting easier or more difficult? Were existing friends/family more or less willing to lend support after the other parent was removed from the situation? Were more or less resources available after becoming single?

- To what degree does anger paralyze a single mother? Can anger stand in the way of creating or sustaining success?

- Do specific reasons for becoming a single mother impact success? This study had single mothers that were widowed, divorced, and never married. If this specific demographic variable were explored further, would different needs for support be found?

- Does the age of the children at the time of becoming a single mother have an impact on the mother's success and/or need for support when already in a high profile position?

Conclusions

Very few studies have been done on single mothers in high profile professional positions. The mothers in this participant population were happy to share their stories. Many commented that they loved that this research is being done and that it is always important to know that you are not alone in your situation. Many were empowered by being able to share their stories and

took pride in the fact that this information could help someone one day. Naturally when participants were asked if there was anything else they wanted to share, most immediately gave words of advice to other single mothers. Continued research can help single mothers from the participant population as well as from the general single mother population. As a result of this study this researcher established an online forum for single mothers in high profile professional positions to come together and share uplifting and supportive stories, experiences, and ideas. Additionally, the researcher will go on to continue researching and supporting single mothers and bring forth information that helps to change public perception of single mothers in a positive way as well as strengthen single mothers self-perceptions as a whole.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about yourself as a single mother in a high profile position?

2. What is your motivation for being in the career you are in now?

3. What kind of supports have helped in your role as a single mother in a high profile position?

4. How has being a single mother in a high profile position impacted the way you interact with and/or rely on others for support?

5. What is your leadership style as a single mother?

APPENDIX B

Single Mother Leadership Invitation E-Mail

Dear Colleague and Friend:

My name is Toia Thompson Mengesha. I am a doctoral student in the Organizational Leadership program at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study about single mothers in high profile professional positions and exploring the supports involved in creating and/or sustaining success. Requirements for participation include the following:

- Participant must be a single mother by chance, which occurs when a relationship comes to an end by divorce, abandonment, separation, death, deployment, incarceration, or by not ever solidifying as a unit for various reasons.
- Participant must have at least three consecutive years of parenting as a single mother. They may currently be single or married but have spent at least three consecutive years parenting as a single parent. The time as a single parent need not be in the last three years.
- Participant must be classified as the primary caretaker of one or more children.
- Participant must work in a high profile professional position. As defined in this study, a high profile professional position is highly regarded in today's society bringing about prestige in most social circles. Positions exemplifying this include, but are not limited to a school principal, a writer/author, an attorney, a doctor, a fulltime professor, a fiscally successful entrepreneur, an upper level manager/supervisor, and an executive director.
- Participant must reside in the Los Angeles / San Francisco Bay Area.

If you believe you meet the criteria and would like to participate in the survey, I invite you to click the link below to take the eligibility survey. There are 6 questions, which should only take a few minutes to complete. If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will be sent a follow-up e-mail with instructions on how to proceed. Participants will be asked to complete an in-person one-on-one interview followed by taking the MLQ survey. Participants will be asked to provide their name, phone number and email address for future project related communications with the researcher. Total time involved is anticipated to be no longer than 5 hours. If you feel you qualify and would like to participate, please opt in by clicking the eligibility link as soon as possible. Interviews will be scheduled between December 9th and December 13th.

If you know someone who might fit the criteria, please feel free to forward this invitation.
Also, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by replying to this e-mail.

Thank you for your consideration to participate and/or forward this e-mail to other candidates that meet the eligibility requirements.

Toia T. Mengesha, M.A.
Doctoral Student- Organizational Leadership
Pepperdine University

Link to eligibility survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6P68QGP

INFORMED CONSENT NOTICE: By clicking the above link to the eligibility survey, you are giving your informed consent to participate in this portion of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and no compensation will be given. At each step of this research study you will be asked to give your informed consent before proceeding. No assumptions will be made.

RISK & CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: All information provided will be kept confidential. Risks of participation in this study are minimal at most. There is a possibility that you may revisit thoughts of an uncomfortable time in your life and loose time from your work by participating in this study, but negative risks are minimal, no more than those associated with having a conversation with a friend in normal life. There is also a minimal risk that personal information could be compromised by exposure to a technology breech, however, this is highly unlikely. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which they are addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not review, copy or distribute this message. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original message. Neither the sender nor the company for which he or she works accepts any liability for any damage caused by any virus transmitted by this email.

APPENDIX C

Single Mother Eligibility Survey

Single Mother Leadership Eligibility Survey

Welcome - and thank you for taking this eligibility survey. Throughout history, single mothers have been grouped into one single category. Modern research is now classifying single mothers into different categories that more closely represent the lived experience. This study focuses on single mothers by chance. A single mother by chance is one that arrives at the state of being a single mother by a relationship coming to an end by divorce, abandonment, separation, death, deployment, incarceration, or by not ever solidifying as a unit for various reasons.

1. Given the definition of single by chance, do you consider yourself a single mother by chance?

Yes

No

2. How would you classify your relationship status at this time?

Single

Married

In a relationship

Cohabitating

3. While a single parent, were/are you the primary caretaker of the child(ren)?

Yes - I did the majority of the parenting

No - The division of parenting was equal

4. How much time have you spent as a single parent?

Less than 3 years

More than 3 years

5. What is your current occupation?

APPENDIX D

Single Mother Leadership Study Consent Form

I authorize Toia T. Mengesha, M.A., a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University, to include me in the research project entitled Single Mother Leadership. I understand my participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

I have been asked to participate in this research project designed to study single mothers in high profile professional positions. The study will require me to complete an online eligibility survey, an online demographic survey, and an in person one-on-one interview followed by taking the MLQ survey. The amount of time for participants to complete all portions of the research project is anticipated to be no longer than 5 hours total.

I have been asked to participate in this study because I am a single mother who has spent at least three years as a single parent and am in a high profile professional position. I will be asked to share my demographic information in an online survey as well as my experience of being a single parent while simultaneously building and/or maintaining a successful career in a one-on-one interview. I will also be asked to complete the MLQ survey, which will measure my leadership capabilities.

I understand that I will be audiotaped if I decide to participate in this study. The audio files will be used for research purposes only. The files will be stored in a secure manner and will be destroyed 3 year after the completion of the study. If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personally identifying information will be released. The data gathered will be stored in locked file cabinet to which only the investigator will have access. The data will be maintained in a secure manner for 3 years at which time the data will be destroyed.

I understand that no information gathered from my study will be released to others without my permission, or as required by law. Under California law, an exception to the privilege of confidentiality includes but is not limited to the alleged or probable abuse of a child, physical abuse of an elder or a dependent adult, or if a person indicated she or he wishes to do serious harm to self, others, or property.

There are no anticipated risks associated with this study, however, if for any reason a participant wishes to end their participation in the study, they may do so at any time without penalty. I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I also understand that there might be times that the investigator may find it necessary to end my study participation.

I understand that I will receive no compensation, financial or otherwise for participating in this study and that there is no direct personal benefit from participation in this study, however, the

information derived from this study can be of great benefits to other single mothers and the professional organizations that work with them.

I understand that if I have any questions regarding the study procedures, I can contact Toia T. Mengesha, M.A., at ***********@yahoo.com or 310-XXX-XXXX to get answers to my questions. If I have further questions, I may contact Dr. Doug Leigh Chairperson of the GSP Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University.

I understand to my satisfaction the information in the consent form regarding my participation in the research project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

_____
Participant's Signature

_____
Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

_____
Principal Investigator

_____
Date

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IRB Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

November 25, 2014

Toia T. Mengesha

Protocol #: E0914D05
Project Title: The Major Supporting Mechanisms of Single Mothers Leaders

Dear Ms. Mengesha:

Thank you for submitting your application, *The Major Supporting Mechanisms of Single Mothers Leaders*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Schmieder-Ramirez, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2) states:

> (b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:
>
> **Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse

events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at gpsirb@peppderdine.edu. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
   Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney
   Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez, Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX F

Thank You Letter

Dear Participant:

Thank you for completing the eligibility survey and for signing up for an interview time slot. Your interview is scheduled for _____ Date/Time. I look forward to our interview. Interviews will take place at NextSpace in Downtown Culver City unless other arrangements have been made. The interview will take no longer than 3 hours. Before the interview session begins, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form. The interview will consist of four open ended interview questions followed by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire which consists of 45 multiple choice questions.

If you have any questions or concerns prior to our interview, please do not hesitate to contact me at **************@yahoo.com.

Thank you,

Toia T. Mengesha, M.A.
Doctoral Student- Organizational Leadership
Pepperdine University

APPENDIX G

Letter For Single Mothers Not Meeting Criteria

Dear Participant:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the eligibility survey. Based on your responses, you do not meet all of the criteria for this particular study. I appreciate your interest in this study and I assure you that your information will remain confidential.

Thank you,

Toia T. Mengesha, M.A.
Doctoral Student- Organizational Leadership
Pepperdine University

APPENDIX H

Mind Garden Sales Receipt

From: info@mindgarden.com
Subject: Mind Garden: Sales Receipt for Order 21082
Date: April 2, 2012 at 3:55 PM
To:
Cc: info@mindgarden.com, bobmost@msn.com, mindgardeninfo@gmail.com, ken@mindgarden.com

The following order was placed with Mind Garden, Inc. Your order contains at least one PDF product.

Please follow the instructions below to login to your account on our Transform system and access your PDFs.

We appreciate your business. If you have any questions about your order please contact us by either replying to this e-mail or calling our office at 1-650-322-6300.

How to login to your Transform account

Transform is a web-based survey, assessment, and document-storage system by Mind Garden, Inc.

You will need to establish your identity (login) in Transform (if you haven't already done so). For this process, your User ID will be your email address; you will set your own password. To begin the login process, click on the link below. You may need to copy and paste this URL into your web browser if clicking on the URL does not work.

Login: http://www.mindgarden.com/login/143197/138033

Email:

As always, we are available weekdays (US) to answer any questions you may have. Reach us by email by going to the "Contact" link on our website http://www.mindgarden.com/contact.htm, or call us at
650-322-6300 (US Pacific).

Sales Receipt for Order 21082

Placed on Monday, April 2, 2012 at 3:55 pm (PDT, UTC-7)

Special Instructions:

Thank you for helping me figure out how to utilize the MLQ for my dissertation needs.

Ship To:

Toia Beans
Spill the Beans Coaching

Bill To:

Toia Beans
Spill the Beans Coaching
US (United States)

Product Code Quantity Price/Each Total
MLQR3 Manual

Format: downloadable PDF file
MLQ-Manual 1 $40.00 $40.00
Format: downloadable PDF file
Shipping: Online Product Delivery: $0.00

Sales Tax: $0.00

Order Total: $40.00
Payment method: PayPal
This order has been paid in full.
Our privacy policy is available here.

Returns and Exchanges:
If a shipment is refused, the customer is responsible for the return shipping costs. This amount will be deducted from the credit.
Manuals or Workbooks which we print and ship to you may be returned within thirty days of purchase.
To receive credit (minus shipping charges), products must be in resaleable condition and accompanied by a copy of the original sales receipt.
Returns must be sent to Mind Garden by certified mail or other traceable method.

Prior to returning a manual, please contact Mind Garden via phone or email for return authorization.