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The factors contributing to the perceived strength of female truck drivers

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERCEIVED STRENGTH OF FEMALE TRUCK
DRIVERS

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

by

Carlinda Tabor

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Michael Patterson, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
VITA	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
Chapter 1: The Issue	1
Background	3
Early Working Women	9
Problem Statement	11
Research Purpose	12
Research Questions	13
Assumptions	14
Limitations	15
Delimitations	16
Methodological Approach	16
Theoretical Framework	17
Related Theories and Conceptual Perspective	18
Definition of Terms	19
Significance of Conducting the Proposed Study	25
Summary	26
Organization of Study	27
Chapter 2: Literature Review	29
Overview	29
Cultural Underpinning Constructing Female Strength	31
Feminism	33
History of Working Women	47
Occupational Barriers	51
Cognitive and Behavioral Theories	79
Summary	97
Chapter 3: Methodology	99
Research Design	100
Overview of Qualitative Research	100
Overview of the Phenomenological Approach	101
Sources of Data	105
Instruments Used	107

Validity of Data Collection Instruments	109
Reliability of Data Collection Instruments	110
Data Collection Procedures.....	111
Human Subject Considerations.....	113
Plan for Reporting Findings.....	116
Chapter 4: Results	117
Data Collection Procedure	119
Data Analysis	120
Findings.....	122
Interview Questions 1-14.....	125
Summary	162
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations	167
Summary of the Theoretical Framework	169
Summary of the Methodology	171
Brief Summary of Key Findings.....	172
Research Findings.....	173
Research Implications.....	180
Research Limitations	181
Conclusions.....	182
Recommendations.....	185
Further Research	186
REFERENCES	189
APPENDIX A: Recruitment Script	227
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Letter	228
APPENDIX C: Interview Questions.....	231
APPENDIX D: IRB Approval.....	233
APPENDIX E: Interview Protocol	234

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Study Participants' Demographics	118
Table 2: Study Participant Years and Miles of Driving Experience.....	118
Table 3: Research Questions and Associated Interview Questions	122
Table 4: Notable Statements and Frequency From Interview Questions	123
Table 5: Research Questions, Correlated Interview Questions, Notable Statements, and Themes.....	163
Table 6: Themes, Codes, and Number of Notable Responses	172

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ABSTRACT

The perceptions of women in the workforce take different forms. Customarily, the perception of women in the workforce leans toward women being somewhat docile and powerless and needing external empowerment, especially women in male-dominated/oriented fields. The literature conveys this mindset and philosophy that permeates our culture, perpetuates this perception, and influences many women. Nonetheless, women with a different reality or experience need corroboration that supports them and dispels the described cultural influences and the ensuing impact on the next generation. This study investigated women in the trucking industry to unveil the factors contributing to women's innate strength. This qualitative study uses a phenomenological approach, focusing on female commercial truck drivers working in the United States and Canada. The use of purposive sampling provided a basis for selecting the study participants. The participants include 14 female truck drivers, 28 to 75 years old. Individually their lived experience extends from 4 to 44 years, with 250,000 miles to over 4,000,000 miles as professional long-haul drivers. Data collected through interviewing the study participants revealed a broad range of developed capabilities, evolved mental acuity, intrinsic strengths, and several factors contributing to their success. The study's findings brought to light authentic equality between men and women and their innately endowed differences in the same occupation performing the same work. These women excel and are in several ways superior in performance without the aid of social, political, or governmental programs of equity. Lastly, the lived experiences of the study participants presented evidence of female strength, her ability to forge through life, and make agentic choices to overcome seen and unseen obstacles and impediments as God describes an ezer kenegdo (עזר כנגדו). These women exemplified simultaneously residing in and traversing the multiple intersections of life applicable to men and women.

Chapter 1: The Issue

Regardless of an individual's sex, achieving one's personal or professional goals involves commitment, dedication, self-confidence, hard work (Gribbin, 2006), and accountability (Gringarten, 2015) to advance in a desired direction field effectively. Nonetheless, choosing an occupation, surviving the pitfalls, or remaining in a particular line of work may be more complicated than expected. Some women may find themselves experiencing additional roadblocks or a seemingly restricted ability to progress or move further in their careers (CEDA, 2013) and possibly more so in male-dominated or male-oriented fields (Hatch & Moline, 1997). The lists of experiences or obstacles impeding women's mobility appear to be an observable reality for some women (Carter, 2019; Yoder & McDonald, 1998). Various sources in the literature repeat the same perspectives regarding the impediments women face, women's lack of empowerment, and the impacts presumed barriers have on women and society.

The literature has a singular focus on barriers and bias that results in an atmosphere, a culture, and a socially constructed ethos that engulfs the working world of both men and women. This ethos promotes an outlook that dismisses genuine empowerment and merit-based maturity from diligence, hard work, and sacrifice (Boston, 2019). The outcome is a seemingly low opinion of what women can do on merit and a one-dimensional solution to all the issues working women might face (Rowe, 2009). Yet, not considering that women in a wide assortment of professions seem to tap into those innate signals, internal messages, and a fundamental drive that empowers them to overcome almost any obstacle encountered. Whatever these natural, underdeveloped, or learned qualities are, they tend to receive little to no attention due to an all-consuming atmosphere or ethos and the socialization of presumed bias within which women must attempt to thrive. Identifying these factors, agency, or qualities that some women possess

offers a pathway for the next generation of young women to flourish, in whatever capacity they choose, including the trucking industry, despite the ethos.

For almost forty years as a woman, working in primarily male-oriented/dominated professions, the researcher's exposure to various sources of information created a thirst to know why women seem often depicted by other women as inferior. The U.S. education system, women's organizations, and many media outlets assert that all the workplace impediments and obstacles women encounter result from external institutional or structural barriers related to unfair biological bias, harassment, or some behaviors deemed as sexual discrimination. This structured environmental ethos where women work takes root in the clamor of inequity, inequality, biological bias, underrepresentation, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination. These terms overwhelmingly frame the culture of working women. The ethos defines and promotes an overpowering worldview of prejudice and barriers that cultivates, sustains, and perpetuates women's societal values and beliefs. Many women seem to learn a significant portion of their identity, construct, and develop their opinions about the working world. These are the messages heard for decades from every external outlet, institutions of learning at every level, national and local news outlets, magazines, newspapers, movies, television, online, and in many homes.

The repetition of the ideology of the ethos has had an all-encompassing influence on how young women see themselves as they anticipate powerlessness, expect adverse outcomes, reject personal choice and accountability, and perceive limitations in the workplace (Lent et al., 1994). Consequently, this study addressed the terms and impediments in a limited yet objective manner. Filtering out experiences of forced tokenism and the perception of differential treatment (Yoder & McDonald, 1998) assisted in comprehending women's working world while also

understanding the possible source or genesis of why some women instinctively triumph and excel.

Background

Some women employ internal dialogue and impetus to overcome barriers and obstacles that empower them to succeed (Zytowski, 1969), working alongside men in male-dominated/oriented industries (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). The research identified those internal dynamics and maybe the external considerations that propel some women to fulfill their personal and professional goals regardless of a cultural mindset with a singular focus on possible limitations faced. Much of the research through the literature spoke about how women felt (Price, 1992) or what they perceived happening in a particular environment (Tingle et al., 2014). Many references to bias in the literature used and described the same or similar evidence of discrimination. These examples included a disregard for women's opinions, experiencing condescension in tone (Cortina & Magley 2009), male colleagues arriving late to meetings, ignoring phone calls, and dirty looks and glares (Pearson et al., 2001), and men interrupting women during meetings (Loftus-Farren, 2018).

In many instances, the ethos primarily focuses on comparing women to men. The conclusions presuppose that one set of gendered traits and characteristics are the only standards for both in most scenarios (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000) rather than assessing each sex as its distinct entity uniquely contributing to a workforce or a particular field. Women's perceptions and prejudices about men and the mindset women have about themselves and other women also augment barriers to advancement (Coleman, 2005; Hakim, 1995). In addition to these factors, some hindrances at their core can be more a matter of choice, age, and aspirations (Lynch &

Post, 1996), impacting women's potential and influencing their ability to maneuver through any career, but especially in a male-oriented domain (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000).

However, for some women, any career obstacle they may face is simply a motivator providing momentum rather than an impediment set for elimination (Gribbin, 2006). Hence, this phenomenon needed further research. This research explored and offered a perspective on the innate and distinctive strength that women possess while also adding to the existing literature a life-affirming sense of empowerment and liberation that young women can embrace as a benchmark as they map out their personal and professional lives. The underpinning of this study looked at women in male-oriented/dominated occupations where the mind, confidence, and drive override biology and physicality.

There are male-oriented industries where women succeed and surpass men in ability and reliability. For instance, women are better investors. Women money managers make more money and take fewer risks than men (Wilson, 1994). Video game designers, women make some of the best video games. Although women make up only 32% of designers, 52% of gamers are women (Stuart, 2011). Women tend to be more social (Jackson et al., 2001) and pay more attention to what other people think. Incidentally, this makes them better advertisers and marketers. Women often outperform men because marketers must do qualitative and quantitative research to generate market insight (Ritson, 2009).

Studies of the female brain show that blood flow in the brain is significantly greater for women, meaning women possess more extensive pathways between the left and right hemispheres (Vries & Forger, 2015). Women are better at decoding non-verbal communication, picking up nuances, tone of voice, facial expressions, and assessing character traits (Ritson, 2017). Women also excel as farmers, earning far more than their male counterparts. Female

Gynecologists succeed beyond male doctors, not because they are better at science, but because other women prefer and choose women doctors to open up about their bodies. A career in the military is another male-oriented position into which women gravitate (Blumberg, 1984).

However, an ultimate example of a male-dominated/oriented field of interest and the focus of this research is women in the trucking industry. Female truck drivers give the impression that they succeed primarily on merit. Statistically, women are safer drivers. According to American Transportation Research Institute, in 2018, female commercial drivers were safer than male commercial drivers in every significant safety behavior. Men were 20% more likely to be involved in crashes than women (Murray, 2018), accounting for 97% of large-truck fatalities (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association, 2017). Women are less impulsive, take fewer risks than men (Hartocollis, 2010), and tend to be sought and retained in some fields for those skills, traits, and reliability (Hofstede, 2016).

Existing literature rarely addressed or viewed women as purposefully and distinctively designed creatures (*New International Version Holy Bible*, 1983, Genesis 1:26-28, 2:28, 5:2; Proverbs 31:10-31; Matthew 19:4). Nor are they viewed as beings possessing tremendous strength. Strength is revealed and expressed through their influential nature, creative capacity, resourcefulness, an innate ability to order, organize and lead (Travers, 2020; Zytowski, 1969) while garnering the ability to survive through an entrepreneurial spirit with relational acuity (Hofstede, 2016). Often it is not just men who overlook women's worth and value, but women who are more biased and dismissive against other women (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). In many instances, the literature fails to acknowledge and validate the entirety of women's strengths but focuses on the conflicting subjective scenarios between men and women (Yoder & McDonald, 1998).

As women pursue their aspirations, it is distressing and confusing when their innate worth and design do not receive validation from other women (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). A seemingly constant disconnect occurs when recognizing that men and women are equal and of great contributory worth to humankind, while acknowledging that they are not the same (Wilson, 1994). Therefore, celebrating parity between the sexes depends on the lenses through which one reasonably or unreasonably views men and women and probably determines the degree of perceived or genuine sources of inequity.

Male-oriented work occurs because of pay based on physical agility and specific intellect (Duff, 1993) or where work performed results from the structure of the work (Dainty & Lingard, 2006; Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000). When attempting to cultivate and foster a culture of female empowerment, history and the foundations that created sex/gender-oriented work cannot be forgotten or rewritten to accommodate a narrow focus of the ethos for "change" predicated on a belief about the limited sameness of the sexes. The interconnection between men and women is inextricable; one does not exist without the other (Eagly & Wood, 2011; Lemkau, 1983; Marini, 1990). Both males and females bring specific and invaluable attributes, characteristics, and abilities to humanity (Vries & Forger, 2015; Van Anders et al., 2015). The issue revolves around how each is evaluated, praised, and empowered. Traditionally, the understanding was men and women possess innate traits and characteristics related to their sex. These traits and characteristics inevitably lead to specific behaviors attributed to each sex (Hofstede, 2016). The literature overwhelmingly addresses male countenance and the impact the ensuing behavior has on women, yet focuses little to no attention on female character traits and strengths without comparison to men.

Nonetheless, comparisons are meaningful among equals, except when one set of attributes (Kalender et al., 2020) becomes the only standard one judges both (Clement, 1987). Although comparisons offer a standard to assess qualifications and capability for a field or profession, especially among men, those judgments often lead to competition focused on poorly chosen comparisons of maleness and femaleness (Berdahl et al., 2018). More than men, women make these evaluations and comparisons (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005) as if to say the innate attributes of being a woman are not good enough. Women seem to devalue women's worth by focusing on arguments for and against masculine traits, male behavior (Kalender et al., 2020) and female stereotypes (Coleman, 2005).

Surprisingly, studies showed that women tend to be more sexist against other women than men. Often it was easier to point out and label men as sexist perpetrators, while women's sexist behavior often goes undetected and rarely acknowledged (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). Surprisingly, Women experience gender discrimination in judgments of competence from both men and women (Howlett, 2015; Rodica & Robu, 2016). Noted in the Florida Bar Journal, gender bias was not just a male flaw observed by attorney David Carter during over 40 years of civil law practice. He noticed that more often than not, women confided that they would not retain a woman as an attorney under any circumstances. This sentiment might have been more prevalent than most of the literature reveals (Carter, 2019).

A New York Times survey bore out the same results, with 70 percent of women indicating that they would prefer a male boss, while 50 percent of the men surveyed stated that they had no problem working for a man or a woman (Carter, 2019). It might be better for women if the outcry were to ponder what abilities women innately possess that yield achievement regardless of the industry and not so much whether the sector is male or female. Throughout

recorded history, evidence of the empowered woman abounds. When life's difficulties occur and in times of crisis, whether for personal reasons, family subsistence, or national survival, women exhibit capabilities beyond the expectation of the era and culture in which they resided. Women have taken on the double burden of family and work, when necessary (Hudson, 2011), performing many jobs deemed male-oriented, including positions of leadership, business owners, farmers, coal miners, and a host of other labor-intensive low-paid jobs according to the U.S. Department of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2010).

Historically, many occupations were accessible (Hudson, 2011). Although culture, traditions, socialization, sexual bias, and individual preferences limited the number of women performing most work outside the home. Aside from the external indicators, the factors influencing women's preferences and choices span a broad spectrum (Clement, 1987). One aspect of this research was to pay close attention to the possible attributes that can validate the worth and unique qualities women employ when challenged by possible stereotyping and male mindset while competing in male culture. Too often, research focused on comparing female character traits to male character traits (Berdahl et al., 2018; Coleman, 2005) rather than evaluating what, how, and whether feminine ways and abilities offer and merit value on their own. This research aspired to understand the unique qualities, characteristics, and drives that make women extraordinarily powerful.

Women who succeed or fail in many male-oriented professions seem to possess an innately ingrained something and can garner specific characteristics that promote achievement and victory despite possible obstacles related to their sex. Discovering the substance of those factors could lead to greater self-awareness and willingness to view presumed barriers as opportunities, broadening how women see their capacities while developing an informed

appreciation of what it might indeed mean to be a successful woman. Women, especially young women, need edification and genuine leadership from those with the power to influence a continued evolution of diversity based on skilled behavior, professional interaction, and collaboration with men.

In addition to social theory and particular policies that may lead to further advancement, young women have to discover an objective, individualized path where self-empowerment and a stable fact-based foundation to build their personal and professional lives. This groundwork would assist young women in finding validation while appreciating authentic "equality" between the sexes, acknowledging their innate strength while understanding the totality of the contributions of womankind, whether that means being CEO or homeschooling parent running a household. Otherwise, it looks as if the eventual disintegration of an orderly society may be imminent.

Early Working Women

For an accurate picture of women in the U.S. workforce, it is crucial to see the panoramic view of historical occurrences as both men and women built the nation. The necessary commitment and sacrifices involved in the founding and evolving United States took performing work and specific roles based on gender, trade training, and natural ability (Dainty & Lingard, 2006). Although unfair on its surface, men and women culturally and religiously viewed and pragmatically accepted their biologically different roles for practically engineering a nation (Chafe, 1990). Societal norms also encouraged these roles, facilitating masculine dominance, a sense of order in society, and direction for a vast, evolving nation (Blumberg, 1984).

Additionally, as with most cultures, males rarely expose females, the source of reproduction, to danger. Hence, women have tended to perform tasks involving less travel,

threat, and risk inconsistent with childbearing and nursing (Brown, 1970; Burton et al., 1977; Friedl, 1975). Child-rearing principally belonged to the mother, whose physicality produced food (Zytowski, 1969), which fostered a loving bond and sense of security for children, consequently solidifying the cultural norms in part that drove job orientation (Brown, 1970; Ember, 1983). There was men's work and women's work in developing a nation from nothing, with the occasional overlap or outlier. The other biological factor would be the physical strength of the male anatomy, which had a constraining effect on the sexual division of labor (Murdock & Provost, 1973).

In addition to the cultural, religious, biological, and social constructs contributing to women's positions in society (Eagly & Cali, 2007; Eagly & Wood, 2011; Ha, 2011; Marini, 1990) and the type of work women performed, other factors limited the single woman in the labor force. During the late 19th century, mass European immigration impacted the labor market. The education level attained by most men and women also determined their occupation. Usually, the eighth grade was as far as most people went. Then, there was the drive to fulfill the desire to marry and have children. Moreover, both parents worked outside of the home in many instances.

Although work to sustain the family sustains the nation, the Federal census defined "work" as "market work" and participation in the market economy as the only form of productive labor. This redefining of this term in the mid-twentieth century devalued women's "unpaid" work within the home. Women often identified as housewives, whether they worked outside of the house or not. The term "gainfully employed" fostered a misleading concept of women in the workforce outside the home, adding an internalized layer devaluing women's contribution to the family, which acted as a stabilizing force that supported the economy or market work (Folbre & Abel, 1989). The result has been an added element as a barrier within the ethos. The ethos

teaches that work within the home is unpaid because there isn't a specific paycheck with their name on it at the end of the week.

Problem Statement

Although women impact and participate in almost every industry to some degree, the acknowledgment of the perseverance of women beyond the external limiting factors, such as sexual bias or discrimination, consistently goes unnoticed. So far, much of the literature seems to address the possible subjective barriers or biological burdens to women succeeding in the workplace, with male-oriented occupations receiving the brunt of the criticism. Nonetheless, women achieve and excel in many fields dominated by men without the intervention of gender-based programs and special consideration due to sex. Even though the numbers may appear small, revealing the contributing factors to this triumph would go a long way in assisting women to continue to triumph in any chosen profession.

There is little research, theories, or thought focused on promoting the intrinsic factors that women always use to overcome difficulty. As a result, women tend to dismiss their authentic strength and capability while constantly comparing themselves to men and strength and ability. Women of all ages seem confused about the innate power and authority they may possess as women that would allow them to confidently progress through the various stages of professional and personal goals. They are not encouraged to value the attributes of being women but to revile and ignore them by other women in prominent and influential positions. Many of these women maintain that a woman's innate abilities have limited or no significance unless compared with men. Masculinity is the standard by which one measures the worth and value of all human traits that contribute to a vibrant society.

Research Purpose

This phenomenological inquiry aimed to identify the attributes that some women possess and embrace, as well as how these factors contribute to self-efficacy for women in professions typically held by men. This study used a small but significant sample of female truckers whose routes originate in the United States and Canada. These women traverse various parts of the United States and end their trips, work days, or work weeks in different parts of both countries. The objective was to incorporate a simple but diverse sample of women in the trucking industry who possess a full range of experiences across several states within the trucking industry. This country is vast, and every state, city, and community produces women with differing attitudes, values, and perspectives on choosing a career. Therefore, gathering information from this broad spectrum of experience, coupled with the one common factor of being female, produced robust data.

The trucking industry fulfills two significant aspects of this study. First, the potential for the purported barriers and impediments to women are present and very high due to the number of men versus the number of women working in the field. Secondly, it is the epitome of the male nature of the work. Professional truck driving encompasses all the elements characterized as a male-dominated job (Almli et al., 2001; Marini, 1990). The male-oriented job includes working outdoors, long hours, varying shifts, schedules away from home, risk-taking, high potential for danger (Shera Avi-Yonah, 2021), isolation, competition, and interactions on masculine terms (Augustine, 2018). At this stage in the research, observation, and general knowledge, the researcher sought to determine whether there is something different in how women truckers approach their occupation, the work environment, and male counterparts. This research explores

discovering what these attributes are and if self-efficacy and locus of control were vital components in empowering women in their personal and professional success.

Research Questions

This study was qualitative, following a phenomenological methodology. The phenomenological research approach endeavors to sum up the lived experiences of individuals as part of a phenomenon in a detailed description (Boeije, 2010). The phenomenological approach offered the study participants a way of describing their experiences as women in the trucking industry in their own words. This study contrasted the quantitative method with stricter measures and multiple-choice surveys. Phenomenology fostered a broad and deep understanding of women working in and succeeding in a uniquely male-oriented/dominated occupation, gaining insight into how to help more women enter this field and possibly the trucking industry with its present driver shortage. The research question consisted of a central question and associated sub-questions. What is the lived experience of female truckers as it relates to what they bring to the occupation and their ability to do such a difficult job?

Sub-questions:

- RQ1: What factors persuade women to enter, overcome impediments, and prevail over the barriers associated with male-oriented work in a male-dominated field such as trucking?
- RQ2: What role, if any, does self-belief play in the success of women in the trucking industry?
- RQ3: What role, if any, does self-efficacy play in the success of women in the trucking industry?

- RQ4: What role, if any, does the locus of control play in the success of women in the truck industry?

Assumptions

- The selected study participants could speak of their experience as women in the trucking industry's complicated, challenging, and sometimes perilous way of life.
- Proficient as a solo company employed/entrepreneurial, over-the-road, long-haul, and local, DOT accredited Commercial drivers.
- The study participants gain insight from their experiences, goals, achievements, and failures. Comprehending their lived experience may boost the number of female truck drivers or enrich the trucking industry.

The preceding research questions were the foundation for the researcher to design and develop the interview questions, exploring a specific phenomenon. In qualitative research, the research questions were the center of the research design, which maintains, concentrates, and connects all other interacting components, reflecting on why the study is worth doing, what might be going on, what is not known, and what the researcher will do (Maxwell, 2013). As dictated by the phenomenological approach, the research process encompassed deep self-reflections at the start, sample selection, data collection, data analysis, and the interpretation or inferences of that data. While attentively keeping the research questions in view, the open-ended and naturally evolving interview questions assisted the researcher in delving into the lived experiences of women truck drivers through their perceptions and own perspectives. As a result, this allowed the researcher to use the interpretations to inform, develop theory, transform policy, or take action (Lester, 1999).

Limitations

Due to the nature of qualitative research and the relatively small sample size of participants, the ability to generalize broadly had limitations. Also, gathering background data for each participant had some restrictions, given the ability or lack thereof to thoroughly and coherently express their experiences. The focus of this study was mainly on the impact of their work environment on the driver's professional ambition, initiative, and motivation while also considering the considerations affecting their private life concerning this highly relevant and exemplified male-oriented/dominated occupation. The generalized nature of qualitative data analysis found themes and patterns that might be relatively subjective, which may lead to unintended researcher bias. Although the potential exists for the results to apply to women in general and their work environments, further objective research may be needed to extrapolate the results to larger groups or other male-oriented/dominated fields. Although self-efficacy theory and locus of control may apply to men and women equally, certain aspects reflect a biblical worldview where human design is immutable (*New International Version Holy Bible*, Genesis 1:11; Eagly & Wood, 2011; Lemkau, 1983; Marini, 1990; Van Anders et al., 2015).

The researcher's worldview also encompasses several careers spanning over thirty-five years in male-oriented/dominated air, ground, and rail transportation fields. These careers include National trucking, Railroad, Fire, and Police dispatch, Airport ramp/sorting operations, Local, Heavyweight freight, Short-haul, and Long-haul Commercial truck driver. Through lived experience, the researcher acquired a unique perspective as a woman who faced many obstacles and barriers yet prevailed without inhibiting scars. The researcher was aware of potential bias and actively, intentionally, and attentively overcame any concerns with a high degree of integrity.

Delimitations

This study focused on discovering the innate or learned elements, traits, and abilities some women use to advance and succeed in a male-oriented/dominated field such as the trucking industry. The data sought related to the experiences of individuals who intentionally chose trucking as a profession or, by happenstance, found their passion. The theoretical frameworks for this study were self-efficacy theory and locus of control, which shed light on innate and learned empowerment. As participants communicated experiences, factors that distinguished themselves, and the results noted.

The data collection for this study used video conferencing via Zoom rather than in person due to the Corona virus restrictions over a short three-week period. A national women's trucking organization offered to provide volunteers to participate in the interviews associated with this research. The results of these interviews determined what factors are most predominant and impactful, acting as a force for empowerment.

Methodological Approach

The research methodology followed a qualitative approach where the participants shared their experiences and perspectives on their achievements and if self-efficacy played a part. The industry presented itself as the ideal arena to gather data. Although a challenging and usually atypical profession for a woman, the long hours, including manual labor and a degree of danger, the position is sex-neutral. Success, advancement, and the pay scale are primarily a result of ability based on spatial insight, reliability, and commitment to productivity. The group I studied consisted of women truckers successfully engaged in this typically male-oriented occupation.

The number of years on the road is essential but not as crucial as the unexpected circumstances, weather, miles, and terrain driven. Truck drivers spend anywhere from 300 to 400

miles on the road daily, up to 2500 miles per week (Free Freight, 2019), while maintaining the DOT restrictions to drive no more than 70hours over eight days (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association, 2020). Professional drivers average at least 80,000-125 000 miles per year. Drivers with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) employed as solo drivers (unaccompanied) are self-reliant and must analyze scenarios instantly and make decisions of self-determination and safety. In general, entrepreneurship is the primary avenue of career advancement (Luca, 2016), leading to becoming an owner-operator, which is, in fact, an independent, privately owned, and managed business.

The success or failure of these businesswomen depends on their skill-sets, abilities, and choices. These women were the best suited for the study to gather data strictly from a woman's perspective and lived experience. Interviews occurred via Zoom.com because of the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions on in-person gatherings. This phenomenological strategy supported collecting robust data by observing the participants interacting with their male counterparts while engaging in and performing a host of specialized responsibilities (Creswell, 2014). Interviewing the participants in their vehicles and natural work environment produced a more relaxed and authentic response to questions and allowed the researcher to observe these drivers.

Theoretical Framework

The research primarily concentrates on Albert Bandura's Self-efficacy (1986) concepts rooted in his Social Cognitive theory, focusing on the four interrelated proponents of this theoretical framework supporting his work. Bandura (1991a) proposed these four supporting elements of self-efficacy: mastery of experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states. Mastery of experience involves learning, skill development, and improved performance through practice. The result is the individual teaches themselves that they are

capable. Vicarious experiences refer to observing role models and emulating healthy high self-efficacy. The result is the individual absorbs a degree of affirming self-belief. Social and verbal persuasion expresses the impact of words on the individual's self-efficacy. Telling someone they are capable and can overcome almost any challenge can encourage, add to, and promote a developing belief in the ability to succeed. The Emotional state refers to the overall health and well-being of the individual while recognizing their ability to develop and preserve self-efficacy.

Through these four components, self-efficacy expresses an individual's belief in their competence to cope with a wide range of challenges, demands, and stress (Bandura, 1989), along with determining how much effort to expend to achieve a particular task or objective (Bandura, 2006). Bandura (1991b) also posited that self-efficacy is a self-sustaining trait, signifying that when individuals become driven to work through their issues in their way, they gain positive experiences that boost forward momentum exponentially, increasing their self-efficacy (Ackerman, 2020).

Related Theories and Conceptual Perspective

Self-efficacy and internal Locus of Control (LOC) are closely related. The spectrum of internal-external locus of control is the concept introduced by Julian Rotter, which also evolved from social cognitive theory (Halpert & Hill, 2013). Rotter differentiated between internal and external locus of control, which indicates that consequences based on preceding behavior depend on whether the individual perceives the reward as a factor of his action or independent of it (Rotter, 1966a). People with internal loc (internals) believe that they are the masters of their destinies. These individuals think and have confidence in their abilities and actions and accept that they can influence their external environments (Halpert & Hill, 2013).

People with high self-efficacy also possess a stable internal locus of control. They believe and know that they have the power that resides within them, which can alter the events of their life. In comparison, individuals with an external LOC (externals) tend to believe that external forces control their lives (Rotter, 1966a). These individuals believe that "fate" or other entities are in charge of their lives (Ng et al., 2006). The individual sees external forces or impediments as challenges to overcome, not defining or hindering them (Ackerman, 2020).

Definition of Terms

The foundation for the research depends on comprehending the intended meaning of many terms that fill the world of working women. In building this study, separating the external cloud of influences from what women think and experience is also necessary. In many instances, the literature puts forward subjective concepts to define the various terms framing the issues related to women in the workforce. The implications here are a culmination of terms objectively expressed in the literature.

- *Agency*. Agency is when a being can act (Schloossen, 2015) and reflects the individual's capacity to determine and make meaning from their environment (Houston, 2010), which intentionally influences their functioning and immediate circumstance (Bandura, 2001, 2006).
- *Biological and Physical obstacles*. Biological and physical obstacles are natural barriers that include choices made to facilitate non-career or personal desires. Women are often the caregiver for aging or infirmed family members, consisting of her or her husband's parents. In many instances, the amount of time, ability to travel, or the hours that some women can devote to a job is an obstacle to their advancement and earning potential (Zytowski, 1969).

- *Employment Barriers.* Employment Barriers that impact women include the culture of an organization, self-imposed and generalized stereotypes, organizational inflexibility (Jackson et al., 2001) in relation to work systems; perceived and actual sexist attitudes (Crowley, 2013), mentor availability (Blackmon, 2018) where men refuse (McGregor, 2019) and women are unwilling (Schneider, 1991), absence of female leaders (Vasquez & Pandya, 2019), Imposter Syndrome-self-doubt sets in (Beilock, 2019), learned helplessness (Brown & Inouye, 1978), and individual caring expectations and responsibilities including children, aged parents, and domestic duties of home life (CEDA, 2013).
- *Empowerment.* Empowerment implies giving power to, enabling something or someone, or the managerial practice of delegating the authority to make decisions. Empowerment is also a multidimensional process that enables the individual to institute control over their life and realize success (Blau & Alba, 1982), through the interrelating the act of accessing resources, using of those resource, the resulting achievements (Kabeer, 1994,) and strategically control one's destiny related to others (Mason, 2005).
- *Entrepreneurship.* Entrepreneurship occurs when an individual creates a new business venture, taking on most of the responsibility and most of the financial risks, with an internal drive to succeed primarily on their terms and prompts to control their destiny (Cetin et al., 2021; Luca, 2016; Rodica & Robu, 2016).
- *Equality.* Equality is an opportunity or substantive fairness that requires each individual to have the same or similar starting point (Perry, 2014); fairness based on the same rules applied to each individual with all-encompassing respect for persons that allows for an unequal outcome (Longstaff, 2018). Although the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VII, and

the establishment of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (U.S. Department of Labor, 1964), a lack of consensus persists in defining sex equality between the sexes and sex discrimination due to the complexity and nature of individual complaints (Turk, 2016).

- *Equity*. Equity refers to policies that distribute public benefits among citizens (Kraft & Furlong, 2020). Individuals or groups receive exact resources while recognizing that people have different circumstances, with varied aspirations, abilities, and moral sensibilities that drive them towards opportunities, yet with the same outcome (Baron & Markman, 2000).
- *Ezer* (עֶזֶר). Ezer means to be strong, (Kaiser, n.d.) an ally, a rescuer, and someone who comes expeditiously when those they love cry out for help. This is also the descriptor of the role of the Almighty God, when man calls out for His presence in Deuteronomy 33: 26, 29 (*King James Holy Bible*, 1769/1982).
- *Ezer Kenegdo* (כַּנְגְדוֹ עֶזֶר). Ezer Kenegdo used by God in Genesis 2:18 to refer to the woman He created, translated helper or helpmate in the early King James Bible (*King James Holy Bible*, 1769/1982). However, ezer Kenegdo is deeper and signifies strength as she is to be a strong ally to man (Rendsburg, 2021.)
- *Female-oriented work*. Female-oriented work identifies the existence of behavioral components observed in performing the duties of a homemaker. Such behaviors include flexibility (Stone & Hernandez, 2013), nurturing, or maternal (Zytowski, 1969). Female work tends to fall under the category of personal care. Women gravitate toward, excel at, and dominate in health care, teachers, especially preschool and kindergarten, Speech and

language pathologists, administrative assistants, Childcare providers, and Foodservice members. (International Labor Organization, 2020).

- *Gendered traits/behaviors.* Gendered Traits/behaviors combine biological and cultural influences (Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016; Van Anders et al., 2015). These characteristics begin at conception (Eagly & Wood, 2011; Lemkau, 1983; Marini, 1990) and are encouraged by modeling by the same-sex parent or both (Berdahl et al., 2018). Human males and females tend to behave differently (Ha, 2011; Stevens, 1906; Wilson, 1905) and are directly related to chromosomal and hormonal differentiation of the sexes (Arnold, 2016; Craig et al., 2004). Little girls, in general, learn in part to be outwardly female by mimicking (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009). their mothers and other women (Bonsang, 2017), while little boys develop masculine conduct through play (Edwards, 1993) from their fathers, other boys, and men (Zell et al., 2015)
- *Glass Ceiling.* Glass Ceiling is an invisible, perceived, or experiential cultural and organizational barrier impeding women from advancing or achieving career goals (Loftus-Farren, 2018), especially in senior and executive positions (Medina, 2005).
- *God.* God or Elohim (אלהים) is The Eternal Being (Lovik, 2017), pre-existing outside to time, space, and matter (Hovind, 2016), yet personal and knowable to each individual (*The New International Version Holy Bible*, 1983, Exodus 33:11, Acts 9, Romans 10:9).According to Genesis: 1-3 and Psalm 139, He is the Omnipotent Loving Creator, Omniscient Intelligent Designer, and Omnipresent Almighty Sustainer(*The King James Bible*, 1769/1982; *The New International Version Holy Bible*, 1983; *The Torah*, 1962/1999) of all living and non-living matter, within and outside the universe (Bentley, 2020).

- *Intersectionality*. A theory used to categorize people based on immutable characteristics such as race and sex, intertwining g social behavior and political identities. These receive labels of advantage and disadvantage, where inequality, discrimination, and oppression are inevitable (Crenshaw, 1989; Mann & Huffman, 2005; Rampton, 2008; Zimmerman, 2017), regardless of individual ability, accountability, or the innate nature common to all humankind (Rosen, 2022; Swartz, 2021).
- *Male-oriented work*. Male-oriented work was created mainly by and designed by men for men. As a result, these jobs draw on masculine strengths and characteristics valued by men, explicitly appealing to men (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). The field typically comprises at least 75% men (Lemkau, 1983). Usually, work is laborious, manual in nature, outdoors, and geared toward problem-solving (Dainty & Lingard, 2006). In addition to these descriptors, work retains a sense of the quality of a job with harsh outdoor conditions, dangerous, high paying, and specialist gear and attire (Wheeler, 2017). Manly jobs such as motor mechanic, infantry soldier, security, butcher, engineer, surgeon, miner, construction laborer, manufacturer, and transportation conduit (International Labor Organization, 2020) continue to follow the description above. Consequently, these jobs tend to be male-dominated.
- *The Maternal Wall*. The Maternal Wall is possibly the biological longing or a calling to be the best wife or mom she can be, with no aspirations to manage others or head an organization (Crosby et al., 2004). Some women categorize this longing and fulfillment as impediments in their careers and an obstacle to a fulfilled life (Williams & Chen, 2014).

- *Power*. Power defined as four types. First, is ability to control or possess power over others. Next, is exercising choice with the power to alter external conditions. Then, there is the cooperating power connecting unity and strength. Lastly, is power derived from self-respect, the power from within, and the internal awareness of the designed nature and societal support constructed by humanity (Rowlands, 1997).
- *Sex*. Sex refers to the observation of biological evidence of males or females based on the levels of testosterone and estrogen (Ha, 2011; Li, 2014; McIntyre & Edwards, 2009; McLeod, 2014; Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016; Stevens, 1906; Wilson, 1905; Zell et al., 2015), and the number of the X and Y chromosomes present from conception and throughout embryonic development (Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016). Female/woman (XX) refers to the historically scientific category (Arnold, 2017) where women are mothers, sisters, and wives to men and are physically, in general, capable of becoming impregnated and giving birth. Male/man (XY) refers to biologically and physically tend to be larger than women, more muscular, with greater lung capacity, and biologically produce sperm (Van Anders et al., 2015). Although men possess significantly more testosterone (McLeod, 2014), women also make this hormone. Nonetheless, testosterone is the determining factor in gendered characteristics and behavior for both females/women and males/men (Vries & Forger, 2015).
- *Sexism*. Sexism is prejudice, bias, or discrimination involving perceptions (Bonsang, 2017), actions, or attitudes related to an individual's sex, sexual behavior, or sexual preference (Thiroux & Krasemann, 2012).

Significance of Conducting the Proposed Study

The bulk of the literature and research related to women, their life, and career choices concentrates on the external obstacles presumably placed in the path of women to intentionally limit their options in specific fields and stifle their advancement. This includes the impression that workplace barriers and discrimination exist, regardless of the legitimate cause or possible contributing explanations. Additionally, many women in public and private leadership lead with a loud voice indoctrinating generations of young women into gauging their ability to succeed or hindrances in their path as the external forces of bias and sexism perpetrated by men. So much of the Peer-reviewed writings concentrate on relentlessly repeating an ideology based on the oppression of women (Boston, 2019; Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000; Loftus-Farren, 2018)

The literature primarily focuses on manufacturing and continuing a battle between the sexes to create an unattainable outcome. Even the articles addressing successful women in male-oriented occupations rarely celebrate or encourage the unique attributes women bring to a field or sector without fighting to label every male behavior or interaction as an insult to women (Crowley, 2013; Demaiter & Adams, 2009). The absence of research accurately assessing why and how self-empowered women succeed in the workforce is missing. There is also a void in the education of many young women and girls on recognizing self-empowerment as they struggle alongside men to build their lives and professions. This paper aimed to add a seldom-heard practical perspective and an authentic worldview of women in a male-oriented/dominated industry, like trucking, to the existing literature on empowering women. The findings should offer praise for women's unique design and purpose.

This study of women in trucking sought to discover what it takes for a woman to make it in a genuine male-oriented/dominated field without sex-based governmental or socially

constructed policies for the advancement of women. The research involved a profession encompassing all aspects of this domain, including outdoor work, danger, physical labor, long hours, inconsistent schedules, critical thinking, significant pay for completed tasks, and the risks associated with entrepreneurship. Some women thrive in such environments despite domination by men and any perceived or bona fide discriminatory barriers. Therefore, an added goal was to incentivize women to embrace the self fully, celebrate the innate, elevate the value of what is natural and immutable, and take hold of these truths of being a woman well before venturing out and taking their place in the world.

Summary

Women are multifaceted beings gifted to lead, manage, organize, craft, produce, and facilitate in a host of professional and personal positions (Hofstede, 2016) while also tapping into talents common to both men and women (Li, 2014). Although external forces or barriers labeled sexual bias and discrimination (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Glick & Fiske, 1997; Verniers & Vala, 2018), women innately employ attributes and skills that allow them to accomplish varying tasks simultaneously (Zytowski, 1969). These intrinsic factors that lead to overcoming potential impediments are ignored and receive little or no review or praise. As the most influential and potent creature created, the expression of being a female has many implications prompting a fusion of life choices. Consequently, it is imperative to identify the attributes and factors that encourage self-efficacy and self-empowerment in any profession, yet more so in male-oriented occupations. Unfortunately, these external forces of the ethos compel and perpetuate weakness and discourage women from recognizing, engaging, and relying on their inherent design of exceptional influence, courage, and strength that comes with being born a woman.

Therefore, it was vital to understand the elements shaping and forming women's ability to succeed in an occupation attributed to a "man's world" while also heavily impacted by culture influenced by the ethos. It was to understand what may control and steer the individual drive to achieve, the relationship between aspiring to, no matter what (Gribbin, 2006), and not expecting to succeed because of some exterior force. This research did not directly address bias or discriminatory practices beyond describing how these barriers, as described in the literature, construct an ethos that inhibits, devalues, and downplays authentic female empowerment. The approach strictly dealt with the experiences, attitudes, perspectives, and attributes embraced by women while working in the trucking industry, an ideal mail-oriented/dominated profession ripe for study.

When talented women pursue specific careers, especially in male-dominated fields and positions, their choice involves lots of factors (Bennett, 1982). Such factors include low self-concept (U.S. Department. of Education, 2015), lack of confidence in ability (Halpert & Hill, 2013), sense of low intrinsic value (Eccles, 1985; Frome et al., 2006), and lack of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1978; Judge et al., 2002). Wilson (1994) noted to counteract what appears to be essentially biological, yet heavily impacted by culture, is to understand the relationship between aspiring to and expecting to succeed. Early support and valuing of feminine traits may help women embrace the innate strength comparable to masculine self-confidence, leading to self-efficacy (Lemkau, 1983).

Organization of Study

There are five chapters offered in presenting this research study. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, theoretical framework, and comprehensive research questions and sub-questions for the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature, divided into three sections. The first sections

discuss the literature about the world or ethos in which women must maneuver. This section also provides a brief history and description of the issues surrounding and motivating the study. The second and third sections detail the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy and locus of control. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology. This chapter also details the setting for the study and the data collection process. Chapter 4 puts forth the study's findings, including all data gathered and the interpretation, answering the research questions posed. Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the entire research, including implications for the study and recommendations for practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

This literature review has three main sections. The first explored the ethos of the working world of women, with its inextricably interwoven issues that impact women, their comprehension of their worth, and their attributes in the workforce, particularly in male-oriented professions. This part of the literature review also provided a foundation for building the second section and understanding the need for the research. This inquiry used self-efficacy theory, an extension of social cognitive theory and locus of control as the theoretical frameworks to ground this exploratory phenomenological study of women truckers navigating this male-oriented profession.

Although significant research exists about women in the workforce, there is a gap in the literature addressing the factors and capacity some women use to achieve success, despite any impediments. This research study uses self-efficacy and locus of control theoretical frameworks to address the gap and examine the source and application of those attributes. The research examined how women thrive amid the ethos' cultural influences on women in the trucking industry. The literature reviewed in this section offered a brief discussion of the ideological atmosphere that engulfs women when employment becomes an option and a detailed discourse of the theoretical self-efficacy framework, which is foundational to this study.

The first section of the literature review explored the foundational underpinning of social and cultural ethos in which most women learn to function. The section also described the barriers and obstacles supporting the ethos' philosophy that fabricates a potentially inescapable worldview and atmosphere for women focusing on their sex and forces them to ignore their natural capability. The ideological structure of the ethos restrains the outlook, narrows the

mindset, and may ingrain an attitude of inferiority. Ideas and information can affect self-perception and the perceptions of the environment, whether expressed through words, the consequences of action, or the performances of others. Exposure to the failures of others can dissuade large groups of people from attempting certain activities. The resulting disbelief operates as a barrier to developing cognitive and behavioral skills (Bandura, 1978). There are several ways in which the ethos influences women in their mindset, expectations, and aspirations for their lives; learned helplessness (Brown & Inouye, 1978), Occupational Aspirations (OA), and Occupational Expectations (OE; Watts et al., 2015).

Occupational aspiration concerns the career or job an individual desires the most. Occupational expectation refers to the trade or position the individual believes they are most likely to have (Ashby & Schoon, 2010). This section reviews the consistent yet varying definitions of those barriers and obstacles, sexual bias and discrimination, perceptions (Watts et al., 2015), and the glass ceiling and the maternal wall (Belkin, 2003). It reveals the confusion created by the subjectivity which traps women, fostering a need to identify the factors and significance of self-efficacy as the means to propel women forward. It provides a general idea and a clear overview of the barriers and obstacles constructing this figurative ethos, focusing on its impact on how women see themselves in the workforce.

The second section of this literature review focused on the elements that might lead to and support self-efficacy. The literature reviewed in the previous section lays the groundwork for exposing the void, the necessity, and the atmosphere within which the literature review of this section evolves. This study used social and emotional self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), which expresses a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2006) or the confidence in one's competence to cope with a broad range of

stressful or challenging demands (Halpert & Hill, 2013). This section reviewed the literature on self-efficacy in the workplace. It described those factors that lead to the development of self-determination, self-confidence, and competency and how women may use them to overcome the effects of this ethos.

This literature review's third section concentrated on locus of control (LOC; Rotter, 1966b), precisely internal locus of control. Internal locus of control and self-efficacy are closely intertwined. The two go hand and hand (Ackerman, 2020). The spectrum of internal-external locus of control is the concept introduced by Julian Rotter (1966a), which also evolved from social cognitive theory (Halpert & Hill, 2013). According to Julian Rotter, an individual's perception of reward centers on internal or external forces, signifying that a person's LOC is where that person places the primary causation of events in his or her life (Halpert & Hill, 2013). He posited that preceding behavior depends on whether the individual perceives the reward or consequence as a factor of his action or independent of it (Rotter, 1966b). Psychologist Carol Dweck (2006) attributed this to one's mindset. She believed success comes from talent, intelligence, and education, which enhances cleverness and talent. People with an internal LOC (internals) believe that they are the masters of their destinies. These individuals think and have confidence in their abilities and actions and accept that they can influence their external environments (Halpert & Hill, 2013). In comparison, individuals with an external LOC (externals) tend to believe that external forces control their lives (Rotter, 1966b).

Cultural Underpinning Constructing Female Strength

The Research Question sought to determine the factors contributing to the perceived strength of female truck drivers. The focus was on uncovering the innate strengths of women working in a male-dominated/oriented occupation, particularly the truck industry. However,

those strengths and the contributing factors come with and become sustained by various cultural perceptions and societal ideas about women, men, and the work environment. To get to the origin of the elements shaping those perceptions and beliefs, the researcher looked back at American history when women began their fight for recognition as valuable contributors to society (Alexander, 2021).

The researcher searched through the literature to uncover the earliest source of the seemingly deeply engrained perceptions and ideas about women's strength, empowerment, and self-determination in American culture and working outside the home. The researcher's goal was to go back to the beginning to discover where men and women derived their connotations of strength. The literature appears to point to the Feminism movement and the Suffrage movements of the 19th century as the sources that began influencing the American view of how to view women and their potential strengths (Pruitt, 2022).

However, six decades ago, it seems that the feminist movement began laying a foundation that morphed into slightly different ideologies every few years (Chafe, 1990; Hoefler, 2016; Rosen, 2022). Feminism appears to be the primary origin and source of fostering attitudes and male/female workplace dynamics. The researcher considered it essential to add a detailed description of feminism beginning in the era when women's voices began receiving recognition; defining what makes women strong, independent, and self-determinant was critical.

Feminism also appeared to have a significant influence that continues to dismiss the unique characteristics and factors contributing to the strengths of being female in exchange for those strengths usually attributed to men. The ideologies of feminism in all its iterations seem to impact the perceptions that both men and women have about women working in various environments, especially in male-dominated/oriented occupations.

Feminism

The researcher provided a detailed but brief synopsis of the evolution of feminism described through what is called the Four Waves of feminism. The impact of these four waves seems to form the underpinning for the ethos. The three of the four waves of feminism hold the key to where the distinctness of being female got lost. There were four significant shifts in the feminist movement where the focus was not to celebrate and extol women's unique character, abilities, thought processes, and innate strength. On the contrary, these elements seem to devalue and dismiss women's exceptionality by narrowly defining power, strength, and influence using male attributes.

The feminist movement began in our history almost 170 years ago (Alexander, 2021). The movement aimed to validate women's worth and contributions to society using the struggle for the Right to Vote as the vehicle (Rosen, 2022). The feminist movement counteracted the culture and thinking during this era. A time that often dismissed women's intellect, their strength and the miraculous act of conceiving and bearing children, the commitment to the arduous physical labor on a farm, and the rarely recognized entrepreneurial female business owner (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2010).

The researcher paid much attention to areas of the feminist movement that appear to have the most significant influence on both women and men. This influence has become entwined with and formed the framework and atmosphere of the ethos of American culture, academic philosophies, theories, and working women's attitudes about themselves. Namely, the researcher addressed the prominent issues within the four waves that seem to have had the most significant impact on the cultural view of women's comportment, responsibilities, assumed weaknesses, and inferred diminished strengths.

The researcher provided a summary of the literature regarding the Suffrage movement, the struggle for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, an emphasis on the federal legalization of abortion nationwide, and the adoption and furthering of Intersectionality as the most recent mission of the feminist movement. The inclusion of every group, ideology, or social theory now takes precedence over safeguarding and celebrating the uniqueness of being a woman. These waves woven into the ethos engulfed women of past generations and are currently overwhelming young women today (Rosen, 2022).

First Wave Feminism

The force behind feminist activities and thought on behalf of women in the U.S. began with two principal players, Elizabeth Stanton, and Lucretia Mott. Their first organized convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in July of 1848, concentrated on obtaining rights for women, which did not include suffrage for women of African heritage like feminist Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells (Pruitt, 2022). The convention attendees passed many resolutions affirming women's equality with men and the right to vote contained in their Declaration of Sentiments. However, this movement took inspiration from other movements for rights and freedom in the U.S. and other parts of the world (Alexander, 2021).

The first documented movements for women's rights began half a century earlier in France with the French Revolution, followed by the Temperance Movement and the Abolitionist Movement. When the French Revolution began in 1789, women were an intricate part of the era's fight for economic survival and food shortages. A few years earlier, the French National Constituent Assembly adopted the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen." The declaration made little difference to the plight of women; they were still not considered citizens. The document afforded citizenship only to select members of society. Nonetheless, in 1791, the

"Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizens" reflected the preamble to the French Constitution.

In this era, women's attention was on equal rights and citizenship based on the perspective that women were just as intelligent and valuable to society as men. The same year, writer Olympe de Gouges wrote "The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen." Ms. Gouges insisted, "Women are born free and are man's equal in law. Social distinctions can be founded solely on common utility" (Gouges, 1791, p. 2). The words of Ms. Gouges inspired first-wave feminists (Alexander, 2021). The fight was successful. The 19th Amendment passed in 1919 and ratified in 1920, granted American women the right to vote (National Archives, 1919). Later in the century, feminists deemed this the first wave of feminism.

In Between the First-wave and the Second-wave

When World War II broke out, men of age received their call to war. These men left jobs, careers, farms, and high school to enlist in the Armed Forces to battle against fascism and fight the assault on the ideals of Western freedom. According to the War Manpower Commission, there was a need for men on the battlefield, and the cultural view of women changed (temporarily), and now women were seen as the secret weapon (Chafe, 1990). As men took their places on the frontlines of the war, women took their place on the assembly line (Chafe, 1990) and in jobs such as welders, sheet metal workers, riveters, ship fitters, chauffeurs, and crane operators (Jack, 2019).

Additionally, to entice more women to leave the home, magazines, newsfeeds, and national publications celebrated the heroism of women working for the war effort (Chafe, 1990). As a result of this message, the American public changed their perspective of women in the labor

force. At this time, 71% of Americans believed married women should take jobs. Whereas just four years earlier, 80% of the population, both men and women, emphatically thought it was wrong for women to work outside the home if their husbands worked. Therefore, women chose to have a career or care for a family since the two were incompatible. For Example, women could get a job as a teacher but would lose their job after marriage (Chafe, 1990).

When the war ended, layoffs for women reached the hundreds of thousands. A new governmental propaganda campaign emerged, encouraging mothers to return to their proper place and care for their children. Federal legislation dictated that returning veterans had a primary claim on their old jobs. Men displaced women working in male occupations at the time (Anand, 2018). Companies reinstated their age-related requirements, leaving women over forty out of work. Plus, the past restrictions for hiring married women reappeared (Chafe, 1990). Although these previously employed women got used to being the breadwinner with a degree of liberty and independence (Anand, 2018), these displaced women often went back to their full-time jobs working in the home or moved to jobs outside of the house that paid less or was unfulfilling (Chafe, 1990).

Furthermore, many other women wanted to avoid returning to the societal expectations of going back to just being housewives and mothers (Anand, 2018). The behavioral and attitudinal changes during the war broke the previous patterns and created shifts in employment and sex-role expectations. These changes in attitude eventually led to a swell in women in the workforce, starting in the 1960s, with 38 percent of the women who worked in the U.S. held jobs in typically female-oriented work at this point (Chafe, 1990). By the end of the 1970s, most married women had jobs, and more than 50% of mothers worked outside the home (Chafe, 1990).

Although attitudes shifted a bit about women working outside of the home, women's intuitive barriers and cultural norms deemed as sexual inequality continued to exist (Anand, 2018). After the war, there was somewhat of a contradiction of values and cultural confusion among both men and women in America; with the number of employed women increasing, there was also an increase in the number of children born in this 'Baby Boom' era (Chafe, 1990). Women proved what they could do in a time of urgency (Anand, 2018), but very little change occurred in women's lives concerning equal rights (Chafe, 1990). There were no feminist protests when women had to give up those war-time jobs (Chafe, 1990).

Second Wave Feminism

The Second Wave began in the 1960s with concerns regarding domestic violence, workplace safety, instances of rape, and reproductive rights at the forefront of the movement (Anand, 2018). However, the primary focus was to transform the existing "negative" stereotypes of women in popular culture. The movement committed itself to eliminate images of domesticity and submission to men at home. Some women said that these depictions did a disservice to women and implied that women and their contributions to society were inferior to those related to men (Rosen, 2022). This research indicated that this perspective rejected women's innate gifts and was probably the start of the self-imposed idea of women's inferiority. Unfortunately, at its peak, the second wave feminism was the largest and most impactful social movement in U.S. History (Gordon, 2013).

In 1963, the second wave marked the NOW era, driven by the National Organization for Women. In the same year, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, which argued that women struggled against and became trapped by their position, status, and responsibilities as wives and mothers (Jack, 2019). This book, coupled with the Civil Rights movement and the

issues surrounding the Vietnam War, helped solidify the force of the Second Wave (Anand, 2018). The second wave also considered the era of bra burners, where feminists rejected traditional sex roles while fighting to end sexual discrimination (Chafe, 1990).

By the 1970s, women pursuing employment continued to increase; approximately 60% were married with children aged 6-17 (Chafe, 1990). Further validation of the capabilities of women came from working outside of the home. However, this avenue of empowerment arrived at a high cost. Children were no longer critical to the nation's survival or our future. So many stayed home alone or "latch-keyed" while their well-being took second place in their mom's job or career (Chafe, 1990). At this point, women were still clinging to the traditional meaning of womanhood; wife and mother. However, this did not align with the feminist agenda.

Therefore, the movement's path led to coercing women into letting go of traditional ideas and objective reality. Various feminists added their voices to shift the culture to embrace the feminist agenda. Although she rejected the notion of women emulating men so that they could receive treatment as equals, another formidable feminist, Simone de Beauvoir, insisted that all women work outside the home. She declared, "No woman should be authorized to stay home to raise her children. Women should not have a choice because if there is such a choice, too many women will make that one" (as cited in Friedan, 1976, p. 397). Her ideas were among the many seeds planted in women's minds to deny the cornerstone of being female, childbearing, and raising their children. De Beauvoir's contradictory view of not behaving like men and rejecting being female appeared to be the impetus for women, further dismissing many other aspects of female worth, value, and critical role as women.

Additionally, the movement took on the label Women's Liberation, intending to remove the stigma associated with women, casual sex, and reproductive accountability, loosening the

restraints of marriage and motherhood, and gaining significant political strength. Gloria Steinem and Bella Abzug assisted in the passage of the Equal Pay Act, Roe versus Wade, and the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972 (Anand, 2018). Second-wave feminists also started the battle to break through the barriers that limited the ability of women to advance beyond middle management in employment, or the "Glass ceiling (Rosen, 2022).

Nonetheless, one of the more significant impacts on how women viewed themselves occurred with the hijacking of the feminist movement in the early 70s by the Sexual Revolution and Pro-choice proponents in the abortion industry (Hoefler, 2016). Initially, the author, Feminist Betty Friedan, and the head of the National Organization for Women (NOW) were Pro-life, pro-mother, and pro-wife. Moreover, she began her fight for equality and workplace accommodation after being fired because she was pregnant (Jack, 2019).

Although the feminist movement of the early 1960s began unified as a women's movement to support working women and mothers, it was later subverted (Hoefler, 2016). Larry Lader, the founder of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), called pregnancy the ultimate punishment for sex. Lader convinced Betty Friedan to join the feminist movement and the abortion movement through his book, *Abortion in 1966* (Bayles, 1990). Sue Ellen Browder, the author of *Subverted*, recorded her experience as part of the Pro-choice movement and her activism later in the Pro-life movement. From her research and personal recollection, Lader's writing was a masterpiece of propaganda. The combination of these two individuals making abortion a dominant element of the feminist movement would dismantle the entire system of sexual morality in the nation and add the presumption that all women could behave sexually in the same manner as some men (Bellinger, 2015).

On November 4, 1967, about 900 people from NOW met to discuss three key issues; a political bill of rights for the feminist movement, the Equal Right Amendment, and the issue of abortion. Surprisingly, uproar resulted over the subject of abortion. By the end of the discussion, a third of the staunch feminists set to vote walked out of the meeting, leaving less than 60 people present and voting to adopt abortion and contraception as central components of the women's movement (Hoefler, 2016).

Nevertheless, Betty Friedan claimed to speak for 28 million working American women, even though she only represented 57 attendees, according to NOW in 1966 (Browder, 2016). Later in the week, several national news outlets reported an abortion vote and that NOW favors furthering the sexual revolution by broadening sex education, providing information on birth control and contraceptives, and insisting on appealing all laws that penalize abortion. All of this was recorded in the NOW files from the meeting that night and documented by Sue Ellen Browder (2016) in her research.

Friedan's NOW organization created an enduring bill of rights for the movement to level the playing field. Those rights specified that women should not lose their job for being pregnant. They should receive paid maternity leave, and working parents should be able to deduct home and childcare expenses from their taxes. Women should be able to aspire to their highest level of education. The Pro-life feminists of the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), formed by Elizabeth Boyer, got the Pregnancy Act passed in 1978, in addition to Women's sports programs in high schools and colleges (Hoefler, 2016). The pro-abortion feminists received most of the credit. NOW became the first national organization to endorse the legalization of abortion (NOW, 1966).

The battle over abortion was raging at this point. *Roe v. Wade* became a prominent factor in the fight for how women defined women's rights. The issue of abortion was seriously dividing the nation and set for a decision in the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Blackmun had the task of writing the Opinion. Justice Blackmun accepted the "authority" and the contents of Larry Lader's book as reliable sources of information on abortion history rather than seeing it as invented history and selected truths (Bayles, 1990, p. 7). Justice Blackmun cited the book seven times, and the flawed legal papers about the abortion history of Cyril Chestnut Means another seven times in his Opinion.

In response to the Opinion, both pro-life and pro-abortion scholars found the Opinion on *Roe v. Wade* quite peculiar. In *Harvard Law Review*, Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe called the Opinion a verbal smokescreen, and the judgment relies on nothing that exists (Tribe, 1973). Loyola University law history professor Joseph Dellapenna (2006) refutes Lader in his book *Dispelling Myth of Abortion History*, which spans almost 1,300 pages of discourse (Keown, 2007; Uhlmann, 2007).

The decision fractured the pro-woman aspect of feminism, where women chose to adapt a fight that marginalized several biological, historical, and traditional elements of being female and a woman (Jack, 2019). The Opinion cemented the judgment on abortion in American society (Bayles, 1990), lasting over fifty years. This "victory" seems to impact again the thinking of and perceptions of women and how they view womanhood, their fight for "equality," "equity," and their personal and corporate strengths. The reversal of the Opinion occurred in July 2022 (Housman, 2022).

The second wave tapered off in 1980 due to the above successes (Anand, 2018). During the 1980s and the 1990s, feminism seemed to lose sight of the value and uniqueness of the

female being. These decades were the moments in history when women turned away from the extraordinary significance of femaleness in the bi-hemisphere thought process, the XX physical strength and endurance, and the innate sensitivity to the humanity and needs of both sexes (Rosen, 2022). Moreover, this aspect of the ethos appeared to broaden its influence and control over how the culture perceives women.

The researcher chose to be thorough in researching and reporting about this element of feminism in particular in an attempt to discover something that might reveal the factors contributing to the perceived strength of women in trucking and other fields dominated by men. The feminist choice to put abortion at the forefront of women's rights had an overarching and overwhelming impact on women. This issue divided women years ago and left generations of women confused, insecure, and consistently comparing themselves to and attempting to structure their lives and function as men (Jack, 2019).

The Third Wave

The Third wave of feminism emerged in the 1990s as a criticism of the second wave (Finneman & Volz, 2020), using the second wave's rhetoric of rejecting traditional sex roles (Jack, 2019) as a springboard for focusing on sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace and a shortage of women in positions of power. Although equality and the availability of opportunities for women held some value for third-wave feminists (Rich, 2019), the liberation of sexualities was the primary objective (Finneman & Volz, 2020).

Feminist theory categorizes women as an oppressed group in need of freedom from the traditional male-female sexual dynamic and freedom to explore all sexual behaviors (Maclaran, 2015), which includes interacting with all "genders," affirming all orientations and identities (Rich, 2019). The third wave grew from a desire to address the "failures" of the second wave.

One shortcoming of the second wave during the '60s and the '70s was the inability of feminists to divorce sex and gender differences from reality (Bayles, 1990).

The expression of innate biological differences between men and women is deemed evidence of women's oppression and is said to be deeply rooted in historical injustice (Anand, 2018). The third wave feminist found evidence of intimidation, discrimination, and harassment. The accusations of sexual harassment by Anita Hill against Justice Clarence Thomas in 1991 provided fuel to push forward (Finneman & Volz, 2020). The following year, feminists proclaimed that 1992 was the Year of the Woman, where individuality and expression of sexuality were the focus of the movement (Anand, 2018).

Initially, some feminists with a logical leaning sought to celebrate sex and gender differences without sacrificing the fight for equality. These women found validity in a study of the moral reasoning of men and women by psychologists Gilligan and Attanucci (1988) concluded that women reason from private-oriented thought of responsibility and caring for others, while men reason from public-oriented thinking of individual rights and fair play. Although the study further implied that although the *Feminine Mystique* received credit for changing the lives of many women (Jack, 2019), this needed to be more accurate (Rosen, 2022). Most women spent their lives living in their birth communities, did not strive for college degrees and careers, and did not envy men's work experiences (Foegen, 1992).

The logical feminist contended that labeling traditional roles and behaviors as oppressive was oppressive to women because the perspective denied subjectivity and moral agency (Jack, 2019). This point of view led to some acceptance of the value of being a homemaker, whereas for others, radicalism resulted. However, more radical feminists seemed to see women as solely passive victims. These radical feminists argued that these innate thought-process differences

would cause confusion and relegate women to mental inferiority (Jack, 2019). This flawed assumption that innate differences in how men and women process data became ingrained into the ethos that male thinking and character traits were better than women's.

The Third wave seems to have evolved beyond the real-life societal struggles of being female adults in the workplace (Maclaran, 2015). Employment among women rose continuously since 1963, and family stability hit rock bottom, which meant that the feminist movement, in its third surge, did not translate to most women (Hofer, 2016). Therefore, this era of feminism had a paradigm shift late during this decade. Third-wave feminists dismissed sex/gender-based division of labor as a legitimate component of equality; instead, they posited that women's roles must be identical to men as homemakers and breadwinners. Their final cry was, women's ideals and thought processes are not only different from men's but also better (Jack, 2019).

In the end, third-wave feminist theory hypothesized that discrimination, injustice, and oppression on a systemic level must be dealt with and eliminated for social change to impose a twenty-first-century notion of equality for everyone (Rich, 2019). Feminists concentrated their efforts on various social ills; sexism, multiculturalism, patriarchy, classism, child abuse, domestic violence, racism, identity politics, and rape. Then Intersectionality and the call for inclusivity (Anand, 2018; Evans, 2015; Mann & Huffman, 2005), with issues related to women of color thrown in for extra credibility (Jack, 2019). Again, the ideals of feminism are further imprinted within the ethos, seemingly leaving women in a crisis of identity. Neither young nor older women seem to identify, tap into or harness their innate strength and self-empowerment.

The Fourth Wave

The Fourth wave is nothing like the feminist waves of the past. Activism, through the using the media, both online and in print, took the message of this wave faster and further than

the previous three (Jack, 2019). The most visible act of the fourth wave was the #MeToo movement. The online threads screamed that society should believe all women while ignoring the flawed logic where evidence was optional (Lewis, 2020). The #MeToo movement of 2017 spread worldwide, bringing attention to and deemed as pervasive sexual assault and harassment against women, which included actual instances, manufactured accusations, and the imagined offense (Finneman & Volz, 2020).

This era of the fourth wave is a mutation of feminism where marginalization, suppression, and a consciousness of oppression are the only context to view women. The contradiction dehumanizes women, labels them weak and manipulative (Evans, 2015), and perpetually assigns them victim status (Rosen, 2022). At this stage, feminism is no longer the rallying cry for overcoming the struggle for equal opportunities for women but a call for gender equity (Rampton, 2008) or what seems to be a desire for societal chaos (Evans, 2015).

The fourth wave fully embraces the 21st-century radical ideology that biological sex differences are non-existent (Rosen, 2022). Intersectionality, a Marxist-feminist perspective rooted in social conditions of the past is the dominant theme of the fourth wave of feminism (Mann & Huffman, 2005), where gender theories are the pillars, and using social media delivers the message with force (Zimmerman, 2017). Today's feminists are gender activists profiting from the feminist organizational structure of the past to interject an expanded view of male and female expression and behavior and forms of oppression (Swartz, 2021).

According to the literature, Intersectionality is a theory used to categorize people based on immutable characteristics such as race and sex, intertwining social behavior and political identities. These factors receive labels of advantage and disadvantage, where inequality, discrimination, and oppression are inevitable (Crenshaw, 1989; Rampton, 2008; Zimmerman,

2017), regardless of individual ability, accountability, or the innate nature common to all humankind (Swartz, 2021). The objective of fourth-wave feminists is to continue to chip away at the sex binary to invalidate it (Swartz, 2021).

Multiple feminisms were always present. Nevertheless, in this current wave, a conversion occurred, focusing primarily on intertwining the ideas related to the relationships between different categories of oppressed groups, using the fight for women's equality as a vehicle to keep the feminist movement valid (Maclaran, 2015). All four waves appear to culminate into a mixture of illogic, confused, and anti-female rhetoric. "The new misogyny insists that being a female is not an essential biological fact, but a mutable identity, something anyone can be" (Rosen, 2022, p. 18). The research demonstrated that issues inculcated in the four waves of feminism have more than significantly influenced women (Maclaran, 2015; Rosen, 2022), and are an intrinsic part of the ethos.

The result is that half of the population with the incomparable ability to stabilize the fabric of societal virtue, protect the lives of the young, and maintain the family accepted false information, further minimizing the worth of all women, both born and unborn. The long-term interwoven fabric of the four waves of feminism is the environment where the exceptional state of being female died. With the inclusion of every group, ideology, or theory takes precedence over safeguarding and celebrating the uniqueness of being a woman. The wave metaphor looks to be appropriate in describing an ethos of chaos where diverse objectives and outcomes seem to compete and contradict feminist ideals (Evans, 2015).

The researcher intentionally thought it necessary to thoroughly comb the literature to completely understand the history of feminism and how the feminist movement impacted and influenced all of society. The effects of feminism revealed themselves in every area of modern

life. The researcher meticulously included detailed data because this aspect of the ethos is inescapable. For over a hundred years, but specifically, the past 60 years, the attitudes of women, men, boys, and girls developed, guided by and pressured, manipulated, and inspired by feminist expression and rhetoric. The following provides an overview of the world of working women, how feminism fuels the ethos, and the resulting influences of the ethos on the perspectives of working women.

History of Working Women

Looking back about 100 years, 31% of the gainfully employed worked on farms. In addition to farming, the main occupations included professions, tailors, dressmakers, manufacturing operatives, and other agricultural-related endeavors (Leon, 2016). Since June 5, 1920, the U.S. Department of Labor has investigated and reported on all the affairs related to women in the American workforce. Public Law No. 66-259 gave the Women's Bureau the duty to put together standards and policies to promote the welfare for wage-earning women, enhance working conditions, increase their efficiency, and expand opportunities for women with profitable employment. Before establishing the Women's Bureau, approximately 75% of working women held jobs in manufacturing textiles, food, and tobacco products.

Many American men were unavailable between July 1914 and November 1918 when America entered the war. At that time, industries opened their doors to women in various occupations, such as ammunition testers, switchboard operators, stock takers, yeomen, mechanics, translators, doctors, nurses, and ambulance drivers (National Park Service, 2020). However, most jobs remained concentrated in personal and domestic service, clerical positions, and factory labor. Women comprised about 20% of all workers (Bureau of Labor, 2016). After the war, approximately 8.5 million women entered and contributed to the workforce. The more

educated women had the option of choosing to be teachers and nurses because women had the reputation of being paragons of moral virtue and loving nurturers (Bureau of Labor, 2016). By 1920, Women were 52.8% of these top ten occupations (U.S. Census Bureau, 1929).

Evolution of Occupations

The division of labor fell along the lines of male and female because most physical labor and outdoor work besides farming belonged to men. The technology of the time, or lack thereof, tended to favor men and their masculine physical attributes and the tendency toward spatial reasoning (Gabrielsen, 2020; Schlereth, 2016). The work fell to those to which it seemed most suitable, considering the mindset of both sexes of the era. The scientific evidence and knowledge of human physiology were still in their infancy. Men's physical strength lent itself to building structures, constructing roads, fighting wars, clearing and leveling grasslands, bricklayers, and completing the railroads (Hakim, 1995). Aside from the presence of external factors, the influences on women's preferences are expansive (Clement, 1987).

Although women's natural tendencies tend to lean more toward being better writing skills than men (Reynolds et al., 2015), a women's role was primarily caring for her husband and preparing the next generation within the home through childbirth, educating their children, managing domestic affairs, and work deemed ladylike and suitable based on cultural norms of the time (Schlereth, 2016). Socialization and experiences during childhood may impact the development of self-efficacy, moral boldness, and leadership principles resulting in an inability to enter the C-suite (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). Moreover, different kinds of women choose certain types of work based on their individual orientation that often results in patterns of occupational segregation, and frequently the employment structures are the result of choice and constraint for both men and women (Crompton, 2018).

By 1950, women held positions in female-oriented occupations as store clerks, semi-skilled factory operators, stenographers, typists, bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks, accountants, teachers, nurses, and telephone operators. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2018), women were 69.8% of those employed within these fields. Today the obligation is to acknowledge the struggles of the past that both men and women endured. Then, we must recognize the conditions of a developing nation, including the cultural and religious traditions that assisted in maintaining the societal and civil order of the time. Plus, women rarely chose to step beyond those boundaries. Most industries and organizations are the creation of men, designed for men, and based on male experiences (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000). Certain professions, labor, and particular jobs fell into typically male or female categories. The evolving culture indicated that both men and women were working with what they knew at the time. Usually, most jobs outside of the home or off the farm tended to pay a higher wage. They leaned toward being masculine because most industries evolved through the men who created and shaped them, thus categorizing them as male-oriented/dominated (Fowlkes, 2006).

The issues surrounding wages based on sex arose from several scenarios. Several intentional forces drove women's work and wages in the past. Humphries (1987) posits that job segregation in the workplace began primarily as a means of controlling sexuality and preventing intimate contact between unrelated men and women in the workplace. Segregation aimed to minimize the sexual liaisons that might produce illegitimate children. Wage differences partly resulted from bias against women in the form of family pay; married men received more than single men or single women (Hudson, 2011) to discourage the need for both husband and wife to work. Men earned a living outside the home, working long hours, performing arduous labor, and receiving increased pay due to the danger involved. Women managed the house and all that

entails, in addition to nurturing the next generation. Past centuries grounded the culture in religion, family stability, and consistent employment for men as critical to a new nation built from almost nothing (Schlereth, 2016).

The evolution of various industries was also slow to address the societal hindrances that precluded many women from the workforce in previous decades. There were few indoor jobs, specifically little to no office work. The lack of consistent indoor plumbing and air-conditioned structures limited indoor office jobs. Before the late 20th century, feminine products were often ineffectual and homemade and restrained to some degree many women's sense of freedom to explore and venture beyond what was comfortable (Schroeder, 1976). Mobility also hampered women because of the lack of physical safety for men and women in an evolving nation (Sommer, 2016). Also, scientific studies of the sexes, physical differences and commonalities, and mental abilities were evolving significantly. These factors wholly and partly contributed to the "oppression" of women for centuries before the latter part of the last century. The Equal Pay Act (1963) sought to remedy this established and outdated pay structure where men played the role of primary breadwinners and received more pay than a woman performing the same duties was just (Wheeler, 2017).

As of 2019, women hold about 44% of all managerial and professional jobs in the United States. The percentage of women in management breaks down to; 17% in the C-suite, 33% as Senior Vice President or in the role of Vice President, 30% holding a Senior Director or Manager position, and an overall 38% in entry-level manager stage (Catalyst, 2020). Also, according to the Catalyst (2020), the workplaces where women seemed to thrive included Human Resources, where women comprise 74.8% of management, 69.7% of leadership positions in the medical and

healthcare services, and 46.5% of food services managers (Watts et al., 2015). The figures intimate that women tend to pursue specific careers where they excel.

Occupational Barriers

As of 2020, women comprised about 47% of those working in the United States (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020), almost half of the labor force, and 51% of the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The distribution of this 47% in occupations across the U.S. was extensive and varied. Women work in every industry in the U.S., and in professions, many women have chosen not to pursue and are seemingly underrepresented (Leslie, 2015). The literature asserts that bias and discrimination are the sole culprits causing occupational impediments to women (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000; Lotfus-Farren, 2018; Lynch & Post, 1996; Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2014; Saylor, 2018; Verniers & Vala, 2018).

At the same time, they have ignored the other factors that might add to the success of those women who face minimal issues pursuing and excelling in careers in male-dominated fields. Nonetheless, it was critical to this research to understand the messages women receive within our culture regarding the external elements creating limited opportunities and the ingrained negative beliefs and expectations about male organizational cultures and environments. Although the subject of this paper is not necessarily about sex discrimination, equality, equity, or the pay gap, these issues received attention to some degree.

Demaiter and Adams (2009) clarified these barriers and obstacles by putting them into two categories: professional and psychological, especially in male-oriented fields. Professional barriers include stagnation in promotions, the opportunity to train, and the accessibility of mentors. Two dynamics creating professional barriers to advancement are “style” and “experience.” For example, in engineering and other male-oriented professions, success depends

on aggressiveness and competitiveness (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). These traits are crucial to taking charge, putting forth, and fighting for a viable idea or design. Men tend to thrive at both. Women, in general, tend to be uncomfortable expressing these either out of fear or of not choosing to conform to the nurturing feminine traits (Maskell-Pretz & Hopkins, 1997). However, most women in male-oriented professions seem to function well at both.

The psychological barriers tend to fall into subjectivity. Psychological barriers include primarily issues surrounding family-work-life balance and incidences of sexual harassment or discrimination. Childbearing is uniquely psychologically and physically taxing. Women's inability to balance the two causes a conflict of desires (Schwartz, 1992) that may impact their psychological well-being (Maskell-Pretz & Hopkins, 1997). Therefore, the onus is for organizations to accommodate professional women's desire to have children rather than lose them as such a rich resource. Although men's blatant sexual harassment in the workplace decreased due to laws against it (Maskell-Pretz & Hopkins, 1977), subtle hostility persists (Augustine, 2018; Verniers & Vala, 2018). A realistic perspective may be the first ingredient to attaining and maintaining individual strength that overcomes any impediment, whether the barrier or obstacle is psychological or professional.

Presumptions

The literature on working women and the elements contributing to professional success or failure focuses primarily on the impediments some women face. The literature previously discussed identifies the obstacles and barriers as sexual bias and discrimination, perception, inequity, exclusion supporting the glass ceiling, "wage gap," and the maternal marginalization of women. What the literature repeatedly strives to present as evidence never pinned down any definitive definitions or meanings. Since the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VII, and the

establishment of U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), there remains a lack of consensus on what sex equality and sex discrimination mean due to the complexity and nature of individual complaints (Turk, 2016; Willett, 2017). Often a statement concluding that the “Glass Ceiling” still exists (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000; Loftus-Farren, 2018) followed by the terms sexual discrimination and gender bias, which leads to inequity, marginalization, and the “wage gap.”

Although what may seem an impediment, rooted in discrimination and bias, may come from personal choice, suitability, and fit, unrelated directly ability based on sex (Crompton, 2018). These terms warrant a brief overview of the milieu imposed upon and within which women must function. The most familiar and repeated catch-all idiom is the “Glass Ceiling,” where a female executive lost a promotion to a possibly less experienced male colleague or a female manager received a demotion after maternity leave.

Glass Ceiling

Although similar repeated statements of a glass ceiling detailing the underrepresentation of the number of women in the upper echelons of corporate America, it is by primarily focusing on fortune 500 companies to see inequity while ignoring the rest of the working world of women (Watts et al., 2015). Women comprise approximately 6% or 30 of the CEO positions in these fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2021b). In 2017, according to the Bureau of labor, women held about 40% of managerial and professional jobs when looking at and including smaller firms that significantly impact the local and national economies. Studies also indicate that women climb to the upper rungs of the corporate platform. They step away, become dismayed, or disenchanted with their careers or the business world in general (Harman & Sealy, 2017). Much of the literature uses organizational culture or companies with poor overall operations to identify

barriers stopping women from achieving their goals (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000; Loftus-Farren, 2018).

In one of many examples, Fletcher and Meyerson (2000) describe one organization intending to increase its female staff who sought out many young women from several business schools for interviews. They allotted the same amount of time per interview for both sexes. However, the hiring rate for women did not change. The observers reasoned that the program failed because most interviewers were middle-aged men. Not because they demeaned, mistreated, or held a bias against the potential hires but because they were older men incapable of sufficiently connecting with the young women or seeing beyond their directly relevant technical skills. No one attributed accountability to the young women for their inability to impress the interviewers, learn from the experience, or be encouraged to improve their skills in selling themselves. Yet, the scenario became evidence of inequity and an example of injustice against young women being “They hadn’t had enough time to impress their interviewers” (Fletcher & Meyerson, 2000, p. 15)

These numbers presented in the literature have become the determining factor for the existence of and pre-determined conclusion about sex discrimination and gender bias (Hakim, 1995). However, the actual conduct or behavior implications in an organization, entity, or individual do not find support in other data. The glass ceiling seems to apply strictly to large companies or the Fortune 500, and small organizations and entrepreneurship do not fit into a narrative (Lynch & Post, 1996). As of 1992, the Interagency Committee on Women’s Business Enterprise created by President Clinton reported that women-owned businesses represented one-third of all domestic firms and 40 percent of all retail and service firms in the United States.

There exist categories or subgroups of working women. Those who commit to a lifetime career and those choosing to work intermittently adapt to marriage and children (Harman & Sealy, 2017). Over time, these two groups overlap; change from one to the other, and will always exist. The glass ceiling, at its core, is more a matter of choice, age, and aspirations (Lynch & Post, 1996). Although women outnumber men in higher education, particularly in Business, Law, and Medicine, studies indicate some women seek senior management positions. Still, less than 14% of women aspire to be CEO compared to 45% of men (Hakim, 1995). Without accurately disseminating this information to women, how women see themselves and others might skew the data against women's self-perception and potential achievement.

Thus, further adding to the gender/sex-role perceptions contained within the ethos. Both men and women tend to limit job selection to appropriateness according to gender/sex attributes. Eagly and Karau (2002) labeled this phenomenon of defining feminine and masculine work as Role congruity theory. Women often believe they face perception barriers plus the expected bias and discrimination in future careers. These are the beliefs they have about themselves that add to perceived career barriers and impediments. Social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) states that these perceptions can influence career paths.

The literature further expresses a consistent dismissal of any conflicting facts and data and that many impediments may be a matter of subjectivity (Crowley, 2013; Demaiter & Adams, 2009; Fitzsimmons et al., 2014; Javadian, 2014; Watts et al., 2015). Speculative ideas and illogical ideologies tend to survive academic scrutiny grounded in fact and empirical data due to overwhelming political persuasion, emotional manipulation, and the absence of critical thinking (Boston, 2019). According to the American Astrological Society, looking at astronomy, purely intellectual pursuit, and consistently male-oriented industry with longevity, women comprised

17% in 1938, 7.9% in 1972, and 11% in 1990. The Society surveyed 5,300 male and female members, asking if they felt, experienced, or witnessed discrimination or harassment. Of the 41% responding, 50% of the women indicated that they thought or noticed both, while only 15% of the men responded affirmatively. The survey results concluded that the experiences or observations were more about the perception of what constitutes intolerance rather than actual acts of discrimination or harassment. Men and women working in the same environment may interpret the same scenario differently.

A second survey completed several years later (Price, 1992) of 548 women asked if they agreed with a series of statements about harassment and discrimination. This survey indicated 49% of the respondents affirmed that they had withstood harassing remarks, insulting gestures, or poor treatment as inferior. 35% felt that they were not taken seriously by their male counterparts. Twenty-seven percent faced accusations of being demanding, vocal, or having a strong personality when they spoke up or voiced their opinion on a subject about which they were very knowledgeable. Of the 108 women participating in Price's survey, 28% felt propositioned. 38% of the women she surveyed had not encountered any negative interactions but witnessed several incidents. These experiences, in part, maybe due to the government policies and standards set in place to counteract acts of conscious discrimination and gender bias (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1964), which opened opportunities for advancement for women and other groups. Plus, in the past 30 or so years, almost every organization and government entity continued to seek to promote women (Gribbins, 2006) actively.

Hostile Environment

Research shows that women may experience a less-than-civil environment when entering a male-oriented/dominated field. A study by Tingle et al. in 2014, using a diverse population of former U.S. female sports officials described their work experience as lacking a sense of community or belonging due to gender-specific factors. The eight women studied expressed a “felt social inequity,” which pointed to four factors that supported a discourteous atmosphere. These female officials spoke of something that felt like a lack of mutual respect from their male colleagues. They perceived that the application of policies was inequitable; role models and mentors did not exist for these women, and Female basketball officials experienced more gender abuse than male officials (Tingle et al., 2014, p. 12).

The interplay of these factors resulted in women not feeling a sense of belonging to the sports officiating community and, eventually, withdrawing from their positions. Although this study adds an exciting dynamic to women in a male-oriented/dominated field geared towards satisfying masculine aggression and competition and the most accurate definition of a male environment, other factors may play a role. Men play men’s basketball. Men show the most interest as spectators via television in-person attendance and are the primary supporters financially of college and professional teams (Gough, 2020). The attraction to competition and battle supports that male and female thought processes may generally differ (Brenner et al., 1989; Gregory, 1990). The differences begin early in life, where biology plays a significant role and socialization to a lesser degree.

Biological Factors and Socialization

Since the early 20th century, research has clarified biological sex differentiation in animals and birds (Ha, 2011). Sex-different behavior patterns emerge clearly in young children

when physical sex differentiation is minimal, long before puberty, and the development of crucial secondary sex differences. Patterns of sex segregation, in which children play in same-sex groups, which accompany differences in the games played, emerge by five years old and often earlier in many societies (Munroe & Romney, 2006).

An empirical study by Edwards (1993) conducted in Kenya, India, Liberia, Okinawa, the Philippines, Mexico, and the U.S. revealed consistent behavioral sex-differentiation areas, unfortunately without a clear understanding of the cause or the consequences of the phenomenon. A sample of between 16 and 104 children aged 2-10 years was for timed observation or Focal-Subject Sampling. The study's authors argue that sex differences in children's involvement with infants are understood to be mainly due to sex-role identification and societal expectations. The desire for acceptance and expectations becomes internalized and prompts girls to imitate adult females and feminine behavior, including the resulting nurturance and a preference for infants (Edwards, 1993).

The study indicated several differences between the activities of boys and girls observed in the representative cultures. Edwards recorded the following observations: Little girls spend more time working, whereas boys spend more time playing. Children self-segregate by sex and age when playing in groups. Boys aspire to more independence and spend more time than girls away from home and their mothers. Girls tend to participate in more infant contact and care than boys. Boys engage in rough-housing more than girls during play. Boys participate in more games with imaginary weapons and pretend vehicles than girls. Girls delight in more make-believe "dress-up" and in actual personal care, boys not so much (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009).

Edwards and other research on infants and young children attempt to identify biological and cultural influences on sex differences (Arnold, 2017). These and other sex differences in

infancy and early childhood are more likely to have a biological basis because infants and young children have had relatively little exposure to cultural influences. More sex differences appear through physical maturation associated with changes due to hormones (Marini, 1990).

Additionally, evidence to support that the sexes do not differ significantly in cognitive style, independence, emotion, empathy, nurturance, and warmth appears inconsistent with other empirical biological studies (Vries & Forger, 2015). Yet, evidence suggests that males possess higher quantitative and particular spatial abilities, whereas women express more verbal and relational skills (Marini, 1990; Reynolds et al., 2015).

Biology. The literature addressing human development and biology provides empirical data on the biological differences between men and women and the resulting innate psychological (Hyde, 2005), behavioral, and personality traits (Ha, 2011; Li, 2014; McIntyre & Edwards, 2009; McLeod, 2014; Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016; Zell et al., 2015). Wilson (1905) provided extensive evidence, laying the foundation for the Chromosomal theory of sex in insects, and Stevens (1906) solidified the theory in humans soon after. A few years later, scientists asserted and accepted (Ha, 2011) that human males and females tend to behave differently due to chromosomal and hormonal differentiation of the sexes (Arnold, 2016; Craig et al., 2004).

Chromosomes. All biological sex differences result from the inequality in the effects of sex chromosomes (X/Y), the only factors that differ in male and female zygotes (Arnold, 2017). Chromosomes are the biochemical unit of heredity or binary that governs human development (McLeod, 2014). Chromosomes determine the amount and type of gonadal sex hormone exposure in the womb. The Y chromosome carries the SRY gene, prompting testes growth (XY; Almli et al., 2001). There will be no testicular development without the SRY gene; instead, there

will be ovaries (XX; Craig, 2004). The SRY gene establishes lifelong sex differences in maleness and femaleness (Vries & Forger, 2015).

Biological studies contend that biological sex creates gendered behavior (Van Anders et al., 2015). Thus, the basis for determining human behavior is two elements, chromosomes and hormones (McLeod, 2014). Addressing the differentiation in behavior and character traits, whether in adolescence or adulthood, it is critical to begin at the very beginning, conception, since every human cell has biological sex (Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016). The quantity of both hormones (Almli et al., 2001) and which strands of chromosomes each individual possesses have control over the different aspects of sex and gender development (McLeod, 2014). Hormones are the chemical substances that occur in both men and women, glands secrete throughout the body and rush through the bloodstream. Increasing evidence indicates that these hormones show up in differing amounts during gestation, infancy, and childhood, organizing permanent effects upon different body parts (McLeod, 2014) that reveal gender behaviors and temperament (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009).

Hormones. Much research focuses on testosterone because its presence or absence determines sex and gender (Arnold, 2016.) and has been more widely studied regarding human behavior and sex stereotyping (Zell et al., 2015). Testosterone is one such sex hormone in both males and females and affects the development and conduct before and after birth. Although present in both sexes (Craig et al., 2004), this hormone is significantly higher in men and primarily influences physical features and behavioral characteristics seen as male and or masculine (Van Anders et al., 2015). Testosterone causes the development of male sex organs and acts on the hypothalamus in the male brain (McLeod, 2014); without it, a female child emerges (Vries & Forger, 2015). Typically, testosterone levels (Van Anders et al., 2015) are

responsible for male behaviors, such as aggression, competitiveness, high sex drive, and visual-spatial abilities (Almli et al., 2001; Kimura, 1993). Nonetheless, the female hormone estrogen directs the circuitry development in the male brain (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009). The intricacy of human design and the differences between males and females is “Good, very good” (*The King James Bible*, 1769/1982, Genesis:1-3).

For clarity, the researcher limited the sexes to male and female and the categories of gender and "corresponding" behavior to the two, consisting of maleness and femaleness (Van Anders et al., 2015), as described in the cited resources. Sex includes all of its dimensions from the cellular level, which gives rise to external manifestation, while gender refers to the physical, social, and cultural interactions based on sex (Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016). Since the acknowledgment of expected social and cultural differences among and between men and women exists, the research does not include data associated with political, psychological, and genetic defects related to sex and gender. The empirical studies affirm the overlaps in physicality and behavioral traits because men and women receive genetic material from one male and one female parent (Eagly & Wood, 2011; Lemkau, 1983; Marini, 1990).

The Brain. Many differences in brain structure and chemistry reveal that men's and women's brains are not the same. Therefore, their behaviors differ because hormones act directly on the brain and the entire body (Vries & Forger, 2015), offering extraordinary value to women and men. Evidence suggests that brain development follows significantly divergent paths from infancy, prompted by the sex hormones supporting the fact that male and female behavior is innate and not socially constructed (Kimura, 1992). Few examples posited in structural studies of the brain support a biological standard for behavioral differences in men and women (Swaab & Hofman, 1984). On average, various aspects of the male brain are more prominent and weigh

more, leading to a typically greater physical mass. However, women's brains possess more grey matter than the male brain (Schlaepfer et al. 1995). More volume in the frontal and medial paralimbic cortices lends credence to women's more vital language skills and memory task abilities (Li, 2014).

As with mammals, every human cell has a biological sex, and that sex permeates every aspect of the complex body and the brain network (Sanchis-Segura & Becker, 2016). Sex refers to biological differences between males (XY) and females (XX); reproductive organs (ovaries, testes) and hormones (estrogen, testosterone) give rise to cognition and ascribed behaviors. One example is the neurobehavioral relationship studies throughout gestation, during, and after birth. Male infants displayed more continuity and frequency of leg movement than female infants, while female infants displayed more forceful and more altering movement patterns than males. Gender-specific behavior is associated with and rooted in the nervous system contributing to and affecting activity levels, learning and memory, and temperament of male and female children (Almli et al., 2001). Credence leans toward the idea that masculine culture is the male mindset, supported by brain development (Almli et al., 2001; Na, 2011) prompted by testosterone (Vries & Forger, 2015). Male-dominated occupations exist due to masculine culture and seem rooted in the same type of competition and male mindset that support the existence of specific fields dominated by men.

Masculine Contest Culture

The literature previously noted describes the biological growth and development of the human male and female, human brain development from conception to early adult, and socialization supports the immutable differences between men and women. Previously, the evolution of separate male and female spaces appeared organic, natural, and acceptable.

Typically, men interact with other men much differently than the manner women interact with each other, nor do women engage the same way with men (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009).

Therefore, some surroundings and workplaces may lend themselves solely to either sex. To some degree, extreme masculine environments exist. Men tend not to function within or find themselves trapped by the ethos when choosing a career.

Jennifer Berdahl, professor of Leadership Studies: Gender and Diversity, Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia, and her colleagues (2018) proposed a perspective grounded in a theoretical framework that outlines work as a masculinity contest. They think the job is where men feel pressured to prove themselves as “real men.” These workplaces develop a Masculine Contest Culture (MCC) of toxic dysfunction fueled by ‘cut-throat tactics, sabotage among the leadership, one-upmanship, harassment, and bullying. A study by Berdahl et al. (2018) looked at male-dominated sectors, including Silicon Valley Tech, Television, and entertainment companies, noting both men and women suffer from burnout, low sense of well-being, and poor individual achievement. Yet, some women endured more acts of sexual harassment and dismissive conduct from HR departments and management. These industries stood out because of their “bro” culture, rule-breaking, and sexism. Kupers (2005) labels the aggressive masculine need to compete and dominate others as toxic masculinity.

Berdahl et al. (2018) argued that what it takes to get ahead on the job takes root in male behaviors to prove one’s manhood. Furthermore, masculinity contests are a means of securing influence to gain economic and social resources. According to Williams (2013), bias diversion, diversity training, and work-life balance programs have little effect on masculinity contest cultures. Berdahl et al. (2018) suggest addressing the masculinity contest exhibited by men to foster a healthier and happier workplace for women and the men who feel excluded from, refuse

to play, or predetermine to lose the contest. This research indicated that masculine contests are prevalent and embedded in male-oriented/dominated occupations, and gender inequalities are present in organizing work. Combining high and male gender performance (Gregory, 1990; Konrad et al., 2000) results in the concept and culture where job success and masculinity are synonymous (Kanter, 1977; Lemkau, 1983). Male norms of determination and focus on work or career achievement, physical strength and endurance, fighting to the end competition (Marini, 1990), and avoiding the appearance of weakness are the standards for competence, fitting in, and advancing.

Incivility

Incivility is considered a subtle form of discrimination in the workplace (Cortina, 2008). Rude, discourteous behaviors with an ambiguous intent to harm and lacking regard for others fall into this category. An added uncivil gendered mistreatment might include ignoring an opinion, condescension in tone (Tingle et al., 2014), arriving late to meetings, ignoring phone calls or dirty looks, and glares as potentially discriminatory actions against women (Cortina & Magley 2009; Pearson et al., 2001). These former female basketball officials interviewed for this previously cited phenomenological study disclosed that leaving their profession was primarily due to subtle disrespect, repeated ambiguous responses, and lack of acknowledgment of their emotions and feelings from colleagues and supervisors (Cortina, 2008). This study seeks to discover the factors that propel women in other male-oriented/dominated fields, such as trucking, to overcome or dismiss incivility and a lack of sense of community in the workplace.

Wage Gap

Today's wage gap or disparity is strictly a matter of how the data are correlated. Researchers consider the other dynamics at play, such as hours worked, type of work, danger

involved in the work, and willingness to live for one's work which accounts for the disparity (Wheeler, 2017). A disparity exists (O'Neill, 1995) of approximately 3-5 percent between men and women (Lynch & Post, 1996). According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2010), the "wage gap" between men and women is attributable to occupation segregation. Traditionally women tend to cluster in certain occupations due to the apparent flexibility around family life (Lynch & Post, 1996). Women often chose to teach for the two or three months off during the summer as an act of self-interest, not the result of discrimination cited by the Congressional Budget Office's conclusion of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (O'Neill, 1995).

Women hold about 6.5% of male-oriented occupations (Catalyst, 2021a). These professions include manufacturing salespeople, farmers, ranchers, architects, computer programmers, transportation supervisors, and detectives. At the same time, the vast majority of women worked as nurses, administrative assistants, cashiers, retail salespeople, home and healthcare aides, customer service reps, and housecleaners (Wheeler, 2017). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's explanation was twofold regarding workers' choice and sex discrimination leading to wage differences. Segregation might result from the individual's choice because one group (men) is more willing to accept distasteful, dangerous work, longer hours, and physical stress for higher pay.

The other group (women) participating in the segregation prefers occupations that require less commitment constraint, needing and expecting flexibility in their desire to continue in any field. This report also indicated that some employers blatantly refused to hire women. They held policies that screened out and severely harassed women in non-traditional jobs, which led to patterns of exclusion and discrimination, contributing to a pronounced delineation of work

segregation based on sex. Furthermore, based on economic theory, wages drop when significant quantities of women enter an industry. When women enter a previously male-dominated field, and the participation of men does not decrease, an overall increase in the number of laborers exerts downward pressure on wages (Lynch & Post, 1996)

Lynch and Post (1996) also concluded that calculations attributed to the wage gap between men and women contain flaws. Also, the so-called glass ceiling is a fallacy when the data controls are in place for relevant variables such as relative age and qualifications. These studies found that, in general, women's positions economically and professionally relative to men are mainly a product of individual choices rather than intentional discrimination. Those promoting an idea of wage unfairness used a statistical aggregate where an amalgamation of all the wages paid to women and divided by all the wages paid to men as evidence of discrimination. The inference is that factors that determine pay, such as education, degree held, career choice, type of work, and continuity in the workforce, are the same for men and women.

Additionally, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2018), men consistently work more hours than women. The turnover rate for women is much higher than for men. Women spend much more time away from work and cannot build the same level of seniority as men. Less seniority produces lower earnings, as noted by the National Bureau of Economic Research (Fernandez, 2007). For decades, advocates decrying inequity have continued to use this misinformation as a powerful tool for government intervention against inequity, injustice, and marginalization of women. Rarely are market demands or the non-monetary work benefits taken into account for the differences in wages between men's and women's work.

According to economist Thomas Sowell (2008), any wage disparity disappears when age, education level, and seniority are the dominant factors determining wages. Since the early 1970s,

single women who worked continuously earned slightly higher incomes than men with the same qualifications. An important example of this phenomenon also occurred during the 1930s in academia. Women with a Ph.D. became full professors by 1950 at a higher rate than their male colleagues (Sowell, 2016). Moreover, looking at the reason for some professional choices may provide an additional affirming and logical explanation that further clarifies these patterns that may exclude the wage gap, but rather an *Earnings Gap*.

Women's competing desires also become an impediment based on gender bias. The higher an individual rises in an organization or simply the position, the more hours required to work per day or week. Women have to choose between hours spent at home and hours spent at work. Women must find a balance or choose one over the other (Watts et al., 2015). Of those women who reach the highest echelons in their fields, earning over \$100,000 annually, only half are married with children (Howlett, 2002). Lyness and Thompson (1997) found that women at that level were significantly less likely to be married or have children than their male counterparts. Like many men, these women possibly decide to put their work first or are so involved in their careers that the traditional family is no longer a priority (Watts et al., 2015).

Maternal Wall

The literature declares that in addition to the glass ceiling, women face the "maternal wall" (Crosby et al., 2004). Motherhood falls into subjective discrimination where women with children are victims of presumption. Mothers do not present as ideal workers or meet the same employment standards or demands as women without children (Correll, 2007). Women with children report discriminatory practices and perceived bias when they get the job, on the job, and during performance evaluations and promotions (Crowley, 2013). Motherhood is the one biological factor that can inhibit women's ability to remain on course to reach the corporate

suite. The innate desire and choice to reproduce creates a natural barrier, or a predictable hurdle otherwise referred to as the “child penalty” (Baker, 2010) or the motherhood penalty that creates a wage gap between women with children and women without children (Correll et al., 2007). Women with children and other family commitments admittedly prefer not to work extended hours while taking advantage of flexible work schedules and paid family leave. Women choose to fulfill many aspects of their lives, thus preventing a total commitment to a career.

Although an inconvenient truth, it became mislabeled as a myth (Verniers & Vala, 2018) and said to be a tool for employment “discrimination” against women (Fels, 2004). According to Williams and Chen (2014), a mother’s desire to nurture, be present, and bond with her child is possibly a pathological myth that creates psychological barriers impairing women’s ability to seek positions of power and responsibility. Much of the literature describes the choices women make based on biology as invalid and the attempt by public and private organizations to accommodate those choices as insufficient (Dainty & Lingard, 2006) as stubborn and persistent discrimination or prejudice against women (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Glick & Fiske, 1997; Verniers & Vala, 2018).

Nevertheless, women often follow two of three directions at some point in their working lives. They opt out of their jobs (Belkin, 2003), go part/half-time, endure the stigma associated with the need for flexible working conditions due to maternity (Stone & Hernandez, 2013), or press on to overcome it (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). The lack of flexible work hours for women falls into the category of an oppressive impediment, contributing to the “maternal wall” (Crosby et al., 2004) and, ultimately, the “glass ceiling” (Jackson et al., 2001). Often the workplace fosters and sustains a sense of dishonor and bias against women when they need the flexibility to coordinate family and work life.

When this stigma exists, it may play a part in some women choosing to leave their careers. However, Stone and Hernandez (2013) found that although most women studied behaved and reacted to flexibility bias, they confessed to understanding their profession's time and schedule demands as legitimate and justifiable without attributing it to any prejudice or discrimination in their field. Several of the women interviewed during this study confirmed this opinion. A thriving and competent engineer stated that particular time and commitment factors were inherent to their type of work, whether the employee was male or female. Furthermore, she did not believe that her employer had any obligation to create a new position to accommodate her need for a flexible work arrangement. She affirmed that an attorney equates full-time work with commitment, competence, and trust (Stone & Hernandez, 2013).

This study further indicated the difficulty in organizing professional women around flexible work schedules and agreements or prompting them to be more proactive with flexibility bias. Women tend not to conform to what is considered a highly gendered ideal American worker (Williams, 2013), in addition to specific categories of work that require twenty-four hours, seven days per week availability (Cha, 2014). In most cases, this creates a significant conflict for women with children since the employers' primary concern is that someone with minimal distractions gets the job done. Most of the literature on the ideal worker model and its incompatibility with motherhood is an example of the unfair treatment of women (Crowley, 2013). As a result of the inflexibility of some work environments, or an employer's unwillingness to make allowances for women's familial responsibilities, women's careers slowdown (Crowley, 2013). Moreover, the negative attitudes (other women) towards breastfeeding, expressing breast milk at work, and providing daycare, women cannot keep up with their male counterparts (Roth, 2006).

Unfortunately, human design appears to be a bit unfair on the surface. Generally, most men are more career/labor-oriented (Berdahl et al., 2018) and not necessarily built for the role of primary nurturer (Edwards, 2002), and at the same time, women are remarkably distinctive in their physical design and ability to produce food for their offspring, having spent the first nine months of life inside her (Zytowski, 1969). Since men thrive when laboring, mainly when motivated to provide for a family. When women choose to exchange careers for parenthood or a partnership where one parent or the father participates in the workforce outside of the house for cash, the woman's role at home deserves respect. That arrangement benefits the woman, the children, the male partner, and society. Daycare centers and nannies do not raise children; they merely keep an eye on them (Zytowski, 1969).

Women's career experiences do not always result from a nefarious force trying to hinder them. Their struggle for justice and equality emphasized fighting a battle imposed on and waged against employers, and the weavers of validation of the differences between men and women occurred. "Much of the literature supports tactics that bully employers into social engineering away from the cooperative process entered into by men and women by making the government an intimate third party in the employment contract" (Kirkby, 1987, p. 65). Nor is motherhood a social construct needing intervention (Verniers & Vala, 2018). There appears to be an intentional overlap or blurring of the lines between what women need or might desire to fulfill in their lives personally and professionally, how an employer is to compensate for assisting in achieving social equity of outcome, and to what degree each is responsible. –Social dominance and system justification theories (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012; Sidanius et al., 2004).

A pilot study by Bennett (1982) attempted to clarify the relevance of specific situational and personality variables and actual sources of well-being in young women, adult women, and

more mature women in their self-ratings of efficacy. This small study demonstrated the complexity of the two areas of satisfaction and well-being in women's lives. Each domain needs a separate examination because the data showed that marriage and family directly influence the overall happiness rating with positive self-evaluation of confidence. Bennett's study raised questions about whether women's sense of well-being has anything to do with their enthusiasm and belief in achieving career goals.

Business Decisions

A business exercising sound economic sense and not discriminating may selfishly and unintentionally add to the barriers by encouraging aspects of the ethos that hold women back. In one such instance, employee retention may relate to the uniqueness of being female, a mother, a grandmother, a generational caretaker, and a wife—an organization's ability to recognize individual potential and their ability based on turnover. Women can bring exceptional value to an organization, resulting in financial returns that out-weight the investment in employee hiring, training, salary, and benefits. However, the return on investment might be meager or a significant loss if retaining women is a severe problem (Maskell-Pretz & Hopkins, 1997). Most full-time professions cannot accommodate a second job. Realistically, managing a household is far more than a full-time job; caring for others, especially childbearing, and rearing (Demaiter & Adams, 2009).

The literature repeats the outrage and claims of barriers inhibiting women, if not overtly, subconsciously, where no other explanation is ever consistently validated. As Fletcher and Meyerson (2000) put it, the rhetoric proclaims that discrimination and bias are insidious and embedded yet indiscernible while having a lasting impact that blindsides women. The male mindset structures organizations around maximizing productivity through extended schedules,

high stress, on-call availability, and 15-hour days (Dainty & Lingard, 2006). This structure works well for fathers and their ability to promote while at the same time inhibiting mothers due to the division of labor among gender lines.

Secondly, they assume that, even though organizations led by men actively invest in programs seeking to add women to the employee roles, they practice screening out women because those doing the interviews are men. The idea is that men naturally bond with other men; therefore, this is their tool used to discriminate. However, Fletcher and Myerson (2000) conclude that inequity is not the fault of men or women. Many others approached research with a particular worldview and researcher bias that presupposes that all circumstances that, on the surface, appear to have some inequity or intent to discriminate and exclude women when other elements might be at play.

A similar sentiment expressed by Verniers and Vala (2018) states that the general interdependence of women and men occurs within the family context and produces gender roles. Although these roles are complementary, they are inescapable in their contribution to discrimination, inequality, and some form of inequity. According to Glick and Fiske (1997), the domestic context is where sexism begins and leads up to it seeping into organizations. Men seem to have made the sacrifices, sometimes of life and limb, to establish a standard to suit a skill or profession developed and fine-tuned by men. When creating an industry or business, the goal is productivity, efficiency, and profitability. Skill set and reliability are crucial; whether the individual performing essential duties is male or female is not often a consideration.

Somehow the conclusion reached by the vast majority of the contributors in the literature is that the choices many women make to prioritize marriage, children, and family are illegitimate because preference mediates the relationship between sexist attitudes regarding gender roles and

opposition to women working outside of the home (Verniers & Vala, 2018). On the other hand, a Mandel and Semyonov (2005) study indicated that family-friendly programs for women had the opposite effect of its intention. Women take advantage of paid family leave and childcare facilities designed to increase pay disproportionately to men. As a consequence, women tended to remain in part-time work.

An employer's pragmatic practices hiring decisions based on the willingness and availability of a new employee or an existing employee to adapt to an organization's need create a psychosocial barrier and can be an excuse for gender discrimination. When investing time and resources to hire and train an individual, businesses must consider the individual's longevity to the company's goals. Most women will sooner or later become mothers (Dambrin & Lambert, 2008). There is overwhelming evidence that women long for children far more than men (Lynch & Post, 1996; Roxburgh, 2002). Stanford economist Victor R. Fuchs (1989) concluded this difference impacts and contributes to economic and other disadvantages for women. In addition to several studies at the time, a study called "Women: The New Providers," sponsored by the Whirlpool Foundation and the Families and Work Institute conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (Lewin, 1995) found that working women defined success in terms of home and family. Women generally emphasize the quality and value of their family and community relationships (Kiesel, 2015).

Social and Career Capital

There is complexity in acquiring social or career capital. However, women's domestic life and home commitments tend to limit their ability to contribute to their careers equitably compared to men (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). Although studies indicate no gender difference in the tangible ability to succeed in math and physical sciences, women tend to gravitate towards

flexible female or neutral occupations to accommodate the desire for children and family relationships. Many male-oriented fields are operationally inflexible. Consequently, women often choose not to pursue particular career aspirations due to the barriers of unaffordable and inaccessible childcare and responsibilities at home (Frome et al., 2006).

Often women do not put in long hours developing their skills and relevant experience (de Pater & Van Vianen, 2006). Women have fewer opportunities to secure the social and career capital needed for advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2007), particularly in male-oriented/dominated fields (Dainty & Lingard, 2006). This low volume and poorly supported social and career capital also pointed to the inability of the female respondents in this study to maintain continuous commitment in an industry compared to men. However, Bourdieu (1977) noted that an individual's perception of possible success or failure in a field might correlate to their degree of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy takes root by overcoming adversity, stewardship or significant responsibilities, and adult roles early in life. These are life events that lay the foundation for building sufficient career capital. These factors were accurate for female respondents in a study by Fitzsimmons et al. (2014). The women studied revealed that having such formative experiences gave them inner strength, strong character, and high self-efficacy.

In many instances, an industry or an organization is deemed unsupportive and held responsible for gender parity in the face of women's choices to prioritize family over career, comfort over stress, or consistency rather than chaos. Industries where men tend to dominate, such as IT, engineering, sports management, law professions, entrepreneurial endeavors, and the construction industry, are those identified within the ethos as havens of discrimination. However, looking at the intricacies of certain types of work reveals an interesting picture. For example, the primary components of construction work are dangers, long hours, high stress, and travel to

diverse locations for lengthy periods. The industry expects flexible employees who balance their lives around work and family without company assistance (Dainty & Lingard, 2006). Men, more often than not, suit these requirements. Many women interviewed in a study by Dainty & Lingard (2006) indicated that construction work is fundamentally incompatible with family life.

Engineering is another male-oriented/dominated field offering insight. Engineering suffered from a lack of retention of women for some time (Maskell-Pretz & Hopkins, 1997; U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Reportedly, women engineers were uncomfortable with their work environment due to perceived or actual activities that may occur and cause psychological stress. A Bell Laboratories' study conducted by Kelly and Caplan (1993) of women engineers indicated that women who developed skills through training comparable to those of men performed at a rate four times better than those women who did not participate in such activity. Women who did not participate had a decrease in performance (Duff, 1993).

The study also noted the inherent differences between male and female engineers. These differences affected women's performance and their opportunities for advancement. Other studies of these differences (Li, 2014; McIntyre & Edwards, 2009; McLeod, 2014) found that women prefer interactions when talking, listening, understanding, and cooperation are tools for leading. Men tended to thrive in operations when taking action, commanding, to lecture, advising, and competing. This study further concluded that ignoring these differences, the productivity of both men and women was not optimal and might point to bias where there was none or add labels of discriminatory barriers when the issue was innate gender differences.

The choices married working women make and those of single women tended to support studies researching employer attitudes towards hiring women, presuming the level of commitment to a career based on personal responsibilities that might affect work (Dainty &

Lingard, 2006; Hakim, 1995). The study also took into account full and part-time employment. When many women found it doable, they often chose to work part-time or in positions with low responsibility to focus on one priority, family. Although childcare is one factor in the type of work women choose, the study also indicated that women often choose not to work at all if possible (Verniers & Vala 2018). The older women became, the more this principle applied (Lynch & Post, 1996). Thus, again familial responsibility reveals itself as a principal factor contributing to women's professional and personal choices, despite the presumed bias (Eagly & Karau, 2002), nature, and environment of the ethos (Beilock, 2019).

In an attempt to further understand various influences of the ethos, the researcher uncovered an explanation in the work of Martin Elias Seligman (1975). Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) emphasizes observing, modeling attitudes, imitating behavior, and emotional reaction to others, considering how cognitive factors and environments interact, influencing behavior and learning (McLeod, 2016). In its broad form, social learning theory deals with acquiring mental and behavioral competencies and understanding what knowledge regulates what (Seligman, 1975). An aspect of this theory that explained an added phenomenon within the ethos that permeates the mindset of women is Learned helplessness, proposed by Maier and Seligman (2016). Learned helplessness occurs when individuals accept that outcomes are not dependent upon their responses. Seligman (1975) stated, "A person or animal is helpless concerning some outcome when the outcome occurs independently of all his voluntary responses" (p. 2).

The researcher chose to follow the thinking associated with self-efficacy theory because it differentiates itself from Seligman's expectancy of learned helplessness. Individuals can stop trying due to their serious doubt that they can achieve the necessary performance measure rather

than from external forces. Those external forces within an environment may present themselves as punishing or unresponsive to the capabilities of an assured individual, prompting them to stop extending effort (Seligman, 1975). Male-oriented/dominated work and professions have a distinctly male organizational structure, culture, and environment (Acker 1990; Marshall, 1993; Miller 2004). Some of the literature contends it might present as an impediment to women (Beilock, 2019) that may scare some women away (Demaiter & Adams, 2009).

Male-Dominated/Oriented Culture

The aim of most male-oriented jobs is for men (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). As a result, these jobs draw on masculine strengths and characteristics valued by men. Thus, there is an expectation for women to demonstrate rationality, intellect, fairness, authority, and self-control, be unemotional, and work long hours while doing so. Miller's (2004) study showed that some women in male-oriented work use the tactic of overdoing an attempt at masculinity while downplaying their "femininity" to gain acceptance. While simultaneously meeting the requirement to maintain their femininity to avoid unpleasant criticism and be deemed suitable. Other women in male-oriented jobs choose not to play a role but instead work on their terms by mastering their craft (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). Those women who thought of themselves as outgoing, talkers, dominant, dynamic, and extroverted perceived themselves as capable of balancing professional and personal lives, empowered and competent at engaging their male counterparts (Francescato et al., 2020). These are the women this research sought to study.

Other studies labeled this a coping mechanism to facilitate acceptance in a male-oriented environment. The result is a considerable strain on women having to blind themselves to a male culture (Marshall, 1992). The literature also suggested that women who choose not to emphasize their gender in male-oriented workplaces may perform better. Research within the field of IT, a

predominately male profession, and women tended to downplay the significance of gender while also using it to shape their careers. Although to some other women, gender may serve as a barrier that hinders them, Demaiter and Adams (2009) also suggested that when women refused to acknowledge gender as a factor, coupled with their skill and competence, they succeeded.

Literature also supported the gendered nature of work, especially in a male-oriented occupation like trucking, and may influence women's participation. Also, like many male-oriented professions, such as IT and Engineering, trucking is seen as unattractive, isolating, and problematic (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). Moreover, few jobs aim to facilitate career advancement and accommodate maternity leave at three to four months or an entire year per occurrence. With multiple pregnancies, a woman can easily fall behind significantly or get lost on the path to promotion (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). Stone and Hernandez (2013) deemed this flexibility bias poses an additional barrier for women, evidence of gender inequality in the workplace (Marshall, 1993).

The literature mentioned earlier prompts several queries on the researcher's part that is not the primary focus of this paper. However, this research hopes to offer insight by adding an overlooked perspective to the ethos. Possibly, the understanding triggers a thirst in some women that inspires them to pose a few queries and insist on answers. So, should businesses be burdened with and held responsible because men and women are different? Men tend to have the drive to work longer days and more irregular hours, while women tend to prefer consistency. So, who or what is to blame for "inequality or underrepresentation? How much accommodation is needed to make women and men the same? Are the barriers indeed barriers? Is this discrimination or inequity? Are the issues systemic factors that hold women back? Should standards, expectations,

and qualifications be lowered or altered for more women to compete, or one standard for men and one for women? Should quotas set the tone for an organization?

Some working women seem to answer all these questions, evidenced by their success. The research chose the trucking industry because women answer these questions each time they enter the cab of their vehicle. Through the framework of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and locus of control (Rotter, 1966b), this study proposes to discover what these women innately possess that propels them forward no matter the impediment, barrier, or obstacle. The following two sections addressed Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and Rotter's Locus of Control.

Cognitive and Behavioral Theories

Self-Efficacy Theory

Section two reviewed the literature on the Social Cognitive Theory of Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1994, 1995, 2006). This phenomenological qualitative research study is grounded in Self-efficacy theoretical framework developed by Albert Bandura from Social Cognitive theory, also formulated by Albert Bandura: Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), formerly social learning theory. Self-efficacy theory is an offshoot of social cognitive theory. A person's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive skills comprise the self-system (Kaur & Singh, 2017). Bandura modified the concept to describe better how humans learn from social experiences. Individuals possess a cognitive system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and actions. This system generates interaction between itself and sources of influences from the environment, providing the individual with the capacity to alter and control that environment by obtaining knowledge (cognitive processes) and actions. How individuals interpret their performance informs and changes their beliefs about self, the environment, and future performance (Pajares, 2007).

The theory proposes that effective learning and growth occur when individuals engage in dynamic and reciprocal interactions between people, behaviors, and an environment in a social context (LaMorte, 2016). Individuals are agents of their self-development, with the ability to adapt and self-regulate to achieve (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). The social cognitive theory states that observed and imitated behaviors are reinforced through reward or extinguished through punishment (Halpert & Hill, 2013). The expression of self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation (Bandura, 1977, 1994, 1995, 2006) or confidence in one's competence to cope with a broad range of stressful or challenging demands.

Perceived self-efficacy concerns people's beliefs about influencing the events that affect their lives. This core belief is the foundation of human motivation, performance accomplishments, and emotional well-being (Bandura, 1997, 2006). People have to believe their actions can produce desired effects. Otherwise, they have little incentive to undertake activities, push themselves or persevere in the face of trials and difficulties. Additionally, there may be other factors that serve as guides and motivators. Self-efficacy is not a personality trait but considered a situational-specific construct, a cognitive mediator of action (Ackerman, 2020; Bandura, 1982).

Nevertheless, personality traits and personal values significantly impact self-efficacy (Stajkovic, et al., 2018). An individual's values are critical to career expectations and the path to goal achievement. Aptitudes for transformation and self-improvement have a direct correlation with self-efficacy. Research completed in 2019 by Wilmot et al., indicated that extroversion impacts several aspects of work and career outcomes. These factors take root in the core belief that one can make a difference through actions (Bandura, 2010). The presence of positive competency traits associated with men indicates that women in engineering, IT, Construction,

and Politics (Beilock, 2019; Francescato et al., 2020) are more self-assured, self-sufficient, intelligent, assertive, venturesome, and more open to taking risks than other women (Lemkau, 1983). A 2020 study of women in politics, the proverbial male-oriented/dominated sector, found that extraversion was the crucial element that increased self-efficacy and political progression. Those women who thought of themselves as outgoing, talkers, dominant, dynamic, and extroverted perceived themselves as capable of balancing professional and personal lives, empowered and competent at engaging their male counterparts (Francescato et al., 2020).

This study further concluded that these components of extroversion appear suitable and well-matched tools when faced with the various obstacles in male-oriented/dominated occupations. Being assertive and dominant opens the way to a high degree of efficacy. Being proactive and assertive may play an essential role in developing a sense of self-efficacy expectation and is critical to success in many occupations (Betz & Hackett, 1981). Two elements of extraversion, popularity through openness and conversation, create social support, resulting in a heightened sense of empowerment. The study correlated a willingness to converse might help women politicians, in particular, to exhibit traditional feminine behavior when contextualized when interacting with authoritative men, especially in highly masculine environments (Hofstede, 2016)

How individuals perceive and respond to situations forms through their cognitive skills and attitudes, and abilities (Kaur & Singh, 2017). Albert Bandura's self-efficacy (1986); consist of the beliefs held about one's ability to achieve one's goals with success. Self-efficacy determines how individuals think, experience life, and motivate themselves to act (Kaur & Singh, 2016). Self-efficacy can be multifaceted or relatively simple, consisting of four elements, general, academic, social, and emotional self-efficacy. General self-efficacy indicates whether an

individual embraces the belief that barriers and problems are conquerable (Bandura, 1986). Academic self-efficacy has to do with the personal conviction that academic tasks, levels of achievements, and goals are attainable. Social self-efficacy comprises the individual's confidence in interacting with others by adjusting varying perceptions to various social situations (Bandura, 1997). Emotional self-efficacy reflects one's belief and the ability to self-regulate by initiating, avoiding, maintaining, or modulating internal emotions and ways of behaving to master self.

Self-efficacy is significant in how individuals feel about themselves and whether they believe they can achieve their goals and dreams (Cherry, 2020). The self-system comprises one's abilities, attitudes, and cognitive skills (Bandura, 1982; Kaur & Singh, 2017). This encompassing system contributes to how individuals' perceptions and behavioral responses form in a given situation. The individual's belief in their ability to succeed determines how they feel, think, perform, behave, and set goals. This theory is unique in that its emphasis is on the relevance of the social context plus the importance of the ability of both men and women to initiate and maintain performance behaviors (Ackerman, 2020). Both the initiating and supporting behavior result from applying strong self-efficaciousness to sustain and intensify the effort needed for optimal performance, even in moments of struggle against periods of self-doubt.

Bandura (2006) devised that Perceived self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capability to produce a designated performance measure, influencing the events affecting their lives. These beliefs govern how the individual feels, thinks, motivates themselves, and their pending actions. According to Bandura, these beliefs generate various cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. Cognitive Processes regulate emotional states and set in motion emotional reactions. Motivational processes stimulate a level and course of action that

becomes more intense and persistent with effort. Affective Processes regulate emotional states and elicit emotional responses. Self-Regulation exercises authority over one's motivation, thoughts, emotional condition, and behavior patterns. Although definitively observed in adulthood, the sense of efficacy develops and expresses itself differently based on the competency demands through various phases of life.

Self-efficacy and Lifespan. A sense of efficacy originates in infancy (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). An implicit understanding of self begins developing at birth (Rochat, 2000) and possibly before. Exploration and the effects achieved by their efforts lay the foundation to cultivate a sense of efficacy. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy begins with mastery experiences. Infants learn by repeatedly observing that their behavior gets results. They figure out that things happen with action and not inaction, either through disruptive screams or physical motion. When they experience a job well done by controlling events in their environment, they become more productive and competent in learning new ways of achieving responses. Infants who receive similar responses without effort tend to be less attentive to their behavior and less skilled in learning efficacious reactions (Bandura, 1989a).

Early Childhood. Developing a sense of personal efficacy requires the infant or individual to perceive their actions as part of themselves, not just acts that produce effects (Bandura). Experiences that are personal to the individual and unlike those of others become differentiated by the self. For example, drinking water provides comfort by quenching one's thirst, whereas observing someone else drink water does not have the same effect. One's actions and activities become distinct from the actions of others. Additionally, as children mature, those around them begin to treat them as distinctly separate individuals, and the child forms a distinctive image of themselves.

Childhood. As children grow up, they gain self-knowledge by appraising and testing their physical and social capabilities and competencies, and linguistic and cognitive talents for understanding and dealing with various situations daily. Children with opportunities to express efficacious actions through freedom of movement and exploration with the option to reflect on their experience and feedback from others have advanced social and cognitive abilities. This level of efficacy begins within the family but expands as the child's social world expands. Peers have an added impact on the child or individual's sense of efficacy through modeling efficacious thinking and behavior by providing comparisons that verify or devalue their perception of themselves while also validating self-efficacy.

Same-age peers in early childhood build efficacy to a degree, but school is a great cultivator of agency during the formative years. School is where children gain cognitive skills, problem-solving, and practical knowledge, preparing them for society. Their intellectual efficacy develops through testing, evaluation, and mastering various skills. Even the teacher's sense of efficacy will affect the child's sense of efficacy. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy regarding their teaching capability can motivate their students to excel. At the same time, teachers with a low sense of efficacy tend to act in a custodial capacity, using punitive measures to prompt their students to complete tasks. Teachers can encourage a sense of well-being and effectiveness in their students, or they may confuse and cause fear limiting a child's ability to assess their capabilities honestly. What students believe about their capacity to master academic tasks impacts ambition, interests, and educational achievements.

Adolescence. Experiences in adolescence also play a role in developing self-belief to cope and self-efficacy. In this stage, young people must learn to care for themselves in almost all aspects of their lives. Young people amplify and fortify their sense of efficacy by dealing with

unfamiliar difficulties and beneficial experiences. That learning may also involve taking on unwarranted challenges, experimenting, and participating in risky behavior. Efficacy intensifies preceding mastery experience as adolescence eases the transition from childhood to adulthood. Young people with high self-efficacy engage in more challenging schoolwork, tasks, and work without anxiety. Self-efficacy aids in preventing cognitive overload, and these young people are more likely to persevere when encountering failure (Kalender, 2020). Self-efficacy influences young people's self-judgment, self-assessment, time management abilities, and goal setting (Schunk & Pajares. 2002).

Early Adulthood. Efficacy acquired through mastery experiences during childhood to adulthood becomes a productive tool when choosing and entering a career. The individual's beliefs about their sense of effectiveness add to career development and doing well in other pursuits. Perceived self-efficacy determines how well the individual develops cognitive talents, self-regulation, and the ability to interact effectively with others, which are influential determinants of one's occupational path.

Further clarification comes when viewing how underdeveloped and embraced efficacy exhibits in the individual. Bandura proposes that a strong sense of efficacy boosts personal accomplishment and well-being. High self-assurance fosters an outlook where complex tasks are challenges to conquer, not threats to avoid. This efficaciousness generates inherent attention and an enthrallment in activities. They set demanding goals as they maintain an unyielding commitment to those goals. Plus, they intensify their efforts and quickly recover their sense of efficacy after setbacks when faced with danger. These individuals see failure as in adequate action, refusal to work hard, lack of knowledge, and acquirable skills. They address difficult and threatening circumstances with an assurance that they will not be overwhelmed but will exercise

control. Bandura believes that this is where efficacy yields personal accomplishment. This study looks at how or of these two aspects of self-efficacy correlate to women choosing a typically male-oriented/dominated profession such as truck driving.

The description of those lacking in efficacy has a comprehensible contrast. Individuals doubting their capabilities tend to avoid difficulty and tasks they deem a personal threat. They pursue their chosen goals with low aspirations and little commitment. They also get stuck on their deficiencies, potential impediments, and every possible negative outcome. They decide not to focus on how to perform due to the inferior sense of efficacy successfully. The effort extended becomes sluggish and quickly gives up when difficulties arise. When faced with failure or setbacks, the ability to recover their sense of efficacy is slow because they see inadequate performance as limited ability. Bandura (1989b) posited that these individuals do not need much to lose faith and confidence in their capabilities.

Self-efficacy Simplified. Self-efficacy emerges as human agency's innermost force and influence (Bandura, 1982). The individual perceives self-driven efficacy through thought, actions, and emotions. Bandura proclaimed the higher the level of triggered self-efficacy, the higher the realized performance accomplishment and the lower the emotional stimulation. Self-efficacy offers a perspective on human behavior, proposing that individuals' beliefs about themselves are critical components in employing control and personal agency (Bandura, 1986). The theory further suggested a view of men and women as both the products and the producers of their environments and social systems (Pajares, 2007). The source of achievement is among the four primary developmental roots influencing individual self-efficacy, including Mastery experience, Vicarious experience, Social persuasion, and Physical states (Bandura, 2006).

Mastery Experiences. Mastery experiences are the best means of fostering a strong sense of efficacy. With an established sense of efficacy, success enhances the individual belief in their effectiveness. Although failure can undermine the sense of efficacy, loss and disappointment are needed to build resilience. Tackling impediments and setbacks serves a crucial purpose for teaching and instilling perseverance through persistent effort. However, the individual experiences mostly unimpeded successes; they expect quick, easy results and are overwhelmed by failure.

Through conquest and defeat, the individual believes they have what it takes to accomplish the tasks set before them. Mastery experience produces strength and the ability to rebound quickly and overcome obstacles. Without the mastery of experiences formed through success and failure, the individual lacks the tools to face personal and professional challenges (Bandura, 2006). Mastery of experience is a crucial foundation for building one's sense of efficacy. However, men and women tend to have different approaches. Researchers Zeldin, Pajares, and Britner (2006) posit that women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and mathematics gain their sense of self-efficacy through social persuasion and vicarious experience, while men increase self-efficacy through mastery experiences. This success in mathematics in particular, is rooted in repetition, confidence, and internal motivational beliefs (Fennema & Peterson, 1985).

Vicarious Experience. Vicarious experience provided by social models creates the second avenue by which one forms and strengthens self-efficacy beliefs. Observing others similar to oneself in intellect, ability, or physical attributes achieve something through perseverance and persistence encourages the observer that they, too, are capable and can do likewise. People often seek competent individuals who model skills and abilities to which they

aspire. In the same way, despite the hard work, when observed failure will lessen the observer's self-assessment due to the connection with the model. Thus, the assumed connection with the model is great, the more persuasive the achievements and setbacks.

Studies by Brown and Inouye (1978) demonstrated that vicarious experience could induce learned helplessness, where self-efficacy mediates performance breakdown. The individuals in Brown and Inouye's study who possessed a heightened sense of competence did not alter their perceived efficacy or lessen their efforts to achieve when they observed models portrayed as helpless. The response was especially significant, with an unenthusiastic response to failure. However, the observers who saw themselves with similar abilities as the helpless model did not do well. This group lowered their perception of competence and readily gave up when faced with difficulty (Beilock, 2019). Brown and Inouye concluded that self-efficacy was a valuable predictor of persistence. The higher the degree of self-efficacy, the more time invested in enduring hardship to achieve tasks.

Vicarious experience through modeling offers more to the observer than a standard against which one can judge one's efficacy. Modeled behavior, ways of thinking, and competency conducts knowledge and teaches practical skills and prudent approaches to dealing with the demands of various environments. Bandura concludes that the acumen acquired through experienced connection and similarity produces heightened perceived self-efficacy. There is power in vicarious experience (Brown & Inouye, 1978). This power comes from self-respect, the innate strength, and the internal awareness of the designed nature and societal support constructed by others (Rowlands, 1997).

Social Persuasion. The third means of enhancing and strengthening the individual so that they possess what they need to do well is social persuasion. Those in the position to assist in

building efficacy in others often use positive praise to increase an individual's belief in their capacity to do well. The social persuasion offered, often in vocal support and encouragement, strategically structured teaching moments that make a significant difference. In these moments, individuals avoid situations where frequent failure is likely, while directed to scenarios that bring about some form of success. In this way, the measurement of doing well is a matter of self-improvement rather than making comparisons with others.

Verbal influence indicating a potential to master a task or activity can cause the individual to muster more effort and persist through difficulty, even when self-doubt and over-emphasized deficiencies arise. Additionally, acts of persuasion prompt the individual to develop their existing ability and acquire new skills leading to a sense of efficacy. However, social persuasion undermines personal efficacy by inaccurate or false praise of efficacy disproved by unfavorable results of the individual's spent efforts. In the same light, when individuals feel persuaded that they lack capabilities, they avoid the difficulty that may activate prospective talent or give up without trying. The ultimate consequence is a decline in motivation, avoidance of opportunities, and disbelief in their capabilities, which creates a behavioral circle that validates low efficacy. Social persuasion promotes a healthy sense of efficacy through realistic and positive affirmation and balanced moments of achievement and failure (Bandura, 1989).

Physical State. The fourth influence on the individual's sense of efficacy relates to their physical state. Physiological and emotional conditions, like stress, anxiety, fatigue, arousal, and mood (Pajares, 2007), affect how individuals see themselves or judge their capabilities. Often physical ailments become confused with incapacity and weakness. Mood impacts the assessment of personal efficacy. An optimistic attitude leads to an enhancement of perceived self-efficacy, while a downcast mood lowers perceived self-efficacy.

Bandura (1991b) suggested reducing individuals' reactions that produce stress and minimizing negative emotional tendencies and the false impression prompted by their physical state. In this regard, the Individual's perception and interpretation of their physical and emotional is the issue, not only the intensity of those states. Individuals with a high sense of efficacy tend to view their state of emotional stimulation or affective arousal as a primer for performance, while those loaded with self-doubt experience arousal as debilitating. Self-awareness, especially over periods of emotional upheaval, needs the individual's attention to avoid self-doubt, disparaging self-talk, and skeptical attitudes regarding one's abilities (Tugsbaatar & Uyanga, 2020).

Some researchers contended that work segregates into distinct agency, autonomy, and shared behavior categories. Masculine attributes such as independence and task orientation tend to be associated with behaviors of genuine agency. Feminine qualities of being relational and focused socially relate to communal behavior. Whether a position falls into a specific gender role has to do with the level of agency or collective behavior expected of the individual performing a job, as well as the perceived effectiveness of the individual as assessed by their peers and subordinates, taking into account the unity of the leader's sex with the perceptions of the position (Frame et al., 2010). The literature puts forward additional perspectives related to personal Agency and sex differences in young people regarding selecting suitable work.

The National Center for Education Statistics (Kena et al., 2015) suggests that gender differences persist, particularly in the self-concept of ability and expectancy for success based on males' and females' value of math and physical science (Frome et al., 2006). These differences in young people can predict gender differences in behaviors related to the self-efficacy necessary for achievement later in traditionally "male jobs." Thus, explaining in part the underrepresentation of talented women in various occupations (Frome et al., 2006). The

conclusion was that women who aspire to conventionally male positions must overcome those perceptions to keep the job and succeed (Watts et al., 2015).

In regards to typically male oriented/dominated work, women tend to have lower self-efficacy expectations than men (Betz and Hackett, 1981). A study by Clement (1987) showed that lower self-efficacy does not deter women from thinking about a career in masculine oriented fields. On the other hand, the opposite is true according to Giles (1999), a study of self-efficacy in respect to career exploration, intention, and behaviors found that higher self-efficacy is involved in the process, and can offer a useful framework in which to assess the preferences of both men and women in their choice of occupation.

Much of the literature mentioned focuses significant energy and attention on the nature of gender in the workplace and appears to do little to clarify what attributes women innately contribute to the workforce. It is possible to direct more attention to successful women's experiences and strategies in taking on any barriers, perceptions of obstacles, or the ignored glass ceilings in male-oriented fields (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). This study aims to determine to what degree this is true by studying a male-oriented/dominated field where all the aspects of what is typical "men's work" are present. The trucking industry meets these criteria on all levels. As a truck driver, spatial reasoning, hand and eye coordination, imminent decision making, multi-tasking with intense focus, flexible work schedules, outdoors, all weather conditions, potentially grubby, dangerous, need for physical strength, labor-intensive readiness, and enduring isolation.

Locus of Control

While Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) of behavior learned through conditioning, punishment, and reinforcement gave rise to his self-efficacy theory, Julian Rotter also explored Social learning theory in 1954. Rotter (1966) valued the reinforcement aspect of

social learning yet concentrated on the interactions between people and their environment as a critical element, leading to his theory of general expectancy or locus of control. There exist some apparent similarities between the two approaches due to this common groundwork formed in social learning theory. The social environment is of primary importance in shaping behavior—social outcomes, such as approval, love, or rejection, influence behavior in a powerful way.

These social reinforcements are the most important to social beings-people (Mearns, 2019). Social learning theory is foundational in Self-efficacy and Locus of control; both posit the importance of observing, modeling, and imitating behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions (Murphy, 2021). Self-efficacy relates to the belief one has about their innate ability to complete or perform a task. In contrast, Locus of control refers to one's belief about the source of power or influence over circumstances and events in life (Mearns, 2019). Internal locus of control or agency includes the ability to act or do something, have authority in one's life, be efficacious, and take responsibility for one's behaviors, whether success or failure (Li et al., 2015).

Rotter's concept of generalized expectancies for control of reinforcement or Locus of control (Mearns, 2019) is useful when assessing the degree of individual differences where reinforcement or control is a consequence of a person's behavior or the result of fate, luck, or 'powerful others' (Borden & Hendrick, 1973). Locus of control describes the potential for any behavior to occur in a given situation as a function of the person's expectancy that the given behavior will secure the available reinforcement and what those available reinforcements are worth to the person (Laws, 1976). Expectancy refers to individuals' general intersecting situational beliefs about whether they get reinforced life experiences. Each individual's experiences of their environment are unique. Therefore, different individuals interpret situations differently and have different expectancies and reinforcement values in the same circumstances.

Consequently, the interpretation of the environment is subjective and not an objective array of meaningful stimuli, which may determine how they behave (Mearns, 2019).

Observations of the behavior of others affect individual expectancy. Expectancy is the subjective probability that a given behavior will lead to a particular outcome or reinforcement (Rotter, 1954). The observation of the effect of others' behaviors affects our expectancies. Expectancy is formed based on past experiences, but not always one's direct experiences. When we witness the outcomes of someone else's action, we might expect the same if we do the same. However, people tend to over or underestimate, which distorts likely conclusions. Individuals with solid and significant expectancies are confident that their intentional behavior will produce a positive outcome. This high expectancy prompts the individual to effectively engage in conduct, most likely to produce results that pay off, fostering reinforcement (Rotter, 1966b). One success will lead to the next (Lopez-Garrido, 2020).

Weak or low expectancies indicate that individuals perceive that their behavior will not pay off with desired outcomes and not produce reinforcement. Those outcomes of our behavior have high and low reinforcement values (RF), depending on whether the individual wants to avoid or embrace what happens. If expectancy and reinforcement values are high, behavior potential will be impressive. If either expectancy or reinforcement value is low, behavior potential will be lower. Rotter's generalized expectancies for control of reinforcement (LOC) classification is not a typology but a continuum from extreme internal to extreme external (Mearns, 2019). It is not an either/or proposition. The orientation of LOC is natural and nurtured because it is possible to learn to have agency, meaning that change, based on personal experience and impacts the individual's level of achievement and success (Hutch, 2019). Locus of Control

or Generalized expectancy predicts behavior across situations. There are situations where some people are generally externally oriented but behave like they are internally oriented.

Past learning taught control over the reinforcement an individual received in certain situations. However, their overall perception is that they have little to do with what happens to them. This personality construct considers the person's interaction and environment crucial. One's character and, therefore, behaviors are always changeable (Rotter, 1954). Change how a person thinks or the setting the person is responding to, and behavior will change. Personality is not static, yet through life experiences, beliefs build up. Rotter's optimistic view of humankind sees the individual as being drawn forward by their goals, expectancy, reinforcement as a value, and the psychological aspects of a situation. The ability of humans to control their environment prompts immense interest from various sectors seeking to understand specific criteria for performance. The concepts of helplessness, hopelessness, alienation, competence, and mastery are indicators of individual control in one's life (Lefcourt, 1966). Loc perceived control over events in their lives. Internals see a direct connection between their actions and results or consequences, whether life circumstances are with one's power (Thomas, 2021).

Locus of Control represents the source from which one's power derives, within or outside of the individual, to alter the events in life (Ackerman, 2020). Rotter's concept of internal-external locus of control evolved as a spectrum (Halpert & Hill, 2013). Rotter differentiated between internal and external locus of control, which indicates that consequences based on preceding behavior depend on whether the individual perceives the reward as a factor of his action or independent of it (Rotter, 1966b). Locus of control also describes how individuals perceive outcomes resulting from their behaviors or external forces, affecting how one views the world (Mind Tools Content Team, 2019). Where one believes the locus (*Latin for place*) lies in

one's life says a lot about how much agency one thinks one possesses. LOC forms in one's experience rather than a personality trait, like introversion or extroversion (Baer, 2014). Agency rooted in life experience counts. Individuals in middle age tend to have the highest internal locus of control. Nonetheless, younger and older people tend to have a higher external locus of control than people in middle age (Rotter, 1990).

Internal/External Locus of Control. Response to failure states that the cause was thoroughly outside of one's control, and the result of someone else's actions indicates a lack of belief in one's ability (Ackerman, 2020). The individual readily shifts blame and responsibility. These individuals with an external LOC (externals) tend to believe that external forces control their lives (Rotter, 1966a). On the other hand, an ability to quickly admit mistakes and failures or take credit or blame is evidence of an external locus of control. The individual owns the good, the bad, and the ugly and grows from who they are. Those with an internal LOC (internals) believe that they are the masters of their destinies. These individuals think and have confidence in their abilities and actions and accept that they can influence their external environments (Halpert & Hill, 2013).

Individuals deemed high internals who try to master their environments are help-seeking and positive. High externals feel helpless, avoid coping, and practice resignation (Keenan & McBain, 1979). Internal loc is not good, and external is terrible, although internals tend to be better off and are more achievement-oriented (Joelson, 2017). Internal loc is beneficial to the worker. The individual will perform well, be less vulnerable, deal better with stress, have more job satisfaction, and be a more active problem solver. Regarding work, it is best if there is a match in self-efficacy, competence, and opportunity. Without these elements, the internals become anxious, neurotic, and depressed (Hutch, 2019).

Additionally, individuals prioritizing an internal agency as a source of forwarding momentum benefit from positive mental health. They are less likely to experience any form of learned helplessness or powerlessness (Murphy, 2021). The British Cohort Study (1970) followed 7500 individuals from 10 to 30 years old. The participants behaved more healthily, with greater confidence observed among those with an internal locus of control throughout the twenty years of research. These researchers resumed that locus of control was an innate personality trait. However, the evidence showed that childhood experiences and parental interactions shape the locus of control. Children with parents focused on independence helped their children learn the connection between actions and the ensuing consequences and developed an internal locus of control and the ability to influence outcomes through their actions (Bale, 2008). Lastly, the study touches on human biology and the implications of how men and women may differ in their behavior (Zell et al., 2015).

Another study identified several characteristics attributed to women, such as passivity, dependence, and submissiveness, which seem to reflect an external orientation of locus of control or a constrained influence over the events in their lives. Marecek and Frasch (1977) tested the theory, confirming that external loc orientation may act as a psychological barrier affecting women's participation in certain occupations. This study also showed that at this time, women committed to conservative ideologies regarding traditional sex roles were more likely to have an external orientation. These women were less likely to conform to or aspire to non-traditional work or pursue careers requiring intense, long-term involvement. Marceck and Frasch (1977) suggested that this might explain why the expectations of women-oriented externally were lower than internally oriented women. These women also tended to do less career planning due to the external orientation toward luck, chance, or other forces.

The data from this study also indicated that college-age women with external loc orientations might encounter a degree of conflict while anticipating their future roles based on what they wish to do, not what they will do. Individual beliefs and choices related to sex roles and societal pressure for women to have careers are overwhelming. Conflict occurs when determining which innate character traits are common to both (McIntyre & Edwards, 2009) and are primarily attributable to only one or the other sex, male and female (Konrad et al., 2000). Positive masculine traits come together to reflect competence and are highly valued, whereas positive feminine traits engender persuasiveness and kindness (Broverman et al., 1972). According to the Broverman study, sex-role meanings incorporate themselves in the concept of self for both men and women (Connelly, 2017; Edwards, 1993; Na, 2011; Van Anders et al., 2015).

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the literature related to the impediment and barriers women face in the working world as prescribed by this century's societal construct or ethos. The chapter also addressed the self-efficacy and locus of control theoretical frameworks and the related theories in this study. Individuals with a strong internal locus of control also have a high sense of self-efficacy (Ackerman, 2020). This research proposed to look at those unique self-efficacious elements of being a woman that innately propels some women forward in the workforce, manage home life with an exception, and succeed beyond and within the Ethos. The researcher aimed to understand how women excelling in male-oriented/dominated occupations may require personal characteristics beyond the traditional external orientation (Marecek & Frasch, 1977). The researcher also hoped to comprehend if the trucking industry might benefit

from women with an internal loc orientation, perceiving themselves as controlling the events of their lives (Lefcourt, 1966; Rotter, 1966a).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The researcher described in detail the research methodology and procedures in Chapter 3. This chapter discussed the guidelines and frameworks for the design of this study. The details embraced the process used to select data sources, the employed, the reliability and validity of the data instruments, and procedures used for data collection. The chapter also illustrated the principle and the process adhered to garner Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The proposed analysis entails ensuring study validity. Additionally, the researcher addressed a plan for reporting the findings.

This study examined female truck drivers' experiences working in a predominately male-oriented and dominated occupation. This study purposed to explore and discover the factors that promote women's strength and power to overcome the impediments purported within the ethos. This study has two forms of research questions: the primary research question and the related sub-questions. What is the lived experience of female truckers as it relates to what they bring to the occupation and their ability to do such a difficult job?

Sub-questions:

- RQ1: What factors persuade women to enter, overcome impediments, and prevail over the barriers associated with male-oriented work in a male-dominated field such as trucking?
- RQ2: What role, if any, does self-belief play in the success of women in the trucking industry?
- RQ3: What role, if any, does self-efficacy play in the success of women in the trucking industry?

- RQ4: What role, if any, does the locus of control play in the success of women in the truck industry?

Can those factors be categorized objectively and benchmarked to influence the truck driver shortage to attract more women to the trucking industry?

Research Design

The research methodology selected depended on several key factors, such as the problem or issues the researcher wanted to address, the purpose of the research, implications of practice or policy influence, the theoretical framework upon which to build the study, and the type of data collected by the researcher (Maxwell, 2013). The procedures associated with research design intend to answer questions of validity, accuracy, objectivity, and minimal financial outlay that determine the proposed study (Kumar, 2011). Considering these elements, the researcher embraced a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experience of a small number of women truck drivers in a typically male-oriented/dominated occupation. This study aimed to understand this phenomenon. The following sections provide the rationale behind the researcher's choice of research method.

Overview of Qualitative Research

Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies; have rigor, strength, and logic but are often used to address different questions and objectives (Maxwell, 2005). Quantitative research applies a deductive approach to test previously selected theories or hypotheses (Boeije, 2010), following a rigid, structured, predetermined approach. The emphasis is on collecting a large sample(s) to quantify the variables of a phenomenon using numbers (Kumar, 2011). Qualitative research is inductive (Boeije, 2010). Qualitative research is empirical, unstructured, and somewhat flexible (Kumar, 2011), with an exploratory focus on explaining and

understanding perceptions, attitudes, and feelings. The researcher observes, interviews small samples (groups or individuals), and often uses focus groups while concentrating on words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher places themselves in the participants' setting to appreciate the meaning, context, various influences, and the process by which circumstances occur to explain causes ascribed to a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

As a qualitative research method, phenomenology permitted this researcher to understand the experiences, attitudes, and perspectives of women faced with the reality of traditional work done by men. This work encompassed all the elements of danger, long hours, typically "sweaty" outdoor labor, with significant scheduling irregularity. Not all the complex variables related to women's experiences and interpersonal dynamics are knowable. Qualitative research methods allowed this researcher to collect data through interviews with women drivers, creating notes, analyzing, and understanding women's perceptions and perspectives based on their lived experience in the trucking industry.

Overview of the Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology, or the philosophy of experience, originated with the philosophical perspective of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), where he focused on understanding phenomena or the science of living beings. Later, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) concentrated on the manner of being human or the position of humanity in the world (Lavery, 2003). Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2015) contributed perceptual experience and subjectivity, including the individual's perception, the physical body, and consciousness concerning the natural world (Whittmore, 2021).

Phenomenology was a robust inquiry design in which the researcher described their attempt to learn from the events in the lives of others or lived experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019). The pursuit of meaningful insight was from the first-person point of view, as detailed by

the study participants (van Manen, 2017). The phenomenological description became a culmination of a small group of individuals, all having experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenology focuses on the intentional, the imagination, relationships, and the self as the ultimate source of meaning and value in the lived experience of human beings (Armstrong, 2005). The researcher's objective was to understand those lived experiences by elevating the voices of individuals with particular expertise to comprehend their perspectives better (Neubauer et al., 2019).

The researcher addressed the research questions by employing the phenomenological approach to look at a small sample of female truckers to understand the phenomenon of women who thrive in the trucking industry. This researcher believed that the best way to appreciate the elements or traits contributing to the ability of women truckers to do well is to allow them to describe their lived experiences in their environment (Creswell, 2014). The researcher found that this methodology provided a way to gain meaning from women truckers' unique and distinct shared experiences (Armstrong, 2005), while also uncovering and devising some possible beneficial guidance to young women working in male-oriented/dominated fields in general, possibly providing insight into the driver shortage and how to attract more women to the trucking industry.

The use of the phenomenological approach facilitated the research purpose of studying how women in trucking give meaning to their lives by interpreting their experiences, thoughts, expressions, and actions. The researcher collected plentiful descriptive data from the study participants working in a predominately male occupation. The descriptive data allowed the researcher to distinguish and explore the common themes among women truck drivers (Boeije,

2010). Therefore, as the primary data collection and analysis instrument, the researcher was mindful of mediating findings through human subjectivity and interpretation (Chan et al., 2013).

The researchers' personal biases can enter into the study through unconsciously imposed beliefs; questions posed to participants might prompt a particular response or unintended misinterpretation used to meet a predetermined assumption, theory, or hypothesis (Shah, 2019). Some degree of researcher bias is inevitable. The researcher took precautions to diminish the impact of her presumptions on the outcome of this phenomenological study. Peer review, respondent validation, and bracketing are the tools the researcher used to enhance the results and mitigate qualitative researcher bias (Lawson, 2019; Noble & Smith, 2015).

Bracketing is a phenomenological method of refraining from personal judgments that might taint the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2012) by creating a distance between the study of lived experience and the commonplace or familiar ways of seeing people or circumstances (Chan et al., 2013). Bracketing is a form of disclosure in qualitative research, where the researcher shares the background from which the study might emanate. The researcher did her best to suspend beliefs, thoughts, biases, emotions, preconceptions, presuppositions, assumptions, and hypotheses about the phenomenon under study. Nothing impinged on the participant's understanding of the study or the phenomena (Fischer, 2009).

This qualitative tool permitted the researcher to document any experiences associated with the research topic while also endeavoring to limit imposed data construction or any assumptions that may shape the process of data collection (Lawson, 2019). Bracketing was a vital element that aided validity in qualitative research unless its application was purposely vague and superficial, keeping in mind that both the researcher and the study participants possess biases that could have influenced the perception of experiences and reality (Gearing, 2004). The

successful use of bracketing depended on the researcher's level of self-awareness (Lawson, 2019) and the intentional action by the researcher in offering a safeguard from the effects and challenges of delving into the emotionally or psychologically charged subject matter (Chan et al., 2013).

A planned reflexive process and bracketing started with the initiation of the research proposal and continued through data collection and the analysis process. The researcher began the research by bracketing experiences germane to the research topic while also adopting a conscious ignorance (Chan et al., 2013). This progression included a diary of the researcher's contemplation about her history, professional background in the trucking industry, and her viewpoints on male-oriented/dominated occupations. Journaling helps the researcher bracket her experiences, not eliminating but recognizing and minimizing biases.

Phenomenological research intends to learn from the experiences of other humans, expressed through conversation via interviews, participant observation, and analysis of personal texts (Lester, 1999). Therefore, the researcher was attentive and documented the interviewees and their responses. Through analyzing the recorded interviews and possible observation of the participants, the researcher extracted the common themes, encounters, and occurrences within the phenomenon associated with female truck drivers. The researcher conveyed an accurate meaning and context by using follow-up questions during interviews and questions that provided clarity after the interview. The researcher used Zoom (<https://www.zoom.us>), phone calls, messages, and possibly in-person recorded interviews (Lester, 1999). This technique offered the researcher confidence in developing a comprehensive understanding of the interviewees' experiences while avoiding misunderstandings related to the phenomenon.

Sources of Data

The researcher conducted this phenomenological research by selecting and using drivers associated with a national Woman's trucking organization in Plover, Wisconsin. The organization provided a pool of elite, experienced, and seasoned women drivers from across the United States, holding a Class A Commercial license (CDL) with various Department of Transportation (DOT) endorsements to participate in this study. The participants with DOT endorsements, such as Hazardous material (H), Triples (T), and Tanker (N) Permits, allow the driver to haul dangerous materials, multiple trailers simultaneously, and shifting and unstable cargo (liquids) when moved. Participants with these endorsements can contribute added vigor to the study, attesting to exceptional skill, tenacity, and determination necessary in this exceptionally intense and sometimes dangerous trucking industry.

Independent owner-operators and company-employee drivers are acceptable; both will provide a broad perspective as drivers working in an organizational structure and those taking entrepreneurial risks. However, to increase the degree of homogeneity, women drivers with only team driver (male/female) experience will exclude the female driver from the study. The researcher desires to maintain a measure of sample homogeneity among the study participants to achieve more rigor related to the phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). Being partnered with a male driver on a long-term basis affects the perspective and lived experience, unlike a solo woman driver on the road alone. The researcher aims to explore the participants' needs, views, perceptions, expectations, and attitudes in this male job.

One area of concern in qualitative research was the sample size. Too small of a sample population may not support the purported, invalid saturation point or might augment informational redundancy. Too large a sample population prohibits deep analysis, which prompts

the rationale for the study (Sandelowski, 1995). For this study, the researcher effectuated judgment or purposive sampling to address her research questions (Frey, 2018) based on a framework of variables likely to influence the participants' contributions and the researcher's practical knowledge of the study subject (Marshall, 1996). Empirical research has illustrated that a sample of 12 participants may be where saturation occurs among selected homogeneous participants (Boddy, 2016).

Therefore, data collection involved at least 12 drivers and no more than 15 driver participants for this study. This criteria and method for sampling selection ensured that the chosen study participants possessed relevant shared experiences related to the phenomenon studied. Using the above criteria for sample selection, the researcher selected participants meeting the following qualifications were eligible to contribute to the study:

- Female truck drivers licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with and without endorsements), and
- Have accumulated more than 200,000 miles of "over-the-road" driving; and
- Have experience primarily as a solo driver, independent or company employee.

The researcher contacted a national trucking association for women to locate qualified study participants. The association had access to thousands of female drivers across the United States. Therefore, it was an excellent source of candidates willing to participate in the study. The researcher recruited from a list of drivers provided by the association, using an initial recruitment email or a script via phone call (Appendix A). The second email included the request to contribute to the study by signing an IRB consent Letter (Appendix B), ensuring confidentiality. The data selection process ended when the projected sample size completed the interviews.

Instruments Used

To lay the foundation for data collection, the researcher scrutinized the female drivers for suitability for the study, using the selection criteria listed above, using proficiency as a commercial driver as one of two instruments. Subsequently, the researcher developed and presented several open-ended questions to study participants to gather sufficient data. In addition to the prepared questions, the researcher fostered the flow of a natural, uninhibited conversation to emerge to delve into the wide-ranging comprehensive experiences of study participants. The design of the following initial 14 questions was to elicit information related to the primary and secondary research questions. The researcher conducted several pilot interviews to determine if the questions provided the data sought to answer the research questions. Additionally, the researcher confirmed that the questions aligned with the literature on locus of control and self-efficacy theories, fulfilling the expectation of illuminating the significance of both approaches.

- Interview Question 1: Tell me about something in your life that challenges you. How did you overcome it?
- Interview Question 2: What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations, if any? Describe how you handled those experiences. What did you do to keep going?
- Interview Question 3: Who was your role model, or who inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?
- Interview Question 4: What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?

- Interview Question 5: What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? Have you had such experiences in other jobs?
- Interview Question 6: At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?
- Interview Question 7: What do you think you may be contributing to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?
- Interview Question 8: What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?
- Interview Question 9: How do you describe success for working women? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?
- Interview Question 10: Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?
- Interview Question 11: At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe both.
- Interview Question 12: If there were just three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?
- Interview Question 13: What is the most challenging aspect of working in the trucking industry as a woman? How would you change it?
- Interview Question 14: What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?

The researcher transcribed the interviews using the transcription services embedded within the Zoom software (<https://www.Zoom.us>), analyzing them for key patterns and main themes to prepare a compelling, detailed description. The researcher compared the interview data, including study notes, the transcription, and possible observations, with participant review to confirm accuracy. Although the researcher utilized several techniques for data collection, the researcher was the primary means of data collection, rigor, and one of the study instruments (Cypress, 2017).

Validity of Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative research validity, quality is a goal, where trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility are plentiful (Creswell, 2014). Quality also refers to the credibility of a description, interpretation, explanation, or conclusion (Maxwell, 2005). Thus, instrument validity is the extent to which the research instrument gauged what the researcher designed it to measure (Maxwell, 2005). For this study, the researcher assessed the validity of female drivers' strengths, character traits, perception of events, and comportment in the trucking industry. To ensure the accuracy of the transcription and data collection credibility, the researcher shared this information with the participants for confirmation and approval. This participation corroboration process was valuable for validating data collected through the interview process (Kumar, 2011). The recorded interviews and the construction of the questions precisely addressed the above elements fully, thus corresponding to the study objective.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the interview questions, the researcher will engage a peer to assist by reviewing the questions before the participant interviews. The researcher chose these individuals based on their general comprehension of the study subject and their knowledge of doctoral research methodology (Appendix C). The researcher also planned a

“mock interview” to lend credibility to this instrument before the interviews with the study participants. The “mock interview” involved one of the selected participating drivers familiar with the trucking industry to offer reliable feedback on the interview questions. The responses to the interview questions during the “mock interview” revealed a bit of ambiguity in the meaning of several questions. The researcher avoided confusing the interviewees by adjusting the interview questions before proceeding further with the study.

Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

As a naturalistic inquiry, this phenomenological study aspired to understand and illuminate lived experiences (Cypress, 2017). The researcher used accuracy, consistency, and stability as the principal components of reliability for the qualitative data collection instrument (Kumar, 2011). It was pertinent that this qualitative naturalistic inquiry exhibited truthfulness. The research had to yield credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability throughout the process. Otherwise, it was neither scientific nor valid (Cypress, 2017). To solidify the reliability of this qualitative study, the researcher gathered detailed data by video recording the interviews in their entirety, offering the ability to verify and authenticate the initial assessment. These recordings increased the reliability of verbal communication and visual interactions via Zoom (<https://Zoom.us>).

The researcher informed and obtained permission to record audio and video from the participants in this study before the study. To further ensure reliability or trustworthiness, the researcher employed strategies such as addressing unhelpful information or discrepancies in the data and conveying observed descriptive detail related to the phenomenon and the participants by phone call, texts, and email. Covid -19 restrictions did not permit in-person contact (Creswell, 2014). After the interviews, the researcher used transcription software embedded in the Zoom

application to transcribe the interview. Next, the researcher safeguarded the accuracy and dependability of the responses by sending the transcripts to the interviewees for review. This process made sure that their perceptions were accurately recorded and precisely transcribed.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process began in Chapter 2 by reviewing current literature relevant to the working world of women, the purported impediments and barriers, and the writings focused on Self-efficacy and Locus of Control. This research and the research questions relied on insight from the reviewed literature. The researcher selected drivers from a national trucking association for women lists of members to recruit the target study participants. The recruitment process involved five steps.

- **Step 1:** Located and spoke to trucking associations geared solely toward women.
- **Step 2:** Met with an organization's representative to provide the criteria for the study, the number of drivers needed, and describe the yardstick for driver selection.
- **Step 3:** Contacted and explained the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, while vetting those drivers interested in participating and getting them to agree to the interview.
- **Step 4:** Coordinated with the representative and the drivers to schedule in-depth face-to-face or virtual interviews.
- Before the interview, **Step 5:** each participant receives and returns a signed consent letter (Appendix B).

The participants did not receive the interview questions at this time. Seeing the questions before the interview may have impacted authenticity. However, the participants received a full

interview transcript to bracket and revise responses. The researcher took notes and recorded the entire conversation with the study participants during the 45–60-minute interview.

The researcher developed an interview protocol as an instrument of inquiry to ask questions focusing on specific information about individual lived experiences. The researcher integrated several interview protocol designs (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Turner, 2010) to create one suitable to this study, guiding the question preparation and planning. Before beginning the interview process, the researcher aligned the interview questions with the research questions to ensure the necessity and intentional queries.

The interview began and ended with a script to lay a foundation of consistency. Here the researcher presented relevant information about the study and a participant information sheet that included; interview length, researcher contact information to get in touch later, and addressed terms of confidentiality to encourage sharing. The researcher created openness and a comfortable space to speak. These were necessary background inquiries, asking their name, how they are, their interest and likes beyond work, and their number of years on the road. The researcher signaled the approaching end of the interview to allow the interviewee time to gather their thoughts and offer any additional insights. The researcher encouraged the participant to relax and elicited rich detail about their experience. The questions were open-ended, prompted, and began from easy to more challenging. For example: “Tell me about the most difficult situation you found yourself in and how you handled it?” The researcher understood the necessity to revise, re-order, or add additional questions facilitating a natural conversation based on the participants’ responses. The changes aided in perfecting the interviews to follow.

Additionally, the researcher kept all identifiable information confidential to guarantee confidentiality and the interviewee's privacy. The researcher used alpha/numeric labels for the

Study participants 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, and so on, based on the category appropriate for the driving longevity, vehicle type driven, and whether company employed or Owner/Operator. After securing the transcripts in a file restricted by a private password, the researcher also deleted all recorded audio and video interviews.

Human Subject Considerations

An essential ethical consideration in phenomenological research is protecting the privacy of human subjects. This study adhered to the principles of Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). To protect the rights of the study participants from risk or harm, the researcher upheld the IRB standards prescribed by Pepperdine University by including the Informed Consent letter. The following presents the specific points contained in that letter (Appendix B). To take part:

- the study participation is entirely voluntary;
- the study participants retain the right to withdraw from the research for any reason at any time;
- the study participants need to know the purpose of the study and the data collection procedures before conducting the interview;
- all information associated with the identities of the study participants remains confidential;
- the study participants have to know the risks of participating in the study in advance;
- the researcher has to inform the study participants of the gained benefits while participating in the study;
- and the consent form requires the signatures of both the researcher and the participants.

After a successful oral defense, the researcher sends the IRB application to Pepperdine University's IRB office for a comprehensive review to obtain permission to proceed with the interview process (Appendix D).

Proposed Analysis

Before analyzing the data, the researcher noted possible areas for bracketing her personal experiences while conducting the interviews. This preemptive measure laid a foundation for the researcher to acknowledge and put aside the personal experiences relevant to the phenomenon. As the interview progressed, the researcher's heightened self-awareness prevented the impact of her knowledge on the study participants' comprehension of the phenomenon (Chan et al., 2013). The researcher documented the process of embracing and reflecting on the various experiences of women commercial truck drivers operating locally and over the road. Additionally, the researcher possesses extensive experience as a commercial truck driver, an invaluable source of reflection for the study. For that reason, the researcher sustained a unique attitude, amenable to focusing on the experiences of the study participants.

Coding the transcripts followed manually or using Nvivo software. The researcher began the analysis by systematically organizing, bringing together, and comprehending all the interview data to develop themes and a synthesized storyline. Repeatedly and attentively reviewing the recordings and reading the transcripts line by line, the researcher identified several categories of codes from single words, phrases, or sentences. Arranging the codes into categories and subcategories allowed the researcher to make connections and deduce and interpret those common themes attributed to the participants experiencing the phenomenon, linking ideas to the data (Boeije, 2010). The researcher's reflective journal helped to examine and re-examine the choices and decisions made throughout the phenomenological study. Thus, addressing researcher

bias ensured credibility and transferability (Chenail, 2011). Chapter 4 detailed the discussion of the data analysis process for this study.

Means To Ensure Study Validity

The researcher bracketed her experiences and knowledge pertinent to the research topic to exclude her bias and ensure the accuracy of the study findings. The researcher's reflections on commercial driving as a woman assisted in her ability to focus solely on the study participant's experiences in this research. This phenomenological study used driver proficiency and interview questions as its instruments to ensure quality. CDL licensing by the DOT and the driver's home state lends validity to driver proficiency. The interview questions established stability, uniformity, and consistency in the participants' responses about their perceptions and insights about their experiences as professional truck drivers.

The researcher engaged a student peer to review the interview questions to validate them before the meeting with the participants. The researcher chose a student peer and academic based on the degree of knowledge of research methodology at the doctoral level and competency related to the subject of the study. To obtain feedback to clarify any interview questions needing modifications before the actual participant interviews, the researcher used "mock interviews" with one proficient woman commercial driver.

The researcher took notes and meticulously transcribed recorded study participant interviews, assuring the conclusions from the data solicited and collected from the interviews. To further garner the accuracy of the interview data as expressed through the study participants' perspectives, the researcher sent individual transcripts to all study participants' interview responses for respondent validation (Maxwell, 2005). The study participants made statements more straightforward by making corrections and adding details to add credibility and

trustworthiness to form validity. This process eliminated the possible misinterpretation of the participant's perspectives, perceptions, or what they say or do and identified the researcher's bias (Maxwell, 2013). This study not only relied on the validated instrument but also grounded itself in taking notes, recognizing researcher bias, respondent checks, and peer reviews guaranteed the quality of the study's validity and the research (Creswell, 2014).

Plan for Reporting Findings

Chapter 4 includes the researcher's detailed discussion of the study. The chapter presents the initial problem that prompted the research, a restatement of the research questions compelling the investigation, an overview of the research design, and a summary presentation of the research findings. The researcher describes the research finding in narrative form, the coded data gathered from open-ended interview questions.

In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses the data collected, presenting a comprehensive analysis and a steadfast interpretation. The researcher evaluates relevant findings regarding the literature on self-efficacy and locus of control theoretical frameworks, determining whether the findings contribute to, disagree with, or back up the existing research. The researcher discusses and analyzes the findings related to current literature on self-efficacy and locus of control, encompassing credibility, trustworthiness, limitations, inferences, implications, and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

The researcher explored the lived experience of women truck drivers across the United States and part of Canada, examining women working in the ultimate male oriented/dominated occupation. The researcher chose the phenomenological approach outlined in Chapter 3 for this purpose. Chapter 3 included the descriptive data collected from the prescribed interviews.

Demographics of Research Participants

This study aimed to discover and understand what factors, innate abilities, or character traits contribute to their perceived strength, success, or failure in trucking. Therefore, the researcher purposively selected study participants using particular criteria: (a) Female Commercial truck drivers licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with and without endorsements), (b) having driven more than 200,000 miles of “over-the-road” driving, and (c) experience primarily as a solo driver, independent or company employee.

The researcher selected 14 individuals meeting the above criteria. All are solo drivers holding a Commercial Class A Driver’s license, several with Hazardous Materials and Triples endorsements. Among the fourteen participants, three were Owner-Operators or Lease-Holders, and the remaining eleven were company employees. Those selected were both American and Canadian citizens. There were twelve American participants and three Canadian, with eight to forty-four years in the trucking industry and accumulating a half-million to over four million miles of individual experience on the road. At the time of the interview, all participants were in route, on the road, actively engaged in and describing their lived experiences. Study participants’ detailed demographic data are in Table 1.

Table 1*Study Participants' Demographics*

Study Participants	Sex	Trucker Status	Position	Location
Driver A1-m	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A2	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A3	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A4	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A5	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A6	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A7	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A8	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver A9	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver B1H	F	Solo/Over-the-Road/HeavyHaul	Owner/Operator	United States
Driver A11	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	United States
Driver C1	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	Canada
Driver C2	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Company employee	Canada
Driver B2	F	Solo/Over-the-Road	Owner/Operator	United States

The 14 participants met each of the listed requirements to participate in this study. Table 2 contains the participant's practical experience detailed in miles and years as an over-the-road truck driver. The participants' over-the-road experience includes all terrain and weather conditions; mountain grades, desert, hail storms, heavy rain, snow and blizzards, icy roads, and minus-zero Fahrenheit temperatures.

Table 2*Study Participant Years and Miles of Driving Experience*

Participant	Years	Miles
A1M	2.5	300,000
A2	8.0	500,000

Participant	Years	Miles
A3	8.0	400,000
A4	8.0	600,000
A5	8.0	900,000
A6	4.0	700,000
A7	5.0	500,000
A8	7.0	600,000
C1	43.0	4,000,000
B1H	20.0	2,000,000
C2	32.0	3,500,000
A9	7.0	500,000
A10	44.0	3,000,000
B2	8.0	1,000,000

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher used purposive criteria sampling to identify the fourteen study participants. At the end of April 2022, the researcher contacted the Women in Trucking association, explaining the research and requesting assistance in finding drivers willing to participate in this study. The association posted the request on their internet site and bulletin board, with seventeen interested drivers who emailed or texted me. The researcher responded and emailed the invitations, recruitment scripts, and Informed Consent forms to the potential study participants. Fourteen drivers accepted the invitation to participate by signing the consent forms. The researcher emailed three reminder questions and arranged a tentative time for the recorded interview and conversation via Zoom.com.

The first interview was considered the “mock interview” because it prompted a further refinement of the interview questions. The most important result of this first interview was the need to get the participants thinking about themselves before the interview and prepare them to speak openly about themselves, as with a “friend.” The refinement also prompted a relaxed conversation while fostering and maintaining a narrow scope of the participant’s response and, for instance, having the participant respond to the questions about their lives and lived-experience in the trucking industry rather than getting off track and discussing a completely unrelated topic.

The virtual face-to-face interviews took approximately 75 to 90 minutes due to the conversational style and the fact that truckers enjoy talking and telling their stories. The interviews began on May 24, 2022, and ended on June 29, 2022. The interview dates and times occurred between deliveries, fueling, and rest times. The researcher relied on the interview protocol to focus and guide the entire process (Appendix E). The Zoom program immediately produced the transcriptions following each interview based on the researcher’s settings. The researcher emailed the study participants the transcription of their discussion to get transcript approval. Although there were only six responses to the emails, the researcher solicited immediate clarification and affirmation of the meaning of any vague statements made during the virtual interview and recorded them in the interview notes.

Data Analysis

Before coding, the researcher reviewed the transcripts while screening the virtual interviews to correct minor transcription errors, paid close attention to essential words and phrases, and highlighted and made notes for future reference. The researcher prepared to code the collected data when the study participants began returning the interview transcripts. The

coding processes entailed labeling, organizing, and categorizing words and segments to record and summarize pieces of data (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2014).

As a critical part of the data collection, the researcher took a reflexive approach compartmentalizing the researcher's experience in the trucking industry and other male-dominated/oriented fields. The researcher maintained an awareness of the need to avoid embedding assumptions and values into the data (Braun & Clarke, 2017). To mitigate preconceptions, the researcher took the preliminary step of bracketing to the best of her ability the interview by suspending judgments and opinions by not commenting on direct responses to interview questions to avoid the potential of tainting the research process (Chan et al., 2013).

Then, the researcher began the process of in-vivo coding, developing a list of codes line-by-line using Quirkos software. Using in-vivo coding helped capture metaphors and emotions expressed by the participants while allowing the researcher to remain close to the language used. This process allowed the researcher to pay close attention to the participant's mannerisms, expressions, and personalities when viewing the interviews. This specific method aided in picking up on any nuances contained in the participants' specific verbal use of language (Braun & Clarke, 2017),

After an intensive line-by-line assessment to accumulate a sizeable list of codes, the researcher analyzed and combined codes into categories. Next, sorting based frequency of the collected codes from more than half the study participants denoted significance to the researcher. The researcher repeated these processes multiple times to reveal more valuable data from the transcribed interviews. Consequently, these codes, placed in categories, indicated pertinent themes. Next, the researcher analyzed the notable statements to construct and refine the themes. The Findings section addressed the critical ideas and the themes.

Findings

Chapter 3 outlines the twelve interview questions developed by the researcher to guide the conversation between the researcher and the participant during the interview. The researcher categorized and correlated the fourteen interview questions to the four research questions. Table 3 presents an overview of the relationship between the research and related interview questions.

Table 3

Research Questions and Associated Interview Questions

Research Questions and Associated Interview Questions
Research Question: What is the lived experience of female truckers and related factors contributing to their ability to succeed in such a challenging male-dominated occupation?
Sub-questions
RQ1: What factors persuade women to enter, overcome impediments, and prevail over the barriers associated with male-oriented work in a male-dominated field such as trucking?
Interview Question 1. Tell me about something in your life that challenges you. How did you overcome it?
Interview Question 2. What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations, if any? Describe how you handled those experiences. What did you do to keep going?
Interview Question 9. How do you describe success for working women in general? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?
Interview Question 12. If there were just three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?
RQ2: What role, if any, does self-belief play in the success of women in the trucking industry?
Interview Question 5. What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? Have you had such experiences in other jobs?
Interview Question 6. At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?
Interview Question 11. At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe both.
RQ3: What role, if any, does self-efficacy play in the success of women in the trucking industry?

Research Questions and Associated Interview Questions
Interview Question 7. What do you think you contribute to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?
Interview Question 10. Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?
Interview Question 12. What would the three rules, values, or character traits be if everyone had to possess and follow them in the trucking industry?
Interview Question 14. What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?
RQ4: What role, if any, does the locus of control play in the success of women in the trucking industry?
Interview Question 3. Who was your role model, and who inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?
Interview Question 4. What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?
Interview Question 8. What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?

The initial data analysis revealed 35 noteworthy statements from the 14 interview questions. The researcher considered words and opinions significant when eight or more participants expressed them: these statements and the number of study participant articulations.

Table 4

Notable Statements and Frequency from Interview Questions

Interview Questions	Notable Statements	<i>n</i>
1. Tell me about something in your life that challenge you. How did you overcome it? <i>What do you do to keep going?</i>	Never give up attitude. Trauma/difficulty.	11 11
2. What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations? Describe how you handled difficulties.	None. Earned respect.	11 09
3. Who was your role model, and who inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?	Parent/ friend. Self/childhood desire.	11 09
4. What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?	Belonging Male hostility	11 09

Interview Questions	Notable Statements	<i>n</i>
5. What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? How did you handle it?	Help/support. Standing your ground Safety. Intimidation.	14 11 12 09
6. At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?	Developed skill. Continuous learning. No doubt, born to drive	09 09 09
7. What do you think you contribute to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?	Determination Safer driver	13 10
8. What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?	Patience. Aggression. No functional differences	12 11 09
9. How do you describe success for working women in general? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?	Work ethic. Limitation. Trust.	11 12 09
10. Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?	Lifelong Progress	12
11. At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe what both.	Incidents. Outlook.	12 09
12. If there were just three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?	Respectful. Honest. Confident	13 11 13
13. What is the most challenging aspect of working in the trucking industry as a woman? How would you change it?	Facilities. Empathy. Lifestyle.	12 09 09
14. What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?	Fear. Family. Perceptions	12 10 09

The following paragraphs contain the findings from each interview question and quotes from the study participants. Each study participant received three reminder questions in advance, constructed to encourage deep thought about self and self-belief. The researcher posed the

interview questions to maintain the conversation's continuity and flow. The participants' responses are below, reproduced precisely as spoken to maintain validity and trustworthiness. The focused scrutiny served as the basis for highlighting the notable statements. The design of Interview questions 1, 2, 9 & 12 answered Research 1. The construction of questions 5, 6, & 11 responded to Research Question 2. The creation of Questions 7, 10, 12, & 14 addressed Research Question 3. Lastly, Questions 3, 4 & 8 fostered answers for Research Question 4.

Interview Questions 1-14

Interview Question 1 Results

Interview Question 1. Tell me about something in your life that challenges you. How did you overcome it?

The researcher posed Interview Question 1 to elicit an introspective reflection from the study participants on their decision-making reactions to struggles and difficulties in their personal and professional lives. The responses to this Interview question revealed two notable responses: Never give up and Trauma.

The first notable response focused on never giving up. There were 11 of the 14 study participants expressed the ability to keep going no matter how complicated their personal lives are or how difficult the trucking gets. The participants spoke about overcoming catastrophic physical injury and dreadful childhood experiences of neglect, mistreatment, and foster care. Several participants described surviving abusive relationships, cancer, other traumatic health issues, and awful divorces.

The researcher explored whether there was a common and consistent thread in perspective, attitude, and thinking in how each study participant approached the trials in life. The overall responses line up with high self-efficacy, internal locus of control, or a balanced between

internal and external locus of control. The participants expressed their strength as a matter of accountability attributed to themselves. Although many of the difficulties faced were circumstances beyond their control and due to external forces, the study participants expressed little to no belief that they had no power to re-direct the impact of any situation or grow from their experience. Some of the most notable statements indicating their trust in their capabilities, positive self-belief, and individual strength, the participants communicated the idea of never giving up no matter the tasks.

- Participant C1 stated “The challenges that I face were just to be strong and stay on it and never quitting, but always believing in myself that I can do this.”
- Participant B2 stated “I can always find a reason to keep going. If you tell me that I can’t, I’ll go to the lengths of the earth and the universe to prove you wrong because I can.”
- Participant A9 stated “Its mind over matter, tell me I can’t and I will.”
- Participant A2 stated “I don’t have the quit gene. I cannot walk away without knowing that I did everything in my power to succeed. If I am sure I completed all my tasks and it’s ready for the next person to try that challenge, or I failed, and I learned something from my failure.”
- Participant A10 stated “You know if somebody tells me I can’t do it, it’s like just you flipped that little switch, and I’ll show you.”
- Participant A8 stated “I don’t like things to be, you know, beat me. Let’s put it that way, I will try to find the answer; if I can’t, I will find someone that has the answer. I’m not big on failure.”

The second notable response concerned learned strength experienced in past trauma and difficulties. Of the 14 study participants, 11 said that past struggles and challenges made them the women they are. The responses exhibited high self-efficacy related to mastery of traumatic experiences, motivating them to press on. The participant’s survival contributed to their belief in their efficacy and ability to set goals for themselves, how much effort they needed to extend, and

their capacity to endure and persevere. The participants mastered the most trying struggles of their lives to build resilience, which prepared them to overcome potential failure in the future.

The study participants naturally recognized the ebb and flow or continuum internal and external spectrum of locus of control through their lived experience without an awareness of such social cognition. These participants displayed moments of external LOC, where cancer, abuse, and finances were at fault and responsible for the trauma. Yet, after a time, their innate reliance on internal LOC took over. The participant's expectations and perception of rewards in trucking came from a mastery of experience when they overcame past trauma and obstacles. These women exhibited an innate strength to survive and achieve no matter what external factors invaded their lives. Overcoming these different, similar, and specific trials were the foundation for building self-efficacy. Below are a few glimpses into how the participants succeed in their profession.

- Participant C2 stated “When I was going through cancer recovery, both my family doctor and long-term disability case manager, they’re like, why do you want to go back to work? You have to slow down. I love my job”.
- Participant A9 stated “Having children will be the biggest challenge for the rest of my life. They come with different problems at different times with different stuff, and you figure it out”.
- Participant A6 stated “I have had a lot of things happen in my life, depression. I had a miscarriage several years ago. I have a family history of drug use. I saw so many of them get off on the wrong foot and went up on drugs. I chose to avoid it. I’ve always told myself; I don’t want to end up like them”.
- Participant A3 stated “I’m just a very strong individual. I’ve been through hell. I used to be quite the opposite about 20 years ago. I am a domestic abuse survivor. I didn’t have a family network around me at the time. So, it was just me and the kids and with that you have find those skills real quick. You have to be problem-solver”.
- Participant A4 stated “I’m now 75 and still valid. Personally, you know some days I don’t feel like getting out of bed, I’m in so much pain. I have rheumatoid arthritis in every joint”.

- Participant A2 stated “I was raised by a really chauvinistic white man. He didn’t see the value in women. I spent my lifetime trying to be good enough”.
- Participant A8 stated “I went through cancer when I was an aircraft mechanic. I had to have surgery and eight rounds of chemo, so I was bald”.
- Participant C1 stated “No, nothing ever made me want to quit. I was determined to do this, like I said right from the start”.

Interview Question 2 Results

Interview Question 2. What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations, if any? Describe how you handled those experiences. What did you do to keep going?

The researcher posed Interview Question 2 to discover whether the individual participant’s perspective and world view was their own or whether the ethos had significantly impacted how they function as women. Understanding how the past might influence the participants’ attitudes toward working women in general, the trucking industry, and working in predominately male environments was essential. The participant’s approach to working in a male-dominated/oriented field directly correlates to how women interact with men on the job, their ability to succeed, and how much they enjoy what they do. In addressing difficult experiences in the past that possibly influenced the participants, there were two notable responses; none and earning respect.

The first notable response was none. Of the 14 participants, nine responded, none. Although this response was surprising in today’s social and political climate, it was significant to understanding a level of maturity where self-efficacy and locus of control were evident in how both theories overlap in the lived experience of the participants. The remaining 5 participants spoke about past barriers and obstacles, of which several were put there by other women.

Mastering experience was a direct product of surviving trauma and difficulty, which produced learning and skill development that improved performance in all areas of their lives. For example, a preceding act of fighting to live through cancer, chemo, or an abusive situation fostered a forward momentum that increased self-efficacy while solidifying internal locus of control based on those preceding behavior, generating a sense of perceived future rewards.

“None” as a response also indicated solid self-belief and an internal drive derived from the emotional state activating recognition of their abilities to grow as individuals and persevere. One of the purposes of Interview Question 2 was to discover the degree to which the participants experienced sexual bias, discrimination, and impediments in previous employment situations, regardless of the demographics. Secondly, the researcher thought it critical to include any instances where obstacles impeded women’s career advancement, as purported by the ethos and noted in the literature in Chapter 2.

- Participant A6 stated “Not at all because I don’t let men intimidate me. I’m more of the intimidator”.
- Participant A7 stated “I don’t feel that I have faced any. I mean, personally, I have not. I can’t say that I’ve experienced anything bad from other truck drivers.
- Participant A1 stated: No, not that I can recall. I haven’t had any interference from men”.
- Participant C2 stated “Men are more chauvinistic in the Motorcoach world. There were two scenarios. One was an Eastern religious group, and the other was a group of men, and their leader didn’t believe that women should be outside of the house”.

The second notable response to Interview Question 2 was earning respect. Of the 14 participants, ten responded that earning respect from their male counterparts was an obstacle faced in the past and present. The study participants were adamant in their attitude towards doing a job well because that was their only means of achieving credibility among their male counterparts. The participants encountered various scenarios of male attitudes where chauvinism

created a moment of discouragement, yet the effect was motivation to succeed rather than taking on the mantle of victim. Here, having “thick skin” was the best defense.

Again, mastery of experience kicks in here, where the participants valued being capable. Their mindset was to earn respect based on learning from each negative interaction with certain types of men, developing their skill set, and improving their performance, rather than giving up and letting external factors change them. The participants recognized their internal locus of control or capacity to take control of a troubling situation by their own means. Their emotional state reflected an overall healthy well-being where perseverance indicates a belief in their competence, ability to cope, and internal strength. The participants revealed their control over the self and learned proficiency in maneuvering through unhelpful attitudes, disapproving, and demeaning comments from male co-workers. Below are some of the participants’ notable statements:

- Participant C2 stated “I love being a female, but what I love even more is when a man thinks someone is totally different from what they should be, and then you just go out there and prove them wrong.”
- Participant A6 stated “Yes, I can do whatever you can do. I promise you I’m going to do it better than that. That itself is going to motivate me. Even more, if ever a man tells me no, I have to prove him wrong, ok.”
- Participant A4 stated “Just the attitude of the older fellows who think that women belong barefoot and pregnant.”
- Participant B2 stated “I used to be a mechanic before I became a mechanic. I was not accepted in the mechanic field, because of the fact that I was a female. It was very difficult to secure that job as a mechanic. It all comes down to males versus females. Men don’t like it when a woman steps into their territory.”

Interview Questions 3 Results

Interview Question 3. Who was your role model, or what inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?

The researcher posed Interview Question 3 to explore how and why the participant chose to work in the trucking industry, a sector noted for its demanding and sometimes grueling work. As mentioned in Chapter two, women comprise approximately 6-7% of the truckers on U.S. roadways. Therefore, the participant response could assist in understanding what makes these women different from those who chose more “ladylike” occupations. There were two notable responses to Interview question 3 from the participants; parent/friend and

First, 11 of the 14 participants responded that a male friend, her dad, and even her mother inspired her or was her role model. The participants’ referenced their role models, inspirations, and mentors with respect and appreciation. Their expressions of admiration indicated the presence of self-efficacy through both vicarious experience and social persuasion. The study participants described when they first observed their role models maneuver a massive vehicle and were excited and inspired. These were the affirming moment of their self-belief. The participants also exhibited social persuasion in sharing encouraging words from supporting moms, dads, and male friends. These women believed in their abilities and their capacity to succeed. These verbal and visual interactions revealed to some degree, the extensive amount of effort needed to succeed in the industry. Yet, most of all, the participants grabbed hold of the idea that they could overcome any challenge.

- Participant A3 stated “He was my role model and my mentor. I have known that man for 40 years. He had the confidence in me that I was going to be fine. I can add this too. One of my instructors in school was a woman. She was the only in the school. That probably helped. There were a few times that she pulled to the side because we were the only two women in class out of 10 people in a class of all men. A few little words of wisdom and gave me a pat on the back and told me, you know, don’t worry you’ll be fine. That definitely helped.”
- Participant A4 stated “My dad drove for 42 years, but it was my mother. Dad put me in the truck when I was four years old. I waited 35 years. A neighbor offered to train me, but his insurance wouldn’t cover me. I had used up my egg money to go get my physical and get my permit and everything. And I went to my mom, I said now, what do I do? She

said go sign up for that college and I'll pay for you. So, I worked part-time and went to trucking driving school on the weekend.”

- Participant C1 stated “My dad was a truck driver, so I grew up passionate about this industry. My dad said, “The steering wheel doesn't know who is holding it.” So, that's been my motto, and I all through my life I just kind of carried that with me. He's gone now, so this has been like a legacy. I just kept in my mind; the steering wheel doesn't know who's holding it.”
- Participant A7 stated “I don't think so (If the role model were male or female). There are a lot of women that I've seen that their dads, their grandfathers did it and they're following in those footsteps.”
- Participant A2 stated “After about a whole season of working with him, I ask for a ride in the truck. I loved it. He had been so grouchy and hard to work with. When we got into the truck, he was Mr. Pleasant chatty man. I said it looked like fun and wished that I could drive a truck. He said, you can do it, and I was like, there is no way.”
- Participant B2 stated “My dad was one of the only older guys that I can recall that thought that a woman could do the job better than a man. My dad and his dad before that drove, but none of the women in our family. I think I'm the first woman in our family that went for trucking.”

The second notable response to Interview Question 3 was childhood desire. Of the 14 participants, nine responded that a desire to drive a truck existed since childhood. The study participants retained a childhood dream until the appropriate time in life. This response indicated both internal and external locus of control. Over many years, their desire to fulfill a hope overrode the known and potential obstacles and barriers they would encounter. The participants perceived the professional and monetary rewards despite the difficulty. The participants explained making choices that delayed those dreams.

- Participant A3 stated “The fact that I've been able to triple my income from working in an office and being able to provide for my family while doing something that I love to do.”
- Participant A6 stated “Well, it started when I was three. Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to drive a truck. I don't know what took me so long to do it, but I finally came out here. My ex-husband was a truck driver, but he drove locally. I saw his paycheck, so that kind of motivated me too. “

- Participant A9 stated “I don’t want to depend on anyone and know that my only form of income or my way of living my life financially is that someone else has that power over me ever again. Trucking is the only job that has given me the freedom to have financial power.”
- Participant A10 stated “Well, you know I always wanted to travel, and I love to drive.”
- Participant A5 stated “To make money.”
- Participant B1H stated “My dad was in trucking, and I wanted to do this since childhood. The size of the trucks inspired me.”

Interview Question 4 Results

Interview Question 4. What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?

Interview Question 4 provided an opportunity to delve into the expectations of women before entering the trucking industry and their day-to-day experience after. The study participant’s responses offered a view into women's perceptions before entering predominantly male fields and work environments. The two notable answers to interview question 4 were; belonging and male hostility.

The first of the two notable responses was belonging. Of the 14 participants, 11 responded that a hope to belong or being a good fit for the trucking industry was their most important concern before becoming a trucker. The study participants’ perspectives and perceptions could have hindered and discouraged these women from pressing forward to work in the trucking industry. As several study participants shared their thoughts on wanting to belong and fit in with their peers, uneasiness in their facial expressions and body language was apparent.

However, these women ignored their fears and hesitations caused by their anticipation, hopefulness, and desire to belong. These participants’ ability to master past experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasion aided in fostering an emotional state that

disregarded the ensuing distress and persevered anyway. The result was heightened self-efficacy while moving away from the distracting external locus of control to solid reliance on an internal locus of control. The following are some of the more notable comments made by the study participants:

- Participant A4 stated “Mom always told me that it’s a man’s world, and that a woman has to fit into it.”
- Participant A8 stated “I wanted to be accepted.”
- Participant A7 stated “I thought it would be a lot harder to be accepted by men.”
- Participant B2 stated “I definitely expected not to be accepted by every man that came along. I mean because I had already been told that by my dad, it was probably going to be the worst of my whole career out here, not being accepted by some of these guys.”

Several participants related the moment that they realized how differently men communicated and comported themselves with each other in the workplace, often brash, direct, and undemonstratively. One example that stuck out the most involved a cancer survivor. This driver shared her experience working with an all-male staff of mechanics. After an extended leave of absence, she returned to work and had no hair. No one spoke to her. At that moment, she didn’t know how to take the silence. A few minutes pass, and a colleague gets her attention. He yells, “Chi, Chi, Chi, Chia.” She did not take offense but smiled, and her male co-workers gathered around her in acceptance and support, welcoming her back. She knew how much these men missed and cared about her. This teasing meant more to her than the attention, cards, and hugs she may have received from female coworkers. She felt accepted and knew that she was one of them.

The second notable response was male hostility. Of the 14 participants, nine expressed concerns about the possible unrestrained conduct of their male coworkers. Some participants told stories explaining that the anticipated negative behavior materialized, revealing itself as

distressing hostile attitudes, disrespect, and verbal harassment from some of their male counterparts. These preconceived notions and their possible impact on participants' ability to succeed expressed a facet of external locus of control that discouraged them for a moment and periodically continues to do so. The participants admitted surprise that overall, there were only a few men who behaved poorly. Yet, they also spoke about encounters with too many men who were naturalized residents or from countries where women do not hold these positions, exhibiting the worse conduct.

Nonetheless, the participants recognized these men's approach as their problem and an external source of influence they had to reject. These female drivers chose not to cower to the nastiness of others but tapped into innate strength and a desire to become truck drivers no matter the potential rejection by men. Their determination unveiled an internal locus of control, serving as the foundation to continue to build self-belief. These women overcame fears and doubts despite these guaranteed external impediments to attain their goal before becoming truck drivers.

- Participant A8 stated "I expected to encounter male attitudes and the negativity and the bad treatment from men."
- Participant A5 stated "The Cubans think women should be pregnant and barefoot at home and not in trucking; by the way they looked at me and the way they talked to me."
- Participant A6 stated "There are some guys out there that do not like women won't help you do anything. As I see it, they literally came out physically crying because of what that man said."
- Participant B2 "I have had friends tell me how ugly and rude the guys are to them. They would tell them that they don't belong in this industry, or just be downright mean and cursing them out for no obvious reason; you know all the nasty words, which I won't repeat."
- Participant B1H stated "You get the most disrespect and worse words and behaviors from drivers from Mexico and the Middle-East. They seem to be the ones stuck in the past when it comes to women drivers."
- Participant C1 stated "The remarks are really discouraging, I guess."

Interview Question 5 Results

Interview Question 5. What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? How did you handle it?

The researcher posed Interview Question 5 to explore the study participants' lived experiences regarding positive and negative interactions with male drivers they encounter while on the road. The researcher sought data on the participants' attitudes and perceptions of men and whether their expectations influenced how these women interacted with male truckers. The four notable responses from the participants provided insight into women's daily struggles in trucking and whether men intentionally create barriers and obstacles that add extra difficulty to the job. The four notable responses to Interview question 5 were; help, intimidation, safety, and stand your ground.

All 14-study participant's notable responses involved offers to assist or help. Each participant spoke about how often their male counterparts helped by spotting during backing, offering beneficial advice, support for skill development, and physical protection. These women indicated that male assistance, for the most part, was an act of acceptance, respect, and overall encouragement. These actions served as vicarious experiences and social persuasion and fostered an emotional state where female drivers further develop their abilities and persevere. Consequently, self-efficacy took over as the standard when facing occasional discouraging interactions.

- Participant C2 stated "I had a few people say that men are going to be really chauvinistic. Interestingly, I only came across one chauvinistic man, and the rest of them were really great. They were like my dads or uncles. They respected me. They protected me and I didn't find out until years later. That one I thought was the most chauvinistic was the most encouraging to me."

- Participant A4 stated “I run into or work with co-workers that are willing to help you. Yeah, here is my number. I know this place is hard to get into if you get hung up, give me a call, and I’ll talk you through it.”
- Participant A6 stated “They will help if they see you need help. There are decent men out there; there really are.”
- Participant A7 stated “I’ve had people just offer me help all the time, and I take it.”
- Participant A9 stated “During that time, in my mind, I can do this because he was telling me I could do this.”
- Participant B2 stated “The guys blow their horns and give me the thumbs up every day.”
- Participant B1H stated “I have been pushed hard by several men to do my best. There are a few who approached me because I knew my stuff. I had gained their respect because they saw what I brought to the table.”

The second notable response was safety. Of the 14 study participants, 10 participants were adamant about Safety. Although feeling secure is critical for all drivers, women are more vulnerable and can be an easy target. The participants voiced serious concerns about the lack of safe truck stops and commercial parking lots, especially at night. Several participants shared harrowing tales of being followed; guns pulled on them, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, and attempted assault. Participants also discussed not being able to exit the cab of their trucks due to a potential predator trying to enter.

Unfortunately, the nature of the trucking industry has an abundance of dangerous scenarios. Yet, these women do not allow fear or the hazards of professional driving to coerce them into leaving their line of work. The risks are real. However, all four elements of self-efficacy converge to propel them forward using competence and the ability to cope with the demands and stress of the job. The participants choose to work through these issues their way. Several women spoke about using creative methods, preselected parking locations, and developing relationships with truck stop owners and customers to maintain safety.

- Participant A2 stated “I have had to deal with a lot of mentally unstable people. I have encountered a lot of danger. This job is inherently dangerous. I do a lot of trip planning, and I have learned a lot of skills to try and mitigate the danger that I’m exposed to.”
- Participant A3 stated “I’ve been followed. I’ve been stalked.”
- Participant B1H stated “Some places, you go in. I pulled into truck stops and go in to look around. Oh, hell No! It’s not good. Some areas zoned for truck stops, now have the homeless. You’re not in a good area and don’t have a choice because that’s where the city zoned it.”
- Participant C1 stated “I had a gun pulled on me in the LA area. I talked my way out of it. What I have learned is like always be aware of your surrounding and things of that nature.”
- Participant C2 stated “I’ll never get out of the truck because nobody needs to know that there is a woman in that truck. The biggest anxiety for women out there and the biggest thing is, where am I going to sleep tonight?”

The third notable response was intimidation. Of the 14, nine study participants referenced intimidation as a discouraging aspect of the job. Most participants entered the trucking industry with valid and invalid preconceived ideas about what treatment to expect from their male counterparts while out on the road. From time to time, the participants experienced awful behaviors, nasty attitudes, and rude comments. These women do not take this behavior personally or settle into thinking of themselves as victims. They embraced their internal locus of control and pressed on. However, these women continued to develop their prevention and peacekeeping defense mechanisms. They met conflict and negativity with directness, self-respect, and confidence. These women exhibited self-efficacy that evolved through learning when to back down and when to stand up for themselves and stand firm in the face of confrontation.

- Participant A5 stated “Just do a good job, be a professional, you know, and don’t be intimidated by them.”
- Participant A8 stated “You got your jackasses, the ones you like to go away. They try to belittle you to this day.”

- Participant A6 stated “I don’t let men intimidate me. I’m more of the intimidator. Nothing really discourages me. I encourage myself. I don’t take mess from anyone”.
- Participant A3 stated “Is it too much to ask, not to be harassed on the road.”.
- Participant A4 stated “Just the attitude of that fellow, thinking that women belong barefoot and pregnant.”
- Participant B2 stated “Old school drivers think that I’m out of my place out here. They don’t respect us. I think they feel that we are a threat.”

The fourth notable response was standing your ground. Of the 14,12 study participants spoke about how they reacted to acts of male intimidation, disrespect, and rejection. The participants shared their experiences of being poorly treated by their male counterparts for simply existing in the trucking field. The participants described these men as seemingly insecure and less capable than the women they chose to confront or dismiss. These women quickly learned that backing down or tolerating bad behavior encouraged more bad behavior, leaving them broken for a moment. They recognized a need to stand their ground and be willing to go “toe to toe” with anyone wanting to challenge their credibility, skill, or right to drive professionally.

- Participant C2 stated “When the guys are being a little “interesting,” then I always find a way that they regret what they said.”
- Participant A9 stated “Well, how do you change a whole bunch of men to realize that women aren’t stupid? How do you level the playing field? I’d like them to, to actually want to take me seriously. To talk to me, and don’t just treat me like a set of boobs that walked into the shop. I don’t take much crap from any of them. But if I could change that. That would be fantastic. Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

Interview Question 6 Results

Interview Question 6. At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?

The researcher presented Interview Question 6 to the study participants to explore self-belief. Interview Question 6 is crucial to understanding some of the individual traits and the possible common qualities among professional female drivers. Interview Question 6 revealed three notable responses. The three memorable responses; developed skill, continuous learning, and no doubts.

The first notable response reflected personally developed skills. Of the 14, nine study participants thought of themselves as competent. After a moment of thoughtful contemplation, they replied. The number of years driving, the various terrains traveled, and the treacherous weather conditions fostered confidence. Moreover, hundreds of thousands and millions of miles on the road had a less significant impact on their self-belief than when they could back a 53' trailer into a spot in one shot, with no pulls-up and no corrections. Successfully and skillfully backing a commercial vehicle is the most challenging skill for a driver to develop. Additionally, when there was a male audience to witness the feat, their confidence grew exponentially, especially when her skill set was much more proficient than those watching. This experience is a significant exhibition of self-efficacy as a trait.

- Participant A3 stated “I didn’t have to break a sweat, got the trailer in perfectly with a bunch of guys watching.”
- Participant A6 stated “When I started backing without having to pull forward.”
- Participant A1 stated “Confident? I had a fear of backing, but I believed in myself when the company gave me the keys to the truck.”
- Participant B2 stated “We have better depth perception when it comes to backing. I don’t feel like I’m the best, but after about, I’d say, three or four years, I started feeling very confident and competent in my skills as a truck driver. I mean, I’m still afraid. I still pay a great deal of attention to everything going on around me.”
- Participant A8 stated “You experience seasons. You got to go through a couple of seasons before becoming proficient. It’s not about hours and miles. It’s about understanding.”

The second notable response pointed to continuous learning. Of the 14, nine study participants also referenced continuous learning as vital to proficiency and self-belief. The participants recalled being open to accepting advice and criticism from more experienced drivers while dismissing pride and arrogance as the basis for professional and relational growth. Mastering the experiences as a truck driver never ends. Vicarious understanding, social persuasion, and emotional states affirm and encourage the participant to face challenges while recognizing shortcomings and constructing self-belief.

- Participant A2 stated “I still feel like a rookie because any moment could be the worst moment when it could be your last moment. I clearly have my certifications. I have a perfectly clean record, zero accidents. I am top of the metrics with all the other drivers. Still, I am able to say I know my limitations”.
- Participant A3 stated “Be respectful of the road and the equipment that you are driving. You also have to have humility. You have to be teachable and open to learning. You have to respect the guys and the men and women who have been doing this for years. You can’t come into this being a woman, as Rosie the riveter. Thinking she is going to take on the industry”.
- Participant A8 stated “If you think you know everything about trucking, quit now because you don’t. Women keep learning. We adapt and persevere probably better than any other species. So, for me, you never stop learning, and you never stop paying attention because the situation changes every second of everyday when you’re on the road, and you’re hauling different weights. I’m never going to know it all. I would say have a thirst for learning.”
- Participant A4 stated “You know I’ve got a bucket list. I’ve driven a Cab-Over that was on my list, and I did that this year. Next, I want to learn how to shift a double, a 10-speed splitter.”

The third notable response was none, no doubts. Of the 14, nine study participants addressed the question of personal doubt as a woman doing a job typically suited for a man. These participants specifically and emphatically responded that they had no doubts about themselves as women primarily working with men, their competency as a driver, or their choice to enter the trucking industry. These women’s thoughts and feelings regarding the absence of

doubt about their abilities evidenced high self-efficacy and a high internal locus of control. Most of the study participants stated that they were born to drive a truck, and absolutely nothing would have stopped them from doing so.

- Participant B2 stated “I have doubts more about people other than myself.”
- Participant A1 stated “Just for a moment, especially when I had to change my equipment. I was determined not to doubt myself, so I dismissed other people’s opinions.”
- Participant A2 stated “I know everything there is about being a truck driver, and I can drive anything. No, not doubts.”
- Participant A3 stated “Yeah, for a moment, but no. I don’t have any doubts.”

Interview Question 7 Results

Interview Question 7. What do you think you contribute to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?

The researcher posed Interview Question 7 to delve into and discover what the drivers believe about themselves, their feelings of self-worth, and what they may tangibly bring to the trucking industry as women. The participants indicated two notable responses; determination and safer driver.

The first notable response was determination. Of the 14, 13 participants stated that their presence in the industry proves their determination to succeed in a demanding field where there are so few women was their contribution. The participants expressed their sense of accomplishment to be able to do the same job that their male counterparts do and, in their opinion, do it far better. These women claim their value and worth as professional truck drivers in an industry dominated by men.

Several women also described their desire and goal to own a truck, acquire additional licenses to drive larger capacity vehicles, and promotions to management in the trucking

industry. The participants expressed self-assurance earned through hard work and a willingness to face failure to achieve success, not just for themselves but for others following in their footsteps. Lastly, the participant expressed their sense of self-empowerment and determination to continue in the industry to inspire and teach self-empowerment to other women truckers. These are evidence of self-efficacy and high internal LOC.

- Participant A3 stated “You have to be determined. You can’t be lackadaisical because then you’re just going to be a danger to yourself and others. You’ve got to be determined in action and in thought.”
- Participant A9 stated “I am strong, not because they want me to be, but because I have to be. Know that’s a jack of all trades, master of none. If something is going to be done, I learned how to do it. I worked my way up from the bottom.”
- Participant A4 stated “A woman needs to stand her ground, be open to criticism, and not let her feelings get involved in any interaction. Be observant and listen.”
- Participant B1H stated “I believe that encourage and empower other drivers, both men and women. I am a team player, and I love mentoring. I bring diversity. Few women are heavy haulers. I enjoy the challenge of carrying loads of 150,000lbs and driving eight axle vehicles.
- Participant A7 stated “I think I’m making the same amount of money as a man doing the same type of work as a man. We are determined for men to realize we’re out here working just as hard as they are and not just a piece of fluff.”

The second notable response to Interview Question 7 was the safer driver. Of the 14, 11 study participants noted safe driving as a tremendous contribution to the trucking industry. These women knew they brought safety and professionalism through their need to prove themselves through their determination to do the best job possible. In addition to being safer drivers, these women also proclaim women’s determination to maintain the female traits and perspective that women bring to the industry, such as good communication, a solid work ethic, dependability, better awareness, patience, timeliness, and hygienic feminine image. The participants noted that although loving what they do, they also get extra satisfaction because they continue to pave the

way for any woman that wants to enter the industry. High self-efficacy and high internal LOC are present.

- Participant A6 stated “Women tend to care more about other drivers, whether it be car or truck.”
- Participant B2 stated “I think that women totally approach this job different way. I mean, because we are more safe. I think that women are safer drivers than men. We tend to be more perfectionist than men.”
- Participant B1H stated “Women pull towards getting it right the first time, rather than keeping on trying it this way or that way, and the other way. Okay, work smart, not hard. Guys think they know it all in the beginning; we actually will take guidance from somebody else. Women are more cautious in nature.”
- Participant C1 stated “You know, I’m still a lady down deep inside at the end of the day. Even though I’m in a male-dominated world, I feel like my eyelashes. I like my makeup and my hair done nice and clean clothes on. “
- Participant C2 stated “I haven’t run across a woman yet who doesn’t care what she looks like. So if you’re have a bad hair day, you put on a hat. As a rule, a woman still cares about cleanliness and that actually shows in the trucks too.”

Interview Question 8 Results

Interview Question 8. What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?

The researcher posed Interview Question 8 to examine whether women and men function the same or differently as truckers and how their possibly characteristic behaviors impact women and the trucking industry. There were three notable responses to Interview question 8; patience, aggression, and no functional difference.

The first notable response was patience. Of the 14, 12 participants shared that patience was one of the most significant differences witnessed. The participants noted that women tended to be more patient than their male counterparts. Men often lost their composure and were inflexible when something did not go as planned. According to the participants, male drivers

refused to wait for an alternative way to react to disappointing circumstances, whereas women adjusted to accommodate a change. The participants also related that when male truckers lacked patience, they took more risks, which led to accidents, dangerous close calls, and other incidences that cost time and money. These women expressed self-determination, self-awareness, self-efficacy, and a balanced sense of external and internal LOC.

- Participant A3 stated “So many of the men are ego-centered and gung-ho. They are always going full-speed, just reckless. I believe women are smarter and, just more patient. Women are more patient behind the wheel.”
- Participant A4 stated “Women are more laid-back. They bring a laid-back attitude. After eight years of driving, I’ve only ever seen one woman go off the deep end.”
- Participant A6 stated “I can’t say that they bring anything more specific, but women are definitely not as rude or impatient as men are, in every way driving down the road.”
- Participant A10 stated “Well, the difference I see is their attire. They don’t seem to care about being clean. They are always on edge and ready to get into it like a competition. I would say aggressive and inconsiderate.”
- Participant C2 stated “They don’t know how to count to 10.”
- Participant C1 stated “Women are mellow and more pleasant, and more patient.”

The second notable response was aggressive and competitive. Of the 14, 11 study participants noted that their male truck drivers often exhibit noticeable aggression through competitive behavior. Participants recognized a tendency for their male counterparts to become aggressive with other drivers or to overtly compete with each other without a rational purpose or reason. At times, male drivers expressed anger and a need to prove an unnecessary point to one another. These female drivers acknowledged a sense of self-control that appeared to them as innate. Their live experience pointed to an observed difference between a male response to a stressful situation and that of female drivers, which indicates an awareness of the self.

- Participant A1 stated “Men aren’t clean. They are aggressive and inconsiderate, with an, I don’t care attitude.”

- Participant A3 stated “They are, forgive the term “balls to the wall.” I haven’t seen a woman behind the wheel being reckless; women are more safety conscious. I think, we as women have the tendency to be more focused on others, just because a lot of us are mothers.”
- Participant A6 stated “Women drive with less aggression. Women care more. Men don’t care.”
- Participant A7 stated “They are so aggressive when they are driving. It’s like a competition.”
- Participant C1 stated “Men seem to get upset faster, like they have less self-control or something. They speak with aggressiveness and defensive. Men are more aggressive. They like to speed for no reason.”
- Participant C2 stated “Men don’t care how they look. They go days without showering. They talk and gossip more than women, and get angry easier, and hold grudges longer. Women don’t care about beating men on the road.”

The third notable response was there is no functional difference. Of the 14, nine study participants objectively stated that there was no applicable difference in how men and women do the job. No systems or shortcuts provided an advantage to legally becoming a truck driver. After developing the necessary skills through personal effort and trial and error, men and women pass the same tests and certifications. For the most part, the trucking industry primarily functions on nothing other than a driver’s individually cultivated qualifications and capability to safely drive a truck, serve the customer, and satisfy the legal requirements of the employer, state and local regulations, and DOT.

- Participant A1m stated “No, I don’t see differences in the ability to do this job.”
- Participant A4 stated “There is no difference. I don’t see any difference. We do the same job.”
- Participant A5 stated “No, I don’t think there is any difference. We have the same license, but women are better trucker drivers.”
- Participant A8 stated “There is no difference; gender doesn’t matter. It’s a matter of control, thinking, and being a good driver. We are just as good as men. You don’t have to

have testosterone. This is not a male job anymore. There aren't many male jobs and female jobs left. The world has crossed so many boundaries.”

- Participant B2 stated “I think we function about the same.”
- Participant C1 stated “No, there are no differences between the job a man does or the job a woman does.”

Interview Question 9 Results

Interview Question 9. How do you describe success for working women? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?

The researcher asked Interview Question 9 to explore the attitudes and perspectives of the participant regarding the success of women in general and women as truckers. All of the responses referenced the components of self-efficacy and actively functioning within the internal and external locus of control continuum. The answers described intentional acts, self-belief, and actions taken or one should take while also exemplifying individual responsibility and accountability. There were three notable responses to Interview Question 9; limitations, work ethic, and trust.

The first response was limitations. Of the 14, 12 study participants spoke about limitations. These women pondered for a while before sharing their experiences related to their past employment and their experience working in the trucking industry. The participants described success for working women means being realistic in knowing their limitations. Those limitations entail understanding that, although the job is the same for men and women, some assignments, loads, and skill requirements include physical strength, risks, and danger. So, finding a niche, a type of trucking company, or a Class of load to haul is crucial.

Several participants focused on women knowing what they truly want out of life. These ladies pointed out that women must balance family, children, relationships, and goals within their

profession. She must prepare herself to give up a lot to succeed in trucking. She could be gone for weeks and sometimes months on end. Her mind cannot be on her child's activities at home or her sick parent needing attention. In addition to that, she has to be strong, ambitious, and love the trucking industry. It may not be exact if she is thoughtful and intentional in planning for success, but success would follow because women have to prioritize and make choices. These women recognized early in their lives that they could not do it all or have some things simultaneously.

- Participant A7 stated “When they’re able to handle the balance between work and home okay and properly.”
- Participant A8 stated “We have to have a good head on our shoulders and make it work. We have to be self-motivated and check ourselves. I think being logical is important.”
- Participant A9 stated “Women have to find their niche. They have to find the right company for them. They also have to figure out what type of trucking they want to do.”
- Participant A7 stated “In general, you have to know how to balance home and work.”
- Participant C1 stated “You have to know yourself and be prepared. Be strong. You have to be ambitious, and love the industry.”

The second notable response was work ethic. Of the 14, 11 study participants stated that work ethic was vital to succeeding in their past careers and extremely important in trucking. The participants insisted that a woman must have a good head on her shoulders to make any situation work in her favor. These truckers also spoke about a good work ethic due to being self-motivated and hard work. They also stated that a solid work ethic evolves and improves as a woman “checks herself,” being open to learning from her failures and constructive criticism.

- Participant A2 stated “I think success is having a job where you make decisions that affect women and making a difference. I would say, leave a legacy.”
- Participant A3 stated “I think being appreciated by my boss for the quality of work I do.”
- Participant A6 stated “You can’t be easily intimidated and have to have to have a strong work ethic.”

- Participant B2 stated “You know, women have to persevere and try hard. This is hard work. It will never be easy for women.”
- Participant B1H stated “I think success in the trucking industry is getting recognition for the miles you’ve driven, the loads you’ve hauled, and just the professional job you do.”

The third notable response was trust. Of the 14, nine study participants discussed trust as an answer to Interview Question 9. The participants spoke about women trusting and believing in themselves so that they can persevere. Additionally, these women described success as taking pride in and loving the job, plus earning respect, appreciation, and recognition from your employer. Lastly, the participant spoke about a strong work ethic generally leads to making the same money as their male counterpart. Some drivers alluded to the fact that making the same money indicates success.

- Participant A4 stated “Women have to trust their instincts. They have to be alert and aware of what’s around them.”
- Participant A8 stated “You have to keep going and trust yourself.”
- Participant B1H said “You have to push through the any fear and make the job your own. You have to make the truck your own. You have to know what you want”.

Interview Question 10 Results

Interview Question 10. Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?

The researcher posed Interview Question 10 to discover what challenges these women encountered as they set personal and professional goals in the trucking industry. Several participants stated wanting to be able to make decisions about the trucking industry. The researcher posed Interview Question 10 to explore the perspectives and attitudes the study participants may have about daily trucking life, including stressful incidences and

inconveniences and dangerous life-and-death situations (which all drivers encounter). The researcher expected Interview Question 10 to expose whether self-efficacy was present and whether participants were stationary or active on the internal and external locus of control continuum. There was one notable response, lifelong progress.

The response to Interview Question 10 was to feel like having progressed or moved forward personally and professionally. Of the 14, 12 study participants spoke about a purpose. They shared their details of advancing with a sense of purpose. The participants described goals of enjoying life to its fullest, and not just in terms of money or typical promotions and advancements with an organization. Several participants dream of owning their rig or improving their driving techniques, while others endeavor to influence the world of women in the trucking industry. One participant said that she loved the job so much that her goal was never do anything else until she retired or died. Another study participant expressed her ambition to reach 1 million miles of driving.

In addition, most participants longed to have the time to nurture their relationships with their children, husbands, partners, and grandchildren. Only one of the study participants ever spoke about failure in terms of regret. The majority of these women expressed their setbacks as a matter of making choices or simply delaying their goals and dreams. Participants described bad marriages, abuse, neglect, life-threatening illnesses, and overcoming difficult childhoods. Some participants talked about prioritizing their children and getting off the road to go home and raise them until they could get back behind the wheel. One driver spoke about being on the road, and her company allowed her to take along her infant. The researcher had the opportunity to meet the little girl via Zoom.com, probably, a trucker in the making. Moreover, rather than expressing lofty goals of owning a trucking company or becoming wealthy, the participants were sober-

mindful and realistic after researching the cost, commitment, liability, and responsibility of being an owner/operator.

- Participant C1 stated “I inspire others and my passion for the trucking industry. I guess that is something that’s very, very valuable to me. Now, I love what I do, and any chance I get to do anything extra for the industry, and I’m right there volunteering and helping. My professional goal is to be acknowledged for my contribution to the community and the industry, and you know, validate my efforts and continue to ensure that women have a voice in this trucking industry and things like that, right? I want to help enable and accelerate the growth and success of women.”
- Participant A6 stated “I would like to get, I would like to challenge myself and get 4500 miles in one week at 68 miles per hour. My only other goal is hopefully retiring doing this.”
- Participant A7 stated “I will be buying a truck at some point.”
- Participant A8 stated “I want to make it to the million-mile club. That means staying accident and ticket free and all that. You know, for the million-mile club.”

Interview Question 11 Results

Interview Question 11. At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe both.

The researcher posed Interview question 10 to delve into the study participants' mindset concerning the trucking industry's rigor. The researcher wanted to explore whether the participants possessed a degree of self-efficacy and where they fell on the internal and external locus of control continuum. These women spent weeks and sometimes months alone in their trucks for long periods. The experience of facing daily dangerous situations has to have had an impact. Several women also described a level of pressure associated with constantly interacting with co-workers who want proof of their value while doing a job associated with what purports to be a man's. Both male and female drivers have faced many of the same trials and encountered similar struggles. So, there is always an incident to discuss. There were two notable responses to Interview Question 11; incidents and outlook.

The first notable response was incidents. Of the 14,12 participants shared specific lived experiences on the subject of incidents that formed their perspectives. Many of these incidents were daily challenges particular to women, while other situations were a matter of circumstance and events that happened to every commercial driver. Some participants spoke about the difficulties of breakdowns in questionable areas. Another participant shared her sense of powerlessness, having witnessed incidences of human trafficking and being unable to stop it.

These women emphasized the disrespect and enduring trials of getting repairs done without being taken for an idiot, lacking mechanical knowledge. Several drivers shared their accounts of witnessing horrible accidents and the devastating effect on their mental state. In responding to Interview Question 11, these women recognized that their response was critical, although circumstances are often out of their control. Their responses provided evidence of high internal LOC and high self-efficacy. These were some examples of the types of incidents that determined whether the participants had a “good day” or a “bad day.”

- Participant A3 stated “Number one is your mindset.”
- Participant A4 stated “A good day would be no breakdowns and getting to the goal that you set for that morning. If you don’t meet those goals, it’s kinda “shit under the bus,” so to speak. A bad day is having a breakdown, or the shipper doesn’t have your load ready yet. A Closed road, and there is no sign to tell you that the road is closed. The engine smells funny, or it’s making a noise, and you try to explain some of these mechanics. They look at you like a deer in headlights.”
- Participant B2 stated “A good day is when I don’t have any incidents, nobody cuts me off, nobody. The last thing you want is to have a breakdown right on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere.”

The second notable response was outlook. Of the 14, nine study participants described their outlook on life being a driver and how they face any difficulty. Several participants described the tone of their days in light of their ability to control and maintain a positive mood. Good days were merely making it home safely, having minor mental stress with little to no

incidences, or achieving a 600 to 700-mile run within the regulated hours. Others described still having energy after 10 hours behind the wheel. Their days went well if they delivered their load on time, the customer was happy, or they found a safe place to sleep. Some drivers spoke about too many “break-checks” or inconsiderate behavior from the public, coupled with the tremendous responsibility that affected the participants’ perspectives on a particular day or long term. The participants’ account of a good or bad day was in direct relation to their outlook and mindset. Accountability for oneself was high, indicating high self-efficacy and high internal LOC.

- Participant A8 stated “It’s a good day when I still have energy at the end of the day. I feel good about that day. It’s mental, not physical. It’s a lot of mental stress that truck drivers go through on good and bad days to me.”
- Participant A10 stated “I generally don’t have bad days. Once in a while, you know, but I’m happy and very blessed and grateful.”
- Participant B2 stated “It’s obvious that people don’t pay attention. They are obviously not paying attention to the truck, the next person, or anything else. It’s just constant. I had a lot of things happen to me out here over the road that most people don’t see in a whole career of 30 years. I had to just pray and give it to God.”
- Participant C1 stated “Whenever you’re done for the night, and you’re in a safe, secure place to park, and everything went well in your day with your pickups and drop-offs.”
- Participant C2 stated “I turn lemons into lemonade. I take one day at a time and try to be positive. I would say, when it comes to the job, it’s better to work wise. Do a job that you love. So, it’s not going to work”

Interview Question 12 Results

Interview Question 12. If there were just three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?

The researcher posed Interview Question 12 to explore how the participants viewed the qualifications, skills, and character of commercial truck drivers, whether male or female. This question allowed the researcher to understand if the study participants clearly saw themselves as

professionals doing a difficult job like their male counterparts or if they saw themselves as “just women” struggling to get their co-workers to let them into the industry. The researcher explored the participants’ ability to express a neutral and somewhat unbiased viewpoint based on merit and ability.

The participants expressed the views of a professional driver, not a woman driver. The values, traits, and abilities had nothing to do with the sex of the driver, just good character and mutual consideration. These women did not associate professionalism and skill with either sex, nor did they compare themselves to men based on male characteristics and strength related to being a man. However, there were several references to skill sets where physical strength and agility were necessary. For example, flat bedding, tankers, and heavy hauling require significant physical strength.

However, there was an exception to this requisite. One of the participants was a heavy haul owner-operator with the talent to maneuver and handle massive vehicles with the capacity to haul freight of well over a hundred thousand pounds. She also possessed the mechanic’s expertise and proficiency to repair and add personalized design to her truck and trailer. Although this female driver was an exception among the participants, she was an impressive woman/mother to interview.

The participants confirmed a strong sense of self by categorizing and prioritizing Developed skills, Character, and Earned respect over perceptions and stereotypes of men and women. These women saw themselves as equal to and even better in some regards than their male counterparts. There were three notable responses; respectful, honest, and confident.

The first notable response was respectful. Of the 14, 13 participants spoke about respect, which leads to consideration of others as one of the more essential values a driver can possess.

The participant often described the intentionally rude, disrespectful, inconsiderate, and even dangerous behavior they encountered while interacting with other commercial drivers. Some of the most severe incidents included the stories about the horrible driving habits exhibited by the general public that impacted their ability to do their job well. However, for this paper, the focus remained on the conduct of the participant's peers. In addition to being considerate, the participants wanted that consideration to be rooted in mutual respect.

- Participant A9 stated “I think the ability to think through situations to be polite. That is level-headed to think through problems at a moment's notice. You know, and to hold your peace and be kind.”
- Participant A8 stated “There's got to be more consideration. Common courtesy just doesn't exist a lot on the road.”
- Participant A10 stated “Take pride in yourself and your equipment, honesty, and self-respect.”
- Participant B2 stated “Understanding, respect, and discipline. Meaning women lean toward understanding everyone else's needs and thoughts. Women need an equal playing ground. You know I shouldn't have to work harder to achieve the same status that you have just because I'm a female. Sadly, you know, women don't get the respect and appreciation that they deserve.”

The second more notable response was ethics. Of the 14, 11 study participants spoke about the need to be an honest and ethical individual as a trucker. The study participants noted that they valued honesty in all its forms as the character trait each driver should possess. Several women spoke about being good caretakers of the vehicle entrusted to the driver. Some talked about following the law, the rules of the road, and DOT regulations. They also mentioned honesty and accuracy in paperwork, integrity in dealing with the customer and the employer, and ethical conduct in balancing a load, not to endanger others on the road. Other women focused on drivers being unwilling to be honest with themselves; when they need help or training or don't have the proper attitude to be on the road.

- Participant A2 stated “Well, the first one would be to make the right choice when on one is looking. Be compliant and follow the rules. We’re highly regulated. Be self-motivated. Just be the kind of person that doesn’t cut corners. I mean, there are no corners that need to be cut in this job.”
- Participant A5 stated “I would say cleanliness and good character. They need integrity and honesty.”
- Participant A7 stated “Doing the same job, be ethical and considerate. Have respect for each other.”
- Participant A7 stated “I think ethics and integrity. Ethics are important, if we could all just help each other out. But I guess respect would be more important because, like I said, we’re all doing the same job. We’re all away from our families”.

The third notable response was confident. Of the 14 study participants, nine described confidence as necessary for any commercial driver, especially for women. Being a professional truck driver is a demanding occupation for anyone. Women must approach the job as work they desire and love to do. There is no accommodation for physical size, physical strength, motherhood, or any other attribute typically associated with being female. Therefore, a woman with confidence or just presenting a confident demeanor is significant to success in the trucking industry.

- Participant A3 stated “My attitude and personality have a lot to do with it. That doesn’t bode well with a lot of guys; if you’re in this industry, you should be able to do it. You should be able to do all your docs and hooks. You should be able to do all your work and not rely on anyone.”
- Participant C2 stated “If you want a job done right, get a woman to do it. You know, totally knowing my limitations. I’m strong. I’m a pretty strong personality.”
- Participant A6 stated “I think a successful woman is willing to wake up and do her job. Get out there and not let anyone intimidate her. Have a really good work ethic. Just don’t let anyone take over them because there are men out here that make a woman tell herself, I’m not good enough. I’m just a woman. I can’t do this. She just can’t back down.”

Interview Question 13 Results

Interview Question 13. What is the most challenging aspect of working in the trucking industry as a woman? How would you change it?

The researcher asked Interview Question 13 to explore how the study participant viewed their lived experience in their chosen profession. Additionally, the researcher hoped to understand the trucking industry's impact on the participants, their influence on the industry, and their attitudes and beliefs about self. The study participants expressed three notable responses; facilities, empathy, and lifestyle.

The first notable response was facilities. Of the 14 study participants, 12 shared that the need for women's facilities was critical. The lack of female restrooms and showers was the more discouraging aspect of being a woman in the trucking industry. The participants have often made do with either using men's toilets and showers, locating inconveniently located women's restrooms and showers, or just being creative in caring for themselves while on the road. Younger women with childbearing capabilities found the lack of accommodations tiresome and beyond annoying. Despite the difficulties, the participants relied upon their internal locus of control, adapting and preparing for any eventuality. They did not allow the situation to hinder or inhibit their success.

- Participant A4 stated "So, have you ever found yourself having to use a men's restroom."
- Participant A5 stated "I wouldn't want to be a young woman having her period in this industry because it's a hard thing to be hygienic when you have that."
- Participant B2 stated "I have noticed that some truck stops don't have women's restrooms in the trucker area. There are truck stops that literally only have a men's restroom in the driver's lounge. A lot of truck stops have gone a certain way. They've passed the law about women and me being equal with respect to restrooms. Now men will go into the ladies' restrooms, and ladies can go into the men's room. I don't like that idea where I can actually come in the restroom and watch. A man can just go in there to be peeping toms."

- Participant C1 stated “One of the biggest obstacles; there aren’t any accommodations for us women versus men. You know, I mean, like restrooms and things of that nature.”
- Participant A7 stated “I’m serious, I’m sorry, but I’m a certain age, you know, and I can’t hold it that long. I have to hold it for six hours. That’s, honestly, that’s my biggest challenge.”

The second notable response was empathy. Nine of the 14 study participants expressed concerns about the difficulties due to a lack of empathy. The participants spoke about their experiences where their male counterparts did not understand the challenges of being female alone on the road. The participants talked about female drivers adapting to the environment more than men. One instance was that equipment design generally fits the male physique.

Interestingly, several participants with this concern were 5 feet tall or slightly taller. Nonetheless, the participants believed that the needs of the female body and physicality were not part of the conversation. The point these drivers were making was they have to be flexible in various ways and hold their own without asking the immutable aspects of the job or environment to change. These women adapted as women have always done, whether working on a farm during the nation's founding or being a woman in any male-oriented/dominated field. For these women, unforeseen dangers, harassment, shortage of female facilities, and questionable showers were part of their lived experience and obstacles, but nothing they have not overcome.

- Participant A2 stated “They don’t even want to look at potential issues that we face, as far as being a smaller frame, not having the same upper body strength, and having to deal with our monthly. You know, cranking down gears and struggling with big heavy equipment and stuff like that. It’s a little bit more physical than people think.”
- Participant A3 stated “There are still some men that just don’t get it. They don’t understand the challenges that they will never face. It is too much to ask not to be harassed on the road.”
- Participant A5 stated “You’re away from home for long periods of time. There are less jobs in the driving industry where you are home daily. They are 70 hours work weeks. It is very hard to be a parent or a partner.”

- Participant C2 stated “The challenge for me is a personal one. I’m 5’ tall. So, when it comes to the truck, you just learn how to adapt, like opening up the hood of a truck, for example.”

The third notable response was the lifestyle. Of the 14, eight study participants spoke about adapting their lifestyle to the trucking industry. These participants shared their lived experiences in making critical choices to enable them to pursue the dream of becoming truck drivers. Although many participants desired to become commercial truck drivers since childhood, these women decided to take different work or temporarily put their aspirations on hold. The participants discussed their need to care for and raise their minor children. Other participants with children decided to enter the trucking industry after their children left to attend a university because they needed to make money to pay tuition fees. Several women spoke about fulfilling their goal of becoming a trucker after removing themselves from a difficult domestic situation or after a divorce.

- Participant A3 stated “The female aspect of being a divorced single mom. I’m still maintaining my home and putting both kids into college. For women in this industry, that can be challenging.”
- Participant A4 stated “We have a job to do, forcing myself to leave the family. I wasn’t able to make it to my friend’s funeral.”
- Participant A6 stated “Some companies want you to be out for two or three weeks at a time. I’m a woman with children. That’s hard. You can’t raise your kids and being out here gone for that long. You can’t raise your kids like that. My company is letting me take my daughter. She is six months old.”
- Participant B2 stated “I’m out over the road for four weeks, five weeks, and sometimes six weeks, then I go home for three or four days. Anyway, far as anything else, I’m very pleased with the job I have.”
- Participant A9 stated “This is an adventure, like a lifestyle period. It is a lifestyle like no other.”
- Participant C1 stated “Personal and professional relationships are always a challenge in their lives. It is hard to have relationships in this industry. That is the number one downfall of the industry.”

Interview Question 14 Results

Interview Question 14. What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?

The researcher posed Interview Question 14 to gather information about any implied or overt obstacles women encounter or experience entering and remaining in the trucking industry. There were three notable responses from the study participants; fear, family, and perception. The participants revealed self-efficacious reactions to challenges on and off the job. These women acknowledged the internal and external forces pressing on their lives and made decisions to take control.

The participants also recognized the need to manage those difficulties and make choices that direct their lives. These women put a concerted effort into creating their desired lives, accepting the hindrances as obstacles to overcome and a bump in the road rather than permanent fixtures in their path. The participants embraced and grew from the challenges, moving away from an external locus of control while further developing and relying on a high internal locus of control.

The first notable response was fear. Of the 14,12 participants addressed fear. The participants insisted fear may be the biggest hindrance women face in entering the trucking industry. According to the participants, self-doubt and personal fear are the obstacles that prevent women from pursuing a career in trucking. Fear of being alone. Fear of the vehicle's size and handling it in bad weather. Fear of being unable to back, position, and park a trailer. Fear of being unable to deal with men as peers in their world and lacking confidence in working primarily in a male field. Fear of the unknown. Fear of the image and stereotypes that follow truck drivers. It is a dirty job.

- Participant A3 stated “I don’t think too many are proactive and resourceful, or fear, a mental roadblock, a lack of initiative for themselves, a lack of thinking outside the box.”
- Participant A4 stated “They’re afraid to drive a truck, and they’re afraid of what their men will think of them.”
- Participant B1H stated “Well, I think they are intimidated by the size of the truck. A lot of women are afraid of using a stick shift, and there are a lot of gears. I don’t think men have anything to do with it.”
- Participant B2 stated “Some women think that we don’t stack up them like women are considered dainty creatures. It’s being afraid and coming out into a world that they don’t know that discourages them from entering the industry. “

The second notable response was family. Of the 14, 10 participants spoke about family.

The participants discussed work-life balance and the sacrifices to pursue an occupation they love.

Most of the participants talked about loneliness and missing their families. Those participants addressed the missed birthdays, holidays, and graduations as a significant factor in why many women don’t enter the trucking industry. Several participants indicated not having an adequate support system to take a job as a driver. Even age appeared as a factor. Some have boyfriends and families that prefer that they get a different job. Lastly, the most significant hindrance preventing many women from entering trucking was when they had children, especially tiny ones. The participants discussed making choices to fulfill their desire to drive and their love for their children.

- Participant A3 stated “I think having a young family. That’s going to tear your heart apart, being away from those kids, missing out on raising them, and being there for their activities and their milestones, and their accomplishments. Dads feel that too, but it’s different for a woman.”
- Participant A6 stated “I don’t want to leave my daughter behind. If ever a trucking company tells me that, I’ll end up going back home. There is only one job that can pay me decent enough to where I can still pay my bills and make ends meet.”
- Participant A7 stated “A lot of older women think that their age is going to prevent them from succeeding. They also have to deal with their families not being supported. There are so many women on these groups (social media) that are saying you’re the only ones who support me. You know my family doesn’t want me to do this.”

- Participant A8 stated “You’re alone a lot, and there’s no support system on the road. When you’re in the truck, you’re by yourself.”
- Participant A9 stated “Women are generally the ones to nurture their children. Having small children in this industry is almost impossible unless you have like a stay-at-home husband or whatever. I think it’s mentally harder for women.”

The third notable response was perception. Of the 14, eight study participants shared and talked about perceptions. Several study participants spoke about the potential for mental roadblocks and women not taking the initiative and not thinking outside of the box. The participants also thought that some women allowed their feelings and expectations of not being welcomed by men to hinder them. They spoke about some women being unable to cope with the solitude and being away from home for weeks or possibly months at a time. Plus, they recognized the mental, social, and emotional challenges they might face, being away from home and longing to fulfill their maternal instinct of caring for their children. Self-efficacious women with a high internal locus of control make selfless sober-minded choices to benefit their children, husbands, families, and themselves.

- Participant A2 stated “The perception that it is an unsafe place for women to work is a huge barrier for women to enter the trucking industry.”
- Participant A4 stated “They’re afraid of what men will think of them.”
- Participant C2 stated “There are stereotypes that it is a dirty job. It doesn’t have to be dirty, and you’re going to get fat,”

Summary

Although the Interview Questions were not in numerical order, the researcher presented each Interview Question in such a way as to aid in creating a conversational flow during the interview. Each Interview Question aligned with the appropriate Research Question. Additionally, the in-vivo coding process made the following in table 5 codes and themes apparent.

Table 5

Research Questions, Correlated Interview Questions, Notable Statements, and Themes

Sub-Questions	Notable Statements	Themes
Research Question: What is the lived experience of female truckers and the related factors contributing to their ability to succeed in an intensely challenging male-dominated occupation?		
RQ1: What factors persuade women to enter, overcome impediments, and prevail over the barriers associated with male-oriented work in a male-dominated field such as trucking?		
Interview Question 1. Tell me about something in your life that challenges you. How did you overcome it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never give up • Trauma 	1. Resilience
What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations, if any? Describe how you handled those experiences. What did you do to keep going?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Earned Respect 	
Interview Question 9. How do you describe success for working women in general? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations • Work ethic • Trust 	
Interview Question 13. What is the most challenging aspect of working in the trucking industry as a woman? How would you change it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities • Empathy • Perceptions 	2. Tenacity
RQ2: What role, if any, does self-belief play in the success of women in the trucking industry?		
Interview Question 5. What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? How did you handle it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help and Support • Intimidation • Safety • Standing your ground 	3. Assertiveness
Interview Question 6. At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed skill • Continuous learning • No doubts 	4. Courage

Sub-Questions	Notable Statements	Themes
Interview Question 11. At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe both.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidents • Outlook 	
RQ3: What role, if any, does self-efficacy play in the success of women in the trucking industry?		
Interview Question 7. What do you think you may be contributing to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Safer driver 	5. Introspective
Interview Question 10. Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong Progress 	6. Pragmatic
Interview Question 12. If there were three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to possess and follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful • Honest • Confident 	
Interview Question 14. What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Family • Lifestyle 	
RQ4: What role, if any, does the locus of control play in the success of women in the trucking industry?		
Interview Question 3. Who was your role model, or what inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/Friend • Childhood desire 	7. Adaptable

Sub-Questions	Notable Statements	Themes
Interview Question 4. What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging • Male hostility 	8. Realistic
Interview Question 8. What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience • Aggression • No functional difference 	

The participants' experiences illustrated a variety of struggles and challenges, personally and on the job. Yet, their internal drive to fulfill a childhood dream and heightened self-determination thrust them into a career outside the expected norm for a woman. These women recognized that they were about to embark upon a mentally, physically, and emotionally demanding endeavor. Although most participants loved the trucking industry before pursuing their Commercial Driver's License, it took an extra internal push to overcome the fear of the unknown, anxiety, and mistrust of a sector possibly filled with an abundance of male chauvinists. The added support and encouragement from friends and loved ones were excellent bridges from "woman's work" to men's work."

Chapter 4 comprised a detailed presentation of the data collected from the fourteen study participants. The researcher designed fourteen open-ended interview questions to explore and discover answers to the four research questions. The researcher uncovered thirty-five notable responses through coding and analyzing the data provided by the interviews. The researcher further unveiled eight themes from these responses to answer each research question. Chapter 5 discussed the implications and limitations of the research findings, plus recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Chapter 5 briefly summarized the research issue, the study's theoretical framework, the study purpose and research questions, the methodology used, and the significant findings of this study. Then, the researcher described and narrated the conclusions revealed in this work (Braun & Clarke, 2017) by addressing finding themes as correlated with the literature in Chapter 2. The potential limitations and implications of the findings followed next. Lastly, included was the summary of the study and recommendations.

Summary of the Study Issue

This study sought to discover and reveal the elements shaping and forming women's ability to succeed in an occupation attributed to a "man's world," yet heavily impacted by a cultural façade fabricated and maintained by the ethos. These women have employed attributes and skills that allowed them to accomplish and succeed at any task and environment without prompting or propping up (Zytowski, 1969) by the ethos or the feminist agenda. These intrinsic female factors have led to overcoming potential impediments, going ignored entirely or compartmentalized and dismissed so that achievement is possible. These factors and traits in women generally have received little or no review, acknowledgment, or praise as women. They are only validated when women morph into or conduct themselves as men do or pretend to exhibit masculine attributes. Unfortunately, for about six decades, the external forces of the ethos have interfered with, compelled, and perpetuated weakness while discouraging women from recognizing, engaging, and relying on the inherent stabilizing influence, courage, and strength that comes with being born a female.

The researcher yearned to understand what may control and push the individual drive to achieve, the relationship between aspiring to, no matter what (Gribbin, 2006), and not expecting

to succeed because of some exterior force. Consequently, it was imperative to identify and understand the traits, attributes, and factors that encourage self-efficacy and self-empowerment in the trucking industry, and more so in male-oriented/occupations and any other profession. This research did not directly address sexual bias or discriminatory practices beyond describing how these barriers, as described in the literature, contributed to an ethos that inhibits, devalues, and downplays authentic female empowerment. The approach strictly dealt with the lived experiences, including attitudes, perspectives, and attributes embraced by women in the trucking industry. As the most influential and uniquely powerful creatures created, these women's expression of being female has many implications that foster a fusion of choices at the intersections of life.

Summary of Purpose and Research Questions

This research was a qualitative phenomenological inquiry into the lived experiences of fourteen diverse female truck drivers working in the United States and Canada. The researcher developed one overarching primary research question and four related sub-questions to explore the factors supporting women's strength and power to overcome the impediments purported within the ethos. This study endeavored to discover the attributes female truckers embraced that contributed to self-efficacy and locus of control and were vital components of women's success in the trucking industry and possibly other professions typically held by men.

There are about 3.5 million commercial truck drivers on the U.S. roads, and in 29 states it is the most common job. Of those numbers, there are only about 200,000 female truckers or 5.8%, indicating that 94.2% of commercial drivers are male (Kopestinsky, 2021; Trindade, 2018). Female truckers possess a full range of lived experiences, professionally and personally, running in all 50 states within the U.S., throughout the provinces in Canada, and across the

US/Canadian border in the trucking industry. What is the lived experience of female truckers and related factors contributing to their ability to succeed in such a challenging male-dominated occupation?

Sub-questions:

- RQ1: What factors persuade women to enter, overcome impediments, and prevail over the barriers associated with male-oriented work in a male-dominated field such as trucking?
- RQ2: What role, if any, does self-belief play in the success of women in the trucking industry?
- RQ3: What role, if any, does self-efficacy play in the success of women in the trucking industry?
- RQ4: What role, if any, does the locus of control play in the success of women in the truck industry?

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks for this study were Self-efficacy theory and Locus of Control, which shed light on innate and learned empowerment. The primary focus of the study was on Albert Bandura's Self-efficacy (1986) concepts rooted in his Social Cognitive theory, focusing on the four interrelated proponents of this theoretical framework supporting his work. Bandura proposed these four supporting elements of self-efficacy; Mastery of experiences, Vicarious experiences, Social persuasion, and Emotional states.

The four proponents of self-efficacy related directly to the study of the lived experiences of the study participants. First, there is the focus on learning, skill development, and improved performance through practice, resulting in the individual teaching themselves that they are

capable. Another aspect was the participants observing role models and emulating healthy high self-efficacy; consequently, the participant absorbs a degree of affirming self-belief. Then there are social and verbal interactions that persuade and convey the impact of words on the participant's self-efficacy. Being told by someone that you are capable and can overcome almost any challenge can encourage, add to, and promote a developing belief in the ability to succeed.

Lastly, regarding self-efficacy, there is an emotional reference to the overall health and well-being of the participant while also recognizing their ability to develop and preserve self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). Through these four components, self-efficacy, considered a self-sustaining trait, expresses an individual's belief in their competence to cope with diverse challenges, demands, and stress (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Participants become driven to work through their issues their way, fostering forward momentum exponentially, thus increasing their self-efficacy (Ackerman, 2020).

The associated and overlapping theoretical framework applied to this study was the locus of control (LOC). The internal-external locus of control spectrum is the concept introduced by Julian Rotter, which also evolved from social cognitive theory (Halpert & Hill, 2013). The delineation between internal and external locus of control sorts out consequences based on preceding behavior depending on whether the participant perceives the reward as a factor of his action or independent of his actions (Rotter, 1966b). Those participants expressing internal loc (internals) believe they are the masters of their destinies and thus possess high self-efficacy. These study participants have confidence in their abilities and actions and accept their influence on their external environments (Halpert & Hill, 2013). They have a stable internal locus of control and believe in the power that resides within them that can alter the events of their life (Rotter, 1990).

Participants with an external locus of control (externals) tend to believe that external forces control their lives (Rotter, 1966a). These individuals believe that "fate" or other entities are in charge of their lives (Ng et al., 2005). These participants see external forces or impediments as challenges to overcome, not defining or hindering them (Ackerman, 2020). Both theoretical frameworks are fundamental to this exploratory phenomenological study, which took into view the entire life of the participant, both personal and professional lived experience, thus achieving an in-depth and rich understanding of what female drivers bring to the job.

Summary of the Methodology

This phenomenological approach with a qualitative design used in this study explored the lived experiences of female Commercial truck drivers. The researcher interviewed female drivers from the U.S. and Canada to collect data, using Purposive sampling methods to select the study participants. Those invited to participate must meet the following requirements: (a) Female truck drivers licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with and without endorsements), (b) Have accumulated more than 200,000 miles of "over-the-road" driving; and (c) Have experience primarily as a solo driver, independent or company employee. Of the seventeen invitees, fourteen study participants met the requirements and agreed to take part in the interview. The study participants worked for various male and female-owned trucking companies and independent Lease-holders and Owner-Operators.

The researcher conducted the interviews via Zoom and telephone and recorded them via Zoom audio and video recorder. Each interview took 75-90 minutes. The researcher used Zoom to transcribe the interviews, producing transcripts for coding using Quirkos software. The researcher stored all the transcriptions in a password-protected file on her laptop. The transcripts and notes received an anonymous participant label to cross-check and confirm accuracy. Each

study participant received a copy of their transcript for review. The researcher employed inductive and deductive approaches to analyze the data collected and prepared recommendations for best practices as part of the study findings.

Brief Summary of Key Findings

Table 6

Themes, Codes, and Number of Notable Responses

Themes	Codes	Notable Responses
1. Resilience	Work Ethic	11
	Limitations	12
	Trust	09
	Facilities	12
	Empathy	09
	Lifestyle	09
2. Tenacity	Never Give up	11
	Trauma	11
	None	11
	Earn Respect	09
3. Assertiveness	Helpful/Supportive	14
	Stand your ground	11
	Safety	12
	Intimidation	09
2. Courage	Developed skill	09
	Continuous learning	09
	No doubt, born to do it	09
	Incidents	12
	Outlook	09
5. Introspective	Lifelong progress	12
	Respectful	13
	Honest	11
	Confident	13
6. Pragmatic	Determination	13
	Safer driver	10
	Fear	12
	Family	10
	Perceptions	09
7. Adaptable	Belonging	11
	Male hostility	09

Themes	Codes	Notable Responses
8. Realistic	Parent/Friend	11
	Self-childhood	09
	Patience	12
	Aggression	11
	No functional difference	09

The researcher initially designed twelve open-ended research questions. However, with feedback from the mock interview, I added two additional interview questions to capture data from the broadest spectrum possible. The researcher employed a qualitative in-vivo coding process to begin the analysis of the data collected by interview and to isolate significant expressions and themes. Based on the thirty-five notable statements purged from the collected data, the following eight considerable themes come into view, answering the Research Questions:

1. Resilience
2. Tenacity
3. Assertiveness
4. Courage
5. Introspective
6. Pragmatic
7. Adaptable
8. Realistic

Research Findings

Themes for Research Question 1

RQ1: The themes contained within the codes associated with Interview Questions 1, 2, 9, and 13. These Interview Questions provided data answering Research Question 1. The researcher

identified ten notable statements. Based on those ten statements, two themes were evident in describing the factors that persuade women to enter, overcome impediments, and prevail over the barriers associated with male-oriented work in a male-dominated field such as trucking.

Resilience and tenacity were the prevailing themes revealed in the notable responses.

Resilience. The study participants repeatedly described their life experiences before entering the trucking industry as the catalysts for persevering amid the difficulties of being a woman trucker. In the past, these women overcame various personal and professional trials that prepared them for this occupation. They tapped into their innate strength, which evolved over time and through repeated use. The participants learned not to give up but to bounce back and to press on when difficulty arises. Each day on the road is different and comes with its own set of problems and trials. These female drivers' lived experiences fostered that ability to overcome almost any impediment.

Tenacity. These women developed a solid work ethic, trust in themselves, and a capacity to never give up. The participants recognized their limitations and the necessity to take action to improve their skills. These women learned to make the best out of unnecessarily unfair circumstances, such as a scarcity of female restrooms, showers, and other accommodations. The participants deemed these character traits critical for all professional drivers, both men and women.

Themes for Research Question 2

RQ2: The themes contained within the codes associated with Interview Questions 5, 6, and 11. These Interview Questions provided data answering Research Question 2. The researcher identified nine notable statements. Based on those nine statements, two themes were evident in

describing the role self-belief plays in the success of women in the trucking industry.

Assertiveness and Courage were the prevailing themes revealed in the many responses.

Assertiveness. The participants shared experiences where intimidation and nastiness from some male drivers could discourage or crush the spirit of a female driver without her guard up. However, the experienced woman in the industry learned quickly to stand her ground and never allow the behaviors of others to affect her confidence or skip her in a line of waiting vehicles. Moreover, her response to inappropriate disrespectful comments and conduct must receive a swift and wise response. In addition, she must maintain awareness of her opponent's size and strength differences while considering the isolation and time of day. She had to exude strength without being a pushover. Her self-belief would promote confidence to assert herself wisely in most situations, especially in an unfamiliar environment where male attributes were the standard.

Courage. Although the participants experienced some negative attitudes and perception difficulties with their male counterparts, these women possessed the ability to press on matter what they faced. Being a permanent competent presence amid hostility garnered support from confident and personally secure men. Almost all of the female drivers mentioned that most of their male counterparts routinely offer to assist and even reach out for assistance from these women. The study participants sustained an optimistic and self-assured outlook about the job and its trials while also appreciating the superior professional, safe driving skills they bring to trucking. Thus, these women avoided allowing self-doubts to enter their thinking or behavior in the presence of trepidation.

Themes for Research Question 3

RQ3: The themes contained within the codes associated with Interview Questions 7, 10, 12, and 14. These Interview questions provided data answering Research Question 3. The researcher identified nine notable statements. Based on those nine statements, two themes were evident in relating to self-efficacy's role in the success of women in the trucking industry. Introspective and Pragmatic were the prevailing themes revealed in the many responses.

Introspective. The participants' lived experiences taught them the value of pursuing one's dreams and aspirations regardless of any barriers, actual or presumed. According to these female drivers, being aware of what uniquely propelled and fulfilled them and what they considered their priorities. Each woman had to have those answers to make informed personal and professional and to have control of their life choices. The trucking industry demands and expects women to be well-organized and willing to make sacrifices. Having taken an honest look at herself, acknowledging her weaknesses and strengths, with a desire to grow, propels a woman forward in any domain. Success and failure were teachers of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was the root of a woman's ability to know herself well.

Pragmatic. Although intelligence and common sense are highly prized traits for any driver, female drivers must have a realistic view of life as truckers and the trucking industry. These women maintained identities as professional drivers, not necessarily as women drivers. They had to sustain an awareness of their surroundings and the people in them. However, several participants shared that they never stopped being a lady, even when uncombed, wrinkled, and unwashed. Participants explicitly differentiated between women who look like they have given up and those who go too far in expressing their femininity. Both extremes attract danger. Yet, they do not leave their female caring, communicating, and sacrificial attributes. It was

interesting; one driver baked Christmas cookies for her customers, while another was the listener and safe place for conversation for her male coworkers. As complex and competent beings, women must always make choices to balance relationships, family, career, and home. Self-knowledge is strength and empowerment.

Themes for Research Question 4

RQ 4: The themes contained within the codes associated with Interview Questions 3, 4, and 8. These Interview questions provided data answering Research Question 4. The researcher identified seven notable statements. Based on those nine statements, two themes were evident in describing the role locus of control plays in the success of women in the trucking industry. Adaptable and Realistic were the prevailing themes revealed in the many responses.

Adaptable. The participant exposes the need for and the ability to be flexible in every area of the participants' lives. Many participants decided to delay their dream of becoming a Commercial driver due to family commitments and children. Several drivers put driving on hold until their children were off to college. Another female driver brought her small child on the road until it will no longer be feasible. These women entered trucking concerned about wanting to feel like they belonged and that men would accept them. Fortunately, for the most part, acceptance and belonging were more manageable than expected.

Several women spoke about incidences where acceptance and belonging in a male-dominated/oriented environment looked different than in a workplace filled with women. Acceptance from men often meant gentle teasing and joking without malicious intent. These women developed an ability to suspend for a moment the female way of doing things to understand that there was another way of doing things and being. This suspension wavers

between internal and external locus of control. These female drivers learned to appreciate men for being men, with no need for them to be anything else but to exhibit integrity.

Realistic. The participant's lived experiences depicted attitudes and behaviors of men and women forging peer relationships where there is no discernable difference between the skills and abilities required and needed to do so a job. Mutual appreciation and respect were the basis of the accomplishments of a successful professional, regardless of the sex of both men and women, especially women. Nonetheless, they recognized that there are differences between the sexes sustained reality. The subject discussed during interviews with the study participants was the physical strength and the positive aspect of men's aggression. Physical strength and the ability to exude managed aggression puts the driver in control.

For several participants, teaming up with a male driver might be a future option because of safety concerns. Several participants expressed unease over the deteriorating civility and the increasing disregard for the law and human life. These women held a realistic view of working on perilous national and international trucking roads; commercial driving comes with a built-in set of dangers. These women recognized the need for male muscle for safety and security. This sensibility calls for a dependence on high self-efficacy and a balanced continuum of locus of control. They knew when to take responsibility, defer, and rely on others.

Eight Themes are Contributing Factors

The 14 participants shared many aspects of their lives during the interviews. Interview Question 2 referenced past jobs in male-dominated/oriented fields. These women revealed that they were some of the most remarkable people one could ever encounter. As part of the discussion about past experiences of barriers and impediments in previous employment and

male-dominated/oriented occupations, nine of the fourteen participants held positions customarily attributed to men.

Early in their lives, the participants evidenced self-efficacy and balanced on the continuum of internal and external locus of control developed and empowered them in their youth. The previous positions held and the attitudes expressed referenced possessing the eight themes or contributing factors while working in various work, especially in male-dominated/oriented environments. Those occupations included aircraft mechanic, Diesel mechanic, Run-Taxi qualified; licensed to park aircraft, private chauffeur, dump truck driver; hauling in a rock quarry, horse trainer, commercial driver trainer, farm worker, songwriter/recording artist, motorcoach operator, volunteer firefighter/EMT, server, and bookkeeper.

The participants' stories about their lives, both professional and personal, were fascinating to hear in part, and it would take hours to listen to them in their entirety. These women have intertwined their natural power and agency into all aspects of their existence. Our conversations revealed individuals who have made decisions from childhood to adulthood that reflect that effect. They do not easily fit into the boxes of oppression or impediment referenced in the literature, as reviewed in Chapter 2. These women have not allowed the ethos or the feminist movement's ideas of feminine power to define their biologically earned status as a woman and how they relate to men, nor influence them to deny and dismiss their designed intrinsic and instinctive female strengths. The participants' lives confirmed that the ethos structured by feminism does not celebrate the extraordinary female brain, physicality, or miraculous biological talent. The ethos has failed authentic, hardworking women.

Research Implications

According to this research, the participants received little extraneous assistance related to their sex or race to succeed in the trucking industry. The participants willingly acknowledged the practical differences between men and women beyond passing the commercial driver's license tests. Most notably, the disparity in aggressiveness, competitiveness, and physical strength of men often arose while creating social order and relational communication. The power of emotional intelligence rose to the surface for women. Although small numbers of women work in trucking and other male-dominated/oriented fields, these women have proved their strength. Women have contributed their skills and ability in every sector of the working world (Carter, 2019).

Unfortunately, some women have advanced through representation quotas through unequal qualification standards shrouding women's unearned equality. For instance, qualifying for a Police or fire department and military service, women are not treated as equals to men. Beyond written testing, the requirements for women are not the equivalent rigorous agility assessments as men, which lowers the effectiveness of those civil entities and armed forces. Physical tests supplemented with disparity (Rosen, 2022) might suggest that women are not quite as capable or equal to men in certain areas.

As previously noted, the literature consistently identifies and categorizes strength according to male attributes, while female characteristics get diminished or not positively mentioned. These research participants offered a view into the exceptional capabilities of women and their capacity to influence their environment. Women in trucking do the same job as their male counterparts while demonstrating that women can perform the role better in several ways. The lived experiences of many women drivers and entrepreneurs in trucking exemplifies the

sentiments of Raquel Renda, vice president of Renda Environmental. “Gender shouldn’t matter,” Renda said. “It’s all about the integrity of the work being done and the integrity of the person, earning the respect of your coworkers and peers” (Conway, 2018, p. 1). If our society recognized and validated this data, an authentic understanding of the strength of women truckers and women in general, and their existing equality to men might come into view.

The data gathered from participants in this study provided essential data to answer the Research Question: What factors contribute to the perceived strength of female truck drivers? After exploring and analyzing the data collected from interviewing the participants, eight themes surfaced; Resilience, Tenacity, Assertiveness, Courage, Introspective, Pragmatic, Adaptable, and Realistic. These themes directly correlated to those perceptions, yet actual strengths that reveal what it takes to be a trucker, but more importantly, a female trucker. The themes were natural characteristics of women with a high sense of self-efficacy and a tendency towards a solid internal yet balanced continuum of internal and external locus of control.

Research Limitations

This research explored the lived experiences of a particular group of commercial truck drivers. This qualitative research was a study where the researcher chose a purposive approach for sampling to gather information from a small sample of female drivers within the trucking industry. The researcher selected fourteen potential participants from seventeen who responded to the invitation. The fourteen female participants were truck drivers licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with or without endorsements), had accumulated more than 200,000 miles of “over-the-road” driving, and had experience primarily as a solo driver, working as an independent or company employee. The researcher recognized that the findings from this research might not apply to drivers who fall outside of the above characteristics and

demographics. The results may not represent all female truck drivers in North America. However, the data collected characterized the lived experiences of these fourteen study participants.

The study participants represent 250,000 to 4,000,000 miles on the road, with a minimum of 2.5 years to a maximum of 44 years of experience as an over-the-road professional driver. These women command a broad range of skills and abilities developed through a desire to improve their profession, plus trial and error. Nonetheless, each participant brings various personal perceptions and emotions when sharing their experiences. It is plausible that those elements may factor into recounting their experiences with bias.

Additionally, there was the probability that the study participants' expectations, perceptions, expressions, and interpretations of their work experience would vary. All participants achieved the basic competency level they earned their Commercial Driver's License. With each trip, weather condition, public scenario, and each succeeding mile, week, or year practical growth and learning occurred. Each assignment was just a little bit different. This occupation engages all the senses simultaneously and continuously without rest, yet male and female drivers might react and process their experiences differently. Therefore, this research may be limited to these participants and these experiences at this moment in time.

Conclusions

This research study explored female truck drivers lived experiences and their perceived strengths. This qualitative phenomenological study generated important insight confirming the existence of specific factors and traits that produce discernable strength. The lived experience of the female participants in the trucking industry was ongoing and valuable for mentoring peers and the next generation. The data yielded was also a vital source of current information to make

improvements within the industry and throughout local, state, and federal regulations and standards. The theoretical frameworks associated with this study included the theory of self-efficacy and the theory of locus of control. Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of both premises.

The researcher used a purposive process in selecting the 14 research participants. The participants met the following criteria, (a) a female truck driver licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with or without endorsements), (b) have accumulated more than 200,000 miles of “over-the-road” driving, (c) have experience primarily as a solo driver, working as an independent or company employee. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with each participant via Zoom.com and cell phones. The discussions involved having a conversation with the interviewees addressing 14 open-ended questions. The researcher used the responses to the interview questions to collect data for coding and analysis. Thirty-five codes emerged, and finally, eight themes were apparent to answer the research questions: Tenacity, Assertiveness, Courage, Introspective, Pragmatic, Adaptable, and Realistic.

The research suggested that female truck drivers genuinely possess strengths developed and supported by the presence of the specific traits (factors) listed above. The participants exhibited these traits innately and through learning prompted by experiences. The participants were aware of their strengths as women, never comparing themselves directly to their male counterparts as a point of equality. These women never questioned equal or superior competence in how they performed. Yet, they fully acknowledged the fundamental differences in attitudes, behaviors, emotional states, and physicality between women and men.

The participants never made excuses for their failures; they owned and learned from them. Thus, their disappointments and successes were developmental tools to grow and mentor

others. These women accepted responsibility for their choices and lives, never shifting blame for or to the obstacles they faced. The challenges in the trucking industry were just that: to do a job they always wanted to do and excel. Impediments fostered a positive perspective and an impetus to keep moving forward to progress in all areas of their lives. These women presented a heightened internal locus of control and high self-efficacy.

In addition, the researcher desired an objective and immutable meaning of the strength women innately have. It appeared that the participants' natural inclinations affirmed God's indwelling of strength women possess as one of God's image bearers. The creation of the woman was an intentional and specific design. God said, "2:18, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helpmeet suitable for him." (*King James Holy Bible* (1769/1982)). Woman was to be an Ezer Kenegdo (עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ), a support to man and humankind (Abarim Publications, 2006; Rendsburg, 2021; Wrangler, 2022). However, misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the word helpmeet or helper (*King James Holy Bible* (1769/1982)) persisted since its translation from Hebrew to English in the first King James Bible of 1611 (Abarim Publications, n.d.; Fisher, 2017; Rendsburg, 2021), and throughout Western Judeo-Christian cultures (Hargraves, 2017; Verrett, 2022).

Although the translation of that time implied that the woman's role as helper was a pejorative or strictly one of servitude and inferiority, ezer means to be strong (Kaiser, n.d.) an ally, a rescuer, and someone who comes expeditiously when those they love cry out for help. Ezer is also the characterization of the role of the Almighty God when man calls out for His presence in Deuteronomy 33: 26, 29 (*King James Holy Bible* (1769/1982)). God designed and intended for women to embrace and portray His characterization of feminine "power" or "strength," and in every respect to be a match to the man, neither below him nor above him, but

to be of equal in worth according to their roles (Kaiser, n.d.; Hargraves, 2017; Verrett, 2022).

The participants in this study impressively and consistently exemplified strength, living up to the name and position, of Ezer Kenegdo (עזר כנגדו).

The last aspect of gathering data involved discerning with a critical eye and ear the attitudes and perspectives of these women concerning the culture. These women were aware of and sparingly spoke about their views of feminism or its effect on the culture beyond the fact that they do the same work and make the same money as their male counterparts. Consequently, they would make more money if they wanted to be away from home for extended periods, work more consecutive days, or seek an endorsement involving more dangerous assignments. The majority of the responses revealed maturity and self-acceptance as women. They had no intention of hiding their femininity or feminine side unless in a potentially dangerous situation where exposing their sex could get them injured. These women affirmed that being a woman did not hinder them in a male-dominated/oriented field. The comportment of their male counterparts was not an impediment. However, their innate feminine attributes enhanced their experiences and that of their companies and fellow drivers. Nothing in the trucking industry directly prevented women from seeking employment, thriving, and succeeding.

I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.

– *Carl Jung, Quotepedia*

Recommendations

- Although similar daily challenges and difficulties in the trucking industry apply equally to both women and men, the participants discussed the specific hindrances and obstacles to women entering the trucking industry. The biggest struggle for women was their school-aged children. Future research might look at the feasibility

- of more opportunities for shared routes for women or allowing them to take a child on their routes under strictly defined circumstances, especially during summer.
- Another aspect of being a professional commercial truck driver is the negative encounters on the road with the public. Passenger drivers do not understand or do not care about the impact of their careless driving around commercial vehicles. The “brake checking” and “cutting-off” of a massive 80-ton fully loaded truck is not wise or safe for any vehicle in the immediate surroundings. Often the commercial driver is held accountable and more responsible due to the catastrophic and potential loss of life and property. Future research might explore the penalties, local laws, state DMV, and federal DOT passenger driver testing and instruction related to strongly familiarizing the public with safe driving near commercial vehicles.
 - Several study participants have been driving for more than 40 years with absolutely no intention of retiring. Many mature, experienced, competent, and capable drivers are potentially looking for their next career. The industry may address the possibilities of recruiting retiring couples purchasing Recreational Vehicles, focusing on the positive aspects of trucking. Recruiting male/female teams might be an option for drivers working while seeing the country from the cab of a truck rather than a motor home.

Further Research

Female truck drivers are a valuable and untapped resource for the trucking industry. Women bring their innate skill set to the industry. The findings of this research evidenced the natural female abilities women bring to the work environment regardless of the industry. Although trucking is one of the most definitive male-dominated/oriented fields, the participants

of this study were steadfast, hardworking, dependable, and consistently infused the industry with a heightened level of safety, professionalism, and loyalty. The findings contained within this research offered constructive insights into the strengths and character these women bring to the trucking industry and plausibly most sectors when celebrated and valued. The findings also presented the world of female commercial drivers in a way that can provide support and additional awareness of women's experiences on the road. These findings might also assist the trucking industry in investing more resources into attracting, recruiting, and training more women. The results of the research offer a foundation for future research. The following recommendations might provide a guide to more research.

- This research straightforwardly looked at 14 female truck drivers working in North America using a purposive approach for sample selection. A potentially more extensive study, including more participants across several male-dominated/oriented occupations containing several sectors, may not provide new insight but could make the results more representative of all working women.
- The 14 participants in this study met the limiting selection criteria, mainly that they were females with significant miles and years of practical driving experience. The lived experiences spanning decades confirmed a need to tap into the skills and talents of this vast resource of American women capable of contributing a broad spectrum of valuable female attributes to the trucking industry. Future research may address planning the proper time to choose a second career in trucking. The recruitment potential of mature women facing an "empty nest" when their children leave home could be significant.
- This study focused on a small sample size of specific women in the trucking industry and their lived experiences. The exploration concentrated on the factors contributing to the

innate strengths of women. Feminine power does exist distinctly and apart from men, not in competition with masculine energy. A broader study that braces and celebrates those strengths would contribute significantly to the literature, how women see themselves, and the view of women generally.

- Although this sample size was small, the participant's encounters with young women's attitudes and expectations of a fulfilled life can be disingenuous and contradict women's natural inclinations and a denial of their God-given female strengths. The participants learned through trial and error and a lifetime of the tough choices made "to have it all." Future research could focus on young women's satisfaction with life when directed primarily at a career in their youth while postponing family and childbearing.
- The participants in this study primarily addressed safety issues while out on the road alone and the lack of clean, accessible restrooms and shower facilities for women. Future research may focus on coordinating efforts with the DOT and commercial truck stops on making efforts to facilitate a solution to both concerns.
- Lastly, several participants discussed their positions as Owner-Operators. Based on their experiences and observations, being an entrepreneur in trucking might not be beneficial or a dream coming true. The potential scams perpetrated on unsuspecting or under-informed drivers looking to own their vehicle is a "secret" in the industry. Insurance and maintenance costs as an independent driver are often intentionally underestimated. Potentially future research may delve into the positive and negative aspects of selling the dream of being an owner/operator.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Script

Dear Driver,

My name is Carlinda Tabor. I am a candidate for a doctoral degree at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study that examines the presumed strength of female truck drivers. I am inviting you to participate in this study. If you agree, I invite you to participate in an online discussion via “Zoom.” I anticipate the interview taking less than 60minutes.

I am requesting your participation because you are:

- A female truck driver licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with or without endorsements
- Having accumulated more than 200,000 miles of “over-the-road” driving
- Have experience primarily as a solo driver, working as an independent or company employee.

Your participation is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain anonymous and confidential in this qualitative study, during and after the study. The data will have an alpha-numerical identifier, such as Driver A1, Driver A2, Driver A3, etc. If you have any questions or want to participate, don't hesitate to get in touch with me at carlinda.tabor@pepperdine.edu

Thank you for considering taking part in this study,

Carlinda Tabor
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP)
Doctoral Student

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Letter

IRB Number: 22-04-1828

Study Title: Factors Contributing to the Presumed Strength of Women Truck Drivers

Primary Instrument/Investigator: Carlinda Tabor

Consent Form

Dear Driver,

My name is Carlinda Tabor. I am conducting a study on the innate strength of women truck drivers. If you are over the age of 28 and meet the following criteria, you may participate in this research:

- A female truck driver licensed to drive Commercial vehicles (with or without endorsements)
- Having accumulated more than 200,000 miles of “over-the-road” driving
- Have experience primarily as a solo driver, working as an independent or company employee.

What is the reason for this research?

The purpose of this study is to identify the attributes that some women embrace and how these factors contribute to self-efficacy for women in professions typically held by men. The trucking industry fulfills some significant aspects of this study. There exists the potential for all of the purported barriers and impediments to women to be present is very high due to the number of men versus the number of women working in the field. The researcher will use qualitative study methods that describe the discoveries and might provide valuable insight into enticing more women into the trucking industry and possibly a deeper understanding of trucking for women.

What will happen during this research study?

This study uses a small but significant sample of women truckers. The objective is to incorporate a simple but diverse selection of women in the trucking industry who possess a full range of experiences within the trucking industry. The researcher will gather data from this group of proficient professional women truck drivers with differing attitudes, values, and perspectives on choosing a career. Hopefully, this information from extensive lived experience, and the one common factor, women, will produce rich insight. You will participate in a 14-question interview via “Zoom,” (www.zoom.us) lasting approximately 60 minutes.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

Any risks will be minimal to the participant. The risks that might arise from this experience may include: The participant feeling uncomfortable due to the impersonal nature of using the “Zoom” application; the questions may be unsettling; a minor risk of a confidentiality breach; uneasiness with the follow-up query, and possible fatigue during the 60-minute interview. Although there is a slight chance of a compromise in confidentiality, the researcher will take all the necessary precautions to prevent it. The researcher and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) are the only ones to access the research records. The Institutional Review Board may access and occasionally review the data collected to monitor research studies and protect the welfare and rights of the research subjects. The researcher will adhere to the strictest protocols and highest standards to keep the participants' information safe. There will be no harm to the participant’s mental, physical, or financial well-being. Nor will there be damage to the drivers’ reputation or employment.

What are the possible benefits to the researcher?

There is no direct benefit to the researcher.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The results of this study may be helpful and used to enhance the trucking industry, improve hiring practices related to women, and offer the participant a new perspective on their contribution to the workforce as women in a male-oriented/dominated occupation.

How will information about the driver be protected?

The researcher will maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the driver’s responses to the interview questions. The driver’s name, title, organization’s name, or anything that will compromise the driver’s identity will be kept confidential. The audio and video data collected from the driver will remain private but password protected and securely stored on my computer after the study for up to 3 years, then destroyed. Only the researcher will do the transcription and coding.

What are your rights as a research subject?

The driver may ask any questions at any time regarding this research. The driver can have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in this study. Please get in touch with the researcher with any study-related concerns:

Name: Carlinda Tabor

Email:

For questions about your rights or complaints related to this research, contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305

Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or stop participating once you start?

The driver can decide not to participate, stop taking part, or withdraw from this study for any reason before, during, or after this research begins. The decision not to take part or withdraw at any time will not impact the relationship with the researcher and Pepperdine University or your employment status or benefits.

You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of Informed Consent

You are voluntarily deciding whether or not to participate in this research study. By responding by DocuSign (<https://www.docusign.com>), including your signature, your consent to participate is implied. Please print a copy of this page for your records.

Participant/Driver Signature:

Date

Signature of Research Participant/Driver

Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Pepperdine University

Research Study Interview Questions

Research Study: The Perceived Strength of Women Truckers
Primary Researcher: Carlinda Tabor, Doctoral Candidate

Interview Question 1: Tell me about something in your life that challenges you. How did you do to overcome it?

Interview Question 2: What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations, if any? Describe how you handled those experiences. What did you do to keep going?

Interview Question 3: Who was your role model, or what inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?

Interview Question 4: What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?

Interview Question 5: What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? Have you had such experiences in other jobs?

Interview Question 6: At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?

Interview Question 7: What do you think you may be contributing to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?

Interview Question 8: What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?

Interview Question 9: How do you describe success for working women? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?

Interview Question 10: Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?

Interview Question 11: At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe both.

Interview Question 12: If there were just three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?

Interview Question 13: What is the most challenging aspect of working in the trucking industry as a woman? How would you change it?

Interview Question 14: What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval

APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: May 05, 2022

Protocol Investigator Name: Carlinda Tabor

Protocol #: 22-04-1828

Project Title: Factors Contributing to the Perceived Strength of Women Truckers

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Carlinda Tabor:

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 protection of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal 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

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

Pepperdine University

24255 Pacific Coast Highway

Malibu, CA 90263

TEL: 310-506-4000

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol

Time:

Primary Instrument: Carlinda Tabor

Interview Participant Identifier:

Interview begins:

This interview will last less than 60minutes. The research topic is regarding the factors contributing to the strength of women in a male-oriented/dominated field, like the trucking industry. Thank you for participating. When you're ready, I would like to start recording. (Start the recorder). Today is _____, and the identifier of this participant is _____.

I will ask you 14 open-ended questions. There is no right or wrong response to the questions. I need your honest answers. At any time during the interview, please let me know if you want me to clarify or explain anything about a particular question. Before we begin our discussion, do you have any questions?

- 1. Tell me about something in your life that challenges you. How did you overcome it?*
- 2. What barriers or impediments have you encountered in your previous occupations, if any? Describe how you handled those experiences. What did you do to keep going?*
- 3. Who was your role model, or what inspired you to pursue the trucking industry?*
- 4. What obstacles did you expect to encounter working in the trucking industry, a primarily male occupation? What surprised you?*
- 5. What are your most encouraging and discouraging experiences with your male counterparts while working in the trucking industry? Why would you describe those experiences that way? Have you had such experiences in other jobs?*
- 6. At what point (miles, hours, or experiences) in this profession did you feel that you achieved competence, confidence, and belief in your proficiency as a truck driver? Do you have any doubts about your abilities, why, and what are they?*
- 7. What do you think you may be contributing to the trucking industry as a female driver? What do women, in general, bring to the industry?*
- 8. What differences and similarities do you see in how men and women function within the trucking industry?*
- 9. How do you describe success for working women in general? How do you define success in the trucking industry as a woman?*
- 10. Have you set personal or professional goals that challenge you as a woman in the trucking industry? Did you achieve your goal? Did you fail in achieving your goal? Why?*
- 11. At the end of a shift or a long-haul, how do you know if you had a good or bad day? Describe what both.*
- 12. If there were just three rules, values, or character traits that everyone would have to follow in the trucking industry, what would they be?*
- 13. What is the most challenging aspect of working in the trucking industry as a woman? How would you change it?*
- 14. What do you think hinders more women from choosing to enter this profession?*

We have reached the end of the interview. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences. (Stop the recording).