A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE LIFE SATISFACTION OF SINGLE DIVORCED WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

December 2013

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The purpose of this qualitative research life history study was to understand experiences and contributions to life satisfaction for single divorced women in leadership. Understanding the meaning one ascribes to one’s life experiences assists leaders, employers and others to identify and target appropriate motivations. Five single, divorced African American women, ages of 40 to 55, working in leadership positions were interviewed as to how she assessed her overall life satisfaction; what she attributed to her life satisfaction; the factors that were most necessary or influential, i.e., extended family and friends, children, education, purpose, spirituality, and socioeconomic status, etc.; and, the extent, if any, others’ perceptions weighed on her life satisfaction.

The research found of the divorced African American female leaders interviewed that one’s life satisfaction or the lack thereof was highly related to one’s locus of control and whether she believed she was living with purpose. Second, consistent factors attributed to the divorced female leaders’ life satisfaction which included one’s education, family (parent or children) and friend support and purpose. Further, companionship and spirituality also emerged as being strongly influential or important to one’s life satisfaction view as well. Last, in regards to others’ perceptions on the divorced female leaders studied it was found not to be impactful on life satisfaction. Essentially, the study found that divorced African American female leaders who believed she was
living her purpose were more satisfied while those not living on purpose either fully or at all were more dissatisfied with their lives.

This research provides leaders and others valuable information to utilize while working with others as how leaders think, behave or feel is critical to the success and growth of the leaders themselves, the individuals they influence as well the organizations they lead. As one’s satisfaction with life ultimately affects every aspect of one’s life—attitude, behavior, choices, relationships and interactions—it is imperative for leaders to have an awareness of her psychological well-being in order to be more productive; produce better quality work and relationships; and, to and make the most of working with individuals to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.
Dedicated to the memory of strong familial women

Annie Mae Stokes

Ruth Parnell

Evelyn Nimene

Lois Mason

Ledell Shepherd

And to my daddy, Melvin Walls, whom I miss dearly.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I thank God to whom all blessings flow for His grace and mercy and enabling me to complete such a task as this. I prayed that He equip me to complete an associate degree—but He, in His God-ness, He gave me the strength to accomplish so much more. Thank you Jesus!

Second, to my mom, Pastor Blandine Walls, thank you for being a constant role model, mentor and friend; for shaping me, encouraging me, pushing me and helping me in ways too numerable to count. I love you—and am truly blessed to have you as a mother. The example of strength and tenacity you present always amazes me and I still want to be like you when I grow up.

Third, to my daughter, LaTresse Rogers, my rebel warrior, who I could count on to read my stuff and my son, Calvin B. Rogers, “Jr.,” my mini-me and faithful dissertation police, thank you for your patience, encouragement, time and assistance, you are greatly appreciated. I thank the Lord for you both—bearing with me in good times and bad, sickness and health, it has been wonderful to experience life with the two of you. I pray God’s continued blessings for you, may He lead and guide you and establish you to be the keen eagles you were created to be. I pray you live lives that promote happiness and joy for yourselves and others. I love you and am so very proud of you both!

Fourth, a very special heart felt thank you to Earslean Freeman for enduring cold and inconvenience so I could finish high school. Thank you for believing in me enough to sacrifice your comfort for my sake. I truly appreciate it and recognize that it is not a sacrifice to be taken for granted. Though it has literally been more than a decade and a
score, if you hadn’t enabled me to complete my first educational step, I would not be here now completing this step. I truly love you always—you are forever, my ‘mom!’

Fifth, to my extended family and friends—thank you; I have accomplished many things but it is your love, support and assistance that have helped me to do so. A special thanks to Terri Houston, who has been a constant friend and my biggest cheerleader. It’s a pleasure to still have the same childhood friends in my life—thank you all for loving me enough to stay connected. Dr. Toycee Hague-Palmer, thank you for getting me going again.

Sixth, thank you to the women who participated in this study. I truly appreciate you allowing me the privilege of interviewing you on intimate personal matters. I most certainly could not have done this without each and every one of you! Your time, assistance and cooperation helped this endeavor to come to fruition.

Last, but certainly not least, major kudos to my dissertation committee. Dr. Ardenia Jones Terry, for your willingness to serve on my committee. I have always admired you—your professionalism and grace. Who knew when I met you in 1993 that you would one day serve on my dissertation committee. Thank you for being willing to help me and for providing direction and assistance on my behalf. I recognize that it is a sacrifice you did not have to make, but I truly value your willingness to do so. Dr. Joyce Litten, thank you so much for all of your support and direction in this process. Your expertise and empowering compliments have truly propelled me forward. Dr. Terry Herman, thank you for serving on my committee – it was in your class that this study really began to take shape – I appreciate you tremendously for all of your guidance and direction. Dr. Priscilla Coleman, I appreciate you serving as my graduate school representative, I might not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet you. But, know
that I appreciate your time, patience and assistance in getting me to this place. Dr. Mark Earley, my chair and advisor, thank you, thank you, thank you! I appreciate you so much for putting up with me despite my often slowfulness—your patient guidance and assistance has enabled me to be here. I can’t thank you enough for serving on my behalf, looking out for me and getting me to where I needed to be. Initially, I thought, ‘I do not want qualitative, give me the numbers’ but you have made this a seamless process; I could not have selected a better method for this study. Thank you for making qualitative a feasible alternative. I pray God continually bless each and every one of you, your labor is not in vain, thanks again for your commitment and dedication.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In the 1950s the nuclear family was seen as the great fulfillment for women and marriage was the expectation for all. For men and women, but most especially for women, nothing could be more satisfying than child-bearing and taking care of the home. In fact, those who did not engage in such expected gender roles were labeled deviant, as it was most certainly “unnatural” for a woman to remain unmarried (May, 1988). May specifically states:

The ethos of the 1950s emphasized the nuclear family as a haven and as the locus for personal fulfillment, encouraging universal marriage, child-bearing, and homemaking roles for women. Further, men and women who did not take part in heterosexual marriage, childbearing, and breadwinner-homemaker gender roles were labeled as deviant, “unnatural,” or dangerous (1988, p. 11).

In a January 2005, Census 2000 Special Reports, We the people: Women and men in the United States it was noted that since 1970 there has been a dramatic increase in the proportions of never-married women. The January 2005 report went on to state that 36% of women ages 20 to 24 and 12% of women 25 to 29 had not married and by 2000 those percentages had risen to 69% and 38% respectively; the report also noted the proportion of women 30 to 34 years old who had never married; the percentage of that age group had approximately tripled between 1970 and 2000, reaching 22% (Spraggins, 2005).

Given that the data indicate such a strong movement by women away from marriage, what are the implications for women who do not marry but instead pursue career or leadership positions? It is reported that nearly half of female leaders in top positions and half of all women in the United States who earn more than $100,000 do not have children (Dye, 2005; Hewlett,
2002). Thus, women in the work world—especially those in leadership positions generally make great sacrifices in pursuit of work roles.

Campione (2008) states:

[N]early 70% of all women in the US are now employed [and] balancing work and family has nearly become a cliché with individuals, families, employers, and governments attempting to create schedules, task sharing, family-friendly fringe benefits, and work-life policies and programs to ensure this balance (p. 346).

The purpose of this study is to understand experiences in the life satisfaction of single divorced women in leadership whether one’s satisfaction is due to various factors; to describe and discover which, if any, factors are more strongly related to one’s level or estimation of life satisfaction; and to examine how single women who have focused on career or leadership positions ultimately view such a path in retrospect. Whether by choice or circumstance, single women are a large and growing portion of our population. According to a US Census Bureau, Facts for Features, Women’s History Month: March 2010 report, there are 155.8 million women in the US of whom 91.3 million (58.6%) are unmarried: single, divorced or widowed. Such statistics suggest a major change in gender role selection or placement – some by choice, some by force – but, no longer are women merely opting to conform to social and cultural norms that suggest their greatest fulfillment can only be gained from the traditional avenue noted above. As Ireland (1997) stated:

Motherhood was considered by Freud, and still by many today, to be the ultimate achievement and the confirmation of adult womanhood and that most women want more than just motherhood. And an increasing number of women simply do not want to be mothers at all; they wish instead to be and to do something else (p. 109).
A woman moving away from the traditional path requires what some theorists term “self-authorship.” Hodge, Baxter Magolda and Haynes (2009) state “self-authorship not only entails epistemological maturity, it also requires cultivating a secure sense of self that enables interdependent relations with others and making judgments through considering but not being consumed by others’ perspectives” (p. 16). Ireland (1993) further states “there are two common cultural myths about “childless” women which need to be addressed: (1) childless women do not value or are not as capable of sustaining personal relationships; (2) childless women are over invested in career or work” (p. 8). Ireland referred to the woman who chose a life without children as a transformative woman –

A trailblazer, creating a path through a thicket of meanings of what a woman “should be;” her identity is often more organized around independence and autonomy; often endorses characteristics of assertiveness and leadership capacity; has higher self-esteem and a sense of competency and is more able to deflect negative social judgments about her; and usually feel connected and supported by the social network they create for themselves while at the same time are aware of how their lives are left out or marginalized in the popular media (1997, p. 114-115).

One should also consider the concept of transformational learning – much like the concept of transformational women. Transformational learning “involves learning to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than on those we have uncritically assimilated from others” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). Kegan (1994) explained:

A person takes values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties and intrapersonal states as objects or elements of its system, rather than the system itself; it does not identify with them but views them as parts of a new
whole. This new whole is an ideology, an internal identity, a *self-authorship* that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convict, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. It is no longer *authored by* them, it *authors them* and thereby achieves a personal authority (p. 185, italics in original).

Though there is not an abundance of literature available specific to single divorced women in leadership’s life satisfaction, the researcher has addressed and formulated a model of the research to date. Specifically, addressed are issues related to identity: how factors such as work, family and friends, income, education, children or childlessness and spirituality are viewed by single divorced women in leadership in order to determine or estimate one’s level of life satisfaction. Factors such as those cited were explored as well as the impact of a single divorced woman’s social clock on her satisfaction self-evaluation. Finally, differences due to cultural factors on single divorced women in leadership’s interpretations concerning their life satisfaction were investigated as well.

“Leadership in the most general way can be defined as the ability to set goals and standards, exert influence on others to make things happen and then be held accountable for the outcome” (Spielvogel, 1997, p. 190). Such a definition could also apply to single mothers not employed outside the home; however, for the sake of this study we will only focus on single divorced women (mothers or not) formally employed. Spielvogel went on to state:

This requires a passionate vision of the future, an analysis of the situation, the development of a strategy, an ability to communicate the goal, and an approach to maximize cooperation. It necessitates significant personal resources to take appropriate risks, maintain a positive focus, and bear the responsibility for the task. Characteristics
frequently associated with leadership include: strength, vision, intelligence, rationality, commitment, independence, competitiveness and charisma (1997, p. 190-191).

Harkins (2003) defined life satisfaction as “a sense of well-being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfaction with relations with others and with achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with daily life.”

Sumner (1996) said life satisfaction “is widely thought to involve affirming, endorsing, appreciating, or being pleased with one’s life” (p. 145).

Diener, Oishi & Lucas (2003) found:

The field of subjective well-being (SWB) comprises the scientific analysis of how people evaluate their lives—both at the moment and for longer periods such as for the past year. These evaluations include people’s emotional reactions to events, their moods, and judgments they form about their life satisfaction, fulfillment, and satisfaction with domains such as marriage and work. Thus, SWB concerns the study of what lay people might call happiness or satisfaction (p. 404).

Haybron (2007) states “life satisfaction’s significance differs considerably from what we ordinarily ascribe to happiness” (p. 100). He went on to state, “it is seen as somehow embodying a global judgment about one’s life taken as a whole: that, all things considered, one’s life is satisfactory” (p. 101). Haybron further stated:

1) [T]hinking your life is going well is one thing, and thinking it is going well enough quite another; 2) belief lacks weight . . . [the goal is] to like it . . . to appreciate our lives . . . being wholehearted in our assessment . . . 3) “Life satisfaction requires being satisfied, not just thinking things satisfactory… being satisfied has motivational implications, at
least tempering inclinations to seek major changes in where your life is headed” (2007, p. 102).

Life satisfaction seems to be widely regarded as a central aspect of well-being, or at least to correlate very strongly with it. . . Its value is partly hedonic, but this fails to account for why life satisfaction seems distinctively significant. We seem to care about life satisfaction mainly as an evaluation: as an ostensibly authoritative verdict on the overall quality of one’s life. It seems important whether our lives go well by our standards . . . as it tells us about how individuals’ lives measure up in relation to their own priorities (Haybron, 2005, p. 4).

According to Warr (2007) “happiness as self-validation thus invokes some standards of appropriateness or rightness . . . a standard of worth defined in terms external to the individual . . . a person’s own view of what is fitting for him or her” (p.11). Warr went on to convey that one’s philosophy, core values and believing he/she is where he/she should be shape his/her perception of happiness and further, that happiness does not denote pleasure.

“Most conceptualizations define life satisfaction as a function of the relationship between situational factors or achievement (what is) and aspirations (what one wishes for; Bearon, 1989)” (Tangri, Thomas, Mednick & Lee, 2003, p. 113-114). Tangri, et al. (2003) also proposes that well-being is a product of one’s autonomy – self-determination and independence, achievement, self-acceptance, personal growth and locus of control – meaning one is instrumental in one’s own life outcomes (p. 115).

Understanding one’s life satisfaction in regard to singlehood is therefore necessary and it would greatly assist in the leadership, education, job performance and the like for this population. Jayson (2011, p. 1D) conducted a national study of 5,199 single men and women and
found that the “attitudes and behaviors of today’s singles are quite unlike their counterparts just a few decades ago; and men are now expressing some traditionally female attitudes, while women are adopting some of those long attributed to men.” Jayson concluded the following: a) single women want more independence than men in their relationships; b) reported the importance of having their own interests and hobbies as well; c) they found regular nights out with [friends] to be important; and d) they were not as likely as men to want children; and they do not fall in love as quickly as their male counterparts.

To this end, research is needed to address questions regarding life satisfaction among single divorced women in leadership. Langer and Rodin (1976) state, “we are happier and more effective people when we have the power to choose” (p. 149) the course of action our lives should take. Thus, examining one’s satisfaction as a result of choices to pursue leadership roles is needful.

Though not specific to single divorced women, several studies have been conducted to identify life satisfaction – assessing one’s level of hope, optimism, and quality of life. Authors Lavallee, Hatch, Michalos, and McKinley (2007), conducted research “to investigate levels of life satisfaction experienced in daily life” (p. 202); Bailey, Eng, Frisch and Snyder (2007), found that “two separate but related constructs . . . in assessing and predicting life satisfaction [to be] hope and optimism” (p. 168); and, Lavallee et al., “assessed people’s existing feelings of dissatisfaction . . . (1) feelings of contentment, (2) sense of fulfillment, and (3) discrepancies between one’s actual life and one’s wants or aspirations” (p. 205).

Other studies identified the following:

- Health, socioeconomic status and social support affects the perception of life satisfaction for older adults to provide a better understanding of how health and
socioeconomic status (SES) and social support relate to congruence and happiness in later life (Bishop, Martin, Poon, 2006);

- The impact of race, SES, marital status, perceived health and social participation upon the life satisfaction of adults in the United States (Clemente & Sauer, 1976);
- Marriage, children and closeness to parents impact the life satisfaction and/or well being of various groups and individuals (Flouri, 2003, Broman, 1988 & 1993, Dykstra & Wagner, 2007, Ball & Robbins, 1986);
- The stresses and rewards in the lives of a sample of single women whose singleness was an ongoing long term state and the way these are related to life satisfaction (Loewenstein, Bloch, Campion, Epstein, Gale & Salvatore, 1981);
- A correlation between life satisfaction and satisfaction in domains of life (health, economic, job, family, friendship, and personal and community environment) (Rojas, 2006).
- Religion and/or spirituality impact life satisfaction in older Whites, African and Native Americans (Yoon & Lee, 2004);

The researcher seeks to understand the life satisfaction of single women in leadership and therefore, begins by noting the research available. The researcher is interested in finding whether this research rings true for this population of women.

All of this research influences one’s outlook on the study of life satisfaction in many ways. Life satisfaction includes studying the lives of single divorced women on many multifaceted domains. Regardless of race, economics, religion and even gender, certain standards affect one’s satisfaction with life. The information learned from these studies is essential to the
study of life satisfaction of single divorced women in leadership and assists us in realigning the concepts concerning life satisfaction, leadership and single divorced women.

Thus, further study of single divorced women is needed to evaluate how or to what degree family, spouse, children, relationships, spiritual awareness, career and education impact life satisfaction. This information will be helpful in mentoring single divorced women and will provide additional information for recruitment and support.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this life history study is to understand experiences in the life satisfaction of single divorced women in leadership whether one’s satisfaction is due to various factors, such as, extended family and friends, relationships, children or the lack thereof, education, career, one’s purpose or spirituality or socioeconomic status; to describe and discover which, if any, factors are more strongly related to one’s level or estimation of life satisfaction; and to examine how single women who have focused on career or leadership positions ultimately view such a path in retrospect. Understanding the meaning one ascribes to one’s life experiences assists leaders, employers or those who work with said population to identify and target more appropriate motivations for engaging, leading or working with said individuals.

At this stage in the research, life satisfaction will be generally defined as follows:

A cognitive judgmental process… a comparison of one’s circumstances with what is thought to be an appropriate standard. . . the judgment of how satisfied people are with their present state of affairs… a comparison with a standard which each individual sets for him or herself; it is not externally imposed (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985, p. 71).
Research Questions

This study will focus on life satisfaction of single divorced females in leadership roles:

1) How do single divorced women in leadership assess their overall life satisfaction and to what do they attribute their life satisfaction?

2) What factors are most necessary and influential in their general life satisfaction?

3) What extent do others’ perceptions have on single divorced women’s life satisfaction?

Theoretical Framework

There are so many things which shape one’s view of life: parents, career, religion, experience, education, culture, success and failure. Frisch (1999), states “that a person’s satisfaction with a particular area of life is weighed according to its importance or value . . . satisfaction in areas of life deemed unimportant, or “goal irrelevant,” should have no influence on life satisfaction whatsoever” (p. 1291). Thus, it is crucial to investigate this process further to determine how to better assist single divorced women to reach their goals and aspirations and thereby help them to create the lives they crave.

Additionally, the perception of others impacts the way one views her singleness. Lynell George (1999) in an article entitled, Flying Solo, stated that “life . . . doesn’t slow its gait or stop because a Mrs. has yet to precede (or, for that matter, no longer precedes) one’s name” (p. 113). However, one’s perception or belief on this matter would greatly affect her evaluation of her life satisfaction. George went on to say, “getting to—and remaining at—a healthy place about who you are as an individual in a society built for two is an ongoing process. It is a territory with few rules and support systems.” Thus, a study of the life satisfaction of single divorced women working, living, moving and breathing in a place where their singleness is often considered to be
abnormal is a needful one as one’s estimations greatly impact one’s ability to lead or be lead, not to mention one’s overall development. To put it another way, determining one’s outlook in relation to her satisfaction with life will assist researchers to design and implement strategies that will complement or build upon deficiencies and strengths that may exist.

Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) state, “a major component of subjective well-being is life satisfaction… the cognitive evaluations of one’s life” (p. 72). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the life satisfaction of single divorced women as it has a direct impact on whether, how or to what degree one pursues goals, builds relationships, leads or follows others or lives life.

Significance of the Study

A satisfied single woman equals a more satisfied worker, leader, caretaker or friend. The single woman’s state of mind is therefore of the utmost importance to ensuring that she is leading, doing, performing to the best of her ability. McCrae (2002) suggests individuals will virtually be the same 30 years from now. Therefore, the personality evident in an individual and the manner best to work with that personality type will not change from year to year. Further, it makes it possible to devise plans that are constant and relatively the same for each personality type to allow one to work or serve in relatively stable ways. Stability is important in regards to providing information, services and/or programs as one can then perfect what works well with different populations or personalities.

In order to effectively lead it is imperative for leaders to have some awareness of personality development, its effects as individuals mature and how personality affects the psychological well-being of individuals. Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2003) state “[h]ow people feel and think about their own lives is essential to understanding well-being in any society that
grants importance not just to the opinions of experts and leaders, but to all people in the society” (p. 405). This information provides leaders valuable information to utilize while working with adults and young people. It gives clarity and direction as to how to work with individuals and, further, how their personality will or will not change. All of this allows leaders to make the most of working with individuals to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.

One’s satisfaction with life affects ultimately every aspect of one’s life – it influences attitude, behavior, choices, relations and interactions, it has emotional implications, i.e., depression, contributes to one’s level of stress, etc. Haybron (2007), states:

“Few things are likely to seem more platitudinous than that it matters whether people are satisfied with their lives. Some would even say that this is basically all that matters” (p. 99); specifically, he defines life satisfaction “as having a favorable attitude toward one’s life as a whole” (p. 101).

Plagnol and Easterlin (2008), state “women start adult life happier than men, but end up less happy” (p. 601). The authors attribute this disparity to the extent to which goals and aspirations have been attained; so, “for example, one’s aspirations, simply put, reaching one’s goals career wise at the expense of foregoing mating and children, may lend to one being discontented in the end. Satisfaction with family life would reflect the extent to which one’s attainments match these aspirations, the greater the shortfall the less the satisfaction” (p. 602). Based on Plagnol and Easterlin’s premise it appears that women are not fulfilling their aspirations at the same rate as men and, therefore, are less satisfied later in life.

Koropecskyj-Cox, Pienta and Brown (2007) state “the strongest and most consistent predictors of well-being are current marital status, self-reported physical health and current
employment” (p. 321). Thus, one wonders the extent to which these factors must be in play in order for one’s estimation to remain positive.

Media images also portray the desperateness of single divorced women today, shows like Flavor of Love and the Bachelor depict dozens of single women vying for the affection of one man; further highlighting the disparity connected to a woman being single. These shows often show women as sexual beings only, showing them without much clothing, often in a negative light and fighting with the women next to them for the attention and affection of the male prize. What kind of self-esteem is a young girl to grow up with when constantly bombarded with such images? At every turn, a single woman is accosted with images that lead her to believe she is somehow deficient for not being married. Even kid shows tend to reinforce this same theme – movies such as Aladdin, Beauty and the Beast, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, etc. show single women to be first sexual beings, second, fragile and very often unable, incapable of taking care of their needs. Again, the reoccurring theme is often that she needs to be dependent on a man for rescuing – further instilling a woman’s need for a spouse or her utter uselessness if un-companioned.

Carter and Glick as cited in Feldberg and Kohen (1976) state “the United States has among the highest divorce rates of all industrialized countries but it also has among the highest marriage and remarriage rates;” further, “the American ideology of the family emphasizes personal fulfillment as the reasoning for maintaining family relationships” (p. 151). Feldberg and Kohen (1976) also noted that according to Burgess and Locke and Baum, “most people view the family primarily as an emotional unit, oriented to individual well-being, and expect it to be the one group in which they will find stable interpersonal relationships which offer support, sharing and intimate communication” (p. 152).
The quality of one’s social environments is also thought to have an impact on a woman’s life satisfaction. The social environment as well as one’s stress level related to such influence one’s estimation. For instance, the quality of the social environment, the level of chronic stress at home or work, emotional and psychological functioning which includes issues of self-worth, optimism, sense of personal control (Repetti, 1998; Taylor, 1995; Vandewater, Ostrove & Stewart, 1997) all come into play in noting one’s outlook concerning life satisfaction. Work and family are thought to greatly impact one’s satisfaction and well-being. In considering the factors that lead one to be satisfied with one’s life issues such as the division of labor, ability or comfort in fulfilling family or work tasks, quality of one’s relationships, as well as one’s ability to balance tasks, assignments, work, relations, etc. are factors to consider as well as one’s ability to adequately balance them also.

Mezirow (2000) states:

The process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action (p. 7-8).

A factor to consider in addressing one’s life satisfaction is the work, work roles, i.e., leadership or positional value, and education one is engaged or has accomplished. Hayes and Way (2003) interviewed young adult women who had been raised mostly by mothers. Many of those interviewed were now single mothers themselves – the authors found that the “actual work experiences of the women interviewed reflected a model in which compromise and pragmatics often overrode the models of choice and upward mobility” (p. 373). To put it another way, a
woman working a job she hates or that is in some other way unfulfilling but yet pays the bills may change her outlook on life.

According to Diener et al. (2003) “income is most strongly related to subjective well-being (satisfaction) at very low levels of money, where small increments in wealth can have a substantial impact” (p. 411). Thus, people’s abilities to care for themselves or those around them, especially for items related to survival – food, shelter, clothing and the like, color the assessment of satisfaction with life’s current and past state of affairs. The authors go on to say, “the hypothesis is that SWB results from meeting innate and universal human needs and not from meeting desires that are not related to needs” (p. 411). In other words, the premise is that one will observe major increases or decreases in life satisfaction when one is without basic necessities. A certain level of negotiation is necessary in the evaluation of one’s life satisfaction. “Negotiation is not a sphere in which women feel at ease” (Gilliss & Kaltreider, 1997, p. 211).

As stated by Baxter Magolda (2008) “self-authorship evolves when the challenge to become self-authoring is present and is accompanied by sufficient support to help an individual make the shift to internal meaning making” (p. 271).

**Definition of Terms**

*Single Women*

Single divorced women are defined as unmarried women formerly married (divorced) women who are not living with a romantic partner.

*Leadership*

The ability to set goals and standards, exert influence on others to make things happen and then be held accountable for the outcome (Spielvogel, 1997, p. 190).
Delimitations

This study will focus on qualitative data obtained through in-person interviews of five single divorced women leaders to ascertain each one’s life satisfaction. Participants will also answer questions regarding socioeconomic status, race, education, family & friend relationships, and spirituality.

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 is a summary of the literature related to single divorced women in leadership’s life satisfaction and focuses on topics related to identity; the impact of work, family, friends, income, education, children/childlessness and/or spirituality; adult development; social clocks and satisfaction and assessment of life satisfaction.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology describing the research design, participants, data collection, instruments to be utilized, variables, materials as well as procedures the researcher will use in collection of data and analyses.

Chapter 4 introduces the respondents interviewed via pseudo identities and describes the results of the Life Satisfaction Interviews of each of the single divorced women in leadership.

Lastly, Chapter 5 analyzes and synthesizes the qualitative data and offers a conclusion on the life satisfaction of the five single divorced women in leadership researched.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the conceptual framework of the author’s life satisfaction study of single divorced women in leadership. While there is not an abundance of literature available specific to single divorced women in leadership life satisfaction let alone literature on African American women in leadership, the researcher will address and formulate a model of the studies found. Specifically, issues related to identity: how factors such as work, family and friends, income, education, children or childlessness and spirituality are viewed regarding single divorced women in leadership to determine or estimate one’s level of life satisfaction. Factors such as those cited are explored as well as the impact of single divorced women’s social clock on their satisfaction evaluation. Finally, differences due to cultural factors on single divorced women in leadership’s interpretations concerning their life satisfaction are investigated as well.

Women in Leadership

First, studies specific to single divorced African American women in leadership are scarce. A Catalyst survey, Advancing African American Women in the Workplace: What managers Need to Know, notes, “African American women are not advancing as far in corporate America as their white, Asian, and Latina counterparts. The biggest barriers they face are negative, race-based stereotypes; more frequent questioning of their credibility and authority; a lack of institutional support; exclusion from informal networks and conflicted relationships with white women” (Brown, 2004, p. 46). Thus, the challenges faced by African American women in leadership in the workplace may greatly detract from their satisfaction with life.

Second, there are not many studies specific to single divorced women in leadership. Therefore, the researcher will address women in leadership in general and will then make inferences that emerge from the literature in relation to single divorced women in leadership.
roles. Hertneky (2010) discussed the role of balance for women in leadership in relation to one’s self-identity. Hertneky studied female college presidents’ view of themselves as leaders. Through narrative evaluation he looked at how women in college president roles defined themselves as leaders, their personal attributes, career aspirations and relationships influencing their self-identity as leaders. In this study, Hertneky (2010) found that these women accepted that leadership included “loneliness and distance as well as connection and praise . . . a dance of integration and living with paradox” (p. 4). Thus, women who have an understanding that leadership has such a cost may also have a view that aligns life satisfaction different from women who are not in leadership. Further, Hertneky (2010) noted that for women in his study (college presidents) they recognized “the cost of leadership” to include a lack of a personal life; “for them, balancing is a dynamic, on-going process . . . they choose to carry the responsibility of the position and feel it counterbalances the privilege and an honor to be able to serve” (p. 7).

Bainton (1997) notes that women need to develop a mature professional identity. She goes on to say:

You don’t have to be a chair, managing partner, dean or president to be a leader in your chosen professional field. However, there are several essential requisites to follow (1) you must be already a true professional; (2) you must be willing to continue to master the subject by trial and failure, pain and discomfort; (3) you must be at the stage in your life when you can enjoy other people’s success more than your own (p. 255).

Ruderman and Ohlott (2002) looked at the “underlying forces guiding the personal choices and trade-offs in the lives of managerial women” (p. 5). The resulting themes of their study were authenticity, connection, controlling your destiny, wholeness and self-clarity which they explained as “self-knowledge.” They note that “[w]omen high in self-clarity approach
transitions and chaotic situations with the perspective that they can learn something from them regardless of what happens, and they can admit mistakes and learn from failures as well as successes” (pp. 136-137). Thus, women in leadership positions have a type of life composing view – which again, I contend may have a very different impact of one’s life satisfaction – regardless of the personal cost or lack. According to Spielvogel (1997) “women in visible leadership positions must confront the feared effects of envy and competitiveness in themselves and others” (p. 202). “Understanding yourself is a necessity if you are going to undertake the responsibility of directing the actions of others in carrying out the goals of an organization. If you don’t understanding yourself, there is no way you can size up other people accurately” (Bainton, p. 257).

While one accepts that there is a certain level of sacrifice that goes along with female leadership – just how much is over the top or taints one’s view of life satisfaction. For instance, Anderson, Diabah and Mensa (2011) researched how women in political leadership positions are often presented or rather, misrepresented by the media. Women, most especially in these types of leadership positions [political] are “often discriminated against”; portrayed in a manner not conducive of respect of leadership such as “only as mothers, daughters, sex objects”; and that more focus is drawn to her “family relationships and appearance rather than her political record and experience” (p. 2510). How one is presented to others may have a significant impact on one’s life satisfaction as it may color the perception of those with whom one interacts or serves calling into question one’s professionalism and ability to perform in leadership. Bailey (2001) states, “a leader who has no followers is, by definition, not a leader” (p. 40). Bailey further stated “the idea is very simple: to be a leader, a person must have followers . . . , a definition of the
word “leader” means—it must hold in any political setting, in any culture” (p. 40). Lastly, Bailey included, in his definition of leadership that a leader must lead and make decisions.

Antonakis, Cianciolo and Sternberg (2004) state:

Most leadership scholars probably would agree, in principle, that leadership can be defined as the nature of the influencing process—and its resultant outcomes—that occurs between a leader and followers and how this influencing process is explained by the leader’s dispositional characteristics and behaviors, follower perceptions and attributions of the leaders, and the context in which the influencing process occurs. A necessary condition for effective and authentic leadership is the creation of empowered followers in pursuit of a moral purpose, leading to moral outcomes that are guided by moral means (p. 5).

Elsesser and Lever (2011) conducted a large scale survey to determine whether gender bias against female leaders has persisted. The researchers found gender bias has still persisted regarding women in leadership. Essentially, role congruity – the level in which one is seen or considered to be performing in gender stereotypical roles still has an impact on the perception of women in leadership positions. According to Elsesser and Lever, “role congruity theory predicts female leaders suffer two types of prejudice: descriptive and prescriptive” (p. 1556).

Descriptive bias occurs when female leaders are stereotyped as possessing less potential for leadership than men. Prescriptive bias occurs when actual female leaders are evaluated less favorably because leadership is seen as more desirable for men than for women . . . If they conform to their traditional gender role, women are not seen as having potential for leadership; if they adopt the agentic characteristics associated with
successful leaders, then they are evaluated negatively for behaving in an unfeminine manner (p. 1556-1557).

Such estimation leaves women in leadership in a particular bind and further lumps an additional weight to one’s leadership role, performance and satisfaction personally as well as professionally.

Additionally, the authors, Elsesser and Lever (2011) studied whether or not “a trend does suggest that gender bias seems to be minimized in studies using actual bosses in actual organizations” (p. 1558) compared to hypothesized situations. In other words, when individuals rated their own actual boss being female her estimation was more favorable than when questioned about preferences about their boss in hypothetical situations. “Culture defines the expectations for women’s and men’s roles in society and sets the norms and values in social behavior” (Cheung and Halpern, 2010, p. 184).

Cheung and Halpern (2010) addressed how women rise to the top of their professions when they have significant family care responsibilities. They discussed that there are two stories concerning women in leadership around the world that are either “very good or very bad” (p. 182). They state:

For the first time in US history, women are close to surpassing men in their employment rate, largely because most of the jobs lost in recent recession have been in manufacturing, construction, and finance, where the jobs are largely held by men. . . . Women are better educated than ever before, they comprise the majority of undergraduate college enrollments in industrialized countries and are catching up in the developing countries (p. 182).
The bad news, the authors note, is while women have made tremendous strides and progress in the work world and hold 50% of middle management positions that “despite their (women) middle-management success, only 2% of Fortune 500 CEOs and 2% of the Fortune 1000 CEOs are women” (p. 182). Further, the authors state that the sacrifices necessary for women to succeed are different from that of men. For instance, almost half of top executives have no children, and almost half of all women in the United States with salaries greater than $100,000 have no children; one-third of all women who began their jobs at research universities without children ever become mothers and among those who attain tenure, women are twice as likely as their male counterparts to be single 12 years after obtaining their doctorate. The presence of children signals stability and responsibility for men, who are assumed to be better workers because of their roles as breadwinners. The identical situation for women has the opposite effect. The choice for highly successful women has been clear: Choose either a baby or a briefcase (p. 183).

Even within religious institutions, where one would presume there would be a major protector and advancer of women’s leadership attainment, where “women are slightly more involved than men in religious congregational participation and general leadership and recently even outpaced men in enrollment in seminary programs . . . [yet] less than 5% of all head clergy in US congregations are women” (Adams, 2007, p. 81). In fact, for most of Christian history, official church policies have excluded women from holding clergy positions (p. 80), “the situation for Catholic women aspiring to the priesthood has not changed. In the Catholic world, the closer one approaches the sacred space of the clergy, the more quickly women disappear” (Wallace, 2000, p. 507).
Estler (1975) states, “[i]n our culture with its clearly defined sex roles, bright women are caught in a double bind between the desire for social acceptance and intellectual achievement” (p. 365). The author went on to state:

Major attributes found in most professional roles, including those in educational administration such as persistence, drive, personal dedication, aggressiveness, and emotional detachment, are often considered to be masculine . . . and those who do accept such roles are subject to conflicts and ambiguities . . . they are often required to adopt a complex life-style to accommodate both home and work responsibilities (p. 366).

Derrington and Sharratt (2009) state women have to “develop determination and iron will. . . often have to fight harder, wait longer and survive more scrutiny . . .” (para. 2) to achieve top leadership positions. Eagly and Karau (2002) state, “prejudice toward female leaders follows from the incongruity that many people perceive between the characteristics of women and the requirements of leader roles” (p. 574).

Eagly and Carli (2008) state, there is a “set of widely shared conscious and unconscious mental associations about women, men and leaders (p. 3). The authors go on to state:

Women are associated with communal qualities, which convey a concern for the compassionate treatment of others. . . affectionate, helpful, friendly, kind and sympathetic, as well as interpersonally sensitive, gentle, and soft-spoken. In contrast, men are associated with agentic qualities, which convey assertion and control . . . aggressive, ambitious, dominant, self-confident, and forceful, as well as self-reliant and individualistic. The agentic traits are also associated in most people’s minds with effective leadership . . . (p. 3).
Lambert (1995) listed a few illustrative definitions of leadership by various theorists. She states:

Peter Senge (1990): *Leaders* design learning processes whereby people throughout the organization deal productively with issues and learn the disciplines. (Michael Fullan [1993] uses a definition that is similar to Senge’s).

Phillip Schlechty (1990): *Leaders* invite others to share authority. Others are those who accept the invitation and share responsibility.

Stephen Covey (1991): *Leaders* foster mutual respect and build a complementary team in which strengths are made productive and weaknesses become essentially irrelevant.

Roland Barth (1992): *Leaders* make happen that in which you believe while working with all in a community of leaders.

William Foster (1989): *Leadership* is the reciprocal processes among leaders and followers working toward a common purpose.

John Gardner (1990): *Leadership* is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group (followers) to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared with his or her followers. (In 1991, Sergiovanni’s definition was essentially the same as Gardner’s.)

Joseph Rost (1991): *Leadership* is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.

Margaret Wheatley (1992): *Leadership* is context-dependent and relational among leaders and followers, with an emphasis on the concepts of community, dignity, meaning and love (p. 30-31).
Lambert went on to state that “in most of these conceptions, the processes of either the “leader” or of “leadership” are summed up by a single verb: design, foster, invite, persuade, influence (p. 31).

Noor (2004) studied 147 employed mothers at Oxford and the Oxford City Council examining the relationship between work-family conflict, role salience, and well-being in a study of employed women. The study is fairly significant as it highlights the impact of work and family on women. The majority of the participants were from the University of Oxford. The aim of the study was to see if role salience combined additively or interactively with work-family conflict (work-interfering-with-family (WIF) conflict and family-interfering-with-work (FIW) conflict) to predict well-being (job satisfaction and symptoms of psychological distress). Further, explaining the link between work and family domains in relation to how these activities stress women is beneficial in determining their life satisfaction. A short description of the study was emailed to 400 parents at Oxford – 152 expressed an interest in participating and were sent the questionnaire – 127 completed and returned same. Additionally, 50 questionnaires were sent to the Oxford City Council – 20 of those were returned.

Bailey, Eng, Frisch and Snyder (2007) make a comparison of hope and optimism as they relate to life satisfaction. Hope was stated to be related but conceptually different from optimism. Optimism is considered to be the stable tendency to believe that good things will happen while hope specifies both the ability to generate plans to reach goals and the belief in the energy to implement these plans. Studies were conducted of various quality of life surveys. The current study is limited by the use of a domain specific measure of life satisfaction. Study 1’s participants were 332 psychology and business students from Baylor University who received course credit for completing a group of questionnaires, the order of which was randomized. The
LISREL 8 software package was used to evaluate goodness-of-fit and estimate confirmatory factor analysis models. Study 2 consisted of 215 participants solicited through a variety of means (direct, email and fliers). No incentives were offered and informed consent complied with federal, state and institutional guidelines. The data in both studies was similarly analyzed. The distinction offered by the study of hope versus optimism is fairly relevant in further or future study of life satisfaction.

Bishop, Martin and Poon (2006) focused on the study of older adults’ life satisfaction. The researchers looked at how health, socioeconomic status and social support affected the perception of life satisfaction for 320 older adults. The authors assert that life satisfaction declines after year 65 and that older adults’ life satisfaction is more a comparison of past with present and/or future. The study was conducted to provide a better understanding of life satisfaction and to see how health, SES and social support relate to congruence and happiness in later life. The article is a meaningful study. Further, it would be useful for future research to highlight specific differences in life satisfaction especially in terms of how it relates to past and present event/states. The University of Georgia Survey Research Center assisted in generating a sample of octogenarians and sextagenarians with random-digit dialing.

Clemente and Sauer (1976) highlight a study regarding the impact of race, socioeconomic status, marital status, perceived health and social participation upon the life satisfaction of adults in the United States. The study made six hypotheses such as “Whites score higher on life satisfaction than blacks,” and “There is a direct relationship between both indicators of SES and life satisfaction” (p. 628). The authors provide possible reasons for the results of the study as well as implications for future research. The article is a worthwhile place for others to build upon – to establish and/or provide other researchers a benchmark for future analyses. Data was
drawn from the 1937 General Social Survey or NORC at the University of Chicago. The data came from a national survey of 1,504 individuals over 18 living in non-institutional arrangements in the US. Interviews were conducted in March 1973 by the staff of NORC.

Degges-White and Myers (2006) studied chronological age, subjective age, wellness and life satisfaction of 224 women between the ages of 35 to 65 and found that women whose subjective age was equal to or less than their chronological age had greater wellness which was a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The limitations of the study include a sample not demographically representative of the overall population as the study was conducted on predominantly well-educated Caucasian women. Volunteers were recruited through a variety of means (email notices on electronic mailing lists that serve predominately adult females and special interests groups that include midlife women; flyers at women’s centers and health organizations; snowball sampling was implemented, and face to face recruitment used at women’s centers, classrooms and church groups). Participants completed three paper-and-pencil assessment instruments, including a Subjective Age Questionnaire, the Five Factor Wellness Inventory, the Satisfaction with Life Survey and a brief demographic questionnaire. As the researchers found a strong relationship between wellness, income and life satisfaction, more research on factors that contribute to the well-being of midlife women is needful to determine whether these findings are consistent across other demographics as well.

Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) discuss the need for a multi-item scale to measure the life satisfaction of individuals as a cognitive-judgmental process. The scale is designed around the idea that one must assess the satisfaction levels of individuals in regards to their life in order to actually measure their life satisfaction with it. In several different studies individuals were given a 48 self-reported item survey concerning life satisfaction in order to
make correlations of satisfaction with life. As the study found, there were moderately strong correlations among nearly all the subjective well-being scales it provides a relevant basis for further research. Participants in Study 1 were 176 undergraduates at the University of Illinois who were enrolled in introductory psychology classes – two months later, 76 of those students were re-administered the scale. Secondly, Study 2 consisted of two different samples of undergraduates – Sample 1’s 176 students and a different group of 163 undergraduates enrolled in introductory psychology classes. In addition to the SWLS, subjects were also administered a battery of subjective well-being measures. A third study was conducted of 53 elderly persons living in Urbana-Champaign area who volunteered for the project. In this case, each participant was interviewed about their life for about an hour by a pair of trained interviewers.

Lavallee, Hatch, Michalos and McKinley (2007) developed the Contentment with Life Scale (CLAS) to assess contentment, fulfillment and self-discrepancies in relation to life satisfaction of Anglo-Americans. The authors found that the CLAS produced a close to normal distribution of scores, had excellent reliability and was sensitive to differences in life conditions. The CLAS was found to be the best predictor among three self-report life satisfaction measures. The article provides valuable information to be further studied to assess the life satisfaction of not just Anglo-Americans, but other individuals as well. Twenty-five hundred participants were sent mail-out surveys (494 were returned a 20% response rate), simple random samples were generated from a provincial telephone directory service – 5,000 questionnaires were sent to the provincial samples (780 were returned a 16% response rate). Any member of the household who was 18 or over was asked to complete the questionnaire and return it in an enclosed stamped envelope within a month of receiving it.
Loewenstein et al. (1981) conducted a study regarding the satisfaction and stresses of being a single woman 35 to 65 years old who was never married or previously married. Life satisfaction was found to be related to things such as good health, not being lonely and having many casual friends. The authors research the stresses and rewards in the lives of a sample of single women whose singleness was an ongoing long term state and the way these are related to life satisfaction. While the finding of this article is notable, as this is a small modest study, it would be beneficial to expand this study on a larger scale. Further, the study was limited by the lack of a control group of comparable married women. The sample consisted of 60 women who were interviewed to determine their level of life satisfaction. Care was taken not to use independent variables to define life satisfaction – instead 4 or more highs were used to indicate High Life Satisfaction, 4 or more lows indicated Low Life Satisfaction and other combinations were defined as Medium Life Satisfaction.

Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park and Seligman (2007), discuss their research findings of 12,439 US adults and 445 Swiss adults to measure character of strength, orientations to happiness and life satisfaction of participants. In both studies, the character strength was found to be the most highly linked to life satisfaction. One of the major limitations of the study can be seen in the size of the two sample groups surveyed – the US group was substantially larger in comparison to the Swiss group which raises question of the correlations found in the study. US respondents completed the three measures of interest on the Authentic Happiness website (www.authentichappiness.com) between September 2002 and December 2005. Respondents register on the website, provide demographic information, complete measures of their choosing and receive immediate feedback about their scores. The Swiss sample was recruited in several ways – via advertisements passed out in public places, undergraduate students in a psychology
class and members of senior clubs and residence homes. The Swiss sample was given questionnaires which were translated to German to complete and return by mail or in person.

Renshaw (2007) looked at perceived criticism respondents perceive from another individual. The researchers found that perceived criticism predicted symptom fluctuation, treatment outcome and relapse rates across many disorders in situations where the criticism came from family and/or romantic partners actually living with participants. The sample consisted of 66 undergraduate students, ages 17 to 33, from a large intermountain western university which fulfilled a psychology course research requirement. Only participants with significant levels of depressive symptoms (initial scores of 13 or above on the Beck Depression Inventory) were admitted into the study. Two weeks after completing the first set of measures, the participants was contacted via email and provided a link to the second website to complete the questionnaire again. Also, a Relationship Assessment Scale was completed to provide a general measure of relationship satisfaction so this variable could be controlled. The second group included 220 undergraduate students initially enrolled in the study online via a secure website where they consented and completed the questionnaires. All procedures were approved by the University of Utah’s Institutional Review Board. The limitations of this study include that it was only conducted of undergraduate students. Additional research on this topic may be relevant as it relates to the mental state and/or its effect on participants.

Identity

Vandewater et al. (1997) suggest a woman’s personality development as well as the social role in which she is involved is a predictor in her well-being. In their study, the authors brought together literature on role involvements and well-being and personality development noting “theories of adult development generally view well-being in adulthood as a
developmental achievement that both affects and is affected by personality development and social role involvement” (p. 1148). Further, they state, “[r]ecent empirical work on the relationships between personality, role involvements, and well-being has suggested that the development of identity is associated with well-being for women in midlife” (p. 1148). Essentially, Vandewater, et. al. expected and found strong correlations in their study that a woman’s social role and her personality development both influenced each other. In other words, the role in which a woman performed helped to shape her personality but her personality also influenced the social role in which she filled and the quality of one’s role and personality leads to a greater sense of well-being. Their study included women aged 48, 66% of whom were married, 23% divorced and 10% single – 83% of them were mothers; 89% of them worked outside the home; 48% had earned doctorate and 27% master’s degrees.

McCrae (2002) examined the maturation of personality psychology as it relates to adult personality development and psychological well-being. The author discusses that there is now a generally accepted model of personality traits that endure through adulthood which remains essentially unchanged despite the many changes and problems individuals experience during life. For more than 25 years personality was thought to be more an influence of socioeconomic status, living conditions and a result of the health care available to individuals. Today, personality traits are believed to be rooted in biological factors that continue throughout adulthood and, further, these traits are about who people are as well as why and how they act the way they do. McCrae found that “individual differences in personality traits are extremely stable in adults, even over periods of as long as three decades” (p. 309) even though individuals, for the most part, during that time period will have experienced major life changes in family, friends, career and health. Changes in personality were mainly found with changes in the brain as a result of Alzheimer’s
disease or through some kind of major brain injury. Secondly, the researchers concluded that as individuals mature their levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness increase while their neuroticism, extraversion and openness declines.

Baxter Magolda (2008) states “self-authorship, or the internal capacity to define one’s beliefs, identity and the social relations, has emerged in the past 15 years as a developmental capacity that helps meet the challenges of adult life” (p. 269). Baxter Magolda (2001) conducted a 21-year longitudinal study of young adults 18 to 39 which supports Kegan’s stance that complex epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development is necessary for adults to build complex belief systems to form a coherent sense of identity (p. 269).

Lastly, McCrae (2002) found that coping is strongly influenced by personality; it is relevant not only to the degree of psychological well-being, but also to the form in which it is manifested. Personality was found to exist as a stable entity – that while even though individuals experience many changes in life, their personality is relatively stable and constant. In other words, people are not erratic and undependable as a result of the difficulties and challenges they may experience. If an individual’s personality is that of a sound, realistic, level headed nature, that individual will essentially be the same when trouble arises even though those troubles may weigh heavily on them. Individuals with say a positive affect would continue to have that same positive affect throughout their adulthood.

Daukantaite and Bergman (2005) conducted a longitudinal study of females 13 to 43 in regards to subjective well-being. Specifically, they looked at the relationship between optimism in adolescence and subjective well-being in adulthood. As noted by Diener (1984) subjective well-being consists of one’s assessment of life as a whole. The longitudinal study completed by Daukantaite and Bergman consisted of following 297 women from age 13 in 1968 to age 43 in
The authors studied the attitude of the women when they were adolescents regarding their outlook concerning their future. At age 43 the girls’ attitude, now as women, was again evaluated using the global life satisfaction scale in relation to how each woman currently liked their life. The authors found that the girls who at age 13 viewed their future more optimistically were more satisfied with their current state in life at age 43: “A significant correlation . . . was found between attitude to future in adolescence and optimism in adulthood” (p. 291).

Luthar, Doyle, Suchman, and Mayes (2001) studied developmental themes in a woman’s emotional experiences in relation to parenting. One of the notable aspects they studied was in regard to women’s overall feelings of satisfaction – whether positive or negative – to being a mother. Essentially, the authors studied how a woman’s psychological traits related to her experiences as a mother. They studied 91 mothers who had at least one child between 5 and 16 years old, the mother’s average age was 34.9 years, 77% were from a minority group, 58% African American, 9% Hispanic, and 33% Caucasians; 18% had at least one child, 36% had two children and 46% had three or more children; lastly, 32% were high socioeconomic status, 68% were low or low-middle socioeconomic and 20% received state assistance. The authors utilized the Washington University Sentence Completion Test Measuring Ego Development Short Form 81 to assess each woman’s development. Further, they found that a woman’s ego development was correlated with her maternal affective experiences. Thus, the better a woman perceived her role or experiences as a mother, the more favorably she estimated herself in relation to life satisfaction.

Linville (1987) looked at one’s multiple cognitive structures or self-aspects which are activated based on a person’s experiences and thoughts at the time – the intensity or frequency of an event lead to one’s estimation of the impact of such. In her study, she looked at 106
undergraduates (men, women, freshmen and upperclassmen) to test their self-complexity in terms of how they saw themselves. Linville believed that one’s self-complexity affects how one deals with life’s stressors – thus, she contends that self-complexity then will positively or negatively influence one’s view in terms of life satisfaction. “When self-aspects are few and undifferentiated, a stressful event in one aspect tends to spill over and color thoughts and feelings about other aspects” (Linville, 1987, p. 664). Schleicher and McConnell (2005) hypothesized based on Linville’s self-complexity work that “those facing negative life events (i.e., greater stress) would subsequently report relatively better well-being (i.e., fewer physical symptoms and less depression) . . .” (p. 398).

However, Ryan, LaGuardia and Rawsthorne (2005) studied self-complexity in relation to well-being. In one study they found self-complexity to be largely unrelated to well-being – in another they found that authenticity of self-aspects that constitute self-complexity to be associated with greater well-being. In other words, they found that when individuals are authentic in regards to their self-aspect – the authenticity is what really made the difference. When one performs a job, task or role and can be true to self in its performance, it leads to a much greater sense of well-being or satisfaction with life.

People should mentally separate their self-knowledge, keeping thoughts about various traits, behaviors or roles distinct. When people view themselves differently in their different roles, for example, a negative event relative to one role (e.g., poor performance evaluation) may not disproportionately affect self-views relevant to other roles (e.g., friend, spouse, volunteer) (Koch and Shepperd, 2004, p. 728).

Again, the more roles a person fulfills in life and the more distinct those roles are greatly impacts his or her assessment of life satisfaction as a result. Thus, a woman who, for instance, is worker,
mother, friend, spouse, etc. may have a greater sense of life satisfaction than a woman whose sole self-concept is of herself as a worker only or in instances where her roles all run together with little delineation as to where one ends and the other begins.

Erikson (1968), states “the problem of adulthood is how to take care of those to whom one finds oneself committed as one emerges from the identity period, and to whom one now owes their identity (p. 33). Kroger (2002) put it this way: “identity as formed in adolescence, according to Erikson, involves finding an optimal balance between identity and role confusion; this resolution provides the initial framework through which the biological, psychological, and social demands of adult life are encountered” (p. 1). Demonstrating one’s ability to interpret life, responsibilities, relationships, etc. colors one’s identity and one’s assessment of the life living.

Work, Family, Friends, Income, Education, Children and Spirituality

An awareness of any conflict that might exist concerning work-interfering-with-family impacts individuals and family-interfering-with-work are essential to the adult development process as well as one’s satisfaction with life. “Work and family are two central domains in most adults’ lives” (Noor, 2004, p. 390). Noor’s study revealed that family-interfering-with-work conflicts lead to greater distress for the women. In other words, a working mother carried more stress and/or distraction into the workplace as a result of dealing with, for instance, a sick child at home as opposed to work-interfering-with-family conflict situations. Although the study was done of a specific group of women, it still provides an overview of the conflict which exists for women in the work and family arena which allows one the opportunity to develop greater coping mechanisms to increase life satisfaction.

Examining the link between work-family conflict and well-being is beneficial as changes in the number of women working and caring for families has increased tremendously in the last
30 years (Noor, 2004). Explaining the link between work and family domains in relation to how these activities stress women is beneficial to leaders, employers, etc. Inter-role conflicts concerning the demands of work roles versus the demands of family roles provides the reader an understanding of how difficult the demands of working woman juggling family responsibilities and work responsibilities can impact one’s outlook.

The family-interfering-with-work conflict is more significant than work-interfering-with-family conflict (Noor, 2004). Employed women are concerned with being a good mother (not allowing work to interfere with family activities) and a good worker (not allowing family demands to interfere with work commitments); however, between the two conflicts, Noor found that family-interfering-with-work is more related to employed women’s well-being. As even though the woman’s work role may be seen as an “extra” role, it is still psychologically important to her self-image to be seen as a good employee. When women are employed they are still the primary caretakers of home and family, therefore, their conflict between work and family roles are higher than that of men. Merriam and Clark (2006), state “there is harmony within the core self; conflict comes from outside or from efforts to be other than the authentic self. . . self is highly individualistic in that more power resides in the person than in socio-cultural forces” (p. 34) – socio-cultural forces are domains such as spirituality, work, education and family.

As long as family alone is believed to care for and promote people’s well-being, formal organizations can be based on principles which ignore or conflict with that well-being. Therefore, single people who participate in these organizations are under a great deal of pressure to marry and obtain the emotional benefits which they and others assume characterize family life (Feldberg & Kohen, 1976, p. 153).
Merriam and Clark (2006) say the modern understanding of self “implies the existence of a core or authentic self that is there to be found and assumes that the individual has the power to find it” (p. 33); Maslow (1970) refers to it as self-actualization; Rogers (1961) says the goal is “to be the self which one truly is” (p. 166). Thus, as Hoare (2006) put it, “some adults will enhance their intellectual powers, . . . develop more mature mental mechanisms and coping styles, . . . advance to the ethical level of principles and action . . . move to higher levels of consciousness . . . [while] others remain static or deteriorate” (p. 9).

Feldberg and Kohen (1976) believe that “according to dominant cultural ideology people believe that the family is an independent and separate institution for personal life” (p. 158). Therefore, one’s satisfaction is directly thought to be tied to being married and having children. As women were previously thought to be more satisfied with their lives if they were married or mothers, it is necessary to consider whether such is the case currently. The authors, Lee, Seccombe & Shehan (1991) analyzed General Social data from 1972 through 1989 on personal happiness of married and never married individuals; Lee et al. noted that “the well-being of married and never-married were significant and formerly married persons were generally found to have the lowest levels of well-being of all types” (p. 839).

Adult Development

According to Hoare (2006) “adult development means systematic, qualitative changes in human abilities and behaviors as a result of interaction between internal and external environments” (p. 8). Adult development focuses on an individual’s ability or lack thereof to deal with life’s changes and how the individual then, in turn, interprets those changes (Hoare, 2006). Further, Hoare lists external resources to be “adequate finances, strong kin and friendship networks, community assets and support, available transportation, learning opportunities and
tools, competent medical care, low levels of stressors and affirming work and civic environments” and internal resources as “good health, adaptive capacities, positive coping strategies, motivations for ongoing growth, curiosity, a sense of self-efficacy, openness to experience and varied interests” (p. 9).

Merriam and Clark view how an individual “develops” as a function of historical and cultural norms in conjunction with chronological age (p. 38). Hoare states “by middle age the adult has learned to be less concerned with external standards” (p. 13) which may account for variance found. Mezirow (2000) studied women who returned to the community college after a number of years; his theory focuses on how one creates meaning from his or her life experiences: the process by which we transform our taken for granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will provide more true or justified to guide action (pp. 7-8).

Lambert (1995) states:

When new experiences are encountered and mediated by reflection and social interaction, meaning and knowledge are constructed, learning takes place as does adult development. When actively engaged in reflective dialogue, adults become more complex in their thinking about the world, more tolerant of diverse perspectives, more flexible and open toward new experiences (p. 28).

Langer and Rodin (1976) cite “control” as an important factor in influencing behavior. The authors state that it “is not your ability to control the actions of others, but the personal power you possess over your own life and the events in it” (p. 148). They further state:
You have made choices in your life—some good ones, and maybe some poor ones—and they have brought you where you are today. And while you may not consciously think about it, you will make many more choices in your life. When your sense of control is threatened, you experience negative feelings (anger, outrage, indignation) and will rebel by behaving in ways that will restore your perception of personal freedom (p. 148).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Four Phases of the Journey toward Self-Authorship</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemological dimension: how do I know</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Following Formulas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe authority’s plans; how “you” know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define self through external others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act in relationships to acquire approval</td>
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(Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 40).

According to Baxter Magolda (Table 1 above) there are four phases an individual goes through at each level, epistemological, intrapersonal and interpersonal – initially individuals start out following formulas then move onto a crossroads where they begin to question; one then evolves to becoming one’s own author and in the end creates an internal foundation.

According to Kohlberg (1984) cognitive-developmental theories make the following assumptions:
1. Basic development involves basic transformations of cognitive structure which cannot be defined or explained by the parameters of associationistic learning (contiguity, repetition, reinforcement, etc.), and which must be explained by parameters of organizational wholes or systems of internal relations.

2. Development of cognitive structure is the result of processes of interaction between the structure of the organism and the structure of the environment, rather than being the direct result of maturation or the direct result of learning (in the sense of a direct shaping of the organism’s responses to accord with environmental structures).

3. Cognitive structures are always structures (schemata) of action. While cognitive activities move from the sensorimotor to the symbolic to verbal-propositional modes, the organization of these modes is always an organization of actions upon objects.

4. The direction of development of cognitive structure is toward greater equilibrium in this organism-environment interaction, that is, of greater balance of reciprocity between the action of the organism upon the (perceived) object (or situation) and the action of the (perceived) object upon the organism. This balance in interaction, rather than a static correspondence of a concept to an object, represents “truth,” “logic,” “knowledge,” or “adaption” in their general forms. This balance is reflected in the underlying stability (conservation) of a cognitive act under apparent transformation, with development representing a widened system of transformations maintaining such conservation (p.8).
Issues Related to Social Clocks and Satisfaction

Haybron (2005) notes that “life satisfaction attitudes, in short, are governed by norms” (p. 6). Social time is probably the most powerful construct in understanding certain forms of adult development (Merriam & Clark, 2006, p. 38). Therefore, as stated by Hoare (2006) “various contexts, such as work environment and home life, with their varied support mechanisms, play important roles in fostering movement in one or another direction” (p. 9).

According to Neugarten (1976), social time is “the socially prescribed timetable for the ordering of major life events” (p. 16). Therefore, a woman, who for instance has not had children by a certain age may feel less satisfied with her life if she has not fulfilled childbearing by what is considered her socially prescribed time to have children. That same rationale fits for many other things as well, be it marriage, schooling, buying a home or any other domain she is socially expected to have mastered or experienced by certain chronological time periods. Therefore, it is the adherence to; in this case, a woman’s social time line which often denotes her life satisfaction. As the “normative pattern is adhered to, more or less consistently, by most persons within a given social group” (p. 16) one’s perception regarding her devotion to say childbearing is generally what will affect her sense of satisfaction relating to those events. Rotter (1966) states, “some believe that their lives are controlled by external factors, such as fate, while others feel the control is internal—in their own hands” (p. 191).

Life Satisfaction for African American Women

Few studies have been done in an effort to determine the meaning of well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction of African American women. The beginning of this type of research focused on aging adults and aging successfully as well as what aging successfully actually means. Tangri et al. (2003) stated “middle adulthood or midlife is often viewed as a
transition rather than a distinct phase of the life cycle” (p.113). Typically, it is seen as a time when individuals reevaluate their past successes and failures, statuses, etc. and then renegotiates those factors not to one’s liking to establish a better life and relationships. The authors further noted “scholarly work on midlife African American women is virtually nonexistent (p. 114). Although experts argue about what the true definition of life satisfaction is and what it consists of, there is a general consensus that midlife is a time of reappraisal and important decision making (Tangri et al., 2003).

Heath (2006) in a study of the relationship between spirituality and mental health of Black women stated, “regardless of educational status, economic conditions, or social position, Black women are continuously plagued with stress” (p. 156). She went on to discuss the view and “stereotype” of the Black woman as matriarch in the family – “the glue that holds everything in the community, church and family together” (p. 163) and essentially noted that while it sounded good it ignored the profound traumas Black women experienced. Heath also states, “those who serve as the familial and community adhesive sometimes experience a greater sense of isolation and often find themselves exasperated” (p. 163).

Implications Related to One’s Life Satisfaction Assessment

Emotions lie at the very heart of social relationships. Their expressive elements encapsulate a social signaling and mutual regulatory system of phenomenal sophistication and importance, not least of which because they are the primary channel through which cultural environments enact their encouragements, prohibitions, and sanctions (Consedine & Magai, 2006, p. 123).

Further, Consedine and Magai (2006) went on to say that “emotions act as a major interface between the personal and interpersonal . . . social and biological spheres of human functioning; .
. . nature and nurture . . . person and environment” (p. 123). Therefore, the state on one’s emotions affects the manner in which his or her life satisfaction is viewed. In other words, if a person, at the time of her assessment of her level of life satisfaction, is emotionally whole, stable, fearful, etc. those results will be seen in her answers or estimation regarding her level of satisfaction or lack thereof.

Haybron (2005) refers to “emotional state theory, which identifies happiness with having a favorable overall emotional condition [which] differs from hedonism mainly by focusing more on mood-related affects and on nonconscious aspects of affect, such as individuals’ emotional dispositions” (p. 4). Thus, how one identifies his/her life experiences will have a direct impact upon his/her assessment in terms of life satisfaction or perceived well-being.

Erikson (1987) stated “you don’t just prove or disapprove a life-cycle theme, but learn to observe the changes and then decide whether the terms you first chose to name the strengths or weaknesses are the right words” (p. 136). He went on to say that identity formation “did not differ for men and women” but that it “all depends on what the culture makes of it” (p. 137).

Summary

It is imperative to determine the factors that influence the life satisfaction of single divorced women. The implications are far reaching as there are more than 91.3 million single, divorced and widowed women in the US (U.S. Census Bureau, January, 2010, Facts and Features Report). Happiness, life satisfaction, well-being and even optimism are again, all interrelated for the purposes of this study. Income or socioeconomic status, work or career status, presence of strong family or friend relationships, culture and various other topics are all believed to be predictors of one’s assessment in terms of satisfaction with life as well as whether any one of these factors are considered to be temporary or necessary.
Further, life satisfaction may be proven to be a self-fulfilling prophecy –

For example, if someone assumes, for whatever reason, that he is not respected, he will, because of this assumption, act in such a hostile, overly sensitive, suspicious manner that he brings about that very contempt in others which “proves” again and again his firmly entrenched conviction (Watzlawick, 1984, p.95).

In such cases, a woman’s estimation of her satisfaction creates or establishes the factors that make her satisfaction or dissatisfaction true.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

The researcher used a qualitative research design which is based on the social constructivism worldview: “the goal of the research was to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Thus, my intention was to understand or interpret the meanings the single divorced women in leadership interviewed in this study had regarding their life satisfaction. To that end, I used a life history method as life histories depict one’s entire life (Creswell, 2009; Denzin, 1989; Maxwell, 2005) in examination of single divorced women in leadership’s life satisfaction via face-to-face interview with five single divorced women in leadership. Further, qualitative researchers are a key instrument as they “interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researcher’s own experiences and backgrounds that is largely inductive, generating meaning from the data collected in the field” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8).

A life history perspective was selected as the preferred method in this study in order for the researcher to assess the single women in leadership’s evaluations through their own perspectives. Further, a life history narrative blends well with a life satisfaction study as both seek to understand the meaning or assessment of the whole life as opposed to segments or snapshots of time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Diener et al., 1985).

The depth of the study generated through qualitative design will strengthen the literature concerning the study of life satisfaction of single divorced women in leadership roles. The purpose of this study was to look for themes in the stories of single divorced women in leadership who were interviewed to highlight similarities and differences while also noting, if any, what factors were present (or not). The opportunity for a second interview was provided to
the women approximately one to two weeks after the initial interview to get clarification on information originally provided and any lasting thoughts the women had to gain greater insight into the study’s results. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed and coded for themes, similarities and notable differences.

Research Questions

This study focused on life satisfaction of single females in leadership:

1) How do single divorced women in leadership assess their overall life satisfaction and to what they attribute their life satisfaction?

2) What factors are most necessary and influential in their general life satisfaction?

3) What extent do others’ perceptions have on single divorced women’s life satisfaction?

Participant Selection

Five single divorced women in leadership roles between the ages of 40 to 55, living in the United States, were interviewed. The participants in the study were secured by referral and convenience method. The leadership roles held by these women included supervision, authority or motivation over others as a regular function of their position. Thus, a leadership role might be a pastor, administrator or director provided the position included direct reports. Again, for the purpose of this study, single divorced women were defined as unmarried formerly married women. General demographic information was collected on each participant as well (Appendix B). Interested volunteers were sought from several organizations such as the University environment, religious institutions, corporate world or community organizations. An email was sent to several of the aforementioned agency types requesting volunteers – I then met with and interviewed five single divorced participants.
The women were interviewed individually in a comfortable environment such as at their home or office. They were assured their responses were confidential. While it was not my intention to focus on friends – any who were single divorced women in leadership who were interested in participating, were certainly welcomed to be interviewed.

Interview Protocol and Procedures

I reviewed literature on life satisfaction and single divorced women in leadership in order to find suitable interview questions. However, as no existing survey or interview protocol was found that suited the purposes of this study, I developed an initial set of interview questions (Appendix A) based on the research questions. After incorporating feedback from consultants, I used an initial set of questions to interview a single divorced woman in leadership regarding her life satisfaction as a pilot interview. Afterwards, I checked with the participant as to which questions might have been unclear or confusing and for any potential questions to add that might be relevant to this study (Maxwell, 2005). The first interview participant, however, did not have or offer any interview question changes or suggestions so no changes or adjustments were made to the interview questions.

Each participant completed a general demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) which provided information on each woman’s age, educational background, leadership position, ethnicity and family history. The information was taken to make further comparisons and analyses of participants. Participants interviewed were found by convenience and referral. At the beginning of the interview session, the purpose of the study was explained to interview participants along with the Consent Form. Each participant gave verbal consent and signed the Consent Form (Appendix C) as well. Participants then completed the general demographic questionnaire after which the researcher then began the interview. “The interview is an inter-
subjective enterprise of two persons talking about common themes of interest” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 192).

Participants were asked open-ended questions in a conversational manner. Therefore, the meaning the women attached to issues of life satisfaction was the result of both the interviewer and interviewee’s interaction.

An interview is said to be a conversation with a purpose, but it would be a rare conversation that was entirely one-sided, no matter how dominate one member of the dyad might be or how submissive the other. In a very real sense, then, investigator and respondent together create the data of the research. Each influence the others, and the direction that the data gathering will take place in the next moment is acutely dependent upon what data have already been collected, and in what manner. There is in the investigator-respondent dyad transitivity, a continuous unfolding, a series of iterations. Each shapes the other and is shaped by the other (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 100).

Participants were encouraged to speak at length about each question. Follow-up questions were asked as necessary for clarification or if the participant failed to address a particular issue. Interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription.

Data Analysis

Each interview was audio recorded for transcription and analysis of data. Common themes were sought for amongst participants as outlined by Kvale (1996), Creswell (1998) and Maxwell (2005). Themes found to be present for all participants was then presumed to be a prevailing factor in the life satisfaction of the participants in this study. The researcher utilized this method throughout. Further, a factor or a theme noted by a majority of participants was also assessed to be a possible contributor to life satisfaction for single women in leadership. Baxter
Magolda’s theory of self-authorship also guided the interpretation and analysis of participant data. Themes which presented in only one participant were considered insignificant. The following procedures were utilized as well:

1) Interviews were transcribed verbatim, including both interviewer and interviewee statements (McLellan, Macqueen & Neidig, 2003).

2) Transcripts were read in full (Maxwell, 2005).

3) Each participant’s transcript was reviewed and themes were noted that summarize rather than interpret the statements (LaPelle, 2004).

4) Emerging themes were highlighted and grouped in categories.

This process was done for each participant. Major and minor themes were charted across participants. As the researcher’s goal was to look for themes participants had in common, issues which may have been noted only by one interviewee were not addressed or included unless interpreted to have relevant meaning on the analysis results.

Using the constant comparative method makes probable the achievement of a complex theory that corresponds closely to the data, since the constant comparisons force the analyst to consider much diversity in the data. By diversity we mean that each incident is compared with other incidents or with properties of a category, in terms of as many similarities and differences as possible. This mode of comparing is in contrast to coding for crude proofs; such coding only establishes whether as incident indicates the few properties of this category that are being counted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 114).

Credibility

Prior to the invitation for final interview each of the single divorced women interviewed was given the opportunity to read over her transcript and analysis to be used in the study so that
if there was anything she wanted to clarify or believed was misrepresented she had the opportunity to correct or restate the information. Further, based on procedures outlined by Maxwell (2005) the following steps were taken to assure credibility:

1) Each initial interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

2) I reread the transcripts for discrepant evidence to see where it supported and conflicted with my findings, as well as to check for alternative explanations and negative evidence.

3) Member–checking was utilized. I contacted participants a second time and allow them to verify, elaborate or clarify my interpretation of their story. Email was utilized to send participants full transcripts, generated themes and examples from the transcripts which support the themes. I met with each woman at different locations to conduct the initial interviews.

4) Discussion of the finding with teachers, participants and colleagues.

5) I also compared findings with existing theory.

6) These methods and others described earlier enabled me to deal with the major validity threats to my conclusions: bias in the selection of single divorced women in leadership and self-report bias for both (p. 130).

**Ethical Issues**

This study proposed no serious ethical problems. Data from single divorced women in leadership will be confidential. Further, I took measures to minimize the possible effect of my own assumptions.
Researcher Subjectivity

As a woman who fits within the description of the women being studied—single divorced women in leadership—I was careful not to skew data found toward any perceived notion, especially as there were issues or responses that came up which I had definite agreement or disagreement.

I was a teen mother at 17 years old and though I initially went to college to pursue an associate’s degree so as to be able to get a reasonable job, I always felt that I was somehow left behind and, therefore, had to diligently work to play catch up to my high school counterparts. I am interested in the life satisfaction of women, particularly single divorced women, who have made life altering choices and how these women now view the outcome(s). Much of my life was lived as a single parent first, followed by education and career second. As a result, for much of my early years I felt as if I were trying to catch up with my counterparts – women who in my opinion had focused first on cultivating a career, putting off the family aspect until they had attained their educational/career goals. In fact, in many instances, have found many of these women never even got around to ever doing the full family thing (husband and/or children), preferring instead to continue to cultivate career-focused goals.

These ideologies shaped the focus of this study. My preconceived ideas put me at a bit of a disadvantage in conducting this research. For instance, years ago I remember attending a conference where I ran into an old friend from grade school. I told her that I always felt like I was trying to catch up with everyone else who had pursued the education and career first and then had children and spouse. My friend indicated that was a really interesting perspective because she never felt that way and she had not gone to college right out of high school nor was she a teen pregnancy. Like me she went to college as a non-traditional student years later, she
had married, divorced and did not have children, and was not at all feeling like she had missed the boat. Thus, I am painfully aware that my own prejudice in terms of what constitutes life satisfaction is something I have addressed so as not to poison the results as to what constitutes a single woman’s life satisfaction and/or how that satisfaction is reached. Even now, years later, my children grown, married, pursuing their own goals, there is still an unsubstantiated undercurrent that I have to catch up – that I would be so much further along if only.

The most serious threats relating to this Life Satisfaction Study included: a) Interview interpretation – I may not have correctly interpreted the true meaning being communicated to me, b) Individuals may have come from too similar a background – and thus, the results may appear to have a similar pattern, c) I made assumptions or generalizations of the data based on my biases or prejudices.

Solutions were noted above previously, how I would minimize these threats and increase the credibility of my conclusions. Further, every attempt was made to utilize participants from diverse backgrounds, ages, and fields. Interviewing candidates who came from various sources helped to ensure the researcher was not interviewing “peas in a pod.” Lastly, I have addressed my own prejudices and biases concerning the study.

Also, it is possible that an undercurrent of what is really going on, was missed either by my interpretation, the language or terminology the women used or that it was just not stated in clear enough terms to stand out. Further, my lack of relationship with the single divorced women surveyed may have possibly hindered the level of honesty revealed by the women I interviewed. In other words, the interviewees may not have been as comfortable opening up to me as a result of our not having a friendship beforehand. On the other hand, interviewing women with whom I have some familiarity may have also changed the quality of the answers
given as they may not have been as willing to indicate any dissatisfaction or disappointment. According to Maxwell (2005) “bias and reactivity occur due to influence of researcher on the setting or individuals studied” (p. 109).
CHAPTER IV. INTERVIEWS

This chapter provides the participant demographic information of each of the single divorced women in leadership interviewed for this study as well as each responders answers. The chapter following provides the analysis and findings of interviews.

The researcher focused on the perspectives of single divorced women’s assessment of her life satisfaction. I interviewed a total of five single divorced women between the ages of 40 to 55 years old for this study. The single divorced women who participated in the study volunteered to an interview which took approximately 60 minutes (interview questions, Appendix A). Each participant was then emailed a copy of the transcript and researcher assessment in order to correct or clarify statements made. Additionally, the single women interviewed were assured their participation in the study was confidential: names, places, and other tags that might indicate one’s identity have been changed.

Participant Demographics

Demographic information was collected for further or future study as well as to provide a comparative analysis of the results reported by participants (demographic questionnaire, Appendix C). The women interviewed were all African American and the interviews took place in various locations selected by each participant. Two interviews were conducted in participant offices, two in participant homes and one at a local coffee shop. This was done to ensure the location was convenient and comfortable for those involved. The participants’ marital years were 6, 8, 13, 15 and 21 years and the number of years each was divorced ranged nearly the same – 4, 6, 8, 15 and 20 years. All the women who participated in this study had at least one child, one had two children and two women had four children; their children ranged in ages from 12 years old to 28 years old. Participant titles included a professor, supervisor, assistant retail
store manager and an executive and assistant director. The education of participants ranged from one with high school diploma, one with a bachelor’s degree and three women had earned graduate degrees. The overall estimation of participants’ life satisfaction was good to needing improvement – which will be addressed in greater detail in the following sections. Lastly, participant incomes were one below $30,000; two each earned incomes between $30,001 to $60,000 and $60,001 to $90,000.

Annie Mae

Annie Mae is a 49 year old divorced African American supervisor interviewed at her office. She was married a total of six years, has one child who is 25 years old and still living at home and has been divorced 20 years. Annie Mae holds a bachelor’s degree, earns an annual income ranging $30,001 to $60,000 and rated her satisfaction with life as needing improvement.

Specifically, Annie Mae indicated in response to her satisfaction with life overall that she was “Not very satisfied because . . . I am not where I should be spiritually. When I find I am where I should be spiritually, I am satisfied.” Spirituality presented as a major factor or contributor to Annie Mae’s estimation of life satisfaction throughout her interview. Many issues related to her spirituality were weaved throughout the conversation – praying, hearing from God, obeying God, humbling herself and following what she believe God was leading her to do, say or be were clearly vocalized. Furthermore, it tied deeply to her sense of purpose as it was only through her obedience to God that she experienced ‘being satisfied.’ In fact, Annie Mae indicated that only when she is engaging in such activity that “I feel that I am living an abundant life and it has nothing to do with anything material.”

Annie Mae, when asked in relation to adding one thing to aid in her life satisfaction what she would add, indicated that she would add a self-improvement type course as she believed it
would assist her with all types of things like work, reading her Word and other things as well. Further, she indicated that if she could take one thing away to aid in her life satisfaction, she would take away her stubbornness, which she described as not being obedient to the will of God and just being... submissive.

In relation to how Annie Mae’s support system impacted her life she noted that her supporters impacted a great deal and consisted of her church, family and mom. However, as to how she believed others’ perceptions have influenced her life path, she stated, “I can’t say I put too much stock in what or how others perceive me. Not to the extent that it makes me want to do something.”

Annie Mae did not believe she was living her purpose as she stated, “I’m 49 years old and I don’t think I even know – No, I don’t know my purpose.” Further, she indicated that not living her purpose greatly impacts her life satisfaction “because I believe people who operate in purpose – they enjoy life, and are just happy people – they really are.”

Lastly, when asked of Annie Mae if she had a chance to do life over again, would she do anything differently? She replied, “The choices I’ve made have caused me to miss out on a lot of things; my choices have impacted my family—my daughter negatively. So, yes, I would do a lot of things over again.

Ruth

Ruth is a 49 year old divorced African American assistant retail store manager who was interviewed in my home. She was married a total of eight years and has four children who are 21, 23, 26 and 28 years old. Ruth currently resides with one of her children and has been divorced for eight years. She has a high school education and a few years of college but has not
completed a degree program; Ruth earns an annual income below $30,000 and rated her life satisfaction as needing improvement.

Ruth indicated in response to the question of her overall life satisfaction to date that:

*There are things I am satisfied with and things I am not satisfied with: I’m not satisfied in my job area—I wish that I had finished my education or obtained a degree so I could get a better job because I want more and I don’t have the education to do it or to say this is what I’ve accomplished. I still live below my means or maybe I’m not saying that right—I live below what I’d like to live like.*

Ruth further indicated that if she could add one thing to her life to aid in her satisfaction that she would add *education—a degree, I would complete my education.* The one thing she mentioned she would take away from her life to aid in her satisfaction if she could would be to take away *being gullible . . . I would just make better choices.*

Ruth did indicate that what has been the most necessary and influential on her life satisfaction or dissatisfaction has been her *spiritual life.* . . . *God has been my source of peace in a world of chaos.* Further, Ruth stated a constant in her life that has been influential and necessary has also been having the same friends for years which as she put it, added *stability* in her life. Other than the stability Ruth found in her friendships, she indicated she did not have a support system. She said:

*I think I didn’t have a support system. If had one, wasn’t aware of. As far as like family, someone in my corner to like push me. I had friends and family of course, but everybody was struggling to make it. I think I was real independent; I didn’t always let people know I needed support—I did things because of pride in some ways. I mean people did what they could but everyone had children themselves, they had their own issue.*
Furthermore, Ruth added the following example as evidence of a lack of support in her situation as:

_I just see different ones who have degrees, doctorates, who say, their mom – she helped me with the kids or she told me what to do. I don’t know, for instance, when I look at my life, one friend married someone and when it didn’t work out—she knew not to marry again or chose not to marry again, or a couple of my other friends who stayed married to the same man. I don’t know, I guess I would always base my life around my friends because I felt like I was just out there, feeling my way—I didn’t have any structure. I wasn’t taught. But, I don’t know if anybody is taught so I could just be asking for something that’s not there. But, I don’t know, you know how you could just say, ‘my mother taught me this or my mother taught me that . . .’ I don’t know, my mother and I didn’t have that kind of relationship where we had conversation about life and things so I kind of lived in my own little dream world and made my own decisions—foolishly. But everybody doesn’t have that—there are some people who’ve been adopted and they may not have anybody and they know what they want and they just go for it. Me, I was just like out there. I really didn’t have a vision -- you know, I guess that’s what it was._

Ruth was clear that other’s perceptions have a lot of impact on her choices and life path. She indicated, _I always thought other people made better choices than I did, I always thought what would this friend do or what would that friend do and maybe too much where I didn’t appreciate my own life or own choices. Ruth went on to say, I tend to think about what others think even when I make stupid choices._ She did, however, indicate that she is now learning to be confident in her own choices.
In speaking with Ruth in relation to living her purpose and how that impacts her life satisfaction, she said, *I think I haven’t reached my potential. I’m getting old which kind of makes me feel like I’m running out of time. But, I think I’m on my way to my purpose, I don’t think I’m there yet.*

Lastly, when Ruth and I talked about whether if she had a chance to do life over again, would she do anything in her life differently, her answer indicated a sense of reckoning – she stated,

*You know I would love to say I’d like to start all over again and marry one man and have all my kids by that man but then I probably wouldn’t have the same kids. Maybe I wouldn’t be where I am now, but I think everything happens for a reason. . . But, I think if I had to do it all over again, I think I would be more spiritual minded . . .*

Evelyn

Evelyn is a 55 year old divorced African American executive director of a non-profit organization who was interviewed at her office. She was married a total of 21 years and has two children who are 18. Evelyn currently has one child still living at home and has been divorced four years. She has a graduate education and earns an annual income between $30,001 and $60,000. Evelyn rated her life satisfaction as good.

Specifically, Evelyn indicated, *I’m enjoying what I’m doing right now with my life in terms of my travels and, you know helping my girls get through school and being able to help them get through school, so I’m pretty satisfied.* However, Evelyn indicated that she would add a mate (companionship) and would take away some stress to aid in her satisfaction.

In terms of what Evelyn attributes as being most necessary and influential on her life satisfaction or dissatisfaction she found a constant in *a couple of board members who have*
become friends who really keep me grounded about the reality of non-profit, about the reality of what I can really accomplish and what I can really do.

Additionally, Evelyn stated in regards to the impact her support system has on her life that it affected her a lot – and that her greatest supporters were her mom and children and her father when he was living.

When asked regarding others’ perceptions on Evelyn’s choices or life path, she indicated that, I think when I was younger what people thought or how people perceived what I did or who I was, was important to me but it’s not that important anymore. Evelyn further indicated that she believed she had basically evolved to a place where what others thought of her or in relation to her was no longer important, I think that comes with time, that comes with age, because I know who I am, I know what I’m trying to do, I know the impact I’m trying to make in my community. . I’m comfortable in my skin, my ability, and my capabilities.

Evelyn also believed that she was living her purpose—she indicated her purpose has always been to people . . . I go out and help serve food, pass out clothing, talk to the people . . . it’s getting out there and helping . . .

Lastly, when asked of Evelyn what, if anything, she would do differently in her life if given the opportunity to do it all again, she stated that she would just change when she pursued her degrees; If I had it to do over again, I would go straight through school . . . and then maybe I might be Dr. Evelyn . . . at this point, it’s not going to happen I’m too tired and I’m satisfied with just being Evelyn.

Ledell

Ledell is a 54 year old divorced African American assistant professor and counselor whose interview was conducted at my home. She was married a total of 13 years, has one child,
24 years old who is still living at home. Ledell has been divorced for 15 years and has a
graduate school education. Ledell earns an annual income between $60,001 and $90,000 and
rated her life satisfaction as needing improvement.

First, when Ledell was questioned concerning her overall life satisfaction to date, she
indicated that,

Well, in theory, most of the time I am unhappy although I know realistically I should be
happy for many, many reasons. But I am unhappy because I am lonely, alone . . . my
mother’s dead, my father’s gone. I’ve lost all connection with my brothers and sister, it
was never there anyway. And then I moved so much . . . I’ve lost a lot of contact with
people so I feel very isolated and I’m 54 and that worries me quite a bit . . . although I
have learned I do really well by myself, I go out to movies . . . dinner by myself, I can do
everything by myself, so that’s a good thing but the finances, the finances should be in
good stead now. I’m still at the point where I was when I divorced – in debt! To date, I
am disenchanted with the quality of my life. I envisioned being content with a companion
or husband and having a comfortable lifestyle. Such is not the case. Since my divorce 15
years ago, I am still alone and struggling to make ends meet—despite numerous years of
advanced education and having secured a well-paying job. And my last move cost me a
lot of money, first and last month’s rent and security deposit and then I had to stay with
someone and pay her rent and then I still had to pay where I was living at the time of the
move so I still haven’t picked up from that, I’ve lost ground. And, because I know the
Lord I should be grateful, I have a new home, I have a new car, I have a great job, but
there still is a sense, and maybe it is human nature . . . there could be more.
Ledell went on to say that if she could add one thing to aid in her life satisfaction it would be a companion—*he does not have to be a husband, male companion, let’s put that in bold . . . there just aren’t . . . eligible African American men that have the basics for me.* Ledell spoke in detail concerning the criteria she would like to find in a companion and further indicated she believed:

*Some women, I think, do better when they are in a relationship, and I think I am one of them and I always feel like something is missing without the relationship even though I survive and survive very well and know how to do things in my life without it but I always feel a loss because it isn’t there.*

Ledell indicated that if she could take away one thing in her life to aid in her satisfaction that she would take away some of her decisions. *Some of the decisions I’ve made have put me where I am. I’d take my ex-husband away.*

Further, when I asked Ledell what had been the most necessary and influential concerning her view of being satisfied or dissatisfied with her life Ledell spoke about the dream one has about one’s life. She stated,

*. . . when you think about the dream for your life, I envisioned for instance a home like this, it’s so pretty, friends, having a barbeque, a little bit of travel, those things I think are basic and I have none of that. So, I’m really very, very isolated and that’s what makes me so lonely. I’m social, I’m very social, but I’m detached. I maybe have a couple of people but when they get too close, I back off. But also, the reality is the movement, the moves, again, I’m still doing it to myself, again, I’ve never been satisfied anyplace. Even when I was with my husband, after two or three years, I’m ready to move, I’m ready to move. So there’s this factor in me that cannot attach.*
Ledell said that in terms of the impact of her support system on her life that there were a couple of people she could always count on.

*I have people in my life that support me . . . but it’s not a really large support system . . . I have no family, none, even my own son. My support system is not strong enough . . . So even though I have a support system, a momentary support system, for longevity it will not be there. So, again, my support system is limited due to family dysfunction, death, relocation, and so forth.*

Ledell also indicated concerning the extent others’ perceptions have on her life choices or path,

*It used to be very important that people perceived me as capable, nice, in a positive way and it still does to an extent as it’s learned behavior but it’s not so important anymore, I’d say since my mother’s death – watching my mother and father and how they thought they had all these friends, but in the end there was nobody there. So it’s not as important what people think because most of them are not going to be around when you really, really, really need them so why put emphasis on them. I have now lived long enough to not “give a damn.”*

When asked of Ledell if she believed she is living her purpose and how that impacts her life satisfaction she stated,

*I think I am where I am because God enabled it to be. There is no way I should have made it through grad school, I had no money, I was coming out of a divorce, I was scared, I didn’t believe I could do it and God kept moving me. There were times when I shouldn’t have had employment and God moved me into job when I should’ve been without a job. So I believe God has always had his hand, and I believe the hand has*
always moved me towards what it is he wants me to do. So, yes, I do believe that where I am is where I am supposed to be, that I am a helping professional . . . So, I’d have to say yes....but not to the full extent....as I am not serving as a full vessel of God and that has an adverse effect on my life satisfaction . . . I am where I am supposed to be but I am not charged up. There is a lot more I could be doing that would be helpful to many other people and I’m not doing it.

As Ledell continued talking she indicated, No, I’m not satisfied, I’m disappointed but not enough to pick myself up and do something about it. It’s called lazy.

Lastly, Ledell said, when asked if she had the chance to do it over again, if she would do anything different and why that yes....I would do many things over...particularly marriage and children as both have caused a tremendous amount of heartache and life dissatisfaction.

Lois

Lois is a 45 year old divorced African American assistant director of an educational program. Lois was interviewed at a coffee shop. She was married a total of 15 years; has four children, 12, 14, 16 and 18 years old – three of which still reside at home with her. Lois has a graduate school education and earns an annual income between $60,001 and $90,000 and rated her life satisfaction as good.

Specifically, Lois indicated in terms of how satisfied she is overall with life to date and why she would make such an evaluation that,

I’m pretty satisfied; I mean my kids are healthy, probably professionally I’m not where I would want to be, but I am okay with where I’m at especially concerning that I am working on my dissertation and I’m in a good position that will help me or lend itself to
be helpful with that but just in terms of overall satisfaction I would say that I am pretty satisfied. I couldn’t ask for anything or I don’t feel like I am missing anything major.

Lois further stated that if she could add one thing to her life, if anything, to aid in her satisfaction that she would add, having my dissertation complete, it’s just a milestone that I want to have done but it’s so challenging trying to stay focused and just trying to go through the process itself, it’s just grueling.

Lois stated when asked what she would take away from her life, if anything, to aid in her satisfaction, I don’t know that I would take away anything. She explained further that,

I mean I could say bills, never having to pay bills ever again and just live a free life and just do whatever I want but that’s rather farfetched. I think overall though I am happy with my life even though life is just going to throw you curve balls—that is just what it is. But I think when I look at my life, who I am is a totality of my experiences so I feel like if I were to take an element away, I wouldn’t really be who I am. So, the growth that has happened in me as a person, I think if I took something away I wouldn’t be who I am. . . So, I feel like if I took something away, I wouldn’t . . . maybe some growth that I needed to have happen, wouldn’t or maybe I might be still stuck in a certain way of thinking because I didn’t experience something. So I don’t think I would take anything away.

Lois said in terms of what has been the most necessary and influential on her life satisfaction or dissatisfaction is having gone to college, . . . if I took that element away I don’t know, things would look, very, very different. Lois explained that college lead to growth on several aspects—such as points of view and income realized from having obtained a formal education. She also stated, I don’t know if I would have been as satisfied with my life had I not
had any education because I feel like because of my degree I’ve been able to live a life that I can say I’m satisfied with.

In terms of the impact of Lois’ support system and the extent it impacted her life satisfaction, Lois indicated:

*Umm, that’s interesting, that’s interesting because I’m not from Toledo, I’m originally from Cleveland, so when I came to Bowling Green to go to college I was a student and then when I got married and started my family, I had four kids, we stayed in the Toledo area. So I don’t have any family here so that family support really wasn’t available, I mean my mom would come up and do what she could to help support but you know sometimes you just needed that sitter to do something, not available. . . . Working a job and taking care of a family and not having a support system around, it’s kind of hard because we were part of a church and we were actively involved in our church but I wouldn’t say that it so much provided a huge support, there was some support there because you meet people and maybe somebody’s kid could babysit every once in a while or maybe provide some extra support when I was home schooling my kids, talking to people. But I was probably more the support for other people because I always like to research stuff to the nth degree just to learn something new. But I don’t really say I have a strong support system. I’ve had to learn to be self-sufficient . . . I had to learn how to kind of make it work, whatever that looked like so I don’t know and I taught my kids that way . . . as my kids got older, my older kids were a support when I went to class I would prep dinner for the week and my older daughter would maybe put the meat in the oven or maybe cook vegetables or whatever to go with that. . . . I looked at what do I have in hand and I had to make use of what I had around me because I didn’t have that external to*
come in from the outside and help. . . . Sometimes people don’t understand that and they’re like Oh, you’re strong and so independent but when you have had to do what you had to do, that’s just the way it is.

Lois also stated in terms of what extent others’ perceptions have on her choices or life path that,

. . . I’ve always been the person who said, ‘I don’t care what other people think about me.’ I’ve always been like that and I think because it is what it is with me. What you see is what you get; when you see me that’s who you are getting. If I was upset about something, it showed. I mean I wasn’t a tyrant or anything it’s just that you can clearly see I was not in agreement with whatever it is because it showed on my face. But, I think as I’ve gotten a little older, I used to say that I didn’t have a game face, now I think I’ve gotten a game face. So when I think about perceptions its more that I use that to an advantage as opposed to being controlled by somebody like if someone thinks this way about you that you should change to fit what people’s perceptions are. I think when I was younger growing up, I didn’t care what people thought about me but now I think about what they think, but I think about it from the stand point that I need to . . . I want something from that person, I want them to think in a certain way, like if it’s for support of a program or whatever the case may be, so overtime and just maturing, I look at perception from the perspective that I still don’t care about what people think about me but I care about what they think about me in the sense or in terms of how a program may be perceived or something like that because to foster collaboration or a sense of community you have to be concerned with what people think. . . . but as you move through life you begin to truly understand that perception piece.
Lois response in terms of whether she believed she was living her purpose as well as how that impacted her view of her life satisfaction was,

*Actually yes, . . . because I’m a helper – that’s how I see myself. Most of the stuff I have done beyond my bachelor’s degree in terms of my education has been because I feel like I am feeding into a purpose. . . . So, I don’t know, I guess pursuing a masters and pursuing even the doctorate for that matter which is very grueling work has been because of me feeling like I needed to be able to do things to impact student success, especially students of color success, and in order for me to put my feet at the table, I feel like I moved in that direction because of purpose. . . purpose is why I keep going forward. So, yeah, I would say I am living my life with purpose and on purpose and with a purpose I feel that’s kind of ingrained in who God wants me to be and when I say that I mean really getting in touch with who you are I’m living my life with a purpose and its clearly evident, I think, in the choices I make and why I make them – I mean I am very intentional.*

Lastly, Lois indicated when asked if she had the chance to do life over again, whether she would do anything differently that she said,

*I don’t know, it’s easy to be like hind sight is 20/20, but I like who I am so I don’t know that I would be me if I took any element out. Going through divorce is hard work, it’s tough but, it taught me some things about myself so if I hadn’t had that experience, would I be the same person I am today? I don’t think so. Maybe, maybe there would have been another path I could’ve chosen that would have given me that same information, but I don’t know. I feel like it’s the way it is, because it’s supposed to be that way. Who’s to say, maybe I wouldn’t have made certain choices, or maybe I would have been a drug addict or something and my life would have been totally different if I took out something,*
you know maybe if I didn’t go to church, or . . . I don’t know, I just feel like my life is what it is and I am who I am because of all of the aspects of my life, good and bad, so I embrace all of it and I’m at peace with it, and I move on and I’m just like, ‘okay.’ So the things that I’ve learned I can share those with other people. And help them to learn by wisdom as opposed to having to walk through learning things by experience.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings as well as the themes which emerged. Participants in this study all fell within the middle adulthood stage which covers individuals between the ages of 40 to 65 years old. Adult development theory notes this is the age period where one’s biological ability is still at a point when one can be active and lively which ultimately assists one’s life satisfaction (Levinson, 1986).

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences and life satisfaction of single divorced women in leadership. This information will assist leaders and those who work with them to identify and target more appropriate motivations for engaging, leading and working with these individuals.

The specific research questions addressed and answered in this section of the study concerned the life satisfaction of single divorced females in leadership:

1) How do single divorced women in leadership assess their overall life satisfaction and to what do they attribute their life satisfaction?

2) What factors are most necessary and influential in their general life satisfaction?

3) What extent do others’ perceptions have on single divorced women’s life satisfaction?

Research Question 1: How Do Single Divorced Women in Leadership Assess Their Overall Life Satisfaction and to What Do They Attribute Their Life Satisfaction?

The table below is a comparative list of each of the single divorced women in leadership’s response to the topical questions related to one’s life satisfaction assessment. First, as shown on the following chart, three of the women noted in relation to their overall satisfaction that it needed improvement; two indicated their life satisfaction was good.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topical</th>
<th>Annie Mae</th>
<th>Ruth</th>
<th>Evelyn</th>
<th>Ledell</th>
<th>Lois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Needing Improvement</td>
<td>Needing Improvement</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Needing Improvement</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Addition of</strong></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Companion</td>
<td>Companion</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtraction of</strong></td>
<td>Stubbornness</td>
<td>Earlier Choices</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Earlier Choices</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Necessary/Influential</strong></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Support System</td>
<td>Dream</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extent of Support System</strong></td>
<td>Great deal: church, family &amp; mom</td>
<td>Didn’t really have one, but stability in friends</td>
<td>A lot, parents, children</td>
<td>Not strong enough, friends, no family support</td>
<td>Not strong, some friends, self-reliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact of Others’ Perceptions</strong></td>
<td>Not much stock in it; doesn’t move to change</td>
<td>Great impact; thought others always made better choices; learning to appreciate own choices</td>
<td>When younger what others thought great impact, but no longer</td>
<td>Used to be important to be seen as capable, nice, positive, but no longer ‘give a damn’</td>
<td>Initially didn’t care, now concerned only in terms of how might be beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living on Purpose</strong></td>
<td>No, don’t know what it is</td>
<td>No, on way to purpose, don’t think there yet, running out of time</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, but not to the full extent</td>
<td>Yes, very intentional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do Over</strong></td>
<td>Yes, would make different choices</td>
<td>Yes, and be more spiritual minded</td>
<td>Yes, educational timing</td>
<td>Yes, would make different choices</td>
<td>No, what was experienced was necessary to evolve into true self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, a theme which emerged predictive of one’s life satisfaction or the lack thereof was highly related to whether one was living with purpose. Purpose is related to what is the drive of one’s life—the what, why and how of the path an individual lives (Bundick, 2011).

Kashdan and McKnight (2009) state:

Purpose can be characterized as a central, self-organizing life aim. Central in that when present, purpose is a predominant theme of a person’s identity. Self-organizing in that it provides a framework for systematic behavior patterns in everyday life. As a life aim, a purpose generates continual goals and targets for efforts to be devoted (p. 303).

It can develop from many ways—religion or spirituality; by observing others’ behavior and mimicking it, (social learning theory); or as a result of experiencing a transformative life event.
(Kashdan & McKnight, 2009). Thomas Carlyle (1795 - 1881) said, “a [wo]man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder—a waif, a nothing a no [wo]man.” In other words, a person living without a purpose one has no reason for doing or being.

Purpose is also said to be a high level psychological concept (Kashdan and McKnight, 2009). It is the leading theme or force of one’s focus and gives reason to what one does as well as why one does it. It provides a foundation and resilience to stress, pain and anguish; it enables one to persist even during periods of long suffering; it aids one’s life satisfaction, dedication and peace (Kashdan & McKnight, 2009; Wilson & Murrell, 2004; Wong & Fry, 1998). This study revealed two of the single divorced women in leadership believed they were living with purpose—thus, it was their reason for being and doing. As previously stated, individuals who have a high level of satisfaction with life tend to also estimate a high level of purpose (Diener, Fujita, Tay & Biswas-Diener, 2012).

Conversely, two of single divorced women in leadership did not believe they were living with purpose as they thought themselves unaware or unsure of their direction. Another participant indicated she was, to some extent, living her purpose; however, as she believed she was not fully invested, she felt much like the women not living with purpose at all. Kashdan and McKnight (2009) state “A person with a purpose in life should have overarching values that consistently manifest at the behavioral and cognitive level on a day-to-day basis” (p. 305). To reiterate, purpose is what drives one’s life, fuels the soul, gives it meaning and is one’s reason for getting up in the morning, facing challenges and enduring disappointments (Warren, 2002). Cohen (2008) states, “people that are able to connect their daily work with a larger overall purpose will be rewarded with higher levels of fulfillment, accomplishment, employee
engagement, and job satisfaction” (p. 1041). Thus, one’s sense of purpose will potentially influence, enhance or detract from one’s life satisfaction.

The women who did not believe they were living with purpose had personal successes of which they could be proud; for instance, working in a leadership position—as they failed to connect work life accomplishments to their purpose for being and doing they still experienced dissatisfaction with life despite accomplishments. In fact, the dissatisfaction may even be a result of the burden connected with the leadership roles in which the women serve. Many factors related to the workplace have changed rendering one’s work life less fulfilling, i.e., heavy workloads; more job stress; long work hours which can lead to more discontentment and lack of fulfillment with one’s work life (Curry, 2003). Cohen (2008) states, “if we regard the purpose of our work as maximizing our inherent potential . . . to improve the human condition . . . within this lies a path to greater organizational accomplishment and higher personal fulfillment” (p. 1041). Thus, if what we do is not tied to a greater meaning or purpose, it is shallow and unfulfilling—the more purpose we find or see in what we do, the more satisfied we are or become.

A second factor found contributing to one’s assessment of life satisfaction concerned one’s locus of control. Locus of control, whether it is internal or external, is an important part of a person. A person with a high internal locus of control believes, for instance, he or she is directly responsible for what happens in his or her life whereas a person with more of an external locus of control might believe that his or her fate is a result of bad luck—essentially that he or she cannot do anything to change his or her circumstances (Rotter, 1966). “Internals tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than externals, see their supervisors as higher on consideration and initiating structure, report less role stress, perceive more autonomy and control, and enjoy longer
job tenure” (Spector, 1988, p. 335). O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) indicate, “[a]n internal career locus of control is a belief that an individual is responsible for her own career success and in charge of creating and managing her future career” (p. 174).

Furthermore, “external career locus is reflected in the belief that an individual’s career opportunities and career success are due more to chance or luck, external interventions such as others offering her career opportunities or taking them away, or as a result of organizational interventions such as down-sizing or bureaucratic rules.” (O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005, p. 174). Bandura (1978) essentially finds a person’s belief, even if false, will keep him or her either avoiding or out of touch in situations and that will ultimately color his or her perspective in terms of capabilities, opportunities, experiences, satisfaction, etc.

The researcher found several of the women interviewed demonstrated high levels of internal locus of control. For instance, Lois showed a high level of internal locus of control when she answered in regard to eliminating or taking something away from her life to aid in her satisfaction. She stated that, “I think when I look at my life, who I am is a totality of experiences so I feel like if I were to take an element away, I wouldn’t really be who I am.” Phillip and Gully (1997) state, “[i]ndividuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to interpret a past experience, even if it is a failure, as something positive from which they can learn” (p. 794). Lois went on to provide an example and again reiterated that, “I feel like if I took something away, I wouldn’t . . . maybe some growth that I needed to have happen, wouldn’t or maybe I might be still stuck in a certain way of thinking because I didn’t experience something.” Additionally, Evelyn’s response indicated a high level of internal locus of control as she believed her decisions determined the state of her life as well as her satisfaction with it. She said, “As long as I can
keep moving, I keep moving; I did a bucket list about four years ago and I’m checking it off, I’m really doing that.”

Ledell, however, presented a high level of internal locus of control but contrary to the theorist had a lower satisfaction with life estimation. Klonowicz (2001) stated, “[c]urrent life satisfaction was related to locus of control: people with external locus of control reported less satisfaction with their current life than people with internal locus of control” (p. 42). Ledell believed she was directly responsible for the state of her life – she stated, “Some of the decisions I’ve made have put me where I am.” Her dissatisfaction appeared to be more related to reaching or not accomplishing goals or aspirations she thought she should have. Ledell spoke of, “when you think about the dream for your life; . . . I envisioned . . . such is not the case” she did a quick assessment of what she had hoped for in comparison to what she has accomplished in her estimation. How one interprets or appraises his or her life, the judgments one makes about the state of things one has accomplished or wants to accomplish – those expectations lead to one’s evaluation of life satisfaction, the more one perceives he or she has accomplished goals, the higher the life satisfaction (Dave, Tripathi, Singh & Udainiya, 2011).

Ledell had many accomplishments, noted that she or her decision making had impeded her progress and that while she was not fully living her purpose believed she was to some degree. Ledell’s evaluations demonstrate a confidence to deal with life’s challenges from a positive frame of mind; and further, displayed a conscious determination to improve life (Dave, Singh, Tripathi & Udiniya, 2011).

Ruth, on the other hand, had a high external locus of control and was dissatisfied with the state of her life. Essentially, those with high external locus of control tend to be more compliant with life circumstances, more along the lines of going along with the program as things happen
to one as opposed to one making things happen (Rotter, 1966). Ruth stated, “I wish that I had finished my education or obtained a degree so I could . . .” Angelou, 1993, stated in relation to our choices:

Each of us has the right and responsibility to access the roads that lie ahead, and over those which we have traveled and if the future road looms ominous, and the roads back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and, carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction. If the new choice is also unpalatable, without embarrassment, we must be ready to change that as well (p. 24).

When it comes to life satisfaction income, occupational status, and prestige have little effect (Czapinski, 1992; Diener & Fujita, 1995; Suh, Diener & Fujita, 1996); even positive or traumatic events (winning the lottery or being in an accident) do not have a lasting impact on life satisfaction (Brickman, Coates & Janoff-Bulman, 1978). Diener and Fujita (1995) believe that people adapt to events and resources and thus, such does not have a lasting impact on life satisfaction. Bandura (1993) states “self-influences affect the selection and construction of environments. The impact of most environmental influences on human motivation, affect, and action is heavily mediated through self-processes. They give meaning and valence to external events” (p. 118). Further, “[a]n individual’s self-efficacy has been found to affect choice of goal level, with greater self-efficacy being associated with the setting of higher goals and ultimately with higher performance;” it “is thought to reflect both an individual’s self-perceived ability and a motivational component” (Phillips & Gully, 1997, p. 792). Efficacy relates to how individuals think and feel and self-motivate and perform; thus, one’s estimation or belief regarding his or her efficacy denotes one’s actions and beliefs (Bandura, 1993).
Further, according to Kegan’s development of our consciousness, after age 40, one is able to see beyond self, stages, others and systems to comprehend how all is interrelated or connected (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010). Similarly, Baxter Magolda’s theory of self-authorship, encompasses defining one’s beliefs, identity and social relations (Evans, et al., 2010), its highest phase is internal foundation which is “grounded in their self-determined belief system, in their sense of who they are, and the mutuality of their relationships” (p. 186).

Most individuals think philosophically about their lives or the goals in which they pursue life on an everyday basis (Hedley, 2012) which also aligns a) with Mezirow’s description of self-authorship wherein we transform our thinking, i.e., the meaning one ascribes to people, places and things; habits one might have; or other ways of thinking one possesses (Mezirow, 2000); and, b) within the seven-stage transition cycle which occurs when an event or nonevent leads to a change of one’s behavior and relationships (Sugarman, 1986). Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Regalia and Scabini (2011) said “there are no adaptive benefits to being plagued by self-doubts about one’s capabilities and belief in the futility of effect (p. 444). “When people make self-satisfaction or tangible gratifications conditional upon certain accomplishments, they motivate themselves to expend the effort needed to attain the desired performance” (Bandura, 1978, p. 350).

Lastly, a further factor that presented for the single women interviewed concerned their support system. For instance, Ledell’s estimation of her support system or the limitations thereof brings to mind social cognitive theory or collective efficacy which becomes achievable through working and interacting with others. Collective efficacy refers to individuals working together—joining their individual knowledge to others, pooling these resources and skills, offering each
other support and forming alliances to do, gain or become what they cannot on their own (Bandura, 2000; Bandura, et. al., 2011).

Research Question 2: What Factors Are Most Necessary and Influential in Their General Life Satisfaction?

The factors indicated by all of the single divorced women to be most necessary and influential on each one’s life satisfaction were education, family (parent or children) and friend support and purpose. Additionally, two other themes, companionship and spirituality, emerged from a majority of the women interviewed as being influential or important on one’s life satisfaction as well. However, it should be noted that companionship, if had, was seen as something that would improve one’s life satisfaction. What a person believes shapes or authors them (Kegan, 1994). Life satisfaction is closely linked to one’s assessment of one’s ability or judgment to achieve goals and deal with life and its challenges (Bearon, 1989; Harkins, 2003; Haybron 2005, 2007; Tangri, Thomas, Mednick & Lee, 2003; Warr 2007). According to Lewis and Borders (1995) “the middle aged woman's preoccupation supposedly is trying to deal with the loss of roles that had given her identity, power, and meaning” (p. 94).

*Education*

Education was mentioned by all of the women interviewed—three indicated that adding education, would enhance the life satisfaction rating indicated as it would either aid in employment opportunity, earning potential or self-enhancement; and two spoke of how they believed it has enhanced their lives. Education is an investment that provides monetary rewards; gives one greater rewards to look toward to; and contributes to one’s well-being (Salinas-Jime´nez, Arte´s & Salinas-Jime´nez, 2013). Daraei and Mohajery (2013) found a “positive correlation between socioeconomic status and life satisfaction” (p. 69). Thus, one’s education
may certainly have an effect on how one perceives or interprets his or her satisfaction with life as it ultimately ties to one’s income. Furthermore, one’s level of paid employment was found to be a great contributor to a women’s satisfaction with life (Baruch et al., 1983; Noor, 2004) and family income as well as a woman’s paid employment was a contributor to one’s life satisfaction (Lewis & Borders, 1995). For example, Lois explained that college lead to growth on several aspects—such as points of view and income realized from having obtained a formal education. The benefits of education are many, however, a few in particular point to increased productivity, quality of life, professional status, income and job opportunity (Salinas-Jimenez et al., 2013).

Family (Parent or Children) and Friend Support

Family support whether it was that of parent or child or of a friend was a further indication of life satisfaction for these single divorced women in leadership. Family relationships can represent an essential reason attributed to one’s satisfaction as often, it is an important social organization which influences one’s life experiences as well as the ideas one associates with such. Further, one’s family support system also aids one in assisting or dealing with family events; affords one a place of comfort and encouragement in times of need; and even offers one something else, besides self, on which to focus (Gerson, 1993; Hochschild, 1989). For instance, Ruth stated, “I don’t know I just see different ones . . . who say, their mom – she helped me with the kids or she told me what to do” saw her lack of having a mother who gave her advice or helped with the kids still a contributing factor in her dissatisfaction with life.

According to some sociologist ‘peer friendships’ have a greater impact than filial relationships on one’s morale; many studies support positive relationships, particularly those between friends, as being a contributor to one’s life satisfaction estimations (Blau, 1973; Lebo, 1953; Lemon, Bengtson & Peterson, 1972; Phillips, 1961; Phillips, 1973). Having a sound base
to assist one in making decisions or even being a sounding board can have a major impact on one’s life satisfaction; supervisor support, much like that of board members, lessens the conflict and stress on life satisfaction (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008) as the quality of experiences in regards to one’s role influences a woman’s life satisfaction (Vandewater and Stewart, 2006).

**Purpose**

Simply stated purpose is what gives meaning to life (Warren, 2002). One’s sense of purpose presented as a strong predictor of one’s life satisfaction. Essentially, everyone has something that moves or propels him or her forward (Warren) that ‘thing’ guides, controls, directs one in life. Further, how we respond, answer or listen to that ‘thing’ affects one’s life satisfaction as it directly aids in one’s sense of purpose or being in line or on target with the path one is pursuing. Warren wrote that “the purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It’s far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions” (p. 17).

Living our purpose is what is thought to give life and joy to one’s life—otherwise, one goes aimlessly through life as if in the dark, aimless and without drive or determination. Again, purpose is what gives one a sense of value that what he or she does is important or worthwhile—without it one tends to just go through the motions of life (Warren, 2002). Accordingly, in line with Ledell’s thinking is the notion that God designed us with various skills, abilities, talents, and gifts on purpose so that we might serve others (Warren). Living one’s life on purpose may require one to choose the path less travelled, the difficult road as opposed to the easy one (Warren). Purposes shows as a product or result of core values and interests and is why one pursues goals (Kashdan, 2009). The more one is aligned with purpose, the more satisfied one is with life (Diener et al., 2012).
Companionship

Companionship was indicated by two of the women as something believed, that if had, would aid in her life satisfaction. Companionship was not confined to having a husband but more of another support person. Some researchers believe in relation to marriage it is not so much marriage as the quality of the relationship that contributes to life satisfaction and provides individuals with a purpose and belonging (Gove, Hughes and Style, 1983; Waite and Gallagher, 2000). Ledell, for instance, spoke at length regarding her loneliness, her desire for companionship; she stated “I would essentially add a loving and supportive male companion; not sex, I rarely think of sex.” Further, other studies found that single women who prefer marriage or to be in a relationship are not as satisfied with their life when they are without a partner (Austrom and Hanel, 1985; Frazier, Arikian, Benson, Losoff & Maurer, 1996). Specifically, one’s desire for a companion, whether married or not, is highly correlated to low life satisfaction (Lewis & Borders, 1995). Perhaps some of which is related to the role one fulfills in life and how well it is done. Role quality addresses one’s particular experience and is thought to have an impact on one’s life satisfaction (Vandewater & Stewart, 2006).

Spirituality

Spirituality was also indicated as a necessity for life satisfaction. Spirituality generally provides one with a sense of meaning—a connectedness to what one believes and is different from religion. Spirituality can also be closely related to one’s sense of purpose as both spirituality and purpose influence one’s actions and beliefs. Spirituality generally refers to what one ascribes or attributes his or her meaning of the sacred (Wink & Dillon, 2002). Spirituality is universal (Vanzant, 1992).
Other theorists believe that African American women achieve greater life satisfaction through the evolution of their spirituality (Devi, 1994; Warfield-Coppack, 1994); thus, when one’s spirituality is off-center or even if or as it shifts, it will affect one’s estimation of her satisfaction with life. Again, spirituality is different from religion – religion is regarded as a formal organized doctrine of beliefs whereas spirituality is concerned with one’s internal relationship where one attributes his or her meaning or life purpose (Vanzant, 1992).

Spirituality gives one comfort from being with others and provides support and influences one’s sense of satisfaction (Thomas & Holmes, 1992). It provides one a constant and crucial meaning through one’s interpretation of what is reverential and holy (Wink & Dillon, 2002). Thus, spiritually lends itself to providing one a greater sense of peace in the scheme of things. Further, reiterating the importance of one having a sense of purpose – a spiritual connection to whatever one attributes his or her source – through spiritual evolution, African American women gain more life satisfaction (Devi, 1994; Warfield-Coppack, 1994). Further, the stress that women experience has been attributed to less life satisfaction (Avis, Assmann, Kravitz, Ganz & Ory, 2004).

Research Question 3: What Extent Do Others’ Perceptions Have on Single Divorced Women’s Life Satisfaction?

In terms of the impact of other’s perceptions on the single divorced women in leadership’s satisfaction with life, three of the women indicated that when they were younger what others said about them registered with them in some way. However, as each grew older, more self-assured and mature, others’ opinion did not carry the same weight and, in fact, was non-consequential. It is not so much how others’ views or assesses one but how the person
interprets that message, the value or weight she assigns it that determines its importance (Baxter Magolda, 2008; Diener et al., 1985; Frisch, 1999; Renshaw, 2007).

Chou and Edge (2012) stated “Most people are concerned about others’ impressions of them and try to manage these impressions in a favorable way” (117). However, as one becomes more autonomous, one tends to care less about how others see him or her, interprets his or her actions or even what others may think about him or her. Baxter Magolda’s theory of self-authorship – initially, in phase one an individual allows others to define him or her, however, as one moves through the stages, he or she becomes more self-authoring – in the final stages one is able to choose one’s own path even when or if it is in conflict with what others believe; the individual has then become grounded in his or her own belief system—he or she operates from a place of knowing who he or she is (Evans, et. al., 2010).

Again, it is how we perceive our lives – where we should be, how we should be, whether we have accomplished our goals, what we perceive to have or lack, etc. that determines our estimation of satisfaction with life (Dave et al., 2011). Lois, for example, changed her thinking from how she initially thought of other’s perception and evolved into a way of thinking that was more purposeful which aligns with Kegan’s theory of the evolution of consciousness which states: “personal unfolding of ways of organizing experiences that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex system of mind” (Evans, et al., 2010, p. 178).

One of the women talked about how the opinion of others’ has never influenced her to change so, in that regard she took no stock in what others thought. Another indicated that as she matured, she learned to be aware of others’ perspectives so that she might utilize that information to her own advantage. In other words, she was not imprisoned or negatively influenced by what others thought but she was concerned that she be viewed positively in order to be able to get
services, finances or other resources from others. Thus, in that respect, she found others’
perspectives could be useful in reaching her goals and aspirations. Another essentially spoke of
what is termed “self-authorship” which is how one comes to understand who they are and define
his or her life and relationship with others regardless of what others might think (Baxter-
Magolda, 2002).

How Single Women Have Focused on Career or Leadership Positions

Ultimately View Such a Path in Retrospect

The research participants in this study had all married and had children prior to really
pursuing or working in leadership positions. Thus, these research participants’ path to leadership
actually developed either after divorce or having children. In retrospect, for the most part, the
ultimate view of each of these single women as to how she has focused on career and leadership
positions were indicative of both regret and acceptance. Regret, for instance, was seen in
statements such as “I would do a lot of things over again;” “there’s a lot I’d want to change;”
“I would change when I pursued my degrees…I would go straight through school; “I would do
many things over, particularly marriage and children as both have caused a tremendous amount
of heartache and life dissatisfaction;” and, “maybe there would have been another path I
could’ve chosen.” McAdams (1996) stated, “much of what is required to describe and
understand the individual person is grounded in the person’s culture and in the sociohistorical
setting within which the person’s life makes sense” (p. 296).

On the other hand, though most of the participants indicated some desire or wish that they
had done things differently there was also evidence of acceptance as several women indicated
they believed their life experiences were what they should have been. For example, statements
were made such as, “you can’t rewrite history just make better choices now;” and “I think
everything happens for a reason...there’s a lot I’d want to change but I’d be afraid to change it
because you never know what the outcome is going to be.” McAdams also discussed the modern
self—what makes me, me. He indicated six aspects of the modern self to include: [paraphrased]
a self that is worked on or made; finds legitimacy in everyday life—work and family; is
multilayered—an inner moral source, thus he spoke of the importance to be “true to one’s self;”
that the modern self develops over time—growing, changing, moving; seeks “temporal
coherence”—in other words, it needs to “construct some form of life coherence and continuity to
make the change make sense” (1996, p. 297); further, the modern self—self-narrates or tells
stories; and, lastly connects deeply with each other [one’s relationships]—primarily for personal
fulfillment (1996, pp. 297-298). Research results indicate the single women in leadership in this
study met all six of McAdams qualities in relation to the state of their life.

Lois, summed it up best as she indicated, “I like who I am so I don’t know if I would be
me if I took any element [experience] out...I feel like it’s the way it is because it’s supposed to be
that way.” Grossbaum and Bates (2002) state the “[s]uccessful negotiation of this period
[midlife] involves the appreciation of life’s achievements whilst simultaneously accepting that
all one’s dreams and ambitions may not have been fulfilled” (p. 120).

Summary

This study revealed there are factors generally in place that effects one’s life satisfaction
estimation. First, one’s sense of purpose, locus of control and support system were attributors to
the life satisfaction of the single women in this study – those who believed she was living with
purpose had a greater sense of satisfaction while those who indicated she was not living on
purpose either fully or at all, were more dissatisfied with their lives. Second, the factors which
influenced the life satisfaction of the single divorced women included her education or lack
thereof; family and friends’ support; and again, her sense of purpose. Additionally, several of the women in the study suggested her spirituality and desire for companionship to be significant contributors as well. Third, most of the research participants noted at one time she was concerned with how others thought of her and during that time it had some bearing on her; however, as each evolved she no longer placed importance on what others thought unless it would be useful in her reaching her goals.

Lastly, it was not necessary for all factors to be present for one to be satisfied with life; however, this research confirmed that at least three of these factors would be present for an individual. When these factors were not present, participants in this study tended to claim lower life satisfaction. Conversely, the importance attached to any one of the factors is what led to it being assessed as either aiding or detracting from one’s satisfaction with life.

Recommendations for Leadership

Loader (2010) states that “leadership requires a strong inner-personal life that will cope with the scrutiny that comes with such a visible role” (p. 198). Diener et al. (2003) state, “[h]ow people feel and think about their own lives is essential to understanding well-being in any society that grants importance not just to the opinions of experts and leaders, but to all people in the society” (p. 405). Thus, this research provides leaders and others valuable information to utilize while working with others as how leaders think, behave or feel is critical to the success and growth of the leaders themselves, the individuals they influence as well the organizations they lead. Furthermore, it is imperative for leaders to have an awareness of her psychological well-being as it affects aspects of her life and presence in order to be more productive and make the most of working with individuals to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.
One’s satisfaction with life affects ultimately every aspect of one’s life – it influences attitude, behavior, choices, relationships and interactions. Further, it has emotional implications (i.e., depression) and contributes to one’s level of stress. Leaders need to understand this information for self and others as it will affect the quality and effort of work one does whether leading or following. “Few things are likely to seem more platitudinous than that it matters whether people are satisfied with their lives. Some would even say that this is basically all that matters” (Haybron, 2007, p. 99).

Successful leadership requires that leaders motivate followers. This study contributes to the understanding of leadership in that it gives the perspectives of single divorced African American women in leadership voice to each one’s experiences and the impact of those on her life satisfaction. Further, for leaders to effectively motivate their followers it is crucial that he or she first have credibility with and among the people he or she leads rendering his or her ability to motivate critical to the success and growth of others and the organization. Kouzes & Posner (2003) state that “discovering yourself is the first discipline of credibility . . .” (p. 81). Leaders who are credible have less difficulty inspiring dedication, commitment and vision in his or her followers.

Furthermore, this study provides leadership scholars and practitioners as well another perspective in regard to single divorced women in leadership. Calabrese (2002) states, “Beliefs represent one of the larger frameworks for behaviors. When you really believe something, you will behave congruently with that belief” (p. 117). Therefore, when a person believes something his or her actions will align with his or her belief. So, leaders must first be fully aware of their own self, belief, actions, and/or motivations before he or she can effectively motivate others.
Credibility is a direct result of the perceptions others have developed based on the successfulness of the leader’s ability to follow through. At times, leaders are unaware of the impact of who he or she is as it relates to the reaction of others’ responsiveness to his or her leadership. Thus, leaders who are acquainted with who they are, what defines their behavior, their guiding values and principles and/or what they stand for and why lay the foundation for a sound ethical structure” (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 80).

A leader who is seen by followers to be unreliable, no matter how true, great or wonderful his or her vision may be will be unable to efficiently lead his or her followers on mere humdrum day to day activities and issues, let alone issues of change or advancement. “People first follow the person, then the plan” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 15). Senge (2006) states, “small changes can produce big results—but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious” (p. 63). Leaders who display inconsistent behavior even in what may appear to be insignificant affairs set the stage for disruption, discord and shoddy commitment from followers. “Leaders are effective because of their impact on [followers’] motivation, ability to perform effectively and satisfactions” (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2001, p. 112). This research also helps to demonstrate the gap that exists concerning single women in leadership and life satisfaction rendering this study a significant contribution to literature.

Limitations

This research study focused on the responses of a small sample of women. As it is a qualitative study one has more in-depth information from which to work, however, as the sample was small it has not been determined that a larger study would confirm or deny the research question findings in this study. Additional research would need to be done with a larger sample to determine whether these findings would again be found.
Also, though not originally intended, the sample was homogeneous; subjects in this study were all African American women. Women from other cultures might have raised issues or other factors which did not present in this study. Additionally, there may have been a problem with the wording of questions or the understanding of the answers given; though the researcher tried to control for this by sending each respondent a copy of the transcript and analysis as well as the opportunity to add, redress or clarify answers, none of the participants did; however, respondent’s failure to correct or respond, is not indicative of agreement. Lastly, the women participants in this study were interviewed only once which took no more than an hour.

Future Research

Although this study raised and answered some questions in relation to single divorced women in leadership’s life satisfaction, there are still questions to be examined on the topic. Further study of single women in leadership life satisfaction will help us to better understand the attributing factors, i.e., family, support, spouse, children, education, career, purpose, etc. Thus, deeper study into leadership in relation to the three prevailing factors present in this study for life satisfaction: education, family and friend support and purpose as well as the other two factors which arose: companionship and spirituality are suggested. Future research is also suggested with a larger sample of women – would a qualitative study with more women produce similar findings? Would a quantitative study bare the same results?

Studies which impact the lives of single women in leadership are necessary as a means to provide a better deeper understanding and investigation into the impact of age, socioeconomics and/or education on women’s lives and living; how they lead; the impact she has on others; and how best to be effective when discrepancies concerning life dissatisfaction exist. Specific studies on this particular population and/or in this area are limited, but beneficial as it will help identify
how single women in leadership can lead more fulfilling lives. A study of this nature would very much be in the interest of single women, leaders, employers, organizations, etc. – those who work, serve and/or are involved in addressing life issues of single women in leadership and how life satisfaction may be impacted by age, socioeconomics and/or education.

Similarly, comparative studies might be useful of single and married women from other cultures as well. For example, would single women who had never married or even women who were widowed report the same life satisfaction factors? Further, a study of how weighty life satisfaction really is in comparison to the personality type of women in leadership or how a single woman in leadership personality in general impacts one’s life satisfaction is also suggested. Or, even still, a study of adult development themes that present in life satisfaction of single women in leadership. This information would provide leaders more clarity and direction as they work with individuals.

Conclusion

This study collected data and determined how single women in leadership between the ages of 40 to 55 estimated her life satisfaction. First, in relation to single women in leadership’s life satisfaction this study found her purpose, locus of control and support system were strong indicators of life satisfaction. Second, her life satisfaction was greatly influenced by education; her support system as well as her purpose; her spirituality aided her life satisfaction while her desire for companionship detracted from it. Third, the single women in leadership in this study had grown to a point where others’ perceptions did not disturb her. Lastly, this information gives leaders more clarity and direction as they work with and leads individuals to achieve the goals and objectives of the leader, the individual and organization.
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APPENDIX A

Single divorced women in Leadership Life Satisfaction
Interview Questions

1) How satisfied are you overall with life? Why do you say that?

2) If you could add one thing to your life, if anything, to aid in your satisfaction, what would you add?

3) If you could take away one thing from your life, if anything, to aid in your satisfaction, what would you take away?

4) What would you say has been most necessary and influential on your life satisfaction or dissatisfaction?

5) To what extent does your support system impact your life?

6) What extent do others’ perceptions have on your choices or life path? Why?

7) Do you believe you are living your purpose? How does that impact your satisfaction?

8) If you had a chance to do it over again, would you do anything in your life differently? Why?
APPENDIX B

Single divorced women in Leadership Life Satisfaction
General Demographic Questionnaire

Directions: Please fill in or check the blank with the most appropriate response.

1) Your Age ______

2) Ethnic Background:
   African American □   Hispanic/Latin American □   Caucasian □
   Native American □   Asian/Pacific Islander □
   If other, please indicate here: ________________________________

3) Marital History:  □ Never Married  □ Divorced  □ Widowed

4) If divorced or widowed:
   Number of Years You Were Married ______
   Number of Years Since Last Married ______

5) Do you have children?  □ Yes  □ No  If yes, how many ____________
   Are they still living at home?  □ Yes  □ No  List child(ren) ages: ____________

6) Describe or state leadership position/title: ________________________________

7) Level of education?
   □ High School   □ Associate   □ Bachelor   □ Graduate (Master’s or Doctoral)
   □ Professional school (e.g., Medicine, Law, Dental, Optometry, etc.)

8) How would you currently rate your satisfaction with life?
   □ Excellent   □ Good   □ Needs Improvement   □ Dissatisfied

9) □ Below $30,000  □ $30,001-$60,000  □ $60,001-$90,000  □ Above $90,001
APPENDIX C

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator: Pamela N. Rogers  Phone: 419/215-3162

Project Title: A Qualitative Study Of The Life Satisfaction Of Single Women In Leadership

You are invited to participate in a study designed to investigate divorced women in leadership’s life satisfaction as well as what one attributes to said satisfaction. For example, are factors such as extended family and friends, relationships, children, education, career, purpose, spirituality or socioeconomic status impactful; and, if so, to what degree? The purpose of this study is to increase understanding of the meanings ascribed to life experiences as well as identify and target more appropriate motivations for engaging, leading or working with said individuals. While you will not be financially compensated in any way for your participation in this study, I trust you will gain intrinsic rewards from assisting in the furtherance of our understanding of divorced women in leadership.

If you choose to participate, you will meet with me for approximately 60 minutes; the interview may be held in your office, home, coffee shop or other place where you would be most comfortable. The interview will ask questions of your life satisfaction through questions such as, “If you could add or take away one thing from your life, if anything, to aid in your satisfaction, what would it be?” Or, “What extent does your support system impact your life,” etc. So I have an exact record of what we discuss, the interview will be audio-taped with your permission. You will be provided a typed transcript of the interview so you may ensure the transcript is accurate, correct any statements or information unclear or that you believe should be restated, and ensure my interpretation is representative of your assessments.

Your decision whether to participate or not will not impact any relationship you may have with Bowling Green State University or the College of Education and Human Development. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or penalty. The information obtained from this investigation will be kept confidential and will only be reported in statistical and/or qualitative analyses with no specific connections made to you. A fake name will be attached to data obtained from you so no one will know who gave specific information. The data will be stored on a password-protected flash drive and transcripts kept in a locked file cabinet, both only accessible to me.

The risk of participation for you is anticipated to be no greater than what you would experience in everyday life; however, should the interviewing process give rise to any emotional or traumatic memories as a result of revisiting past experiences that have occurred in your life during the interview process or after, you may contact the National Crisis Hotline which is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-448-3000.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact me at 419/215-3162 or by e-mail at progers@bgsu.edu or the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Mark Earley, at 419/372-0274 or earleym@bgsu.edu. Should you have any questions regarding your rights in relation to this study, you may contact the Chair of Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University at 419/372-7716 or at hsrb@bgsu.edu. Do not sign this sheet until these questions have been addressed to your satisfaction. Please retain a copy of this form (two have been provided) for your records.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE AND BASED ON THE FACT THAT ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED TO YOUR SATISFACTION.

I AGREE to participate in this study:

Date: _______________  Participant’s signature: ____________________________
Participant’s name (print): ____________________________________________
DATE: March 1, 2013

TO: Pamela Rogers, M.Ed.
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [414162-3] A Qualitative Study Of The Life Satisfaction Of Single Women In Leadership

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: February 28, 2013

EXPIRATION DATE: January 24, 2014

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 2

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 20 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on January 24, 2014. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsr@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.
This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
Principal Investigator: Pamela N. Rogers  
Phone: 419/215-3162

Project Title: A Qualitative Study Of The Life Satisfaction Of Single Women In Leadership

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I **AGREE** to participate in this study:

Date: ______________  Participant’s signature: ______________________________

Participant’s name (print): ____________________________________________