
Theses and Dissertations

2017

Success strategies in emerging Iranian American women leaders

Sanam Minoo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Minoo, Sanam, "Success strategies in emerging Iranian American women leaders" (2017). *Theses and Dissertations*. 856.

<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd/856>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.

Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

SUCCESS STRATEGIES IN EMERGING IRANIAN AMERICAN WOMEN LEADERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Sanam Minoo

July, 2017

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Sanam Minoo

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D., Chairperson

Lani Simpao Fraizer, Ed.D.

Gabriella Miramontes, Ed.D.

© Copyright by Sanam Minoo 2017

All Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
DEDICATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
VITA	x
ABSTRACT	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Women in Iran: Origins of Traditional Culture and Prominent Figures.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Purpose Statement.....	13
Research Questions	14
Significance of the Study	14
Limitations and Assumptions	16
Definition of Terms.....	18
Chapter Summary	20
Chapter 2: Literature Review	22
Overview	22
Organizational Culture, Emotional Intelligence, and the Basis of Leadership	22
Success Strategies	75
Chapter Summary	81
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	83
Introduction.....	83
Re-Statement of Research Questions.....	84

Nature of the Study	84
Methodology	88
Research Design.....	95
Human Subject Consideration	100
Data Collection	101
Interview Techniques.....	103
Statement of Personal Bias	110
Data Analysis	112
Chapter Summary	115
Chapter 4: Findings.....	115
Structure of the Chapter	116
Participants.....	117
Data Collection	119
Data Analysis	121
Inter-rater Review Process	123
Data Display.....	123
Research Question 1	123
Research Question 2	137
Research Question 3	142
Research Question 4	148
Chapter Summary	157
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations	159
Overall Summary and Structure of the Study	160
Results and Discussion of Findings	161
Key Findings.....	173

Implications of the Study	175
Recommendations for Future Research	182
Final Thoughts	186
REFERENCES	189
APPENDIX A. INFORMED CONSENT FORM	213
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT E-MAIL SCRIPT	217
APPENDIX C. IRB APPROVAL LETTER	218

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions	108
Table 2. Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions	110
Table 3. Dates of Participant Interviews	121

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. IQ1: Qualities of a successful leader. This figure demonstrates the six that have emerged from the responses. The numbers represent the number of times that particular theme was mentioned.....	125
Figure 2. IQ 2: Leadership strategies used to create success.....	129
Figure 3. IQ 3: Overcoming resistance to change.....	132
Figure 4. IQ 4: Overcoming challenges and barriers to success.....	134
Figure 5. IQ 5: Challenges and barriers that are faced as a leader.....	138
Figure 6. IQ 6: Barriers experienced throughout leadership journey.	140
Figure 7. IQ 7: Defining personal success.	143
Figure 8. IQ 8: Defining professional success.	146
Figure 9. IQ 9: Responses to what participants would if they were to start their journey all over again.	149
Figure 10. IQ 10: Advice, do's, and don'ts for aspiring Iranian women leaders.....	152
Figure 11. IQ 11: Additional responses participants wished to add.	156

DEDICATION

To all future Iranian women leaders: I hope the contents of this study will inspire and empower you to fulfill all your pursuits.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This acknowledgement goes out to all those who supported me through this entire journey, especially my family: Mom, Dad, Sahar, Bahar, and Justin—I want to especially thank you all for all your unconditional love, support, and encouragement. I would not have been able to do this without you.

To all my friends, thank you for your support and hearing my rants about getting through this process and being there for me.

To my committee—Dr. Farzin Madjidi, Dr. Lani Fraizer, and Dr. Gabriella Miramontes—thank you for your guidance and support that made the entire dissertation process manageable.

To the wonderful and inspiring women that I had the opportunity to interview: Angella Nazarian, Homa Sarshar, Fereshteh Amin, Marjan Sarshar, Roya Soleimani, Haleh Emrani, Anousheh Oskouian, Honorable Ashley Tabaddor, Maryam Refougaran, Roshni Rahnama, Honorable Judge Shahla Sabet, Maryam Khosravani, and Samira Far - thank you so much for your time, insights, and advice that you shared with me.

Thank you all!

VITA

EDUCATION

Doctorate of Organizational Leadership,

Pepperdine University

Master of Science

Loma Linda University

Bachelor of Arts

University of California Los Angeles

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CEO

Superior Caregivers

Project Manager

Convalo Health International, Inc., Los Angeles, Ca

Project Data Manager

Harbor UCLA Medical Center, Torrance, Ca

PRESENTATIONS

International Organization of Social Sciences and Behavioral Research

The Rising Generation of a More Open and Pro-Western World: Iranian American

Women in Leadership Roles. In Proceedings of the International Organization of Social

Sciences and Behavioral Research Conference. San Antonio, TX.

.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the prospects, challenges, and practicalities of an ethnic and demographic and subgroup in the attainment and exercise of leadership, specifically Iranian-American women based in the Greater Los Angeles area of California. A qualitative phenomenological study was designed in which 15 participants, selected through purposive sampling, were engaged in a semi-structured interview format, with a focus on eliciting answers pertinent to 4 research questions germane to the topic of interest. These 4 questions concerned the success strategies of Iranian-American women leaders, their specific challenges, the metrics of their success, and their lessons for aspiring leaders. Eleven specific interview questions were conceived to address these issues, with the responses recorded, transcribed, and coded to uncover common themes and categories among the answers. The findings indicated a common agreement on the importance of education, mentorship, motivation, a sense of self-belief and purpose, optimism, considerations of culture, and integrity as core elements of attaining success. Broadly speaking, participants' responses independently converged on the central importance of a leadership character best identified with what has become known as transformation leadership. This style is associated with leading by example and motivating a team to act independently yet in alignment with broader goals, in contrast to the traditional *command-and-obey* structure of transactional leadership. As indicated by a substantial body of literature, the transformational style is more commonly associated with women leaders and with the empathy-related component of emotional intelligence. Moreover, research has indicated that it is an especially effective style. Together, the results of this research and the associated literature lend themselves to a number of specific recommendations for aspiring Iranian women leaders, while also providing encouragement for them in their attainment and practice of such leadership.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Women in Iran: Origins of Traditional Culture and Prominent Figures

In ancient Persia, women enjoyed a high position and honor, especially relative to neighboring cultures in Arabia or the ancient Mediterranean. Persians worshipped a number of goddesses, and women had respected positions of power and influence, often assuming positions of authority alongside men (Farhid, 2011). In Zoroastrian (pre-Islamic) texts such as the *Avesta*, there is ample evidence that Iranian women were treated with respect and were granted important social and legal freedoms (Jayaram, 2015). Zoroastrians honored women as priestesses, and the priestesses were able to reach the highest religious position (known as *Zoot*), according to the rules of Zoroastrianism. They often served as leaders for religious ceremonies and social events, and they were given the power to choose their spouses; such freedoms and assertions of independence were encouraged by Zoroaster.

Woman also ascended to positions of power in many cases, especially if a king passed away and the prince was still a minor, in which case a woman was able to take the throne. For instance, Hodaya (often identified with the legendary Scheherazade of *The Arabian Nights*) was noted in the *Darab-Naameh*, a popular medieval Persian work, to be a competent and successful queen, considered a model for future generations (Jackson-Laufer, 2009). Even more so, the *Schahname*, the Persian national epic, includes a number of heroines who were leaders and/or military commanders. Examples of such figures include Gondafarid, who has been held up as an example of courage and discipline to Persians in subsequent centuries (Blatherwick, 2002).

In later periods in which historical documentation was more extensive, many women gained significant power within the Persian Empire (Frye, 1963). One example of such women is the naval commander Artemisia, a Persian imperial subject who fought against the Greeks at the

Battle of Salamis (Fabre-Serris & Keith, 2015; Strauss, 2004), as well as Azarmidokht and especially Purandokht, who was described in ancient scriptures as “wise, just, and good-natured” (Farhid, 2011, p. 2). Their reigns in the 7th century were brief, yet brought about essential reforms as an exhausted Sassanid Empire sought to preserve its identity and culture against a powerful expansionist Arab Islamic caliphate. As a result of this historical tradition and such remarkable individuals, Iran has had a somewhat more fluid attitude and set of opportunities for women compared to many of its neighbors, who have generally imposed a much more patriarchal social system.

The Islamic Conquest of Persia in the mid-7th century A.D. did bring about a number of cultural changes, especially since the Persians were under direct Arab rule (the Islamic Caliphate) for nearly 200 years. The Arabic alphabet became the official script for the Farsi language. Islam became the primary religion, and Arab-Islamic cultural norms (which were generally less supportive of women’s rights and opportunities) became more prevalent. Traditional Perso-Iranian culture, however, remained intact despite the Arab conquest—so much so that Persian culture would come to be highly influential in the Arab world in subsequent centuries, and a number of Iran’s most remarkable literary epics would be composed after the Islamic conquest (Jackson-Laufer, 2009).

Modern Iran and its traditional culture are generally linked to the rise of the Safavid dynasty in the early 1500s and the broad conversion of the population from Sunni to Shia Islam. The jurists and administrators of the new regime set out to define basic standards in a number of cultural realms such as family and religious practice, work and contracts, education, state loyalty, taxes, and military service; in doing so, they drew upon not only standard principles of Islamic law, but also upon ancient Persian traditions that had remained within Iranian culture. In the

process, the officials also introduced reforms in the treatment of women within the vast Persian Empire, which extended into and culturally influenced what is now Central Asia and India (Mitchell, 2011). Many of these reforms provided women with relative freedom in areas like education, family responsibilities, political participation, and property ownership, especially compared to women in neighboring Sunni Muslim regions in the Arab states and the Ottoman Turkish Empire. However, the new systems also formalized a number of restrictions on women's activities in higher education, merchant, and business enterprises; legal recognition; and leadership positions that would continue into the 1900s (Ferrier, 1999).

By the mid-20th century, Iran was a country with a mixed record on opportunities for women; it was somewhat more flexible and open than its neighbors, with women openly advocating for their interests in the political sphere, but still quite restrictive. "For all these signs of independence and political interest, the position of women was clearly a second class one" (Keddie, 1981, p. 150). In effect, the longstanding Safavid cultural and legal tradition prescribed that women should aspire only in the marriage and family arenas, without being recognized as full participants in the broader society. Such legal and cultural prescriptions were supported by widely held beliefs, in the Safavid Persian tradition, that women were irrational or immature, and thus not intrinsically capable of functioning in institutions largely founded and led by men (Mohammadi, 2007). Nevertheless, from the early 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, Iranian women have become much more active in fighting for their basic civil and constitutional rights (Mahdi, 2004; Moghadam, 2004). These competing cultural strains have been at the center of Iranian women's aspirations in recent decades. From this backdrop, women's recent opportunities and their social status overall have been shaped broadly by two critical political shifts since the 1950s: the overthrow (by British and American agents) of Iran's

liberalizing democratic government under Mohammed Mossadegh, followed by the anti-Anglo-American reaction and ayatollah-led Islamic Revolution in 1979 (de Bellaigue, 2012).

A brief modern history of Iran's political developments and their effects on women.

Ever since the revolution in 1979 and establishment of Islamic rule in the country, topics involving women have been particularly controversial. As detailed below, Iran's recent history leading up to the revolution was complicated—a result of not only conflicting internal factions but also external from the British and American, among others due to oil and imperial concerns—and has further contributed to the sensitivity of the subject (Abrahamian, 1982).

During the mid-20th century, Iran was reputed to be a fledgling and promising democracy in the region (Mehran, 2009). The country had a tolerant and progressive elected leader, Mohammad Mossadegh, in the 1950s alongside the Pahlavi dynasty (1929-1979), which shared goals of secularization, modernization, and westernization (Keddie, 1981). As noted before, many of these concepts had already been inherent within the Safavid tradition, and so the secular reformers were able to implement these changes within the context of an indigenous Persian cultural framework making them broadly acceptable to the public. Thus, Iran in particular seemed destined to set an example of a prosperous secular and humanistic state in the region with enlightened attitudes toward its female citizens (Kinzer, 2003).

Unfortunately, British interests feared that Mossadegh planned to nationalize the oil fields of Iran, many of which were controlled by British investors (Shenkman, 2005). Winston Churchill, who had regained British leadership at the time, worked with American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents to depose Mossadegh and instead give full power to the Shah Reza Pahlavi (Shoamanesh, 2009), who would allow the British and Americans to profit from Iran's oil. Although the Shah did continue Mossadegh's progressive policies, Iran itself, which

had been operating as a constitutional monarchy, was unable to develop the appropriate institutions to govern effectively after Mossadegh's removal (Kinzer, 2003). British power in the region was soon crushed due to Britain's humiliating defeat in the Suez Crisis of 1956, but the damage of Churchill's actions had been done (Israeli, 2013). Corruption and resentment both grew, culminating in the Revolution in 1979 with its angry protest against Anglo-American interests.

Setbacks for Iranian women after the revolution. According to Gillis (2016), "Women of the middle and upper classes—many of whom had adopted secular, Westernized values and customs—were among those most affected when the conservative Islamic government came to power with the revolution in 1979" (p. 8). There was a strict enforcement on dress code, which included consequences (minor infractions) if a woman went out in public wearing items women were not permitted to wear such as make-up. During the 1980s, the official attitude toward women varied but was generally on the restrictive side. This development was a manifestation of the new regime's general hostility towards Western secularism and suspicion of ongoing Anglo-American influences in any form, thus in part a continuing reaction to festering resentment from the 1953 coup (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007).

Some obvious and easily observable examples of these policies came in the form of police enforcement of the dress code and other restrictive social practices, which served as constant reminders of more subtle but deeper rooted restrictions in other legal and political realms. These did vary somewhat by region (being more severe in rural areas than in Teheran, the capital city) and with fluctuations in the political realm. Nonetheless, even in Tehran, a woman could be fined for wearing perfume, for letting some hair escape from her *chador*, or for speaking to a man in public in an animated fashion. Women in Iran also faced ongoing

restrictions in their independent pursuits of everything from job-seeking to driving unaccompanied. Although Iranian women believe they are allowed more independence than women in Saudi Arabia, their current status nonetheless accords them far less than was accorded them before the revolution, and the inconsistency with which the laws have been applied can sow additional resentment and anxiety (Gillis, 2016).

Women in post-revolutionary Iran. As part of their drive to unify Iran after 1979 and gain legitimacy in the eyes of the people, Ayatollah Khomeini and other religious leaders introduced reforms in opposition to the policies of the Shah who had been overthrown. Moreover, since the Shah was seen as corrupt and as a puppet for American and British interests, the ayatollahs' reforms altered Iran's political and administrative structure. They also targeted social systems that were perceived as being too associated with the US or the West in general. Unfortunately for Iran's women, many of these reforms also targeted social policies that had been relatively favorable to them under the Shah and Mohammed Mossadegh's regimes.

In particular, Khomeini and his ministers pushed for the repeal of the Family Protection Act (FPA), which had been a mainstay of social policy under the Shah's more Western-oriented regime (Girgis, 1996). The FPA was a remarkable piece of legislation in its reach and scope, extending a number of core rights to women and children that are generally more associated with advanced social democratic countries such as the Nordic countries or France. It mandated not only equal rights in education (both secondary and postsecondary education for both men and women, but also guaranteed equality in workplace compensation, as well as full voting rights and hearings on family issues in specialized secular courts. Many of these reforms had been envisioned by Reza Shah Pahlavi, founder of the Pahlavi dynasty and forerunner of the modern Iranian state in the 1920s (Abrahamian, 1982). The FPA, in other words, established a high level

of legal equality between men and women, in effect building on the more open and humanistic traditions of Iran that had been evolving over centuries amid its unique cultural mix, yet also adopting a number of very progressive policies usually considered Western-oriented.

The FPA was enacted in the 1960s and 1970s; by limiting the authority of the clerical courts, the FPA reduced the ayatollahs' power and provoked their opposition (Girgis, 1996). Thus, when Khomeini and his officials swept to power in broad opposition to the Shah and his Anglo-American associations, their long-simmering opposition to the FPA became one of the first manifestations of their social policy. In effect, the theocratic regime abrogated the FPA and replaced it with Islamic Shari'a law, which is generally hostile towards women's rights and opportunities (Mir-Hosseini, 2012). Women were again limited in their rights in the household, as had been the case before Mossadegh's regime and before the FPA in particular, while also suffering restrictions on their rights in hold public office or seek out commercial opportunities.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, Iran's Islamic Revolution and institution of Shari'a Law did not roll back women's rights and opportunities nearly as much as one might have suspected. According to Girgis (1996), "Contrary to accusations, the Islamic Republic is not trying to bring back archaic laws from the time of Mohammed, Shari'a law has been influencing the laws in Iran throughout its entire history and was intact until 1967" (p. 3). For example, women continued to enjoy broad access to both general and university education, with most Iranian degree-holders now female (Motevalli, 2015). Similarly, women retain full voting rights in Iran and can drive without an escort, as is standard in Saudi Arabia (Dehghan, 2016). Likewise, while some limitations were introduced on officeholding and business pursuits, these policies have been much more lenient than in Iran's Arab neighbors, allowing for greater freedom of opportunity.

Iranian women have also retained a surprising degree of autonomy and self-determination in the household, despite the principles of Shari'a Law and the ayatollahs' assertions that women were not capable of functioning independently. As Sahbat noted, "Women still retained the right to receive economic support from her husband, regardless of her personal wealth, the right to inherit (although it was still half) and the right to make contracts" (Neshat, 1980, p. 6). For instance, Iran implemented a remarkably successful birth control program beginning in the Shah's regime. While the post-Revolutionary government did not embrace such family planning at first, the policy has continued largely unchanged (Farmaian & Munker, 2006).

An interesting result of this continuity is that Iran has had one of the fastest falling birth rates in the world in the past 30 years. This decline has been even steeper than that of Western nations, as women have assumed more control over their reproductive decisions and households in general (Roudi-Fahimi & Kent, 2007). Notably, this drop occurred almost entirely after Khomeini's Islamic Revolution, and has correlated with a number of indices related to human development and women's opportunities such as workforce participation, access to birth control, and increasing education.

Iran's fertility decline has not been in isolation in the region; in fact, many otherwise conservative Arab Muslim countries have also experienced rapid fertility drops. Those countries significantly affected were North African and Gulf nations such as Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Oman, Bahrain, and Turkey (Eberstadt & Shah, 2012). Iranian women have demonstrated a much more sustained and pronounced pattern in this regard in the period since 1979. This phenomenon has taken hold in combination with the other indices noted above (especially birth control access), providing another indication that Iranian women have retained some critical rights and freedoms since the Islamic Revolution (Roudi-Fahimi & Kent, 2007).

The key implication of such findings is that the Islamic Revolution in Iran has had mixed results in regard to the rights and opportunities of Iranian women (Isfandiyari, 1997; Loiacono, 2007; Moghadam, 2004; Wolpow, 2015). Despite the conservative tone of the ayatollahs and imposition of clerical Shari'a Law, Iranian women have retained a number of core rights in association with voting, education and their position in the household (Mohammadi, 2007). Thus, in many ways offering them more freedom than their counterparts in neighboring Arab Muslim countries. However, the theocratic leaders of the country did manage to repeal or at least weaken Iranian women's rights in a number of other areas such as women's political and legal rights, their control of property and finances (with the abolition of the FPA) and even their dress (Girgis, 1996).

Current challenges and reformist goals for Iranian women. As a result of this historical backdrop, Iranian women today are poised at an uncertain crossroads, whether in Iran or overseas (Isfandiyari, 1997; Loiacono, 2007). On the one hand, these women can avail themselves of more freedoms than their sisters in much of the region; on the other hand, Iranian women must also assert their rights and demonstrate their ability as leaders and full economic participants, which have been either denied or attenuated since 1979 (Hoodfar, 1999). In this sense, women have borne the brunt of the painful consequences of the ill-fated (and ultimately futile) attempt of Churchill and the British to depose Iran's secular and progressive democracy to boost their own profits and maintain regional power. Having to wear a veil when going out in public (Girgis, 1996), facing limitations on their commercial aspirations (Moghadam, 2004), and being denied recognition by the law as fully independent participants in society (Shavarini, 2009) represent just a few examples of post-revolutionary policies that were seen as proper by the regime, yet clearly going against the secular, progressive spirit that had defined Iran before 1979.

Although there have been gradual changes and liberalizations in the country over the last 30 years (Mahdi, 2004; Wolpow, 2015), such as those brought about by reformers like Mohammad Khatami and Iran's current elected leader, the issue of women and their opportunities for work and education still remain a major issue in Iran (Pendleton & Zhu, 2011).

Part of the problem is that after the Anglo-American coup against Mossadegh and then the fall of the Shah's government, Iran's weakened governmental structure allowed the conservative religious ayatollahs to gain power comparable to the elected president (Ghosh, 2012). Even reformist Iranian leaders like Khatami, who have often paid particular attention to facilitating the rights of women ("Options Narrow," 2012), have seen their reforms watered down by the religious leaders. Iran's current president, Hassan Rouhani, shares many of the reformist goals of his predecessor Khatami, but just like before, he continues to face resistance from the religious (theocratic) leadership ("Options Narrow," 2012). There have been remarkable strides in some areas of political power, with several of Iran's current vice-presidents, top ministers and Parliament members are women. However, the overall political, business, and legal climate for the country's women remains challenging compared to the period before the 1979 Revolution (Kishi, 2015). The implication of this state of affairs is that reforms and assertions of rights for Iran's women will likely have to come from the bottom up as well as from the top down (Ghosh, 2012). That is, Iranian women themselves have had to organize at the grassroots, gain leadership positions, set examples, and mobilize in order to win support and bring about reforms. That said, however, Iran's developing and uncertain political system, combined with the general conflict and instability in the region (most recently Iran's own bloody 10-year war with Iraq), has posed risks for the nation's women and has complicated the process in a way that would be less of an issue in stable Western or East Asian democracies (Babak,

2015; Shahidian, 2002).

Importantly, this effort and the personal examples that fuel it, are coming not only out of Iran itself, but also from Iran's large community of immigrants abroad, especially in the United States (Ghorashi & Tavakoli, 2006). Like women in Iran, Iranian-American women have been largely encouraged to avoid pursuing financial independence and focus on marriage and family roles (Girgis, 1996; Hoodfar, 1999). With many inspired by the reforms of Khatami (Mahdi, 2004) and pioneering women activists in the home country (Wolpow, 2015), a number of Iranian-Americans have blazed trails toward leadership and educational and occupational success in their adopted lands (Tenty & Houston, 2013), without the legal restrictions they would face under Iran's strict laws (Ghosh, 2012; Sepehrrad, 2003). In this overseas context, successful Iranian-American women and community leaders play an especially significant role in helping to nurture better rights for Iranian women in general, including those in Iran.

Statement of the Problem

The core problem addressed in this study was the nature of the obstacles that still hinder the progress of even ambitious Iranian and Iranian-American women, and the ways in which these women might (or already have) overcome these persistent hurdles amid the uncertain cultural evolution of the Iranian state. Some examples of these obstacles include the reduction of freedom and independence for women after the Islamic Revolution, and constraints resulting from the way they have been viewed by society. Such issues are compounded by structural and perceptual problems in the workplace, legal, and political realms, which are not confined to the Middle Eastern region (Talattof, 1997).

Women have made many gains across the board in Western societies, but even there (and especially in the United States), the results of their efforts have been uneven. This phenomenon

is especially true in the political and business (ownership and executive) realms, where women's opportunities for independent promotion continue to lag. Even in the cases where women have achieved leadership positions in the West, these have often depended on family connections, indicative of ongoing barriers for women who do not start out with major advantages or hail from the upper class (Hashemi, 2016; Quadrini, 2000). For instance, much attention has been directed to Hillary Clinton as the first woman Presidential candidate of a major U.S. party. Her political career has owed much to her family association with her husband Bill Clinton, a two-term President, and his name and political organization; women starting from the ground floor have had comparatively mixed success in attaining U.S. higher offices (Abramson & Ballabon, 2016; Pessen, 1971).

Similarly, women in the United States have struggled to gain boardroom and executive positions in the private sector, a point that the current investigator revisited in the context of Iranian-American women. In the corporate world, where even liberal Western democracies have made it difficult for women to advance, Iranian women face particularly high hurdles (Mahdi, 2004; Wolpow, 2015). While more Iranian-American women in modern society are highly educated, successful, and work full time—with more starting their own businesses, especially since the recent lifting of sanctions—they also suffer significant shortcomings in gaining the sorts of commercial and community leadership positions where they can exercise significant influence (Babak, 2015). In addition to the general challenges of gaining leadership in an organization, Iranian women have faced profound structural and historical barriers linked to the very perception of leadership itself. As will be discussed at length in this report, traditional views of leadership tend to envision a leader as *transactional* in temperament—in essence, issuing commands and expecting obedience—a view that is at odds with women's perceived roles in

general, especially in Iran since the 1979 Revolution (Mahdi, 2004).

Notably, recent researchers (Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001) on the nature of organizational leadership have suggested that the transactional model may not be the best paradigm. In fact, many qualities broadly considered female and not fitting in with the transactional paradigm (and likewise popularly associated in Iran with its women) may turn out to be empirically associated with stronger leadership, especially when other paradigms of leadership are considered. One such paradigm that the current researcher tackled, the so-called *transformational model*, entails many classically female qualities (especially connected with empathy) that can be quite conducive to good leadership and governance (Aaltio & Takala, 2007; Mahdi, 2004). Nevertheless, the combination of well-ingrained perceptions and official disdain (if not quite hostility) for women's opportunities by Iran's clerical leadership has made it difficult for Iranian women to garner the kind of consensus support that would help to catapult them to greater leadership positions (Mahdi, 2004; Mohammadi, 2007).

Purpose Statement

Despite the multilayered challenges that modern Iranian women have faced, especially since the Khomeini Revolution, a number of them have nonetheless attained remarkable success in diverse fields like medicine, law and politics (Metcalf & Mutlaq, 2011). What makes these women more inspiring is the fact that they did not allow such obstacles to get in their way of reaching success. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to determine (a) the success strategies used by emerging Iranian American women leaders; (b) what challenges are faced by Iranian American Women leaders in their leadership journey; (c) how Iranian women measure success; and (d) what lessons Iranian American leaders have for future Iranian American leaders.

Research Questions

The specific objectives of this study were to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?

RQ2: What are some of the challenges faced by Iranian-American women leaders in their leadership journey?

RQ3: How do Iranian women leaders measure their leadership success?

RQ4: What lessons do current Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian American leaders?

Significance of the Study

This study was highly significant because of the unique historical context of Iranian women and the crossroads (and associated challenges and opportunity) they currently face. In effect, the current investigation provided a rare, personal, and comprehensive insight into the mindsets and goals of Iranian women at one of their most important historical junctures in modern history. As discussed before, women in Iran have suffered setbacks since the 1979 Revolution, yet the historical circumstances of the Revolution and Iran's intricate historical tradition provide opportunities for Iranian women to make significant progress. Despite the centrality of Khomeini's Revolution to Iran's current political and social culture, Iranians in general understand that it was also a reaction to prior events and external impositions—specifically, the Anglo-Iranian coup against Mossadegh and attempts to seize Iran's oil and other natural resources.

As a result, the conservative law—especially in the form of the Shari'a—imposed by Iran's theocrats after 1979 is in no way the defining culture of Iran (as evidenced by its progressive tendencies prior under Mossadegh and the Shah), especially for younger Iranians

(Wolpow, 2015). Iranian women, both inside and outside Iran, enjoy the opportunities created by a broader and more open society than their predecessors, and one in which the rising generation is more open and pro-Western. In fact, considering Iran's trajectory prior to and just after the Anglo-American coup against Mossadegh (under both Mossadegh and the Shah), Iranians today are in many ways simply resuming the country's original secularizing, reformist-minded direction leading up to the Revolution. In this environment, women have more freedom to advance their causes from the bottom up, as described before, for which successful role models are essential both within and outside Iran itself.

This generational shift in Iran's cultural character and perspective also provides another aspect of great significance for this study. As more and more young Iranian women are becoming educated and aspiring towards success in their careers, they bring a unique cultural perspective with them--one that is neither entirely traditionally Iranian nor fully Western (Girgis, 1996). Such an unusual vantage point can itself serve as a benchmark for understanding how the social and generational shifts in developing countries in general are experienced on the personal, individual level. Another important facet of this phenomenon is the emotional impact of such aspiration on the individual, particularly in the form of the stresses and the delicate balances that Iranian women must endure as they strive for opportunities in a society and culture that is itself in a state of rapid evolution (Hoodfar, 1999).

Ultimately, the accounts provided in this article provided a more concrete picture of Iranian women's changing opportunities and perspectives through their own eyes, in a way that is difficult to appreciate by outsiders or through simple (broad-brushed) descriptions. By using such accounts to shed light on success factors and the personal experiences associated with them, the current researcher aimed to furnish a broader understanding that can help other Iranian

women (especially in the younger generation) apply such stories to their personal lives and boost their own success. These stories can have high motivational value, especially for those starting their careers. Furthermore, they could serve as the template for courses or mentoring workshops to help guide women leaders and help them to hone their leadership skills.

Limitations and Assumptions

There were several limitations of the current study. The current author was limited to interviewing participants who are willing to communicate over an extended period for interviews, which excluded Iranian women who for various reasons (such scheduling conflicts or demands) may simply not be interested in such an extended communication-- creating a potential selection bias. A similar selection bias-based limitation was that more culturally Iranian women may actually be less inclined to share their thoughts and experiences, due perhaps to shyness or lingering doubts about their gender roles or concerns about family back in Iran. Even if promised anonymity, some may still fear divulging too many personal details, or just be generally disinclined to be too public about their Persian identity and entrepreneurial or other efforts--in effect, excluding many of the women who (due to their bicultural status) might actually be the most interesting and informative. A traditional Iranian superstition about the *evil eye* may have discouraged participation by more culturally Iranian women; they may have worried that by becoming too public, they might encourage readers to give them the evil eye and hurt their business. Once again, this factor would introduce a selection bias against more bicultural (less Westernized) Iranian-American women.

The investigator interviewed a total of 15 participants due to the unavoidable constraints of conducting such extended interviews and contacts. While this is a relatively sizable sample for such qualitative research, it is not immediately clear how easy it would be to generalize the data

collected from the group, given the scale of Iran's population and the diversity of the challenges that its women (both in Iran and overseas) face. Out of practical necessity, the investigator interviewed only Iranian-American women; thus, a window of the circumstances within Iran itself (and the business and social milieu there) was more difficult to obtain. Participants were limited to those women who are fluent and bilingual in English and Farsi. This pre-selection excluded many Iranian women who have come more recently and would not be fluent in English—thus introducing another potential element of selection bias.

In terms of assumptions, in line with the cultural backdrop discussed before, this study presumed that Iranian women are typically expected to get married and start a family. The interviewed women, therefore, have rejected that tradition. Conversely, the investigator presumed that the women in this investigation are presently career-focused even if they are caring for families. Another assumption in this study was that the women might have been stay-at-home mothers previously. Furthermore, since the focus of the study was on an Iranian Diaspora population--Iranian-American women, who are themselves quite religiously diverse--as opposed to women in Iran itself, the relative role of Islam as a cultural factor was not thoroughly addressed, even though it is likely to be significant given its importance in framing the overall cultural backdrop of Iranian women's experiences.

Success now versus success in the 1980s. A more intricate and relevant set of assumptions relates to the marked shift in the cultural concept of success itself between the 1980s and the present. These assumptions may have an impact on interviewing different generations of Iranian-American women. This consideration clearly implies that the significance of these Iranian-American women's activities might vary substantially between different generations in terms of the family and cultural expectations, which they would have internalized.

To be more specific, when Iranians migrated out of Iran, especially after the fall of the Shah, families moved to different parts of the world. A substantial proportion moved to Israel, Austria, and the United States. Once families became settled in America and began creating a new life for themselves, those with daughters still often held onto the tradition of making sure their daughters got married to a good family, with little focus on education or career; these cultural norms were what embodied success in a traditional context. During the 1980s, it was still fairly common for women to get married at age 21 or as a teenager. Getting a college education and pursuing a career was not a priority. Therefore, another key assumption with this study was that there would be a built-in perceptual difference for Iranian-American women based on when they or their families emigrated. That is, those who left Iran right around the Revolution would have been expected to be much less career-focused (more interested in simply being homemakers), and thus clearly going against ingrained trends. In contrast, those leaving much later (in the past decade for example) would likely be more Westernized and thus less inclined to consider a career focus as a departure from the norm, though still aware of and concerned about the challenges to women's opportunities in Iran.

Definition of Terms

In this section, the author will provide precise definitions of the terms used in this work to clarify their meaning in the context of the study, and to differentiate from everyday uses that might differ from their specialized uses here:

Family Protection Act. This is an Iranian law passed in several phases, beginning in the 1960s, that established a number of protections and freedoms for American women in the household, legal realm, education, business, and other areas; the FPA was partially though not completely repealed after 1979 (Gillis, 2016).

Farsi language. This term refers to the national language of Iranians.

Immigrants. This term refers to those who migrated from Iran or took refuge in the United States, especially during a time when there was political upheaval in the country (such as the Islamic Revolution). This is simply a country-specific application of the *immigrant* term, which is used in general in government-defined contexts to apply to any individual who shifts location from one geographically defined country to another. The Immigration Nationality Act (INA) defines immigrants as an “alien admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident” (Department of Homeland Security, 2015 p. 4).

Iranians. An Iranian is a native, citizen, or inhabitant of Iran or an individual born to a family of Iranian descent.

Leader. This term describes a person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country, and demonstrates the personal qualities as detailed in the definition for *leadership* (Summerfield, 2014).

Leadership. According to Northouse (2016), leadership is defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6). Garry Wills and Marcus Buckingham have provided similar examples focusing on motivation of others and setting of an example, so the specific definition of leadership in this study refers to the ability of motivating others and influencing them towards a common goal, while setting a positive example that itself helps to guide others’ actions (Summerfield, 2014).

Shari’a law. This describes a conservative religious law based on tenets of the Koran, the Islamic holy book, which is generally more restrictive to women’s freedom than secular laws. Shari’a derives from an Arabic term for *way* or *road*, and represents a collection of legal principles stemming from Islamic jurists’ and scholars’ interpretations of guiding principles from

the various religious texts and commentaries that are considered central to the religion, though the exact laws in place can vary between Muslim sects (Akgunduz, 2010).

Success. Success refers to the accomplishment of an aim or purpose, or overall achievement in a given field or endeavor. A successful Iranian woman is defined more specifically in terms of educational and workplace attainment, with recognition of said accomplishment from the community. Nash and Stevenson (2004) concluded that high achievement involved four relevant components: (a) happiness (feelings of gratitude and pleasure), (b) achievement (accomplishing things one has always strived for), (c) significance (making a positive impact), and (d) legacy (the recognition of one's values and accomplishments in order to help others). These four components helped establish what consisted of lasting success (Nash & Stevenson, 2004).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the author focused on the unique historical backdrop and cultural context reasonable for the uncertain and evolving challenges facing Iranian women, a context that is more complicated than often assumed, as well as the reasons for pursuing this study. As discussed, Iran's recent history has been quite turbulent and its culture quite varied, without a simplistic narrative to explain or describe the environment for women (Mahdi, 2004). Iran's Persian Shiite culture is distinct in the Middle Eastern region, and the work of leaders such as Mohammed Mossadegh and the Shah Pahlavi from 1953 through 1979 was designed to open and secularize Iran—partly along Western lines but also partly in Iran's own native tradition (Ghosh, 2012). Women during this period made gains not far from those enjoyed by secular European democracies (Girgis, 1996).

Unfortunately, British and American oil interests (led by Winston Churchill) damaged

this path (Farmaian & Munker, 2006). The British and Americans did this by pushing to oust the democratically elected Mossadegh and take foreign control of Iran's oil fields, seeding the bitter resentment that would lead to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the seizure and nationalism of Iran's oil resources (Hernon, 2013). The removal of Mossadegh led to many setbacks for Iranian women's goals and opportunities (Mahdi, 2004), though not as comprehensively as often assumed or feared. The net result of this is that Iranian women today are at a kind of crossroads. Iranian women are still facing obstacles brought about by the 1979 Revolution (Ghosh, 2012), but also enjoying new opportunities to start movements and bring about reforms, especially with the more Westernized and open attitude of the younger Iranian generation (Kinzer, 2003).

While Iranian women have made impressive and often surprising strides in areas like education (Wolpow, 2015), political representation (Mahdi, 2004), and business participation (Esfandiari, n.d.), they still lag in many areas (Loiacono, 2007) especially in the legal and commercial realms compared to the policies in place before 1979 (Girgis, 1996). Therefore, the current researcher opted to obtain the personal perspectives of Iranian-American women who have migrated to the United States or are descended from emigrating families after the 1979 Revolution. Given the still uncertain development of Iran (Gillis, 2016) and of the prospects for women there (Shavarini, 2009), gaining an insight into leadership and experience from actual Iranian women leaders can be quite helpful in illuminating their challenges and serving as a model for other Iranian women. In addition, a goal of this study was to shed light on the unique situation and suitability of women for leadership roles in general, and the specific styles of leadership that women bring to bear (Kinzer, 2003).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

This chapter is organized into the following major sections: (a) leadership as an area of critical study, (b) a historical analysis of women in leadership and their leadership styles (with consideration of relevance to Iranian women), and (c) an examination of success strategies especially as they relate to Iranian women. The first major section centers on a discussion of the historical background of women in leadership, with an examination of prominent historical figures and an exploration of their styles based on what historical documents have made available. In this section, the author applies these lessons to Iranian women and to the movement to gain more rights for women in Iran. In the second major section, the author focuses on leadership as an area of study (in the sense that it constitutes a collection of characteristic behaviors), and transitions into a consideration of specific success factors. The third major section describes success factors more precisely—what they are and how they are implemented, especially in the context of women leaders and Iranian women in particular.

Organizational Culture, Emotional Intelligence, and the Basis of Leadership

O'Toole (1996) described culture as the shared values, assumptions and customs that characterize a particular group. This author referred to corporate culture as “the complex, interrelated whole of standardized, institutionalized, habitual behavior that characterizes that firm and that firm only” (O'Toole, 1996, p. 72). Since most organizations (especially in government and the private sector) tend to be hierarchical in nature, their actions tend to be ultimately guided by an individual or group of individuals who issues commands and sets the agenda for the organization (O'Toole, 1996).

A similarly significant concept to take into account is that of emotional intelligence (EI), a notion

first introduced by Beldoch (1964) in a child psychology study, and broadly disseminated by Goleman (2011) several decades later. EI entails a set of characteristics that speak to a person's ability to not only empathize with others, but also to guide their behavior and unify them with a common sense of purpose—a close correlate to the very essence of leadership as defined previously (Dabke, 2016). Therefore, leadership in the common view fundamentally entails investigations into the temperament of the leader and the manner in which the leader can empathize and connect with his/her followers (Collins, 2001).

Emotional intelligence and its relevance to leadership. According to Goleman (2011), emotional intelligence is most concisely defined as the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. In Goleman's conception, emotional intelligence primarily encompasses the following three skills: (a) emotional awareness, including the ability to identify one's own emotions and the emotions of others; (b) the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem-solving skills; (c) the ability to manage emotions, including the ability to regulate one's own emotions, and the ability to calm down another person where needed (Goleman, 2011).

For sociologists, psychologists, policymakers, and other experts studying leadership, investigations into EI generally tend to center on two defining questions. The first is whether EI has a truly causal relationship to good leadership or whether the connection is simply correlative (Li, Gupta, Loon, & Casimir, 2016). The second key question involves whether EI represents a distinct personal attribute with predictive power, or is merely a rebranding of qualities that have already been described (or are better described) by standard metrics of general intelligence or overall personality traits (Turner, 2016). This analysis, in turn, addresses issues surrounding the validity of a measure like EI itself. On the one hand, a number of studies have shown that people

with high EI have greater mental health, job performance, and leadership skills (Goleman, 1995). On the other hand, it has been difficult to establish whether such elevated EI has a truly causal relationship, or whether such findings are likely to be attributable to general intelligence or deeper, specific personality traits which themselves give rise to what is perceived as emotional intelligence (Northouse, 2016).

As a further example, Goleman (2011) claimed that EI accounted for 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for superior performance in leaders, and mattered twice as much as technical expertise or IQ. Nevertheless, other researchers (Fambrough & Hart, 2008; Kreitz, 2009; Lopez-Zafra, Garcia-Retamero, & Berrios Martos, 2012) have found that the effect of EI on leadership and managerial performance is non-significant when ability and prior personality are controlled for and that general intelligence correlates very closely with leadership. The EI concept can undoubtedly be valuable as a guide to investigate leadership (George, 2000) and the people occupying position of leadership (Doe, Ndinguri, & Phipps, 2015), even if it does not turn out to be a causal factor per se (Harati, 2013). That is, even if EI itself is merely a manifestation of deeper factors and characteristics that truly are predictive of good leadership abilities and greater likelihood of attaining such positions, it can still function as a kind of summarizing statistic that effectively captures whatever the deeper variables are, and thus would correlate well with an expectation to attain leadership and practice it well (Cavazotte, Moreno, & Hickmann, 2012). Furthermore, markers of EI and methods of developing it have become more widely developed in the past decade, and it has thus become possible to more quantitatively gauge EI and its correlations to good leadership (Ramchunder & Martins, 2014). In addition, scholars (Duncan & Skarstad, 1995; Humphreys & Einstein, 2004; Kreitz, 2009) have begun to provide evidence to help characterize the neural mechanisms of emotional intelligence.

Literature trends. According to research done by Higgs and Dulewics (1999) and Cavazotte et al. (2012), a growing professional interest has arisen in regard to more quantitative measurements of EI and their potential correlation to good leadership. This interest has grown further in this field in recent years (Doe et al., 2015; Ramchunder & Martins, 2014). The extent emotional intelligence actually plays a role in effective leadership, however, remains debatable (Palmer et al., 2001). As Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) noted, detailed analysis of leadership temperament suggested that emotional intelligence often may be simply acting as a proxy for emotional, cognitive, and behavioral characteristics that are readily assessed with existing tools. On the other hand, some elements of what is deemed EI do seem to shed new light on successful leadership in a manner independent from previous findings (Doe et al., 2015; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012).

Recently, there has been a focus by scholars on relating overall emotional intelligence to leadership skills and performance (George, 2000) or showing how specific components of emotional intelligence such as empathy are important traits that contribute to leadership (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). Coetzee and Schaap (2005) claimed that there is a solid relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership, and much of the past decade in the field (Doe et al., 2015; Li et al., 2016; Palmer et al., 2001) has focused on evaluating the validity of their specific arguments in this regard. Thus far, the conclusions of this debate are mixed. Some evidence points to EI as simply restating earlier work (Dowda & Hart, 2000; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012). More recently, however, researchers have indicated that EI delves into distinct characteristics not previously measured, and that it sheds significant new light on the seemingly contradictory mix of traits that correlates with leadership success, especially with women (Duncan & Skarstad, 1995; Li et al., 2016; Northouse, 2016).

The character and structure of effective leadership. Women in business leadership positions have to maintain a delicate balance, moving a work environment in productive directions and communicating personal values to employees without giving up their integrity (Doe et al., 2015). Bushe (2001) defined leadership in the context of a diverse, often tense work environment as “anytime anyone helps a group of people increase their clarity or come to agreement” (p. 11). This conception of leadership suggests that it is a faculty that is intimately connected to human emotions and relationships, rather than being confined to mere technical performance or competence. A leader's style, demeanor, and impression on a team depend on a variety of factors, and a leader's own development generally progresses through several stages since the leader, himself or herself, is inevitably learning on the job as he or she adapts his or her style. Iranian women leaders must adapt to these challenges just as men, but with the added hurdle of winning respect in a role that is often seen (even by other women) as best assumed by male authority while also overcoming deep cultural and social biases about their abilities, temperament, and inclinations (Metcalf & Mutlaq, 2011).

Collins (2001) described five specific stages of leadership in a kind of hierarchy. While there can be some variation from leader to leader, these stages provide something of a roadmap for the personal evolution that a leader must undergo. At the first level, an individual gains a reputation for basic competence, the core requirement for any sort of professional or management position. At the second level, the individual is seen as an indispensable, contributing team player. It should be noted that at both of these stages, one is deemed a leader without explicitly serving in an obvious leadership role, rather a person's contributions and ability make them implicitly a leader—or, at least, an individual with acknowledged leadership qualities who is respected by colleagues.

Collins (2011) described the third level as the first one identified with a traditional leadership role: that of an effective manager. However, the manager level alone is not necessarily associated with a broader vision, imagination, or inspiration (Goleman, 2011). The fourth level more directly identifies an effective leader as a leader per se, in the form of a person who can motivate others with a clear and vigorous shared vision, and who can effectively bring a group to achieve far more than they could working individually. In effect, a level-four leader embodies and internalizes the highly valued trait of making the whole add up to more than the sum of its individual parts. Still, even a level-four leader is limited by a largely self-oriented perspective--this kind of leader is mainly concerned with personal achievement and individual record. The level-five leader perhaps best exemplifies the essence of leadership: determination but a principal focus on the success of the team, mission, or institution itself. At the fifth level, the leader has a strong ego; however, he or she shifts the focus of his or her ego externally, upon the achievements and excellence of the organization, rather than him or herself. The level-five leader is most inspiring because the team or organization in which he or she is involved is readily able to grasp the broader effort in which all are taking part, and more easily appreciate the greater objective at hand (Collins, 2001).

In contrast to Collins (2011), who envisioned leadership as a hierarchical and chronological process with stages of development akin to those described by neurologists or psychologists like Erik Erikson, Goleman (2011) instead regarded leadership as a more heterogeneous array of characteristics that come together in a form generally recognized in an individual who takes charge of a group. Specifically, Goleman described six styles of leadership, four of which are considered to be styles of *resonance leadership*, which are more fundamentally linked with leadership styles overall, however diverse. These six styles include:

1. *Visionary*, where the leader engages the group in formulating and embracing a shared vision;
2. *Coaching*, in which the leader works with an employee to enhance their performance by linking the goals of the employee with those of the organization;
3. *Affiliative*, in which the leader works to enhance the relationships within the employee group;
4. *Democratic*, where the leader builds consensus by valuing the independent ideas and input of participants, and rallying them in a common commitment to a goal;
5. *Pacesetting*, where the leader sets high standards for themselves and others alike, affirming both encouragement and expectations of attaining the prescribed benchmarks, and
6. *Commanding*, where the leader is directive and authoritative in their approach to what is usually a crisis or urgent situation, as in the military (Goleman, 2011).

Notably, Goleman (1995) did not frame these leadership styles as being necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather, he suggested that any individual leader should be able to tap into, and variously combine or alternate these styles as needed for particular tasks, situations, or teams (and their constituent personalities). In fact, one of the markers of emotional intelligence is that a leader is versatile enough to adapt in such a fashion: to recognize what kind of leadership is called for, to change one's style depending on the tasks at hand and team members involved (Dabke, 2016), and to successfully execute that style in the context of the specific personal challenges entailed by a given task (Cavazotte et al., 2012).

When it comes to insights into specific leaders, as indicated above, the discussion of female leaders has been especially informative since it has by necessity examined the defining

nature of leadership itself, and how leadership is perceived by society (Cavazotte et al., 2012; Kreitz, 2009). Even though many societies have historically (for a variety of reasons) preferred men in leadership positions, nevertheless a remarkable number of women leaders throughout history have taken charge of countries, communities, companies, or other institutions. Sometimes these positions have been acquired through family or nobility connections (such as a woman inheriting royal authority in a traditional monarchical system) or personal connections (Abramson & Ballabon, 2016). But many women have also won leadership roles through meritorious performance as well, and many have been quite successful and historically influential (Dusinberre, 2003; Kurzman, 2004; Kytzler, 1994).

By necessity, there is some subjectivity in the evaluation of women leaders' success depending in part on what qualities are most respected in a given era, as well as the nations and cultures at hand. Nevertheless, overall there has been a fair degree of consensus about the quality and accomplishments of specific women leaders, as discussed below based on how they faced specific challenges and how they led their people under specific circumstances. In turn, these historical evaluations are increasingly being merged with modern evaluations of leadership more commonly applied to business executives or political figures, in particular the yardstick of emotional intelligence. These historical investigations can help to illuminate both the hurdles and opportunities for Iranian women as they seek to gain and exercise leadership positions of their own, since many of these women had to battle institutional barriers that mirror what Iranian women are facing today. Such an analysis can lead to a better understanding of the very meaning of leadership; as women in general confounded common expectations, this can help Iranian women in their own efforts at better exercising it (Kuiper, 2010).

In particular, it can be helpful to compare and contrast the leadership styles, inspiration of

followers and relative success of three interesting women leaders: Joan of Arc, Elizabeth I, and Benazir Bhutto. Their histories are very well-documented both in the details of their rule and their individual personalities, which makes it feasible to consider and examine their leadership styles and how they gained power and led as women. The wealth of knowledge on these women and their path to success has allowed for a remarkably modern analysis of leadership character and its specific impact, particularly in the case of Joan of Arc, who is not a monarch or daughter of a previous leader, but a peasant girl rising through the ranks, thus mirroring the challenge faced by many Iranian women today (DeVries, 1999; Egan, n.d.). This essential historical understanding can help illuminate both the defining elements and challenges of women taking on important leadership roles, including in Iran. These cases will subsequently be considered in the context of less well-documented, but more culturally and politically relevant examples of Iranian women leaders. Notably, the three women leaders examined here are quite diverse in several ways. Joan of Arc is perhaps the most applicable in terms of the acquisition of her leadership, since she was a peasant girl in France and had to earn her position, much like women today. Elizabeth I simply inherited her rule from her father (by Henry VIII's will), while Benazir Bhutto was somewhere in between the daughter of a previous Pakistani leader, who nonetheless had to be elected and earn her position (Allen, n.d.; DeVries, 1999; Ridley, 1988).

Likewise, while Joan of Arc was remarkably successful and had a historic impact in her crucial military and political victories against the English (paving the way for an independent and unified France), Elizabeth and Bhutto were overall less successful, with Elizabeth eventually losing costly wars against Spain and Ireland after the Spanish Armada and Bhutto being expelled from power due to corruption charges (Guy, Morgan, & Morrill, 1992; Seward, 1982; Suvorova, n.d.). Finally, in terms of chronology, Joan was a leader in the Middle Ages, while Elizabeth led

in the early modern period and Bhutto in the 20th century. Their well-documented histories and contrasts provide valuable insight into the complexities and nuances of women's leadership under different circumstances, as detailed in the next section. Some examples of these complexities and nuances include the acquisition of power amid a community skeptical of women having such power, as well as issues concerning how women are viewed in such circumstances, and how their leadership style may differ substantially compared to male leaders (Aaltio & Takala, 2007; Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005; Richey, 2003). This acts as a valuable foundation for later examination of women leaders in a more specifically Iranian and Middle Eastern context.

Historical analysis of prominent women leaders and defining traits of their leadership. In this section, the researcher will examine a number of prominent women leaders throughout history.

Joan of Arc: Archetype of a successful, transformational woman leader. Perhaps the most remarkable example of a successful and influential woman leader, against incredible odds and in the face of serious challenges, is France's Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc). While many women did achieve leadership positions in the monarchies of medieval and Renaissance Europe, most of them were already members of royal families and thus, in effect, born into privilege. However successfully they exercised their authority later, they had the good fortune of essentially inheriting it and not having to fight to gain it in the first place. Joan was very different, however, since she was basically a peasant girl in France; it was rare for peasants at any level—male or female—to gain political or military authority. Thus, Joan had to first convince a very skeptical group of established powers in France to be granted a leadership position at all. Joan succeeded in this unusual feat by establishing her leadership fitness under

circumstances of crisis—perhaps the most defining and demanding situation in which a strong leader is needed and called upon. Joan did this by exhibiting a unique style of leadership that transcended what had been seen previously in a fruitless conflict and which paralleled in many ways what would later be considered transformational leadership (Leadbeater, 2012; Seward, 1982). Crucially, Joan was able to break with custom by convincing male counterparts that she was injecting a crucial new element into their aims, much as Iranian women leaders today must do to gain acceptance for their aspirations (DeVries, 1999). Even more remarkably, she was only a teenage girl when she began to present her case to be granted a leadership position in the French military (Richey, 2003).

At the time in the 15th century, France was effectively in danger of losing its sovereignty to English rule, as a result of its military struggles in what historians have called the Hundred Years War (Seward, 1982). Even though England itself had been ruled by French kings in some previous centuries, by this point the English had become a determined enemy seeking to establish political power over France, and English kings and their allies had essentially taken over half of France. The French themselves were discouraged, and the French king (Charles VII) feared that he would soon have to request a peace in which England would take control (DeVries, 1999). Moreover, Joan's participation came at the Siege of Orleans, probably the most crucial challenge of the Hundred Years War, and one which involved many battles of its own. Orleans was in the center of France and divided the region controlled by the English and the French themselves—if the English captured Orleans, there was probably nothing to stop them from then capturing the rest of the country. This was therefore a crucial test of leadership where success was essential otherwise the French faced disaster (Richey, 2003).

In summary, looking this state of affairs from the perspective of modern leadership

analysis, the established leadership figures had failed and frankly admitted failure. Charles VII and his officials lacked the political authority to command or motivate the people even in the regions they claimed to control, while his military leaders had been shown to be ineffective, suffering years of defeats and further discouraging the French population and soldiers (Leadbeater, 2012). Thus, Joan achieved a remarkable feat even before she had fought a battle as a military or political leader: being accepted as a leader by established powers despite being an outsider, by being able to convince them that she might succeed in a severe crisis where they had failed. This will be considered in more detail later, since it suggests an important consideration when evaluating Emotional Intelligence in connection to leadership (DeVries, 1999).

Subsequently, when faced with actual challenges in the field, Joan had to demonstrate executive aspects of leadership based on her performance as a political leader and military commander (Check, 2014). France at the time was not a unified country, but full of factions that did not like each other, and did not trust Charles VII at all. In fact, many of the factions in the French court were fighting against each other more than they were fighting against the English and their allies. Joan had to unify them to support her cause, which was recognizing Charles VII and a common authority over France, which in turn had a goal unifying France in general against the English-led invading enemy that was then occupying about half of France (Richey, 2003). Also, Joan had to convince the factions to follow her and her war plans, which they eventually did, though often reluctantly and with a lot of hesitation. Finally, Joan had to prove herself on the battlefield. Part of the reason for France's crisis was the devastation it was suffering after so many military defeats, and Joan had to reverse this to be considered successful in what she was trying to do. Joan was able to accomplish all of these goals in a manner that testifies to the success of her leadership, in large part because she manifested such extraordinary leadership

skills under circumstances of great pressure and very high stakes. Nothing less than the survival of the French nation was at stake, and Joan was able to prevail by not only earning the trust of both nobles and commoners, itself a remarkable feat, but also inspiring them to achieve at a higher ability and with higher motivation than they could have otherwise managed. In so doing, Joan demonstrated qualities of great leadership as recognized by numerous traditions, and also exhibited a high degree of what has today become known as transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (Bingham, 1994; Duff-McCall & Schweinle, 2008; Kreis, 2009).

This is particularly true with the way she was able to unify the disagreeing factions. Goleman (1995) as well as other authors in the EI field (Dowda & Hart, 2000; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012) have repeatedly emphasized that EI is demonstrated especially by appreciating (empathizing) the concerns of others in a group, even people one may bitterly disagree with, and finding a way to both recognize those concerns, while also overcoming them to unite them towards a common goal. Joan's solution to the factional problem had historical significance: she was able to get the French nobles and factions to start seeing past their individual interests and claims to power, and begin to see themselves as representing a higher cause (Seward, 1982). Even though countries as they are perceived now did not exist during Joan of Arc's period, Joan was able to get the disagreeing officials to conceive of an idea of this concept, beyond their specific royal interests, and thus to unite them under a common belief while also embracing the French common people outside the aristocracy (Pernoud, Clin, Adams, & Wheeler, 1999). In devising and executing war plans, Joan took a leadership role, but given her inexperience as a commander in war, she also managed to listen and learn from more senior commanders, and to take their advice when it made more sense to do so (Richey, 2003).

Ultimately though, to be accepted as a person in a leadership position, she had to take

command with plans that she herself put together, and she had to execute them successfully. As a military commander, Joan had to lead specific assaults, but she also had to raise armies in the first place, since the regions of France at this time had no professional army to start with (DeVries, 1999). Therefore, she had to convince the people of the region to fight under her command despite the dangers and lack of pay, which she was ultimately successful in doing. This again, indicates that she had the Emotional Intelligence (Duff-McCall & Schweinle, 2008) to understand the people of the region and to address them in a way that united them in a common goal (Egan, n.d.).

With her armies raised, Joan then had to lead them in battle, amid great dangers and facing the powerful opposition of experienced and well-armed English soldiers. Here again there was disagreement among the commanding factions, and there were clearly a number of more standard elements of leadership (such as knowledge of battle tactics and troop formations) that were needed for victory (Seward, 1982). However, another crucial factor was motivating the French troops into fighting under difficult circumstances, often in the dark and without much rest, to take the English soldiers by surprise (Check, 2014). Motivation for the team—as it would be recognized in any modern corporation—was also a crucial factor, and Joan was able to bring it about by personally taking risks and by seizing critical opportunities to attack the enemy's forts. In doing so, once again, Joan demonstrated a form of emotional intelligence by recognizing what was needed to motivate her troops, and then taking those needed actions to achieve victory under very difficult circumstances (Michelet, 1957).

Therefore, Joan of Arc represents perhaps the most exemplary intersection of a woman leader who was both clearly effective—as recognized by an ongoing consensus—and emotionally intelligent, as best historians can tell from the historical record. She had to achieve a

number of critical tasks for success under the most difficult conditions, and coming from a background in which she lacked power or authority to begin with. From what is known historically, she combined all the types of EI-based leadership that Goleman (1995) identified, and was able to call on and exhibit these styles where they were needed. She was clearly a visionary, and whether or not she was inspired by religious visions, as many historians contend, she was able to spread her sense of visionary ambition—one that included the common people as much as aristocracy (unusual for her era)—so that it was widely shared (Egan, n.d.; Pernoud et al. 1999). She was also an effective coach and affiliative leader, linking their individual goals—as soldiers and defenders of their lands—to the broader goals of her military and political effort, bringing her people together as a cohesive unit (Fraaioli, 2005; Wrenn, 2004). She was a democratic leader when needed, soliciting ideas from local citizens about how best to use the terrain to defend their towns, but also a pacesetter, personally leading charges into battle as a means to inspire and motivate those under her command to do the same (Curry, 1993). Finally, she was an effective command-style leader as well, directing her troops in battle and issuing direct orders to place artillery (DeVries, 1999; Richey, 2003).

Benchmarking leadership: Other exemplary women leaders of the recent and distant past. In comparison to Joan, who perhaps represents the defining example of a successful woman leader who achieved her goals while clearly exhibiting traits closely associated with EI, most other such leaders had a more mixed record. For example, Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister of Pakistan, was a prominent figure in a very masculine oriented country. She was the daughter of a former Pakistani Prime Minister, and thus did have something of an inside route to power, but she still had to win over a number of skeptical critics (Bhutto, 1988). Bhutto did exhibit many of the traits Goleman (1995) identified with EI, in the way that she was able to

sense the emotional concerns of those around her and to strike a balance among them, while at the same time acting as a visionary leader for which she was able to motivate and inspire those around her. One of her main goals, for example, was to repeal controversial laws that violated the rights of women in Pakistan, and she was able to tap into the aspirations of her people and top officials enough to gain support in this effort (Allen, n.d.). Yet she also balanced this with an acknowledgment of the cultural and religious concerns of other top officials around her. While she pushed for improved access to education and jobs for her country's women (DiMarco, 2015), she nonetheless maintained a more skeptical stance on issues like wages for female workers, unions and abortion rights (Bhutto, 1988).

In this way, Bhutto demonstrated a measure of EI and enjoyed a good deal of electoral success at first. However, her EI was perhaps limited by a more privileged background (compared to Joan of Arc, for example) that made it harder for her to sympathize with her country's broad masses when economic difficulty came about (Allen, n.d.). Modern Pakistan (Khan, 2001) has been plagued by massive inequality and hindered social mobility, with a small privileged elite insulated from the grinding economic struggles affecting the vast majority of the country's citizens (Cheema, 1985). Bhutto herself grew up as part of this elite, never in fear of economic hardship and free to train at top schools and universities overseas, which she herself admits (Bhutto, 1988; Suvarova, n.d.). Instead of modifying her positions and soliciting the people's suggestions, an example of Goleman's democratic approach, she became an even more determined opponent of labor and wage reform, while also allowing too much corruption by connected insider officials (DiMarco, 2015). This obstinance ultimately led to her downfall, with her government twice dismissed from power due to popular opposition. The limits of Bhutto's EI likely also limited her ultimate success as a leader, which was nonetheless still substantial given

her circumstances (Allen, n.d.).

Another prominent woman leader between the medieval era of Joan of Arc and the modern era of Benazir Bhutto was England's Queen Elizabeth I. She demonstrated a more mixed picture of leadership success and EI based on her fairly well-documented period in power.

Elizabeth I was born into vast wealth and power as a queen in a royal family (designated as such by her father Henry VIII), and while she had some conflict with her sister Queen Mary, her path to power was thus smooth and largely taken care of, unlike Joan (Ridley, 1988). Still, she set about on multiple occasions to connect with and win support of her people, which shows a level of EI that many other European monarchs lacked. Elizabeth did not affirm a great visionary style of leadership like Joan or even Benazir Bhutto, and largely followed the religious policies of her father. She was also not particularly democratic, and in regard to command leadership, the records indicate that she sometimes took command but often delegated strategy (as in the long wars with Spain and Ireland) to her commanders, making her EI in these respects difficult to assess. However, she does appear to have been particularly effective as a coach and an affiliative leader. She aligned the goals of the officers with her own, and in many cases bridged bitter disputes among her commanders to link them in common pursuits, while judiciously soliciting the advice and suggestions of experienced military commanders and advisors. (Guy et al., 1992).

Her overall record, both as a leader and in terms of her EI, is thus mixed (Ridley, 1988). She was able to forge a level of consensus on England's religious direction, and she was able to motivate and bring together a number of fractious factions in fighting the Spanish Armada for example, despite all their prior squabbling and disagreements, which indicates a good deal of EI as a coach and an engager of her subjects, and the kind of empathizing understanding that Goleman emphasized. However, England in general suffered a string of defeats and military and

political failure against Spain after the Armada (in 1588) while getting drawn into a guerrilla war in Ireland, which left it weaker and in debt (Falls, 1950; Fernandez-Armesto, 1988).

Some of this was likely due to factors that had nothing to do with Elizabeth's EI. For example, not only Elizabeth but also all her experienced officers and council members failed to appreciate the extent of Spain's military intelligence, or the abilities of the Irish rebels to fight England in 1594 (Falls, 1950). However, the records also indicate a breakdown in some key aspects of EI, for example being unable to make a decision and outright discouraging commanders even after a mission had started such as, the Counter-Armada against Spain in 1589, a major naval defeat for England (Santos, 2011; Wernham, 1994). Some of Elizabeth's tendencies also demonstrated a lack of empathy, the most basic and critical component of EI, in ways that sapped her own soldiers' morale and led directly to England's declining war performance and eventual defeat against Spain by 1604. For example, the English soldiers who fought the Spanish Armada were not even paid for months or even years afterward—even though Elizabeth's own advisors noted that funds were available— with many suffering poverty or utter financial ruin as a result. This practice progressively wore down the morale and motivation of English soldiers—in stark contrast to Joan of Arc's followers—with disastrous consequences, such as Spain's successful invasion of western England and the burning of many towns in 1595 under Carlos de Amezola (Hernon, 2013).

These suggest that Elizabeth did not consistently display the kind of coaching or commanding EI that Joan of Arc, for example, managed to show. Also in contrast to Joan, who embodied the EI of a pacesetter and visionary leader—connecting with her troops' goals and inspiring them by clearly laying out what they should expect to achieve—Elizabeth's style lacked that kind of embracing engagement. In addition to the unpaid compensation and

mistreatment of many Armada soldiers, English subjects were frequently not given sufficient support, and Irish subjects were openly disrespected, which led to disunity and ineffective policy (Guy et al., 1992). Elizabeth thus provides a good example of how complicated the leadership analysis can be: she had many successes and failures as a leader, and while some of her leadership breakdowns can clearly be attributed to a breakdown in EI, some appear to be due to unrelated factors (Guy et al., 1992; Ridley, 1988).

Leadership character as a whole as illuminated by historical women leaders. The real-life historical examples of Joan of Arc, Benazir Bhutto, and Queen Elizabeth help to provide practical (and fairly well-documented examples of female leadership that can be independently considered in the context of overall success on the one hand, and leadership-associated personal characteristics (including emotional intelligence) on the other, even given the limitations of studying such things from historical records as opposed to direct interviews (for current leaders). The general pattern of an empathetic and emotionally intelligent leader, again perhaps best exemplified by Joan of Arc, is that she is able to encourage others to reach deep into themselves to maximize their performance, to align their personal goals with the broader aims of the group, and to delegate responsibilities to those who are competent in completing such tasks, smoothing out factions and engaging participants in the process (DeVries, 1999). While the examples of Joan of Arc, Benazir Bhutto, and Queen Elizabeth suggest that the connection between effective leadership (to the extent that it can be observed and identified by an outsider) and overall leadership success may not always be clear-cut, they nonetheless offer evidence that there is very likely a solid connection.

Work by Palmer et al. (2001) has lent support to such a conclusion, which, even though it does not focus on women leaders specifically, nevertheless indicates that good leadership in

general likely has a non-trivial (greater than chance) relation to the factors that Goleman identified as being associated with EI, and that experts in general would identify as being important for establishing emotional connections and empathy between leaders and followers. For example, Goleman (2011) noted that women leaders tend to be particularly receptive to learning from others around them; that is, they absorb lessons and potential solutions by being open to the ideas of others in their vicinity, and communicating directly with them.

In turn, women leaders tend to be more focused on the personal and professional development of others in their teams, in part because they have a reference point in their own professional development based on external examples who supported them. Specifically, according to Van Velsor and Hughes (1990):

Their experience with bosses who had helped them gain acceptance, credibility, and self-confidence caused them to focus special attention on being an effective developer of other people. The women talked about the importance of giving rewards and recognition to subordinates, trying to give them stretching experiences while making expectations clear, and actively seeking ways for employees to grow. (Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990, p. 28)

They are also more inclined to use self-assessment, reflection, and introspection to improve their leadership style and practices than their male counterparts (Latarova & Pilarik, 2015; Quarterman, 2016).

Women leaders, EI, and transformational leadership. Researchers such as those cited above have pointed to an interesting distinction in the leadership styles of men and women overall, and how women's style may be better associated with not only emotional intelligence but truly effective leadership overall as it is generally recognized. Moreover, researchers have

suggested that while women's self-perception (and others' perception of them) may be less associated with *traditional* leadership than perceptions of their male counterparts, nevertheless women leaders may be more effective overall because of a fundamentally different style of leading (Dabke, 2016; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Specifically, women seem to be more prone to assume a *transformational* style of leadership, which is potentially a better and more effective approach than traditional (transactional) styles (Conger & Hunt, 1999; Eagly et al., 2003; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

A landmark study conducted by Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) focused on the qualities and associations of transformational leadership as it relates to women and gender roles in general. They noted that transformational leadership is distinguished in the manner that it sets a positive example for a team and encourages and motivates people in a group to aim higher and achieve better (Lowe et al., 1996). This kind of self-motivated effort and mutual emotional engagement helps a team to function better as a unit from the leader down through all the members of the team—as was seen in abundance in Joan of Arc's missions. Moreover, this united effort is driven not by commands from the top down as much as by the group's respect for and identification with the leader with its member's independent thinking leading to a high-quality character of support which is rooted in high morale. This form of leadership, and the corresponding high morale of the team, often leads to better results than traditional top-down styles of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1996; Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004). In fact, one of the reasons that Joan of Arc has been almost universally regarded as an extraordinary and successful leader—both by contemporaries and modern observers—is that her leadership epitomized transformational rather than transactional qualities.

Joan was able to set an example through her courage, persistence, skill, and confidence,

which inspired her followers to battle successfully even without Joan having to issue direct commands or demand reports or specific performance metrics (a more transactional style). Her behavior thereby exemplified transformational leadership and the successful results it tends to bring about, and Joan's difficult path to that leadership suggests that her gender likely had a very non-trivial impact on her ability to exhibit it (Eagly et al., 2003; Porterfield & Kleiner, 2005; Weierter, 1997). The source of such transformational leadership, however, as well as its relationship to gender and gender roles, is not necessarily so clear.

As a contrast to Joan of Arc's transformational leadership and remarkable success, Benazir Bhutto and Elizabeth I, as well as most male leaders throughout history, have acted more as transactional leaders. This has generally led to mixed success, especially when those following them do not feel as engaged or even feel neglected—for example, England's sailors in the war with Spain, who often went unpaid and unappreciated in Elizabeth's reign (Ridley, 1988). A key question arises, however, about the role of gender specifically in this contrast in leadership styles. Notably, Joan's transformational style may have been due in part to her own humble background and need to win support without prior authority (Richey, 2003). In contrast, Benazir Bhutto and Elizabeth were both born into their powerful positions to some extent—Bhutto the daughter of a former prime minister and Elizabeth the daughter and heiress of King Henry VIII—as was the case with a large majority of male leaders in history (who often tended to be monarchs and sons of previous kings). It is thus not entirely clear from the historical record whether gender itself or other factors (such as stature of birth) are the key in forging transformational leadership, and how these in turn relate to emotional intelligence (Garner & Estep, 2001).

To address this question, Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) independently assessed a group of

undergraduates with targeted questionnaires along lines of transformational leadership, EI, and gender role perceptions. The undergraduates were at Spanish universities, and both the men and women in the group hailed from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, which helped to control for the effect of social class and prior privilege. In their study, the group found that transformational leadership was not only associated with the gender of the survey participants, but also with their perceived gender roles, and that this leadership style and gender roles were also strongly correlated with Emotional Intelligence. That is, the traits and comprehension associated with transformational leadership were markedly associated with the communal roles and habits generally associated with women (which in turn are less associated with transactions leadership), *even if male participants indicated such communal traits in the questionnaire*. This is highly consistent with previous research showing a positive correlation between such gender roles (and gender role perceptions) and transformational leadership (Hackman, Furniss, Hills, & Paterson, 1992).

The additional association of such leadership traits with EI was also intriguing, and it lent further support to the notion that emotional intelligence may indeed be non-trivially associated with the sorts of qualities that lead to especially successful and effective leaders, due to their transformational style (Quarterman, 2016). A further look at the styles elucidated by Goleman suggested that this is not accidental. After all, the traits associated with transformational leadership also overlap notably with several of the styles that Goleman associated with EI-based leadership, particularly visionary and pacesetting styles, as well as coaching and democratic to some extent. Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) went much further by more quantitatively demonstrating a link between EI assessed as a whole, and the transformational leadership traits that in general are associated with success as a leader.

While Joan of Arc's extraordinary success and impact help to support a potential link between transformational leadership and both EI and gender, the simple scarcity of such transformational leaders both presently and historically—especially among women—makes it difficult to systematically and quantitatively link these traits together (Kreitz, 2009). After all, as noted by the distinguished American author Mark Twain himself, Joan was such an outlier that she was not only the youngest person (male or female) to become a top commander as she did, but also managed to gain such leadership from a peasant background, which was quite uncommon at the time (Nelson, 2011; Twain, 1996). Ironically, the very extraordinary and standout quality of Joan's leadership and accomplishments also, in some ways, makes it more challenging to utilize her example as a foundation to craft a broader model of attainable leadership and achievement for Iranian women in general. The study by Lopez-Zafra and coworkers, by contrast, was able to boost the statistical power of such a study (and control for confounding factors) by more directly assessing transformational leadership qualities in the general population, whether or not the possessors of such qualities actually occupied positions of leadership per se (Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012).

Since Lopez-Zafra et al. showed a solid correlation between transformational leadership and both female gender roles and EI, it is natural to infer that women in general might score better in assessments of EI than their male counterparts (Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012). The literature is suggestive though is somewhat unclear. Researchers performing general studies on gender and association with EI have indeed suggested that women as a whole tend to score better on widely accepted tests that measure EI-based traits (Dawda & Hart, 2000; Extremera, Fernández-Berrocal, & Salovey, 2006; Mayer et al., 1999). Nevertheless, questions have arisen about whether these measurements are indeed detecting genuine (and independent) indicators of EI as

it applies to leadership, or if the tests themselves are simply biased *a priori* to detect (and give a higher score for) feminine traits that are not in and of themselves indicative of EI especially as it applies to leadership duties (Lopez-Zafra & Gartzia, 2014; Siegling, Sfeir, & Smyth, 2014). The latter case would simply give rise to a classic circular argument.

In effect, the debate in this case concerns the core issue of the validity of EI assessments, which, in many instances are still relatively young, and without full consensus in the field. For example, Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) made particular note of the controversy surrounding the measurement of what might be termed emotional lability versus stability, and whether this is a true indicator of leadership-related emotional intelligence. As the authors noted, some studies have shown that women score higher on EI-based tests that focus on temperament and mood, like the Trait-Meta Mood Scale, also known as TMMS (Ciarrochi, Chang, & Caputi, 2000). Nonetheless, the EQI—the Emotional Quotient Inventory, which roughly models traditional mixed-assessment intelligence testing—has not noted any such gender discrepancy, in contradiction to the TMMS findings (Dawda & Hart, 2000).

Other scholars have suggested that the EI gender discrepancy (especially as applied to leadership ability) may not be global so much as a collection of differences across specific subcategories or traits assayed within the battery of comprehensive EI tests. For example, Bar-On, Brown, Kirkcaldy, and Thome (2000) ascertained variances in test results for specific sections of the EI assessments that were reasonably reproducible. Notably, the results by Bar-On et al. suggested that men actually score higher in assessments of stress tolerance and managing difficult situations, a component that Goleman (1995) noted as being essential as a leadership-associated element of emotional intelligence.

In contrast, women tend to score higher in measurements of empathy, grasping others’

emotions, and forging and maintaining good interpersonal relationships, which Goleman (1995) also made repeated reference to and which are critical components of transformational leadership. In particular, women seem to be more at ease with expressing themselves and both hearing out and responding to the emotions of those around them (Garner & Estep, 2001). This sort of emotional monitoring and management is perhaps most directly (or at least intuitively) related to what is traditionally conceived of as EI (and thus incorporated into formal assessments), which perhaps explains part of the perception of women having higher EI in general (Goleman 2011). Subsequent researchers have largely reinforced these findings, noting that hypotheses of male-female EI differences produce conflicting results when measured globally (depending on the assessment and approach), but that fairly regular disparities do seem to arise and manifest when the EI assessments are broken down into specific components and subcategories (Conway, 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2000).

The lingering questions regarding EI as a gender-associated characteristic constituted part of the motivation for Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) undertaking their comprehensive study. In simultaneously assessing EI in parallel alongside transformational leadership and gender perceptions (assessing feminine traits as manifested by both female and male study participants), Lopez-Zafra et al. were able to work through a number of the most challenging factors confounding previous studies. As such, they were able to provide a clearer picture of gender and EI in the particular context of those EI-based components that are best associated with especially effective (transformational) leadership styles.

Stated more specifically, Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) lucidly indicated that whether or not EI overall is associated with women leaders (or feminine traits manifested by either sex), the EI traits most germane to good leadership indeed correspond more closely with feminine qualities

specifically, which, again, can be manifested in a respondent of either sex. Moreover, these associations are more likely to be causal rather than merely correlational, since the specific EI components in question are indeed tightly linked with the ability to empathize and communicate with team members, such as soldiers or a company's workers (Skinner & Spurgeon, 2005).

These abilities are precisely the ones most identified with a transformational leader: the kind who can offer a rousing and positive example, and demonstrate the sorts of behaviors that will motivate the members to action based on voluntary commitment as opposed to direct commands (Dabke, 2016). The findings and explanations by Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) thus provided a more coherent, quantitative description of the powerful, highly successful sort of transformational leadership demonstrated by women leaders like Joan of Arc—able to rouse and inspire rather than simply to give orders, which achieves more by more fully engaging followers in the goals and activities of the leader.

Factors that influence women's leadership roles. Agassi's (1989) conceptual framework of gender equality explains the way in which socio-cultural factors can hinder women's access to management and overall leadership positions, which can help explain the gap between women's potential for good leadership (as described above) and their actual attainment of it, whether in Iran or the West. Likewise, a parallel study by Onyango, Simatwa, and Ondigi (2011) reinforced these findings, noting that socio-cultural factors do indeed hinder women wanting to participate in management positions, but cannot fully explain the gap in apparent qualifications with actual leadership on the ground. Some of the pertinent sociological factors (which are often exacerbated for women in Iranian society) include discouragement by spouses, domestic chores, lack of interest, gender bias, lack of motivation, inferiority complex, religion, and political interference. However, the study also made particular mention of the negative

attitudes by women themselves in regard to leadership positions and their fear of criticisms, lack of self-esteem, and lack of self-confidence as additional inhibiting factors. The findings of Onyango et al. suggested that even women, to a major extent, have internalized the idea that their temperaments are not well-suited to good leadership, despite strong evidence to the contrary (and historical examples, like Joan of Arc, who have exemplified this).

Transformational leadership and the specific role of empathy. Goleman (2011) asserted that emotional intelligence, as it has come to be understood since the pioneering work of the 1990's, has four distinct (and measurable) parts: self-awareness, managing emotions, empathy, and social skill. Despite women's advantages in many aspects of leadership-based EI in particular, their potential has largely gone unfulfilled, perhaps because it has been difficult to translate these EI advantages into clear leadership skills. The key factor here is the third one that Goleman mentioned: empathy. Confirming previous findings, Goleman observed that men do tend to score better than women in managing and overcoming stressful emotions. However women as a whole, and some outlier women in particular, tended to score much better than men in the category of empathy (Goleman, 2011). This ability to empathize is the EI trait that is perhaps most strongly associated with the deep understanding and motivational character that gives rise to transformation leadership (Dabke, 2016).

As further explained by Goleman (2011), there are three kinds of empathy: cognitive empathy, which is being able to grasp how the other person sees things; emotional empathy, which is feeling what the other person feels; and empathic concern; or sympathy, which refers to being able to help someone in need. Women tend to be better especially at emotional empathy than men. In turn, people who excel in emotional empathy tend to make excellent counselors, teachers, and group leaders because of this ability to sense in the moment how others are feeling

and reacting. In fact, recent evidence has indicated that empathy in general is associated with good leadership and healthy, functioning organizations far more than previously appreciated and helping to shed light on the limitations of the more commonly practiced transactional leadership. The common attitude and underlying assumptions linked with transactional leadership—often associated with *dog eat dog* or *sink or swim* social Darwinist beliefs—not only fails to motivate a team effectively, but also reduces morale. Thus empathy in a leader, in fact, is not merely a pleasant side benefit in an individual nor a barrier to overcome; it is in fact integral to practically effective leadership and a well-functioning organization (Goleman, 2011; Olson, 2012). In turn, transformational women leaders like Joan of Arc are able to incorporate their empathetic understanding of their followers into the actions they take and the examples they set to successfully energize their followers.

Leadership challenges for women in the Middle East. Geographically and culturally, Iran is part of the Islamic Middle East, even if its specific traditions and Shiite form of Islam often differ substantially from most of its Arab neighbors. Like many Arab countries, Iran since Khomeini's revolution has been governed by Shari'a Law, albeit in a particular form suited to Iran's own customs and systems (Loiacono, 2007). It is therefore instructive to consider women's leadership challenges more broadly in the Middle Eastern context. Nations in this region in general have been challenging places for women to gain leadership roles (and work and educational opportunities overall), not only due to conservative Islamic traditions but also the unique economic structure of the Gulf Arab region. The countries there rely heavily on expatriate labor, predominantly male expatriates in e.g. the UAE, Qatar, and Oman (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2014; Zeffane & Kemp, 2012), with 44% of the population in Oman consisting of expatriates (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2014). This practice harms the ability

of local women to get jobs, while also weakening the social structures that could build and sustain an indigenous push toward boosting access for women in leadership position. The net result of this is to reinforce women's financial dependency on men and to provoke a vicious cycle making it even more difficult for women to advocate for their own interests (Elamin & Omair, 2010). The reliance on expatriates is closing many of the economic opportunities that (for example) helped women in Western countries to gradually gain financial independence as a prelude to other reforms (Berrebi, Martorell, & Tanner, 2009).

Factors that influence, and hinder, women's leadership opportunities in the region.

While Iran does differ in some substantive ways compared to its Arab peers, in the legal and traditional as well as economic aspects (with far fewer expatriate workers for example), it shares many of the same structural difficulties especially since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. A framework proposed by Metcalfe and Mutlaq (2011) has helped to better characterize the internal and external factors that continue to affect women's leadership opportunities throughout the region. They highlighted seven factors in particular that impact the options for working women. Additionally, these factors also affect the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in leadership positions:

1. Patriarchy: refers to the concepts of honor and power, freedom of choice, family and marriage, and education. As discussed before, this remains a significant factor in Iran, even with recent reforms.
2. Government and policy: refers to the limitations on female representation in government, social and sexual discrimination protection, and child care.
3. External market conditions: refers to the impact of the fact that Arab Gulf states now have more highly educated women than men without the corresponding job openings

(posing additional pressure on jobs and wages), the size of the immigrant workforce, gender quota debates, and the public sector (often more conducive employment for female citizens).

4. Religion: Focuses on Shari'a law and clerical authorities having great influence on both the public and private sectors, and how these authorities impact companies' and bureaucracies' decisions on the hiring of women.
5. Personal motivators: The salaries of males are higher than females; however, benefits are higher in the public sector than in the private sector, including better career development and more flexible work hours.
6. Private sector perceptions and concerns: Includes women's compensation being viewed as supplementary in a household, women employees being seen as more costly (e.g. maternity leave), and the expectation that women are more likely to leave for better opportunities or for family reasons. Two prevalent assumptions are that men are preferred to women for leadership roles and that there are inadequate skills between indigenous job seekers and foreign labor.
7. Tribal origins: Wealth and power in communities are organized through male networks, and women's social status is connected to their family position (Kemp, Madsen, & Davis, 2015).

This framework provides a useful backdrop in understanding the intricate dynamics of women's status and their opportunities for advancement and personal fulfillment in the Mideast. While the factors above often tend to limit women's opportunities for leadership in many regards, nevertheless women in the Middle East continue to make remarkable strides particularly in education, and to be selected for leadership positions in both the public and private sectors

(Isfandiyari, 1997). Thus the status and opportunities for women in the Middle East are often more complicated than may be apparent at first glance. Many outside observers such as Gallant and Pounder (2008) have claimed that the intricate social structures of Middle Eastern societies are difficult to grasp for Westerners, and thus inherently prone to misinterpretation especially with regard to women's rights. However, others have argued that women's advancement in the region can be interpreted through systematic consideration of defining internal factors such as culture, traditions, religion, values, backgrounds, education, work-family issues, self-concept, gender barriers, expectations, previous opportunities, and perceived future opportunities (Kemp et al., 2015).

A cultural examination of women in leadership. Even with progress on some fronts, women throughout the Middle East still face unique challenges in attaining leadership positions of any sort, whether in schools or government or business. This is true of not only the Arab countries in the region but also, to varying extents, of Turkey (which is more secular) and Iran, with its own distinctive Shiite Persian culture (Cavdar & Yasar, 2014). Once again the reasons are quite complex, and involve cultural stereotypes and biases often in the midst of ineffective laws and policies that do not meet women's needs or respect their contributions (Ngunjiri & Madsen, 2015). The religious context is also critical, despite the fundamental differences between Shiite Iran and the (mostly) Sunni Muslim Arab world. Kabasakal and Bodur (2002) argued that, "Islam defines the roles that men and women fulfill and creates a masculine society, where men are more dominant in many facets of life" (p. 48).

More specifically, Islam creates a series of expectations and cultural assumptions about the role and activities of women. Its impact is hardly predetermined or static; like the evolving interpretations of Christianity (which is also male-dominated) over many centuries and following

the Protestant Reformation in Europe, the interpretations of Islam and the Koran have also varied considerably, and there is remarkable diversity in the specific subdivisions of Islam across the Middle East (Mahdi, 2004; Nashat & Beck, 2003; Obermeyer, 1994). Until recently, most clerical interpretations of traditional Islam have ascribed to men the central role of leadership in the home, government and commercial activities, with women largely expected to be homemakers. Women aspiring to leadership have therefore had to pursue their goals in the face of ongoing social and cultural skepticism about their aims (Al Marzouqi & Forster, 2011).

There have been a notable number of Iranian women who have served in positions of leadership, both before and after the Arab Islamic Conquest of the Sassanian Empire in the 7th century A.D., and including many modern figures occupying high-ranking positions in government and business (Farrokh, 2015). In contrast to Western or modern women leaders such as Joan of Arc or Benazir Bhutto, noted previously, comparatively little is known about most of the Iranian women political leaders, military commanders or administrators in the pre-modern era (Frye, 1963). Thus it is difficult to do as extensive of an analysis concerning them compared to, for example, Joan of Arc, who is well-documented enough that reasonable conclusions can be drawn about her transformational leadership style, her connections to her followers and the reasons she was able to surmount so many barriers to acquire such a position (especially being born as a peasant girl before rising to power). However, enough is known about at least some of these figures that some broad understanding can be gained about how they led and what inspired trust in them as leaders. This in turn can provide lessons and inspiration for modern Iranian women, in a manner similar to the example of Joan of Arc but in a more culturally specific Iranian (and broadly Middle Eastern) context. This more culturally and geographically specific examination will begin with a timeline of significant Iranian women leaders.

Significance of the timeline. It is worth mentioning here that pre-Islamic Iran, particularly during the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods, held women in remarkably high esteem. Due in part to a religious tradition that honored women and gave them a high stature, Iran stood out in the degree to which it welcomed women political leaders, military officers, diplomats, administrators, and even businesspeople. Girls received education alongside boys, had freedom to own property and run their own firms, could choose their husbands, could serve in the military, and could rise rapidly in government and the merchant classes. Ancient Iran, in other words, exhibited many of the features of a thoroughly modern society. Women from this period therefore provide rousing examples for Iranian women today, not only in their embodiment of an egalitarian Persian tradition, but also in the relevance of their specific achievements to modern women. A number of salient such cases are summarized below.

Timeline of Iranian women leaders. Iranian women leading up to the Sassanian Era (224-651 AD) Iran's written history for the most part coincides with the founding of the Achaemenid Empire in the 5th century B.C., continuing through the Parthian Empire (revived after the conquests of Alexander the Great), and then into the Sassanian Empire which paralleled the late Roman and Byzantine Empires to the west. According to Roman sources who documented their Sassanian rivals extensively, Iranian women were known to fight alongside the Sassanian cavalry in the many Roman-Persian wars of the period. As the Sassanian empire faced collapse against invading Arab Muslim forces in the 7th century A.D., many Iranian women involved in the military resistance were identified by name. Some notable examples were Apranik (the daughter of the Sassanian General Piran) as well as Negan, and Azadeh, who prevented the Arab invaders from coming into northern Persia (Farrokh, 2015). Several exemplary named figures from the Achaemenid period through the Sassanids and beyond

(following the Islamic Conquest), often involved in political or military leadership, are detailed below.

Mandana (584 B.C.E.) was a Median princess and an important figure in the events surrounding the birth of Cyrus the Great. While there have been some questions about her historical authenticity, more detailed scholarship has suggested that she played a genuine and important role in the political structures that led to the founding of the Persian Empire and nation (Dusinberre, 2003). She is thus in many ways a prototype for the powerful and respected Iranian women who followed in her footsteps, and an archetype for modern Iranian women seeking leadership and justifying their efforts to skeptical conservative religious authorities (W. Smith, 1967).

Amitis Shahbanu (559 B.C.E.) was a Median princess who later became the wife of Cyrus the Great. Amitis eventually became the Queen of Medea and the Queen of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. Like Mandana, Amitis's example is significant because she was an early pivotal leader who exercised real authority, the wife of a revered figure who nonetheless was accomplished as a leader in her own right (Dusinberre, 2003; W. Smith, 1967).

Pantea Arteshbod (550 B.C.E.) was an important and influential ancient Persian commander and administrator during the reign of Cyrus the Great (559-529 B.C.E.) and the wife of General Aryasb. As with her predecessors, there have been difficulties with historical sourcing (and thus many details of her actions and personality are poorly documented, unlike Joan of Arc), but modern scholarship has likewise recognized her genuine accomplishments as a historical figure and an example to modern Iranian women leaders (Kytzler, 1994). She played an important role in both incorporating and maintaining Babylonia after the conquest by Cyrus the Great. Both she and her husband had attained the rank of commander of the elite Persian

forces, which served both as an Imperial Guard (like the Pretorian Guard in Rome) and as a well-trained standing army during the empire's expansion. Of further interest, Pantea was known to be not only tough but also beautiful. Contemporary legends noted that in battle, she would conceal her face so as to prevent men from falling in love with her and being distracted from the fight. Thus her example in many ways anticipates the modern challenge faced by Iranian women in balancing masculine duties with feminine expectations (Kurzman, 2004).

Cassandane Shahbanu (545 B.C.E.) was a Persian noblewoman who became Empress beside Cyrus the Great after the Emperor's wife, Queen Amitis, had passed away. She exercised independent authority (though not as well-documented as Amitis; Dusinger, 2003).

Mahruyeh Shahbanu (530 B.C.E.) was the queen of the Persian Achaemenid Empire and the wife of King Cambyses the Second—Cyrus's successor—carrying on the tradition of Amitis and Cassandane (Kytzler, 1994; W. Smith, 1967).

Lieutenant Artunis (525 B.C.E.) was the Commander of the Achaemenid Persian army who was known to be a very brave woman, and daughter of Artebaz who was the Lieutenant General (Kytzler, 1994; W. Smith, 1967).

Atusa (Atossa) Shahbanu (522 B.C.E.) was a notable and powerful Queen of the Persian Achaemenid Empire, and married King Darius the Great, and daughter of Cyrus the Great. Atusa wielded significant power independent of her husband and was respected by ancient Greek historians as a full co-ruler of the Persian domains. She was also culturally influential in her duties as director of the palace gaining renown as one of the developers of the ancient Persian script (Encyclopedia Iranica, 2011). As another sign of her independence, the ancient Persepolis Purification Tablet also notes that she was very wealthy and even maintained her own personal army (Der Neue Pauly, 1996).

Irdabama (488 B.C.E.) stands out in that she was a successful merchant and business leader, resembling what one would call a CEO today, and thus perhaps an especially relevant paragon of success for modern Iranian-American women. She built a wine and grain business that employed thousands, building it up herself and even creating her own seal (similar to a trademark today). Irdabama was not alone in exemplifying the successful Persian businesswoman, but she was one of the most notable and well-documented, displaying what one would today call business savvy on a high scale (Encyclopedia Iranica, 2011; Kytzler, 1994; Kuhrt, 1995).

Admiral Artemisia (485 B.C.E.) was the ruler of Halicarnassus (a Greek city and colony of the Persian empire) and a remarkable leader of the Persian Navy, feared and respected both by the Persians and her own foes among the Greek city-states. She was known to be beautiful, powerful, intelligent, and independent, a trusted advisor to Emperor Xerxes, and the victor of many important battles during the Achaemenid Dynasty era (Kuhrt, 1995). Although she was not the overall sea commander—leading an important though modest-sized squadron in the critical Battle of Salamis against the Greeks—she nonetheless contributed crucially to her navy’s morale in a difficult clash which the Greeks ultimately won, using guile and quick thinking to rescue a major portion of the Persian navy. She thus became a role model for ambitious Persian women in the empire (Shuckburgh, 2013; Tharor, 2014).

Esther (478 B.C.E.) was a purported ancient Persian Jewish queen and wife of King Ahasuerus (generally identified with the historical Xerxes), after which a Biblical book is named. Esther is an interesting case since scholars now generally agree that both she is a fictional figure (Xerxes was married to Amestris, detailed above, among other things). Her importance, rather, is in what the character represents. The Persian Empire was unusual in its broad acceptance and

tolerance of many ancient peoples and cultures, and the Persian emperors and high officials often married non-Persians (or included them outright, such as Artemisia). Thus, in the Persian tradition, Esther represents the tolerance and respect of Persia for the many peoples it incorporated (Berlin, 2001; Phillips, 2011).

Pari Satis (423 B.C.E.) was the wife of King Darius the second and a Queen of the Achaemenid Empire. She was also a respected military commander who took personal charge of the Persian Imperial army when her husband passed away during battle (Kytzler, 1994). Unlike other ancient Persian women figures, however, who also distinguished themselves as battlefield commanders, Pari Satis stood out for her judicious use of diplomacy to avoid costly conflicts. She restored order and peace with her own army after King Artaxerxes II had set out to exclude his own brother after being betrayed. Even Greek historians noted that her husband was quite dependent on her, more than the other way around (Ejaz, 2010).

Sissy Cambis (381 B.C.E.) was an Empress of Persia, mother of Darius the Third and another Iranian woman commander who took on a much more formidable opponent than her predecessors: the great conqueror Alexander the Great (Kytzler, 1994). She continued a stern resistance and refused to surrender, long after many of her male colleagues had given up the fight. She was eventually defeated and capture at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C.E. (alongside her daughter Princess Estatira, also known as Stateira), yet Alexander's Macedonian armies were so impressed by her courage and determination that they treated her and her daughter with respect, and she continued on in the administration that was later provided by Alexander's generals (Daryaei, 2009).

Youtab Aryobarzan (334 B.C.E.) was the sister of General Aryobarzan, a legendary Persian hero and commander of the Achaemenid army. She fought the Greeks and Macedonians

during the invasion of Alexander with her brother. Like Sissy Cambis and her daughter, Youtab and her brother fought effectively and courageously against the Greeks and Macedonians under Alexander the Great, and despite their defeat and capture, were praised and respected by the Macedonians (Dusinberre, 2003). Her example, like that of Sissy, was important for later generations of Persians since many of the most important historical works at the time were being composed in ancient Greek, which was then the most prestigious language of the world and generally read by intellectuals (Heckel, 2008). Thus her favorable impression on the Macedonians helped to provide a remarkably concrete picture of the ancient Persian women and a model for later generations to follow (Lendering, 2016).

Sura (213 C.E.), a strategical and military genius during the Parthian dynasty, was one of the greatest Heroines in Persian history. She was Ardavan the fifth's daughter and has been described in history books as her father's right hand. Sura had the rank of Ashkanid' General and Sepahbod (Lieutenant General) and was also a well-respected Lieutenant General herself (Kuhrt, 1995).

Azadokht Shahbanu (241 C.E.) was queen of the Persian Sassanid Empire and the wife of Shapour the Great. While Persia was constantly at war with the Roman (and later Byzantine) Empire, Azadokht distinguished herself as a skilled diplomat who maintained a more cautious policy, while also demonstrating her own military skill and impressing even the Romans (Gharipour, 2013; Nicola, Mendel, & Qutbuddin, 2010).

Zand (531 C.E.) was the Queen of Persia and the wife of King Khosrow Anushirvan. She was most distinguished in the legal arena, serving as a court counselor and helping to shape its decisions and practices (Daryaee, 2009; Kuhrt, 1995).

Shirin Shahbanu (590 C.E.) was the Queen of the Persian Sassanid Empire and the wife

of King Khosrow Parviz. Shirin was a Christian princess who married King Khosrow, a heroic figure in Persian history who saved Shirin herself from a lion. Shirin and Khosrow's romance became something of an epic love story in the region, but Shirin herself also took on important duties during a challenging period for the Sassanid state, embroiled in an ongoing war with the Byzantines (Nicola et al., 2010). Her husband built a few palaces in Iran, and even named some of them after his queen. Thus, the city derived its name from Shirin and is now called *Qasr-e-Shirin*, which translates to the *Palace of Shirin* (Baker, Smith, & Oleynik, 2014).

Empress Purandokht (629 C.E.) was the 26th Sassanid monarch of Persia from 629-631. She was the elder sister of Azarmidokht and the eldest daughter of Khosrow Parviz. Purandokht sought to bring stability to the empire during a period of great turmoil, when she ascended to the throne after the murder of general Shahrbaraz, amid circumstances leading to a peace treaty after a long war with the Byzantine Empire. She aided in the rapid recovery of the Sassanian state, improving the implementation of justice, the reconstruction of infrastructure, and reducing taxes, and minting coins. Purandokht eventually resigned when she was unsuccessful in her attempt to restore the power of the Sassanian central authority. However, she contributed to the revitalization of important institutions that survived the Arab Muslim conquest and Iran's subjection to the rule of the Rashidun Caliphate (Daryaei, 2009; Pourshariati, 2008).

Empress Azarmidokht (632 C.E.) was the 27th Sassanid Monarch of Persia and the daughter of King Khosrow Parviz. After her sister Purandokht stepped down from her rule of the Sassanid state, Azarmidokht took the throne. While her rule was brief, she was instrumental in bringing additional stability and reducing the internecine strife of the previous decade, helping to lay the groundwork for King Yazdegerd's long rule and the Persian resistance to the Arab Muslim invasions (Daryaei, 2009; Pourshariati, 2008).

Turandokht (633 C.E.) – Turandokht was the princess of Persia during the Sassanid dynasty era, daughter of King Khosrow Parviz, and the sister of Purandokht and Azarmidokht. While she did not rule as an authority in her own right (in the manner of her sisters), she functioned as something similar to a modern head of state, important in ceremonial and official capacities and helping to keep the fractious empire unified (Price, 1811). Her beauty and stature became the basis of a story known as the *Haft Peykar* (later adapted into a Puccini opera) by Nizami, a medieval Persian poet. Since Nizami's works represented a kind of renaissance of nationalist interest in Persia's pre-Muslim history, Turandokht became an important figure around which Iranians come together to celebrate their heritage and unique culture (Nicola et al., 2010).

Apranik (635 C.E.) was a high-ranking Persian Commander of Army and the daughter of Piran, who was the great General of King Yazdegerd III in the battles against the invading Arab armies. As a resistance commander, she fought with remarkable effectiveness, enabling the Sassanians to recapture much of what was lost to the Arabs. She had followed in her father's footsteps and became a professional soldier, rising from a petty officer to a full commander of the Persian Army. Despite the eventual incorporation of Iran into the Rashidun Caliphate, Apranik's contribution helped Persia to maintain a measure of autonomy; to this day, she and her white horse have been revered by Persians as a symbol of freedom and independence from Arab rule (Nicola et al., 2010).

Negan (639 C.E.) was a freedom fighter leader and a guerrilla commander during the Sassanid dynasty era. She was one of the major resistance fighters of Persia against the Arab Invasion, and as such she has and continues to loom large as a leading figure representing Iran's distinct culture (with its relative freedom and power for women) before the Arab conquest

(Pourshariati, 2008). Negan was a woman of nobility, and was known for her love for Persia and for her heroic death in battle. Today, as the pre-Islamic culture and Zoroastrianism are increasingly supported in Iran and neighboring countries, Negan's name is considered to be a representative of the Persian spirit and the respect commanded by its women (Daryaei, 2009).

Azad Deylani (751 C.E.) was a guerrilla commander and a partisan leader from Iran who fought bravely for many years against the Arab oppressors in the Rashidun Caliphate (which followed the Arab conquest). As a result, she, like Negan, became respected as a beacon for the reemergence of Persian culture and its relative openness to women (Kytzler, 1994; Pourshariati, 2008).

Banu (795-838 C.E.) was a legendary freedom fighter who fought side by side with her husband Babak Khoramdin. Banu and Babak are especially significant because of their role in leading the Khoramdinan movement, a major resistance uprising against the Muslim Abbasid caliphate and a conscious attempt to recapture ancient Iranian culture and its Zoroastrian roots (Daryaei, 2009). Banu was known to be temperamental and a skilled archer, having grown up with bows and arrows. Ever more so than her guerrilla predecessors against the Arab rulers, Banu for modern Iranians has come to symbolize the undaunted spirit of Persian women as the Iranian pre-Islamic past is recaptured (Kytzler, 1994).

Persia after the Arab Islamic Conquest. The Sassanian Empire was engaged in a number of long and draining wars with the Byzantine Empire in the 6th and 7th centuries, along with civil wars that weakened the Sassanid state. This made Iran vulnerable to conquest by the Arab Islamic theocratic state formed in southern Arabia by Muhammad and then turned into a military power by a subsequent caliph, Umar (Kennedy, 2007). Umar's forces managed to take control of Iraq, then under Sassanid control, though they were later defeated and expelled by a

Persian counterattack, with the Sassanids now allied with the Byzantines (Pourshariati, 2008). However, the Arabs regrouped and managed to defeat the Sassanids in a series of battles culminating with Qadisiyyah in 636 A.D., in which they took firm control of Iraq and weakened the Sassanid state (Nicolle & McBride, 1993). The Persians were ultimately unable to reassert control over Iraq, and with the subsequent death of King Yazdegerd, the Sassanid Dynasty collapsed and the Arabs managed to impose administrative control over Iran itself. The next few decades were dominated by turmoil as a number of anti-Arab uprisings took place, which the Arabs brutally crushed, often looting cities and raping Iranian women while seizing much of the Persian treasury (Nashat & Beck, 2003).

The most important result of this is that Persia not only changed politically, but also culturally and socially. The remarkable success and freedom of ancient Iranian women was a result in part of the Zoroastrian religious and philosophical tradition that had dominated Iran, which not only supported but often revered the power and roles of women as leaders (Kennedy, 2007). Despite previous severe military setbacks for the Persian imperial dynasties—especially the conquest by Alexander the Great but also a number of defeats against the Romans—the resulting Persian empires (such as the Parthians who followed the Achamaenids) retained the core of Persian Zoroastrian culture (Pourshariati, 2008). But the Arabs changed this since they brought a new belief system, Islam, which steadily began to take hold in Iran after Qadisiyyah (Nashat & Beck, 2003).

As a result of the general political turmoil in Persia, the direct rule by a foreign Arab imperial power (first the Umayyads and then the Abbasids) for nearly two centuries, internal conflicts and economic struggles, Iran in general entered a period during which it had few prominent figures (Nicolle & McBride, 1993). Women in particular were oppressed since in

addition to these general political shifts, Islam overall tended to take a rather negative view of their roles and opportunities. Unlike under Zoroastrianism, Iran's native religion, women were not allowed to participate on equal footing in social affairs, and were strongly discouraged from seeking positions of leadership (Ferrier, 1999). Thus as Zoroastrianism weakened, so did the general character of societal support for women and their aspirations—an effect Iranian women are still wrestling with today. As a result, comparatively few Iranian women historical figures were noted in Persian history after the ancient pre-Islamic period, until the Safavid period (16th century) when they began to re-emerge (Frye, 1963). Some exceptions:

Fatima al-Ma'suma (817 A.D.) was an important figure who became a saint among Shia believers and among Iranians in particular. She was the sister and daughter of imams, but she herself became learned in both religious and secular traditions. Most notably, Fatima focused many of her efforts and her own shrine on the rights and opportunities of women. As a result, Iranian women since then have looked to her as a kind of protective figure, and an inspiration in their own efforts to gain greater rights and freedoms (Nashat & Beck, 2003; Ruggles, 2000).

Prominent Safavid Iranian women. Despite the conservative Islamic impositions of the Shiite Muslim Safavid rulers, women began to regain some of the ancient Zoroastrian freedoms they had lost following the battle of Qadisiyyah and Arab Islamic conquest (Nicolle & McBride, 1993). The Safavids (led by their first ruler, Ismail I) were intensely motivated to reassert Persian identity against the Arabs and Turks, and so began to reintroduce ancient some Zoroastrian customs, traditions and holidays, merging these in many ways with the unique Shiite Islam of the Ismailis. There was considerable turmoil in the Safavid Dynasties, and as women in general gained varying levels of freedom, Iranian women also took on positions of leadership (Ferrier, 1999) in a way that had not been seen since the Sassanids. While some Safavid women gained

political power, they distinguished themselves most remarkably as influential patrons of the arts and sciences, contributing enormously to the cultural richness that became closely associated with Safavid rule. Some examples include:

Mahin Banu (1561) was an important Safavid political figure and a renowned diplomat, patron of the arts, and activist. Herself the daughter of a powerful and influential woman of the court (Tajlu Khanum), Mahin Banu served as a trusted diplomat negotiating with the Ottoman and Mughal empires, and sponsored not only religious shrines but also educational institutes and foundations (Ferrier, 1999). Perhaps most remarkably, she also developed an organization to help protect and assist Iranian girls, especially orphan girls—not only one of the first such organizations in Iran, but among the first in the world to tend specifically to the needs of women and girls (Ruggles, 2000).

Khayr al-Nisa Begum (1578, also known by her title, *Mahd-I Ulya* or *Heavenly Cradle*) was the wife of a weak shah, Mohammed Khodabanda. She therefore took power and ruled in her own right. In essence, she made the domestic and foreign policy decisions for Safavid Persia. She herself had succeeded in power after the Shah's sister, Princess Pari Khan, had been overthrown. She was known as a firm and effective ruler (Jahandideh & Khaefi, n.d.)

Dilaram Khanum (1642), a Safavid noblewoman, constructed one of Iran's most imposing structures—the Caravanserai Jadda—as well as a number of religious schools and institutions. The Caravanserai became a great commercial center for Iran, and Khanum was one of the most notable patrons in modern Iranian history (Ruggles, 2000).

Shahr Banu (1694), like Diliaram Khanum, was not of royal lineage, yet she became a significant sponsor of artistic and building projects regardless. She not only built schools but also popular spa-like facilities, which stand as remarkable examples of the architectural influents of

the later Safavid period (Ruggles, 2000).

Maryam Begum (1703), a Safavid princess, built a number of both religious and secular buildings that remain top attractions in Iran (Ruggles, 2000). As Iran gradually matured into a more modern state, the status and leadership opportunities for women paradoxically retreated again somewhat. The centralized state and economy faced a period of uncertainty during which major figures in general had brief reigns and commercial activity was unstable, for both men and women, leading to relatively few prominent leaders especially among women (Jahandideh & Khaefi, n.d.). As the 20th century approached, however, Iran began to move more in the direction of citizen participation and a more constitutional, law-based system of government and administration. Iran was also absorbing many Western influences even as it (ultimately successfully) frustrated the imperial ambitions of the British and other Western powers (Dusinberrer, 2003). Iran, while never fully abolishing the rule of the shahs, nonetheless began to increase literacy and encourage a greater degree of democracy. Matters were further altered by the discovery of oil and other natural resources, which opened up new economic and educational opportunities especially for women. Thus the roles and advance of women in Iranian society began to take on a very different character by the 20th century. This was ushered in especially by the constitutional movement at the start of the century.

The underlying purpose of the constitutional movement (1905-1911) was to advocate in favor of human rights, equality, and democracy. In practical political terms, the main goal was to limit the Qajar Shah from absolute power in favor of a democratically elected parliament (Farrokh, 2015). Women played a vital role in this process and were often seen as champions of the common people. One woman leader prominent in the constitutional revolution was Bi Bi Maryam Bakhtiari. The debate over constitutionalism led to a civil crisis, with the constitutional

faction led by the so-called Bakhtiari contingents who followed Bakhtiari herself. Her eventual victory in Tehran was fundamental in the adoption of Persian constitutionalism, making her one of the most influential figures in modern Iranian history. She was joined by a number of advisors, a substantial number of whom were also women and who also spearheaded the push for improved human rights in Iran (Esfandiari, n.d.). Some important dates noted in this era were:

In 1837, the first girls school opened, initially only for Christian girls. However, 30 years later, in the 1870s, the school was open to Muslim girls as well. The first official constitution (in 1906) was granted was Muzaffar Al-din Shah. Women were heavily involved in the constitutional movement, albeit in a mostly underground fashion. These efforts led to the convening of the first official parliament in 1906. Additionally, this constitution was the first document to make specifications to human rights.

The year after the constitution (1907), the first women-focused domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the first one being the Women's Association for Freedom, which functioned to protect women's basic rights and to advocate for increased freedoms for Iranian women. Another organization, the Women's Secret Union, focused more specifically on gains in the political arena.

From 1907-1920, girls' and women's opportunities advanced on many fronts during this formative period, specifically, the first officially established primary elementary schools for girls came into being, most of them initially funded and led by the NGO's, but then receiving support from the government itself. In addition, a number of journals and publications focused on women's issues were inaugurated, including a number of books and women focused magazines. Finally, the first women focused institute for higher education was also founded—a school for educating teachers in the capital city of Tehran (“Snapshots of Iran's Women's Movement,” n.d.)

As noted in the previous chapter, the Pahlavi Era (1925-1979) was a period in which Iranian women gained many significant opportunities, especially in the areas of education, business, and political opportunity. In 1936, Tehran's first university opened and allowed men and women to attend. By 1963, women were given the right to vote, and under the Family Protection Law, women were given the right to petition for child custody and divorce. Additionally, the minimum age requirement for girls to get married went from age 13 to 18 (Esfandiari, n.d.).

For the first decade of Reza Shah Pahlavi's reign (1922-1932), the NGOs founded in the Qajar dynasty were heavily involved in rapidly creating and maintaining a number of schools, hospitals, and workplace and cultural opportunities for women. These proved to be durable institutions with most remaining intact even after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. For his part, Reza Shah followed the example of Mustafah Kemal Ataturk in Turkey, in seeking to Westernize and secularize the Iranian nation. Reza Shah banned the veil for women and encouraged Western dress and instituted a number of programs to boost literacy and extend public education, including for girls and women ("Snapshots of Iran's Women's Movement," n.d.)

A number of important developments for Iranian women occurred during this decade (1932-1942), while educational opportunities for girls and women were further extended, basic rights were also extended into the workplace, including a number of laws and customary practices that allowed women to apply for work and to even develop their own businesses. Women gained additional rights in the household, particularly in the areas of marriage and divorce, women also gained their first official press, on top of the earlier success enjoyed in founding their own magazines and media organizations. In general throughout the Shiite regions

of the Middle East, including Iran and much of Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, women began to further develop and coordinate their political organizing, often in the context of moral arguments rooted in Shiite ethical traditions (“Snapshots of Iran’s Women’s Movement”, n.d.). In 1935, Fatimeh Sayyah became the first women professor at Tehran University, marking a milestone for women in leadership positions in Iran (Girgis, 1996).

The first period of Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign was from 1942-1951. This period was dominated by Iranian women’s efforts to obtain full voting rights and actively participate in elections. These efforts culminated in 1951, with a formal petition by women for full suffrage. This ultimate successful effort coincided with the election of Iran’s popular prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh in 1951 (Girgis, 1996).

The second period of Mohammed Reza Shah’s reign began in 1951 until 1961, with the nationalist reforms of Mohammad Mossadegh. Mossadegh, like the Shah himself, was interested in progressive reforms to boost Iranians literacy, general education, entrepreneurial activities, political rights, and social freedoms. Therefore, this period solved further gains for women’s opportunities supported by virtually all levels of government. Unfortunately, as detailed in Chapter 1, the British under Churchill and the Americans under John Foster Dulles carried out a coup against Mossadegh when Mossadegh sought to use Iran’s oil revenues to benefit the Iranian people. This led to political turmoil and a general interruption in Iranian women’s subsequent gains until the early 1960’s (Abrahamian, 1982; Keddie, 1981; “Snapshots of Iran’s Women’s Movement,” n.d).

The third period of Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign began in 1961 until 1979, with the White Revolution, which ushered in the most far-reaching reforms for women and the general public in Iran’s history. In this year, the Shah temporarily suspended the constitution and

dissolved the legislature, but this allowed him to implement important social reforms without the veto of religious conservatives. The Shah was especially focused on expanding women's rights giving them full suffrage as well as extensive rights in the household and workplace, as well as instituting a number of protections for the environments and workers (Snapshots of Iran's Women's Movement," n.d.). As noted in Chapter 1, this period (1965-1969) included the passage of reforms in family and labor laws, extending women's household rights further, while also providing for formally recognized maternity leave, along the lines of many European countries ("Snapshots of Iran's Women's Movement," n.d.).

During the Khomeini decade (1979-1989), after the Islamic Revolution, women were discouraged from becoming working professionals and were instead pushed to enter traditional female fields such as teaching and nursing. Higher positions such as judgeships, for example, were largely barred to women. Shari'a Law replaced the secular laws from the Shah's period (including in the family law realm), and the revised dress code renewed the expectation for women to wear the hijab. During this time, women did enjoy the right to vote and run for parliament, with four women elected to the first parliament in 1980, after which they were given the opportunity to sit on local councils. In general, however, women in leadership positions were dismissed, given early retirement, or demoted. The grinding Iran-Iraq War imposed further hardships for the country. While in the one hand it may have actually protected some of women's previous gains (by diverting lawmakers' attention away from repeals of previous pro-women and pro-family laws), nevertheless the cost and exhaustion of the long war also made it difficult for even women to get a hearing or publicly raise awareness about issues relevant to them, given the country's consuming focus on the war. Nonetheless, 10 years later, the first woman was named deputy minister, and 17 years later, a woman was appointed vice president.

In 2010, the Islamic Republic named its first female minister. However, Iran's constitution still prohibits women from positions of supreme leadership (Esfandiari, n.d.). The implementation of Shari'a law did reduce some of women's earlier gains during the constitutional and Shah eras.

Rafsanjani (1989-1997) was a reformer and more pragmatic about women's issues. He was openly supportive of women's rights, and once he became president, many social changes took effect, including a major increase in the number of girls attending schools and universities. Women were also better respected in public and not harassed as much on the streets (Esfandiari, n.d.). Rafsanjani also broke fundamentally from his predecessor in his support for women in political, with a woman appointed as deputy minister early in his tenure. In essence, by the early 1990's, a balance between conservative Shari'a traditions and more progressive traditions (related both to Iran's own Zoroastrian tradition and the examples provided by the West) had begun to arise, with a greater degree of tolerance for women's rights, especially in educational, household and media realms (Brumberg, 2001).

Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) was an even more vigorous reformer than Rafsanjani, and undertook even more concrete efforts to open up opportunities to women, bringing Iran's overall legal posture closer to that under the Shah's reign before the Islamic Revolution. He appointed a woman official (Masoumeh Ebtekar) to be his vice president for the environment, while another woman (Zahra Rahnavard) became the first chancellor of an Iranian university (Brumberg, 2001). Women enjoyed considerable success in winning elected office, with a banner year especially in 2004. Perhaps of greatest importance, Khatami restored some key elements of the Family Protection Law, a cornerstone of the Shah's progressive reforms that had been effectively suspended upon Khomeini's rise to power. Single women could also go abroad to study without male accompaniment (Esfandiari, n.d.).

Ahmadinejad's (2005-2013) years led to a series of setbacks for women's aspirations in Iran. Although Ahmadinejad was conservative on foreign policy, he was not necessarily as hardline on domestic policy (Chamlian, 2009). His rule, however, depended on support from the clerics, who did press more conservative restrictions in domestic areas. This led to significant falls in women's opportunities to seek and win elected office (Skelly, 2010). Women-oriented media, such as the feminist magazine *Zanan*, were shut down or suspended, making it more difficult for women to publicly advocate for their rights (Esfandiari, n.d.). The dress code was enforced more vigorously, and women were often given rather harsh sentences for minor infractions against it.

Ahmadinejad himself struggled to maintain a proper balance, especially after taking criticism for the harsh sentences that women were encountering, generally perceives as unfair (Chamlian, 2009). Upon his reelection, he sought to appoint several women to important posts, as Khatami had done (Skelly, 2010). However only one, Marzieh-Vahid Dastjerdi (a health minister) was approved by parliament because of objections from clerics and conservative politicians. Unfortunately, even Dastjerdi did not last and was dismissed by Ahmadinejad in 2012. During his last year in office, the government reduced the budget for family planning, which damaged one of the most successful such programs in the world, even though the change has little effect on Iranian fertility rates (Eberstadt & Shah, 2012). Additionally, the Ministry of Higher Education also decided to ban female students from many fields of study (Esfandiari, n.d.).

Hassan Rouhani (2013 – present), like Khatami and Rafsanjani, was reform-minded, though he has had to work in a challenging political environment. In the first 2 years of Hassan Rouhani's presidency, many women in Iran had mixed emotions. He initially did not name any

women to his cabinet or revive the Ministry for Women's Affairs as he had promised, because he knew the conservative majority would not allow it. However, Rouhani achieved a breakthrough when four women were eventually appointed as vice presidents, including Masoumeh Ebtekar as the head of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization and Shahindokht Molaverdi as vice president for women and family affairs (Saikel, 2015). Each of Rouhani's cabinet members were also instructed to appoint at least one woman as a deputy minister. Rouhani's major successes have primarily taken place in the social sector of Iran. Women gained more freedom in regards to dress and public display, such as wearing more provocative and colorful outfits, and wearing make-up in addition to head scarves. Importantly, women entrepreneurs became more prominent, continuing to lead major companies but also founding many start-ups (Esfandiari, n.d.). The following section includes names of prominent modern Iranian women in positions of power or importance:

Masoumeh Ebtekar was Iran's first female vice president during the era of president Mohammad Khatami. Ebtekar was also a spokesperson for students who seized the U.S. Embassy in 1979, continuing to serve under later governments (including the current one). Additionally, she was the first woman to participate in the first cabinet since the Islamic Revolution.

Born in Mashhad, Iran in 1966, Anousheh Ansari is an Iranian-American engineer. In 2006, she became the co-founder and chairwoman of Prodea Systems. Previously, she had been a co-founder and CEO of Telecom Technologies and in 2001, became the vice president of Sonus, which is a stock company. Additionally, Ansari (2009) was known to be the fourth self-funded space traveler, and the first self-funded woman to fly to the International Space Station.

Born in 1983, Parisa Tabriz is an American computer security expert and has been

featured on Forbes' 30 Under 30 List. She currently works for Google as head of the Chrome Security division (Esfandiari, n.d.). She also trains the staff at Google who are interested in the field of security.

Success Strategies

Success is defined precisely here as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose, or overall achievement in a given field or endeavor. A successful Iranian woman, is defined more specifically in terms of educational and workplace attainment, with recognition of said accomplishment from the community. This section of the literature examines the different concrete strategies toward success that researchers have found.

After reviewing 200 years of literature and the concept and examples of success, Covey (1989) came to the conclusion that there was indeed a pattern that emerged (though he criticized much of the literature of the previous 50 years as being superficial). The literature on the first 150 years focused less on success per se (as it is often covered in business-related publications), and more on what Covey described as the character ethic of success, which included integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the Golden Rule. Covey also claimed that there are basic principles of living that were taught, or at least implied, by the character ethic, and that people reach success and happiness once they learn how to integrate these key principles into their character.

However, after World War I, the way success was viewed shifted from the character ethic to the personality ethic. There were two paths of interpretation that were taken in the midst of this perspective shift: the first involved linking success to good public relations and leadership and other skills, and the other involved taking on a so-called positive mental attitude (PMA). The personality ethic approach, Covey (1989) argued, was manipulative and deceptive, since it

focused more on phenomenon associated with success than with its actual sources. Johannes Gutenberg's success and titanic historical influence with his printing press may have been reflected in his PMA and the public relations surrounding his work among colleagues in Germany, for example, but it was Gutenberg's character—his unflagging industry, temperance, courage, integrity, and patience—that actually created his success. Both the character and personality ethic are examples of social paradigms (Covey, 1989), and in weighing them, Covey also argued that these social paradigms help to shape people's attitudes and behaviors. With such considerations in mind, Covey outlined a list of seven habits of effective people, as follows:

1. Be proactive: being responsible and taking the initiative to make things happen; in Covey's eyes, the virtue of this habit is that it helps an individual to stand out and be different, while channeling a person's focus to be resourceful and diligent (as the initiator of an action or enterprise).
2. Begin with the end in mind: creating an image related to the accomplishment of long-term and short-term goals, which can help to focus one's efforts productively.
3. Put first things first: avoiding the distractions of instant gratification and instead focusing on more meaningful achievements, thus managing self-discipline and time management and also (of particular importance) avoiding the pitfalls of excessive debt and consumption.
4. Think win/win: ensuring that everyone benefits and thus bringing others on board to share one's goals; this habit is most directly tied in with interpersonal leadership, which requires vision, guidance, and wisdom.
5. Seek first to understand, then be understood: communication is important and listening first is the bedrock for that, allowing one to grasp others' perceptions and concerns.

6. Synergize: the core of principle-centered leadership; the whole is greater than the sum of all parts, thus good leadership entails not only reconciling differences but also harnessing them, and the abilities of individual team members, to yield a result greater than any of them would be capable of individually.
7. Sharpen the saw: improving spiritually, physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally, making oneself more adept and capable of handling challenges as they arise and maintaining one's good qualities over the long term.

Covey (1989) cited these seven habits as representing a holistic and integrated approach to personal success. In particular, based on his own background, Covey envisioned them as core to success in business and entrepreneurship, though he extended his principles to many other realms of pursuit, especially with his emphasis on initiative, putting off instant gratification, and sharpening one's skills (by, for example, managing a budget and avoiding excessive debt, a chronic problem for Americans and even more so today). In his most recent book, Covey (2004) introduced an eighth habit necessary to reach the next level of success and leadership: finding one's voice, and inspiring others to find theirs.

What Covey (2004) primarily focused on is paying attention to the mind, heart, body, and spirit, and channeling them to focus in a unified manner on a goal or set of goals. At the core of this, he believes, is finding one's own voice as a foundation to unifying this various aspects of self, and that in doing so (in an honest and forthright manner), one encourages others to join in the same aspirations. Interestingly, this perspective aligns quite well with principles of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2011) and transformational leadership as discussed before, though Covey did not focus much on EI or its associated literature in formulating his own concepts. To him, such leadership aspects were essential to realizing greater freedom and power of choice to solve

challenges that one would face, in business or otherwise.

In line with the specific habits and character traits that Covey was investigating, Rimm and Rimm (1999) examined the different factors that affected the success of 1,000 women in different arenas in order to better understand what the motivating factors were in the lives of women who were happy and successful. In their investigation, many of the qualities associated with their success (both work and family-related) lined up with many of the things that Covey was detailing, though Rimm and Rimm placed more emphasis on the importance of mentorship. As a contrast to the more positive messages on success by Covey (1989) and Rimm and Rimm (1999); however, Nash and Stevenson (2004) noted that perceptions of success and self-satisfaction are quite diverse throughout the US population. They also stated that many surveys show high burnout rates and job dissatisfaction among the general population, even among those generally considered successful. For example, Nash and Stevenson conducted 60 interviews on successful professionals and surveyed 90 of the top executives who attended Harvard Business School management programs. Their results showed that burnout and dissatisfaction rates were significant, and concluded that there are four components (somewhat different from Covey's habits) to enduring success and satisfaction: happiness, achievement, significance, and legacy. Personal happiness, in particular, is hard to quantify but essential to ongoing success, and that those who focus too much on achievement and having the correct traits find it difficult to sustain their success.

Nash and Stevenson (2004) compared effective success strategies to a *kaleidoscope strategy*, a reference to a more personal conceptualization of success based on one's own perception of what constitutes it. Elaborating on their general findings, they found that individuals who achieved lasting success had five common characteristics: high achievement,

multiple goals, the ability to experience pleasure, the ability to create positive relationships, and placement of a high value on accomplishments that endure. Thus, according to these investigators, adopting good success strategies in many ways entails getting a better grasp on goals that are worth focusing on, and what success involves.

Success strategies of Iranian-Americans. Iranian-Americans, despite their kinship and shared culture with their counterparts in Iran, nevertheless differ in some important ways. One of the most important is simply that Iranian-Americans tend to hail from wealthier families with a higher level of economic prosperity to begin with. Likewise, they tend to have a stronger educational background overall (Amin, 2006). As a result, when considering success strategies and leadership ambitions for Iranian women in general, it is useful to keep in mind that Iranian-American women represent a related, and yet distinctive subset of Iranian women who have advantages that their counterparts in Iran generally do not have as much of.

This aspect is important to consider also in the context of the preferred leadership style that helps to facilitate a potential leader's path to success. Success strategies are often linked to what is called best practices in a business context, which Iranian-American business owners in particular very much appreciate (Zanjani, 2014). Since Iranian-Americans so often come from wealthier backgrounds with substantial family capital and contacts, as well as solid educational backgrounds, they are more likely to be able to learn and pick up the skills most associated with best practices. Amin (2006) argued that in order to be a successful leader, one must be distinguished above all by making good decisions under pressure. Additionally, she also indicated that leaders should: (a) have empathy, (b) be able to establish trust and genuine relationships, (c) have technical expertise, (d) develop social science skills, (e) be decisive, (f) pay attention to subordinates who are not as experienced, and (g) take classes or have special

training in communication skills (Vaziri, as cited in Amin, 2006, p. 41).

Building on these basic notions about success factors, in a recent study by Amin (2006), the author investigated specific success strategies and challenges of successful Iranian men and women. The common themes and patterns Amin noted when examining the characteristics of a successful leader included: (a) self-confidence, (b) self-discovery, (c) values/ethics, (d) vision, (e) humility, (f) commitment, (g) persistent, (h) optimistic, (i) family oriented, (j) creativity, (k) drive, (l) learner, (m) communication skills, (n) passion, and (o) responsibility (Amin, 2006). The major themes Amin discovered when analyzing the challenges Iranian American leaders faced involved self-awareness, motivation, social skills, bicultural approach, and education. She also claims that all the participants in her study had a high drive for achieving success and had a high internal focus of control, marking these characteristics as defining factors of success.

Therefore, Amin argued:

If a young Iranian has high drive, high self-confidence, and high internal focus of control then arguably, through education, coaching, and mentoring he/she could be helped with finding his/her strengths in order to create a clear vision of her/his desired future with a long-term commitment to the vision and bicultural approach of problem solving. (Amin, 2006, p. 159)

These findings demonstrated that the participants ultimately took responsibility for the journey they took to become successful, which was essential for them in focusing their efforts. That is, they consciously made specific choices to get to where they are today. Of particular importance, they focused on being in a career they were passionate about, while being persistent and committed to their work, projects, and relationships in business and elsewhere (Amin, 2006).

Chapter Summary

For Iranian women seeking business success and leadership, Iran's own history and the world's history at large offer up a multifaceted, nuanced, often contradictory backdrop (Farhid, 2011; Farrokh, 2015) that can help to guide them in their efforts and gain the support of the broader society for reforms. Iran's history is distinctive from other Middle Eastern countries, with the most rich and ancient tradition in the region, and a unique Zoroastrian cultural foundation that honored and respected women while encouraging them to seek and practice leadership. This tradition has alternated and often conflicted with the more conservative Arab Islamic tradition since the 7th century Battle of Qadisiyyah (Kennedy, 2007; Nicole & McBride, 1993), especially as enshrined in Shari'a law, meaning that Iranian women today are best served by simultaneously drawing on Iran's tradition of openness and women's freedom (Mir-Hosseini, 2012), while also uniting in reform with respect to the constraints introduced especially since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 (Girgis, 1996). Fortunately, there are a number of notable examples (Kytzler, 1994; B. Smith, 2004) of women leaders both in Iran's own history and in broader world history, Joan of Arc in particular, who have helped to exemplify a distinctive sort of leadership—transformational leadership—that is both more amenable to the styles and abilities of Iranian women, and also more effective (Leadbeater, 2012). Such examples help to better characterize what constitutes a good leader, and also to clarify the importance of classical behavioral descriptors, such as emotional intelligence and success strategies connected to effective leadership (Turner, 2016). By keeping this historical context in mind, and linking it to both the current political environment and the modern cognitive and sociological contexts of leadership, Iranian women can blaze a more effective path towards not only gaining leadership positions and funding for their enterprises, but also setting their own examples to help normalize

such opportunities for Iranian girls and women in general.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the common features of successful Iranian-American women and thus discern a common theme in their path to success and their leadership qualities. In this chapter, the researcher investigates the success strategies and challenges of emerging Iranian-American women leaders using an interview-based, qualitative and phenomenological approach. The researcher will describe the population of this study in this chapter, along with the instrument used to measure the identified variables. Also included in this chapter is a description of the system used to gather and analyze data collected for this study. The author will address principles and standards of study reliability and validity, along with the steps taken to ensure that the study conforms to best practices to meet such standards. Issues of IRB approval and human subjects consideration are also confronted, as well as the process used to contact potential participants, the sampling methods, and potential biases to be overcome. This chapter will lay out the study's data collection and coding formats in detail.

This focus on a common, uniting thread of experience and personal improvement (Creswell, 2013) was the principal motivation for the phenomenological design chosen to tackle this question. The investigator used the research questions, assembled as described in the previous chapters, to frame and specify a series of verbal questions that the researcher posed in the interviews with the Iranian-American women leaders who took part in the study. These interview questions, and their rationale, are laid out in this chapter. The author will also detail the process of forming memos from the interview transcripts, and of further recording and coding these findings. Finally, the author addresses the methodologies of establishing validity with respect to the study.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

The investigator addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?

RQ2: What are some of the challenges faced by Iranian-American women leaders in their leadership journey?

RQ3: How do Iranian women leaders measure their leadership success?

RQ4: What lessons do current Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian American leaders?

Nature of the Study

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), a qualitative study is distinguished most saliently by the study of a topic in a natural setting in the field or generally in the context in which that subject is usually found. The researcher is not a detached observer, but instead an active participant in the research setting, and interacts directly with the subject or subjects, who in turn participate and engage with the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the qualitative study is naturalistic, but also interpretive, in that the researcher ascribes meaning to observations and seeks to understand their broader meaning and impact. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) did not specifically mention non-quantitative or open-ended approaches as a basic feature of qualitative research, though such a conclusion is somewhat implied in the nature of the studies and methods utilized (Creswell, 2013). Instead, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined a qualitative study more in terms of the tools that are utilized to acquire and assemble the data, mainly field notes, interviews, and conversations, all of which tend to favor, but do not exclude, hard numerical data for subsequent analysis (Creswell, 2013).

To summarize, several common characteristics of a qualitative research study include.

1. Natural setting (researchers collect data at the field site, or otherwise where the subject is naturally situated);
2. Researcher as key instrument (researcher acquires data through examining documents, observing behavior, and/or interviewing participants);
3. Multiple methods (multiple study approaches and thus forms of data);
4. Complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic;
5. Participants' meaning (a focus on the participants' perspective and reactions);
6. Reflexivity (the position and background of the researcher);
7. Holistic account, developing a complex picture of the problem or issue (Creswell, 2013 p. 47).

In addition, qualitative studies are especially well-suited to exploratory investigations in fields and domains of knowledge where there is relatively little in the way of established principles or variables that can be quantitatively assessed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this sense, qualitative studies often precede quantitative studies, and are in essential in laying down something resembling a foundation (or a basic canon of knowledge) needed for deeper study of a subject. The qualitative data help to provide a big-picture understanding of what a new field involves, what the important considerations are, and what would be most appropriate as far as new and relevant terminology (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The qualitative approach and related reasoning strategies. Creswell (2013) accepted many of Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) basic premises in his own definition of qualitative research, particularly the emphasis on open-ended data collection tools such as interviews and field notes, but elaborates on them in some basic ways. For example, Creswell placed a higher priority on the interpretive and theoretical framework that motivates the study. Creswell also

emphasized the developing (emerging) structure of the study as it is conducted, and on the use of multiple complementary approaches to gather data and engage with the subject or subjects (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, Creswell stressed the importance of both inductive and deductive reasoning in establishing patterns that illuminate the phenomenon under study, and also the reflexivity of the investigator—that is, the investigator’s particular background and vantage point and how these inform his or her perspective in understanding what or who is being studied.

Inductive reasoning involves trying to establish a readily comprehensible set of themes and principles by assembling unifying motifs from the aggregate observations, and by the researcher working back and forth between the databases (Heit & Rotello, 2010). This process also involves collaborating with the participants so that they have the opportunity to help identify the themes that emerge (Creswell, 2013). Inductive reasoning is popular in both the hard sciences and social sciences, since it is based primarily in original observations, without the bias of prior expectations or presumptions (Bradford, 2015). Deductive reasoning, in contrast, involves working backwards from previously-established tenets or general principles to anticipate observations or explain specific cases or findings (Crossman, 2016).

Qualitative studies generally involve both of these to some extent, mainly inductive reasoning, due to the observation-based structure of such studies (Babbie, 1992). However, they also entail some deductive reasoning when widely agreed-upon sociological, economic, or other patterns can be identified in the findings (Babbie, 1992). The current researcher made extensive use of inductive reasoning in particular to establish meaningful patterns of behavior, social adjustment, and success strategies based on the accumulated findings from the interviews of Iranian-American women, since the field is relatively new and there is little in the way of established concepts to work from.

Some of the advantages of conducting a qualitative research study include more in-depth and comprehensive information than would be available for a more limited quantitative study, as well as the availability of broad subjective information and participant observation and involvement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Sherman & Reid, 1994). Qualitative research by design is also undertaken in the natural setting of the variables being addressed, and seeks a wide, big-picture understanding of the entire situation. These advantages are present especially for studies like this one, conducted in accordance with a constructivist perspective as opposed to an advocacy-based perspective (Creswell, 2013; Sherman & Reid, 1994).

Specifically, this means that the patterns and themes established are constructed based on the findings and the participants' own input about those findings, that is, their insights about the unifying motifs that guided their behavior and decisions (Creswell, 2013; Sherman & Reid, 1994). Constructivist qualitative research, in many respects, constitutes the most basic form of scientific investigation. It uses assorted findings without prior presumptions with a bottom-up (inductive) approach to note general patterns, assisted by the participants themselves, who contribute a different vantage point compared to the investigator or investigators (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013).

The current researcher made use of an interpretive, as opposed to a critical, style of research. In essence, this means that the primary focus of the study is to interpret a phenomenon or, more broadly speaking, the behavior or identity of a group, as opposed to leveling criticism at society or a particular institution or institutions (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). This approach shares the advantages noted above, in particular the emphasis on unbiased, open interpretation of objectively acquired findings without having to adhere to prior presumptions or guidelines (Sherman & Reid, 1994).

Despite its many advantages, qualitative research does have some important drawbacks. For instance, the subjectivity of the inquiry can lead to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the information. The very factor that makes qualitative studies so valuable for exploratory investigations—its relative flexibility and openness to broad findings—can make validity especially difficult to establish, since there may be little in the way of agreed-upon standards to benchmark the research approach or findings (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Sherman & Reid, 1994). Likewise, it can be difficult to prevent or detect researcher biases, and its scope is limited due to the in-depth, comprehensive data gathering approaches required, which can make large-scale investigations with a large number of participants impractical (Creswell, 2013).

Methodology

The structure of the study conducted was descriptive phenomenological, thus entailing a qualitative design. According to Creswell (2013), the focus of a phenomenological study is on understanding a concept or phenomenon such as the psychological meaning of an interaction and its broader significance. In describing a phenomenological study, the author stated that it is “not only a description, but it is also an interpretive process in which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). Based on the phenomenological principles, Creswell stated the major procedural steps taken when using this method, summarized below:

1. Ascertaining whether the phenomenological approach is most appropriate as a tool for examining a research problem of interest, by investigating whether shared experiences or themes can be discerned for a group of subjects experiencing the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Keeping in mind the general philosophical tenets of phenomenological studies (as first detailed by Edmund Husserl in particular), especially in regard to the

importance of inductive logic and the formulation of new concepts based on empirical examination and subjective experience (Creswell, 2013).

2. Focusing initially on the subjects above all—that is, examining how subjects perceive and experience a phenomenon, while putting aside the way the researcher himself or herself perceives or experiences it, starting with a fully external focus (Creswell, 2013).
3. Organizing the choice of subjects and the investigation in general around a common theme in which the subjects' experiences can be framed, such as emotions (anger), experiences (trauma or growing up in a war zone), or achieving leadership, and recognizing common threads among the subjects rather than merely reporting diverse experiences (Creswell, 2013).
4. Organizing the investigation around a feasible, structured interview format that allows for convenient interaction with the subjects and eliciting of truthful, detailed answers (Creswell, 2013).
5. Focusing the principal questions on how subjects have experienced the phenomena in general, and what factors have affected and/or shaped the manner in which subjects have experienced or come to understand the phenomena, with a mixture of open-ended questions and more directed (targeted) questions (Creswell, 2013).
6. Taking an interpretive approach once the data and reports from the subjects have been collected, and actively considering the findings not as diverse, individual, or disconnected threads (as with narrative approach), but as aspects of a broader connected story (Creswell, 2013).
7. Supplementing inductive reasoning with deductive (top-down) reasoning where appropriate to help reinforce the common theme or themes (Creswell, 2013).

8. Assembling the findings in such a way that they add up to tell a story and provide an overall unified picture about what is being examined (Creswell, 2013).

The origins of the phenomenological study and its structure lie in the concepts of the German philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, expanded upon by the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Loy, 2015). Husserl was himself heavily influenced by Immanuel Kant (Parsons, 2012), another German philosopher who had first proposed the notion that our knowledge of the world is heavily filtered and edited by the human sensory and perceptual apparatus, with some of this filtering effectively built-in within the nervous system (Bernet, Welton, & Zavota, 2005). Kant described how raw perceptual data were not passing through unfiltered, but being shaped by some kind of patterning system initially not understood (Raedler, 2015), a pioneering idea which has since been confirmed by studies in neurology, psychology, and other fields (Pecorino, 2000). From this foundation, Husserl developed a system of philosophy and examination that was based on human perception and experience as the primary area of focus (Natanson, 1973), which Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty developed further (Moran, 2005).

The concept of the phenomenological study was an outgrowth of the focus on perception and experience as emphasized by Husserl and Heidegger (Heidegger, 1988), with a particular interest in how perception and experience are shared among distinct individuals (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Spiegelberg, 2013). Since phenomenological research is interested primarily in the aspect of experience, and how that experience is shared, it is also most interested in the perception and interpretation of broad, complex phenomena for which a common theme can be attested (Bernet et al., 2005), as well as reflections of individuals on that perception (Kriegel & Williford, 2006). That is, phenomenological studies are not interested in simple sensory

perception of objects or basic experiences, since these are perceived in similar ways by the human nervous system (Natanson, 1973). Kant helped to explain how even basic concepts like space and time are perceptual rather than empirical (Raedler, 2015)—intuitive notions that come from the way our brains process sensory information--so when Husserl and Heidegger assembled the core tenets of phenomenology, they were more interested in a holistic understanding of how people perceive the world (Moran, 2005), including the emotional aspects as well as the information of perception itself (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

As a result, phenomenological studies are more interested in broader social, societal, and community experiences that, despite their apparent differences (and the many distinct aspects of participants' personal lives), might still exhibit common threads that are experienced in similar ways by very different people (Moran, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). This focus helps to illuminate both the phenomenon under study, as well as the nature of human thought and interpretation, through which such phenomena are perceived (Sinha, 1969; van Manen, 2002). These goals are in line with the basic principles as formulated by Husserl and Heidegger, as well as with the original motivation for their work, in the form of Kant's fundamental reconciling of empirical data (what is being experienced) with rational thought--in this case, the subjective perception of the data (Parsons, 2012). Phenomenological studies are thus a favorite tool especially in the social sciences, but also even in some of the natural sciences, since they can provide a vast amount of information about both natural and social phenomena, and about external objects and internal human perception (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

In considering a phenomenological design for investigating the common threads and challenges facing Iranian-American women leaders, it was important for the current researcher to consider whether their individual experiences could be broadly regarded and understood

according to a common uniting theme. That is, for the study to work according to a phenomenological framework, it had to involve a common phenomenon, as well as common features in the way that phenomenon was experienced and appreciated. While this was impossible to determine with certainty prior to initiating the investigation, the subject matter and historical backdrop suggested that this topic would be reasonably likely to fit within a phenomenological framework. The interviews were focused on subjects and structured around experiences with a common characteristic: they all involved the path to leadership for Iranian-American women, the barriers these women faced in their quest, and the specific strategies and approaches the woman employed to achieve their success with a fair likelihood of common themes to be found in those strategies.

As with other types of studies, such as narrative, grounded theory, and case studies, phenomenological studies entail challenges and limitations that must be considered at the start in considering if they are appropriate and how feasible they are (Creswell, 2013). Since phenomenological studies are in some ways goal-directed—in the sense of trying to identify a common theme and phenomenon for the subjects interviewed—a researcher must be very careful in the selection and vetting of the subjects. This can lead to practical difficulties in simply conducting the study, since such a requirement can inevitably limit the pool of potential participants and make it harder for a researcher to manage the study's logistical aspects (Creswell, 2013). In contrast, a narrative study need not be so selective about its subjects, since it is trying to elicit their individual stories and understanding, whether or not a common theme emerges.

Another challenge for this sort of study is that phenomenological studies, by their nature, are paradoxically both rigorous and loose in their structure—organized around and directed

towards a unifying theme, yet also open-ended enough to allow for broad explorations of participants' experience, and encouraging their own contribution to interpreting such experiences (Spiegelberg, 2013). This creates a kind of natural conflict, often going against the grain of the more generally fluid and open-ended nature of qualitative research, as seen for example in narrative studies (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). Phenomenological researchers, unlike those conducting narrative studies, are constrained in the manner in which they conduct their interviews, both in the sorts of questions they ask and in the way in which they interpret the data with a common motif in mind (Moran, 2005). Similarly, phenomenological studies are rooted in often abstract philosophical concepts—especially by Husserl and his colleagues—that may be difficult to convert into specific, concrete approaches for a given topic (Bernet et al., 2005). This often leads to debate about how well a particular study truly fits into the phenomenological framework.

Structured process of phenomenology. Phenomenological studies, similar to other types of qualitative studies, involve a structured process that flows (in general) in a step-by-step format (Creswell, 2013): (a) introducing the study and deciding on its primary focus; (b) gathering the relevant data; (c) sifting, analyzing, and presenting the data in a form readily interpretable by audiences; (d) writing up the study in a coherent document; and (e) following up the study as needed.

Phenomenological studies, as discussed above, tend to mix both rigorous structuring and open-ended interaction and reflection involving the participants. They are overall more structured than other sorts of qualitative studies, such as narrative studies (Moustakas, 1994), since by their nature they tend to constantly revert to the common theme or phenomenon. This is in contrast to narrative and other such studies, which tend to assume more of a journalistic

character in the form of taking accounts and letting participants speak for themselves, without necessarily seeking out a common or unifying thread among them.

This structuring is especially true of the data analysis and writing portions of the phenomenological study, for which a fairly rigorous superstructure for these phases can be identified. Its steps include identifying significant statements made by subjects, creating meaning units, clustering themes, advancing textural and structural descriptions, and ending with a composite description of textural and structural descriptions with a description of the essential invariant structure of the experience. The actual writing of the research report collected findings is itself a structured process, involving both overall structure, the general form and approach taken to crafting the report and embedded structure, which is the manner in which essential thematic elements and conclusions are communicated—specific narrative structures, the latter including approaches such as the progressive-regressive method, which skips chronologically around a particular watershed event), zooming in and out, a focus on epiphanies, and foreshadowing. A generally accepted model for crafting the research report, found in the studies of Polkinghorne (1989), is to start with the raw data without prior assumptions of its meaning, and then progressively build from that body of data towards a general, unifying description of the phenomenon, experience, or binding theme.

Appropriateness of phenomenology methodology. Qualitative research derives from personal experiences and an interest in a topic developed from opportunities that give the researcher physical or psychological access to such types of settings (Riemer, as cited in Creswell, 2013). In the instance of this current study, since the current investigator is Iranian and had access to Iranian-American leaders, she used this opportunity to document the success strategies and challenges of the leaders to inspire the younger generation of Iranian-American

aspiring leaders to reach their potential. A phenomenological approach was most suitable for this topic since the interviews were not done to obtain simple narratives, but rather to discern a common theme or themes and phenomena that stand out in the group of such women who have achieved independent success.

To be more specific, the topic investigated in the study was not so much the specific success strategies that Iranian-American women employed to achieve success, but rather how they perceived the obstacles facing them, and how they conceptualized those success strategies. That is, the investigator was most interested in the experience as understood by these women as opposed to some objective, external phenomenon—though the study of course was designed to shed light on factors that would characterize their common experience. In essence, one can better grasp what the success strategies for Iranian-American women leaders have been, based on the common themes that emerged from the interviews. Such themes in effect were derived from the participants' recollections of their personal journeys and how they interpreted these journeys' significance. Thus, open-ended interviews were essential in examining how Iranian-American women achieved success and what they felt the critical factors and strategies were.

Moustakas (1994) summarized that phenomenological research consists of surveying a small number of subjects based on statements made. This is another reason why interviews are the most common research method of obtaining data, since a relatively small number of participants are involved, and they can all be engaged in the form of the open-ended interview (Creswell, 2013). The investigator conducted such interviews for the purposes of this study and are further explained them in the data collection section.

Research Design

In the investigation presented below, the analysis unit was an Iranian-American woman

leader who was successful in her field, either born in Iran or the U.S. and residing in the U.S. currently. The population collectively consisted of all the Iranian-American women in various leadership positions, across a wide variety of fields and geographical regions. The current author defined Iranian-American successful women leaders as women who had achieved a societally agreed milestone in their careers, and were born in either Iran or in the U.S. Exemplary cases included leaders who (a) attained a leadership position at a company with more than \$100 million in assets, (b) held a high academic position at a high ranking university in the U.S., or (c) were well-known within the Iranian community for overall reputation and achievement. The sample consisted of a subset of these women with enough diversity in their backgrounds and fields of expertise so as to constitute a reasonably representative subgroup of the population as a whole.

Sample size. The investigator ultimately chose a sample size of 15, since it is large enough to accommodate a diverse and interesting cohort of Iranian-American women leaders, yet also manageable enough to allow for in-depth interviews and the broad collections of heterogeneous data that are so valuable for a qualitative research study. More specifically, regarding the eventual selection of 15 as the optimal sample size, Creswell (2013) indicated that in a phenomenological study, “the participants may be located at a single site and must be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their lived experiences” (p. 149). For the purposes of this study, the investigator conducted in-depth interviews with the participants. In terms of ideal size, Polkinghorne (1989) recommended using between one through 325 participants. Riemen (1986), whose landmark investigations of caring interactions in nursing are often cited as signal examples of phenomenological research, studied 10 individuals. Ultimately, the current researcher chose a size of 15 as the optimal number. This

figure is also in line with recommendations and examples from the literature, and was most practical and apt for this study.

Purposive sampling. Creswell (2013) described purposive sampling as “the decision as to whom to select as participants (or sites) for the study, the specific type of sampling strategy, and the size of the sample to be studied” (p. 155). Specifically, purposive sampling is not entirely blind, but designed to bring the sample in line with the population of interest, as can be best managed given the logistical limitations of the study. The purposive sampling in this case was based on referrals through different individuals or participants within the Iranian community, especially from a conference in Irvine, CA, assembling Iranian-American women leaders from throughout the nation. This meeting was a particularly valuable source of potential participants, since recruitment there helped to make the sample of interviewed participants more representative of the much larger Iranian-American population of women in leadership. Purposive sampling allowed the investigator to purposely choose exemplary women in leadership.

Sampling frame to create the master list. The researcher constructed a sampling frame, consisting of a preliminary master list of 30 potential participants with full contact information at hand—derived from individuals contacted at the conference and through other channels as listed above—on the basis of suitability in meeting the inclusion criteria and avoiding the exclusion criteria as listed below. The author then took the following steps to create a master list for participant recruitment:

1. She obtained information from sources as described above, on potential contacts of interest who would be likely to fit the criteria. She briefly scoured local Iranian media such as KIRN AM radio for potential participants based on examinations of the station’s

website and notes taken on news stories that focus on Iranian-American women leaders in the community. In addition, she closely examined the website of the Women's Leadership Conference to find possible candidates who would be good study participants based on their biographies. The researcher obtained specific information about the conference itself, including contact information for staff and speaking engagements. This particular website contained information about various events, mentorship programs, a career resource center, internship opportunities for aspiring leaders, and a directory of women leaders in the community organized by the different professional fields.

2. To facilitate the recruitment among conference attendees as participants in the study, the researcher made efforts obtain professional contact information of those who would be physically present at the event. She contacted the president of the Iranian American Women's conference by email regarding the list of potential participants, but she did not respond. Therefore, the author acquired specific contact information on attendees and potential study participants through direct interaction at the conference itself. The author gathered additional contact information for staff so as to facilitate subsequent communications. Since no contact was established with the conference president and there were no significant issues of privacy and confidentiality, especially given the public nature of the women involved, it was not necessary to obtain permission to contact them.

Criteria for inclusion. The inclusion criteria for such participants in general involved:

- (a) the holding of a leadership position, (b) acting in a leadership capacity in a way that is public and recognized by the community, and (c) having have held a leadership position within the last 5 years within academia, healthcare, business, entertainment, community standing, technology, or other industries with a significant impact on the community.

Criteria for exclusion. Exclusion criteria for this study included: (a) traveling back and forth to Iran, making it difficult to establish whether a potential participant truly had a U.S. base; (b) knowing the researcher on a personal level; (c) geographic distance; or (d) being related to the researcher.

Suitability in meeting these criteria was based off of biographical information obtained from the IAWF website, corresponding information on LinkedIn and other social media websites, data on prospective participants from Iranian-American media, from professional publications either authored by or featuring the prospective participant, public forums in which the prospective participant has contributed, personal referrals, endorsements, or descriptions, as well as information gleaned from casual initial contacts.

Maximum variation. To further ensure that the initial sample is representative of the desired participant group and refine the purposive sampling process, the author considered factors to optimize the diversity, significance, and logistical practicality of the group to be contacted. From this initial list, the investigator contacted potential participants to narrow the group down to 15 individuals. This recruitment process was undertaken in such a way as to ensure maximum variation in the final sample of 15 participants.

This study utilized the maximum variation approach so as to maximize the diversity, and thus the likely representational nature, of the cross-section of subjects in this study. According to Creswell (2013), maximum variation sampling is often a good fit for qualitative research because “when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or difference perspectives” (p. 157). The maximum variation criteria for this specific population was: (a) field, (b) age, and (c) educational background (degrees obtained).

Human Subject Consideration

While gaining access to such individuals required several steps, one important factor was obtaining approval from the human subject review board (Creswell, 2013). In the wake of tragic abuses of human subjects embodied most notably in the Tuskegee syphilis experiments of the early 20th century, institutions throughout the United States have settled on commonly-agreed upon criteria to protect the health, safety, dignity, and autonomy of human subjects (Brandt, 1978; Jones, 1981). In practice, this has taken the form of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) which formulate research guidelines and approve specific research protocols.

Pepperdine University's stated purpose in its Institutional Review Boards is to "protect the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research activities conducted under the auspices of Pepperdine University. Applications submitted to the GPS IRB generally encompass social, behavioral, and educational research and are usually considered medically non-invasive" (Pepperdine University, n.d., p. 1). The primary goal of Pepperdine's IRB is thus to protect the welfare and dignity of the human subjects in addition to conduct a study that is ethical and meets the proper guidelines.

Protecting the confidentiality of the participants in the work described here was crucial, since the study gathered the data through one-on-one interviews and often entailed the solicitation of personal information. In order to proceed with the interviews, each participant received an informed consent form, which described her role in the study and information regarding the study. The initial pitch to potential participants was made through a Pepperdine IRB-approved recruitment script, which briefly laid out the study and its rationale, indicated how potential participants could contribute to it, outlined the study length and interview format, and offered a small reward for those who participated (a \$15 Starbucks gift certificate). The consent

form included specific considerations and notices to participants, such as: (a) the right of participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; (b) the central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection; and (c) the protection of the confidentiality of the respondents (Creswell, 2013).

Since the interviews conducted with the participants were extensive and in-depth in nature—approximately 1 hour long and face-to-face—the investigator made further considerations to ensure that participants remained active and engaged within the study. Riemen (as cited in Creswell, 2013) suggested that it is a good idea to make sure the participants are easily accessible to the researcher, and this guideline was kept in mind in structuring the study and follow-up with the participants. With this foundation established, the investigator then filed a request with Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board. For the purposes of this study, the investigator conducted recorded interviews which imposed no risk—physical, mental, or emotional—to the participant. The researcher submitted an application on informed consent procedures form to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board, conforming to the criteria established by the IRB to protect participants' confidentiality, as well as to affirm that the research presented no risk of harm to subjects.

Data Collection

The initial list of prospective participants contained 30 individuals. The final sample size for this study was 15. This was accomplished by sending out simultaneous contact requests to one individual from each field of interest on a given day. Depending the response and the acceptance of the invitation, the current researcher adjusted subsequent contacts to ensure or to provide for the desired maximum variation, until there was a total of 15 respondents who were willing to participate in the study.

The author created a master list through an Excel spreadsheet and examined each participant to make sure she met the criteria. She contacted the participants in various ways, including telephone calls and emails. The master list included the phone numbers and email addresses of the participants. The researcher then secured the master list in a locked filing cabinet to ensure the confidential information of the participants. Once the contact information details of the participants were obtained, the author sent an email (incorporating the recruitment script as discussed above) to the participants' work email address during business hours asking them if they would like to partake in a study on success strategies involving established and emerging Iranian-American women leaders. The participants who replied back to the emails sent received an email from the researcher, explaining in great detail all aspects of the study and what the requirements for participation were. Once participants who were interested in the study responded via email, the author sent another email including IRB consent forms, interview dates and locations, information about the questions asked, and the process of the interview itself. Unless stated otherwise, the interview location was a conference room affiliated with Pepperdine University's West Los Angeles location, allowing for privacy of communication, comfort, and recording of questions and answers (through a standard voice recorder). Because of the workloads and busy schedules of the participants, the researcher worked out an interview time convenient for their schedules (in general outside of work hours) in advance.

One week after the email, the researcher contacted each participant by phone to go over the interview process. If there was no answer, the researcher left a voice message. If there was no subsequent response from the prospective participant, the researcher sent a second email. If there was still no response, the researcher made an additional phone call. If this second phone call received no response, the researcher dropped the prospective participant from the study and the

researcher moved on to another prospect from the master list. While recruiting participants, the researcher used the recruitment script as noted before. When participants were contacted, they were informed that the interview was going to be one-on-one and last roughly 1 hour in length, and that the interview recordings would be stored in a secured, locked drawer inaccessible to outsiders. Once the informed consent forms were signed, the participants faxed, emailed, or mailed the forms to the researcher. The recruitment script and informed consent forms are referenced in Appendices A and B.

Interview Techniques

While conducting phenomenological interviews, the interactions required saying little, handling emotional outbursts, using ice-breakers, and asking appropriate questions with patience to find out what others think about their experiences and personal challenges (Creswell, 2013). In this semi-structured interview, probing helps to clarify ambiguities, deepen the interview process, and allow the participant to feel understood and respected by the interviewer (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

During the interviews, the researcher reassured each participant with empathic words and appropriate body language if a participant had an emotional reaction, relating for example to childhood trauma or acute difficulties with family or business. When talking to human subjects, Creswell (2013) suggested four steps of interviewing to be considered:

1. Use a header to record essential information about the project as a reminder to go over the purpose of the study with the interviewee;
2. Place space between the questions in the protocol form;
3. Memorize the questions and their order to minimize losing eye contact with the participant;

4. Write out the closing comments that thank the individual for the interview and request follow-up information, if needed from him or her.

Interview protocol. The interviews for this study were semi-structured, following general guidelines accepted in the field but allowing for enough variation to tackle the unique challenges of this particular topic. According to Maree (2007), semi-structured interviews are valuable as a flexible format that allows for two-way communication and probing of participants' responses to generate a more information-rich data set. During a semi-structured interview, the researcher follows up with questions such as, "can you tell me more?" or "how do you feel about X?" In addition to the flexibility provided to the researcher, a major strength of this type of interview is that it allows the researcher and participant to develop a relationship, and is thoroughly adaptable. One of the main drawbacks of conducting a semi-structured interview, however, is that the person conducting the interview can mix in his/her own personal opinion and biases (Drever, 1995), and the interviews themselves can be time-consuming.

Interview questions. The researcher asked the participants questions about the following topics which consisted of success strategies and challenges. The interview questions are detailed in the table below. Briefly, participants were queried first on the strategies that made them successful as leaders. They were then asked about the ways in which they overcame resistance and challenges from family and from the community.

Relationship between research and interview questions. Many of the interview questions directly address the central research questions of the study. For example, participants were directly queried on success strategies, on how success is measured, and on the challenges that Iranian-American women (and Iranian women in general) face in realizing their ambitions. Each of these questions mirrors the topics of interest that motivated this research study in the

first place.

In addition, the more personalized questions were designed to help the participants use their specific individual paths and experiences to provide insights that would shed light on the overall thrust of the research (Creswell, 2013). The information gathered from these questions was also obtained to further similar research in the future, and to furnish encouragement for other aspiring Iranian-American women leaders. Therefore, the interview questions were designed both directly and indirectly to provide a clearer picture regarding the paths to success of Iranian-American women, as well as on the particular challenges they face both in achieving success and in having their success (and themselves as people) accepted by the broader community.

Reliability and validity of the study. Reliability, in the context of a qualitative phenomenological study, entails having questions that are clear, easily interpretable, and lead to answers based on specific experiences and beliefs of the participant, as opposed to ambiguity or varying interpretations of the questions themselves (Creswell, 2013). Reliability in this sense differs somewhat from the definition usually applied to quantitative measurements in the natural sciences, when (for example) the reliability of a weight scale is established by ensuring that it retains the same value for a predetermined mass over several measurements. In qualitative studies, given the distinctive nature of each participant's experience, the participants will naturally give different answers to each question, even those with very similar backgrounds. Rather, reliability is rooted in the quality and clarity of the questions themselves, so that the answers given correspond to responses to the intended queries from the researcher, rather than misunderstandings or interpretations different from what the researcher had in mind (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To this effect, the researcher carefully inspected the interview questions for possible

interpretations different from what the researcher originally had in mind. They were tried out with peers and the expert panel to make sure they sounded the same to external observers. Moreover, they were tested with a pilot participant who met the criteria set out for actual participants, and who went through the same process as the actual participants, with feedback solicited regarding the quality and clarity of the questions.

Validity is a measure of how well the data match the actual situation, and thus how trustworthy the data are as an accurate representation of what is being studied. In order to gauge the trustworthiness of a study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced various terms such as *credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability* for conducting qualitative research.

Credibility refers to how plausible the research results are, particularly in the eyes of study participants and those in similar situations as the participants. That is, credibility is lent in major part by how well the study's findings resonate with its own subjects, particularly the broader group in which the research subjects are situated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Authenticity refers to the *genuineness* of the findings—that is, how well they match up with the natural situation (unperturbed by external biases or influences) that is being studied. A key component of authenticity is fairness—the conducting of an even-handed process to approach subjects and acquire and interpret information. Authenticity is also subdivided into several categories that pertain to the nature of the data's genuineness, for example ontological authenticity which assesses the findings' fundamental (ontological truth) as a standalone phenomenon, and tactical authenticity which considers the quality of data-gathering and interpretation process itself (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability refers to the generalizability of the research process and findings to other

situations and contexts that may resemble, but are still distinct from, the specific aspects of the research study under examination. Transferability, in essence, is a measure of how likely it is that another researcher, investigating the same basic phenomenon but under altered circumstances (for example in a different state with a different pool of subjects and distinct experiences) would still tend to arrive at the same basic conclusions. A researcher must therefore pay close attention to potential artifact findings that may simply be resulting from quirks of the specific subject pool or situation in question, and carefully consider how well the design of the study at hand could be transplanted to different circumstances (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability resembles transferability in many respects, in that it relates to how well research findings can carry over and be confirmed upon subsequent investigations. Dependability refers more specifically to the repeatability of the experiment over several iterations, under both similar and different circumstances, and thus is more a measure of how well the study holds up upon repetitive examination (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability refers to the ability of outside researchers to independently reconstruct the study, proceed through its phases, and obtain an answer comparable to that found in the original investigation. Confirmability is a product in part of how meticulously a researcher documents the research process and thus communicates it to peers, as well as how carefully the researcher considers pitfalls and other factors that might make the study more difficult to replicate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The researcher thoroughly considered the factors above in establishing the validity of the results obtained from this study. The researcher used a four-step validation process to concretely facilitate this process. This process is described below.

Prima facie validity. Prima facie validity is largely established simply by direct

inspection of the questions and rational analysis of their quality in addressing the research questions. As noted before, the researcher tailored the interview questions to address and answer the research questions, both directly and indirectly, and done so in a way that is readily apparent to outside observers. Thus the research study has prima facie validity. Table 1 illustrates the relationship between research and interview questions.

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Corresponding Interview Questions	Research Questions
IQ 1: As an Iranian-American leader, what are the strategies you used that made you successful?	RQ1: What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?
IQ 2: How did you overcome resistance?	
IQ 3: As an Iranian-American leader, how did you overcome your challenges?	RQ 2: What are some of the challenges faced by Iranian-American women leaders in their leadership journey?
IQ 4: How do you define success?	RQ 3: How do women leaders measure their leadership success?
IQ5: How do you measure and keep track of your success?	
IQ 6: If you could start over, what would you do differently?	RQ 4: What lessons do Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian-American leaders?
IQ7: Is there anything you wish you knew before that you can share with the younger generation?	

Peer review validity. The peer review committee, which conducted the preliminary evaluation of the research and interview questions, consisted of two fellow students within the Pepperdine Education Doctorate and Organizational Leadership Program (EDOL). These students are also writing their doctoral dissertations in projects similar to this one, and thus had a broad understanding of the pertinent issues and structure of the study. The researcher gave a handout to two peers with instructions on making recommendations for the necessary changes for the research and corresponding questions. Each corresponding question gave the option to: (a) keep as stated, (b) delete it, or (c) modify as suggested. Based on the peer review feedback, the researcher modified the following interview questions in the manner indicated:

1. Original IQ 5: How did you define success?
 - A. Revised IQ 5: How do you define success?
2. Original IQ 7: Is there anything you wish you knew before that you can share with the younger generation?
 - A. Revised IQ 7: What advice would you give to your younger professional self?

Expert review validity. Upon completion of peers' review of the interview and research questions, the researcher submitted the questions to an expert panel consisting of the final committee members for final review. This panel consisted of three faculty members, who either approved or recommended modifications in the content. A consensus was sought on the relevant issues, and in cases where no such consensus was forthcoming, the committee deferred to the judgment of the chair for the final decision. After discussing the interview questions with the dissertation committee some interview questions were modified into their final form as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Corresponding Interview Questions	Research Questions
IQ 1: As an Iranian-American leader, what personal qualities, attributes or educational or training have you instrumented in your success?	RQ1: What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?
IQ 2: What leadership strategies do you use that have created success for you?	
IQ 3: How do you overcome resistance to change when you are in a leadership position?	
IQ 4: How have you overcome challenges and barriers to your success?	
IQ 5: What challenges have you or do you face as a leader?	RQ 2: What are some of the challenges faced by Iranian-American women leaders in their leadership journey?
IQ 6: What barriers have you experienced in your journey in leadership?	
IQ 7: How do you define personal success for you?	RQ 3: How do women leaders measure their leadership success?
IQ 8: How do you define professional success for you?	
IQ 9: If you could start over, what would you do differently?	RQ 4: What lessons do Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian-American leaders?
IQ 10: What advice, “do’s & don’t’s” do you have for Iranian women who aspire to be a leader?	
IQ 11: Is there anything else you wish to add?	

Statement of Personal Bias

The researcher has experience as a trained Marriage and Family Therapist, with concomitant experience in active listening and proper training in being able to handle emotional outbursts. Clients have oftentimes exhibited emotional reactions in therapy sessions with the researcher, and this experience was used to handle related issues for the study. Although there were similarities within the shared culture of the researcher and the participants, the researcher made sure to set aside biases and interpretations of the findings during the study wherever possible, an important part of bracketing and proper engagement of participants (Creswell, 2013). This was accomplished through careful memo-taking and discussion of the topic with

external, neutral observers. Each participant shared a unique story about how she reached success; the uniqueness of her path to success, and the distinctiveness of the field in which she worked relative to other women, helped ensure that her overall story would be unique and original, an important goal in selecting samples and conducting interviews (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Since there is a wide range of different types of personalities in leadership positions, listening empathetically to the women's stories without prior biases or inward focus--and nodding and engaging the speaker when appropriate--was important, and was the approach taken during the interviews (Creswell, 2013). Since the Iranian community is small and tight knit, a limitation was the potential of being related or personally knowing individuals invited to participate. The researcher was aware of this and thus screened out personal friends or acquaintances from the interview pool.

Epoche. The researcher bracketed her personal biases by taking conscious steps to become aware of biases and assumptions that are usually not addressed explicitly, particularly through active and focused techniques such as directed memo-taking and discussions with outside friends and colleagues of potential biases. According to Creswell (2013), epoche or bracketing is putting aside our personal biases, expectations, and understandings so that we may be more curious about the participants themselves. In practice, putting aside these biases entails becoming consciously aware of them, and thus questioning and denying them when evaluating data or deciding which interview questions to ask. It is therefore important for the researcher to “decide how and in what way his or her personal understandings will be introduced into the study” (Creswell, 2013 p. 83), and thus to be consciously aware of them and guard against them swaying interpretation of the results.

Great care was taken in consciously considering otherwise unconscious biases and

implicit assumptions that are taken for granted and otherwise unexplored, since the researcher is often simply unaware of these deep presumptions. Creswell (2013) noted that “bracketing personal experiences may be difficult for the researcher to implement because interpretations of the data always incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brings to the topic” (p. 83). Therefore, potential biases or biasing assumptions were systematically noted in memos and notebooks, with the researcher also communicating with neutral non-participants—such as friends and classmates through telephone conversations and personal contacts—about the topic of the study to help elicit potential unspoken biases.

Data Analysis

The researcher used a three-step process was used during this investigation, constituting the data analysis process. The researcher transcribed the data collected from the interviews. The researcher analyzed and examined the data for common and recurring motifs, and subsequently coded the data on the basis of categories that could sort and organize them. The researcher created a table in which the common themes encountered in the findings were identified through columns and headings, in order to organize and provide a foundation for the coding of the findings.

Reading, memoing. Upon completion of interviews, the researcher analyzed the data through the use of memos produced upon first reading the transcription of the interview. Anytime an idea or consideration of importance came into sight from personal observations, the researcher wrote a memo down on a notepad and connected these notes with other pertinent insights or ideas (Creswell, 2013). The researcher then coded the transcribed data, assisted by the appropriate memos.

Describing, classifying, interpreting (coding). Creswell (2013) defined coding as

breaking “the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different databases being used in a study, and then assigning a label to the code” (p. 184). That is, coding involves sorting the data into organized headings that allow the researcher to make sense of it. As a consequence, a diffuse and otherwise unordered data set takes on a more concrete structure. In this particular instance, coding was done by the researcher by considering the best category headings that emerged from the interview transcription. The purpose of coding is to represent (a) information that researchers expect to find before the study; (b) surprising information that researchers did not expect to find; (c) information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers (Creswell, 2013, p. 186);

Interrater reliability and validity. Interrater-reliability refers to the commonality in themes by reviews from different raters, while validity addresses the overall accuracy and correctness of the reviews by different raters (Creswell, 2013). Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher coded the data by grouping common themes and categories in a separate sheet. Once the data were coded, the researcher reviewed and discussed the results with two doctoral peer reviewers; finally, committee members reviewed results if there was no consensus. In order to establish interrater reliability, the researcher utilized a three-step process, as follows.

1. Code data manually. Categorize the results in an umbrella based on the common themes.
Once all the common themes were grouped together in the appropriate category, enter the final results into an Excel spreadsheet.
2. Discuss results with two peer reviewers---fellow classmates also enrolled in the Doctoral in Education Program at Pepperdine University—with the intention of arriving at a consensus regarding the coding results.

3. Conduct an expert review if there was no consensus.

Broadly speaking, external validity is a subset of the broader concept of validity as representing the trustworthiness and accuracy of the data in question. More specifically, in a qualitative and especially phenomenological study such as this one, external validity is best expressed by the level of transferability of the findings to similar participant sets and situations. This transferability, in turn, is optimized with thorough, rigorous studies that carefully and accurately represent what the participants are saying and feeling, with logical and insightful interpretations that can be cross-applied to other scenarios with similar, and sometimes even dissimilar, groups of participants.

In this case, such validity derives in part from inter-rater reliability. This latter concept refers to the general consensus among commentators, in this case among reviewers, so as to indicate a general direction and common understanding. This reliability in turn serves as one of several markers to gauge the inherent quality and trustworthiness of what is being reviewed, and this validity is further enhanced by the qualifications and knowledge of the reviewers (Gwet, 2012). The validity of the findings in this case is strengthened by the specialized training and subject familiarity of both peer and expert reviewers. Each is a member of the same institution, and the peer reviewers are all participating in a similar project, which provides them with intuitive familiarity with the issues and questions being tackled by the study seeking their reviews and feedback. The greater the reliability of their reviews, the greater the likelihood that the findings being reviewed provide an accurate and transferable explanation of the phenomenon under study.

Representing, visualizing. The researcher grouped the common themes in the appropriate categories, and presented these categories to peer and expert reviewers. It was

organized on the basis of the specific themes gathered following the peer review and final expert review, and used to create a table organizing the specific results and common themes obtained from interviews with the participants. The researcher constructed the table based on this information, and will be explained in further detail in chapter four. The table provided a visual representation of the coding and conclusions drawn from the findings.

Chapter Summary

In this research study, the researcher employed a qualitative phenomenological approach utilizing one-on-one interviews with careful transcription, annotation, and interpretation, in order to gather insights on the success strategies of emerging and established Iranian-American women leaders. In accordance with the standard phenomenological approach and study design, the researcher considered the responses of participants in the context of common underlying themes that would unite and provide a comprehensible foundation for the participants' disparate responses about how they achieved their success, what leadership means to them, and how they overcame obstacles to success. The researcher analyzed their strategies by coding data obtained from direct transcription and memo-taking, with the coding undertaken to group the information from the responses into interpretable and sensible categories. The researcher undertook interview questions, overarching study considerations, and coding of transcriptions with the guidance of peer and expert review to refine the interview questions and make sure they addressed the fundamental research questions themselves. The researcher also used outside feedback to evaluate the study process and finalize the results. Finally, the researcher developed a system for intuitively representing the data to peers and readers in general, so as to effectively tell a story drawing together the thoughts, experiences, and responses of the study participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

Structure of the Chapter

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the success strategies common to emerging Iranian-American women leaders. This chapter includes the results of the research study, including a brief description about each participant. The researcher will present the data and findings that the researcher obtained through qualitative interviews below.

While Iranian women have undoubtedly faced major barriers in their quest for leadership, they have nonetheless been able to make many strides over the last decade. There are many highly accomplished Iranian women in modern society (Kytzler, 1994; B. Smith, 2004), and while greater attainment of leadership has often been lagging, the growing success enjoyed by this community makes their specific success and leadership strategies all the more interesting. Of similar interest are the challenges these women have faced, how they have measured their success, and the lessons to be heeded for future Iranian-American women aspiring to leadership. For the purposes of this study, the researcher generated four specific research questions:

RQ1: What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?

RQ2: What are some of the challenges faced by Iranian-American women leaders in their leadership journey?

RQ3: How do Iranian women leaders measure their leadership success?

RQ4: What lessons do current Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian American leaders?

In order to answer these four research questions, the researcher created 11 corresponding interview questions and presented them to a panel of two inter-raters and three experts for validation. The following are the interview questions:

1. As an Iranian-American leader, what personal qualities, attributes, or education or training have been instrumental in your success?
2. What leadership strategies do you use that have created success for you?
3. How do you overcome resistance to change when you are in a leadership position?
4. How have you overcome challenges and barriers to your success?
5. What challenges have you or do you face as a leader?
6. What barriers have you experienced in your journey to leadership?
7. How do you define personal success for you?
8. How do you define professional success for you?
9. If you could start over, what would you do differently?
10. What advice, “do’s & don’ts” do you have for Iranian women who aspire to be a leader?
11. Is there anything else you wish to add?

The participants interviewed for this study provided detailed and personal accounts of their journey that led them to success. The information that emerged from these interviews served to provide inspiring stories, advice, and tips to the future generation of Iranian-American women aspiring to be a leader. In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of the study, including the participant profile, and discusses the data collection process. The researcher analyzed data obtained from the 11 semi-structured interview questions.

Participants

The researcher selected a total of 15 participants for this study. The researcher selected participants through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling: some through referrals, and some from the IAW Foundation website, as long as they met the selection criteria. The 15

participants chosen for this study were all Iranian women leaders in various private and public sectors, such as technology, journalism, retail, or law. All women had a high standing in the Iranian community, and had significant achievements, both academically and professionally. Additionally, participants' willingness to participate was voluntary and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants.

Participant profiles in more detail. Participants interviewed for this study came from various disciplines, which in turn helped to bring a richer set of perspectives to this study. Through purposive sampling, the researcher carefully examined and biographically researched each participant prior to the interviews. The researcher promised confidentiality to all participants. A brief description of their roles and general positions is detailed below:

1. P1 is an Iranian born author who writes academic and non-fiction books. She is also a conference organizer and philanthropist.
2. P2 is an Iranian-American author, activist and journalist. Moving from Iran to Los Angeles, she continued to pursue her career as a journalist, radio and television producer, and on-air host.
3. P3 was the first woman to receive an MBA from an Institute in Iran after the revolution she is an author and leadership coach.
4. P4 is an entrepreneur and environmentalist with her own engineering company. She is also involved in various Iranian organizations.
5. P5 is an entrepreneur in the food industry, with various stores within the Los Angeles county.
6. P6 is a professor at a University in California, as well as an entrepreneur. She has own company in the field of engineering, and is a philanthropist.

7. P7 is a Corporate Communications Manager for Google, a public speaker, and is involved with several organizations within the Iranian community.
8. P8 is an attorney with her own private practice in the Los Angeles area, and the founder of an art platform which is aimed at connecting artists and visionaries within the community.
9. P9 is an entrepreneur who founded her own company specializing in wireless technology. She also has a background in electrical engineering and has been listed under the top 50 most powerful women in technology.
10. P10 is a law professor and Judge in the greater Los Angeles area.
11. P11 is the president of an Iranian organization within the Jewish community.
12. P12 is the president and founder the National Iranian Women's conference.
13. P13 is an entrepreneur who has several nail salons within the Los Angeles area.
14. P14 is the first female Iranian judge who served in the Supreme Court of California.
15. P15 is a senior manager at a pharmaceutical company in Southern California.

Data Collection

The participant selection began once the researcher received IRB approval to start collecting data. The researcher collected data from 15 successful Iranian-American women leaders within various sectors. The researcher researched the names of leaders on the IAWF (Iranian-American Women Foundation) website as well as the attendance lists of the IAWF conference. Additionally, names were given through referrals during participants' interviews and the IAWF conference itself. Next, the researcher identified Iranian-American women leaders through a Google search that led directly to their websites, housing identifiable information such as their achievements, scope of work, and contact information. For those who did not have this

identifiable information on their websites, the researcher utilized a Facebook search or asked someone who may have known the participant. After identifying the 15 candidates, the researcher obtained their email addresses from either their website or through a referral. Upon receiving IRB approval from Pepperdine University in December 2016, the researcher contacted these 15 individuals via email utilizing the approved IRB recruitment script sending these invitations to their professional email addresses on file as indicated above.

Four of the participants invited to be interviewed responded to the initial invitation within 3 calendar days confirming their participation. Five interview participants responded within 5 calendar days. The final six participants confirmed within 7 calendar days after the researcher sent a reminder invitation to their professional email address.

The researcher conducted data collection utilizing 11 interview questions as noted above, and completed the 15 interviews over 8 weeks. The first interview took place on January 5, 2017 and the final interview took place on February 27, 2017. The researcher took notes during all the interviews in addition to the interviews being audio recorded with two separate devices: an Apple iPhone and a Sony audio recorder.

Table 3

Dates of Participant Interviews

Interview Date	Participant
January 5, 2017	P1
January 6, 2017	P2
January 6, 2017	P3
January 9, 2017	P4
January 13, 2017	P5
January 16, 2017	P6
January 19, 2017	P7
January 21, 2017	P8
January 27, 2017	P9
January 27, 2017	P10
January 31, 2017	P11
February 9, 2017	P12
February 20, 2017	P13
February 21, 2017	P14
February 27, 2017	P15

The researcher conducted all interviews in one sitting between the hours of 10:00AM to 7:30PM. Four interviews had to be rescheduled to a different time and day due to interviewee scheduling conflicts. Additionally, five interviews were cancelled due to busy schedules.

Although a 45-60 minute time slot was allotted, one interview on average took approximately 35 minutes to complete. The shortest interview took 20 minutes and the longest took 55 minutes.

Table 3 presents the days on which each participant interview was conducted. Prior to the interviews taking place, the informed consent form and a copy of the interview questions were sent to the participants and any last minute questions were answered before the interview took place. After the interviews were completed, the researcher conducted the initial transcriptions of the audio recordings.

Data Analysis

According to Bernard and Ryan (2010), qualitative data analysis involves the processes

and procedures in which the data collected is subjected to interpretation and explanation. Thus, the data analysis utilized for this study consisted of data entry and storage as well as coding and developing category systems to interpret the data. With this data analytic process, themes emerged to answer the four research questions.

The data reduction process is the process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data that appear in the full corpus (body) of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical materials” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12). The first step in analyzing the data was to learn and examine the information participants shared. This was done by manually transcribing the audio-recorded interviews onto a Microsoft Word document. Upon listening to each recording, the researcher transcribed everything the participant shared, and went back in case anything was missed.

The researcher read each interview transcription line-by-line three times. During this process, the researcher highlighted key words with a marker in different colors for easy categorization during the coding process. If a participant made a statement which was initially unclear, the researcher asked follow-up questions for clarification. The researcher repeated this process for all 15 transcribed interviews.

After transcribing the data, the researcher performed the following data analysis steps. The researcher read each transcript three times to help gain familiarity. The researcher identified recurring concepts and themes with the help of the relevant literature. After noting common themes, the coding process began. The researcher highlighted significant statements during the reading process, and created a table in Microsoft Excel to distinguish the common themes and concepts. The researcher sorted the data by frequency, grouping the reoccurring themes within the appropriate categories. The researcher gave the coding table to two inter-raters, as mentioned

in Chapter 3, who each reviewed the document and provided feedback on the coding process and suggestions for edits and new categories to be made.

Inter-rater Review Process

The researcher gave the coding table to two doctoral candidates in the Organizational Leadership program at Pepperdine University. Both doctoral students were enrolled within the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program specifically. The inter-rater review process for validating the coding system was analogous to that described above for the rating of the interview questions. Briefly, the researcher detailed the system of coding to the external raters and provided examples. The researcher provided the raw data (from the transcriptions) and discussed the identified common themes and pertinent literature. From this basis, the researcher noted the specific coding approach—including the category names and the means by which the raw data was sorted—and submitted the table for review by the external raters.

Data Display

Based on the research question, the researcher organized the data accordingly and illustrated charts and graphs utilizing key themes that emerged from the interview transcripts. In order to ensure confidentiality for each participant, the researcher numbered participants to distinguish one participant from the other (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). Based on what the participant's response was to a particular question, the researcher identified and grouped common themes.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, "What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?" In order to answer this question, the researcher posed the following four interview questions:

1. As an Iranian-American leader, what personal qualities, attributes, or education or training have been instrumental in your success?
2. What leadership strategies do you use that have created success for you?
3. How do you overcome resistance to change when you are in a leadership position?
4. How have you overcome challenges and barriers to your success?

From these four research questions, various themes emerged that would help to answer the first research question.

Interview Question 1: As an Iranian American leader, what personal qualities, attributes or education or training has been instrumented in your success? Based on data analysis of the collective responses to this interview question, 33 distinct characteristics emerged as answers among the women interviewed. From those 33 characteristics, the following six recurring themes emerged: (a) education; (b) maintaining focus; (c) enthusiasm; (d) perseverance and persistence; (e) motivation, mission, and purpose; and (f) networking/involvement with the broader community (see Figure 1).

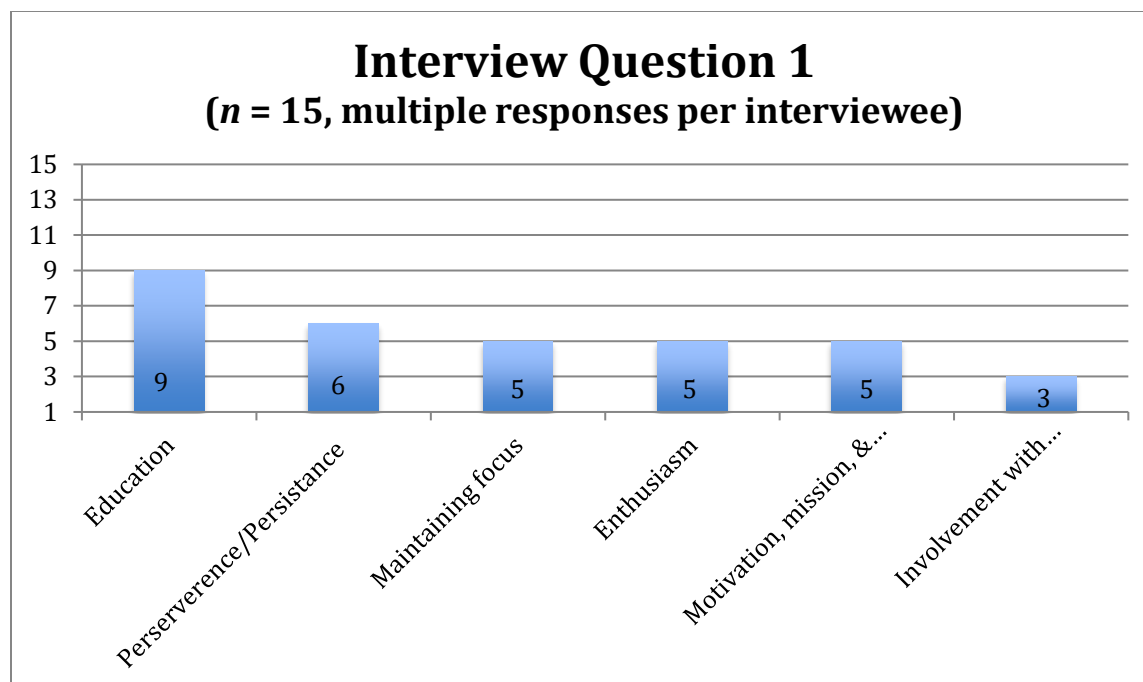


Figure 1. IQ1: Qualities of a successful leader. This figure demonstrates the six that have emerged from the responses. The numbers represent the number of times that particular theme was mentioned.

Education. This category emerged as the most common theme related to this specific interview question, with nine instances of it being mentioned by the interview participants directly. For example, P8 mentioned, “I think education is beyond just what you study. It provides you with the environment to practice what you need with future goals—it’s aside from just getting a degree. I’m very much pro education.” Additionally, P10 expresses the importance of a college education by stating:

Education is what gives you the training and most importantly I really think that University/College education - the greatest lesson you learn from it is to grow as a person because during those years, it’s not so much the degrees you pursue, it’s the process of going through being exposed to all these different subject matters and having to read about all the difficult philosophies and being exposed to

different political systems - and being exposed to different people. It's just being in a place where you have to stop and ponder the basic questions of life.

Maintaining focus. Maintaining focus was another important characteristic that received recurring emphasis among the respondents. P10 in particular stressed that maintaining focus through thick and thin is at the heart of being a successful leader. As far as personal attributes that have been instrumental to success, she placed a significant emphasis on her goal orientation and steady focus on maintaining goals that she had identified, stating that it is important to be “focused on some future aspirational place you want to be then be ready to make the sacrifices and commitments.” Additionally, P4 mentioned “staying focused on your thoughts and beliefs.”

Enthusiasm. Being enthusiastic, which in effect entailed maintaining a positive outlook that fed such enthusiasm, was another theme that was mentioned by five participants. Whether it was stated directly or indirectly, this theme arose with some consistency among distinct participants with very different professions and experiences, again indicating a degree of likely consensus. Thus, maintaining a positive attitude and being enthusiastic represented a personal characteristic that was beneficial to the journey to success. For example, P7 mentioned:

My personal motto is “be contagious.” I am positive by nature and I’ve seen, especially through leadership, how important it is to stay realistic, but also stay very positive—whether you are trying to inspire your team, or get through a tough time - the energy and positivity can be very contagious and when it’s positive, it actually has incredible ripple effects where amazing things happen.

Perseverance and persistence. P2 spoke about perseverance and not getting frustrated or disappointed when not succeeding by explaining, “Anytime I fall or anytime I encounter failure, I just got stronger because I believe that if you’re not strong, if you don’t follow up on your goal,

and you're not focused, it's not going to happen." Throughout the interview, she made a point of how even simple and straightforward goals often took a seemingly extraordinary amount of persistence to attain in the face of obstacles, and how persevering through frustrations both large and small had to be almost automatic for anyone pursuing leadership-related aims.

P4 also stressed that social restrictions, traditions, and expectations did not pose barriers to her, and then she trained her mind to think past those confines. For example, she stated that her status as a woman in a male-dominated environment did not serve as a deterrent or discouragement for her. She mentioned, "Another thing that has truly been an underlying key to some of the things that I have succeeded to do is to never allow anyone tell me that it cannot be done just because you're a woman, and have that become a factor that would stop me from growth." P9 also stated that there are always ways to get to your goal no matter what the obstacles may be, and that the key challenge is not merely being persistent, but staying positive and flexible enough to grasp those options. She claimed, "I usually don't give up hopes and pursuit to try to find a way to solve the issues."

Mission, motivation, and purpose. Being fueled by a sense of mission and purpose was another common theme that emerged for the first interview question. The idea of knowing well and being driven by one's purpose was brought up by five participants throughout the interviews. P6 mentioned this in the sense that in order to have a meaningful purpose, one must first be clear on what it is that he/she is trying to do. For example, P10 explained that her Farsi name was interpreted as a fairytale and the other was a legend, so she interpreted that this "was my calling that you have to go out there and make the world a better place in that legendary fairytale kind of way. The name I suppose unintentionally gave me a quest or a purpose too."

Networking/Involvement with the broader community (networking). While individual

qualities and character traits received particular emphasis by participants, nevertheless many also made the point that success and leadership ultimately had an important social component, and that engagement with the broader community was central to broader success. P8, in particular, began with an assertion that “personal relationships are very much, I think, conducive to success.” She then expounded upon this claim by clarifying what she meant:

Networking [is important], but beyond the task-oriented networking. I think authentic relationships that are built over the years and naturally create a sense of community that once you establish a mission and a goal, you can enroll other people within your community towards your success--I think that’s generally very important and I tend to find that other leaders who tend to be successful in their endeavors are naturally very much in tune with that very organically.

Interview question 2: What leadership strategies do you use that created success for you? Based on data analysis of responses to this question, the researcher identified 23 distinct characteristics. From those 19 characteristics, the following four recurring themes emerged: (a) taking ownership of vision, mission, and goal, (b) social connections and knowing one’s constituency, (c) teamwork, and (d) passion (see Figure 2). One respondent was unresponsive for the question, and was therefore excluded.

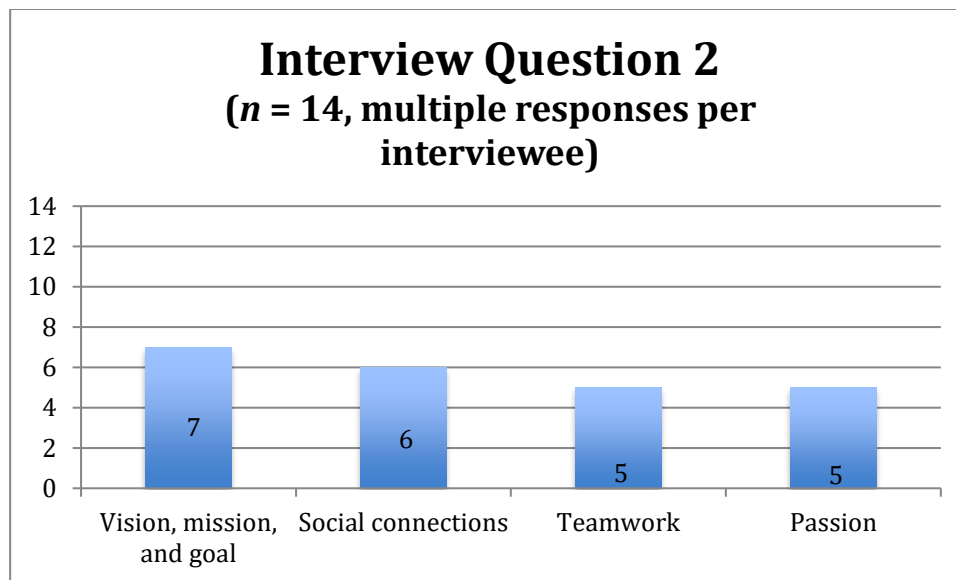


Figure 2. IQ 2: Leadership strategies used to create success.

Taking ownership of vision, mission, and goal. This category emerged as the top theme for this interview question, with seven instances being mentioned by the interview participants either directly or indirectly. Respondents in this case spoke in regards to knowing what one's vision, mission, and main goal are, and then actively embracing the steps needed to attain them, as a key success strategy. This applied not only to the leader herself, but also to those whom she was leading. Notably, this is one of the defining characteristics of a good transformational leader.

P4 shared:

You really need to encourage people to be totally enrolled in what it is you are trying to achieve and accomplish. They also have to take ownership of it - your vision, mission, and goal has to become everyone else's as well, and that's when we can all succeed together.

P6 also supported taking ownership of one's vision, mission, and goal by stating, "You have to have a clear vision and be able to communicate that to the people you are trying to lead." P6

emphasized the importance of working and collaborating as a team in a working environment and shared the importance of having the same mindshare, by adding, "... they have to share your vision, they have to believe in your vision, and they have to commit to the vision."

Social connections and knowing one's constituency. Many participants agreed that establishing and following up on a good social networking system, and being generally aware of the "pulse" of one's community (not being tone-deaf to its concerns), was essential to gaining and successfully exercising leadership. P10 stated, "But I have also found that, for leadership strategies, you have to have a network too. You need to be connected to other people, particularly other leaders, because there is never really anything that you can do by yourself, and it's a constant learning process." P3 demonstrated the importance of building relationships: "I really built strong relationships with my professors, so that kind of helps me to really immediately move to another level." She later went to say that, "So building relationships, honest, authentic, like friendship is another strategy and always going more than required of doing just your homework."

Teamwork. Working in teams and collaborating within an organization was another leadership strategy that emerged as a common theme. Teamwork was mentioned by five participants during the interview for this particular question. All five women expressed the importance of collaborating with team members and making sure everyone is involved. Particularly, P4 explained how important it is to make sure that the people who work for you should all feel important within the group and shouldn't be "weakened" by not having the authority to make decisions. Additionally, P6 shared that "teamwork is the main ingredient for success." She added:

I believe that everybody has a say, and everybody needs to be heard, and

everybody is a member of the team, and everybody has to pull together...So basically, once we set the goal and what we are trying to do, everybody has a say, we listen to everybody, we analyze everything together, we make decisions together, but once the decision is made, everybody has to pull to make sure we achieve the goal. So essentially, I believe having the right team is the main ingredient to success, creating an environment that promotes collaboration.

Passion. Being passionate about a particular calling was another theme that was brought up by five interview participants. As far as using a particular leadership strategy, P14 shared, “I did what I loved to do the best way I can and I think that’s what opened up doors for me.” P12 also stressed the importance of making sure you are passionate about something you are undertaking, especially in a professional context. She explained:

My passion in life was making a difference. So, every step in my life, I was always paying attention to that--I was always living with passion--I really believe in that. Life without passion is not a happy and fulfilled life.

Interview question 3: How do you overcome resistance to change when you are in a leadership position? Subsequent to data analysis of responses to this interview question, 18 distinct characteristics emerged. From those 18 characteristics, the following three recurring themes emerged: (a) opportunity, (b) logical reasoning and compromise, and (c) not taking resistance and setbacks personally (see Figure 3).

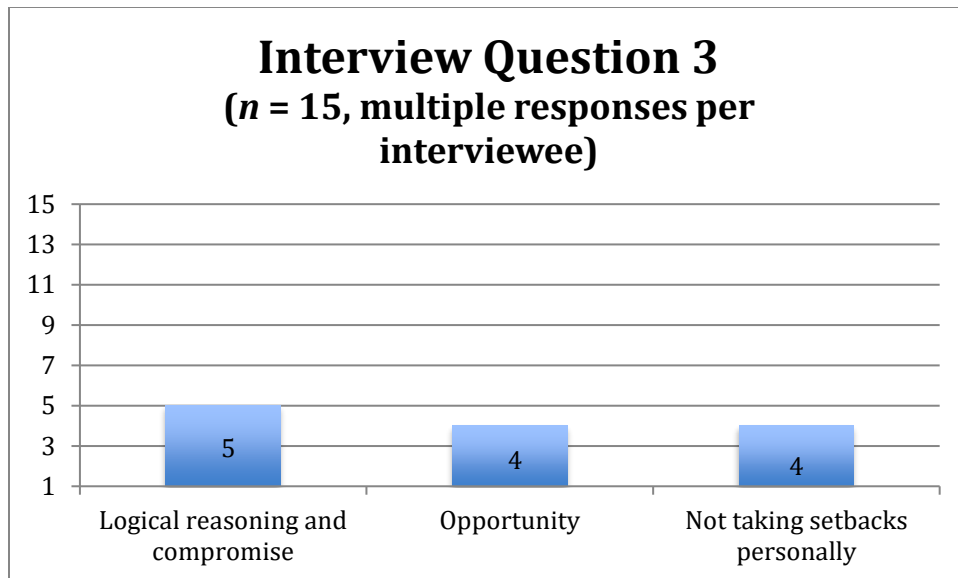


Figure 3. IQ 3: Overcoming resistance to change.

Opportunity. This category emerged as the top theme for this interview question, with four instances of it being mentioned by the interview participants. Most participants shared that resistance to change is normal and happens all the time. Four participants specifically mentioned that they made use of this fact as an opportunity to grow and to learn as a team. For example, when dealing with resistance to change from within an organization, P3 expressed, “I use it as an opportunity...I always look at it as there being another perspective.” The participants were thus able to empathize with the objections to change and to incorporate the pertinent concerns into their overall organizational plans. Additionally, P14 advised a strategy to change people’s perception of what change would entail, changing it from something feared into something exciting or worthy of enthusiasm and anticipation. She stated that one must “encourage the excitement of it—you have to overcome the fear of change into something exciting.”

Logical reasoning and compromise. Using logical reasoning and compromise was another theme among the leadership strategies that emerged for this interview

question. Participants shared that when dealing with resistance to change, their most successful tactic was persuasion through logical reasoning and compromise. By collaborating and reaching a mutual decision with regards to the change being made, they in effect reached a compromise that, in practice, brought about the change successfully. Five participants mentioned that this was a key strategy they used to overcome resistance to change. For instance, P6 highlighted the importance of using (specifically) “logical reasoning and compromise” in overcoming resistance. She explained, “You need to listen carefully and try to analyze what others are voicing, and it is only through reasoning and compromise that you can achieve your goals.” P10 described “rationalizing” with people in order to overcome resistance to change.

Not taking setbacks or resistance personally. Four participants emphasized the importance of keeping a measure of detachment from what they were trying to achieve and the change they were trying to bring about, and thus not becoming personally flustered or overly upset when results were not to their liking or resistance seemed to arise. P7 stated, “don’t take things too personally... compare yourself to yourself.”

Interview question 4: How have you overcome challenges and barriers to your success? Through data analysis of responses to this interview question, 22 characteristics emerged. From those 22 characteristics, the following five themes developed: (a) belief in oneself, (b) support network (mentorship), (c) clear vision and commitment, (d) being positive, and (e) a specific breed of persistence (not taking “no” for an answer; see Figure 4).

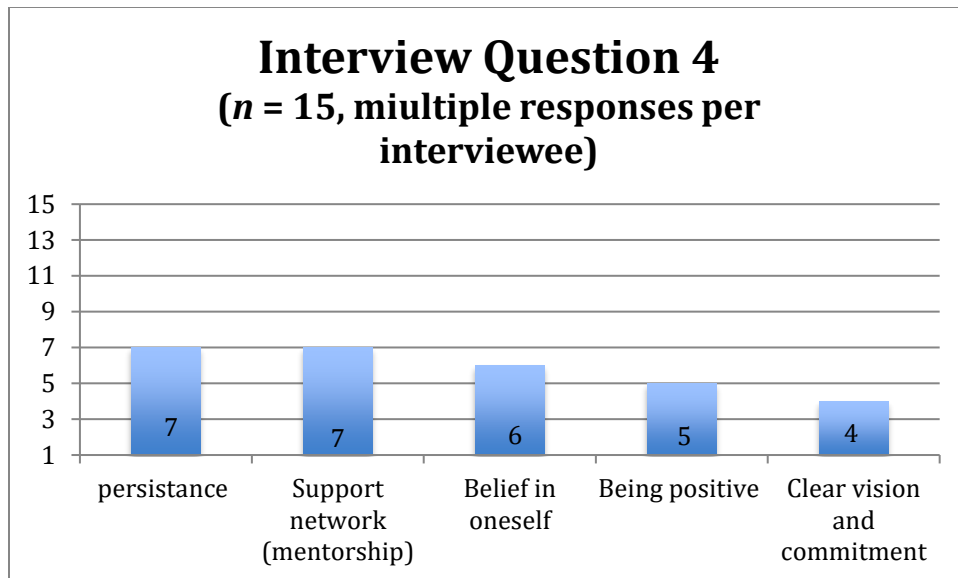


Figure 4. IQ 4: Overcoming challenges and barriers to success.

Belief in oneself. Having a sense of belief in oneself and one's own capabilities was one of the top themes that emerged for this particular interview question. This theme was mentioned by six participants: P1, P4, P6, P7, P10, and P14. In terms of overcoming challenges and barriers to success, having a sense of belief and self-confidence was one of the most significant assets. For example, P4 explained, "just believing in yourself and knowing that you and your voice and what you do and say matters, and not letting anything getting in the way of it." P7 described a time in which she was not taken seriously in her field of work since she was a woman:

I immediately knew that I was five steps behind the competition because of the unconscious/conscious bias they were using against me as a younger female operating in a highly male demographic space. I knew that I had to be on top of my game more than normal...I kept things moving, I didn't skip a beat...you just have to be true to yourself. No matter what, those barriers will also always exist. Additionally, P14 shared that she overcame challenges and barriers by simply "being the

best.” She also stated, “You have to work 10 times harder than everyone else. Whoever you admire, be even better than them.”

Support network (mentorship). When overcoming challenges and barriers, having a strong support network--particularly in the form of a more experienced mentor--was another highly valuable asset. Having a mentor and or a strong support network was mentioned by seven participants during the interviews. P1, P3, P6, P8, P9, P12, and P15 all shared how having a mentor or support system helped them get through challenges and difficult hurdles. For example, P1 stated:

I developed a very good support network for myself through friends and colleagues; I chose to be around people who I thought can really support me and I can support them - you have to find your tribe and that will lead you to a better place because you need support on your journey.

Thus, creating a support system was one important way to overcome challenges and barriers. More specifically, having a mentor received particular mention since in having this form of support, one would be able to better navigate the best means to overcome challenges and barriers. P3 shared, “I always had great mentors and the people who helped when I had difficulties and challenges; I could call on them and because of that strong relationship that we had, they really volunteered to help me.”

Clear vision and commitment. Having a clear vision and being committed to the goal was another way to get over challenges and barriers, as mentioned by four participants. P10 mentioned that by focusing on where you want to go and having a concrete vision of your goal, you will be “willfully ignorant” of the forces that were against you and thus less sensitive to them. She explained:

If you have a single vision and you really believe in that vision and your ability to get there because you are imagining yourself in that position, and you are focused on the goal—you will hopefully not get sidetracked by the challenges or barriers.

Being positive. Maintaining a positive attitude was another way of overcoming challenges and barriers, and was among the recurring themes that emerged from interviews with five participants. No matter how difficult or challenging a situation was, maintaining a positive attitude, even under especially adverse circumstances, helped participants to stay focused and navigate towards success. For example, P3 described how she changes her perspective when faced with a challenging situation, by adding “I don’t look at things as an obstacle...People always tell me I’m so positive and optimistic.” Additionally, P10 highlighted the importance of focusing on the good things and using the motto, “everything happens for a reason.”

Not taking no for an answer. An additional recurring theme among the strategies to overcome adversity and resistance to change was a specific form of persistence in the face of opposition—namely, not taking no for an answer. This characteristic was seized upon by almost half of the participants, being cited by seven of them as a key success strategy. This sort of resilience, they noted, was an important ingredient in enabling them to stay strong in the face of difficulties and to press ahead. P1 shared, “Don’t get discouraged by ‘no’s... Know that you are going to hear ‘no’s and you can find your way around it.” P2 said, “Use Nike’s expression ‘just do it.’” P4, meanwhile, stated, “Don’t ever take no for an answer; be true to yourself, to your own wishes and desires and what you want to achieve and become, and don’t let anyone put you down just because you’re a woman.”

Research question 1 summary. Research Question 1 asked, “What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?” A total of 17 recurring themes emerged in response to four interview questions associated with this research question. Examples of the 17 common themes included education; involvement with the greater community (networking); knowing one’s vision, mission, and purpose; passion; and maintaining a positive attitude.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, “What leadership strategies do you use that have created success for you?” In order to answer this research question, the researcher asked the participants two interview questions:

1. What challenges have you or do you face as a leader?
2. What barriers have you experienced in your journey to leadership?

Specific themes emerged from each interview question that would eventually form the main themes collectively for research question two.

Interview question 5: What challenges have you or do you face as a leader?

Based on data analysis of responses to this interview question, 18 characteristics emerged. From these 18 characteristics, the following four themes emerged: (a) being a woman, (b) culture, (c) balance in personal life, and (d) dealing with other people’s opinions and worries about being disliked (see Figure 5).

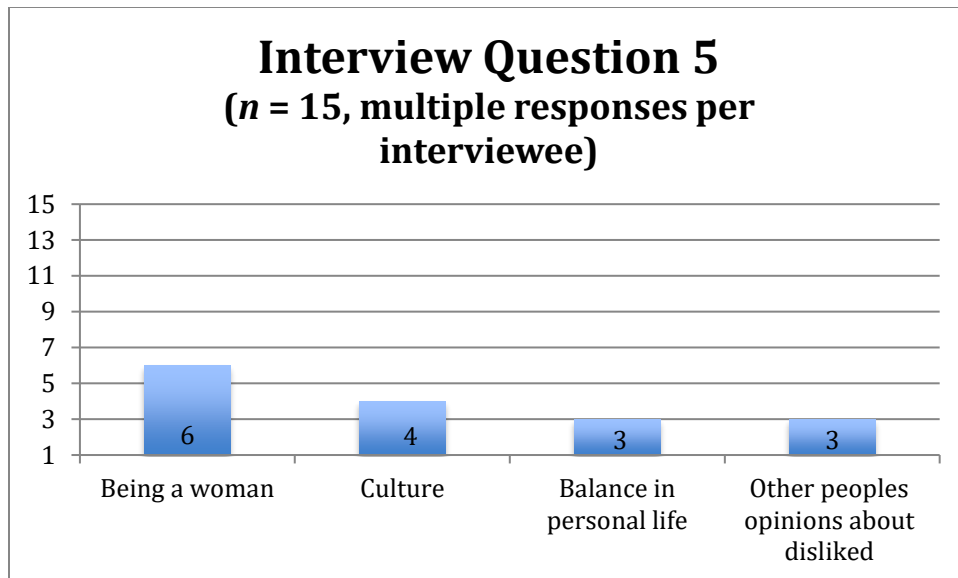


Figure 5. IQ 5: Challenges and barriers that are faced as a leader.

Being a woman. Being a woman was one of the top themes mentioned for this particular interview questions, with six instances of it being mentioned by the participants. P2, P4, P6, P9, P11, and P15 spoke about being a woman specifically in a male-dominated working environment has particularly been a challenge for them. For example, working in the technical field, with a degree in engineering, P6 described that her field of work looks at women as if they “do not belong.” She also claimed, “I have learned over the years that women in any field try harder because they believe they have to work harder.” P9 shared a similar experience as an entrepreneur in the field of technology, where she explained that most of the time, “they don’t take my work seriously” and when she had her first startup, she stated, “I felt like I had to work 10 times harder than everyone else who was working for me to prove that I can do the job.”

Culture. Being an Iranian or Iranian-American was another challenge faced by these women in leadership. The theme of culture was brought up by four participants, who all agreed that their culture played a role as far as challenges faced. For example, P2

explained, “In the Iranian community, there is a culture of being against the leader.” P10 described “a sense of being under attack” as an Iranian American woman because it attempted to put her in the “other” category. However, P11, believed that Iranian women have come a long way and tend to work harder than their male counterparts.

Balance in personal life. Being in a leadership role has many responsibilities that other positions may not have. Especially, since some of these women have families, struggling to maintain a healthy balance between their personal life and their families was another challenge that emerged as one of the themes for this interview question among three participants. For example, P3 shared about the balance between personal and family responsibilities as a challenge that “emotionally drains me because I am a giver and a mother and I need to make sure there are no shortcomings in my motherhood or family.”

Dealing with other people’s opinions and worries about being disliked. Four participants expressed that another obstacle is building the self-confidence and inner security to overcome concerns about other people’s opinions and the fear of being disliked. P4 expressed that stepping into a leadership role entails dealing with the projections of others, and that when one steps out from a follower role, one is no longer “part of the group” and must take on a greater deal of courage and responsibility.

Interview question 6: What barriers have you experienced in your journey to leadership? Based on data analysis of responses to this interview question, 15 characteristics emerged. From those 15 characteristics, four recurring themes emerged: (a) being a woman, (b) culture, (c) self-made barrier, and (d) religion. Notably, two of these coincided with the common themes in the previous interview question, indicating that such issues arose in the path to attaining leadership and also lingered after such a

position was attained (see Figure 6).

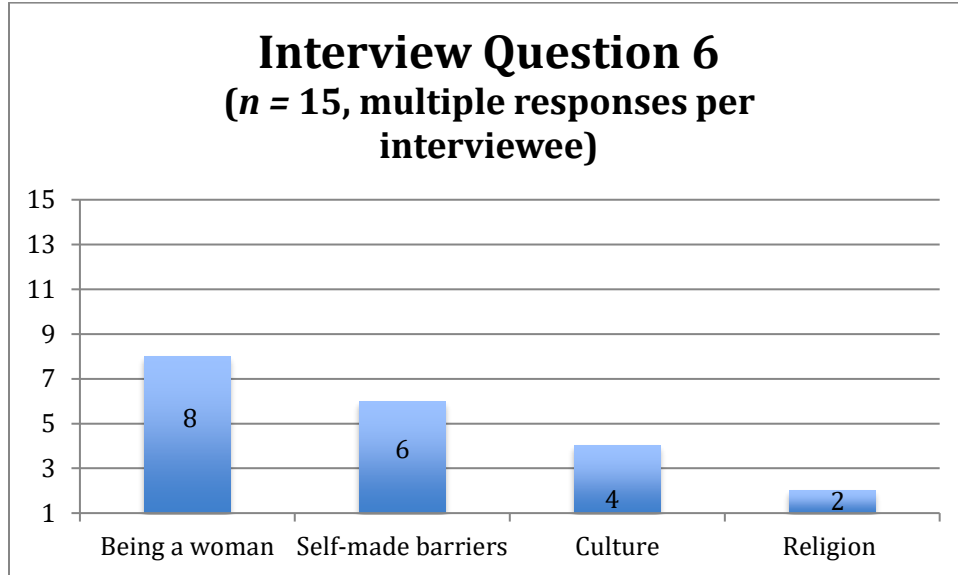


Figure 6. IQ 6: Barriers experienced throughout leadership journey.

Being a woman. This category emerged as the top theme to this interview question, with eight instances of it being mentioned by the participants. Specifically, interview participants spoke about how being a woman has been one of the most significant barriers to their attainment of success. P2, P4, P6, P9, P10, P12, and P14 described not being taken seriously by male counterparts because of their gender—even if they were already in some form of a leadership or managerial position. For example, P4 is the owner of a juice store, and she claimed that being a woman in the food industry has been very difficult. She explained, “Every time I go to lease a place, if I have a man with me, they look at him and they answer to him...they don’t take you seriously.” Additionally, P9 described her experience in the technical field, in which since there are not many woman in that particular field, people are just “not used to it.” She mentioned that “in some cases, they don’t even know how to treat you.”

Culture. Many participants shared that by being an Iranian they were seen as an

ethnic minority, and not a particularly visible or politically powerful one, which often times hindered their success. Specifically, P10 shared, “I am starting to feel it and see that being an Iranian-American has always been somewhat of a handicap, but I have tried to at least co-opt it so that I can turn it into a point of pride as it should be.” P12 shared her experience with cultural barriers as mostly stereotyping of women who are in leadership positions. Therefore, she has created a platform for Iranian women to be empowered and inspired to become successful leaders within the Iranian community.

Self-made barriers. Self-made barriers was another theme that emerged among 6 participants. In this case, each participant explained that some of the most troublesome barriers that became obstacles were not external, but were self-made. In particular, P8 shared that most of her barriers to success have been personal and in order to overcome those barriers, one must be ready to feel “uncomfortable” and to step outside one’s comfort zones. She explained, “If you are not uncomfortable quite often, then you are not making significant changes. So when I’m uncomfortable, I know things are changing.” Additionally, P14 shared that barriers are only barriers based on how they are perceived, and that a simple change in perspective can help to surmount them. She shared, “Being a woman, being gay, being an Iranian--these are all barriers if you look at them as barriers—I don’t look at it that way, otherwise everything in life is a barrier.”

Religion. Two participants mentioned that religion, and the community’s perception of it relative to them, also posed an obstacle that dogged them in their path to success. Interestingly, no single religion was singled out, as one was Jewish and the other Muslim. In both cases, something about the community’s religious identification and expectations made the community skeptical about the woman’s aspirations towards

leadership, and thus represented a barrier particularly in the way of the crucial establishment of roots and support networks within that community to attain leadership.

Research question 2 summary. Research Question 2 asked, “What leadership strategies do you use that have created success for you?” A total of seven themes emerged in response to four interview questions associated with this research question. Examples of the seven themes include: being a woman, culture, religion, concerns about others’ opinions and being disliked, and self-imposed barriers.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, “How do Iranian women leaders measure their leadership success?” In order to answer this research question, the researcher asked the participants two interview questions:

1. How do you define personal success?
2. How do you define professional success?

Specific themes emerged from each interview question that would eventually form the main themes to RQ2.

Interview question 7: How do you define personal success for you? Based on data analysis of responses to this interview question, 27 characteristics developed. From those 27 characteristics, six themes emerged in the following overall order of importance: (a) doing good in the world (helping others), (b) being content (fulfillment), (c) happiness, (d) combined with professional success, (e) a good family life, (f) involvement with the greater community (see Figure 7).

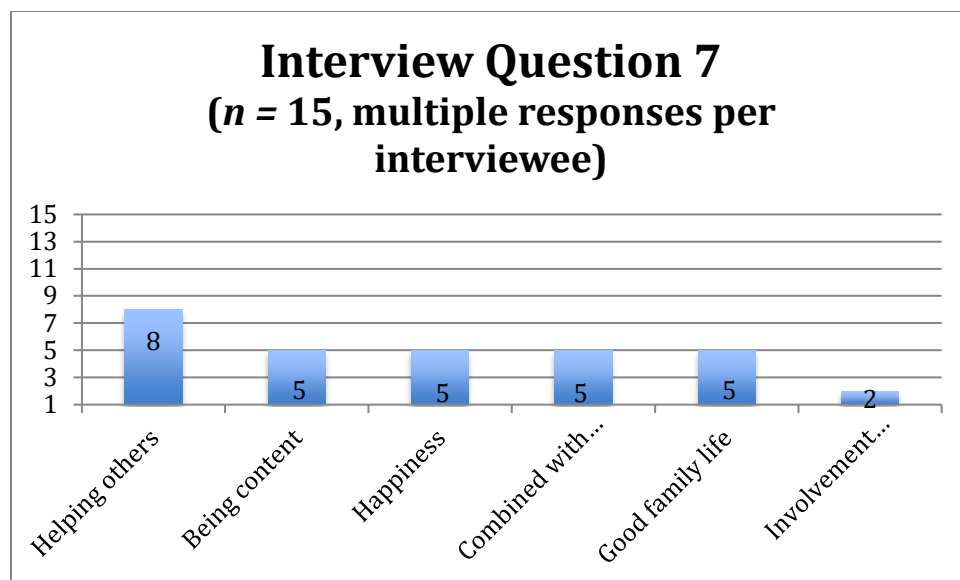


Figure 7. IQ 7: Defining personal success.

Helping others. This category emerged as one of the top themes for this interview question, with 8 instances of it being mentioned by participants. Participants described personal success as doing good in the world and helping others achieve their goals. For example, P3 defined personal success as “serving others.” She explained that “the sense of serving others gives me so much fulfillment and so I think right now my definition of success would be aligning my own strengths and interests to serve others—the community.” P7 also defined personal success as how she affects the lives of others because she saw it in her own personal life and strongly believes that it “pays off in dividends.” Similarly, P12 shared her definition of personal success as knowing “I have made a difference in the life of someone, or to inspire, or to empower someone to see that the sky’s the limit, and make them believe in themselves.”

Family life. Maintaining a family life and the joys of motherhood was another theme that emerged among five participants. These women shared that personal success was as simple as having a good family life (husband and kids). P8 defined personal

success as “achieving a harmonious relationship with my close network with my nucleus, such as my husband, my daughter, and close family and friends.

Happiness. Happiness was another theme that was mentioned by five participants when asked about the definition of personal success. Specifically, P4 highlighted, “Find what tickles your fancy, find something that moves you, find something that melts your heart and pay attention to that.” P9 stated that personal success is as simple with just being happy with one’s life.

Being content (fulfillment). This theme occurred with five participants as another defining element of personal success. To distinguish this sense from happiness in and of itself, participants stressed that being content amounted more to a sense of fulfillment that was consequent to previous actions and accomplishments. P5 shared that “personal success is when I sleep and I have a big smile on my face” (P5, January 13, 2017).

Additionally, P6 added:

Sleeping well at night and that comes from the belief that I did the right thing during the day. If you go to bed at night, and you can honestly say that “I can sleep well tonight because I don’t think I created a major issue for anyone, I was a decent person, I did that best that I could”—that’s personal success.

P10 viewed fulfillment as “defining my own destiny,” in which she was able to take a vision of the world and worked towards making that vision a reality. She also added:

I felt very strongly about the importance of having a quality of life which meant that I wanted to have the time to enjoy the world, travel, connect with people, lead a purposeful life so even when I am going to work, I’m driven by doing the right thing rather than the bottom line.

P14 affirmed that personal success is “not about money, career, or your job; it has to come from within.”

Combined with professional success. Personal and professional success had the same definition—that is, they were synonymous or were perceived in the same way—for five participants. P3 stated that she defined both personal and professional success in terms of fulfillment, a belief that was expressed in various ways by the other respondents. Personal and professional success were “enmeshed” for these participants.

Involvement with greater community. Two instances of this theme were mentioned during the interview process. P4 shared another element of personal success as being involved in the community and giving her attention to the philanthropic side of things. She explained, “You cannot be successful unless you’re able to share what you have with others around you in any which way possible.”

Interview question 8: How do you define professional success? Subsequent to data analysis of responses to this interview question, 22 characteristics emerged. From these 20 characteristics, the following five recurring themes emerged: (a) same as personal, (b) monetary, (c) integrity, (d) public recognition, and (e) creating something unique and of value (see Figure 8).

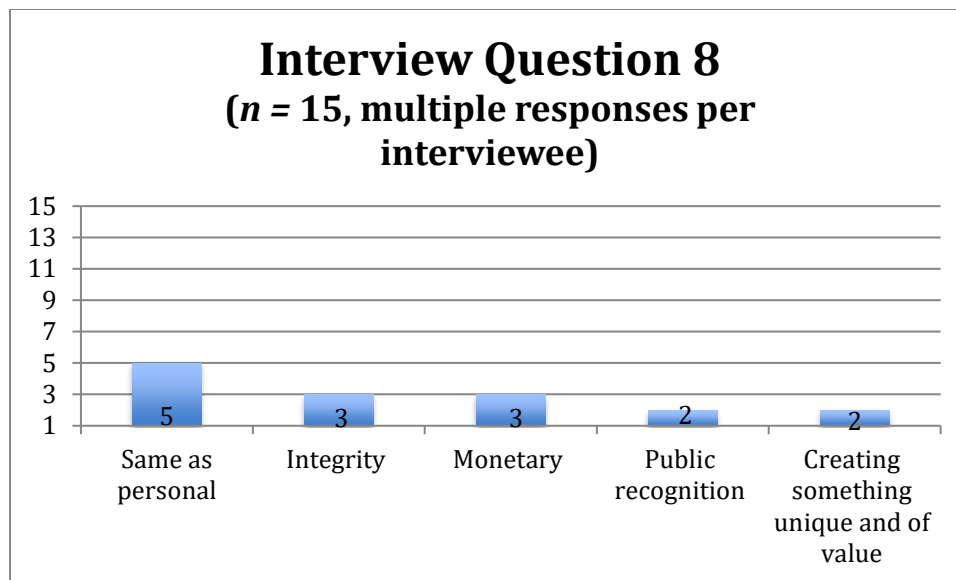


Figure 8. IQ 8: Defining professional success.

Same as personal. Personal and professional success had the same meaning for five participants. As mentioned above, the definition of personal and professional success, were enmeshed. P7 perceived that “for professional and personal success, the pillars are the same but the difference is the professional growth.”

Monetary. Another theme that emerged for the definition of professional success was monetary and financial gains. This was mentioned by three participants, as they saw this as the number one factor in professional success. P2 expressed that monetary gains should be at the “top of the list” when it comes to defining professional success.

Integrity. Integrity was another theme that was mentioned by three participants. P4 expressed that a “moral compass is extremely important” for one to have and making sure that one does not cross the line that would jeopardize his/her integrity. She also mentioned that “ethical and moral values always have to be in play when you’re doing business.” Notably, though financial success was important, the participants emphasized that such success was valuable only if it did not compromise one’s integrity.

Recognition. Recognition of achievements in the public sphere was also a recurring theme identified with professional success. For example, P7, who worked for Google, recounted her path to promotion within the company as she transitioned from a corporate communications position focused on foreign policy to machine learning, stating:

I was learning a lot, and that's professional success--it started to pay off because people started to notice, and I think an anecdotal measure of it, when you have granted yourself personally to be good at a series of tasks, within an organization or community, when someone says, "Who can we think of to do this?" you should hope your name is on that list, you hope you've been able to do something where there is an association to you and your skills, and that can mean a lot of different things to a lot of people in different fields. But for me, I've seen that power in my own job in really saying yes to things (within reason) inside and outside of work and really committing to them and seeing how that can be rewarded."

P14 defined professional success as "when other people like you, admire you, and trust you. You have to be good at what you're doing while being a good human being."

Creating something unique and of value. Participants also identified professional success with the creation of something unique and not present before, and of tangible value to the community. P8 specified this as "the creating of something that would not otherwise have happened--something uniquely mine." Likewise P13 specified this as "creating something of value and that people need or want."

Summary of research question 3. Research Question 3 asked, "How do Iranian women leaders measure their leadership success?" A total of 11 recurring themes

emerged in response to the two interview questions asked. Examples of the 11 themes included helping others, contentedness (fulfillment), happiness, involvement with the greater community, a family life, and creating something unique and of value..

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked, “What lessons do current Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian-American leaders?” In order to answer this question, the researcher asked the participants three interview questions.

1. If you could start over, what would you do differently?
2. What advice, do’s and don’t’s do you have for Iranian women who aspire to be a leader?
3. Is there anything else you wish to add?

Various themes emerged from each interview question in order to answer RQ3.

Interview question 9: If you could start over, what would you do differently?

Based on data analysis of responses to this interview question, 15 characteristics developed as answers. From those 15 characteristics, the following four themes emerged: (a) would not do anything differently, (b) take more classes, (c) find a mentor, and (d) believe in myself sooner (see Figure 9).

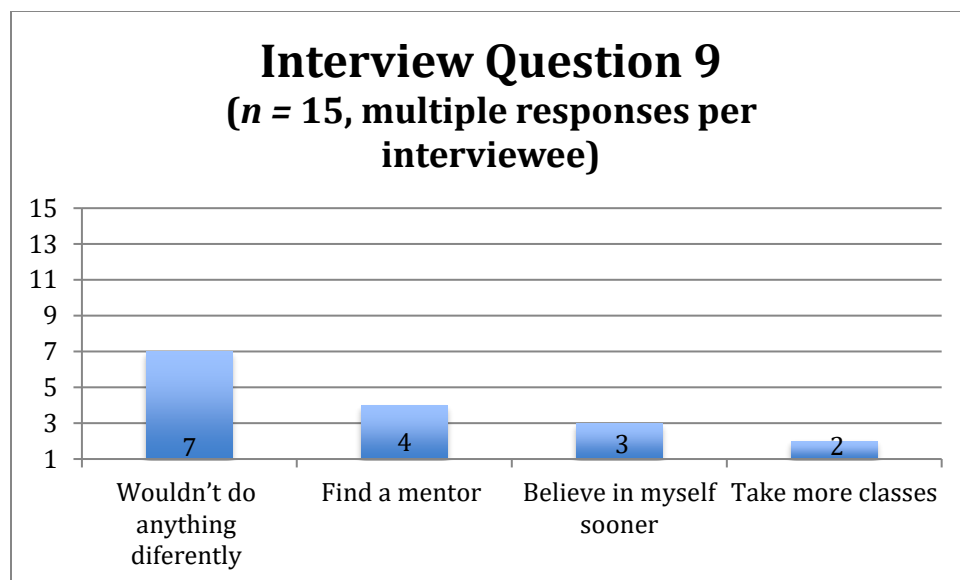


Figure 9. IQ 9: Responses to what participants would if they were to start their journey all over again.

Would not do anything differently. When asked about what the interview participants would do differently, if they were to start their journey over again, seven participants mentioned that they would not do anything different. They also shared that the events that took place throughout their journey is what led them to where they are now. For example, even though P7 shared that she wouldn't change anything, she also shared that she is still growing as a person and in her career and explained:

Even if I looked at my professional, personal, or academic life, so many of the things that happened in my life I could not have predicted...There are a lot of things I have learned along the way, but I think whatever road broken or paved or straight and winding as it was led me to where I am.

P8 shared that even though she did not do things “perfectly,” she significantly learned from everything she did. She shared, “I realized I have been so many different versions of me already and I’m so happy about that...I wouldn’t change a thing” (P8, January 21,

2017).

Take more classes. Enrolling in courses and learning new things was another theme that emerged two times. Two interview participants shared their desire to learn more and explore what the world has to offer. For example, P9 shared that when she moved to the United States, she was in such a rush to begin her career, that she did not initially enroll in English courses to improve her communication and presentation skills. This, she explained, was her biggest regret: “Those are really important no matter what field you’re in...the better you are at communicating what is on your mind, and at relating to others--whether in Farsi or English or Spanish--the better a job you can get.” Additionally, P10 shared her desires for learning more languages, traveling the world, and studying abroad. Specifically, P10 emphasized the importance of studying abroad and reflecting on how she wishes she had the opportunity to do so. She explained:

I would spend more time traveling the world, backpacking, and really trying to see as much of the world as I can—as early as I can—because it’s invaluable, absolutely invaluable to keeping your options earlier on, it opens up your perspectives on the world and helps you when you are trying to figure out who you are and which path you want to take.”

Find a mentor. Finding a mentor was a theme that was brought up by one participant who shared the importance of this in charting a path towards success, and how her lack of a mentor early on may have served as a hindrance. P12 especially shared that the one thing she would change in her journey was to have the opportunity to have a mentor from the start of her professional career. She strongly believed that if she had a mentor sooner in her life, her mentor would “believe in me and guide me to reach my

goals much earlier,” smoothing her path without the need for as much trial and error.

Believe in myself sooner. P3 mentioned that she would be less “self-critical” because when she was younger she was very hard on herself and was very “stringent” with her kids. She saw herself as a “perfectionist” and looking back on it, the one thing she would do differently was to not be so hard on herself. Additionally, P12 shared her journey and not believing in herself when she first started:

It took me years of training and classes and educating myself so that I could get to the point that I really believed in myself. It’s really important to be honest with yourself at any stage in your life. That’s how you achieve something. As long as you are honest with yourself, even with all your shortcomings, weaknesses or strengths... if you are honest about those, then you are one step ahead.

Interview question 10: What advice, do’s and don’t’s do you have for Iranian women who aspire to be a leader? Based on data analysis of responses to this interview question, 33 characteristics developed as answers. From those 33 characteristics, the following six recurring themes emerged: (a) don’t get discouraged by no, (b) have a mentor, (c) relationship building (networking), (d) don’t seek approval, (e) be happy with who you are (fulfillment), and (f) believe in yourself (see Figure 10).

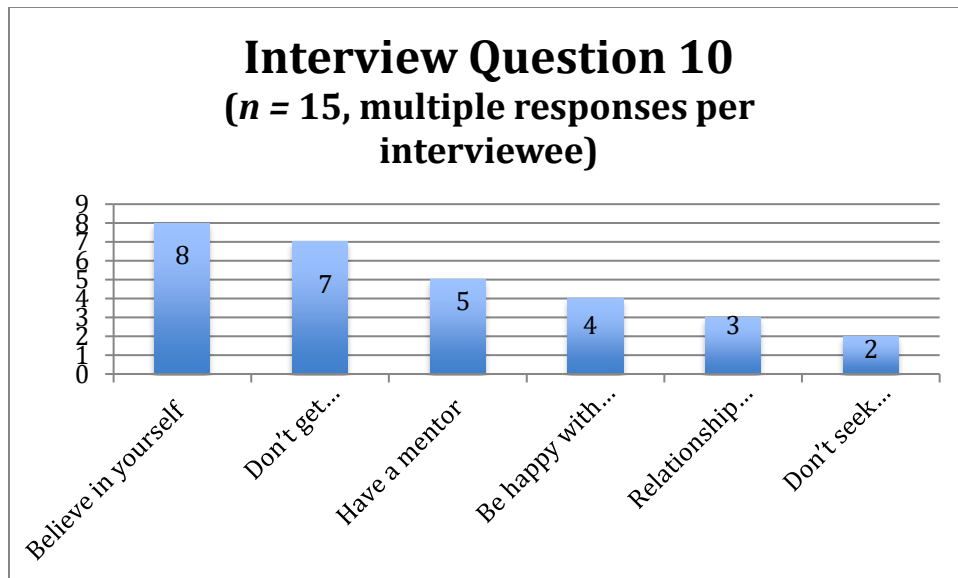


Figure 10. IQ 10: Advice, do's, and don'ts for aspiring Iranian women leaders.

Don't get discouraged by no. Seven participants mentioned this as their key advice to future Iranian-American leaders. The general tenor of this advice was to develop enough inner self-confidence and drive to not be shaken by negative criticism or remarks. P1, for example, cited her initial discouragement and sense of disheartening at the negative criticism she received to a poem she had written, persevering on. She shared, "Missed opportunities are something to regret" only if you keep yourself down and let the criticism get to you, going on to note that she eventually submitted her poem and it was accepted for a national second place prize. She went on to state, "It was a leap of faith for me that says that one person's opinion does not mean that's all of who you are." Additionally, P11 shared, "Aspire high and don't be frightened of the unknown. Experience is gained only if one practices."

Have a mentor. Participants mentioned this factor in response to other interview questions, and unsurprisingly, it also came up as part of their general advice for future aspiring leaders. P1 also stated:

I never really had a mentor. I think it makes such a big difference in a person's life and I think that is one thing I lacked and it would have saved me a lot of process work because a mentor can show you a quicker way and be a real source of inspiration and support.

Likewise P12 said, "Find the best mentor you can to help you on your path to success."

Relationship building (networking). Participants brought this up to emphasize the importance of building a network to assist one on one's path to success and leadership. P1 says, "Relationship building is very important in all aspects of one's life, and especially for your work life as well. I think that a lot of the work that I have been able to do is because of the strong level of relationships I have with people." She later added, "Be interested in the work that other people do, be a good listener, forge relationships, be authentic, and it will serve you well in so many areas of your life."

Additionally, P10 said, "Networking is a key part of your ability to be successful, to navigate both your professional and personal life... Connections you are making should be sincere connections that you want to be developing." She also made a specific point about networking as a leader, noting that people will often come to her and she may not have answers at first, but that with a good network, she will at least know where to direct the person coming to her for help, which can be just as important. She also emphasized the depth and sincerity of those connections, and the reciprocal value both to herself as a leader, and to those in the network around her.

Don't seek approval. One of the "don't's" for this research question was not seeking approval from others. Specifically, P1 indicated that women in general "are good with people but they are also okay with not being socially approved all the time...if you

are constantly seeking approval, you can't be a good leader." She also added that by not having to seek approval, this is what makes someone feel "uncomfortable," which is a sign of growth. More specifically, one becomes accustomed to taking chances, risking failure, and braving criticism and doubt while focusing on the accomplishment of a task rather than the approval of those around oneself per se, and such habits are critical in forging the perseverance and self-confidence of a leader.

Be happy with who you are (fulfillment). Four participants advised the younger generation of aspiring Iranian women leaders to simply be happy with who they are, despite their cultural background or any other shortcomings they might have. For example, one piece of advice P3 gave for aspiring Iranian women leaders was:

Really getting to know themselves and their own interests—what truly fulfills them and having the courage to stand for that—not just following others' definition of success...you have to fulfill your own desires and be happy with who you are.

Believe in yourself. Believing in oneself was a common theme that emerged eight times among the interview participants. They each shared that by having a sense of identity, staying true to who they are, and believing in themselves, they were able to establish productive habits and behavior patterns that paved their way towards success. In particular, P3 shared, "Be more focused on your own growth, rather than criticizing others... be inspired by others, don't compare yourself to others because everyone is different." P4 advised, "Be true to yourself, to your own wishes and your own desires and what you want to achieve and become-don't let anyone put you down just because you are a woman." As far as "don'ts," P6 shared, "Do not think of yourself as an Iranian

woman, but just as a participant in today's global economy, as an expert in your field, someone who can bring value to the organization that you're with." She also referenced not being afraid of failure and mistakes because everyone makes them. She explained:

It's what you do afterwards that is important. When you make a mistake you own it, and you correct it. Unless you fail and make mistakes, you're not going to succeed because if you don't fail, it means you didn't try anything outrageous or extraordinary. So it's okay, you're going to make mistakes, have failures, all those things are natural, but throughout the process, you may do something extraordinary. Ordinary leads to no mistakes, extraordinary requires failures and mistakes, but you are going to end up with something extraordinary—something nobody else has done, something unique.

P8 shared, "Once you become the best version of yourself, it will reflect in everything you do—from your personal life to your professional life...give that to yourself because at the end of the day, it's going to be you and a mirror." Lastly, P12 added, "Believe in yourself and never, ever, ever, allow anyone to tell you otherwise—that is my advice to every single Iranian woman."

Interview question 11: Is there anything else you wish to add? Based on the data analysis of responses to this interview question 16 characteristics developed. From those 16 characteristics, three recurring themes emerged: (a) culture, (b) a sense of pride in the community, and (c) purpose. Notably, these themes were mirrored in responses to previous interview questions, but were given in a different, prescriptive context here (see Figure 11).

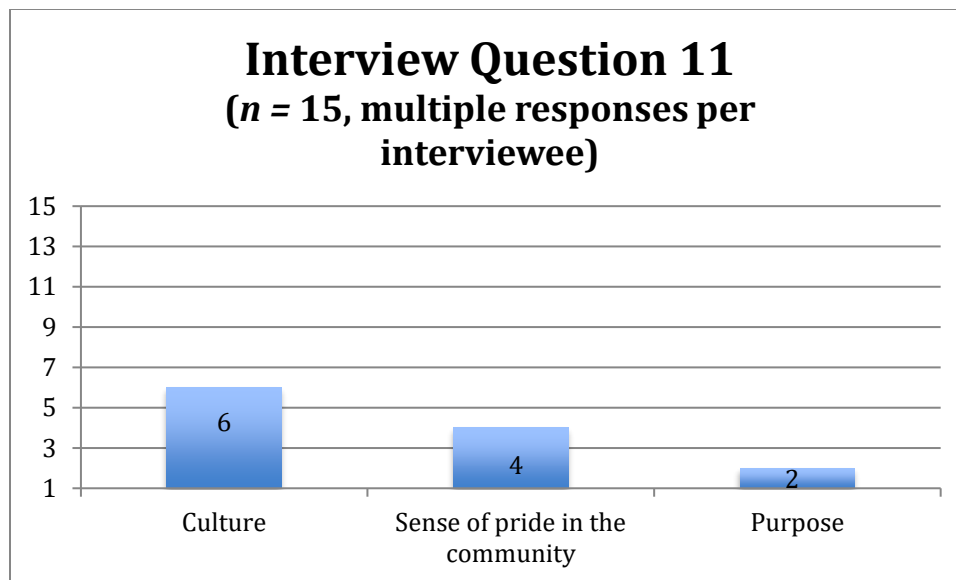


Figure 11. IQ 11: Additional responses participants wished to add.

Culture. The last interview question gave participants the opportunity to share insights and/or their final thoughts. In particular six participants shared that classifying oneself as being “an Iranian” should not be a handicap or to be seen as a minority. Rather, being an Iranian is something to be proud of and something that sets you apart from everyone else, connecting you to a rich and ancient culture in which women, importantly, had prominent and respected roles in the pre-Islamic era. In other words, as a cultural badge, succeeding as an Iranian-American women is also fulfilling the highest ideals of the Persian nation and people, and rekindling the status of honor and success that was at the core of Iran’s Zoroastrian society. Additionally, P9 shared that Iranian women should not feel the need to overly focus on their ethnic identity, Iranian or otherwise—Instead, “we should be thinking that we are people who are very capable of doing anything we want to do.”

Sense of pride in the community. P7 shared that she is grateful to her parents for instilling a strong cultural identity while also “nourishing and facilitating my strong

American identity.” She also shared that the Iranian identity is a benefit to who she is. The participants in general believed that nurturing a sense of community pride was helpful in encouraging achievement by reminding younger Iranian-Americans that they are part of a hard-working, flourishing group. P4 discoursed on this topic at length, expressing the need to apply our community’s collective resources towards mutual betterment and stating that “we are an influential and affluent community and we need to create an environment in which we are able to accomplish still more as a community.”

Purpose. P3 once again highlighted the importance of believing in oneself. She also demonstrated how important it is to know one’s purpose and why one is doing what one chose to do. She shared, “Knowing why you are doing this becomes your fuel that charges your energy. I think that’s the definition of leadership. Leaders have energy and you always feel energized. No one wants to be around someone who is always tired.” Additionally, P6 added, “Success has nothing to do with gender. Success has to do with hard work, discipline, and vision.”

Summary of research question 4. Research Question 4 asked, “What lessons do current Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian-American leaders?” A total of 12 themes emerged to answer this research question. Those 12 themes included the following notable examples: mentorship, sense of belief, not getting discouraged by no’s, relationship building, not seeking approval, being happy with oneself, and culture.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to understand the success strategies emerging Iranian-American women leaders used to become successful and act successfully as leaders. Sixteen themes emerged, with the top four being

education, mentorship, belief in oneself, and passion. Maintaining focus; persistence and perseverance; knowing one's mission, vision, and purpose; as well as involvement with the greater community (networking) and challenges being a woman were among other themes that emerged for the 11 interview questions. The other most important recurring themes were public recognition, teamwork, being wary of self-made barriers, not taking no for an answer, and having passion for what they are doing.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The topic of the success strategies and approaches of emerging Iranian-American women leaders entails a number of related subtopics linked to the systematic study of leadership itself, in this case with a culturally specific context. As discussed extensively before, leadership comes in many varieties, but scholars have increasingly pointed to a kind of emotionally intelligent leadership as being the most effective in achieving desired results. In particular, researchers have identified what has become called transformational leadership as a model that is likely superior to the traditional practice of transactional leadership (Conger & Hunt, 1999). The key takeaways from this study involve the five elements of effective transformational leadership that the Iranian-American women community emphasize most: networking, mentorship, education, perseverance, and integrity, all of which helped to set a positive example for and motivate members of the organization.

Transactional leadership describes the classic top-down, command-driven style, which emphasizes obedience and compliance, whereas transformational leadership places a greater emphasis on leading by example and both motivating and inspiring followers (Lowe et al., 1996). The transformational approach tends to give rise to a more cohesive organization with greater unity in purpose and effort. This is in part because of the defining features of what has become known as transformational leadership, namely the emphasis on leadership by example, empathy-based understanding of and engagement with a team, and motivating the team's members in such a way that they voluntarily and sincerely identify with the leadership's overarching goals, rather than being compelled or ordered to follow them as a command. Notably, for the purposes of this report, women

leaders often tend to embrace a transformational style, perhaps epitomized most remarkably in history by the medieval heroine Joan of Arc (Eagly et al., 2003). This research has notable relevance to this report, which examined Iranian-American women and their strategies for success and leadership.

With this backdrop in mind, the research study discussed here took an in-depth look at the concrete form that leadership has taken among a group of exemplary Iranian-American women leaders in the southern California region. A number of common themes were identified upon organizing and coding the answers provided by the interviewed participants, and the results indeed suggest that the interviewed women have achieved and exercised successful leadership by developing, and then fine-tuning, a transformational style specific to their circumstances. The transformational leadership they exercise is notable for manner in which the participants are able to empathize with the concerns of their team, their clients, and with the broader community. Notably, and of particular interest considering the demographics of the subject group, such transformational leadership seems to be especially important given the cultural context of the participants, and the special needs and challenges of the Iranian overseas diaspora.

Overall Summary and Structure of the Study

The current researcher undertook a qualitative phenomenological study, which sought to shed light on the leadership styles and strategies of Iranian-American women leaders through semi-structured interviews, followed by coding and targeted data analysis that endeavored to identify common and recurring themes of interest. The researcher selected the participants via purposive and snowball sampling built around a conference of Iranian-American women leaders in Los Angeles, leading eventually to interviews

with 15 diverse participants. The researcher asked a total of 11 interview questions corresponding to four distinct research questions, each of them open-ended and touching on distinctive aspects of the qualities a leader should possess, the skills and habits that should be cultivated, and specific counsel to future Iranian-American women leaders.

The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women leaders?

RQ2: What are some of the challenges faced by Iranian-American women leaders in their leadership journey?

RQ3: How do Iranian women leaders measure their leadership success?

RQ4: What lessons do current Iranian-American leaders have for future Iranian American leaders?

The researcher will summarize and discuss the study findings below.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Across the range of interview questions and the different participants with their varying backgrounds and careers, a number of themes nonetheless cropped up with noticeable frequency across multiple interview questions, as quantified in Figures 1-11. These themes included (a) education, (b) mentorship, (c) purpose and motivation, (d) maintaining focus, (e) belief in oneself, (f) mission and vision, (g) being positive, (h) culture, (i) not being overly affected by gender/identity, (j) relationship building and networking, and (k) integrity.

It should be kept in mind that all participants were independent of each other; there was no disclosure of other participants during each interview. In addition, their respective careers and areas of leadership differed markedly from each other, ranging

from business to the arts to engineering as well as leadership in political and social organizations. It is therefore even more salient that their responses converged on several themes in common, lending support to these aspects as essential for Iranian-American women leaders in particular and helping to paint a portrait of their style of leadership.

Education. The participants acknowledged education as an essential ingredient for eventual success and leadership in particular. This theme may result partly from the culture and status of the Iranian community in America and Iranian diaspora in general. Education is highly prized in the culture as a whole, and since Iranian overseas communities tend to be disproportionately from the professional and highly skilled classes, an emphasis on education is perhaps to be expected in interviews with this community. It is interesting how the participants were able to link higher education and scholastic achievement with the attainment and good practice of leadership specifically. Besides the acquisition of specific useful skills, the participants made clear that the critical thinking skills obtained in a broad humanistic education were necessary to provide a foundation for the sort of questioning, contemplation, and thoughtful decision-making that is at the heart of being a leader.

Mentorship. Another common theme that recurred with remarkable frequency, across a variety of research and interview questions and among diverse participants, was mentorship. The participants broadly felt that in a complex and often very confusing world, the guidance of a more experienced mentor was critical especially in one's early career to avoid reinventing the wheel and orienting oneself in a productive direction. A good mentor is able to empathize with the participant and help her to navigate the often-treacherous challenges of their early careers. This factor was considered so important that

even those participants who lacked mentors expressed a wish that they had had such a resource while progressing through their early careers.

Relationship building and networking. Another major recurring theme was relationship building and networking, alongside broader efforts toward involvement with the greater community. Participants identified such activities as being critical in not only career advancement, but also in tackling varied challenges as they arose and dispensing advice to others. Participants emphasized the importance of building and nurturing positive and effective relationships as a key component of their leadership.

Purpose and motivation. Participants shared that in order to be successful in one's career, having a clearly defined purpose and staying motivated were essential. Having a solid sense of purpose specifically took the form of having a passion for the field or line of work being pursued, which was critical for staying productive through thick and thin. Participants likewise mentioned how essential it was to remain determined even when it seemed questionable to maintain such a perspective, with a steady sense of motivation despite the setbacks they faced.

Maintaining focus. As another common theme that emerged, participants shared that maintaining focus was essential to translating their motivation and determination into practical accomplishments that advanced their goals. For instance, P2 described her experience when she was faced with disappointments or frustrations by stating, "Anytime I fell or anytime I encountered failure, I just got stronger because I believe that if you're not strong, you don't follow up on your goal, and you're not focused – it's not going to happen." Other participants expressed similar sentiments, essentially emphasizing that they had made a focus on their tasks into a habit that they would naturally return to,

helping them to avoid a damaging downward spiral in the event of adversity.

Belief in oneself. Self-belief was likewise important as a leadership trait across the range of unique experiences and situations for each participant. Many participants shared that belief and confidence in oneself were not only essential to success, but also at the core of having a strong identity. For example, P4 explicitly stated the importance of having faith and believing in herself, sharing, “I question myself, but I try not to have self-doubt and rely on what speaks the truth to me from the inside.” The notion of believing in oneself was more specifically described by participants as being connected to the sense of belonging in an organization and the belief that the task can successfully be completed.

Mission and vision. In order to be an effective leader in any organization, many participants shared that one of the most important pieces to success was to know one’s mission and vision as precisely as possible. This was similar to participants’ sentiments about having a sense of purpose, but the participants regarded this in more specific and concrete terms. For instance, P6 stated, “You have to have a meaningful purpose – you have to decide what it is you are trying to do, the mission has to be said, and then you have to have a focus and clarity in communicating that vision to the people you are trying to lead.” Having a mission and vision as mentioned by participants throughout the interviews was also very much related to the goal of the organization as a whole and what the team overall was trying to achieve.

Being positive. Participants who were interviewed shared that in the face of the challenges they faced, being positive was a very important factor. Positivity was thus another common theme that emerged across the board, with many women clarifying that

maintaining enthusiasm and looking at things with a positive perspective was one of the main ingredients to success. In fact, an optimistic outlook was in many ways the anchor for their success strategies, and in particular for their self-belief, motivation, and focus as discussed above.

Culture. During the interviews, one of the most common themes that emerged as an issue participants faced throughout their journey was their cultural identity, about which they had complicated views. Some described it as being a “handicap” at times, while others contended that they do not think Iranian women should look at their Iranian identity as a barrier. Two participants in particular shared that one’s cultural identity is what makes them stand out and be unique to others, while other participants shared that their status as an ethnic minority was a source of challenges to them. Ultimately, participants did acknowledge the value of being aware of, and proud of, their connection to the ancient Persian culture and the respect accorded to women in it. Likewise, staying connected to the broader Iranian diaspora, both in the United States and abroad, was acknowledged as being important.

Integrity. When it comes to being a successful leader, maintaining integrity was also broadly emphasized. Specifically, participants shared how important it was to be upright in their activities and maintain a code of ethics, even when dishonest activity might have brought an advantage. Integrity was particularly important because, as many of the women shared, a good leader in their eyes is someone who leads by example, and in order to set a good example as a leader, integrity is essential.

To summarize, the general thrust of participants’ responses was that aspiring Iranian-Americans had to cultivate an inner sense of determination and resilience that

would carry them through setbacks, external barriers, and resistance, as well as inner doubts and misgivings. The participants had intricate feelings about culture, but generally agreed that awareness of the Persian culture and connection to the broader Iranian diaspora remained important. The overall message was an emphasis on both personal qualities and the importance of staying connected to the broader community and both benefiting and deriving benefit from the collective resources of that community.

Summary of research questions and resulting information. The research questions of this study and the results they generated are most valuable in the way they illuminate the broader field, and in particular in the way they link to the literature and historical studies as noted before. To summarize the findings for the research questions, the first of these questions asked what leadership strategies Iranian-American women used to bring about their success, with four corresponding interview questions. The primary recurring themes, as noted previously, were education, involvement with the greater community (networking), maintaining focus, enthusiasm, perseverance/persistence, and mission and purpose. Research Question 2 focused on the barriers and challenges that the participants had to overcome to attain success and leadership, with their cultural background, status (and perception) as women, and self-imposed hurdles arising most frequently as recurring themes.

Research Question 3 concerned the principal measures of success, both personal and professional. For many respondents, metrics for these two types of success were intertwined, but participants generally agreed that the best metrics of personal success involved the degree that they were helping others, having a good family life, happiness, contentedness (fulfillment), and involvement with the greater community. Recurring

markers of professional success included integrity, recognition, and creating something unique and of value. Research Question 4 focused on future counsel—that is, what the participants in this study would suggest as most helpful for aspiring Iranian-American (and especially women) leaders. Common recurring themes for this question included mentorship, relationship building (networking), not being discouraged by negative feedback, believing in oneself, not seeking approval, and happiness. Many of these factors recurred across research questions, and thus seem to be the central ingredients for the success strategies for Iranian-American women in leadership positions.

Relation of findings to the literature. The aggregate findings of this study tell a series of stories in the way that the respondents tied success to their own autobiographical journeys, but there are several such stories that predominate overall, stretching across diverse respondents and distinct research questions. These specific key results link back to important findings and questions related to leadership as investigated in the extensive prior literature on the subject. Of greatest interest is the repeated emphasis that participants placed on the importance of cultivating relationships, networking, working with mentors, unswerving focus (which was communicated effectively to the group), and on education in a formal context (with vocational and occupational elements included in the attainment of advanced degrees). All of these factors speak to an intuitive connection to emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership, even though respondents did not specifically broach these concepts by name.

Dabke (2016), building on the prior work of Goleman (2011) and other predecessors in the field, claimed that emotional intelligence entails a set of characteristics that speak to a person's ability to empathize with others as well as

unifying them with their sense of purpose. Dabke's description of EI ties closely in with the way EI is discussed in the context of leadership studies, and in particular with the defining feature of transformational leadership (Doe et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 1999). The participants' responses in general gave a solid indication that their overall leadership style tended in such a direction, differing from the command-driven, top-down approach that is most favored—albeit not universally—by their male counterparts (Doe et al., 2015; George, 2000; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012). While it can be tempting to brush off the transformational approach (and its associated EI) as simply an optional alternative to the more tried-and-true transactional style, both the literature and historical analysis suggest that effective transformational leadership can yield tremendous and crucial advantages (Coetzee & Schaap, 2005; Doe et al., 2015; Li et al., 2016; Palmer et al., 2001).

As noted in Chapter 2, perhaps the most readily recognizable historical epitome of the transformational leader is Joan of Arc, who had no formal education or military training when she took the field as a significant political and military leader at a critical juncture in France's history (Nelson, 2011). Joan succeeded under extremely stressful circumstances, when most of her more experienced and better-trained colleagues had failed, in large part because she was able to empathize with the surrounding population and rally them to a cause which was theirs as much as hers (DeVries, 1999). Given the low French morale in general and the feeble incentives (such as direct compensation) that are often associated with the command-based style of transactional leadership, Joan's transformational style proved to be historically decisive (Egan, n.d.).

While the participants interviewed in this study may not have been taking a literal field of battle as Joan of Arc did, nevertheless they intuitively agreed on the importance

of aligning the goals of their teams (and the broader community) with their own. None of them were impressed with a simple command-and-obedience approach to leadership; all seemed to grasp, fundamentally, that effective leadership had to motivate those around them at a gut level. Networking and relationship-building were valuable not merely for generating a list of contacts to help with immediate tasks, but also for engendering a sense of common purpose—which, in turn, depended on the leader’s own clarity of purpose, which the Iranian-American women in the current study also repeatedly emphasized. In turn, articulating a clear mission and vision also linked in with this transformational style and the advantages with which it was associated.

Examining these factors more specifically, knowing one’s purpose was cited distinctly as one of the recurring themes amid the data collection. Likewise, as a success strategy, this factor resonates strongly with notions of EI. Li et al. (2016) concluded that good leadership requires high levels of emotional intelligence, and solid formulation and following-up of an articulated purpose was a key part of such success. As discussed in Chapter 2, there remains some controversy about how tight the link between EI and good leadership actually is, and whether EI truly is causative or predictive of effective leadership, or even strongly correlated with it. For example, the previously-cited major study by Lopez-Zafra et al. (2012) yielded a suggestive but still mixed picture about the relevant correlations.

Their work overall indicated that effective leadership was indeed highly correlated with a transformational style and the factors designated by Goleman (2011) and others as being indicative of substantial levels of EI, and that women in general tended to possess these qualities in greater abundance. Closer scrutiny and examination

under a battery of related psychological tests indicated that the picture was more fluid; many analysts have indicated that EI actually did not differ appreciably between the genders, but rather that women reliably tended to be richer in the more empathy-specific components of EI, and that truly transformational leadership as practiced by either gender was connected strongly to this particular subset of EI-related characteristics (Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012). Goleman (2011) shared that EI has four distinct (and measurable) parts: self-awareness, managing emotions, social skill, and empathy. Goleman thus suggested that metrics of EI could indeed be parsed out into such subcategories.

Other investigators (Bar-On et al., 2000; Conway, 2000; Garner & Estep, 2001; Petrides & Furnham, 2000) have noted broadly similar patterns that Lopez-Zafra and coworkers were able to examine with greater quantitative rigor in their 2012 study. Namely, their work has likewise affirmed that the essence of transformational leadership, and the core of what makes it so effective, has a solid link not necessarily with EI as a whole, but with the aspects of EI that speak to a leader's ability to empathize and emotionally connect with followers. It is these qualities in which women in aggregate do reliably appear to outscore their male counterparts (Garner & Estep, 2001; Petrides & Furnham, 2000).

The findings of this research study broadly align with the same narrative, though it should be cautioned that since no male participants were selectively interviewed, it is not possible to make a direct side-by-side comparison from this study alone. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how much the respondents were in unison about the need to grasp and appreciate one's followers and ensure that one's primary purpose and objective are shared with the group, and not merely dictated by command. In this regard,

not only the respondents' gender but also their cultural and immigrant background offers an interesting perspective. The women interviewed for the study were all first- or second-generation immigrants with close ties to family and community in Iran, and although Iranian-Americans as a whole are more affluent than most other U.S. immigrant groups, they share similar challenges in being accepted by mainstream society without having the visibility or sheer political power as many other groups to stand up for their interests. It is worth noting that the interview questions were geared especially toward exploring the participants' perceptions and considerations of intrinsic measures of success, that is, the less tangible and more personal indications that they have achieved important goals. External metrics were of course important in recruiting the sample in the first place, since the participants were drawn from a conference, and subsequent snowball sampling, based on social recognition of the women's accomplishments. Nevertheless, since the interviews were personal, semi-structured, and qualitative in nature, there was a significant emphasis on the participants' personal journeys and the factors they regarded as particularly important in their individual fulfillment and perceptions of success.

As a result, entrepreneurs and aspiring leaders in this group in general would be expected to rely on, and pay particular attention to, the mutual self-interest and collective assistance of the ethnic community. Such a conclusion is indeed borne out by the evidence from the interviews, with the respondents in general placing a heavy emphasis on culture and community ties. This sense of a broader connection, in turn, might also be a significant factor in nurturing empathy and a transformational leadership style, above and beyond what would be demonstrated even by other—for example, European-American—women who would tend towards a transformational style.

Lending further support to such a conclusion, Onyango et al. (2011) noted that socio-cultural factors do indeed hinder women aspiring for leadership positions, and these can be especially acute for women from immigrant backgrounds, due both to friction with the mainstream community and hurdles within the ethnic community. Some of the socio-cultural factors included discouragement by spouses, domestic chores, lack of interest, gender bias, lack of motivation, inferiority complex, religion, and political interference (Onyango et al., 2011). These factors mirrored many of the responses and recurring themes given by participants in this study. For example, when asked about challenges and barriers to their success, the most common explicitly cited factors were being a woman, and being Iranian (culture).

Additionally, Amin (2006) conducted a study measuring the success strategies of both Iranian men and women in leadership. Interestingly, Amin generated findings that were encapsulated by the women alone, suggesting that culture and background may have a significant impact on leadership styles and strategies that would likely not be found if comparing U.S.-born men and women in leadership positions. For example, solid higher education and communication skills were among Amin's key findings for her study as most participants agreed on the central importance of such qualities for effectiveness as a leader. A clearly articulated purpose and motivation were likewise cited. Amin's study also differed in that networking (social relationships) and mentorship were not cited as distinct factors, even though her investigation utilized a similar open-ended semi-structured interview format. Her findings were not split up by gender and thus it is not possible to a direct comparison between the responses of her female cohort with the participants in this study. Nevertheless, a brief consideration of the demographic

difference between the two study groups—12 mixed-gender Iranian-American leaders in her study, and 15 Iranian-American women in this one—suggests a possible gender-related difference in attitudes towards factors associated with transformational leadership. Specifically, the absence of an emphasis on social relationship-building and mentorship in Amin’s study, contrasted with their central importance in this one, might represent an exemplification of the findings on the empathy dimension of EI and transformational leadership as noted in the literature, in this case arising distinctly in an ethnic immigrant subpopulation examined in two separate studies.

Key Findings

To summarize, the key findings are oriented towards four consistent messages that recurred throughout the data, and which reflect and build upon a body of literature that has linked a subset of EI-based characteristics to an effective form of leadership—the transformational style—that is associated particularly with women leaders. In this case, the researcher obtained data from a particular ethnic community in the greater Los Angeles area, with findings that exemplify and add to this underlying picture. When examining the literature and the study findings, the findings identified a common thread among the success strategies and essential factors that participants identified as being most conducive to attaining and exercising leadership. The most common findings, as noted before, were education (60%), mentorship (42%), networking (42%), belief in oneself (42%), being positive (35%), and persistence/perseverance (40%). After interviewing the fifth participant, the researcher noted what the common emerging themes were.

Challenges and barriers cited by successful Iranian-Americans also suggested a

common theme when participants recounted their journey to success. Out of 15 participants, eight (53%) shared that being a woman hindered them due to a very male dominated culture and work environment, while five (33%) participants shared that their cultural identity (being Iranian) created barriers for them. Nonetheless, only two (15%) participants shared that religion was a factor that created significant obstacles and challenges for them.

The women interviewed for this study all had distinctive perspectives on what constituted personal and professional success, with varying degrees of overlap. Although five (35%) participants defined personal and professional success as being essentially the same, seven (46%) participants specifically described personal success in terms of helping others and being involved within the broader community, five (35%) attributed personal success to being happy and content in their own personal lives, and five (35%) participants expressed that a balanced family life with their close nucleus of interpersonal relations (husbands, children, friends) was the best marker of personal success. The participants often equated professional success to personal success, but in general was attributed to different qualities such as having integrity, being recognized within the community, and creating something unique and of value.

Lastly, when asked about the lessons such women have for aspiring Iranian-American women leaders, the most common and recurring themes that emerged were mentorship, building relationships/networking, not getting discouraged by no, not seeking approval, happiness, and believing in oneself. Participants in this case in general made a point to emphasize the importance of productive interactions with the broader Iranian community as a source of support and collective knowledge. Thus, the social dimension

of leadership continued to receive a notable emphasis, with a stress on collaboration, effective teamwork, and bringing interests of the elite into alignment with the broader team and community. Such themes further resonate with the concept of transformational leadership as detailed above.

Implications of the Study

While there are many messages that can be gleaned from the findings of this study, perhaps the most pertinent and interesting are that leadership, in many of its dimensions, is often a team effort in both its attainment and practice. This depiction of leadership, which ties in closely with associated studies on EI and transformational leadership, differs markedly from the *command-and-obey, go it alone, or rugged individualist* depiction of a leader that is common in American culture. Importantly, the leaders examined in this study are quite successful and continue to have an impact. This fact among others lends support to literature findings that the sort of transformational leadership often associated with women leaders, rich in the EI components linked to empathizing and understanding the sentiment of others, is quite effective in real-world contexts.

Specifically, as noted above, a trove of recent literature on leadership has indicated that the tough, top-down, command-and-obey style of leadership is often quite lacking in key characteristics that foster a truly cohesive unit and demonstrably boost the performance of a group. In fact, the EI and specifically the empathy often displayed in greater abundance by women leaders are factors associated with the best-functioning organizations. Bushe (2011) noted that one of the hallmarks of leadership itself is bringing a group of followers together in a manner driven by a common goal, and many

investigators have noted that the empathy component of EI is at the heart of this process and of what makes transformational leadership in general so effective (Coetzee and Schapp, 2005; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999).

Importantly, the advantages of such leadership styles are often overlooked or overtly disregarded since they seem counterintuitive and at odds with the standard assumptions about what constitutes leadership character. Moreover, since such traits are relatively common among women leaders and especially Iranian women, their leadership prospects and the respect accorded to them as leaders are adversely affected. To be more specific, such soft traits as empathy and emotional connection with followers are easy to dismiss as weaknesses from a cursory consideration of a leader's responsibilities (Duncan & Skarstad, 1995).

In reality, this apparent contradiction is precisely what makes effective leadership so challenging, since it requires a fine balance of traits that seem to be opposed to each other. Transformational leaders are so often superior leaders in major part because they strike this balance and achieve truly emotionally intelligent leadership, yet society's skepticism about such nuances continues to act as a hindrance particularly for women leaders who exhibit the transformation style (Li et al., 2016; Northouse, 2016). As a result, even given evidence of women's tangible potential to excel and strengthen their organizations as leaders, the complexity of the EI concept and the unusual nature of transformational leadership continue to act as barriers to attainment of leadership positions (Metcalf & Mutlaq, 2011).

The participants' responses clearly attest to their perception of such difficulties, particularly in their recognition that they had to contradict and often themselves shake off

common misconceptions about women in leadership positions, and overcome an array of cultural barriers. In the results of this study, cultural factors in particular were significant due to the unique status of the Iranian-American immigrant minority community. On the other hand, this distinctive cultural milieu may have also served to enhance the importance placed on networking and relationship building, a fact that likewise has significant implications for aspiring leaders in the community. Furthermore, the emphasis on group dynamics and community involvement may itself act as a catalyst for the development of a transformational leadership style. This development can nurture the attainment of what Collins (2011) identified as the optimal fifth level of leadership, in which a leader is able to identify with the larger goals of the organization and thus unite its members around a common cause.

As a result, besides helping to buttress the case for the value and effectiveness of transformational leadership, this study suggests conclusions relevant to younger Iranian-American women in particular. The findings are relevant in helping to appreciate the success strategies used by a previous generation to attain and practice leadership. In fact, given the historical review previously detailed, this and other studies can help to illuminate and improve the appreciation of women's prominent role in Iran's own history. After all, medieval European women leaders such as Joan of Arc were hardly alone in their demonstration of remarkable and successful transformational leadership.

Iran's own history, especially that of ancient Persia, is filled with notable documented examples of women leaders who excelled in their roles and tangibly guided the development of their nation. Many, such as Mandana (Dusinberre, 2003), Pantea Arteshbod (Kytzler, 1994; Kurzman, 2004), Atusa Shahabnu (Der Neue Pauly, 1996),

and Irdabama (Kuhrt, 1995) were prominent leaders in the realms of administration, business, politics, and even the military. Moreover, and quite pertinently in relation to this study, historical scholars have taken pains to note their ability to balance the seemingly contradictory features that make transformational leaders so effective. In some ways, then, the modern literature on the empathy component of EI, women's leadership styles, and transformational leadership approaches are simply illuminating inspiring examples from Iran's own history, which Iranian women today can draw upon as templates in their own paths to leadership.

These lessons hold salient lessons for younger Iranian-American women as well as for aspiring leaders in general. The results could be used to help formulate a more systematic curriculum and training regimen for students and Iranian-American young women in particular. They could also be consulted help develop a series of courses or a full curriculum for companies who wish to provide training for managers. Additionally, the findings might constitute a valuable reference for college students especially those of an entrepreneurial bent, including those who are looking to start their own businesses or simply wish to excel in their chosen fields of interest.

On the one hand, some of the findings of this study point to internal qualities of the leader as an individual, thus suggesting the importance of personal development. However, there are also numerous implications that could be incorporated into a broader curriculum to help impart the behaviors, strategies, and team-oriented approaches that engender more effective leaders and organizations in general. Several such recommendations are outlined below.

Specific recommendations. The recommendations suggested here are a product

of the central leadership themes as identified by the participants and the conclusions that can be drawn from their responses. In particular, and as noted in the detailed analysis from Chapter 4, the participants emphasize the importance of a set of qualities most identified with transformational leadership and an empathy-rich, emotionally intelligent style. (Dabke, 2016; Conger & Hunt, 1999). On the one hand, accumulated evidence suggests that women leaders tend to be more apt to adopt such a style (Hunt, 1999; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). The capabilities associated with this leadership approach must also be carefully cultivated, with genuine potential for training and mentorship programs (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

It should also be noted that the rising generation of aspiring Iranian women leaders is likely more receptive to such lessons than ever before, both within Iran itself and amid the country's vast overseas diaspora. This is due in large part to the remarkable cultural changes and Westernization that have proceeded despite the attempted restrictions of Iran's clerical leadership since Khomeini's Islamic Revolution in 1979 (Girgis, 1996). Younger Iranians in particular have been skeptical about the constraints of Shari'a Law and other top-down impositions from the ayatollahs and other religious authorities (Wolpow, 2015). Women have begun embracing new freedoms outside of the theocratic confines, in many ways regaining the esteem they enjoyed in ancient Persia, but in other ways forging an entirely new path fraught with both opportunities and challenges that require a careful balancing act (Hoodfar, 1999).

With this background in mind, some recommendations for the implications of this study include leadership training programs that lay out more precisely what leadership entails, and are careful to note the social and transformational dimensions rather than

simply using a top-down, command-and-obey transactional model. Such programs would also provide a platform through which aspiring leaders can develop effective relationships, such as networking and mentorship opportunities. Aspiring leaders would benefit from having this kind of opportunity because it fosters the sorts of social networks that allow for peer-to-peer education and development.

One good option would be a combination of both real and virtual communities, organized according to factors such as field of interest and line of work, which would allow Iranian women both in the US and abroad to converse, share ideas, and provide resources tailored to the leadership challenges in each group. These communities would provide a structured platform which these women can use to develop their own ideas and share them as to how to be an effective leader within their respective organizations. Community centers and other meeting places within the Iranian-American (and other diaspora) communities could be used to encourage in-person meetings wherever possible, which are quite valuable for networking and direct follow-up. In addition, modern social media technologies such as Google Hangouts (Google Talk), Skype, BlueJeans and other videoconferencing services, Twitter, Tumblr and other posting services, Meetup, and a variety of other technological systems have facilitated virtual communities that can be tailored more specifically, while allowing greater flexibility across participants' schedules and geographical separation. Such virtual communities can also be rendered in a multilingual environment (Farsi as well as whichever languages are in common use in a given country) while providing easily accessible, searchable databases and FAQs for interested participants. In this way, Iranian women at various levels of their career from students through managers, and in fields from retail to engineering, fashion to banking,

would be able to answer each other's questions and provide valuable, hands-on information and mentorship.

The researcher also recommends seminar-based courses at the undergraduate level and before, which more systematically note and discuss the factors and strategies that available literature and the results of this study have linked to effective leadership. Pertinent course topics would include the nature of authentic leadership itself (transformational and otherwise), developing a workable mission and vision, inspiring the team, mentorship, focus and motivation, engagement of the team, and teamwork and productive interactions. An important element to these course options would be electives that go beyond discussions of and training for leadership geared toward the undergraduate population as a whole, and furnish more specific training relevant to the Iranian women community in particular. Such courses would not only focus on women in leadership and the specific challenges they face, but also explore and discuss concerns specific to minority communities and especially smaller immigrant communities such as the Iranian-American communities. This is an important consideration since, as this study has demonstrated, Iranian-American women face specific obstacles - both in attaining and in exercising leadership - that are unique to them and quite distinct from the American (especially native-born) mainstream and also from other minority communities, especially those that are larger and more established. Therefore the most relevant training would incorporate these factors in some fashion, and thus the courses might be designed along the lines of, for example, the leadership and career challenges of smaller minorities, especially more recent immigrants such as those from Middle Eastern countries like Iran.

The researcher likewise recommends management training for large corporations who want to encourage the best practices for leadership, again wherever possible including the unique factors and hurdles faced by women in small immigrant communities such as the Iranian-American community. Other possibilities include workshops within the Iranian-American and other diaspora communities to help convey the strategies and practices that have been most valuable for previous generations of Iranian-American women, and mentorship and networking platforms to help younger Iranian-Americans, and women in particular, to train under and learn from more experienced leaders—a factor commonly cited as being helpful by participants in this very study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to examine and research the success strategies of emerging Iranian-American women in leadership positions. Although there was a relative lack of detailed personal information based on available historical sources on Iranian women throughout Iran's ancient history, there is still much to be noted especially from today's successful Iranian-American women in leadership positions. As noted, the findings thus obtained have interesting implications for the broader community and for the Iranian-American community in particular, with a foundation that can be built upon with further studies. Some recommendations for future research would be to perform:

1. An examination of Iranian women diaspora in other countries and a comparison with aspiring women leaders within Iran itself. In part due to the recent social and economic upheavals in Iran even before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iranians constitute a significant global diaspora scattered throughout the Middle East

(especially Turkey and United Arab Emirates), North and South America (esp. Canada, the US, and Brazil), Western Europe, Malaysia, Australia, and East Asia (Hakimzadeh, 2006). Naturally, the cultural milieus and social contexts for these various diasporas differ greatly from each other and from those of Iranians in Iran itself, and it is therefore instructive to consider both the similarities and differences of the experiences of Iranian women in each case, so as to help inform and clarify the role of culture and environment in Iranian women's aspirations, and the ways in which the women manage these obstacles.

2. A comparative examination between Iranian women, both in Iran and in the Iranian diaspora, in or aspiring to leadership positions versus women from other Middle Eastern countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Bahrain. As noted before, Iran stands out in the Middle East in its history of strong, effective, and highly respected women leaders stretching back to its ancient era, during and after the reigns of Cyrus and his successors, as well as in the greater openness of its economy to women (Iranian Women, 2015). This was true even a decade ago, when Iran was under the thumb of a much more restrictive government. For example, Erlich & Scheer (2007) noted that "In Iran, women make up over 60 percent of university students, and they hold high-level jobs in universities, medical fields, and government." Therefore, it is worth exploring whether this situation has translated into greater tangible opportunities for women in Iran to attain and exercise leadership in a variety of societal domains.
3. More closely parsed study stratifying Iranian-American women and success

strategies on the basis of original family income level, immigrant status, years in the host country, field of expertise, religion (e.g., Muslim or Jewish), and location (e.g., Los Angeles or elsewhere). Even before Khomeini's revolution, many Iranians, especially from the educated classes, had gone abroad as students or professionals working in the West, starting in the late 1950's, and by the late 1970's, Iranians were the largest group of foreign students in US universities (Hakimzadeh, 2006). After the revolution, many decided to stay on in the West, and were joined by professionals, religious and ethnic minorities, royalist sympathizers, dissidents, and journalists (Hakimzadeh, 2006; Parsa, 2016; Mafinezam, 2011). As a result, the Iranian Diaspora is quite diverse, varying significantly from country to country and across migration waves. In some cases, due to both the demographic skew of the first post-1979 migration and restrictive immigration laws strongly favoring skilled migration, Iranians abroad are disproportionately from the professional and educated classes, and thus Iranian women overseas may differ substantially from their counterparts in Iran (Mafinezam, 2011). In other cases, such as in the United States and Britain, immigration is based around family reunification which, at least in recent years, has allowed for a broader cross-section of Iranians to enter (Kandel, 2016; American Immigration Council, 2016).

4. Comparative studies of Iranian-American women versus men leaders examining the same factors, and likewise incorporating measurements of EI, may be useful. As noted previously, male and female leaders in aggregate seem to differ in salient aspects, such as in the empathy component of EI (Lopez-Zafra & Gartzia,

2014; Siegling, Sfeir, & Smyth, 2014) and in women's tendency towards transformational leadership. Likewise, prior studies of ethnic Iranians and leadership (e.g. Amin, 2006) have aggregated data from both men and women leaders without necessarily parsing them by gender. Given this study's findings pertaining to themes on EI and the emphases placed on specific qualities by Iranian-American women participants, it might be instructive to compare to Iranian men leaders, thus controlling for other factors, including different ethnicity and national origin, in understanding the nature needs for those in leadership positions.

5. A research study examining attitudes of the younger generation of Iranian women leaders versus those of the older generation would also provide interesting results. As noted, many in Iran's younger generation, especially its girls and young women, are dissatisfied with the restrictions imposed by Iran's ruling clerics and yearn for comparative freedoms, both those enjoyed in the West and in Iran itself in the pre-Islamic era (Spindle, 2015). It might then be suspected that younger Iranian women might approach the topic of leadership itself in a different manner compared to their elder counterparts, which a systematic study might be able to elaborate upon.
6. A comparison of the strategies and important factors among leaders in the Iranian-American community versus other ethnic diasporas. A number of other countries also have very widespread global ethnic Diasporas, for similar or very different reasons from the Iranian Diaspora after 1979. Examples include the Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, Irish, Moroccans, Indians, and Filipinos (Cohen, 2008). All

of these countries have substantial overseas populations in Europe, North America, eastern Asia, South America, and often Australia and Africa as well. In each case, the cultural, religious, economic, political, historical, and social background of the Diasporas differs from that of the Iranian example, as do the status and relative opportunities for women. It may therefore be quite informative to consider and examine women's leadership prospects in each case.

Final Thoughts

During the process of conducting and analyzing research for this study, the author was intrigued by the common themes that emerged. By bracketing her own preconceived notions about what success consisted of, she was surprised at the outcomes from the study, both in the common factors and in the distinctive variations that emerged among the group of participants studied. Reflecting on her own personal journey to success, the researcher was not only inspired and empowered by hearing about the participants' respective journeys, but also encouraged to use the vicarious experience which she had, in effect, documented in aggregate, and apply it to help herself excel in her own career. This was made possible in large part by the systematic examination of leadership afforded by this study. Leadership is often regarded as subjective or even intangible, and thus difficult to study as a distinct phenomenon. However, the investigations undertaken here revealed systematic patterns about leadership and what makes good leadership possible, as well as shining a light on distinct and concrete success strategies that the researcher could herself adopt in her own career. The mentorship and networking components of leadership were especially relevant and informative for the researcher.

The researcher likewise hopes that future Iranian women leaders will be able to use this information productively and apply it to their own journeys, to make a substantive difference in

their careers and in the realizations of their own personal objectives. The findings of this research are relevant in many ways to many different people, but above all, the researcher strives to help spread the message that leadership is attainable for those of many backgrounds, including to Iranian women facing cultural and historical barriers, and that there are tangible lessons that can be learned and applied in the path to success. In fact, this inspirational factor emerged as one of the most fascinating and heartening aspects of the entire study. If it were possible to start the study again from scratch, the researcher would likely focus more on designing interview questions to document the participants' overcoming of personal and community adversity, and in coding and collating their responses in such a way as to provide practical counsel for aspiring Iranian women seeking to surmount their own hurdles in their path toward leadership, overall success and accomplishment.

In addressing aspiring Iranian women leaders on this topic, the researcher perceives that the most important lesson for them to take home is that traditional notions of leadership often fall well short of a much more complex and interesting reality. In particular, the transactional, top-down picture of leadership, common in both Iran and the United States, represents an imperfect and in many ways flawed model of leadership. By contrast, the transformational style—to which women leaders are likely more naturally inclined—is not only an acceptable style, but in many ways far more effective in accomplishing a leader's true goals. Empathy is not a weakness, but a strength that can be harnessed, and Iranian women in particular may be especially well-poised to exercise such leadership by tapping into the component of emotional intelligence that corresponds to empathizing and better connecting with the members of one's group.

It is also worth considering the importance of culture and the Iranian diaspora community as part of the unique circumstances that aspiring Iranian women leaders face. The Iranian culture

is sometimes viewed as a hindrance, both as a result of the restrictions introduced by Iranian clerics after 1979 and also due to the minority status and foreignness of Persian culture in the United States and other Western countries. As noted previously, the relative role of Islam was not thoroughly addressed in this study due to its focus on an Iranian Diaspora population, and this cultural feature may be of interest to address in future investigations.

In any case, Iran's culture is also exemplary, even compared to Western countries, for the respect it has long accorded to women in high places, able to balance out the many often conflicting demands of a leader. In fact, historical consideration can be surprisingly supportive of women's aspirations toward transformational leadership, not only through remarkable and globally recognized examples like France's Joan of Arc, but also the many shining instances from Iran's own history. Navigating the complexity of such an ancient culture in a foreign land can be very challenging, which is another reason that aspiring leaders should seek out a mentor who can empathize with them.

In short, aspiring Iranian women, both in Iran and in the diaspora overseas, face a series of challenges yet also opportunities that are unprecedented in modern history. Even as many women in Iran even today are still campaigning for basic rights, the younger generations are embracing the freedoms and broader horizons that have long been identified with Western democracies. Yet from the ancient history of Persia to the most up-to-date research studies about leadership itself, Iranian women have every reason to take heart in their strivings toward leadership. They are part of a great tradition that is both remarkably ancient yet also capable of adapting to modern realities, and they help to keep that tradition strong by never flagging in their own aspirations.

REFERENCES

- Aaltio, I., & Takala, T. (2007). Charismatic leadership and ethics from gender perspective. *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies*, 12(2). Retrieved from http://ejbo.jyu.fi/articles/0901_6.html
- Abrahamian, E. (1982). *Iran between two revolutions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Abramson, B., & Ballabon, J. (2016, June 13). *Five things standing in the way of Hillary Clinton's path to the White House*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/2016/06/13/five-things-standing-in-the-way-of-hillary-clintons-path-to-the-white-house-commentary.html>
- Agassi, J. B. (1989). Theories of gender equality. *Gender & Society*, 3(2), 160-86.
doi:10.1177/089124389003002002
- Akgunduz, A. (2010). *Introduction to Islamic law: Islamic law in theory and practice*. Rotterdam, NY: IUR Press.
- Al Marzouqi, A. H., & Forster, N. (2011). An exploratory study of the under-representation of Emirate women in the United Arab Emirates' information technology sector. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 30(7), 544–62.
doi:10.1108/02610151111167016
- Allen, B. (n.d.). *Benazir Bhutto: Favored daughter*. New York, NY: New Harvest.
- American Immigration Council. (2016, August 12). *How the United States immigration system works*. Retrieved from <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-united-states-immigration-system-works>

- Amin, F. (2006). *Success strategies of Iranian American leaders* (Order No. 3213338). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses A&I: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (304908351).
- Ansari, A. (2009, June 16). *Iranian-Americans cast ballots on Iran's future*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/06/12/iran.elections.voting/>
- Atossa. (2011). In *Encyclopedia Iranica*. Retrieved from <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/atossa-achaemenid-queen>
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2002). *Developing potential across a full range of leadership: Cases on transactional and transformational leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Babak, M. (2015, October 5). *Trendy Tehran: Meet the female entrepreneurs breaking boundaries in Iran*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/trendy-tehran-meet-female-entrepreneurs-breaking-boundaries-iran-1522490>
- Babbie, E. R. (1992). *The practice of social research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Baker, P. L., Smith, H., & Oleynik, M. (2014). *Iran: The Bradt travel guide*. Bucks, UK: Bradt.
- Bar-On, R., Brown, J. M., Kirkcaldy, B. D., & Thom  , E. P. (2000). Emotional expression and implications for occupational stress: An application of the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). *Personality and Individual Differences*, 28(6), 1107-1118. doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00160-9
- Bass, B. M. (1996). *A new paradigm of leadership: An inquiry into transformational leadership*. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

- Beldoch, M. (1964). Sensitivity to expression of emotional meaning in three modes of communication. In J. R. Davitz et al., *The Communication of Emotional Meaning* (pp. 31-42). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Berlin, A. (2001). The book of Esther and ancient storytelling. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 120(1), 3-14. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3268590>
- Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Bernet, R., Welton, D., & Zavota, G. (2005). *Edmund Husserl: Critical assessments of leading philosophers*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Berrebi, C., Martorell, F., & Tanner, J. C. (2009). Qatar's labor markets at a crucial crossroad. *The Middle East Journal*, 63(3), 421-42. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/external_publications/EP20090625.html
- Bhutto, B. (1988). *Daughter of the East*. London, UK: Hamilton.
- Bingham, M. (1994). Joan of Arc and women's medieval military tradition: A lesson plan. *Social Education*, 58(2), 71-73. Retrieved from <http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/se/5802/580202.html>
- Blatherwick, H. (2002). *Profits, gods and kings: Islamic, Egyptian and Persian cultural strands in Sirat Saif ibn Dhi Yazan*. London, UK: Brill.
- Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1975). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A phenomenological approach to the social sciences*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Bradford, A. (2015, March 23). *Deductive reasoning vs. inductive reasoning*. Retrieved from <http://www.livescience.com/21569-deduction-vs-induction.html>

- Brumberg, D. (2001). *Reinventing Khomeini: The struggle for reform in Iran*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Brandt, A. M. (1978). *Racism and research: The case of the Tuskegee syphilis study*. Retrieved from https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/3372911/Brandt_Racism.pdf
- Bushe, G. (2001). *Clear leadership*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.
- Capeheart, L., & Milovanovic, D. (2007). *Social justice: Theories, issues, and movements*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Cavazotte, F., Moreno, V., & Hickmann, M. (2012). Effects of leader intelligence, personality and emotional intelligence on transformational leadership and managerial performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(3), 443–455. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.10.003
- Çavdar, G., & Yaşar, Y. (2014). Moving beyond culturalism and formalism: Islam, women, and political unrest in the Middle East. *Feminist Economics*, 20(4), 33-57. doi:10.1080/13545701.2014.933858.
- Chamlan, L. (2009). *Ahmadinejad's quest for leadership: Representations of regional order in the Gulf Region*. Norderstedt: GRIN Verlag.
- Check, C. (2014, May 29). *St. Joan of Arc: A guide for every age*. Retrieved from <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2014/st-joan-arc-a-guide-for-every-age>
- Cheema, A. A. (1985). *Poverty in Pakistan: Some new dimensions*. Islamabad, Pakistan: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics.
- Ciarrochi, J. V., Chang, A., & Caputi, P. (2000). A critical evaluation of the emotional intelligence construct. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 28(5), 539–561. doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00119-1

- Coetzee, C., & Schaap, P. (2005). The relationship between leader behavior, outcomes of leadership, and emotional intelligence. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 31(3). doi:10.4102/sajip.v31i3.207
- Cohen, R. (2008). *Global diasporas: An introduction*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Conger, J. A., & Hunt, J. G. (1999). Charismatic and transformational leadership: Taking stock of the present and future. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 121-128. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00012-0
- Collins, J. (2001). *Good to great*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Conway, J. M. (2000). Managerial performance development constructs and personality correlates. *Human Performance*, 13(1), 23–46. doi:10.1207/S15327043HUP1301_2
- Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Covey, S. (2004). *The 8th habit: From effectiveness to greatness*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crossman, A. (2016). *What's the difference between deductive and inductive research?*
Retrieved from <http://sociology.about.com/od/Research/a/Deductive-Reasoning-Versus-Inductive-Reasoning.htm>
- Curry, A. (1993). *The Hundred Years War*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Dabke, D. (2016). Impact of leader's emotional intelligence and transformational behavior on perceived leadership effectiveness: A multiple source view. *Business Perspectives & Research*, 4(1), 27-40. doi:10.1177/2278533715605433

- Daryaei, T. (2009). *Sasanian Persia: The rise and fall of an empire*. London, UK: I. B. Tauris & the Iran Heritage Foundation.
- Dawda, D., & Hart, S. (2000). Assessing emotional intelligence: Reliability and validity of the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) in university students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 28, 797-812. doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00139-7
- De Bellaigue, C. (2012, September). *Talk like an Iranian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/09/talk-like-an-iranian/309056/>
- Dehghan, S. K. (2016, February 29). *Iran set to elect record number of women into parliament*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/29/iran-elect-record-number-women-parliament-parvaneh-salahshori>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp.1-19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Department of Homeland Security. (2015). *Definition: Permanent resident alien*. Retrieved from https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/data-standards-and-definitions/definition-terms#permanent_resident_alien
- Der neue Pauly. (1996). Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.
- DeVries, K. (1999). *Joan of Arc: A military leader*. Stroud, UK: Sutton.
- DiMarco, N. (2015). Benazir Bhutto: Personality, beliefs, and the empowerment of women. In J. Krasno, S. LaPides, J. Krasno, & S. LaPides (Eds.), *Personality, political leadership, and decision making: A global perspective* (pp. 245-262). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/ABC-CLIO.

- Dionne, S. D., Yammarino, F. J., Atwater, L. E., & Spangler, W. D. (2004). Transformational leadership and team performance. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17, 177-193. doi:10.1108/09534810410530601
- Doe, R., Ndinguri, E., & Phipps, S. A. (2015). Emotional intelligence: The link to success and failure of leadership. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 19(3), 105-114.
Retrieved from <http://www.alliedacademies.org/academy-of-educational-leadership-journal/>
- Drever, E. (1995). *Using semi-structured interviews in small-scale research: A teacher's guide*. Edinburgh, Scotland: SCRE.
- Duff-McCall, K., & Schweinle, W. (2008). Leadership and women. In M. A. Paludi, M. A. Paludi (Eds.), *The psychology of women at work: Challenges and solutions for our female workforce, Vol 1: Career liberation, history, and the new millennium* (pp. 87-99). Westport, CT: Praeger/Greenwood.
- Duncan, P. K., & Skarstad, K. (1995). *How women administrators are perceived by others: A case study examining the relationship between leadership temperament, use of power, and success*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, October 11-14, 1995).
- Dusinberre, E. R. (2003). *Aspects of empire in Achaemenid Sardis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & Van Engen, M. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire: A meta-analysis comparing men and women. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 569–591. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.129.4.569

- Eberstadt, N., & Shah, A. (2012, June 1). *Fertility decline in the Muslim world: A veritable sea-change, still curiously noticed*. Retrieved from <http://www.hoover.org/research/fertility-decline-muslim-world>
- Edmonds, W. A., & Kennedy, T. D. (2013). *An applied reference guide to research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Egan, J. (n.d.). *Joan of Arc as military commander*. Retrieved from <http://www.stjoan-center.com/military/johnegan.html>
- Ejaz, K. (2010). *How'd they do that? In the Persian Empire*. Hockessin, DE: Mitchell Lane.
- Elamin, A. M., & Omair, K. (2010). Males' attitudes towards working females in Saudi Arabia. *Personnel Review*, 39(6), 746–66. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/loi/pr>
- Esfandiari, H. (n.d.). *The women's movement*. Retrieved from <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/womens-movement>
- Extremera, N., Fernández-Berrocal, P., & Salovey, P. (2006). Spanish version of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence test (MSCEIT). Version 2.0: Reliabilities, age and gender differences. *Psicothema*, 18(1), 42–48. Retrieved from <http://www.psicothema.com/english/presentation.asp>
- Fabre-Serris, J., & Keith, A. (2015). *Women and war in antiquity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Falls, C. B. (1950). *Elizabeth's Irish wars*. London, UK: Methuen.
- Fambrough, M. J., & Hart, R. K. (2008). Emotions in leadership development: A critique of emotional intelligence. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(5), 740-758. doi:10.1177/1523422308323542

- Farhid, T. (2011, December 28). *Women in ancient Persia*. Retrieved from <http://tarafarhid.blogspot.com/2011/12/women-in-ancient-persia.html>
- Farmaian, S. F., & Munker, D. (2006). *Daughter of Persia: A woman's journey from her father's harem through the Islamic Revolution*. New York, NY: Crown.
- Farrokh, K. (2015). *The Persian lioness: Iranian women in history*. Retrieved from <http://kavehfarrokh.com/iranica/the-women-of-persia/the-persian-lioness-iranian-women-in-history/>
- Fernandez-Armesto, F. (1988). *The Spanish Armada: The experience of war in 1588*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Ferrier, R. (1999). Women in Safavid Iran: The evidence of European travelers. In *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (pp. 383-406).
- Fraioli, D. A. (2005). *Joan of Arc and the Hundred Years War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Frye, R. N. (1963). *The heritage of Persia*. Cleveland, OH: World Pub.
- Gallant, M., & Pounder, J. S. (2008). The employment of female nationals in the United Arab Emirates (UAE): An analysis of opportunities and barriers. *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, 1(1), 26–33.
doi:10.1108/17537980810861493
- Garner, P. W., & Estep, K. M. (2001). Empathy and emotional expressivity. In J. Worrell (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of women and gender: Sex similarities and differences and the impact of society on gender* (Vol 1., pp. 391–402). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- George, J. M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of EI. *Human Relationships*, 53(12), 1027–1041. doi:10.1177/0018726700538001

- Gharipour, M. (2013). *Persian gardens and pavilions: Reflections in history, poetry and the arts*. London, UK: I.B. Tauris.
- Ghosh, P. (2012). *Iran: The long lasting legacy of the 1953 U.S./CIA coup*. Retrieved from <http://www.ibtimes.com/iran-long-lasting-legacy-1953-uscia-coup-214329>
- Ghorashi, H., & Tavakoli, N. (2006). Paradoxes of transnational space and local activism: Iranians organizing across borders. *Focaal*, 2006(47), 90-102. Retrieved from <http://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/focaal/2006/47/focaal470108.xml>
- Gillis, M. (2016). Iranian Americans. *Countries and their Cultures*. Retrieved from <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Iranian-Americans.html>.
- Girgis, M. (1996). *Women in pre-revolutionary, revolutionary and post-revolutionary Iran*. Retrieved from http://www.iranchamber.com/society/articles/women_prepost_revolutionary_iran3.phphttp://www.iranchamber.com/society/articles/women_prepost_revolutionary_iran3.php
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (2011, April 29). *The brain and emotional intelligence: Are women more emotionally intelligent than men?* Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-brain-and-emotional-intelligence/201104/are-women-more-emotionally-intelligent-men>
- Guy, J., Morgan, K. O., & Morrill, J. (1992). *The Oxford history of Britain*. Oxford, UK: University Press.
- Gwet, K. L. (2012). *Handbook of inter-rater reliability: The definitive guide to measuring the extent of agreement among raters*. Gaithersburg, MD: Advanced Analytics, LLC.

- Hackman, M. Z., Furniss, A. H., Hills, M. J., & Paterson, T. J. (1992). Perceptions of gender-role characteristics and transformational and transactional leadership behaviours. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 75, 311-319. doi:10.2466/PMS.75.4.311-319
- Hakimzadeh, S. (2006, September 1). Iran: A vast diaspora abroad and millions of refugees at home. *Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/iran-vast-diaspora-abroad-and-millions-refugees-home>.
- Harati, L. W. (2013, January 1). *Relationship between emotional intelligence and ethical decision making in educational leaders* (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University). Available at ProQuest Dissertations & Theses LLC.
- Hashemi, M. (2016). Social mobility among poor youth in Iran. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, 76.
- Heckel, W. (2008). *Who's who in the age of Alexander the Great*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Heidegger, M. (1988). *Hegel's Phenomenology of spirit*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Heit, E., & Rotello, C. M. (2010). Relations between inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 36(3), 805-812. doi:10.1037/a0018784
- Hernon, I. (2013). *Fortress Britain: All the invasions and incursions since 1066*. Stroud, UK: The History Press.
- Higgs, M. J., & Dulewicz, V. (1999). *Making sense of emotional intelligence*. Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson.

- Hoodfar, H. (1999). The women's movement in Iran: Women at the crossroads of secularization and islamization. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 7(14), 201. doi:10.1016/s0968-8080(99)90101-5
- Humphreys, J. H., & Einstein, W. O. (2004). Leadership and temperament congruence: extending the expectancy model of work motivation. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 10(4), 58-79. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/jlo>
- Isfandiyari, H. (1997). *Reconstructed lives: women and Iran's Islamic revolution*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Israeli, O. (2013). Twilight of colonialism: Mossadegh and the suez crisis. *Middle East Policy*, 20(1), 147-156. doi:10.1111/mepo.12011
- Jackson-Laufer, G. M. (2009). *Women leaders of Africa, Asia, Middle East and Pacific: A biographical reference*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris.
- Jahandideh, M., & Khaefi, S. (n.d.). *Women's status during the Safavid period*. Retrieved from <http://www.wseas.us/e-library/conferences/2011/Lanzarote/SOSOMACTS/SOSOMACTS-22.pdf>
- Jayaram, V. (2015). *Gender equality and status of women in Zoroastrianism*. Retrieved from <http://www.hinduwebsite.com/zoroastrianism/gender.asp>
- Jones, J. H. (1981). *Bad blood: The Tuskegee syphilis experiment*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Kabasakal, H., & Bodur, M. (2002). Arabic cluster: A bridge between East and West. *Journal of World Business*, 37(1), 40-54. doi:10.1016/S1090-9516(01)00073-6
- Kandel, W. A. (2016, February 17). U.S. family-based immigration policy. *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R43145.pdf>

- Keddie, N. R. (1981). *The roots of revolution: An interpretive history of modern Iran*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Kemp, L. J., Madsen, S. R., & Davis, J. (2015). Women in business leadership: A comparative study of countries in the Gulf Arab states. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 15(2), 215-233. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/ccm>
- Kennedy, H. (2007). *The great Arab conquests: How the spread of Islam changed the world we live in*. Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo.
- Khan, S. H. (2001). *Poverty in Pakistan: A nutritional, health, and social income perspective*. Retrieved from <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.391072>
- Kinzer, S. (2003). *All the Shah's men: An American coup and the roots of Middle East terror*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Kishi, K. (2015, December 16). Iran's female dynamos. *United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*. Retrieved from <http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2015/dec/16/irans-female-dynamos>
- Kreis, S. (2009). *Lectures on ancient and medieval European history*. Retrieved from <http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/joan.html>
- Kreitz, P. A. (2009). Leadership and emotional intelligence: A study of university library directors and their senior management teams. *College & Research Libraries*, 70(6), 531-554. Retrieved from <http://crl.acrl.org/content/70/6/531.abstract>
- Kriegel, U., & Williford, K. (2006). *Self-representational approaches to consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kuiper, K. (2010). *The 100 most influential women of all time*. New York, NY: Britannica Educational.

- Kuhrt, A. (1995). *The ancient Near East*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Kurzman, C. (2004). *The unthinkable revolution in Iran*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kytzler, B. (1994). *Frauen der Antike: Von Aspasia bis Znoibia*. Zurich, Switzerland: Artemis.
- Latarova, V., & Pilarik, L. (2015). Predicting career decision-making strategies in women: The role of self-determination and perceived emotional intelligence. *Studia Psychologica*, 57(2), 95-114. Retrieved from <http://www.studiapsychologica.com/>
- Leadbeater, C. (2012, October 11). *Joan of Arc: The woman who shaped a nation*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/joan-of-arc-the-woman-who-shaped-a-nation-8207852.html>
- Lendering, J. (2016). *Ariobarzanes*. Retrieved from <http://www.livius.org/articles/person/ariobarzanes-2/>
- Li, Z., Gupta, B., Loon, M., & Casimir, G. (2016). Combinative aspects of leadership style and emotional intelligence. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37(1), 107-125. doi:10.1108/LODJ-04-2014-0082
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Loiacono, M. W. (2007, September). *The struggle of the women's rights movement in Iran after the Islamic Revolution*. Available at Masters Abstracts International (no. 45).
- Lopez-Zafra, E., Garcia-Retamero, R., & Berrios Martos, M. P. (2012). The relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence from a gendered approach. *Psychological Record*, 62(1), 97-114. Retrieved from <https://www.springer.com/psychology/psychology+general/journal/40732>

- Lopez-Zafra, E., & Gartzia, L. (2014). Perceptions of gender differences in self-report measures of emotional intelligence. *Sex Roles*, 70(11-12), 479-495. Retrieved from <https://www.springer.com/psychology/personality+%26+social+psychology/journal/11199>
- Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytical review of the MLQ literature. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7(3), 385-425. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(96)90027-2
- Loy, M. (2015). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2011*. doi:10.18665/sr.22379.
- Mahdi, A. A. (2004). The Iranian women's movement: A century long struggle. *The Muslim World*, 94(4), 427-448. doi:10.1111/j.1478-1913.2004.00067.x
- Mafinezam, A. (2011, September 21). The Iranian diaspora comes of age. *PBS Social*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2011/09/the-iranian-diaspora-comes-of-age.html>
- Maree, K. (2007). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (1999). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for intelligence. *Intelligence*, 27, 267-298. doi:10.1016/S0160-2896(99)00016
- Mehran, G. (2009). "Doing and undoing gender": Female higher education in the Islamic republic of Iran. *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft*, 55(5/6), 541-559. doi:10.1007/s11159-009-9145-0

- Metcalf, B. D., & Mutlaq, L. (2011). Women, leadership and development: Reappraising the value of the feminine in leadership theorizing in the Middle East. In B. D. Metcalfe and F. Mimouni (Eds.), *Leadership Development in the Middle East* (pp. 328-70). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Michelet, J. (1957). *Joan of Arc*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mir-Hosseini, Z. (2012). Sharia and national law in Iran. In *Sharia incorporated: A comparative overview of the legal systems of twelve Muslim countries in past and present*. Leiden: Leiden University Press.
- Mitchell, C. (2011). *New perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and society*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Moghadam, V. M. (2004). *Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Legal status, social positions, and collective action*. Proceedings from Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
- Mohammadi, M. (2007). Iranian women and the Civil Rights Movement in Iran: Feminism interacted. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 9(1), 1-21. Retrieved from <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol9/iss1/1>
- Moran, D. (2005). *Edmund Husserl: Founder of phenomenology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Motevalli, G. (2015, October 4). *In Iran, women show they mean business*. Retrieved from <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-wp-blm-iran-women-6d247754-6830-11e5-bdb6-6861f4521205-20151004-story.html>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nash, L., & Stevenson, H. (2004). Success that lasts. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(2), 102-109.

Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/>

Nashat, G. & Beck, L. (2003). *Women in Iran from the rise of Islam to 1800*. Urbana, IL:

University of Illinois Press.

Natanson, M. (1973). *Edmund Husserl: Philosopher of infinite tasks*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern

University Press.

Nelson, L. K. (2011). One world, one woman: A transformational leader's approach to primary ovarian insufficiency: Erratum. *Menopause*, 18(7), 830.

doi:10.1097/gme.0b013e3182270253

Neshat, G. (1980). Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 13(165), 80-5.

Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cist20/current>

National Center for Statistics and Information (2014). *Sultanate of Oman, Supreme Council for Planning Statistical Year Book*. Retrieved from

http://www.ncsi.gov.om/NCI_website/book/SYB2014/2-Population.pdf.

Nicola, B. D., Mendel, Y., & Qutbuddin, H. (2010). *Reflections on knowledge and language in Middle Eastern societies*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub.

Nicolle, D., & McBride, A. (1993). *Armies of the Muslim conquest*. London, UK: Osprey.

Ngunjiri, F. W., & Madsen, S. R. (2015). *Women as global leaders*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Obermeyer, C. M. (1994). Reproductive choice in Islam: Gender and the state in Iran and

Tunisia. *Studies in Family Planning*, 25(1), 41-51. Retrieved from

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1728-4465](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1728-4465)

- Onyango, D. O., Simatwa, E. M. W., & Ondigi, B. A. (2011). Factors that influence the participation of women in secondary school education management in Siaya District, Kenya. *International Research Journals*, 16(2), 75-81. Retrieved from www.homeaboutus.com/researchregister
- Options Narrow for Iranian Women. (2012). *Science*, 337(6098), 1024. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencemag.org/journals>
- O'Toole, J. (1996). *Leading change*. Toronto, Canada: Random House of Canada.
- Palmer, B., Walls, M., Burgess, M., & Stough, C. (2001). Emotional intelligence and effective leadership. *Journal of Leadership and Organization Development*, 22(1), 5–10. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journal/lodj>
- Parsa, J. (2016, May 5). What life looks like amid the Iranian diaspora in 'Tehranto.' *PRI's The World*. Retrieved from <https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-05-05/what-life-looks-amid-iranian-diaspora-tehranto>
- Parsons, C. (2012). *From Kant to Husserl: Selected essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pecorino, P. A. (2000). The epistemological theory of Immanuel Kant. In *Transcendental Idealism* (Chapter 5). Retrieved from http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/INTRO_TEXT/Chapter%205%20Epistemology/Transcendental_Idealism.htm
- Pendleton, C., & Zhu, O. (2011, November 8). *New feminism in Iran*. Retrieved from <http://harvardpolitics.com/world/new-feminism-in-iran/>

- Pessen, E. (1971). The egalitarian myth and the American social reality: Wealth, mobility, and equality in the “era” of the common man. *American Historical Review*, 76(4), 989-1034. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1849239>
- Pernoud, R., Clin, M., Adams, J. D., & Wheeler, B. (1999). *Joan of Arc: Her story*. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.
- Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2000). Gender differences in measured and self-estimated trait emotional intelligence. *Sex Roles*, 42, 449–46. doi:10.1023/A:1007006523133
- Phillips, E. (2011). *Esther* (Lecture 1). Retrieved from https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/otesources/17-esther/elainephillips_esther/elainephillips_esther_text/elainephillips_esther_lecture1.pdf.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R. S. Valle & S. Halling, *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp. 41-60). New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Porterfield, J., & Kleiner, B. H. (2005). A new era: Women and leadership. *Equal Opportunities International* 25(5/6), 49-56. doi:10.1108/02610150510788150
- Pourshariati, P. (2008). *Decline and fall of the Sasanian empire: The Sasanian-Parthian confederacy and the Arab conquest of Iran*. London, UK: I. B. Tauris.
- Price, D. (1811). *Chronological retrospect*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Quadrini, V. (2000). Entrepreneurship, saving, and social mobility. *Review of Economic Dynamics*, 3(1), 1-40. Retrieved from <http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~quadrini/papers/redpap.pdf>

- Quarterman, D. T. (2016). The emotional intelligence attributes and transformational leadership skills of African American men and women. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, 76.
- Raedler, S. (2015). *Kant and the interests of reason*. Berlin, Germany: de Gruyter.
- Ramchunder, Y., & Martins, N. (2014). The role of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and leadership style as attributes of leadership effectiveness. *SAJIP: South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 40(1), 1-11. Retrieved from <http://www.sajip.co.za/index.php/sajip>
- Richey, S. W. (2003). *Joan of Arc: The warrior saint*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Ridley, J. G. (1988). *Elizabeth I: The shrewedness of virtue*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Riemen, D. J. (1986). The essential structure of a caring interaction: Doing phenomenology. In P. M. Munhall & C. J. Oiler, *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (pp. 85-105). Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Rimm, S. B., & Rimm, I. (1999). *See Jane win: The Rimm report on how 1000 girls became successful*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Roudi-Fahimi, F., & Kent, M. M. (2007). Challenges and opportunities: The population of the Middle East and North Africa. *Population Bulletin*, 62(2). Retrieved from <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2008/menafertilitydecline.aspx>
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, K. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ruggles, D. F. (2000). *Women, patronage, and self-representation in Islamic societies*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

- Santos, L. G. (2011). *Contra Armada: La mayor catastrofe naval de la historia de Inglaterra*. Madrid, Spain: Ministerio de Defensa.
- Sepehrrad, R. (2003). The role of women in Iran's new popular revolution. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, (IX)2, 217-228. Retrieved from https://www.brown.edu/initiatives/journal-world-affairs/sites/brown.edu/initiatives/journal-world-affairs/files/private/articles/9.2_Sepehrrad.pdf
- Seward, D. (1982). *The Hundred Years War: The English in France*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Shavarini, M. (2009). The social (and economic) implications of being an educated woman in Iran. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(1), 132-140. Retrieved from <http://hepg.org/her-home/home>
- Sherman, E. A. & Reid, W. J. (1994). *Qualitative research in social work*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Shoamanesh, S. S. (2009). Iran's George Washington: Remembering and preserving the legacy of 1953. *MIT International Review*. Retrieved from <http://web.mit.edu/mitir/2009/online/mossadegh.htm>
- Shuckburgh, E. S. (2013). *A short history of the Greeks from the earliest times to B.C. 146*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Siegling, A., Sfeir, M., & Smyth, H. J. (2014). Measured and self-estimated trait emotional intelligence in a UK sample of managers. *Personality & Individual Differences*, 6559-64. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2014.01.027.
- Sinha, D. (1969). *Studies in phenomenology*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Skelly, J. M. (2010). *Political Islam from Muhammad to Ahmadinejad: Defenders, detractors, and definitions*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International.

- Skinner, C., & Spurgeon, P. (2005). Valuing empathy and emotional intelligence in health leadership: A study of empathy, leadership behavior and outcome effectiveness. *Health Services Management Research*, 18(1), 1-12. doi:10.1258/0951484053051924.
- Smith, B. G. (2004). *Women's history in global perspective*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Smith, W. (1967). *A dictionary of Greek and Roman biography and mythology*. New York, NY: AMS Press.
- Snapshots of Iran's Women's Movement. (n.d.). Public protests of Iran's contemporary women's movement - 2003-2006. Retrieved from <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/fall06/sanam/timeline.html>
- Spiegelberg, E. (2013). *Doing phenomenology: Essays on and in phenomenology*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Spindle, B. (2015, July 7). Iran's legions of weary young people push against the old ways. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/irans-legions-of-weary-young-people-push-against-the-old-ways-1436323115>
- Strauss, B. S. (2004). *The battle of Salamis: The naval encounter that saved Greece-and Western civilization*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Summerfield, M. R. (2014). Leadership: A simple definition. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, 71(3), 251-253. doi:10.2146/ajhp130435
- Suvorova, A. A. (n.d.). *Benazir Bhutto: A multidimensional portrait*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Talattof, K. (1997). Iranian women's literature: From pre-revolutionary social discourse to post-revolutionary feminism. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29(4), 531-558.
Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/164401>
- Tenty, T. A., & Houston, C. (2013). The Iranian Diaspora in Sydney: Migration experience of recent Iranian immigrants. *Iranian Studies*, 46(4), 625-640.
doi:10.1080/00210862.2013.784520
- Tharor, I. (2014, March). *Zack Snyder and the West should stop killing Ancient Persians*.
Retrieved from <http://time.com/17578/300-greece-persians-xerxes/>
- Turner, W. L. (2016). Exploring the correlation between cognitive and emotional intelligences with leadership performance in the public sector. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A*, 76.
- Twain, M. (1996). *Personal recollections of Joan of Arc*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2002). *Writing in the dark: Phenomenological studies in interpretive inquiry*. London, Canada: Althouse Press.
- Van Velsor, E., & Hughes, M. W. (1990). *Gender differences in the development of managers: How women managers learn from experience*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Vogt, W. P. (1999). *Dictionary of statistics and methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Weierter, S. J. (1997). Who wants to play "Follow the leader?" A theory of charismatic relationships based on charisma and follower characteristics. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 8(2), 171-198. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(97)90015-1

- Wernham, R. B. (1994). *The return of the armadas: The last years of the Elizabethan war against Spain, 1595-1603*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
- Wolpow, N. (2015, August 7). *Women's rights in Iran: Two steps back, one step forward*. Retrieved from <http://www.refinery29.com/2015/08/92009/womens-revolution-movement-iran>.
- World Economic Forum (WEF). (2014). *The global gender gap report 2014*. Retrieved from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy1/4ISR>
- Wrenn, A. (2004). Making learning drive assessment: Joan of Arc—Saint, witch or warrior? *Teaching History*, 115(1), 44-51. Retrieved from <https://www.emporia.edu/~teaching-history/>
- Zeffane, R., & Kemp, L. J. (2012) Emiratisation: Challenges of strategic and radical change in the United Arab Emirates. In T. Dundon and A. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Case studies in Global Management Strategy, Innovation and People Management* (pp. 306-314). Prahran: Tilde University Press.

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

SUCCESS FACTORS IN EMERGING IRANIAN AMERICAN WOMEN LEADERS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sanam Minoo, M.S. and Farzin Madjidi, Ed. D at Pepperdine University, because you are an Iranian-American woman leader in your organization. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is the purpose of this study is to determine the success strategies used by emerging Iranian American women leaders and what challenges are faced by Iranian American Women leaders in their leadership journey.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Review the provided interview questions.
2. Review the informed consent form.
3. Participate in 45-60 minute face-to-face interview which will be audio recorded.
4. Interview will take place at a location of your choice

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include no

anticipated risks. Possible risks/harm applicable to the subjects in the study include, but are not limited to the following: Potential Breach of Confidentiality, boredom, fatigue, potential diminished self perception.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include data for a doctoral dissertation focusing on the success strategies and challenges in Emerging Iranian-American women leaders. Additionally, this information will help in educating the younger generation of Iranian-American women leaders on their personal journey to success.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There is no compensation for participation.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OF THE INVESTIGATOR

(A "Conflict of Interest (COI)" is a situation in which financial or other personal considerations compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, an individual's professional judgment in proposing, conducting, supervising or reporting research. If there appears to be a conflict of interest (COI) or there is a COI, include this section.

1. The investigator must disclose all financial or other personal considerations that compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the investigator's professional judgment in proposing, conducting, supervising, or reporting research. Conflicts include financial as well as non-financial interests. Conflicts include financial interests (stocks, stock options, or other ownership interests, whether traded publicly or not) in a research sponsor or licensee; management roles in a research sponsor, licensee, or other company having an economic interest in the outcome of the research; and using students to perform services in which an investigator maintains an ownership interest or management role.
2. In disclosing your proprietary interest and research interest in the informed consent, you may do so in general terms, in a manner consistent with IRB requirements. At a minimum, you must disclose the nature of the interest, such as a paid consultant, a lecturer, a board member, an equity ownership, or a management or supervisory role in the sponsoring company. Such conflicts should also be disclosed to the Vice Provost for Research.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records collected for this study will be *confidential* as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, it may be necessary to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if disclosed

any instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be transcribed and coded by for validity and reliability purposes. Upon an initial coding taking place, the data will then be provided to two carefully selected doctoral peer reviewers with a similar amount of training and preparation for conducting qualitative research. They will also code the information based on what they hear from the audio interview. Their coding will be used as comparison to the researcher to ensure the accuracy of what is interpreted from your provided commentary. Upon concluding the data gathering, this information will be provided to the principal investigator and any evidence deleted from their computers. You will then be provided a copy of the transcribed notes and coding to verify the information determined from the recordings. Upon your approval this information will be used all or in part of the findings section of the dissertation.

SUSPECTED NEGLECT OR ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Under California law, the researcher(s) who may also be a mandated reporter will not maintain as confidential, information about known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he or she is required to report this abuse to the proper authorities.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or only completing the items for which you feel comfortable.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment;

however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Sanam Minoo at Sanamminoo@gmail.com and/or Dr. Farzin Madjidi at Farzin.madjidi@pepperdine.edu if you have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

APPENDIX B

Interview Recruitment E-mail Script

Dear [Name],

My name is Sanam Minoo, and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining SUCCESS FACTORS IN EMERGING IRANIAN AMERICAN WOMEN LEADERS and you are invited to participate in the study.

The purpose of this study is to determine the success strategies that Iranian-American women leaders employ to make them successful in leading a public organization. This study consists of 15 open-ended interview questions that will focus on identifying the successes and challenges that current Iranian-American women leaders have experienced in their leadership roles. I am seeking out participants to help me in this qualitative research study. Based upon specific qualifying criteria, I have determined that you would be an excellent participant for this study.

The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be conducted in-person at a location of your choosing.

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at sanam.minoo@pepperdine.edu.

Thank you for your participation,

Sanam Minoo

Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP
sanam.minoo@pepperdine.edu

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval Letter



Pepperdine University
24265 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-508-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: December 22, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Sanam Minoo

Protocol #: 16-09-385

Project Title: Success Strategies of Emerging Iranian-American Women Leaders

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Sanam Minoo:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your 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 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

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 an amendment to the IRB. Since 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 IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the 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 IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written 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 IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair



Pepperdine University
24266 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist