THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR ROLES THROUGH THE SALARY NEGOTIATION PROCESS AT THE TIME OF HIRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Nancy K. Hernandez

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of salary negotiation at the time of hire for women in full-time administrator positions at Texas institutions of higher education. Eagly's social role theory guided this study to explain gender roles and negotiation. A qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach was used to explore the experiences of women in higher education administrator roles during the salary negotiation process. Institutions within the south-central regions of Texas, including public and private colleges and universities, served as the site for this study. Participants were 12 women in full-time administrator positions at one of the included Texas institutions in South Central Texas. For this study, administrators included vice presidents, assistant vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, associate deans, assistant deans, provosts, and directors. Data collection included individual interviews, a focus group, and document analysis to ensure triangulation. The analysis involved memoing, identifying patterns and themes through coding, and data presentation. The thematic findings of this study were should have asked for more, imposter syndrome, mentorship, and collaboration. Results indicated that many biases play into women in higher education administrator roles and the salary negotiation process at the time of hire. Women felt pressure to balance the expected roles of showing gratitude and politeness with negotiating a salary and appearing overly assertive. Access to data such as pay scales, budgets, market analysis, negotiation techniques, and preparedness can help women in higher education administrator roles negotiate salaries more effectively. Mentorship and supportive networks were found to be significant contributors to the salary negotiation success.

Keywords: gender roles, negotiation, administrator, higher education, inclusivity, equity

Copyright Page

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beautiful twin daughters, Hannah and Paige. Thank you for walking alongside me as I worked to complete my dissertation and for accompanying me on the many late-night coffee shop excursions. I hope I have inspired you to embark on your own educational journey and always know your worth. To the working women before me, thank you for your hard work breaking through the door. And to the next generation of working women, may you walk through the open door, sit at the table, and lead with grace, boldness, and an appetite for success.

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Thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Heather Strafaccia. Your patience, kindness, encouragement, and immense knowledge have been appreciated since day one. Your guidance and assistance throughout this journey will never be forgotten. There were many times when I thought to myself how lucky I was to have a chair that was so dedicated to seeing me succeed; I am forever grateful. Thank you to my committee member, Dr. Rachel Hernandez. Your wonderful insights, encouragement, and kindness will always be connected to this journey. I know all this work could not have been possible without your support. I want to thank the participants in my study. Thank you for telling your stories and participating in my dissertation journey. Lastly, thank you to everyone who motivated, encouraged, and cheered me on along the way!

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List of Abbreviations

American Academy of Neurology (AAN)

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Council of Education (ACE)

Associate Vice President (AVP)

Association of American Universities (AAU)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Doctoral Universities – Very high research activity (R1)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Equal Pay Act (EPA)

Human Resources (HR)

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ)

National Women's Law Center (NWLC)

National Institute of Health (NIH)

Salary History Ban (SHB)

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

University of California San Francisco (UCSF)

University of Texas System (UTS)

Vice President (VP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Despite the high representation of women in low to mid-administrator positions, men still dominate top-level positions in higher education institutions, with only 30% of women occupying executive-level positions, such as deans, vice presidents, chancellors, and presidents (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017; Mang, 2019; Silbert et al., 2022). Interestingly, a gender pay gap continues to exist (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Goldin et al., 2017; Glynn, 2016; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021), with women earning 83 cents for every dollar men earn, developing a 17% pay gap (AAUW, 2020; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). This study explored women's lived experiences in higher education roles through the salary negotiation process at the time of hire. Framed by social role theory (Eagly, 1987), this study employed a theoretical framework for understanding the gender and social dynamics that impact women's experiences in higher education administration roles during salary negotiation. This chapter highlighted the study's problem, purpose, and significance that bring to light women's challenges in navigating equity and equality in these roles. The significance section details the historical, theoretical, and empirical literature on the gender gap in higher education, leadership positions in higher education, the pay gap among higher education administrators, and salary negotiation as a contributing factor. By exploring these experiences through the lens of social role theory (Eagly, 1987), the study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the gender pay gap in higher education leadership positions and provide insights into the factors of social norms, gender stereotypes, and biases (Eagly, 1987, 2013). Additionally, chapter one provides the research questions, sub-questions, definitions, and a summary.

Background

Understanding the historical context of women's struggle for equal representation is essential to this study. In 1848, women gathered for the first women's rights convention and produced the document *The Declaration of Sentiments*, which proclaimed that women were autonomous individuals deserving of political identity (Hansan, 2011). Although most attendees were women, some men were involved in the convention and supported the movement. Later, in 1868, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth C. Stanton advocated for equal pay for equal work, education for women, and women's suffrage and published articles supporting new job opportunities and rights for working women (Fermaglich et al., 2020; Hansan, 2011).

Since that time, the gender gap has continuously persisted (AAUW, 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021; Glynn, 2016; Goldin et al., 2017). More specifically, within higher education, the gap in pay and opportunities among administrative leaders is significant (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Silbert et al., 2022). However, women in higher education leadership positions are often more included in prioritizing student success and implementing policies and programs supporting underrepresented students. These policies have been associated with higher student satisfaction and academic achievement (Almukhambetova et al., 2021; Bartlebaugh & Abraham, 2021; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017), which aids in showcasing the significance of women's roles in higher education. In such consideration, the lack of alignment between pay and job significance among women higher education administrators guides this study's investigation. Examining the historical, social, and theoretical context provided an essential background for this study.

Historical Context

Pursuing women's access to higher education has been a longstanding struggle that can be traced back to its inception (Carlton, 2021). Institutions for higher education were created primarily to educate men to enter the seminary (Carlton, 2021; Schwartz, 1997) during the 17th century, and university leaders barred women from attending college until the mid-19th century. As women slowly began to enter college, such admittance to higher education was constrained to women of wealth (Carlton, 2021). Despite backlash from men, the first women to attend classes paved the way for greater inclusivity in higher education (Schwartz, 1997). However, institutions like Harvard University, which only admitted men from 1636 to 1950, remained a barrier to women's education. It was not until 1836 when Wesleyan, the first women's college, was established that women could obtain a college education (Carlton, 2021). Over the following four decades, between 1836 and 1875, women's colleges increased to 50 institutions, providing greater opportunities for women in higher education. In the late 19th century, more institutions became co-ed to increase enrollment and help financial stability (Schwartz, 1997). However, the first colonial institutions still refused to allow women to enroll, and it was not until the late 20th century that Ivy League schools became co-ed. The refusal to allow women to attend these institutions came from the notion that women would ruin the college experience for men (Parker, 2015; Schwartz, 1997).

Alternatively, the perseverance of women, aided by the women's movement, paved the way for greater access to education and expanded opportunities over time. Women continued to enroll and graduate. Since 1982, in the United States, women have earned 60% of all awarded bachelor's degrees; since 2006, women have earned more than 50% of all awarded doctoral degrees (American Council of Education [ACE], 2017). As institutions of higher learning started

to enroll more women, higher education institutions hired more women as professors and administrators. The first women administrator positions were deans (Carlton, 2021). Women deans were hired to guide female students and take care of the business pertaining to women (Carlton, 2021; Schwartz, 1997), with the first woman dean appointed in 1892 at the University of Chicago (Solomon, 1980). In 1903, 17 women deans attended the first women of dean's meeting to discuss housing, intercollegiate athletics, training in etiquette, women's self-government, leadership opportunities, and gender segregation (Schwartz, 1997).

In the early years, the Deans of Women Association established many support and academic services for students, known today as student affairs and academic affairs. As time progressed, women established practices for research, scholarly work, professional organizations, policies, and higher education practices, specifically during the World War II era, as men were called to serve (Chafe, 1972). However, following World War II, there was a regression in female participation in higher education, characterized by an anti-woman sentiment that pushed for restricting women's roles to primarily in the home (Chafe, 1972; Graham, 1978). The movement regained the male-dominated presence within dean positions across many university campuses. Eventually, the Women of Deans turned into Deans of Students, with men filling the positions and women pushed to subordinate roles. Consequently, the work of women in higher education was diminished. During the transitions between the 1950s and the 1990s, men took over most of the dean roles and vice president, leading authors, and spokespersons in academic and student affairs (Carlton, 2021; Schwartz, 1997).

Today, women hold various higher education administrative positions; however, women still face underrepresentation in executive-level positions (Silbert et al., 2022). While women comprise 50% of these positions, only 30% hold higher-pay executive-level positions (AAUW,

2020; Silbert et al., 2022). Unfortunately, a persistent pay gap remains in these positions (AAUW, 2020; Säve-Söderbergh, 2019). As women continue to work through barriers to top roles and equitable salaries, salary negotiation has been identified as a contributing factor to the pay gap (Dreber et al., 2022; Kennedy et al., 2017; Kugler et al., 2017; Mandel, 2016; Mazei et al., 2015; Reif et al., 2019). Responsively, this study aimed to examine women's experiences in higher education administrator roles through the negotiation process at the time of hire.

Social Context

As institutions of higher learning become more diverse in their student populations, the higher education administrators leading the institutions must also be an inclusive and diverse population (Stanley et al., 2019). The lack of equity in leadership positions and pay transparency has a trickle-down effect on the institution's faculty, students, alums, and community (Silbert et al., 2022). Over the last 40 years, the national pay gap has been researched and investigated (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Mandel, 2016; Mazei et al., 2015; Reif et al., 2019). Although efforts have been made among the legislation, corporations, higher education institutions, and major industries, women still take home 83 cents per every dollar than men do (AAUW, 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Goldin et al., 2017; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). The gender pay gap has a profound effect, especially on Hispanic and African American women, for whom the gap is even more expansive (Blau & Kahn, 2017). The persistent gender pay gap not only has significant implications for women but also takes a toll on those who are the primary salary contributors for their families. In fact, in the United States, 42% of women with young children are the primary earners (AAUW, 2020; Glynn, 2016). This disparity in earnings has far-reaching consequences, as it results in women earning over $400,000 less than their male counterparts over the course of their careers, which in turn contributes to a retirement gap

(Silbert et al., 2022). The impact of this wage disparity is particularly pronounced for women who bear the responsibility of supporting their families, perpetuating a cycle of economic inequality (Glynn, 2016).

Even though women now earn more degrees than men at all levels, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, women have not caught up in compensation (ACE, 2017; Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Silbert et al., 2022). Despite progress in educational attainment, the power, pay, and wealth gaps remain interconnected, and if movement does not increase, the gaps will never be closed (Global Gender Gap Report, 2021; Silbert et al., 2022). With close to 17 million students enrolled in colleges and universities in the fall of 2021 (Sedmak, 2022), universities within the Association of American Universities (AAU) paid $95.5 billion in salaries in 2019 (AAU, 2021). The effect colleges and universities have on our economy and business structures is invaluable and associated with venture capitalists, patents, technology licenses, startup companies, and top employers in several home states. Addressing gender inequities among higher-level education leadership positions can establish the necessary movement nationwide. Understanding how women approach the hiring process in administrator positions, specifically the salary negotiation process, can help identify how women acquire the salary for these positions, the gender roles associated with this process, and how these experiences affect further career advancement within higher education (Dreber et al., 2022).

Theoretical Context

This study is based on research that women higher education administrators, as a group, are limited to equitable pay and positions in college and university settings (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Silbert et al., 2022). Various theoretical perspectives are tied to the gender pay gap, equity in work environments, and gender bias during the hiring

process (Grybaite, 2006). Human capital theory (Schultz, 1961) explains how individuals acquire skills and knowledge, ultimately leading to their workforce compensation. The theory suggested that if men and women have the same education, skills, or experiences, they should receive equal compensation (Becker, 1991; Schultz, 1961). However, biases and social norms can lead to inequality among genders in pay (Marginson, 2019).

In contrast to human capital theory's (Schultz, 1961) focus on individual skills and compensation, expectation states theory (Berger et al., 1972) delves into the interpersonal dynamics within group contexts, shedding light on how people's reactions and perceptions of others are influenced by their characteristics and competence. By exploring the social processes at play, expectation states theory provides valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that can contribute to unequal treatment and biases, such as gender-based pay disparities, despite similar levels of education, skills, and experience. Often, women and minorities struggle to receive the same recognition and credit as their non-minority peers and counterparts (Thebaud, 2015). The persistence of organizational biases, such as the tendency to offer lower pay to women, directly contributes to the perpetuation of the gender pay gap (Correll & Rideway, 2006; Berger et al., 1972; Balkwell, 1991).

Additionally, understanding the consequences of unfair treatment and compensation on employees' attitudes and motivations, equity theory (Adams, 1963) suggests that employees want to be treated fairly. If employees perceive that they are being treated or compensated unfairly, their attitudes and motivations can change. In the case of the gender pay gap, this can lead to women feeling less motivated in their positions and can hinder overall work production and leadership if unfairness is perceived based on inequitable pay differences (Shah & Rasli, 2015).

To understand the broader societal dynamics that contribute to these disparities, social role theory (Eagly, 1987) suggests that societal expectations shape social roles, which can adapt as societal expectations change. This study aimed to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions, considering social roles and gender stereotypes. The persistence of gender stereotypes is evident in research, showing that men are often expected to be more assertive and competitive, while women are expected to be communal and unselfish (Eagly, 1987). Social role theory (1987) guided an understanding of how social norms, gender stereotypes, and biases affect compensation decisions and the negotiation process for women administrators. The goal is to provide recommendations for higher education institutions to create more diverse and inclusive learning environments by prioritizing representation in leadership roles (Davenport et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

The problem is that the salary negotiation process for women in higher education administrator roles is underrepresented in the hiring process (Carlton, 2022; Carnevale et al., 2018, 2021). Positions such as directors, deans, vice presidents, associate vice presidents, provosts, and presidents are predominantly held by men, who also receive higher pay than women in these roles (AAUW, 2020; Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Silbert et al., 2022). The lack of diversity among leadership positions can hinder progress, advancement, and decision-making within higher education institutions. Therefore, it is important to study why the gender pay gap and position disparity still exist among administrators (Carlton, 2022; Carnevale et al., 2018, 2021). One contributing factor is the role of salary negotiation, which men tend to do more often and with greater success. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) suggests that women are less likely to negotiate due to societal expectations and gender norms (Dreber et

al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Women are often expected to be communal, agreeable, and nurturing, making negotiating uncomfortable or aggressive (Eagly, 1987, 2019; Kugler et al., 2017). When women negotiate, they may face bias and be seen as non-conforming to traditional gender expectations (Kugler et al., 2017; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Further research will contribute to investigating how women in administrative roles at Texas higher education institutions navigate the salary negotiation process at the time of hire.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of salary negotiation at the time of hire for women in full-time administrator positions at Texas institutions of higher education. At this stage in the research, the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire will generally be defined as the process in which women administrators at South Central Texas colleges or universities engage in discussions with hiring managers or human resources (HR) recruiters to establish the terms of employment (Heathfield, 2019). The theory guiding this study is social role theory (Eagly, 1987).

Significance of the Study

This section will discuss the significance of the study from a theoretical, empirical, and practical perspective. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) suggests that men and women behave according to the presumed role of their society, which may affect how women in higher education administrator roles negotiate salaries (Eagly, 2007, 2019; Wood & Eagly, 2002). Studies provide evidence of inequity among higher education administrator roles, but there is a lack of information on how the approach to salary negotiation affects this (Dreber et al., 2022; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Understanding how women approach the salary

negotiation process in higher education administrator roles can lead to awareness and support where needed to make a movement for equity, equality, inclusion, and diversity among higher education leaders (Ioannidou et al., 2019).

Theoretical

The theoretical significance of this study is grounded in social role theory (Eagly, 1987). Social role theory has been widely used as a framework in the literature on the gender pay gap and negotiation, which acknowledges negotiation as a contributing factor (Dreber et al., 2022; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). According to social role theory (Eagly, 1987), gender stereotypes are developed based on societal expectations and the division of work and labor between males and females (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Wood, 2011). As a result, men and women typically act based on gender roles, which transfer to work environments. As societies shift and time changes, social roles should align according to the new contexts (Eagly & Wood, 2011; Kugler et al., 2017). This study explores whether women in mid-level to executive positions still face bias when negotiating salary and are still seen as aggressive and out of the typical female character or whether women can now adapt to the negotiator role more comfortably.

Empirical

Empirically, this study will advance the existing literature on the gender pay gap and negotiation by offering a unique contribution. Although several empirical studies have been conducted on the gender pay gap and negotiation, many are quantitative (Dreber et al., 2022; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Furthermore, many studies within higher education focus on faculty, library academics, or disciplines within academics (Fiset & Saffie-Robertson, 2020; Silva & Galbraith, 2018; Zakaras et al., 2021). This study focuses on administrators and those in leadership roles on the administrative side of higher education, how administrators

approach the negotiation process, and how the negotiation process affects further career advancement. The current literature examines the administrator equity gaps related to pay and positions (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Mang, 2019; Rabovsky & Lee, 2017; Silbert et al., 2022). However, limited information exists on how women administrators navigate the negotiation process and accept the salary and benefits for these positions and the long-lasting effects of this approach.

Practical

Finally, the practical significance is guided by the exploration of women's approaches to salary negotiation when women are hired for leadership positions in higher education and identifying the barriers that prevent them from negotiating. This examination can provide valuable insights that can contribute to developing strategies, tools, and opportunities to help close the gender pay gap in these roles (AAUW, 2020; Silbert et al., 2022). In addition, identifying how the negotiation process affects further career advancement can affect the overall hiring process (AAUW, 2020). By achieving parity with men in terms of salary negotiation and success rates, there is potential for narrowing and ultimately closing the equity gaps among professionals in higher education administration (AAUW, 2020; Heck, 2018; Silbert et al., 2022). It becomes possible to develop more effective resources that support and advocate for women when women, hiring managers, executive leadership, and HR personnel have access to data that identifies opportunities for promoting inclusion, diversity, and equity. Accessibility can create a ripple effect that benefits all stakeholders within educational institutions. Therefore, fostering environments of mutual responsibility, equity, and empowerment for both genders can go a long way in building a more inclusive and equitable workplace (Heck, 2018).

Research Questions

The following research and sub-questions guided this study and were framed by the social role theory (Eagly, 1987). As women often negotiate salary less and, when women do negotiate salary, receive backlash, it is vital to understand how women approach this type of negotiation, what barriers exist, and how salary negotiation impacts further career advancement. Social role theory argues that, as society evolves and progresses, social roles and gender biases should also adapt (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Wood, 2011).

Central Research Question

What are women's experiences in higher education administration roles during the hiring salary negotiation process?

Sub-Question One

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender identity affecting the hiring salary negotiation process?

Sub-Question Two

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender expectations affecting the hiring salary negotiation process?

Sub-Question Three

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender stereotypes affecting the hiring salary negotiation process?

Definitions

1. *Agentic trait* - Assertive, competitive, independent characteristics associated with male gender roles (Reif et al., 2019).

2. *Communal trait* - Warmth, expressiveness, and agreeable characteristics associated with female gender roles (Hentschel et al., 2019).
3. *Gender* - Characteristics of women and men that are constructed socially and can vary among societies (World Health Organization, 2022).
4. *Gender identities* - An individual's sense of gender identity (Eagly & Wood, 2012).
5. *Gender pay gap* - A disparity in income compensation between men and women for doing the same type of work (Daugherty, 2023).
6. *Gender stereotypes* - Generalizations about the characteristics of roles and behaviors typically based on social roles and expectations (Eagly, 1987).
7. *Glass ceiling* - A metaphor to describe barriers experienced by women that inhibit women from reaching the top of the corporate ladder in corporate and other organizational hierarchies regardless of their qualifications (Kulik & Rae, 2019; United States Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).
8. *Labyrinth* - A pathway of twists and turns related to women's progression toward leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007).
9. *Role expectations* - The role individuals should adopt as society determines (Eagly & Wood, 2012).
10. *Salary negotiation* - Process where employee and employer discuss and reach an agreement on the conditions of the employment that can include compensation, benefits, hours worked, title, and severance (Heathfield, 2019).

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of salary negotiation at the time of hire for women in full-time administrator positions at Texas institutions

of higher education. This study was performed among women working in various colleges and universities in Texas in specific leadership administrative roles. The problem of not having equity in pay and leadership opportunities within higher education weakens diversity and inclusivity and does not allow for equitable representation at the executive level (AAUW, 2020; Silbert et al., 2022). As women in these roles navigate salary negotiation, this study will help answer how their approach affects further career advancement and the weight of the social role theory (Eagly, 1987). In addition, this study may help create awareness of the identified barriers women in these positions face at the time of hire. Finally, empowering women with information on successful negotiating will guide the higher education communities and the magnitude of industries and disciplines that women now lead (AAUW, 2020).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic literature review was conducted to explore women's experiences in higher educational administrator roles during the salary negotiation process at the time of hire. The first section of the literature review will introduce social role theory (Eagly, 1987) as the theoretical framework. The related literature section will then begin by discussing higher education leadership position inequity, pathways, and barriers among women in the field. Next, an examination of the gender pay gap, pay laws, and factors contributing to the gender pay gap is detailed to gain clarity on the problem female higher education administrators face when accepting salaries to such positions. Thus, a thorough examination of education, experiences, bias, discrimination, and salary negotiation is provided, leading to the significance of the study as a contributing factor to salary negotiation.

Theoretical Framework

Social role theory, proposed by Eagly in 1987, serves as the guiding framework for this study, which explores women's lived experiences in higher education administrator roles through the salary negotiation process at the time of hire (Eagly, 1987). This theory examines behavioral similarities and differences between genders and how gender role beliefs shape societal perceptions of social roles (Eagly & Wood, 2011, 2012). Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) suggested that a combination of biology and social factors leads to the occupation of different roles by men and women in society (Eagly & Wood, 2011, 2012; Eagly et al., 2000). The proposed study will focus on traditional binary genders and seek to understand the biosocial factors of gender identity, the influence of gender role expectations, and the impact of gender stereotypes on women in higher education leadership positions (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Understanding the effect of social roles on individuals requires a comprehensive understanding of gender identity formation. Gender roles shape self-concepts and influence one's perception of being male or female (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Developing in early childhood and continuing through adolescence, gender roles shape gender identities and associated societal expectations. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) highlights the dynamic nature of gender-related roles across different societies (Eagly, 1987, 2007). With the evolving recognition of new genders, this study will adopt the World Health Organization's (2022) definition of gender encompassing men and women. This study will dive into the effect of gender identity on women in administrator roles in higher education institutions as they navigate the hiring process.

The significant influence of societal expectations in shaping social roles and behaviors is further discussed by Eagly (1987). Deviating from expected gender roles often leads to penalties for both men and women, but women face additional challenges when displaying leadership-style behaviors (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women in leadership positions are often viewed negatively for adopting more assertive and dominant traits (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Schlamp et al., 2021), and bias against women in non-traditional leadership roles persists in the workplace (Barreda-Tarrazona et al., 2022; Hoover et al., 2019; Wiedman, 2020). The dynamics of gender role expectations are crucial for understanding the contributing factors of gender pay and the barriers women face in pursuing equitable compensation (Eagly, 1987; Wiedman, 2020).

Building on the understanding that beliefs about gender stereotypes are shaped by the expectations of gender roles (Eagly & Wood, 2011, 2012), it is evident that these social roles are closely associated with specific characteristics and behaviors, leading to the development of such stereotypes. Traditionally, women were expected to be caregivers and nurturers, often stereotyped as more emotional and empathetic (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Wood, 2011). In contrast,

men have been expected to be protectors and providers, often stereotyped as more aggressive and competitive (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) argues that gender stereotypes are not fixed and can change over time as gender roles and expectations evolve. As more women have entered the workforce and their educational attainment has increased, the stereotypes of women's competence have shifted (Eagly et al., 2000).

Despite the increasing presence of women in the workforce and leadership positions, women still face challenges in negotiating due to communal gender role characteristics (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Mandel, 2016; Mazei et al., 2015). The proposed study aims to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. With a focus on gender roles, expectations, stereotypes, and the impact of negotiation experiences on women in higher education administrator positions, the study will examine the adaptation to shifting roles and its influence on career advancement in higher education (Eagly, 1987).

Related Literature

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the experiences of salary negotiation at the time of hire for women in full-time administrator positions at Texas institutions of higher education. This review will discuss a clear and synthesized overview of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in higher education, the salary pay gap between men and women, and the contributing factors of the pay gap (Association of American Universities [AAU], 2021; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Silbert et al., 2022). Specifically, the review of literature will aim to explore the gender pay gaps among higher education administrators as a result of little or unsuccessful salary negotiations and the implications that arise due to such events (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). In addition, the

literature highlights the presence of gender inequalities among higher education professionals, emphasizing the need to investigate how women in administrative roles in higher education navigate the negotiation process during the hiring stage (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Silbert et al., 2022).

Inequity in Higher Education Professional Positions

Despite the high representation of women in low to mid-administrator positions, men still dominate top-level positions in higher education institutions, with only 30% of women occupying executive-level positions, such as deans, vice presidents, chancellors, and presidents (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017; Mang, 2019; Silbert et al., 2022). Specifically, in designated R1 universities, as defined as doctoral universities with very high research activity by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2023), only 22% of university presidents in 2021 were women, showcasing a significant underrepresentation of females in top leadership positions (Silbert et al., 2022). Notably, women of color are severely underrepresented in university president positions, with only five percent of elite R1 university presidents being women of color. In addition, while women fill 41% of chief academic officers and 28% of dean positions, women are still significantly underrepresented in top-level positions (Kellerman & Rhode, 2017).

In addition to the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership roles, there is a significant lag for women on university boards (Adams & Kramer, 2022). In 2020, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges reported a 72% male and 28% female gender distribution of board members. Public institution boards were heavily represented by men and White individuals, with 65% White and 63% men (Adams & Kramer, 2022).

Initiatives to increase diversity among college boards are being established through the Women's Nonprofit Leadership Initiative (2022; Adams & Kramer, 2022). The initiative aims to increase awareness of the lack of diversity on nonprofit educational and medical boards and make changes. Such understanding is significant since diverse governance leads to better decision-making and outcomes for higher education institutions' increasingly diverse student populations. Having a diverse faculty, staff, and leadership is crucial to meeting the needs of the growing student diversity population (Carey et al., 2018; Gomez & Bernet, 2019; Silbert et al., 2022).

In addition to diversity issues, there is evidence of inequity in promotions among men and women in higher education institutions (Carey et al., 2018; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017; Mang, 2019; Rabovsky & Lee, 2017). Although women have earned more undergraduate and doctoral degrees than men, fewer women hold higher-level positions in higher education institutions (Fuesting et al., 2022). Since 1982, women have earned more than 60% of all undergraduate degrees; since 2006, women have earned more than 50% of all doctoral degrees (ACE, 2017). ACE explained this as the pipeline myth. The myth falsely suggests that women are not qualified for these executive-level positions, although the data show otherwise. As of 2015, only 32% of women held these prestigious positions (ACE, 2017; Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022; Gobillon et al., 2015). So, although women are educated, prepared with advanced degrees, and eager to move into executive positions, women are still not represented at the top of the employment chain within higher education institutions.

Several phenomena describe women's path to leadership positions, including the glass ceiling, the labyrinth of twists and turns, and the concrete ceiling (Hoobler et al., 2009; Samuelson et al., 2019). Studies researching the pipeline and access to high-level positions, including university and college presidents, agreed that women face many barriers (Appelbaum

et al., 2019; Fuesting et al., 2022; Moak et al., 2020; Samuelson et al., 2019; Silbert et al., 2022). These barriers include bias in pay, the minimal opportunity for leadership positions and lack of promotion, and gender role bias (Appelbaum et al., 2019; Fuesting et al., 2022; Moak et al., 2020; Samuelson et al., 2019; Silbert et al., 2022). Over the past 20 years, the gender pay gap among higher education professionals has been consistent, and data shows no signs of the gap narrowing (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017; Silbert et al., 2022).

Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling is a widely recognized phenomenon coined in 1978 by Marilyn Loden and refers to the invisible barriers preventing women from advancing in their careers (Lefroy, 2022; Vargas, 2018). Since then, the glass ceiling effect term has been used to describe the universal hindrance across all economic conditions (Dahlvig & Longman, 2020; Abbas et al., 2021; Waqar et al., 2019). Studies completed in Uruguay, Lebanon, Italy, Japan, and Israel show the effects of the glass ceiling in various industries and organizations (Adnan & Miaari, 2018; Bukstein & Gandelman, 2019; Castagnetti & Giorgetti, 2019; Chiang & Ohtake, 2014; Harb & Rouhana, 2020). Women researchers in Uruguay are less likely to be accepted into national research programs than men in health sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. However, this gender disparity does not exist in engineering and agricultural sciences (Bukstein & Gandelman, 2019). The glass ceiling contributes to women being suppressed at all levels but is more prevalent as women try to rise to top executive positions across various disciplines and industries (Ertan & Cavlan, 2020). The literature is limited to specific studies and effects of the glass ceiling, including higher education leadership careers, with a few mentioning the phenomena but not focusing solely on the limitations (Ghouralal, 2019).

The lack of support and opportunities for mentoring and networking from male peers reinforces the glass ceiling and makes it less likely to break (Cohen et al., 2020). Many men in the workplace are unaware of the bias, discrimination, and other barriers within their organization (Oliver et al., 2018). Alternatively, when men become aware of such prejudice, change is limited or unfound, resulting from social roles (Hernandez, 2018; Oliver et al., 2018). Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) has been linked to the glass ceiling phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2020). The theory suggests that women are often viewed through stereotypical perceptions based on their social roles, making it challenging to break away from those perceptions. Specifically, women are often seen as communal caregivers and supportive (Eagly, 1987). This role is incongruent with most leadership opportunities, executive positions, and promotional structures for career advancement (Hernandez, 2018).

While navigating leadership roles within organizations, women face a motherhood penalty, whereas men are often awarded a fatherhood bonus (Polan et al., 2022). The motherhood penalty is explained as the cost mothers endure as women navigate the demands of motherhood and professional life (Kelley et al., 2020; Kleven et al., 2019). Programs and support for women who are mothers can help expand leadership opportunities for women. Excluding mothers from executive positions only widens the leadership gap for them. In addition, flexible schedules, telecommuting opportunities, leave policies, post-pregnancy and adoption time off, and onsite daycares benefit working mothers (Warner & Lehmann, 2019).

Pathways

The traditional pathway to top leadership positions of provosts and presidents is a barrier for women due to their lack of representation in the faculty rank positions that lead to senior-level faculty roles. From the senior level role, the next step is to obtain an assistant or associate

dean position, followed by an appointment to a dean position. Finally, deans usually move on to provost or president positions. Unfortunately, women are less likely to secure higher-level provost and president positions through this traditional pathway (Bradfield et al., 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022). Since women represent 28% of dean positions (Kellerman & Rhode, 2017), men are more likely to move from a dean to a president position. According to a study that surveyed more than 150 college and university presidents, 18% of women who became presidents had previously held the position of dean, while 82% had previously been provost.

In contrast, 43% of men who became presidents had previously been deans, and 57% had previously been provosts (Bradfield et al., 2017). It is noted that institutions led by women presidents have a greater representation of women in senior faculty and dean positions. Even further, institutions with women in leadership roles host more equitable pay opportunities. However, despite progress, women are still paid less than their male counterparts in these institutional leadership positions (Fuesting et al., 2022). Similarly, in the corporate world, when women are more represented in leadership positions, equitable pay is experienced (Flabbi et al., 2019). However, the literature is limited in examining the female representation of positions leading to executive roles.

The notion that a confidence gap causes women's inequity in leadership positions had been suggested earlier (Guillen et al., 2017). The confidence gap is explained by women having less confidence in their abilities and being less likely to be aggressive to self-promote and negotiate (Eckel et al., 2021; Roussillon, 2021). However, the idea of fixing the women by addressing the supposed lack of confidence has since backfired. Addressing the notion of lack of confidence among female executives has created a bias against women who may be seen as too aggressive, overconfident, and not fitting women's typical female roles and characteristics, as

suggested by social role theory (Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Eagly, 1987; Shepherd, 2017). Women taking on the negotiator role has created a systematic bias (Amanatullah & Tinsley, 2013; Gratch, 2021). Men and women are both goal-oriented and, within specific fields, share similar goals for advancement (Guillen et al., 2017; Gray et al., 2019). Additionally, a worldwide survey reported that more than 70% of women preferred a paid job when asked if they chose to work, take care of families, or a combination of both. The high dominance of men in leadership positions is not from a lack of desire for women (Guillen et al., 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022).

Although several sources point to the lack of representation of women in top-level positions in higher education institutions, most studies contain older data (ACE, 2017; Bichsel & McChesney, 2017). Given that, sources were identified beyond the scope of higher education administrators. As a result, much evidence indicates a lack of women in leadership roles across various fields and industries, such as medicine, surgery, corporate CEO positions, and membership on corporate boards (Gray et al., 2019; Lawson et al., 2022; Moak et al., 2020). Despite achieving parity with men in receiving medical and law degrees, women are still severely underrepresented in top positions in these fields (Gray et al., 2019).

Although institutions are creating efforts to produce equity, women are still underrepresented at the highest levels, particularly in STEM fields. Women are less likely to achieve tenure among professors, constituting only 34% of full professor roles. The disparity is more significant among women from Hispanic and Black ethnic groups, representing less than five percent of tenured faculty positions in the United States and being paid less in every rank (Cardel et al., 2020). Among Fortune 500 companies, women hold less than 15% of executive positions. Across all industries in the United States (U.S.), women occupy eight percent of executive-level, higher-paying jobs (Kellerman & Rhode, 2017). Since women are being hired

and filling many lower to mid-level positions, it is often thought that the pipeline and pathways to executive positions will happen and will take time. Unfortunately, taking time to correct the absence of equity is not the case. Women remain stagnant in the lower to mid positions. Progress has fallen short, and the promised pathway remains broken (Fuesting et al., 2022; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017).

Leaky Pipeline

The phenomenon known as the *leaky pipeline* refers to the many women leaving the academia pathway despite investing years in education and training due to a lack of promotion and opportunities (Moak et al., 2020). Although women are more likely to be active in lab work and research, women face barriers when securing prestigious authorship positions. Women are less likely to negotiate for these types of authorship positions than men, limiting women's opportunities for recognition and advancement. Furthermore, women are often likely to play it safe when submitting to high-profile journals. Bias among journal submissions is evident where publications viewed as male-type or authored by men are perceived to be of greater scientific quality (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2013). One example of the leaky pipeline can be seen within the neuroscience field. The most recent neuroscience data showed that more women than men are in Ph.D. neuroscience programs at 55% (Shen et al., 2018).

The data in Table 1, compiled by Shen et al. (2018), shows the percentages of men and women in specific neuroscience positions and roles. The data shows inequalities and a lack of support for women in higher education and research environments, often leading to their underrepresentation and departure from the field. The empirical evidence further supports claims of gender inequities in higher educational settings (Casad et al., 2021; Krebsbach, 2022).

Table 1

Percent of Women and Men in Neuroscience Positions

Position/Role	Women	Men
Post-doctoral	44%	57%
Tenure-track faculty	29%	71%
Full professors	24%	76%
First author in scientific journals	25%	75%
Last author in scientific journals	15%	85%
Large NIH grant recipient	30%	70%

Note. Data compiled by Shen et al. (2018).

In recent years, equality and representation have been called upon by journals to ensure support, encouragement, and fair review of women pursuing publication submissions (Fine & Shen, 2018). Regardless of these efforts, women experience perceptions of scholarly devaluation more than men and non-minority groups. Such experiences result in many females' intentions to leave higher education fields with overall negative consequential perceptions of scholarly depreciation for all faculty (Fine & Shen, 2018; Settles et al., 2021). The absence of women from particular fields, full professorships, scientific journals, and executive higher education positions is a reminder of the missed potential for the richness of diverse perspectives that could contribute to scholarly achievements and further invaluable contributions to higher education.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Although diversity in higher education institutions has been a part of discussions and strategic educational plans for many years, there has been a substantial shift in identifying better ways to recruit, maintain, and support students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented groups

(Bradley et al., 2022; Carey et al., 2018; Enders et al., 2021; Foy, 2021; Wingard et al., 2019). Research has shown that increased diversity among administration leadership increases innovation, engagement, and overall better institutional outcomes (Enders et al., 2021). A balanced leadership team, including a diverse faculty population, can improve students' experiences. However, limited studies directly related to higher education administrators and related data for faculty and general workforce research have been excessively examined. Such literature shows that a diverse faculty and staff population positively impacts students and university outcomes (Almukhambetova et al., 2021; Bartlebaugh & Abraham, 2021; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017). For example, in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs, when junior faculty women had senior faculty women as mentors, women were more likely to continue in the STEM path and have successful career outcomes (Almukhambetova et al., 2021; Witteveen & Attewell, 2020).

At the time of this study, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Offices could be found in many, if not all, higher education institutions. In 2020, the University of Texas System (UTS) created a DEI workgroup initiated by the chancellor. The workgroup supported DEI initiatives and engaged with top leadership in DEI conversations. The workgroup focused on inclusive hiring to include diversity training for HR partners. In addition, all UTS job postings included a DEI statement, with such openings placed on diversity hiring boards. The purpose of the UTS 187 Interviews of Executive Administrators and Other Senior Administrators policy was to include a diverse candidate pool at the executive and administrator levels (UTS, 2023a). Specifically, UTS jobs classified as executive administrators included titles as chancellor or any other position directly reporting to a university president. UTS jobs listed as senior administrators fell under titles such as assistant chancellors, executive directors, or similar.

Finally, UTS senior administrators included associate or assistant vice president, associate or assistant deans, department or division heads, or similar titles. At the close of this study, in January 2024, the state of Texas adopted a new law to deactivate DEI Offices at Texas public institutions, and any DEI engagement is now prohibited (UTS, 2023b).

Higher education institutions must make more significant efforts to ensure the pipelines for women remain equitable, inclusive, and aggressive (Johnson, 2016; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017; Sleeman et al., 2019). As women progress into leadership positions at colleges and universities, large clusters of men still hold top executive positions. For example, when Shirley Tilghman, president of Princeton University, left her tenure, she formed a steering committee on Undergraduate Women's Leadership (Kellerman & Rhode, 2017). The intent was to ensure that the disparity seen among men and women in leadership positions on campus could be addressed, allowing women to have opportunities for advancement in academic awards, fellowships, and overall fair representation at Princeton and peer institutions. At Harvard University, the senior associate dean for culture and community at the Harvard Business School has established a research forum, the Gender Initiative, that examines gender issues among various industries and organizations (Kellerman & Rhode, 2017). Institutional campuses should routinely assess progress, compare peer institutions, and conduct further environmental scans of diversity and inclusion.

Pay Gap

Consequently, the pay gap between men and women persists (AAUW, 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Goldin et al., 2017; Glynn, 2016; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). In 2020, women earned 83 cents for every dollar men earned, equating to a 17% pay gap (AAUW, 2020; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). However, the gap had narrowed from the 1960s when women

earned 60 cents for every dollar earned by men. Interestingly, women with children or more advanced in age have a more significant wage disparity than men **(**AAUW, 2020; Chen & Crown, 2019). Based on current rate changes and projections in the United States, women are expected to achieve pay parity with men in 2111. However, on a global scale, pay equity will not likely be achieved until 2155 (AAUW, 2020; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). Unfortunately, there has been little movement toward closing the gap in recent years, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has set women further back regarding the workforce, pay, and career advancement (AAUW, 2020; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021). The gender pay gap has far-reaching implications, particularly for Hispanic and African American women who experience even wider disparities in pay. As women continue to earn less than men, the effects can be especially burdensome for the primary income earners of their families. In the United States, 42% of women with young children are the primary earners in their households (Glynn, 2016).

With knowledge of the pay gap, evidence of data, and organizations working to fix it, it continues to exist. While several factors contribute to the pay gap, they fail to account for how women negotiate their salaries and how the pay gap hinders career growth, particularly among higher education administrators. Although there are limited studies examining the wages of higher education administrators, those that do exist confirm the existence of a gender pay gap (Mang, 2019; Silbert et al., 2022). For example, Canadian universities still host a 4.4% pay gap between men and women (Mang, 2019). Interestingly, when salaries were analyzed by the academic field, the earning gap fell to 2.6%.

The gender pay gap among faculty members in various fields has been the subject of numerous studies and reports (Fuesting et al., 2022; Li et al., 2019; Rabovsky & Lee, 2017). For example, behavioral analysis university programs host higher salaries for male faculty than

females (Li et al., 2019). Such pay gaps among faculty salaries in behavior analysis programs range from 6% to 15%, with the highest-paid faculty member being male and the lowest-paid faculty member being female. Even further, university behavioral analysis programs host more than double the number of male faculty members than female faculty members. Such studies aim to raise awareness and show evidence of the inequality in pay among faculty in an academic discipline. Therefore, leadership must commit to equal salaries.

When considering salary equality, personal experience, and other factors could explain the gender pay gap. Studies must consider the experience level and member credentials when exploring gender pay gaps to gain greater insight into the salary received by each gender. Complete examinations may guide understanding the factors contributing to the gap and how to narrow the pay variance among faculty members, especially with opposing outcomes among studies showcasing conflicting findings. One example of such conflict is the claim that female university presidents significantly relate to female representation in administration positions, while the opposite has been found to show no correlation (Fuesting et al., 2022; Rabovsky & Lee, 2017). This proposed study will collect data to understand how women in higher education administrator roles arrive at their salary at the time of hire. Doing so will provide additional insight to help narrow the gender pay gap among leadership positions in higher education institutions.

Gender Pay Laws

Although several federal laws have been enacted to promote fairness in labor and address the gender pay gap, women still face inequality among their male counterparts and discrimination in the workforce (Blau & Kahn, 2017). In the United States, employers are legally required to provide fair work standards, equitable opportunities, and equal pay to all workers

(Card et al., 2016; Garunay, 2016). The National Committee on Pay Equity, an alliance of women and civil rights groups, has dedicated a day, 'Equal Pay Day,' since 1996 to mark the ongoing efforts to diminish the pay disparity. In addition, various acts have guided the continued efforts to abolish the gender pay gap.

Equal Pay Act

The Equal Pay Act (EPA) of 1963 aimed to abolish wage disparity among genders in work environments. The law was signed into effect on June 10, 1963, by John F. Kennedy and is part of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC], 2020). The EPA law (EEOC, 2020) states that men and women doing similar types of work will be paid the same (Card et al., 2016). In 2018, 14.6 million dollars was garnered in support of equal pay claims through the EEOC. Penalties are distributed to organizations that fail to comply. For example, the amount of $145,402 was paid by a government employer in Maryland for violating the EPA when lower wages were paid to a female engineer than to male engineers doing the same work. In addition to paying damages, the female's pay was raised to a fair amount (EEOC, 2020). The mission of the EEOC aims to ensure that advancement in employment is equal for all, and where there is unfair pay or treatment, that remedy will take place.

The EPA emphasized explicitly that job content, not the job title, should determine pay equality (EEOC, 2020). Factors such as skills, effort, responsibility, working conditions, and establishment should be considered. Differences in pay can be justified by factors such as the quantity of work produced, merit, and seniority (Card et al., 2016). These factors are known as *affirmative defenses*. However, if a claim is filed, the employer must explain and prove that affirmative defenses apply and that the pay differentials do not exist based on gender. If

inequality is found, the employer may not lower the other gender's pay. The pay of the employee receiving the lower compensation must be increased (Card et al., 2016; EEOC, 2020;). Before the EPA's enactment, women's wages were 40% less than men's (United States Census Bureau, 1963), with the gap closing toward approximately 20% in 2007 and stagnating (AAUW, 2020).

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

Intending to reduce the pay gap further, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009, which aims to promote equal pay for men and women, empowering women to file discrimination claims and recover wages due to pay discrimination (Garunay, 2016). This law resets the 180-day limitation on filing an equal-pay lawsuit with each paycheck received rather than when the alleged discrimination occurred (EEOC, 2020; Hamidullah et al., 2021). The act is named in honor of Lilly Ledbetter, who worked at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and filed a claim of discrimination based on the EPA in 1998 after discovering that she was paid substantially less than her male peers for a similar job with similar responsibilities in the same working environment (EEOC, 2020; Hamidullah et al., 2021). As a result, Ledbetter was awarded $3.3 million in punitive and compensatory damages. Overall, gender pay gap laws not only protect against inequality and discrimination based on gender but also based on religion, race, color, age, disability, and national origin.

Salary Transparency

The recent passage of laws in certain states mandating the sharing of job salary ranges and prohibiting employers from asking for previous salary information from candidates is an essential development in the ongoing effort to achieve pay equity (AAUW, 2019; Heisler, 2021; Trotter et al., 2017). The pay gap is known to widen for sectors with minimal transparency (AAUW, 2019). As of 2022, 17 states in the U.S. had laws related to pay transparency (Janisch,

2022). However, the laws vary in how salary transparency works. For example, some states require the employer to provide salary ranges when an offer is extended; others only require that the salary ranges be disclosed after a candidate requests the information. In these states, if a candidate does not request the information, it will not be voluntarily shared. In Nevada, the employer must disclose the salary range for a specific position after a candidate completes an interview. Also, if internal employees have applied for promotions or transfers, interviewed, or offered a job internally, the information must be shared if the employee asks for a salary range. In this instance, the position salary must be shared only if the employee requests the information. The same process is seen in Rhode Island, adopted in January 2023. In New York, as of November 2022, job postings where individuals will work must have salary ranges. Wording that provides potential hourly pay or maximum compensation is not allowed; the actual salary range must be disclosed. The state of Washington's transparency law, adopted in January 2023, does not require job postings. Still, if job postings are used, the job postings must disclose the salary pay range and have full benefit descriptions. This Washington salary transparency law only applies to employers with 15 or more employees (Janisch, 2022; Povich, 2022).

Equipping women with more knowledge of salary information gives women the advantage of negotiating higher pay and a better understanding of the position's value. While some research shows that pay transparency can benefit women and result in more equitable salaries, others claim that pay transparency results in equal salaries and lower wages because there is little room to negotiate. This, in turn, creates higher profits for the organizations (Cullen & Pakzad-Hurson, 2021; Heisler, 2021; Trotter et al., 2017). Other research showed that recent pay transparency raised women's salaries while lowering men's wages (Povich, 2022).

Interestingly, transparency law studies conducted in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada have found that such laws can significantly reduce the pay gap by 1.2% to 4% (Bennedsen et al., 2018, 2023). These findings highlight the potential benefits of implementing transparency laws. However, some argue that salary transparency can produce animosity among employees, as salary information is accessible, and employees conclude that the salaries are lower than others and employees are underpaid (Cullen & Pakzad-Hurson, 2021). In other cases, pay transparency deterred employees from applying to a position if employees felt inadequate compensation. In 2006, Denmark implemented legislation requiring private firms to display wage statistics disaggregated by gender; in doing so, the gender pay gap declined by 13% (Bennedsen et al., 2023).

In the United States, although organizations understood that pay transparency is vital to help limit discrimination and bias when hiring and offering salary compensations, a survey showed that, for companies who claimed salary transparency was important, only 14% of the companies had initiatives for salary transparency systems (Bennedsen et al., 2023). Additionally, regulated companies are more likely to hire and promote women; however, organizational pay changes correlate with lower corporate productivity but, interestingly, have no significant impact on corporate profits. Awareness of the decline in productivity may provide insight into the lack of alignment in legislation and organizational pay transparency. Institutions like the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) created an audit process in response to the California Fair Pay Act of 2015. Through this audit, the institution adjusted salaries for 131 faculty women, which totaled $1.577 million. In addition, John Hopkins completed an analysis in 2014, showing that women in medicine departments were paid 8.6% less in total salary than their male counterparts (Warner & Lehmann, 2019).

However, pay transparency expands beyond the regulatory policies. Open organizational communication with employees about pay structures, market values, benefits, promotion practices, and overall compensation calculations correlates with greater job satisfaction and employee engagement (Mercer, 2020; Warner & Lehmann, 2019). Interestingly, earlier pay transparency changes, and research report productivity increases (Mercer, 2020). On the contrary, some claim that salary transparency can create barriers for employers. (Lam et al., 2022; Mercer, 2020). Some organizations think revealing salary information can have negative consequences. Even though companies have written down pay ranges, they do not always pay employees according to those ranges (Mercer, 2020). Companies that disclose salaries are afraid that employees will think there are unfair differences in pay. As more laws are created, employers will need to align pay transparency with legislated regulations to ensure applicants and current employees that the organizational efforts support equal pay. Communication training for leadership and management will be essential in discussing salary and benefits with internal and external constituents (Warner & Lehmann, 2019). Such commitments from organizations and higher education institutions can help close the gap (Warner & Lehmann, 2019).

Salary History Ban

The effect of the historical pay bans on the gender pay gap is a topic of debate in the literature, with studies reporting mixed results (Agan et al., 2020; Harman, 2022; Wood, 2021). The salary history ban (SHB) prevents employers from asking candidates and potential employees about salary history. The SHB is an effort to decrease a possible disadvantaged pay path dependent on previous salary, particularly for women and minorities (Agan et al., 2020; Barach & Horton, 2021). Although some states ban salary history, hiring organizations can use the previous salary if the employee discloses it or the salary is made public (Wood, 2021).

Specifically, asking women to disclose their previous salary comes with a history of generational wage discrimination. In addition, as women move from job to job, women continue to be anchored with discriminatory pay. As of 2022, 21 states in the United States had some form of SHB (Harman, 2022). Additionally, two states, Michigan and Wisconsin, had prohibited SHBs.

With as many as 30% to 50% of applicants being questioned about salary history (Barach & Horton, 2021), it seems common for employers to inquire about a candidate's salary during the application process. When deleting wage history, employers seek and consider more candidates, giving applicants who, on average, earn less the opportunity to get hired more frequently and with more equitable pay (Barach & Horton, 2021). When salary history is optional, applicants fall into one of three categories: disclosed, never disclosed, and compliant with instructions (Agan et al., 2020). Interestingly, during the application process, men were more likely to disclose and less likely to comply with the policy or instructions given than women. Among states that have deployed an SHB, evidence showed a three to four percent reduction in the gender pay gap, while a review of 19 states with bans found no impact on the pay gap but a one-and-a-half percent increase among wages of women when compared to men (Davis et al., 2022; Hansen & McNichols, 2020; Wood, 2021).

Factors Contributing to the Gender Pay Gap

Several contributing factors have been examined to account for the gender pay gap. The relevant themes in the literature are negotiation, education, experience and skills, and bias and discrimination (Deschacht et al., 2016; Garunay, 2016; Rabovsky & Lee, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to dive into each factor to examine the causes of the gender pay gap and what drives these gaps to persist.

Education and Experience

The first theme observed in the literature is guided heavily by education and experience. Holding a terminal degree and years of experience is observably vital in pay. However, women often seek degrees and jobs that pay less, contributing to a pay gap between men and women (Schneider et al., 2019). Occupational segregation, position segregation, and promotions also affect the pay gap (Alkadry & Sebawit, 2017). Even so, jobs held stereotypically more by men tend to have higher wages than those held by women, even if the jobs require the same level of skill and education. For example, among higher education institutions, women and men require the same educational level and experience for positions working in administrative roles, such as deans, vice presidents, and chancellors. Nevertheless, the pay gap still exists (AAUW, 2020). Regardless of job type or discipline, men and women with the same experience and degree should have equal pay (AAUW, 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Nadler et al., 2016).

Occupational segregation occurs when certain types of jobs and fields of work disciplines are overrepresented by groups, usually by gender, and occurs based on occupational stereotyping (He et al., 2019). Other social groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, older adults, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) groups, have also experienced occupational stereotyping (Dupree & Torrez, 2021). Within occupational segregation, devaluation of work is formed. For example, data from 1950 to 2020 showed that, as occupations primarily held by women rose, the positional salary fell (Bahn & Cumming, 2020). Such findings support the devaluation and limited pay for work stereotypically done by women. The gender devaluation theory (England & Farkas, 1986) explores the notion that women face certain constraints and less bargaining power that lessen their pay in these occupations (Hodges, 2020).

Bias and Discrimination

Although there has been a big push toward equality in hiring and closing the gap, women still experience gender bias, particularly mothers who have taken time off to start a family (Diehl et al., 2020; Mandel, 2016). Gender bias is a phenomenon women experience in workplace cultures that creates disadvantages and impedes women from advancing into leadership positions (Diehl et al., 2020). Although historically, more women are in the workforce and more are in leadership positions, only adding women to the occupational roles does not exclude the bias. Women are often treated differently than men by hiring managers and among teams and other leaders (Cundiff et al., 2018). Some hiring managers may see women as more expensive because women may need to take time off work to become mothers. This stereotype may lead to employers offering women a lower salary than men.

The concept of hiring more women and the *sticky floors* phenomenon, coined by sociologist Catherine Berheide (2013), describes the situation where women are predominantly employed in lower-paying jobs and are thus unable to advance to higher positions. Sticky floors also impact promotions (Chen et al., 2020). Research indicated that although, in some instances where women get promoted at the same rate as men, the promotion wage increase is usually smaller for women than men, keeping women at the bottom of wages and increasing the gender pay gap (Alkadry & Sebawit, 2017; Champoux-Paille et al., 2020; Deschacht et al., 2016). Overall, in a worldwide survey, one-fifth of women respondents reported having personally experienced discrimination during a job interview (Parker & Funk, 2017).

Among more female-dominated industries, such as law, health, higher education, and faith non-profit, the law industry reported bias and discrimination as more apparent. Where

success is measured by billable hours, women often struggle, as many women are the primary caretakers for the family and cannot remain competitive, causing inequities in overall work culture and promotions (Diehl et al., 2020). While women in higher education also experience salary inequality and inconsistent standards, pursuing advancements is comparatively more accessible than in other industries, with a perception of increased collaboration and inclusion in decision-making. However, women in higher education often experience communication barriers through frequent interruptions by male colleagues during meetings (Diehl et al., 2020; Stephenson et al., 2022). Interestingly, healthcare fell in the middle of the four industries, and non-profit organizations reported the lowest scores for sexual harassment and salary inequities contributing to the gender pay gap.

Negotiation

Salary negotiation is often a contributing factor to the pay gap experienced by women. Women are often less likely to negotiate than men and, when doing so, are less successful (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Mandel, 2016; Mazei et al., 2015; Reif et al., 2019). Specifically, when women know that the salary is negotiable, women will initiate negotiations more often than when they are not aware that the pay is negotiable (Kugler et al., 2017). On the other hand, men are more likely to negotiate when the income is not listed as negotiable. For example, when wages are listed as negotiable in the job posting, more women will initiate the salary negotiation as opposed to when the job description does not specify, making the negotiating difference in gender disappear.

In addition to negotiation announcements in job postings, status is also essential in the negotiation process. Women are more often successful in negotiating if women come across as having a higher status, whether from a previous title or position, education, or leadership

experience. The higher the rank, the more likely women will negotiate successfully. This power issue is crucial because the variations in compensation negotiating are often observed to be more about power than gender (Huang & Low, 2022). Other research showed that, although women do have the skills to negotiate, women do not use those skills to leverage a higher salary (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017). For women, the actual position held is more important than the salary (Kugler et al., 2017). Although many studies agree that women negotiate less, and when women do negotiate, it is usually for lower wages than men (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Silva & Galbraith, 2018); When women request the same salary as men, a slightly lower wage is usually offered (Säve-Söderbergh, 2019).

In most instances, men negotiate one and a half times more than women (Gihleb et al., 2020; Kugler et al., 2017; Mazei et al., 2015). Although the effect size varies and, in some cases, is small, any missed opportunity to not negotiate widens the gender pay gap. So, even if the negotiation gap is small, this can affect the overall lifetime of a woman's career concerning salary (Kugler et al., 2017; Reif et al., 2019). This proposed study looks at how the approach to salary negotiation may affect further career advancement for women in higher education administrator roles (Kugler et al., 2017; Mazei et al., 2015; Säve-Söderbergh, 2019). Understanding the impact of negotiation gaps for women leaders in higher education and then advocating for equitable negotiation practices can contribute to creating a more inclusive and fair landscape among administration leaders in colleges and universities (Kugler et al., 2017).

Although much of the literature supports the argument that women negotiate less than men and are not as successful as men, there is varying information on why this occurs. The reasons that emerge from the literature as to why women negotiate less are based on gender differences and link back to social role theory (Bertrand, 2018; Eagly, 1987). Women are usually

not prepared to negotiate based on their perceived societal role (Reif et al., 2019). In addition, women and men communicate differently, with women taking on the non-negotiator role (Appelbaum et al., 2019). Gender bias, the perceived social costs or backlash experienced, and beliefs and attitudes towards negotiating are prevalent (Kugler et al., 2017, 2018; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Women typically do not negotiate because this type of behavior, seen as a negotiator role, contradicts the role women play in society as a non-negotiator with a more cooperative, supportive, and co-dependent nature (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Men usually have the upper hand in negotiating salaries because men are typically more competitive and more willing to take risks in ambiguous situations (Exley et al., 2020; Huang & Low, 2022). Stereotype reactance can lead to better negotiation outcomes when women are trained and aware of how to deal with stereotypes and test boundaries using various characteristics among feminine and masculine traits (Reif et al., 2019). The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) reported a disparity between higher-ranked full-time neurology faculty women and men, with women holding fewer positions than men. The AAN has several educational programs and meetings that assist women in interviewing and negotiating to help close gender gaps. The AAN also provides female neurologists with compensation data to help negotiate salaries.

A study by Silva and Galbraith (2018) surveyed academic librarians who were members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The survey garnered 1,182 responses. The gender distribution of responses was 71% women, and 29% of the respondents were men. The survey's overall scope was on pay discrepancies between men and women, but the researchers focused on the negotiation aspect of the pay discrepancy. The study showed that female librarians negotiated less than men. Women who did negotiate were less successful than men in

arranging for a higher salary. As aligned with the previously discussed literature, women of higher status were more likely to negotiate as women librarians in leadership roles negotiated more than librarians in non-leadership positions (Dreber et al., 2022; Huang & Low, 2022; Kugler et al., 2017).

Although there are limited studies on higher education administrator roles, faculty studies show that new female faculty are less likely to negotiate than their new men counterparts overall (Cardel et al., 2020; Fiset & Saffie-Robertson, 2020; Macfarlane, 2019). Still, new female faculty will negotiate compensation and be more successful when supported by a mentor or academic supervisor (Fiset & Saffie-Robertson, 2020). For example, when women accept their first job after graduation, those who do not negotiate will lose approximately $7,000 in yearly pay (de Janasz & Cabrera, 2018). Over a 45-year career, women can lose between $650,000 and $1 million (National Women's Law Center [NWLC], 2022). Even the most minor differences in the starting salaries will result in significant pay gaps for women's career life span, mainly because promotions and raises are based on initial salary (Dannals et al., 2021). When women negotiate, they often receive backlash for going against gender stereotypes and are viewed as aggressive or overly assertive in the general work setting (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). When women are aware of gender stereotypes and limitations, they tend to negotiate better. Women are also more successful at negotiating if women are negotiating on behalf of others. Through the role of nurturer, if women perceive the negotiation to benefit others or a group to which they belong, observably, women will be more aggressive and successful. Because salary negotiation is more self-serving, women are often less likely to pursue what women want and will be less competitive than men.

When diving into social roles among different cultures, evidence shows that in cultures that support and value the needs of a group more than individual needs, women were more successful than men when negotiating (Lange et al., 2010; Shan et al., 2019). The correlation between cultures prioritizing and valuing collective needs or individual needs and women's greater negotiation success aligns with Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory framework (2011), individualism vs. collectivism. Although, among the relevant literature (Barreda-Tarrazona et al., 2022; Shan et al., 2019), there is limited data on whether women in higher education administrator roles negotiate salaries and what women experience if salary negotiation is attempted. Resultantly, recommendations for reducing the gender pay gap are then ambiguous.

Methods associated with negotiating also guide the exploration of pay outcomes for both males and females. For example, when men and women negotiate using ultimatums, men will be more confident about their chances of winning and odds of success than women (García-Gallego et al., 2012). As a result, men will take more risks, display less prudence, and act more aggressively than women (García-Gallego et al., 2012). Such examples align with other studies demonstrating women's cautiousness when negotiating salary (Barreda-Tarrazona et al., 2022).

The barriers that hinder women from negotiating can be placed into three categories: cognition, inspiration, and paradigms—negative perceptions about women who choose to negotiate often lead to cognitive hurdles (Dannals et al., 2021). The conventional notion that women are less skilled at negotiating, even when women do negotiate, results in motivational limitations. These limitations cause women to perform poorly in negotiations because their counterparts do not expect them to perform well (Dannals et al., 2021; Ren et al., 2022). When the risk is low for women, they are more likely to initiate salary negotiation, but the more risk involved, the less likely they will negotiate (Ren et al., 2022). Overall, research-based studies

may be conducted in a way that exaggerates gender inequalities based on methodological presumptions, leading to a paradigm barrier. Such research and the ideas presented may be deliberately counterproductive for women (Dannals et al., 2021).

Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome, also known as the imposter phenomenon, has been documented as another reason some women do not negotiate their salary at the time of hire (Armstrong & Shulman, 2019; Badawy et al., 2018). Imposter syndrome can be defined as individuals believing that they are faking their intelligence and competency, fooling people of skills, even with evidence of success (Bravata et al., 2019; Clance & Imes, 1978; Mullangi & Jagsi, 2019). Women who experience imposter syndrome are less likely to seek promotions or raises (Goman, 2018). A United Kingdom study concluded that eight out of ten women experienced imposter syndrome, most experienced it frequently, and 67% of women asked for a lower salary than men (Hired, 2019). More than men, women were also not aware of what their skills were worth and were more afraid of failure or inability to perform in a new position.

Imposter syndrome is one reason why women can deny themselves opportunities and the opportunity to negotiate because women may think they are not good enough. A gender pay gap may be created based on what a woman thinks she is worth in the market (Abdelaal, 2020). Women facing imposter syndrome in specific roles and industries may leave due to a lack of diversity and exclusion in their organizations (Lee & Morfitt, 2020). The organizational structure of institutions may also impact how women feel about their place in the organization, precisely if women are paid less than men in the same roles (Feenstra et al., 2020). Having encouraging mentors and having a sense of belonging was found to help mitigate imposter syndrome (Abdelaal, 2020). Interestingly, women in successful leadership positions reported having a

mentor who impacted their success (Mitchell, 2018). These mentors serve as trusted advisors, providing guidance, support, and validation, thus helping individuals navigate the challenges and self-doubt associated with imposter syndrome. Institutional and interpersonal issues may contribute to the heightened feelings of imposter syndrome often experienced among women. (Feenstra et al., 2020). Therefore, fostering a sense of belonging within the workplace environment is crucial in combating imposter syndrome. When individuals feel included, valued, and supported by their colleagues and organizations, they are more likely to develop a positive self-perception and confidence in their abilities. This sense of belonging contributes to a supportive e and affirming work culture that can counteract the negative effects of imposter syndrome (Feenstra et al., 2020; Mitchell, 2018). This study will help identify further factors of women's experiences in higher education administrator roles at the time of hire and possible barriers to salary negotiation.

Summary

Women in higher education administration face significant obstacles, including limited access to top-level executive positions and a gender pay gap (AAUW, 2020). Multiple studies (AAUW, 2020; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Goldin et al., 2017; Glynn, 2016; Global Gender Gap Report, 2021) have highlighted this disparity, with women receiving lower salaries than their male counterparts. Several factors contribute to the gender pay gap in this field, such as bias, discrimination, lack of leadership opportunities, limited promotions, and challenges in salary negotiation (Kugler et al., 2017; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). To better understand the impact of salary negotiation on women's pay and career advancement, social role theory (Eagly, 1987) offers a valuable framework for investigation. Addressing the gender gap in pay, leadership roles, promotions, and career advancement within higher education administration is crucial for

fostering equity and inclusivity in academic institutions (Fuesting et al., 2022). Administrators in these positions significantly influence higher education policies and outcomes. By closing the gender gap, institutions can create a more inclusive and fairer environment that benefits women and the educational community. Efforts to promote equal pay, equal opportunities for leadership positions, and fair promotions and career advancement are essential in empowering women and creating a more equitable higher education system (Carey et al., 2018; Gomez & Bernet, 2019; Silbert et al., 2022).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of salary negotiation at the time of hire for women in full-time administrator positions at Texas institutions of higher education. This chapter will give details of the research design and outline the study's methodology to include procedures to replicate this study. The study participants and setting will be explained, including the data collection and analysis steps. My role as a researcher is reviewed, and trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed.

Research Design

This research study used a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994). The qualitative design was appropriate, as qualitative research occurs in natural settings (van Manen, 2014). The research was guided to understand and interpret what the participants experienced and bring meaning to that experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Furthermore, qualitative research uses the natural setting to collect data, analyze the data, establish patterns, and present the results to help transform the world and call for change (Creswell, 2013). This study used the qualitative design to understand women's experiences through salary negotiation at the time of hiring in administrative roles at Texas higher education institutions.

Specifically, this study followed a phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994). This approach was appropriate because this research examined individuals who shared a common experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). This study focused on women who work in administrative roles in higher education, and all have accepted a salary offer, which is the phenomenon being studied. As the researcher, I explored how these participants experienced the

salary offer process, their approach to salary negotiation, and the specific details of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Even further, the phenomenological approach adopted for this study is hermeneutic (van Manen, 1990, 2014). The intent was to interpret the participants' experiences and develop meaning and understanding of those experiences (van Manen, 2014). Hermeneutics allowed the study participants to describe their experiences and stories and for the researcher to interpret those experiences. My interest in the study stems from my hiring experience in a higher education administrator role. I experienced backlash and perceived bias due to my gender when I negotiated for a higher salary than initially offered. As a fellow administrator in higher education, I was eager to gain insight into other women's experiences during salary negotiations in similar positions, such as dean, vice president, associate vice president, chancellor, assistant dean, associate dean, executive director, or other high-level administrative titles. After working with data revealing a pay gap within similar positions and titles and discussing unsuccessful salary negotiations with women in the dean and vice president roles, I recognized the importance of conducting an impartial study. Therefore, I adopted a fair approach by allowing the participants to share their personal experiences and convey the essential aspects of this phenomenon.

Research Questions

A central question and three sub-questions guided the investigation of the phenomenon. The central research question aimed to explore the phenomenon, while the sub-questions provided additional insights into the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research study was structured around the following research questions.

Central Research Question

What are women's experiences in higher education administration roles during the hiring salary negotiation process?

Sub-Question One

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender identity affecting the hiring salary negotiation process?

Sub-Question Two

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender expectations affecting the hiring salary negotiation process?

Sub-Question Three

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender stereotypes affecting the hiring salary negotiation process?

Setting and Participants

This section will describe the setting and the rationale of how the setting was selected. In phenomenological studies, the participants can come from one site or many (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The important thing is that the setting participants all experienced the phenomena (van Manen, 2014). Additionally, this section will detail the participants' profiles and the necessary eligibility criteria for inclusion in the study.

Setting

The setting for this research study included four-year level and above colleges and universities within the south-central region of Texas. The types of institutions consisted of public and private institutions, both academic and health-related. Each university has administrators in the positions of university president, vice president, assistant vice president, dean, associate

dean, assistant dean, provost, and director. Institutions in the south-central region of Texas were selected as the setting because these institutions fall in a particular geographic region with similar populations of administrators, students, and economic environments. Furthermore, all universities fall under the same accreditation body and follow the same academic and organizational standards. Although compensation packages and benefits differ from a public or private university, both allowed me to study women's experiences in higher education administrator positions from two kinds of universities. Individuals in administrator roles at these institutions have experienced a Texas university institution's hiring and salary offer.

Participants

The number of participants in phenomenological studies can range in size (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, I used the recommended 12 - 15 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dukes, 1984). This study's 12 participants were women in full-time administrator positions at one of the Texas institutions included in the study setting. Administrator positions consisted of vice presidents (associate and assistant), deans (deans and associate deans), and directors (director and senior directors). The participant pool consisted of individuals from various ethnicities, races, and age groups to ensure diversity. Participants were required to be at least 18 years of age. The participants had different levels of tenure and experience, reflecting the broad range of experiences of individuals in the workforce. My goal was to have a heterogeneous participant list from various institutions to collect a variety of perspectives. No participants involved in the study were under my authority. Furthermore, study participants have experienced the same phenomenon being investigated and were able to discuss their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2014). In this study, all participants have experienced receiving a salary offer at one of the universities in South Central Texas at the time of hire.

Recruitment Plan

The type of sampling used in this study was a mix of criterion and snowball. Criterion sampling in phenomenological research recruits individuals who meet predefined criteria (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). In this study, the predefined criteria were women working in an administrator role in higher education at a Texas university in the identified region. Additionally, individuals were recruited based on referrals from already recruited participants. Being able to ask participants if they can refer other women who have a role as administrators in higher education helped recruit participants who shared the same phenomenon (see Appendix D). Additional avenues for criterion sampling included conferences, LinkedIn, and social media higher education professional groups (see Appendix E). The sample size was 12 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Emails were sent to female administrators who work at institutions throughout Texas, inviting them to participate (see Appendix B). The email introduced me as the researcher and provided prospective participants with the purpose of the study, a copy of the consent form, and the IRB approval information. The women were asked to reply to me directly if they were interested in participating in the study or if they knew of anyone who would be interested in participating in the study. An informed consent form was attached to the email (see Appendix F). Finally, a follow-up email was sent one week after the initial recruitment email if there had been no response (see Appendix C).

Researcher's Positionality

Diversity among administrators is at the forefront of higher education, and understanding how women navigate job offers is imperative (AAUW, 2020; ACE, 2017; Bichsel & McChesney, 2017). Closing the gap on gender equity by understanding how women approach salary negotiation in these leadership positions can be insightful to higher education staffing

managers, human resources, and university leaders (AAUW, 2020). As a woman working in a higher education administrator role and with recent experiences in the negotiation processes in an administrative position, I was interested in learning how other females in these roles navigate the salary negotiation process. As a researcher, I identified assumptions that helped collect and analyze data reasonably, and I was able to focus on the participants' stories (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2014).

Interpretive Framework

This study used the social constructivism paradigm framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). People understand the world and associate meanings to their lives through experiences and how they live and associate with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the researcher, I interviewed participants, allowing them to share their experiences with me. Subsequently, the information the participants conveyed guided the interpretation of the findings (Moustakas, 1994). As I sought to understand women's experiences while going through the salary negotiation process for higher-education administrator roles, I allowed the participants to describe their experiences to me. The social constructivism interpretive framework was employed to understand the participants' perspectives on their approach to the salary negotiation process (Moustakas, 1994).

Philosophical Assumptions

The study addressed three philosophical assumptions: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. Ontology creates assumptions about the nature of reality, epistemology creates assumptions of knowledge, and axiology creates value assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The assumptions helped shape research questions and the approach the researcher took to answering these questions. Addressing the philosophical assumptions assists with the direction,

scope, and basis of criteria for the research study.

Ontological Assumption

Ontological assumptions stem from answering the nature of reality and viewing this through multiple views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I approached the ontological assumptions with my position that each individual contributes to the greater society. It is my assumption that this study can influence change. As I learned about the participants' experiences and deeply understood what women experienced through the salary negotiation process, I used the results to share awareness and inform others about what the participants experienced.

Epistemological Assumption

What counts as knowledge is answered through epistemological assumptions, and researchers obtain evidence from the participants, separating their knowledge from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a woman with a position as an administrator in higher education, I have experienced the salary negotiation process at the time of hire, which is the phenomenon of this subject. Because I share similarities with the participants, I plan to incorporate my experiences and knowledge of the salary negotiation process and use these experiences and the participants' stories. Furthermore, I did not include any participants working at the same institution where I am employed. Instead, participants worked at other institutions throughout Texas. Excluding participants who work at my same institution allowed me to avoid making assumptions about data collected regarding (HR), hiring managers, and other processes I am familiar with regarding my administrative position (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Axiological Assumption

The values that I brought to the study that constitute axiological assumptions are that I believe that women should not experience bias because of gender and should experience fairness

in the job salary offer. Axiological assumptions helped clarify the role of values in research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I aimed to explore how women in administrative positions in Texas institutions navigate the salary negotiation process. The core values underpinning this study are equality and equity, and I believe there should be parity in the positions and pay of higher education administrators.

Researcher's Role

A fair approach to research involves prioritizing the impartial collection, analysis, and reporting of data for the study, limiting the investigation to the data shared by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In phenomenological studies, the primary instrument is the human instrument (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the researcher of this study, I disclosed that I hold an administrative position in a higher education institution. With over ten years of experience in higher education institutional research, I have been responsible for collecting and reporting staff and faculty salaries to the Department of Education and The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Given my familiarity with administrator positions and involvement in gender salary studies, I ensured that my biases or pre-existing knowledge did not influence the data collection process. For example, I have had previous discussions with women in the dean and vice president positions where women are not paid the same as their male counterparts. I also had difficulties in the negotiation process at the time of hire.

Procedures

Before the research began, Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was acquired (see Appendix A). Upon IRB approval, I started my research by connecting with participants. Since this study is not hosted at one particular institution and instead uses a research setting, I did not need to gain site approval. Potential participants were sent an email with the

details of the study, asking if they would like to participate (see Appendix B). A follow-up email was sent when a response was not received within one week of the initial email (see Appendix C). Participants were women in higher education administrator roles in central and south Texas universities. Potential participants were known acquaintances to the researcher from professional conferences, previous coworkers, or recommendations by friends. One-hour interviews will be scheduled and performed through Microsoft Teams. The interviews were recorded using the recording features in Microsoft Teams and transcribed immediately after the interview by the researcher. Interviewees were also asked to participate in a 45-minute focus group. After each individual and group interview, the data was analyzed by coding and creating themes and patterns. Lastly, participants were asked to submit their resumes for document analysis. Resumes, LinkedIn, and university website biographies were reviewed and analyzed.

Three data sources were collected to achieve triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout the data and analysis collection, external expert reviews were also conducted. Audit trails were implemented to ensure I maximized and implored the best research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Collection Plan

The data collection plan for this study consisted of three sources of evidence to ensure triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation provides a measure of accuracy and validity for the study when multiple methods and different sources for data collection are used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Three methods were used to collect data for this study: individual interviews, a focus group, and document analysis. These methods were employed in a specific order, with individual virtual interviews as the first approach and a focus group as the second approach. Participants' professional biographies on university websites and

LinkedIn were viewed for the third approach. In addition, each participant was asked to provide a copy of their resume for document analysis.

Individual Interviews

The primary data source for this study was individual interviews. Interviews allow the researcher to uncover the participants' lived experiences and understand their points of view (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Specifically, the interviews were conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams. Nicholas et al. (2010) discussed that online interviews could provide a more non-threatening and comfortable environment. The online option allowed for flexibility in interviewing participants from different cities in Texas.

Furthermore, individual interviews allow for explanations and details that can be lost through written responses (Nicholas et al., 2010). No interviews were conducted until approval and informed consent had been given. After the IRB approval, the interview questions were reviewed by the committee of this study and reviewed by an additional professional in the field for additional feedback. The individual qualifies for the study as a female higher-education administrator but will not be a part of the study.

The interview approach for this study was semi-structured, providing greater flexibility for exploratory questioning (Patton, 2002). While a set of questions guided the researcher, there was room for deeper inquiry and learning. Interviews were scheduled for one hour, with a three-hour gap between interviews if multiple interviews were scheduled for the same day, to allow for additional interview time, if needed, and immediate transcription. To build rapport, I allocated time during the first few minutes of each interview to establish a connection with each of the 12 - 15 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 2

Individual Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience as a higher education administrator. CRQ.
2. What abilities do you bring to your higher education administrator role? SQ1
3. What personal experiences have prepared you for your higher education administrator role? SQ1
4. What professional experiences have prepared your higher education administrator role? SQ1
5. How did you discuss your abilities during the salary negotiation? SQ1
6. How do you describe yourself as a leader? SQ2
7. What unofficial leadership roles have you experienced that helped prepare you for your higher education administrator role? SQ2
8. What official leadership roles have you experienced that helped prepare you for your higher education administrator role? SQ2
9. How did you discuss your leadership experiences during the salary negotiation process? SQ2
10. What type of knowledge do you bring to the higher education administrator role? SQ3
11. What characteristics do you bring to the higher education administrator role? SQ3
12. How do you describe the career advancement opportunities available to you as a higher education administrator? SQ3
13. How did you discuss your knowledge during the salary negation process? SQ3
14. What else would you like to add about the salary negotiation that we have not already discussed? CRQ

Question one was asked as an initial question to build rapport and learn more about the participant. This question is marked as a *grand tour question* (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This question helped set the tone and let the participants share something about themselves. Questions two, three, four, and five relate to sub-question one. These questions helped better understand how the participant's abilities and personal and professional experiences prepared them for the administrator role and how they discussed their abilities during the salary negotiation. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) emphasizes that differences in performance between men and women for gender identity and abilities are primarily due to societal expectations and opportunities rather than innate differences in ability (Eagly & Wood, 2011). Questions six, seven, eight, and nine are related to sub-question two. These questions helped understand how the participants saw themselves as leaders and which official leadership and unofficial leadership roles prepared them for the higher education administrator position. Question nine helped me understand how the participants discussed their leadership skills during the salary negotiation. Questions ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen relate to sub-question three. These questions helped me understand what knowledge and characteristics the participant brought to the administrator role and how they described career advancement opportunities. Question thirteen helped me understand how the participants discussed their knowledge during the salary negotiation. Question fourteen relates to the central question. This question allowed the participant to share additional information about the salary negotiation process.

Focus Group

Conducting a focus group allowed participants to engage with individuals who have encountered the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and enabled me to obtain additional insight into the real-life experiences of everyone involved. Focus groups typically field the best

information when participants engage with one another and the time to collect the information is limited (Krueger & Casey, 2014; Morgan, 1997). The focus group participants were selected from those who completed an interview (see Appendix B). Five participants were available in the focus group. Time constraints of participants' schedules did not allow an additional focus group to be scheduled. The focus group was held virtually through Microsoft Teams and recorded. The focus group for this study utilized a semi-structured interview approach, offering greater flexibility for exploratory questioning and in-depth understanding (Patton, 2002). While a predefined set of questions was used as a guide, there was ample opportunity for open-ended inquiries and discovery. The focus group was scheduled for one hour. Additionally, to foster a sense of rapport, the initial few minutes of the focus group were dedicated to establishing a connection with the focus group participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 3

Focus Group Questions

1. What values do you bring to your position in a higher education administrator role? SQ1
2. How do you describe yourself as a leader? SQ2
3. What knowledge do you bring to your higher education administrator role? SQ3
4. Based on what we discussed today, can you tell me how you would describe yourself during the salary negation process? CRQ
5. Is there anything else you want to add that we have not already discussed? CRQ

Document Analysis

Document analysis was a part of the data collection. Document analysis included personal documents and professional documents. Specifically, the documents were participant biographies and resumes collected from LinkedIn or institutional websites. The biographies on

LinkedIn and resumes are classified as personal documents, and the institutional website biographies are classified as professional documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Collecting participant biographies provided evidence of the participant's occupation and position in higher education.

Furthermore, this document analysis information supplemented the individual interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants' biographies allowed me to learn about the participants' administrator positions in higher education through an unprompted exercise. This additional unprompted data gathering ties back to the central research question. Additionally, resumes provided a timeline of the participant's career progression and evidence that led to their current role as higher education administrators. Participants were asked to provide a copy of their resumes before the interview. The resumes were emailed to me. This evidence provided additional details of the working site and the type of work being conducted and linked to the administrator role's hiring process.

Data Analysis

The analysis plan for the individual interviews began with organizing the recordings, transcripts, and notes taken from the individuals. Coding and condensing were a big part of this data collection, and then patterns and themes were developed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lastly, a visual data display with a tree, matrix, or model was produced. Memoing played a significant role in the data analysis for individual interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles, 2014). Short memos and ideas are written down and collected through memoing for deeper analysis and synthesis (Miles, 2014). Furthermore, memoing helped create a digital trail and documented the thinking process for analyzing the individual interview data (Miles et al., 2014). Many codes emerged through the 14 open-ended questions. These codes were then narrowed down to patterns

and themes. In addition, memoing occurred after each interview to help organize the theme development (Miles et al., 2014). Through this analysis, I will describe what happened and how the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is important to note that coding incorporates linking and not just labeling (Miles et al., 2014). A cluster of codes defines themes, and patterns are noted when the coding appears more than twice. The coding is then tied back to each participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, member checking occurred when the participants were given the opportunity to review the interview transcriptions to ensure their stories were going to be shared accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Each participant had their own digital file, and then the additional analysis was uploaded within that individual file. The interview data is stored and managed on the researcher's computer, which is password-protected. Microsoft Excel and Word were used for file organization, filtering, and code searching. As the researcher, I was the primary source of the analysis and synthesis.

Participants' resumes, biographies, and curriculum vitae were analyzed to confirm the commonality of the participants as it is linked to the higher education administrator role. Commonalities were explored by identifying codes and then classifying those codes into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). With visual documents such as these, it is suggested to ask what codes should fit and what new codes could emerge (Grbich, 2013). The codes from the document analysis were linked and related to further data collection, such as the interviews and focus groups. The resumes were loaded into a data analysis repository. Each resume was highlighted within the repository for key terms and codes, which were then organized and categorized (Miles et al., 2014). These documents were used for further analysis, so the initial organization of these files was essential. Each participant had their own file, and then the additional analysis was

uploaded within that individual file using Microsoft Word and Excel. The coding was then tied back to each participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994)

Coding and condensing were a large part of the focus group data collection, and then patterns and themes developed after coding and condensing had taken place (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, short memos and ideas were written down and collected through memoing for deeper analysis and synthesis. Memoing helps create a digital trail and will document the thinking process for analyzing the focus group data (Miles et al., 2014). Through the open-ended questions, it was assumed that codes would emerge. These codes were narrowed down to patterns and themes (Moustakas, 1994). It is important to note that coding incorporates linking and not just labeling (Miles et al., 2014). A cluster of codes defines themes, and patterns are noted when the coding appears more than twice. Lastly, member checking occurred when the participants were given the opportunity to review the interview transcriptions to ensure their stories would be shared accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Within each analysis of data sources, the analysis spiral emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis began with naming files and organization, then reading and memoing occurred, coding and patterns followed, and the data was then displayed (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Once the data had been analyzed for more profound meaning and understanding, all data sets were combined and linked to develop overall themes of the lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014). Using three data sets created triangulation and a more credible analysis output (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through the different analysis approaches, one summation was to be created. One set of themes and patterns was delivered to create an overall data presentation and the study results. The comprehensive data synthesis followed a template for a phenomenological study that includes significant statements, meanings

and themes, a text description, and a structural description (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The data synthesis concluded when it was noted that the research questions had been answered. Theoretical propositions emerged from linking all data sources and analysis. Lastly, member checking took place to enhance the thoroughness and credibility of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking occurred when the participants were given the opportunity to review the interview transcriptions to ensure their stories would be shared accurately.

Trustworthiness

A research study must demonstrate validity and reliability to be considered high-quality (Patton, 2014). Although these terms are often associated with quantitative research, qualitative studies can also incorporate them by establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness can be established in qualitative research through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this section, I plan to validate my study by applying these four concepts, typically associated with a positivist paradigm.

Credibility

Credibility addresses the fundamental question of whether the findings of a study can be trusted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Is the study credible to the participants, and does it describe and give a good account of the experience of the phenomenon being studied? My plan was to achieve credibility in this study through triangulation, peer review, and member-checking (Patton, 2014).

Triangulation

Credibility through triangulation was achieved by using three different data sources: individual interviews, a focus group, and document analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using various data sources helps the researcher understand the phenomenon being

studied (Patton, 2014). To fully understand women's lived experiences in higher education administrator roles during the salary negotiation hiring process, the women were interviewed, a focus group was conducted, and biographies and resumes were reviewed in detail. Having the various sources helped me provide a deeper understanding of the experience.

Peer Review

To ensure the credibility of my research, I used peer reviews to receive feedback on my research, data collection, analysis, and writing processes. Specifically, I sought input from colleagues who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation and those experienced in qualitative research. Using these colleagues as sounding boards, I hoped to identify any areas of my research study that may require improvement or correction. Additionally, the peer-review process served as an external check, helping to keep me honest and grounded in my role as a researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Member Checking

Lastly, member checking helped establish credibility in my study. I sought participant feedback to ensure I understood their stories and accurately represented the experience. The participant's role is critical, as participants can determine if the portrayed information and the data analysis represent their lived experience (Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Two member checks were conducted during the interview phase and again during the focus group phase. The first member check occurred after the transcriptions had been completed. The second member check happened after the data had been analyzed. This member check helped verify the accuracy of the findings. The member checks were individual virtual meetings, and follow-ups were completed through written correspondence by email (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability

The goal of achieving transferability in this study is to enable readers to apply the concepts and themes to their settings and generalize the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rich descriptive details of the experiences, participants, data, and results were used to achieve transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Vivid tones and descriptions will provide the details needed for the reader to understand the themes and apply the findings to themselves. Some descriptions that will be included are the setting, restrictions of participants, number of participants, data collection methods, number of data collection sessions, and the time period (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Additionally, I will maximize the variation insights of my sample. The participants were all women and were of a diverse ethnic and racial population. Also, I planned on having participants from various universities, both general academic and health-related institutions, within South Central Texas. In addition, I planned on including various titles, such as director, vice president, dean, president chancellor, and associate vice president, to ensure a good representation of administrator positions. Different position titles would allow me to maximize the participant sample and provide a well-generalized narrative.

Dependability

A study is dependable if repeated using the same method and design, with a similar setting and participants, and achieving similar results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I articulated in detail the process and procedures I took within my study so that it can be repeated and have consistent findings. Paying attention to clear and concise steps, data gathering, quality checks, auditing, and reviews support the dependability of my study. Furthermore, the committee review of the process and procedures helped confirm the dependability of this study.

Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized that dependability and confirmability are closely related, and often, one cannot be achieved without the other. Confirmability is the extent to which the study is led and shaped by the participants and their authentic experiences rather than the researcher or led by researcher bias or what the researcher presumes as the truth. To achieve confirmability, I employed an audit trail, auditing of the audit trail, and an expert review (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Huberman & Miles, 1994).

Audit trail

An audit trail was created by keeping track of all calendars, notes, recordings, memos, memoing details, and reflective notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, I tracked resumes, bios, messages, emails, and any other forms of documentation and communications related to the study. This was completed using the researcher's password-protected computer and a password-protected drive. All original data was protected, organized, and detailed.

An experienced external researcher will audit the study's audit trail. The external researcher ensured that the audit trail was appropriate and designed to be effective. In addition, the external researcher guided and offered feedback for additional improvements to the audit trail regarding data collection, record keeping, and analysis. As the researcher, I reviewed the external researcher's audit findings and created an action plan to improve where needed.

Expert review

An expert review of the study, findings, and results was completed to ensure that the processes, procedures, methods, and design were appropriate for the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This expert review was documented, and I created a response to the reviewer detailing an

action plan and how improvements and changes were made to the study. The expert review provided feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Ethical Considerations

From beginning to end, ethical considerations were addressed throughout the study. Before conducting the study, approval was submitted to Liberty University's IRB. No interviews or participant interaction occurred without the approval of the IRB. In addition, each participant's consent was received before participating in the voluntary nature of the study and the ability to withdraw at any time. The purpose of the study was fully disclosed to participants, and I planned to establish trust with each participant. Therefore, it was essential to consider relationships, stereotyping, imbalanced relationships, and potential risks to participants (Hatch, 2002; Weis & Fine, 2000). Particularly, consideration was placed on keeping participants anonymous. Pseudonyms were used for participants and the institutions where participants work. Data was kept confidential and stored electronically on a password-protected drive and computer during collection. Additionally, names were redacted from documents. As the researcher, I kept a natural position and disclosed all results honestly and bias-free during the analysis phase. No data was disclosed that could harm the participants. Copies of the findings were shared with participants. Additionally, plagiarism, falsifying data, and duplicating results were avoided in the study.

Permissions

Permission from the Liberty University IRB was received before any interviews or data collection began (see Appendix A). Individual site approval was not required since the study data was not obtained or focused on a specific institution. In addition, each participant completed the participant consent form (see Appendix F). The consent form provided participants with a clear

understanding of the study's purpose, their involvement, and any potential risks or conflicts that may arise. The consent form also informed participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Any potential threat to participants was vetted and made clear (Hatch, 2002; Weis & Fine, 2000).

Other Participant Protections

Participant consent was received before any study participation, and information was shared with each participant regarding the voluntary nature of the study. Furthermore, I ensured that the participants knew they could withdraw at any time. Throughout the study, great efforts were made to protect the participants. Each participant's digital file was stored on my personal computer, which is password-protected. I was the primary source of the data analysis and synthesis process. Pseudonyms were used for the participants, and institutions were classified by public or private to protect the names of the colleges and universities where participants worked. No data that could harm the participants will be disclosed. After the retention period, all digital copies will be permanently deleted from my computer. Also, the document analysis data collection process redacted names from the resumes and biographies. I took notes electronically through the notes app on my laptop using a stylus pen during the interviews and focus groups. These notes were saved, and I followed the same digital security and destruction process as I did for the interview and focus group data.

Summary

This chapter discussed the research design that included details of the method and approach. A qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological study was employed to understand better the participants' lived experiences, all of whom have experienced the same phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The data collection detailed the three data sources

that emphasized triangulation. The data sources were collected from individual interviews, a focus group, and document analysis. The data analysis walked through the data analysis steps and indicated confidential data and participant information storage. The research questions and sub-questions were highlighted, and the interview and focus group questions were discussed thoroughly. Furthermore, trustworthiness and ethical consideration included IRB and consent processes to minimize participant risk.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. This section describes the 12 study participants and includes a results section detailing the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the three data collection methods: interviews, a focus group, and document analysis. Additionally, this section responds to the central research question and three sub-questions.

Participants

The participants for this study were recruited after IRB approval through convenience and snowball sampling. All 12 participants were women working as full-time higher education administrators at a South Central Texas institution. Of the 12 participants, seven were directors, two were deans, one was an associate vice president, and two were vice presidents. The participants work at a mix of institutions: eight public four-year and above institutions, two private four-year and above institutions, and two community colleges. The women higher education administrators had varying years of experience with various backgrounds. Of the 12 participants, I would like to note that eight self-identified as first-generation college graduates during the interviews.

All 12 women participated in a virtual one-hour interview. Of the 12 participants, five were able to join the focus group. Additionally, all 12 participants submitted a resume, written bio, or LinkedIn profile for document analysis. The institution names were not disclosed for enhanced anonymity and are described as public or private.

Table 4

Administrator Participants

Participant	Title	Institution Type	Years in Higher Ed	Years in Current Role	Level of Education
Anne	Director	Public Institution	10	2	Master's
Betty	Director	Public Institution	10	2	Master's
Charlotte	Director	Public Institution	15	3	Master's
Emily	Director	Public Institution	10	3	Doctorate
Francine	Director	Public Institution	35	4	Master's
Harper	Director	Public Institution	20	2	Doctorate
Jane	Director	Public Institution	17	9	Master's
Lisa	Dean	Public Institution	20	2	Doctorate
Louisa	Dean	Public Institution	20	1	Master's
Maya	Associate Vice President	Private Institution	22	7	Doctorate
Suzanne	Vice President	Private Institution	20	6	Doctorate
Tara	Vice President	Private Institution	30	8	Doctorate

Anne

Anne is a director at a public institution with over ten years of experience in higher education and two years in the current Director role. Anne expressed that she did not negotiate beyond the original offer during the salary negotiation process. At the time of the job and salary offer, Anne was nervous about negotiating a higher salary, fearing the job offer would be retracted. She thought about asking for more but did not. Anne described herself as a calm and flexible leader but stated that she does not see herself as a leader as this is her first role with direct reports, and she is still getting used to the role. She enjoys helping students and helping them solve issues. Anne mentioned putting her educational goals on hold to be a mother. However, she later returned as a non-traditional student and completed her bachelor's and master's degrees while working and being a parent. Being a non-traditional student helped her relate to many of the non-traditional students she assists in her high education administrator position.

Betty

Betty is a director at a public institution with ten years of experience in higher education and two years as a director. Betty has worked continuously since high school and self-identified as a first-generation college graduate. Betty feels she was very supportive in her transition to the Director position but stated that "salary negotiation was not really a thing because the position was reclassified." Betty was aware of the salary band because her mentor was internal to the institution and was transparent about the pay and felt supported. She emphasized, "I felt that I had someone on my side." Betty is currently leading more people than she has ever led and, as a leader, likes to show that there are different ways of doing things and solving problems. She is a supportive leader who focuses on professional development and what her staff can do next. She

shared, “I do not want people to feel that they are stuck in one place; there is much opportunity for growth. How can I help carve that path for them?” Betty's experiences as the oldest daughter in her family have helped her current leadership role because, as the oldest daughter, she was the planner and ensured everybody else’s needs were taken care of, “I made sure all the I’s were dotted, and the T’s were crossed, similar to what I do now. I make sure I know what needs to get done next.”

Charlotte

Charlotte is a director at a public institution. Charlotte has over 15 years of experience in higher education and three and a half years as an administrator leader in the Director role. During the salary negotiation, Charlotte mentioned she wished she had known more about the salary market range and felt she had lowballed herself when asked what her expected salary range was for her current administrator position, so she took a more conservative path. She describes herself as an accessible leader. Charlotte said, “I try to make myself available, and I also describe myself as a leader who encourages continuous improvement and work-life balance. I wouldn’t ask my team member to do something I wouldn’t do.” She brings many years of institutional knowledge, including knowledge of the academic structure and institutional culture, to the position.

Emily

Emily is a director at a public institution. Emily has a background in K-12 and made the jump to higher education ten years ago based on life needs. Her abilities are in oral and written communication, and she does a lot of writing in her current position as Director. Her experiences as a parent and wife have helped strengthen her communication skills and organizational management. Emily describes herself as a transformational leader, stating, “I want to be able to

push them to do more than what they think they are capable of doing." Emily likes working with others on a team and enjoys being in a team environment. Emily felt there was no opportunity for salary negotiation because she had to be persistent to get the promotion. She felt that being a woman led to her not having the support to get an equitable salary with the title promotion, saying:

> I feel like a fair salary increase was not on their radar because I'm a woman. And there's also the fine line between being assertive and having to tiptoe around to figure out if we're gonna cross the line by asking for what we really want.

Francine

Francine is a director at a public institution with over 35 years in higher education and four years in the director role. Francine was afraid of disappointing the person who had referred her to the position, so she was extra cautious during the salary negotiation process. She wanted to remain humble and not be viewed as arrogant. Francine looked at the complete benefits package, including leave and other benefits, before making her final decision about the salary. She got worried when it took longer than ten days for the hiring team to get back to her after providing her with the expected salary for the position. Francine is still getting used to being called a leader. She describes herself as collaborative and transparent with her team and likes to involve everyone in decision-making. Her participation on the institutional accreditation writing team helped her become familiar with working with higher-level executives as the president, provost, and many vice presidents were also on the team.

Harper

Harper is a director at a public institution with over 20 years of experience in higher education and two years in the current director role. Harper has worked in various realms within

higher education, contributing to a multitude of projects and programs. Harper describes herself as a servant leader; nothing is above or beneath her. She is the type of leader who will jump in and help her team accomplish what needs to be done. During hiring for this role, Harper explained that HR took so long to get back with her that she did not want to delay the hiring further by negotiating the salary. Harper was just grateful to have gotten the job offer. She feels she did limit herself in the salary negation process based on previous experiences and how long the process took. Her experiences as a first-generation student and working full time to complete her doctoral degree helped prepare her for the leadership role she now has in that she can relate to the students in the programs she oversees. She brings strong listening skills, good communication skills, and a wealth of institutional knowledge to the role. Her direct supervisor supports any growth and professional and leadership development.

Jane

Jane is a director at a public institution with over 17 years of experience in higher education and nine years in her current role as Director. Jane has a natural knack for organizing and multitasking and excellent communication skills, which help tremendously in juggling competing priorities and responsibilities in student affairs. Her personal experiences growing up and having supportive parents who gave her the confidence to pursue her advanced degree have helped her in her leadership role. When discussing the salary negotiation process, Jane shared, "The salary was a jump up from where I was, so it was a promotion, in every way, so I didn't really feel like I needed to negotiate more at that point." She describes herself as a servant leader, empathetic, task-oriented, and passionate about getting the job done. She is available to all students and enjoys serving and helping. She describes student affairs as a team sport and

approaches her role professionally, being personable, engaged, and connected while building bridges across the institution.

Lisa

Lisa is a dean at a public institution with over 20 years of experience in higher education and two years in the Dean role. Lisa is a hard worker, a fast learner, easy-going, and inquisitive. Her nontraditional student experiences, first-generation college grad, and low-income background have helped her serve students with similar backgrounds. Lisa was promoted to the Dean position, so there was no formal search for the position. The salaries are predetermined for certain roles at the institution where Lisa works; therefore, she felt the salary was not negotiable. There is a culture of not negotiating salaries. She did have to correct her years of supervisory experience as the HR department was not accounting for all years, and this correction led to a higher salary scale. Female administrators have frequently miscalculated supervisory years, so Lisa has helped others in similar situations. The career advancement in higher education seems dim to Lisa as she is bound geographically due to being a caretaker for her mother and son and living in a smaller city; she would most likely have to move to obtain a higher-level position.

Louisa

Louisa is a dean at a public institution. Louisa has over 20 years of experience in higher education, starting in an entry-level position and remaining with the same institution for over 20 years. She has spent one year in the dean position and fulfills various roles. Although Louisa has had several positions, including leadership roles, she has only negotiated salary twice. There was little room to negotiate during the salary negotiation for the Dean position as her supervisor had requested a higher salary. However, the HR department rejected the salary request. Louisa would have liked to have had more salary transparency during the negotiation process at the time of

hire. Louisa described herself as a flexible leader and used different leadership styles based on whom she was supervising. Her personal experiences of how she was raised have helped her become the leader she is today. Her parents had high expectations, and she was raised in a structured and strict environment that prioritized education and being a hard worker.

Maya

Maya is an associate vice president (AVP) at a private institution. Maya has over 22 years of experience in higher education and seven years as an AVP. Maya has worked at both private and public institutions. She describes herself as a coaching leader and enjoys mentoring others. During the salary negotiation process, Maya explained that the AVP role was the first role she negotiated for all her roles in higher education. She said the process was long and tedious, and had it not been for her mentors, she may not have been as persistent as she was. Maya mentioned that having mentors throughout her 22-year career has helped her progress. She is aware of many women who do not negotiate, and she hopes that more women can rely on mentoring and coaching to help them become aware of the possibilities in salary negotiation as well as career advancement as higher education administrators.

Suzanne

Suzanne is a vice president (VP) at a private institution with over 20 years in higher education and six years in the VP role. Suzanne did not negotiate the salary for this position because the initial offer was a substantial increase from her previous senior director role. Suzanne did ask for flexible hours a few days a week to allow her to pick up her children from school and transport them herself to after-school care. As a leader, Suzanne described herself as flexible and available. She said she wants her team to feel they can come to her with any issues

and offers flexibility to her team regarding scheduling because she has found that this benefit helps with retention. Parents are especially grateful for the flexibility.

Tara

Tara is a vice president at a private institution. Tara has over 30 years of experience in higher education and eight years in the VP role. Tara has been in an interim position for two years. When she was fully promoted to the position, she focused on negotiating for staff and office reorganization, so the salary negotiations were put aside. Tara felt her salary was fair but also knew others in similar positions were making much more. Tara identified as a first-generation college graduate whose family did not discuss higher education much. The main priority was graduating high school, getting a good enough job, and starting a family. Her parents have supported her career, and she knows they are genuinely proud of her. Tara's primary motivation in her position is to see students succeed and to help mentor her team and anyone who comes to her for mentoring and coaching, whether it be education, career, or life coaching.

Results

The results of this phenomenological study describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. The findings of this study are based on triangulation with three sources of evidence: individual interviews, a focus group, and document analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each data collection method was analyzed through coding and condensing, with patterns, categories, and themes developing (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldana, 2021). The pattern and theme development allowed for imperfections (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where not all codes and patterns had to appear in all methods (Saldana, 2021). Through this process, four themes emerged, with two

themes having two sub-themes each. Table 5 provides a visualization of the developed themes and subthemes, followed by narrative accounts for each theme and subtheme.

Table 5

Themes & Subthemes

Theme	Subthemes	
Should have asked for more	Fear of job offer withdrawal	Lack of pay transparency
Imposter syndrome	Grateful to receive the job offer	Lack of empowerment
Mentorship		
Collaboration		

Should Have Asked for More

Eight of the twelve participants mentioned that they should have asked for a higher salary but did not at the time of negotiation. Many participants emphasized that they regret not asking for more. Charlotte stated, "…or maybe I guess I wish I would have prepared better even though it turned out better than I thought. But it does leave me thinking, well, maybe I should have asked for more. I suppose I lowballed myself." Additionally, Francine stated, "At first, I thought the salary seemed fair, but then I got to thinking about other things, like all the time off that I wouldn't have, working in this type of position, and I later thought, oh, I should have asked for a little more." Similar quotes were prevalent throughout the data collection as the women higher education administrators discussed their experiences during the salary negotiation of their current role. When asked if there was anything else she would like to add about the salary negotiation process, Anne replied, "I wish I would have asked for more, but honestly, I didn't even negotiate. I just took it and ran."

Fear of Job Offer Withdrawal

As the participants disclosed that they should have asked for more, the fear of job offer withdrawal was prevalent with many of the participants, which was the reason why they did not ask for a higher salary. Several participants shared that they feared that the job offer would be rescinded if the hiring manager or HR representative thought they were asking for too much. Francine mentioned, “I thought they would retract the offer if I negotiated too high.” When asked why she didn’t ask for more, Charlotte responded, “I didn’t want to give them any reason to look the other way. I wanted to make sure that I continued to be considered.”

Lack of Pay Transparency

Throughout the data analysis, pay transparency was evident as a recurring phase or statement when discussing barriers to successful salary negotiation for the higher education administrator participants. Several codes and categories were linked to this theme. In 2018, California was the first state to adopt salary transparency legislation. As of October 2023, ten states require employers to reveal salary pay ranges (Marfice, 2023). Texas currently does not have any pay transparency laws. Suzanne indicated:

> I researched salaries for similar positions and spoke to other women at other universities, but those were at public institutions, so it was hard to gauge the salary for this job. I wasn’t finding much as far as salaries and wished that the range had been posted. Knowing what I know now, I would simply call HR and ask for the salary budget, but I didn’t think to do that before; I was focused on getting the job offer. I was just really hoping to get the job.

When discussing a recent market analysis adjustment, Charlotte expressed that she thinks about being underpaid for all those months. She shared, “I just wish I knew more about the pay

range. I now hear about others sharing that you should not accept the first offer, and well, that's something I didn't do because I went ahead and accepted my first offer." Several other participants mentioned being naïve to the pay range and wishing they had known more about the pay scale or budget.

Imposter Syndrome

The theme of imposter syndrome surfaced from codes and patterns of "unsure," "didn't have the years of experience," "still unsure about my leadership role," "nervous I wasn't fully qualified," "just hoping for the best," "almost didn't apply for the position," "men will apply even if they are not qualified." Anne mentioned, "I better just take it because they're going to realize they've made a mistake" when discussing reasons for not negotiating salary. Although Anne has over ten years of experience and had been doing the director job as interim for six months, she was still nervous that the hiring team would revoke the offer because her years of direct supervisory experience fell short of the written job requirement. Tara also shared that she recognizes she dealt with imposter syndrome when interviewing for the VP position even though she had been interim for a couple of years. She had worked hard to prove she could successfully do the work and lead the academic affairs area. Tara said:

> I wanted to please everyone and show them that I was the best person for the position even though I had already been doing the work. I attended a workshop on imposter syndrome shortly after accepting this position, and it was an eye-opener. I no longer aim to please. I do think that, as a woman, it is difficult to escape being agreeable and humble. We are taught to be polite, smile, and be grateful for what we have.

Grateful to Receive the Job Offer

Many participants indicated that they were grateful for receiving the job offer and,

therefore, did not negotiate the salary. During the focus group, Louisa explained, “I felt like I should just be grateful for the job offer.” Similarly, sharing that she wished she should have asked for a higher salary but did not, Charlotte noted, “Right at that point, I was just very grateful.” When Harper spoke about the job offer taking longer than expected, when she finally received the offer, she said, “It took so long to get it that by the time it came, I was like, I don’t want to delay anything further by trying to negotiate. I was just grateful for it.”

Lack of Empowerment

Within imposter syndrome, a lack of empowerment was evident among many participants as they discussed their experiences during the salary negotiation process. Louisa emphasized, “I still get nervous. I don’t really feel comfortable talking about salaries with my supervisor; it does not come naturally. Anne shared, “I did not feel empowered to negotiate. I had a bad experience before and wasn’t comfortable with it.” Francine also shared, “I did do a little research beforehand, but I was still nervous.” Additionally, phrases like “I was afraid they would say no” and “I didn’t want to make them mad” surfaced in the categorial coding.

Mentorship

Throughout the interviews and focus groups, mentorship was disclosed as a significant aspect for women in higher education administrator roles during the salary negotiation process. Specifically, Louisa conveyed, “I did negotiate, and I only negotiated because I had assistance from a mentor who was more experienced than me in this area. And so, she really guided me through the process.” Most of the women who attempted to negotiate disclosed that mentorship played a vital role in the process. Betty shared, “I had a really great person on my side who was helping me get paid more because they could see other people's salaries, and I couldn't.”

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as a theme from interviews, the focus group, and document analysis. Codes and patterns of teamwork, community, flexibility, communication, and working together were highlighted throughout—numerous other codes and categories from characteristics, leadership, and abilities descriptions aligned to collaboration. Charlotte highlighted, “I would say the ability to work on a team and to collaborate towards a common goal” when asked what abilities she brought to the higher education administrator role. She also added, “ability to work with others and communicate with empathy.” Many participants described themselves as team players and collaborative leaders. When asked what characteristics you bring to the higher education administrator role, Emily emphasized, “I think I collaborate very well.” Jane also shared, “So you would have a lot of collaborating that you're doing, so having an ease in that area, I think, helps. It is one of my top five strengths, connectedness.”

Research Question Responses

A central research question and three sub-questions framed this hermeneutic study. Through a triangulated data collection of interviews, a focus group, and document analysis, four themes emerged. This section will explore the themes associated with each question.

Central Research Question

The central research question of this phenological study was: what are women's experiences in higher education administration roles during the hiring salary negotiation process? As participants shared their stories of the salary negotiation process as women leaders in higher education, the themes that aligned with this question were should have asked for more, imposter syndrome, and mentorship, and the sub-themes that aligned were lack of empowerment, fear of job offer withdrawal, and lack of pay transparency. The women reflected on experiencing

imposter syndrome and the lack of empowerment when negotiating a salary. Many of the participants wish they had asked for more. At the time of the salary negotiation, most did not counter the initial offer or ask for what they thought seemed fair due to inexperience, lack of confidence, or not knowing the salary market range for the position. Additionally, participants expressed that they did not negotiate for fear of the offer being rescinded. Anne shared, "I did not want to ask for more because I was afraid that they would take back the offer. Like I mentioned, I took the offer and ran. I now wish I should have asked for more."

Those who negotiated did so after cultivating mentorship relationships and seeking advice from their mentors. Betty spoke about her mentor, stating, "She carved a path for me. She made sure that we were always keeping an eye for where I needed to go next." Louisa shared that she only negotiated the salary because she had a mentor who was more experienced with negotiating, and she guided Louisa. Her mentor, a high-level executive administrator, provided insight into the salary and helped Louisa feel comfortable discussing the pay process. Louisa mentioned, "I would not have negotiated if she hadn't walked me through it."

Sub-Question One

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender identity affecting the hiring salary negotiation process? The themes connected to this question were collaboration and imposter syndrome. Although study participants emphasized collaboration and teamwork as abilities brought to the leadership role, most of them did not negotiate during the hiring process. Almost all women described their abilities as communicators, collaborators, and good listeners. Maya shared, "I bring collaboration and transparency to the role. I collaborate extensively with units supporting students and other academic areas."

Additionally, the focus group data collection identified reliability and fostering open communication as values the participants bring to the leadership role as administrators. The women expressed valuing flexibility and being empathetic to their roles. Suzanne emphasized, "Although I do consider myself a great collaborator, I did not negotiate. I was grateful to be offered the VP position and was also grateful for the flexibility."

Sub-Question Two

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender expectations affecting the hiring salary negotiation process? The women participants were grateful for receiving the job offer and placed that over negotiating for higher salaries. Some of the participants were made to feel as if they should feel grateful and were not prepared to fully negotiate. The theme of imposter syndrome and sub theme grateful to receive the job offer aligned with sub-question two. Suzanne discussed how she felt she should feel grateful for the offer because it was more than she had previously made. Her focus was having flexibility to help with work-life balance as a mother. Charlotte shared, "I was moving into a director role and thought I should just feel grateful for the offer because I had only supervised a smaller staff." Emily had a similar experience when she pushed hard for a title change, and after several months, when the title change came, the salary was disappointingly low. At the time, she felt she should be grateful for getting the title changed and the small raise that came with it. Emily also shared, "I do feel that I wasn't supported in getting a higher salary because I am a woman. I was made to feel like I should be grateful for them finally giving me the promotion."

Sub-Question Three

How do women in higher education administrator roles perceive gender stereotypes affecting the hiring salary negotiation process? The women in this study expressed nervousness

and were hesitant to negotiate. They did not feel empowered or were in an environment that did not support negotiating.

Most were worried that they would seem too aggressive and viewed as asking for too much, and they did not want to risk losing the job offer. For several, there were previous unsuccessful successes with negotiation that kept them from negotiating in this role. They believed the job offer would be rescinded if they pushed for salary negotiations. Tara shared, "It's hard to ask for what you want, because you don't want to be seen as too greedy." The themes that connected to sub-question three should have asked for more and imposter syndrome. The sub themes were fear of job offer withdrawal and lack of empowerment. One participant asked for a specific salary and was not successful, even though her supervisor supported the pay. The participant shared, "The HR department declined the offer, citing equity issues. I thought this was unfair because I had more years of experience and more education than the others, I was being compared to for equity alignment."

Summary

This chapter provided details of the 12 participants of the study and described the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. After thorough analysis and coding, the results identified four themes and four sub-themes. The themes were should have asked for more, imposter syndrome, mentorship, and collaboration. The sub-themes that emerged were fear of job offer withdrawal, lack of pay transparency under theme one, and grateful to receive the job offer, and lack of empowerment under theme two. Framed by social role theory (Eagly, 1987), the study's findings aligned with the central research question and three sub-questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. This chapter consists of five discussion subsections, including interpretation of findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with a succinct conclusion.

Discussion

This section examines the study's findings, considering the themes that emerged from a hermeneutic data analysis. The implications for policy and practice and theoretical and empirical implications follow the presented findings. The limitations and delimitations are outlined, followed by recommendations for future research.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Data was collected through triangulation using interviews, a focus group, and document analysis that allowed women in higher education administrator roles to share their experiences of the salary negotiation at the time of hire. Through an in-depth analysis of coding, categorizing, patterns, and themes, four themes emerged, with two themes having two additional sub-themes. The four themes consisted of: should have asked for more, imposter syndrome, mentorship, and collaboration. The theme should have asked for more had two sub-themes: fear of job offer withdrawal and lack of pay transparency. The theme of imposter syndrome also had two sub-themes: grateful to receive a job offer and lack of empowerment.

Interpretation of Findings

The interpretations of the study fall under four categories: unbalanced roles and behaviors, building a support network, overcoming bias, and preparedness for negotiation. These interpretations are derived from the themes of this study. This section will discuss each of the study's findings.

Unbalanced roles and behaviors

During women's salary negotiation in higher education administrators, the women felt pressure to balance asking for what they wanted and being assertive with feeling grateful and remaining polite and professional. Most chose the route of a less forceful negotiation, which led to devaluing their worth. Women are usually not prepared to negotiate based on their perceived societal role (Reif et al., 2019). Women in higher education administrator roles found going against agreeableness and gratitude scary and unfamiliar. There is a strong sense of unbalance in how to act to get what you need versus what is expected. Women typically do not negotiate because this type of behavior, seen as a negotiator role, contradicts the role women play in society as a non-negotiator with a more cooperative, supportive, and co-dependent nature (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Although all the women in the study described themselves as collaborative leaders, most struggled to negotiate. Perhaps it would be helpful for women to see negotiation as a problem-solving task where they could apply assertiveness instead of asking.

For career advancement opportunities for women in higher education administrator roles, there was a mix of how the opportunities were perceived. Some viewed the opportunities as positive, while others felt the opportunities to advance were limited. The limitations stem from the necessity of relocating to another city or state to reach higher-level executive positions. For

many, this is not feasible due to family obligations. A significant number, particularly mothers, are the primary caretakers for children or elderly parents. They find it impractical to leave their current city or state to pursue career advancement opportunities.

Building a support network

Women in higher education administrator roles need a support network to help them navigate through the negotiation process at the time of hire. Whether women are first-year directors or ten-year veteran vice presidents, negotiation salary is diminished in the absence of a supportive framework that offers encouragement and reassurance for engaging in salary negotiation. A similar finding was found in a study where women faculty negotiated compensation and were more successful when supported by a mentor or academic supervisor (Fiset & Saffie-Robertson, 2020). Women often report having fewer mentors than men (Zakaras et al., 2021), although women can benefit greatly from having a support system. Women administrators with mentors feel less isolated and empowered to navigate the salary negotiation with greater confidence, knowing they can turn to someone for advice and guidance. Furthermore, mentors play a crucial role in making women aware of the importance of negotiating salary and how it will affect further career advancement. Just knowing that salary negotiation is an option can be impactful and motivate women to negotiate and possibly do it successfully.

Overcoming Bias

Many biases play into women in higher education administrator roles and the salary negotiation process at the time of hire (Kugler et al., 2017; Reif et al., 2019; Silva & Galbraith, 2018). Overcoming these biases can help women be more confident and empowered and conquer imposter syndrome. Many women in this study emphasized that luck had led them to be in the

position they were in versus acknowledging their skills and talents. Others felt discouraged from negotiating and felt that being a woman meant they were not supported in receiving the salary they thought was fair and appropriate.

Preparedness to Negotiate

Data such as pay bands, pay budgets, and market analysis can help women in higher education administrator roles negotiate salaries. Knowing their worth and how to communicate that during salary negotiation is also essential for effectiveness in this process. Although women do have the skills to negotiate, they do not use those skills to leverage a higher salary (Dreber et al., 2022; Kugler et al., 2017). The majority of women lacked confidence and were unprepared to negotiate. The confidence gap is explained by women having less confidence in their abilities and being less likely to be aggressive to self-promote and negotiate (Eckel et al., 2021; Roussillon, 2021).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study suggest the need for a number of implications for policy and practice. This section will identify policies that can benefit women in higher education administrators during the salary negotiation process. Additionally, implications for practice will discuss areas for opportunities to help with the identified problem.

Implications for Policy

Institutions of higher learning have opportunities to implement policies that can assist in helping higher education administrators navigate the hiring process to include salary negotiation and further career advancement. The identified implications for the policy of this study are pay transparency and mentorship programs. By addressing these aspects, institutions can contribute

to creating a more equitable and conducive environment for career progression and growth for higher education administrators.

Pay Transparency. As more states develop pay transparency laws, institutions of higher learning can support women in the hiring process by establishing policies to display pay ranges for positions. This information can equip women to understand the position's value better. Women in this study felt unprepared and unempowered to negotiate for salary because of limited information on the salary available.

Mentorship Programs. Institutions of higher learning can implement mentorship programs to help women in higher education administrator roles be successful in salary negotiation and career advancements. In January 2023, The American Council on Education (ACE) piloted the first ACE Women's Leadership Mentoring Program to "support and advance women through their careers." The ACE Leadership Mentoring Program is part of the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women in Higher Education Leadership® initiative (ACE, 2023). Formalized mentorship programs can improve representation, offer support in network building, help with overcoming challenges, help build confidence, and encourage discussion on ambition and further career success.

Implications for Practice

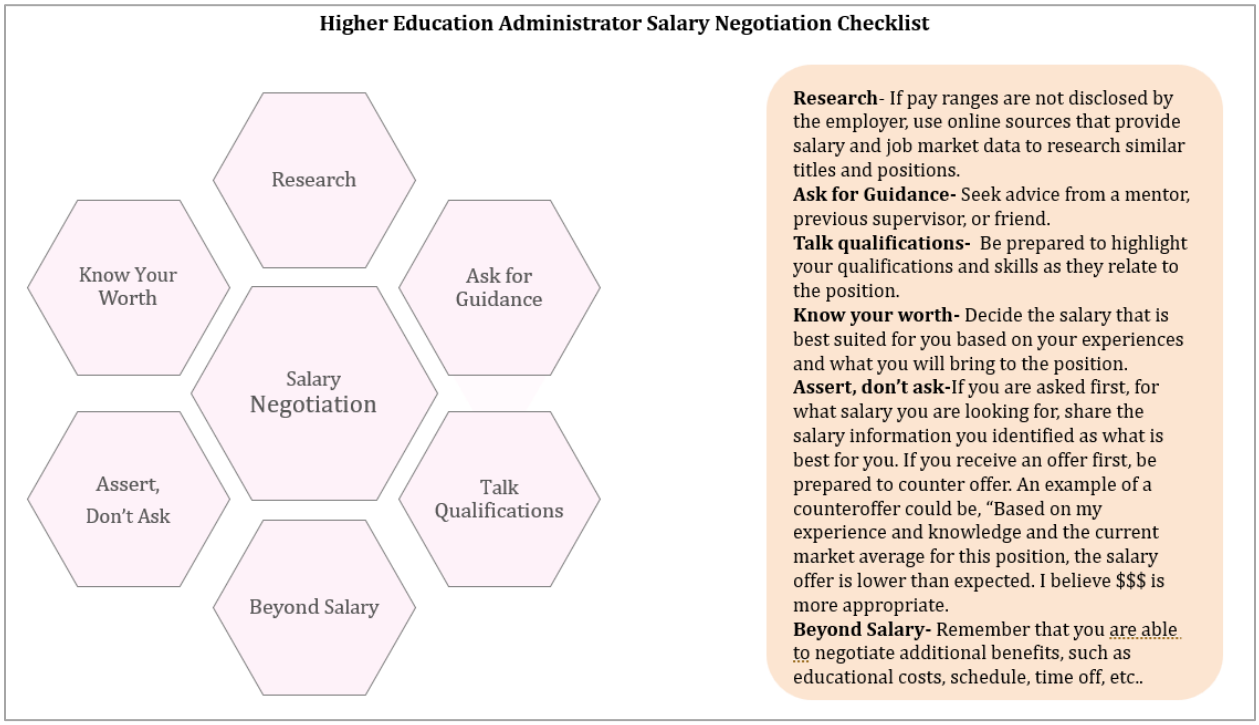
Negotiation skills and gender bias awareness are two key areas that can be applied to help navigate the salary negotiation process for women in higher education administrator roles. These implications for practice suggest that adopting negotiation skills and fostering awareness of gender biases can lead to more equitable and informed salary negotiations. Being proactive in this area of salary negotiation can not only benefit higher education administrators; it can also play a crucial role in encouraging a culture of gender equity within higher education leadership.

Negotiation Skills. Many of the participants of this study did not fully negotiate the salary for the higher education administrator due to a lack of negotiation skills and preparedness. Teamwork, helping, and collaborating were values and skills that were highlighted throughout the data collection. Women often excel in advocating for others but may hesitate in advocating for themselves (Shonk, 2023). Using their collaboration and problem-solving skills to negotiate for themselves can help diminish gender pay and job advancement gaps. Workshops, professional organizations, and networking can offer women the tools and guidance to negotiate and succeed.

Based on the participants' experiences in this study and through the descriptions of their real-world challenges and successes, six recommended practices for salary negotiation were identified. Research: If the employer does not disclose pay ranges, use online sources that provide salary and job market data to research similar titles and positions. Ask for guidance: Seek advice from a mentor, previous supervisor, or friend. Talk qualifications: Be prepared to highlight your qualifications and skills related to the position. Know your worth: Decide the salary that is best suited for you based on your experiences and what will be brought to the position. Assert, do not ask: If asked first, what salary are you looking for? Share the salary information identified as what is best. Be prepared to counteroffer. Beyond salary: Remember that additional benefits can also be negotiated, such as educational costs, schedules, and time off. Figure 1 provides a visual for a higher education administrator salary negotiation checklist.

Figure 1

Higher Education Administrator Salary Negotiation Checklist



Note. This illustration presents a salary negotiation checklist and tips for each item.

Gender Bias Awareness. Being aware of gender bias is critical, not only for hiring teams but for women administrators themselves. Women in this study expressed feeling that they were expected to be grateful simply for receiving the job offer or promotion. Many participants were afraid to negotiate, were not empowered, or lacked negotiation confidence. Gender roles and bias were key in these behaviors and feelings. Being aware of the gender biases that occur from others and within themselves can help women feel more comfortable with not only salary negotiations but with other areas where gender inequalities exist.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

This section will present and analyze the study's findings based on theoretical and empirical data. I will explore the empirical alignment of the study's results. In addition, I will

discuss the correlation with the theoretical framework using social role theory (Eagly, 1987).

Empirical Implications

Previous research specific to women in higher education administrator roles during the salary negotiation at the time of hire was limited to quantitative research, with surveys being the primary method of data collection (Guillen et al., 2017; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017; Fuesting et al., 2022). Qualitative research was recommended to learn more about the experiences of women higher education administrators (Fiset & Saffie-Robertson, 2020; Silva & Galbraith, 2018; Zakaras et al., 2021). This study has contributed to this specific area of women leaders in higher education. The results of the study align with current literature in areas detailing contributing factors that affect salary negotiation for women in general, as well as higher education administrators (AAUW, Armstrong & Shulman, 2019; 2019; Kugler et al., 2017; Silbert et al., 2022). With women's experiences in salary negotiation studies being limited, the literature was extended to review disparities in negotiation among faculty, university library professionals, and other industries such as medical, law, health, and corporate professions. The empirical implications of this study aligned with unequal distribution of pay opportunities, women not having much success in salary negotiation, and experiencing gender bias (AAUW, 2019; Diehl et al., 2020; Mandel, 2016; Povich, 2022; Rabovsky & Lee, 2017; Silbert et al., 2022). Additional thematic factors of experiencing imposter syndrome and lack of pay transparency aligned with this study and current literature (Armstrong & Shulman, 2019; Abdelaal, 2020; Bennedsen et al., 2023; Goman, 2018; Hired, 2019; Mitchel, 2018; Povich, 2022).

Regarding how often women negotiate, current literature shows that women negotiate less than men (Dreber et al., 2022; Huang & Low, 2022; Kugler et al., 2017). Other literature shows that women do negotiate, but when they do, they are less successful than men (Kray et al.,

2023). The focus of the study was to describe the salary negotiation experience for women; therefore, data to show a comparison to men is not available, but out of the twelve women in this study, only two women negotiated or attempted to negotiate the salary. The lived experiences of my participants directly contradict the literature claiming women are negotiating more than ever (Shonk, 2023).

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical framework of this phenomenological study was guided by social theory (Eagly, 1987). Social role theory posits that societal expectations and norms shape an individual's behavior by assigning specific roles based on gender, and a combination of biology and social factors leads to the occupation of different roles by men and women in society (Eagly et al., 2000; Eagly & Wood, 2011, 2012). Additionally, social role theory argues that, as society evolves and progresses, social roles and gender biases should also adapt (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Wood, 2011). The findings of this study aligned with the basis of social role theory that individuals behave based on their identified roles, expectations, and gender stereotypes. Regarding salary negotiation, the women described being grateful for the job offer and were agreeable with the salary offer, as few negotiated.

A surprise of the findings was the small number of women who counter-offered the initial salary. As mentioned, only two of the twelve participants counter-offered the salary negotiation. The women who did not counteroffer had several reasons for not doing so, such as fear of having the original offer rescinded, not wanting to appear aggressive, wanting to appear grateful, not feeling empowered, lack of pay information, a non-negotiation work culture, and pay was higher than the previous role. Although, over time, the occupational role for women has shifted, with

more women now educated and in more leadership positions, it seems women remain in the aggregable, communal role when it comes to asking for a salary they deem worth their value.

Limitations and Delimitations

To ensure a succinct and focused study, I had to make decisions on what factors to include and not include. In addition, limitations out of my control also occurred. This section discusses the limitations and delimitations of this phenomenological study.

Limitations

The study focused on women in higher education administrator roles. Although the intent was to gain 12 participants with varying titles in these leadership positions, only four different titles were included. The titles of director, dean, associate vice president, and vice president were successfully recruited for the study. Seven directors, two deans, one associate vice president, and two vice presidents participated in this study. Attempts were made to recruit women university or college presidents and provosts, but these attempts were not successful. The limitation of having seven out of the 12 participants be directors can influence findings that include possible bias, less variability of experiences of different leadership roles, and reduced external validity (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Another limitation of this study was that the types of institutions included were not evenly distributed. Although there was a mix of public and private, eight participants were from a public university, and four were from a private institution.

Delimitation

The delimitations for this study include location, gender, modality of interviews, and the use of a hermeneutic approach. Framed by social role theory, this study's focus allowed only women participants. The study was limited to the South Central Texas region to ensure participants experienced a similar phenomenon. Women in higher education administrator roles

had to work at a college or university in South Central Texas. With South Central Texas being close to 300,000 miles, a virtual, online modality was chosen to ensure the ease of participating in interviews and focus groups. Lastly, a hermeneutic approach for this study was chosen to allow for deep exploration and interpretive understanding. I am a woman in a higher education administrator role working at a South Central Texas institution who also experienced the phenomena of salary negotiation at the time of hire. This approach allowed me to dive into the meanings of the participant's experiences while acknowledging my interpretations from my experience.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on women in higher education administrator roles working in South Central Texas. This study included the roles of directors, assistant vice presidents, and presidents. Recommendations for future studies are provided, considering the results.

To fully distinguish the influence of social role theory and salary negotiation for women in higher education administrator roles, conducting a similar study with men is recommended. Understanding men’s experiences during the salary negotiation at the time of hire in higher education administrator roles could fill a research gap. Additionally, this study was conducted as a phenomenological qualitative study. I recommend collecting quantitative data through a survey of the salary negotiation experience for both men and women higher education administrators. A mixed-method approach could provide a better understanding of the research problem: the salary negotiation process for women in higher education administrator roles is underrepresented in the hiring process.

This qualitative research included 12 participants working at a college or university in the south-central region of Texas. Another recommendation would be to broaden the study

geographically. Understanding the experiences of women throughout Texas during salary negotiation at the time of hire and throughout the United States could validate this study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. Using a hermeneutic approach and triangulation data collection method of interviews, focus groups, and document analysis, the lived experiences of the women higher education leader participants in this study. Four themes and four sub-themes emerged after thorough coding, categorizing, and pattern and theme analysis. The four themes comprised: should have asked for more, imposter syndrome, mentorship, and collaboration. The four sub-themes are fear of job offer withdrawal, lack of pay transparency, grateful to receive the job offer, and lack of empowerment. The findings of this study were in alignment with the theoretical framework, which was guided by social role theory (Eagly, 1987). During salary negotiations, the women in higher education leadership roles experienced unbalanced roles and behaviors. Overcoming gender bias and stepping outside the expected roles emerged through interpreting lived experiences. The need for a supportive network and mentorship will play a significant role in getting closer to closing gender inequities for women in higher education leadership roles. Additionally, a policy priority should be implementing pay transparency laws and processes. Equipping women administrators with salary information and negotiation skills can lead to successful outcomes in their career navigation.

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Appendix A

Liberty University Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 6, 2023

Nancy Hernandez
Heather Strafaccia

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1723 THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR ROLES THROUGH THE SALARY NEGOTIATION PROCESS AT THE TIME OF HIRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Nancy Hernandez, Heather Strafaccia,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information sheet and final versions of your study documents can also be found on the same page under the Attachments tab.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

S

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of my research is to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and be in an administrator position at a Texas higher education institution. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, virtual interview, submit a copy of their resume, and review the interview transcript after the interview has been completed. It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete the interview and approximately 15 to 20 minutes to review the transcript and confirm accuracy. Additionally, there will be an optional 30-minute focus group to participate it. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me at [redacted] to schedule an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Nancy K. Hernandez
Ph.D. Candidate, SOE
Liberty University
[redacted]

Appendix C

Follow-Up Recruitment Letter

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of my research is to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. Last week an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up email is being sent to remind you to please contact me at [redacted].edu to schedule an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to work with you to schedule a time for an interview. The deadline for participation is

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and be in an administrator position at a Texas higher education institution. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, virtual interview, submit a copy of their resume, and review the interview transcript after the interview has been completed. It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete the interview and approximately 15 to 20 minutes to review the transcript and confirm accuracy. Additionally, there will be an optional 30-minute focus group to participate in.
Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate, please contact me at [redacted] to schedule an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will contact you to work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Nancy K. Hernandez
Ph.D. Candidate, SOE
Liberty University
[redacted]

Appendix D

Verbal Recruitment

Hello!

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a PhD in Higher Education Administration. The purpose of my research is to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions and if you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and be in an administrator position at a Texas higher education institution. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, virtual interview, submit a copy of their resume, and review the interview transcript after the interview has been completed. It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete the interview and approximately 15 to 20 minutes to review the transcript and confirm accuracy. Additionally, there will be an optional 30-minute focus group to participate it. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

Would you like to participate? If yes, Great. Could I get your email address, so we set up a time for an interview. If not, I understand. Thank you for your time.

A consent document will be emailed to you before the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research.

If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

Appendix E

Social Media Recruitment

ATTENTION FACEBOOK GROUP: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions. Participants must be 18 years of age or older and be in an administrator position at a Texas higher education institution. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one, audio-recorded, virtual interview, submit a copy of their resume, and review the interview transcript after the interview has been completed. It should take approximately 45 minutes to complete the interview and approximately 15 to 20 minutes to review the transcript and confirm accuracy. Additionally, there will be an optional 30-minute focus group to participate in. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, direct message me or contact me by email at [redacted] to schedule an interview. A consent document will be emailed to you before the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Appendix F

Consent

Title of the Project: The Lived Experiences of Women in Higher Education Administrator Roles Through the Salary Negotiation Process at the Time of Hire: A Phenomenological Study
Principal Investigator: Nancy K. Hernandez, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age and work as an administrator at a University of Texas System institution. The administrator title must be President, Vice President, Associate/Assistant Vice President, Associate/Assistant Dean, Provost, Associate/Assistant Provost, Chancellor, Assistant/Associate Chancellor, Senior Director, or Director, or a similar administrator title. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to describe the higher education administrator salary negotiation process at the time of hire for women at Texas institutions.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a one-hour interview and answer 14 questions. Interviews will be recorded by voice recording, not video.
2. Participate in a one-hour focus group (all-women group) to discuss the gender pay gap. The Focus group will be voice recorded.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include information about the factors that could potentially be contributing to the gender pay gap among administrators in higher education and possibly bring awareness and help close the gap.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Participant responses will be confidential. Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms/codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be voice recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a Senior Director at the University of Texas Health Science Center. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher[s] at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you apart from focus group data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Nancy Hernandez. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Nancy Hernandez at njones51@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to [audio-record] me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix G

Interview Questions

Individual Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experience as a higher education administrator. CRQ.
2. What abilities do you bring to your higher education administrator role? SQ1
3. What personal experiences have prepared you for your higher education administrator role? SQ1
4. What professional experiences have prepared your higher education administrator role? SQ1
5. How did you discuss your abilities during the salary negotiation? SQ1
6. How do you describe yourself as a leader? SQ2
7. What unofficial leadership roles have you experienced that helped prepare you for your higher education administrator role? SQ2
8. What official leadership roles have you experienced that helped prepare you for your higher education administrator role? SQ2
9. How did you discuss your leadership experiences during the salary negotiation process? SQ2
10. What type of knowledge do you bring to the higher education administrator role? SQ3
11. What characteristics do you bring to the higher education administrator role? SQ3
12. How do you describe the career advancement opportunities available to you as a higher education administrator? SQ3
13. How did you discuss your knowledge during the salary negation process? SQ3

14. What else would you like to add about the salary negotiation that we have not already discussed? CRQ

Appendix H

Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. What values do you bring to your position in a higher education administrator role? SQ1
2. How do you describe yourself as a leader? SQ2
3. What knowledge do you bring to your higher education administrator role? SQ3
4. Based on what we discussed today, can you tell me how you would describe yourself during the salary negation process? CRQ
5. Is there anything else you want to add that we have not already discussed? CRQ