Exploring the Political Styles and Strategies Used by Successful Women Classified Managers in Educational Agencies

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Exploring the Political Styles and Strategies Used by Successful Women Classified Managers in Educational Agencies

A Dissertation by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to experience this Doctorate journey with Brandman University. It was a journey of self-discovery, and personal growth for me as well as academic growth and achievement. Thank you to my family and friends for understanding the commitment I made in embarking on this program.

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The smile on my face as I write this is evidence of the pride I feel in myself and the effectiveness of the Brandman process. I did trust the process and I did achieve my goals, and along the way I met lifelong friends and partners as I now pursue the next chapter of my professional life.
ABSTRACT

Exploring the Political Styles and Strategies Used by Successful Women Classified Managers in Educational Agencies

by Colleen M. Stanley

Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover and describe the political styles of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced from middle management to top-level management positions within an educational agency. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted.

Methodology: This phenomenological study captured the stories of classified women managers’ lived experiences as they successfully advance in their careers to high-level management positions within an educational agency. A sample size of 15 participants was selected from among ACSA award-winning successful women classified managers working for educational agencies in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. The researcher used the political styles and strategies framework from The Politically Intelligent Leader (White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016) to collect rich, descriptive data on the experiences of the participants.

Findings: Examination of the data from interviews, observations, and artifacts from 15 participants revealed that successful women classified managers within educational agencies identify most closely with the strategist political style. The research showed the political strategy of “building trust” to be the one that the successful women found to be most effective.
Conclusions: This study concluded that successful classified women managers use the political style of strategist to navigate their way to top-level positions within educational agencies. In addition, this study concluded that the most used political strategy of successful women classified managers to be building trust.

Recommendations: Further research is recommended to replicate this study of political styles and strategies from the perspective of other populations within educational agencies, such as men who are successful classified managers in educational agencies, and staff-level employees who work in educational agencies as well as expanding the study to include other states beyond California. It is also recommended that a single long-term case study be considered that follows a woman classified employee as she moves from an entry-level position to a top-level management position to determine if political styles and strategies change as position levels change.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The role of the classified manager in an educational setting is a necessary and challenging position of leadership within a school district or county office of education. California Education Code, Section 45390(a) (2019) states that the “Legislature finds and declares that classified employees play a vital role in the education of students in our public schools and community colleges.” Classified managers include assistant superintendents, directors, and coordinators for finance and business, facilities services, technology services, and human resources. They do the essential work of budget monitoring, network support, credentials tracking, and facilities maintenance so that teachers and students focus on succeeding at their highest levels. In general, classified positions for local educational agencies include every position that is not defined by the Education Code as requiring a certificate or credential and not specifically exempted (Cal. Educ. Code §45100-04, 2019).

The designation of classified professional, as opposed to simply “non-certificated” workers, began after World War II with the passing of the Classified Bill of Rights (California School Employees Association [CSEA], n.d.). Classified employees, who had long considered themselves partners in education, were finally garnering some of the recognition they deserved. The bill included defining paid holidays, salary increases for reclassified positions, salary protections for instructional aides, the right to unemployment insurance, collective bargaining rights, workplace safety measures, and improved pension benefits through the public employees’ retirement system (PERS).

For women classified leaders in education, there are many challenges as they work toward advancement into top-level cabinet positions. Women leaders face
numerous barriers, including the glass ceiling, discrimination, second-generation biases, sexism, opposition from their female counterparts, both subordinates and superiors, conflicts involving work–home balance, and resistance to their leadership capabilities (Rowe, 2017; R. B. Smith & Zhao, 2015; Wolfe, 2019). Many of these barriers are due to the global stereotyping of women (Sandberg, 2013). Female representation in entry-level management positions in school districts is relatively plentiful. However, when looking at positions that carry real decision-making power, such as cabinet-level positions, the female gender becomes less represented.

Despite the fact that women’s labor force participation was 56.8% in 2016, compared to men’s labor force participation at 69.2% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017), women hold only 20% of software developer jobs, 27% of chief executive jobs, and 38% of physician and surgeon jobs. While women have been successful in advancing to supervisory or middle-management positions, they do not represent top levels of leadership roles proportionately. Men hold the vast majority of leadership positions in the areas of corporate and political jobs. The same is true for public school classified management positions (Catalyst, 2018; Center for American Women and Politics, 2016; Eagly, 2013).

Significant research has been conducted on leadership over the past decades. Researchers such as Rouleau-Carroll (2014), Costellow (2011), and Campbell (2011) looked at the traits of leaders in general, and leaders in education specifically, to identify and describe the traits of successful leaders. In addition, these researchers discussed the connection between the traits and behaviors of leaders and their employees. White, Harvey, and Fox (2016) wrote about the importance of political intelligence for leaders in
general, but little attention has been paid to the level of political engagement that is needed for women to advance to top-level positions.

Marcus (2015) stated, “Although hard work and performance are important, they are not the sole basis for advancement; women must get savvy about workplace politics if they are serious about their careers” (p. xiii). Marcus also made a point of recognizing that women traditionally do not do a very good job of promoting themselves, which in itself is a political barrier to promoting to the top-level positions because it is political savvy that allows the leaders to be competitive. School leaders, classified and certificated alike, require political skill to lead and manage change successfully (Starr, 2011). Human dynamics are complicated and require politically skilled leaders to understand people and guide them to take positive action (White et al., 2016).

**Background**

The role of the school district or county office of education classified manager is different than that of the certificated school leader. Local educational agency classified positions do not require a teaching credential. Teachers are known as certificated employees as well as principals and many other administrators. All others are designated as classified employees.

**Classification of Positions in an Educational Agency**

Persons employed in noncertificated positions are defined in the California Education Code Section 45390(a) as classified employees. The employees in these positions are within the classified service (Cal. Educ. Code §45103). The classified service includes every position not defined by the Education Code as requiring a certificate or credential and not specifically exempted. Educational agency departments
such as human resources, technology and information services, payroll and retirement services, maintenance and operations, and district advisory services are all managed and staffed with classified positions.

According to California Education Code §45100 (2019), the “governing board of a school district may adopt a resolution designating certain positions as senior management of the classified service.” Employees whose positions are designated as senior management of the classified service are considered to be part of the classified service and are given all the rights and benefits of other classified employees except that they are exempt from all provisions relating to obtaining permanent status in a senior management position. The maximum number of positions that may be designated as senior management or cabinet-level positions is also regulated by the Education Code. These senior management positions include assistant superintendent of finance and business, human resources, maintenance and operations, and technology and information services. In California educational settings specifically, on average, there is one senior-level manager (cabinet level) for every five middle managers, and one out of three of these senior managers is a woman (Ed-Data, 2018).

The Status of Women in Classified Leadership

Leadership for the 21st century will require educational agency administrators to change their focus from management to educational leadership (Montz, 2004). Brunner (1999) stated that “the greatest untapped resource for administrative positions in education is women” (p. 161). Women’s unique inherent skills such as developing others, inspiring and motivating others, relationship building, and collaboration and teamwork match up well with the attributes needed for school leaders. Other
competencies such as taking initiative, demonstrating integrity and honesty, and pushing for results are also the driving forces behind successful 21st-century leaders (Shambaugh, 2016; Sherwin, 2014).

According to McKee, Boyatzis, and Johnston (2008), “The best leaders get results by courageously striving to become the best people they can be, while making decisions that ensure a viable future for the individuals, organizations, and countries they lead” (p. 2). Educational leaders, whether certificated or classified, must strive to make the best decisions for their organizations. In particular, educational leaders need to ensure that they are providing the best possible educational experience for their ultimate client, the student. To lead transformational change, McKee et al. argued that leaders must reflect and become aware of themselves, their passions, beliefs, and reactions to things. Eagly and Carli (2003) compared men and women managers and found that when it comes to transformational leadership skills, women have the competitive edge. According to Bailey (2014), some of the characteristics most commonly attributed to women, such as empowerment and collaboration, are the characteristics that are most commonly exhibited by successful transformation leaders. Despite the fact that women may be capable of carrying out transformational work, statistically speaking, women still hold significantly fewer positions of power around the world than their male colleagues (Sandberg, 2013). Women striving for advancement must not only develop their competency in leading transformational changes that result from new legislation or school board decisions, they must also develop self-awareness (McKee et al. 2008). White et al. (2016) stressed that this self-awareness is the first step in becoming politically savvy as leaders identify, develop, and embrace their own political style.
However, when women engage in political behavior, they are frequently perceived negatively. Women can be viewed as aggressive rather than assertive when expressing opinions or exercising authority (Perrewé & Nelson, 2004). Women may be more likely than men to engage in a relational approach to work, and they may also be more apt to balance dominant characteristics along with softer interaction styles in a given situation as opposed to men who tend to favor a dominant approach (Matthew, Buontempo, & Block, 2013). Women also tend to be less likely to advocate for themselves and less likely to ask for what they want. The implication for this is that they are also less likely to initiate negotiations on their behalf (Bowles, Babcock, & Lai, 2007; Kray & Thompson, 2004; Marcus, 2015).

With millennials coming into their own and flooding the workplace, the inherent skills of women managers will be more and more in demand (Stokes, 2018). Millennials want a happy workplace in which they can engage in purposeful work. They want to work for a company that aligns with their values, and they are happy to have a mentor to guide them and support them. Millennials also value collaboration over competition because they believe that workplace friendships result in great productivity (Engstrom, 2017). As reported by Sandberg (2013), a recent survey of millennials found that women were just as likely to describe themselves as ambitious as men.

There are five leadership attributes that characterize women in educational leadership: (a) leadership for learning, (b) leadership for social justice, (c) relational leadership, (d) spiritual leadership, and (e) balanced leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Along with these five attributes, successful transformational change leaders exhibit additional personal attributes such as character, values, integrity, vision, wisdom,
inspiration, and the ability to build lasting relationships (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson 2010). These attributes are integral to creating personal and organizational meaning. These attributes must be combined with the specific ability to engage politically or the person holding these attributes may still be unable to rise to the levels for which he or she aspires (Marcus, 2015).

**Gender Barriers and Challenges for Women in Educational Organizations**

Data collected at the superintendency level showed that in 2008, a vast majority of California superintendents, at 84%, were male (Martin, 2016), and in fact that number has not been improving over the years. The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA, 2012) has tracked female superintendent numbers from 1990 to 2006. The percentage of female superintendents in 1990 was 17%, which dropped to 16% by 2006. Superville (2016) pointed out that if an organization has talented administrators, the focus should be on getting those talented administrators into the superintendency, the position that has the most power to facilitate the growth and development of all students.

Many dissertations have been written about the dissonance between the genders and addressing the challenges that females face in being promoted when presented with equal circumstances to those of males. Much research has been conducted on leadership over the past decades. Researchers such as Rouleau-Carroll (2014), Rowland and Higgs (2008), Costellow (2011), and Campbell (2011) looked at the traits of leaders in general, and leaders in education specifically, to identify and describe the traits of successful leaders. In addition, these researchers discussed the connection between the traits and behaviors of leaders and their employees. However, research has not focused on the level
of political engagement that is needed in order for women in the classified service to advance within educational agencies.

Robinson, Shakeshaft, Newcomb, and Grogan (2017) studied why women leave the superintendency and found that women leave for a variety of reasons including the challenge of competing politics from school boards, boards of supervisors, and city councils. Marcus (2015) identified four basic reasons why women hesitate to promote themselves in the workplace:

1. Upbringing—which has sabotaged women into thinking they should take a back seat.

2. Failure to see self-promotion as a leadership skill.

3. Fear of potential backlash: the double bind (a great leader is thought of as someone who is decisive, assertive, and independent, and women are expected to be nice, nurturing, and unselfish)—overcoming the double bind is all about using political savvy.

4. Failure to understand the contribution they make to business outcomes. (p. 43)

Furthermore, additional challenges and barriers exist in societal perception for classified staff in their attempt to move up the ladder to achieve cabinet-level positions. The California Association of School Business Officials’ long-running Executive Director Molly McGee Hewitt (2016) commented on the following in her August 23 newsletter:

A double standard often exists that causes us to honor certificated over classified . . . what matters is that you are a dedicated professional who values the work of education and who recognizes the roles we play in supporting students! (para. 9)
There is also recent legislation that created the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program designed to convert beginning manager-level classified staff to classroom teachers by providing funding to complete undergraduate degrees in order to earn teaching credentials (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing CCTC], 2016). The perception that those in classified roles are less important than those in certificated roles contributes to bias in recognizing and promoting women in the classified service to senior management roles. Donis Coronel, director of ACSA’s Classified Education Leaders Academy in San Diego, stated that “most districts focus on certificated employees, whether teachers or principals” (ACSA Writer, 2018, “Helping educational programs succeed,” para. 20), which results in many classified employees not understanding how they fit into the bigger educational picture and how to use positive political intelligence to rise in the organization.

**Political Engagement**

Political intelligence is understanding how power and politics effectively work in an organization. Fennell (2018) explained that “it’s about knowing who the key decision makers are and understanding how to influence them” (para. 1). Understanding one’s own political style as well as the styles of those who are part of the workforce team is critical for thriving in an educational agency (White et al. 2016).

Public education is an extension of the political system and governed by political (legislative) mandates and politically elected school boards. An example of this is the adoption of the new state funding methodology in 2012-2013 (California Department of Education [CDE], 2018). This new funding formula was implemented for all school districts in California and is called the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).
funding formula is accompanied by an accountability requirement in the form of a document called the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). An example, at the federal level, where school districts must comply with political regulations includes the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; U.S. Department of Education, 2015) and the accompanying LCAP Federal Addendum Template as well as the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Each of these new legislative mandates is an effort to make local school districts transparently share their stories of how, what, and why programs and services are selected to meet their local needs and close the achievement gap for students. Local school boards are often elected based on specific agendas their constituents hope to accomplish.

Each of these new California state and national mandates presents political dilemmas for school leaders who must implement the laws and regulations in the face of many dissenting stakeholders (California Collaborative for Educational Excellence [CCEE], 2018; CDE, n.d.-a). Political savvy is an attribute that is more critical than ever for educational leaders to use as they navigate their way through legislative and organizational complexities. Political skills are like any other skill and need to be practiced persistently in order for expertise to develop (Gladwell, 2008). To date, women have not had the time nor opportunity to practice political skills, and the length of one’s profession does not lead to better decision-making (Moxley, Ericsson, Charness, & Krampe, 2012). Through practicing political skills, women classified managers can improve their skills and increase their level of political astuteness and engagement. Exhibiting political skills is important in order to exercise influence and achieve
leadership effectiveness, which will support women classified managers as they attempt to promote themselves in educational agencies (Ewen et al., 2013).

According to Ferris et al. (2005), political skill has four dimensions: (a) social astuteness, (b) interpersonal influence, (c) networking ability, and (d) apparent sincerity. When leaders understand the significance of these four skills and have developed high political astuteness, they have a greater ability to influence employees, especially when there is uncertainty, disorder, and unrest in an organization (Eran, 2000). The power of leaders’ political skills is especially significant in negative situations when they are aware of how their approach might turn these negative situations into positive ones (Douglas & Ammeter, 2004). The political intelligence of leaders is positively correlated with organizational trust and job satisfaction and has a positive effect on the organization in combating against organizational cynicism (Treadway et al., 2004).

**Styles and Strategies of Politically Intelligent Leaders**

Successful leaders use specific political styles that traverse along the continuum from self-interest to organizational interest, moving into the behaviors of other political styles when the situation demands (White et al., 2016). Politically intelligent leaders use a moral compass to lead organizations while considering the values and motivations of stakeholders (White et al., 2016). Using White et al.’s (2016) *The Politically Intelligent Leader* as a theoretical framework, the specific styles and strategies that are engaged in by successful leaders develop into the strategic skills that give leaders a better chance of being politically intelligent. Political intelligence allows leaders to accomplish goals for the betterment of their organizations (White et al., 2016).
According to White et al. (2016), politically intelligent leaders use 19 external and 18 internal political strategies as tools when coping with organizational challenges in an educational environment. Knowing and developing these strategies supports leaders in accomplishing organizational goals. White et al.’s moral imperative is for leaders to use these strategies for “good purposes, helping leaders to accomplish noble goals in an ethical manner” (p. 64).

**Deficiency in Existing Research**

While some literature continues to emerge in the area of certificated leaders in education, such as how female superintendents and principals achieve higher level positions (Brunner, 1999; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Martin, 2016; Montz, 2004), a review of literature revealed a deficit of information specifically in the area of classified managers and their advancement to higher level positions. There also exists a deficit of information throughout the literature specifically relating to the political strategies and styles used to achieve the goals of classified female leaders to advance to the highest levels of classified management. More research is needed on the political styles and strategies that successful women classified managers use to advance their careers to senior management roles within school districts and county offices.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

A significant amount of literature exists discussing women in the workplace (Catalyst, 2018; Eagly, 2013; Rowe, 2017; Sandberg, 2013). Extensive research has also been conducted on leadership over the last decade. Researchers such as Rouleau-Carroll (2014), Costellow (2011), Campbell (2011), and McKee et al. (2008) looked at the traits of leaders in general and leaders in education specifically to identify and describe the
traits of successful leaders. While some literature continues to emerge in the area of certificated leaders in education, such as how female superintendents and principals achieve higher level positions, this review of literature, although comprehensive in terms of the scope of women and female certificated managers (Brunner, 1999; Costellow, 2011; Martin, 2016; Montz, 2004; Rouleau-Carroll, 2014; Rowe, 2017), revealed a deficit of information specifically in the area of classified middle managers who advance to higher level management positions. There is also a deficit of information throughout the literature specifically relating to the political strategies and styles used to achieve the goals of classified female leaders to advance to the highest levels of classified management.

Montz (2004) reported that while there has been an increase in women pursuing higher education degrees, such as bachelors, masters, and doctorates in the field of education, the job placement of women in educational administration is not keeping pace with this increase in educational aspirations (Brunner, 1999). Montz (2004) suggested that this increased number of women graduates has created a pool of highly qualified women prepared to be candidates for superintendent and top-level classified management searches. However, despite the increased number of graduates, in California educational settings on average there is one senior manager (cabinet level) for every five middle managers, and only one out of three of those senior managers is a woman (Ed-Data, 2018). Research suggests that in order for women to achieve the positions they desire within educational agencies they must become more astute about workplace politics and learn how to navigate through the political landscape (C. Chang, Rosen, & Levy, 2009;
Fairholm, 2009; Marcus, 2015; Sandberg, 2013). In other words, the missing element is political savvy (Fennell, 2018; Marcus, 2015).

There is a lack of information on the reasons qualified women in classified middle management positions experience difficulty in advancing to senior management-level positions within California’s school districts. Research has also not explored the level of political engagement that is needed for women in the classified service to advance within educational agencies. More information is needed on the political styles and strategies that successful women classified managers use to advance their careers to the highest levels.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover and describe the political styles of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced from middle management to top-level management positions within an educational agency. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted.

**Research Questions**

**Central Research Question**

What are the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management-level positions in an educational agency and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers?
Research Subquestions

1. How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?

2. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

3. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

Significance of the Problem

*Man is by nature a political animal.*

— Aristotle

The role of the classified manager in an educational setting is a necessary and challenging position of leadership within a school district or county office of education. California Education Code Section 45390(a) states that the “Legislature finds and declares that classified employees play a vital role in the education of students in our public schools and community colleges.” This study provides research data regarding the political styles and strategies used by successful women classified managers in classified service who are hoping to advance their careers to the highest levels within an educational agency. The data gathered identify whether or not the level of political intelligence of classified women managers was an enhancement or a hindrance they experienced when attempting to advance in their careers. Marcus (2015) stated, “Although hard work and performance are important, they are not the sole basis for
advancement; women must get savvy about workplace politics if they are serious about their careers” (p. xiii). Marcus also made a point of recognizing that women traditionally do not do a very good job of promoting themselves, which in itself is a barrier to promotion.

Additionally, this research provides assistance for ACSA (2018) to include within their 3-year strategic plan for 2018-2021, a professional development segment that is specific to teaching political astuteness and political strategies for classified leaders. The purpose, as stated, in training classified leaders is to “build and maintain a vibrant and purposeful network of classified leaders, who share a mutual commitment to excellence and are valued as members of their leadership team” (ACSA, 2018, p. 77). The findings from this study could be used by ACSA to develop helpful workshops and training programs for classified women managers.

Trends in the research (Costellow, 2011; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011) have identified a need for this study for female classified managers because it is urgent that if reasons exist wherein qualified women in classified middle-management positions are not advancing to senior management-level positions, those reasons need to be addressed. Research (ACSA Writer, 2018; Rowe, 2017) showed how important it is for educational organizations to have the benefit of available, talented, motivated, and experienced classified female leaders in order to provide the best support for students. The critical nature of leadership was confirmed in the Hechinger Report (2011), which suggested that leadership is the key to recovery of failing schools—and the more critical a school’s predicament, the greater the need for strong leadership.
Significant research has been conducted on leadership over the past decades. Researchers such as Rouleau-Carroll (2014), Costellow (2011), and Campbell (2011) looked at the traits of leaders in general and leaders in education specifically to identify and describe the traits of successful leaders. Furthermore, these researchers discussed the connection between the traits and behaviors of leaders and those of their employees. While some literature continues to emerge in the area of certificated leaders in education, such as how female superintendents and principals achieve higher level positions (Brunner, 1999; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Martin, 2016; Montz, 2004), this review of literature revealed a deficit of information specifically in the area of classified managers and their advancement to higher level positions. The focus of past research has not been on the level of political engagement that is needed for women to advance to senior management-level positions. This study is significant because political engagement for classified women managers has never been explored; therefore, this study fills an important gap in research.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined:

**Apparent sincerity.** The perception of being honest, sincere, and reliable by others; demonstrating good listening skills (Ferris et al., 2005).

**Cabinet level.** The cabinet is made up of five to 10 senior-level administrators who are responsible for assisting the superintendent in addressing the schools' major system priorities. The cabinet provides input to the superintendent on major operational, programmatic, and fiscal issues that affect the school system.
**Classified staff.** Individuals whose jobs are not dependent upon a specialized credential (CSEA, 2019).

**Education Code.** Establishes the law within California in respect to actions taken by local educational agencies to promote consistency and justice.

**Exemplary leader.** A leader who models the way, inspires a shared vision, challenges the process, enables others to act, and encourages the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

**Interpersonal influence.** The ability of a manager to see the details in cases that cannot be noticed easily by everyone along with the manager’s ability to persuade (Ferris et al., 2005).

**Local educational agency (LEA).** A commonly used acronym for a school district, which is an entity that operates local public primary and secondary schools.

**Manager.** An employee at a top decision-making tier who is salaried, not eligible for overtime, and typically supervises others.

**Networking ability.** The ability of entering easily into a new environment, making new friends, and building partnerships in order to achieve individual, professional, and organizational goals (Ferris et al., 2005).

**Political astuteness.** The ability to create sufficient agreement in order to work more productively as an organization (Hartley, 2015).

**Political intelligence.** Understanding how the dynamics of power and politics function in an organization (White et al., 2016).
**Political savvy.** The ability to understand the environment in which one works through a deep understanding of others, combined with building relationships of trust and influence while aligning him or herself with key stakeholders (Marcus, 2015).

**Senior classified managers.** Those classified managers who hold a position with decision-making authority, such as deputy superintendent, associate superintendent, assistant superintendent, chief, officer, senior director, and director.

**Social astuteness.** Observing employees’ behaviors and interpreting them successfully (Ferris et al., 2005).

**Successful manager.** A manager who has the ability to be promoted—to rise quickly through the organization, in part, by being an astute politician (Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988).

**Delimitations**

Delimitations exist in this qualitative study. The delimitations include the gender of the classified managers in educational agencies, which was limited to females. The geographical location was limited to California’s central coast region, including Monterey County, San Benito County, and Santa Cruz County. The working status and position level of the women managers was limited to females employed in classified positions at the time of this study and who had successfully promoted to a director or above management-level position within an educational agency in the classified service. The number of successful women managers interviewed was also limited based upon the number of females with those specific qualifications, that is, location and position.
Organization of the Study

This qualitative study is organized into five chapters, a list of references, and various appendices. Chapter I included the introduction and background of the study. It included why the study was being done, what was hoped to be discovered, and the significance of the study. Chapter II includes a review of the literature about this subject, both current and historical. It describes what is known about the topic as well as things that are not known. Chapter III outlines the research design and methodology used to collect the data that address the purpose statement and answers the research questions. Chapter III also includes a detailed description of the population, sampling frame, instrumentation, and data collection procedures as well as the methods used to analyze the data collected. Chapter IV presents and summarizes all of the key findings that were discovered through data collection, including interviews, observations, and artifacts. Chapter V provides the major findings, along with the unexpected findings, and conclusions that were developed though the data collected. Chapter V also includes implications for action and recommendations for possible future research topics related to this study.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II establishes the need for this study through a review of the literature related to successful women classified managers and the political styles and strategies they use to promote themselves within educational agencies. The five themes that emerged for this research study prescribed that this literature review be presented thematically:

- Theoretical Framework
- Challenges and Biases that Effect Women
- Women in the Workplace
- Women in Educational Leadership Roles
- Women and Political Engagement

The first section of this chapter includes a classical grounding through a theoretical framework of the significant works contributing to this study as well as a focus on work published within the previous 5 years. The second section focuses on the challenges and biases that impacted women in the past and still have an impact today. The third section provides a brief historical perspective of women’s roles in the workplace. The fourth section specifically addresses the roles women hold in educational leadership within an educational agency. Despite the evolution of women’s role in the workforce (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Freedman, 2002; Khairuzzaman, Ismail, Jafar, & Al-Taee, 2012), there remains a significant underrepresentation of women in top-level administrator positions (Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Kowalski, McCord, Petersen, Young, & Ellerson, 2011). The fifth section examines the role of political engagement and the styles and strategies that women use to navigate through the challenges of
organizational politics to become educational leaders. At the conclusion of this chapter, a summary integrates as many themes as possible in a cohesive way that leads one to imagine what further research might be done in this area. Boote and Beile (2005) stated that “a substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review is a precondition for doing substantive, thorough, sophisticated research” (p. 3). The purpose of a literature review is to create a written summary of books, journal articles, website references, and other documents that describe the past and current state of data related to this study. It organizes the literature into topics and documents a need for this study to occur.

A significant amount of literature exists discussing women in the workplace (Adams et al., 2013, Bruckmüller, Ryan, Haslam, & Peters, 2013; Catalyst, 2013; Evans, 2011; Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2012). While some literature continues to emerge in the area of certificated women leaders in education (Björk, 2000; Brunner, Grogan, & Prince, 2003; Glass, Björk, & Bruner, 2000; Kowalski et al., 2011; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011; R. Williams, 2017), such as how female superintendents and principals achieve higher level positions, this review of literature, although comprehensive in terms of the scope of women and female certificated managers, revealed a deficit of information specifically in the area of classified managers who successfully advance to higher level positions within organizational agencies.

There is also a deficit of information in the literature specifically relating to the political strategies and styles used to achieve the promotional goals of classified female managers. Trends in the research have identified a need for this study to occur for female classified managers because it is urgent that any possible reasons be addressed on why
qualified women in classified middle management positions are not advancing to senior management-level positions.

**Theoretical Framework**

For this research study, the theoretical framework was based, in part, upon feminist theory, social identity theory, and motivational theory, but the work of White et al. (2016) in *The Politically Intelligent Leader* provided the primary framing and focus of the research for this study. Feminist theory includes philosophies about the origins and nature of inequality and the social constructs of sex and gender in an analysis of women’s subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it (Gordon 1979). Social identity theory and motivational theory further define how women have remained in an oppressive position in society. While the role of women in the workforce can be examined through multiple theoretical foundations that have links to gender roles or women’s presence and underrepresentation in leadership positions, it is feminist, social identity, and motivational theories that most closely align with the experience of women in their climb to positions of leadership.

**Feminist Theory**

According to Crossman (2019), feminist theory is a branch of sociology that turns its assumptions, analytic lens, and topical focus away from the male viewpoint and experience and toward that of women. In doing so, feminist theory shines a light on social problems, trends, and issues that are otherwise overlooked or misidentified by the historically dominant male perspective. Feminist theory focuses on the interactions and experiences of women within society in order to ensure that half the world’s population is not left out when considering and understanding social forces, relations, and various other
problems that help us to identify how systems of power and oppression interact (Figure 1).

Feminist theory

Henri Tajfel introduced social identity theory in 1970, which is based primarily upon the social and psychological disciplines (Hogg, 2006). The foundation of this theory was used to explain the relationship between social perception, categorization, and comparisons based on associations with groups. This theoretical foundation addressed discrimination and components of prejudice found in society (Burke, 2006; Hogg, 2001; Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007). Tajfel described how social forces could inform
individual action (Hogg, 2006). Tajfel and Turner (1979) went on to articulate that one’s belongingness to a given group or other types of social connections fosters one’s self-concept and self-esteem (Goethals & Hoyt, 2011). According to social identity theory, people rely upon and link their own perceived social identity to the actions, choices, and paths they take in life. Ultimately, the social identity theory of leadership developed as an extension of social learning theory (Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hogg, 2006). As work teams attempt to identify and define their roles during the changing environment they live in, the ideology under social identity theory is critical to the understanding of the lived experience of female leaders. During the previous 40 years, academicians, theorists, and researchers have become more and more interested in social identity theory, and it has been integrated into other areas of study. Hogg (2006) described how social identity theory addresses a variety of life experiences, including stereotyping, discrimination, group polarization, organizational behavior, and leadership. The foundation of this theory aligns directly with this study of successful classified women educational leaders as a group of people engaging in social identification in a social experience. Additionally, as leadership is tightly linked to understanding oneself in the context of others, the promotion to leadership relates closely to understanding and empowering self-identity, self-esteem, and social influence (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Motivational Theory

Abraham Maslow’s (1943) theory of the hierarchy of basic needs in humans defines the current-day motivation theory. According to Maslow, “The integrated wholeness of the organism” (p. 127) is the foundation of motivational theory, and any motivated behavior is drawn from basic needs and desires that need to be satisfied.
Maslow also stated that all “organismic states” are both “motivated and motivating” (p. 159). Maslow’s hierarchy consists of basic needs being met, going in order from physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization as shown in Figure 2. The implications of this are meaningful for women because if they are not able to meet their self-esteem needs, achievement to higher level positions will be difficult to achieve.

Figure 2. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Adapted from “A Theory of Human Motivation,” by A. H. Maslow, 1943, Psychological Review, 50, pp. 370–396.

Alderfer (1969) reviewed Maslow’s (1943) basic hierarchy and tested a new theory (see Figure 3) using existence, relatedness, growth (ERG). Alderfer (1969) proposed that his theory eliminated the overlapping of Maslow’s (1943) needs: existence covered hunger, thirst, and shelter needs (physiological), plus pay and working conditions
(safety and security); relatedness included friends, family, coworkers, and relationships (social and self-esteem); and growth included people’s need to engage in problems or activities that led to personal growth (self-actualization).

Alderfer’s (1969) motivational theory differed only slightly from Maslow’s (1943) in that a satisfied need still could remain as a motivator and that fulfilling one need does not necessarily lead to another motivated need. Alderfer (1969) also believed that when a person was not satisfied, he or she could regress to meeting more basic needs. Using the idea of motivational theory would require women to believe they are capable of taking a cabinet-level leadership in an educational agency, which was historically considered to be a man’s job. When using feminist theory, social identity theory, and motivational theory, these concepts drive the study of successful classified women’s lived
experiences through a phenomenological perspective. Hesse-Biber (2012) stated, “Feminist standpoint scholars argue that women have access to an enhanced and more nuanced understanding of social reality than men do precisely because of their structurally-oppressed representation vis-à-vis the dominant group of men” (p. 16).

The Politically Intelligent Leader Framework

The framework identified by White et al. (2016) suggests that as organizations become less hierarchical, it becomes even more critical for collaboration to occur. Collaboration and collective decision-making require people to join forces in order to influence others and accomplish goals. Without political awareness and political engagement, the collaboration and collective decision-making of managers cannot be accomplished. Becoming adept at politics builds and sharpens your power (White et al., 2016) so that a manager and his or her coworkers can achieve the mission and vision of your organization. As White et al. said, “we go through life unaware of our own political style and its impact on our organizations” (p. 68). Understanding the various political styles and strategies identified by White et al. (2016) and becoming a politically intelligent leader will be of great benefit when leading an organization while considering the “wants, needs, values, motivation, and emotions” of the stakeholders (p. 3).

Challenges and Biases That Affect Women

The glass ceiling is a well-documented experience that women continue to report as a barrier in the workplace. It is described as “an intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper-level positions” (“Glass ceiling,” n.d., Definition 1). Women still use this term today to describe how they have perceived their experience and suppression in the workforce. In contrast to the glass ceiling effect, a study
in the *Harvard Business Review* suggests that the glass ceiling is a thing of the past because some women have been able to move beyond the ceiling to become chief executive officers and presidents of companies (Eagly & Carli, 2007). According to Eagly and Carli (2007), “The glass ceiling fails to incorporate the complexity and variety of challenges that women can face in their leadership journeys” (para. 4). A new term is now being used to describe women’s experiences in the workplace: the “labyrinth of leadership.” Eagly and Carli suggested that there should be an end to the glass ceiling metaphor and instead compare the obstacles facing women to a labyrinth, which has challenges at every turn. The article proposes that if people can understand the complex barriers that make up this labyrinth, and how some women find their way around them, they can work more effectively to improve the situation. The labyrinth barriers range from straightforward gender prejudices in salary and promotions, to resistance to women’s leadership and leadership styles combined with the demands of family life (see Figure 4).

For women, there is an eventual positive result that is achievable if one is willing to stay on the path toward top-level positions regardless of the unknown variables (Eagly, 2013). Indra Nooyi, the chief executive officer of PepsiCo, reflects on her rise to the top as having to work 50% to 100% better than her male counterparts when she was rising up through the ranks in the workforce because women were held to higher standards than men. She continues by saying, “We still think that a woman has to prove herself by working twenty or thirty percent better than the man—at least the number has come down a bit” (Fast Company, 2017, para. 18). This lament is echoed by Serena Williams (2019) in her first-person essay in *Harper’s Bazaar* regarding the 2018 controversial U.S. Open
match after which she asked herself, “Why is it that when women get passionate, they’re labeled emotional, crazy, and irrational, but when men do they’re seen as passionate and strong?” (para. 5). In addition to the glass ceiling or labyrinth of leadership challenges, according to Arriaga and Lindsey (2016), other barrier themes that women grapple with include marginalization, lack of mentorship and sponsorship, stereotyping, and discrimination.

**Lack of Mentorship**

Several researchers have found that the lack of mentorship, especially female-to-female mentoring, is a significant barrier for women in high-level leadership positions (Brunner, 1999; Griggs, 2014; Gupton, 2009; McGee, 2010). Litmanovitz (2011) reiterated that there is currently a significant lack of role models for female administrators in upper-level educational management, highlighting the importance of
mentorship for women who aspire to administrative positions rather than remaining in teaching positions. Ho (2019) and Arriaga and Lindsey (2016) indicated in their studies that they have found that female leaders rarely have the opportunity to identify female leaders after whom they can model themselves. Mentors are, too many times, men who suggest that women are not ready for the positions for which they are working toward unless they start acting more like men (Arriaga & Lindsey, 2016).

Mentorship creates a strong and reliable support system for women because they naturally want to help other women grow in their careers, yet in a study conducted of 1,000 female executives, the results found that only one in five females have a mentor (A. Chang, 2012). Of the 21 female superintendents in McGee’s (2010) study, a majority indicated that they are not mentored or encouraged, and once they get the position of superintendent, they are once again ostracized. McCabe and Dobberteen (1998) reached the same conclusions in their mixed-methods study on the barriers of female superintendents in California, comparing them to female superintendents nationwide. They found that females experience difficulty breaking into existing organizational networks, is the same challenge experienced by the national group of superintendents and for those superintendents from California (McCabe & Dobberteen, 1998). McCabe and Dobberteen also found that a lack of mentorship both inside and outside the organization was a significant barrier for females in California and across the nation, as discussed by Gutek (2001). Gutek addressed the necessity of increasing the number of women in other leadership positions to allow for additional networking and mentoring. In the same study, the perceived barrier that men are more able than women to handle the political aspects of being superintendents (McCabe & Dobberteen, 1998) was present for both
California and national superintendents. Overall, barriers still exist as evidenced by a continued underrepresentation of females in the role of superintendent in the nation and in California. There are some instances, however, that demonstrate there are women who have broken through the glass ceiling, potentially utilizing support systems to overcome these identified barriers.

After the first 2019 presidential debates, lack of female mentorship in today’s world was clearly evidenced with the responses from the 11 democratic presidential candidates to the question from *The New York Times*: “Who is your hero?” Of those 11 political representatives of the nation, not a single male candidate, of which there were nine, listed a female political hero. Of the two women represented, Kamala Harris listed Shirley Chisholm and Kirsten Gillibrand listed Harriet Tubman. This response is indicative of the larger problem with the way society learns and thinks about women and their roles (Wright, 2019).

**Gender Stereotyping**

Shakeshaft (1987) reported that both males and females alike hold the societal belief that males are more capable in leadership positions than are females, which perpetuates the misperceptions and hiring barriers for females. Decades later, Lopez-Zafra, Garcia-Retamero, Pilar, and Martos (2012) found this misperception still to be real, reporting that gender stereotyping still exists. They stated that “women are mostly viewed as occupying communal/feminine occupations, whereas men are viewed as occupying agentic/masculine occupations” (Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012, p. 98). VanTuyle and Watkins (2009) surveyed and interviewed 39 female superintendents in Illinois and found a comparably identified barrier of gender discrimination exhibited by particular
members of school boards. The same study also noted familial responsibilities and lack of self-confidence as other significant barriers for women in high-level securing positions (VanTuyle & Watkins, 2009). Another exploratory study conducted by Elmuti, Jia, and Davis (2009) examined the perceived barriers of 400 business leaders (193 females, 204 males, plus three others) asking through questionnaires about the experienced organizational barriers of females, including those serving in education. Elmuti et al. revealed 48 findings of significant barriers that females encountered in the study, which included discrimination, prejudice, and gender stereotyping. These researchers reported results that showed that a majority of males indicated that they believe females do not have equal opportunities in moving up in organizations because of gender stereotypes that devalue females’ leadership abilities (Elmuti et al., 2009). McGee (2010) found similar data in a study of 21 female superintendents in Florida, finding that the number one identified barrier for women is the anxiety of balancing the demands of work and family.

**Marginalization of Women**

Historically, women have been explicitly marginalized in the area of equal treatment as compared to the treatment men receive, and it continues to this day. One of the most significant and visible disparities is the gap in pay between men and women. Women earn substantially less than males for doing the same work, with a woman making an average $7,097.67 less per year than a male in the same profession in managerial positions (Mandel & Semyonov, 2014). Economists identify the gender pay gap as being made up of two components: explained and unexplained. The “explained” components pertain to the disparity in wages as a result of differences in the workers’
characteristics such as education level and work experience. The “unexplained” components refer to the unknown aspect of why there is a pay gap and is generally said to be the result of discrimination (Cha & Weeden, 2014).

**Women in the Workplace**

Women have been a part of the working landscape in American history since the mid-1800s (Kessler-Harris, 2003). Women ran hotels, sold baked goods, and even mined during the California gold rush (Johnston & Johnson, 2017). Eagly and Carli (2007) stated that women accounted for 18% of the workforce in the early 1900s. Most of these women served as domestic workers, hairstylists, dressmakers, and nurses (Kwolek-Folland, 2007). Rosie the Riveter emerged during World War II to show women that they had a role to play in the workplace, working in factories to help win over a common enemy (Doepke, Hazan, & Maoz, 2015; Lewis & Neville, 1995). Women needed to provide for their children while their husbands were at war, so they also began to fill clerical and retail jobs. In the case of the death of a spouse, a woman would feel a greater impetus to branch out into the business world in order to support herself and her children (Kessler-Harris, 2003). The female labor force increased by 50% from 1950 to 1970 (Habeeb & Wan Ismail, 2012; J. P. Smith & Ward, 1985). It was during this, and the next decade that women began to understand and embrace that participating in the workforce was a viable option. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1967 made it illegal to discriminate against an individual based upon his or her sex, which started a change in hiring practices in the United States (Eagly & Carli, 2003). This vital legislation now gave women the legal foothold into the world of work and resulted in women becoming a permanent fixture in the American labor force. It is important to remember that women
have always had a role in successful management; it just was not a position they held in an organization. According to recent studies, 75% of executive men had a stay-at-home wife with the woman running the day-to-day operations at home in order for her husband to thrive at work (Galinsky, 2006). As Katrina Alcorn (2010) mentioned in an article for Working Moms Break,

It’s not that these titans of industry don’t have children. Most of them do. But, the majority of these Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Vice Presidents, and executive directors simply have no understanding of what it takes to run a household. (para. 3)

The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s gained more equality for women (Eagly & Carli, 2003) than they had ever experienced in prior years. Equality in pay and position for women was the focus. With more and more women becoming a part of the labor force and earning college degrees at a faster rate, many began seeking higher leadership positions (Gutek, 2001). As a result, women ages 25 to 64 earning college degrees more than tripled from 1970 to 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017).

However, barriers remain. Inequity in wages and promotional opportunities, resistance to women’s leadership exhibited by conscious and unconscious mental associations about women and men, issues related to leadership style as women sought ways to project authority without relying on the autocratic behaviors that people find distasteful in women, the demands of family life with mothers still providing more childcare hours than men, and the underinvestment in social capital (Eagly & Carli, 2007) all continue to be barriers women face. Social capital, the advantage a person has within the structure of his or her relationships, is the balancing act that so many women must
perform as they interact with colleagues and build the necessary professional networks. The social capital that accrues from such “nonessential” parts of work turns out to be essential (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

**Women’s Leadership Traits**

The qualifications and expectations for leadership in 21st-century educational agencies are changing the role of administrative leaders so there is more focus on educational leadership rather than management (Montz, 2004). These changing qualifications, by definition, cause the pool of qualified candidates to lessen. The greatest untapped resource for administrative positions in education is women (Brunner, 1999). Blackmore (2013) argued a need to stop “depoliticizing and decontextualizing” (p. 145) leadership and instead refocus the feminist gaze away from the numerical representation of women in leadership to the social relations of gender and power—locally, nationally, and internationally.

Women are more likely to engage in a relational approach to work than men, and they may also be more apt to balance dominant approaches along with softer interaction styles in a given situation, as opposed to men who tend to favor a strictly dominant approach (Matthew et al., 2013). Women are also less likely to advocate for themselves, less likely to ask for what they want, and less likely to initiate negotiations (Bowles et al., 2007; Kray & Thompson, 2004; Marcus, 2015). When it comes to business, the Pew Research Center reports that there are wide gender gaps on several items that relate directly to workplace culture (Horowitz, Igielnik, & Parker, 2018). For example, according to the Pew Social Trends for 2018, 61% say that women in political leadership are more compassionate and empathetic than men. Women are also better at maintaining
a tone of civility and respect at 34% and at serving as a role model for children. For their part, men are more likely to be better than women at being willing to take risks (see Figure 5).

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**Women have a relative advantage over men on several aspects of political leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women are better</th>
<th>Men are better</th>
<th>No difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being compassionate and empathetic</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as a role model for children</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working out compromises</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being honest and ethical</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a tone of civility and respect</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing up for what they believe in</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being persuasive</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working well under pressure</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being willing to take risks</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown.

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The changing requirements for leaders will, hopefully, open doors for women who naturally possess what are considered 21st-century skills. There are five specific leadership styles that characterize women in educational leadership: “(a) learning leadership, (b) social justice leadership, (c) relational leadership, (d) spiritual leadership, and (e) balanced leadership” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 172). Along with those five
qualities, successful change leaders exhibit additional personal attributes such as character, values, integrity, vision, wisdom, inspiration, and the ability to build lasting relationships (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010). These characteristics are integral to creating personal and organizational meaning. These qualities also relate to positive political engagement and must be combined with the specific ability to engage politically, or the person holding these attributes may still not be able to rise to the levels for which he or she aspires (Marcus, 2015).

In order for educational leaders to ensure a meaningful future for students, they need to make the best decisions for their organizations. Making the best decisions includes recognizing and understanding what drives change and how critical it is to build in change processes that deliver breakthrough results. Educational leaders must do this while guiding others through a variety of external change drivers (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010). External change drivers are regularly introduced by California legislation and must be addressed and implemented by educational agencies. To do this, McKee et al. (2008) argued that leaders must reflect and become aware of themselves by their passions, beliefs, and reactions to things. McKee et al.’s argument reflects the same idea of self-awareness that White et al. (2016) emphasized is the first step for leaders in becoming politically savvy as they identify and embrace their own political styles.

Faw (2018) stated that according to Randstad USA, only 31% of women feel that they have the same opportunities accessible to men in the workplace. When women think they have no power in the workplace, they may be tempted to resort to the use of manipulation, sabotage, and threats in order to advance in an organization (Ryder & Briles, 2003). The research is clear on women in leadership positions; resorting to these
behaviors can cause insecurity and low self-esteem in women. When more women and men discuss and embrace the discomfort they feel in the workplace, change can occur (Sutton, 2015). Women want to be seen as competent contributors (Annis & Gray, 2013) who are able to lead at the highest levels. Eagly and Carli (2007) stated that “women’s leadership styles appear to be somewhat more attuned to most contemporary conditions” (p. 110). Shakeshaft (1987), as well as many others currently studying women’s roles in society, indicated that women, even with all the challenges they face, are still better qualified for educational leadership in today’s world than men (Banuelos, 2008; Benzel & Hoover, 2015; Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1999). Having passion and purpose gives women a sense of urgency, which in turn gives them the ability to achieve greatness without limitations (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Finding a path through the labyrinth from being a nurturing, caring individual to being a confident, decisive leader is difficult to navigate. Women climbing the ladder of leadership must understand when to be seen as serving and when to stand up and lead (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Forbes Coaches Council, 2018; Sandberg, 2013).

**Women in Educational Leadership Roles**

During the early 1800s, men dominated the teaching profession. Women were expected to be at home taking care of the household and not in the workforce. The career of the school administrator emerged in the mid-1800s with men exclusively securing this position and women picking up the void to take on the job of teacher (Blount, 1998). By the late 1800s, men and women were equally represented in the teaching profession, and by the 1900s, women held 70% of all the teaching positions. It is noteworthy that despite the predominance of men in the role of school administrator in the 1800s, in Monterey
County, California, the first woman who served as superintendent of schools was Mrs. E. J. Chope who served for one term from 1899-1902. H. Louise Schultzberg served as Monterey County Superintendent of Schools from 1919-1922.

This percentage has not changed much over the past century (Blount, 1998). In 1909, Ella Flagg Young, the first female superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, stated that “women are destined to rule the schools of every city” (Blount, 1998, p. 468). Despite her enthusiasm, this has not yet materialized in the 21st century. Society has defined the role of the teacher as one that is nurturing and caring, which are characteristics primarily seen as female traits (Eagly & Wood, 2011). Women have been stereotyped with character traits such as being emotional, submissive, and dependent; these traits are not aligned with strong leadership (S. Hill, 2014; Wagner & Berger, 1997). Characteristics of being competitive, authoritarian, independent, task oriented, and individualistic are seen as positive and masculine and, therefore, traits to seek in great leaders (Walker & Aritz, 2015). Women, in contrast, bring the gift of being supportive and inclusive and thus assisting organizations from being ruled by an iron fist to being led with an outstretched hand. Shirley Hufstedler who was the first U.S. Secretary of Education speculated that the gender gap in education leadership is reflective of the gender gap that exists in every other profession and business in the United States (Litmanovitz, 2011). The American Association of School Administrators (AASA, 2019) calculated that only 23% of all superintendents in 2019 identify as female. Districts frequently seem reluctant to hire women as superintendents, business leaders, technology specialists, and human resource leaders. Although women are the substantial
majority of the teaching workforce, they are significantly underrepresented in executive leadership roles (AASA, 2019).

**Women in Middle Management**

In research studies, the available evidence indicates that middle management leaders have a direct and positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning for both teachers and students (Sammons, Thomas, & Mortimore, 1997). These studies emphasize the idea that middle management leaders in school districts can positively influence teaching and learning processes by building and reinforcing active professional support communities in which teachers can learn and develop together (Harris & Jones, 2010).

Overall, the research highlights that middle management leaders play a central role in securing better learning outcomes for students, which is a result of their direct and positive influence on teachers’ classroom practice (Fleming, 2013; Leask & Terrell, 2014). Other than at the teacher level, most variations in school district performance occur at the course subject, the classroom, or the department level (Sammons et al., 1997). In summary, a significant part of any within-school variations in performance can be found at the middle-management tier, implying that this is a critical layer for support and development.

Middle managers are considered the bridge in the organization that connects senior managers and support staff. Middle managers are also successful at bridging the gap between strategy and regular work activities (Birken, Lee, & Weiner, 2012). Middle managers have a substantial impact on individual and team performance in an organization. They provide direction and purpose, set goals, hire staff, and retain
motivated employees with the right technical skill sets. Middle managers also recognize and reward performance while communicating and providing support to the team (Sullivan, 2011). A separate impact of Sullivan’s (2011) study is the positive effect it might have in supporting middle managers’ ascension to cabinet-level managerial positions.

**Women in Certificated Management Roles**

According to Eagly and Carli (2007), “Paths to the top exist, and some women find them” (p. 6). Those females who shatter the glass ceiling to achieve the superintendency report that support systems were instrumental in helping them (Anderson, 2000; McGee, 2010; Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2000). A review of literature revealed that support systems most utilized by females in the superintendent role included mentors, professional and personal networking groups, and support from their family unit (Björk, 2000; Gupton, 2009; Kelsey, Allen, Coke, & Ballard, 2014; McCabe & Dobberteen, 1998; McGee, 2010; Pecora, 2006; Reed & Patterson, 2007). Anderson (2000) stated that an aspiring female superintendent should “examine her family coping skills, use of a mentor, political savvy skills, understanding of the selection process, training opportunities, and her understanding of the workings of a school board” to achieve promotions within an educational agency (p. 25). Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) explained that “documenting female representation in the superintendency continues to be imprecise, and at the average annual increase of less than one percent, it will take another seventy-seven years for women to be proportionally represented” (p. 48).
Women, with longevity in their experience as teachers, proficiently fill the need for effective instructional leaders, which is extremely useful in the educational system of today (Björk, Browne-Ferrigno, & Kowalski, 2014). In today’s world, given that the majority of teachers are female, an equal representation of women should be seen in the upper level management tiers of the educational field. In addition to female superintendents having more extensive teaching experience in their background, a majority of female superintendents obtain experience in multiple administrative roles before advancing to a superintendency position (Glass et al., 2000; Kowalski et al., 2011). The most common position served directly before securing the position of superintendent is that of a district-level administrator, including assistant/associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction (Glass & Franceschini, 2007) or director or coordinator (Kowalski et al., 2011). More males, at 52.5%, compared to females, at 25.5%, advance directly from site principal to superintendent (Glass & Franceschini, 2007). Women experience additional challenges by having to work longer in their career, obtain a greater variety of experiences, and work at the district level in some administrative capacity before securing a superintendent role, than do males (Glass et al., 2000; Glass & Franceschini, 2007; Kowalski et al., 2011).

**Classified Staff in Leadership Roles**

The maximum number of positions that may be designated as senior management or cabinet-level positions is regulated by California Education Code Section 45390(a) (2019). The classified senior managers who sit on an educational agency cabinet are in positions that include assistant superintendent of finance and business, human resources, maintenance and operations, and technology and information services. The recognition
of classified staff and the equal contribution they make to student success as compared with certificated staff is evidenced in part through a report from the California Association of School Business Officials; Executive Director Molly McGee Hewitt commented on the following in her August 23 newsletter:

    A double standard often exists that causes us to honor certificated over classified . . . what matters is that you are a dedicated professional who values the work of education and who recognizes the roles we play in supporting students! (McGee Hewett, 2016, para. 9)

The recent legislation that created the California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program designed to convert beginning manager-level classified staff to certificated teachers is additional evidence of the lack of value placed upon classified staff (CCTC, 2016). As stated by Donis Coronel, director of ACSA’s Classified Education Leaders Academy in San Diego, “Most districts focus on certificated employees, whether teachers or principals” (ACSA Writer, 2018, “Helping educational programs succeed,” para. 2), which results in many classified employees not understanding how they fit into the bigger educational picture.

    AB 1200 legislation was created to ensure that local educational agencies (LEAs) throughout California adequately prepare to meet their financial obligations. This new legislation expanded the role of county offices of education (COEs) in monitoring school districts by mandating that COEs intervene under certain circumstances to ensure districts can meet their financial obligations. The oversight responsibility lies solely with the classified managers who hold the position of chief business official within the COEs.
across California (CDE, 2013). This is a critical role for a classified leadership position and supports the importance of recognizing the value of the classified service.

**Women and Political Engagement**

Politics has consistently been considered a male-dominated domain in which women had no place. Female participation in politics notably increased in 1954 when the United Nations convention on the political rights of women went into force (UN Women, n.d.). This gave women equal rights to vote, hold an office, and have access to public services. Unfortunately, despite these considerable changes, it is still undeniable that women are underrepresented in politics. It would not be prudent to underestimate the importance of women in the political arena. One of the primary goals of government should be to engage more and more women in public policy and close the considerable gender gap in politics (Women’s Forum, 2017).

There is growing evidence that women’s leadership in political decision-making processes improves them and the world they live in (UN Women, n.d.). Women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women’s caucuses—even in the most politically combative environments—and by championing issues of gender equality such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws, and electoral reform (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2008). This advantage of political leadership in elected positions is the same value that occurs in business-related politics.

Fairholm (2009) suggested that there is little evidence that women have different political power needs than men; however, he also concluded that women express their need for power in different ways and they exercise power in different ways depending
upon the situation. Women’s use of political power is more relationship oriented, whereas that of men is more task oriented. The following tactics identified by Fairholm compare those used by women to those used by men (see Table 1).

As one of the first to use the term political skill in academic literature, Pfeffer (1981) argued for a political perspective on organizations. He purported that political skill is needed to be successful, and he appealed to researchers for additional studies that would develop a more informed understanding of what makes up political skill.

Table 1

Organizational Power Politics—Comparison of When Tactics Are Used by Women and Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motive base</td>
<td>No real difference in this factor noted</td>
<td>To be aggressive toward power use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural pressure</td>
<td>To be submissive toward power use</td>
<td>To be aggressive toward power use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases of power</td>
<td>Internal: self</td>
<td>External: situational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>To control one’s own life</td>
<td>To control the environment and others and through that to control one’s own life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactivity</td>
<td>Internal: building self, find strength as a resource</td>
<td>Aggressive: find strength in action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability</td>
<td>More involvement in clubs; associate with others for the intrinsic benefits</td>
<td>More involvement in formal organizations; associate with others because it is the “thing to do”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>Things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision style</td>
<td>Both have a generally similar style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power forms used</td>
<td>Authority—and then manipulation/persuasion</td>
<td>Persuasion and then manipulation and influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power tactics used</td>
<td>System-based</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mintzberg (1983) suggested that political skill refers to the exercise of influence through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation. Fennell (2018) proposed that political intelligence “is not about being Machiavellian or standing on people’s heads to get what you want no matter what” (para. 9). Political intelligence is about being more strategic so that leaders, especially women, can shape organizations to reflect the kind of workplaces of which they can be proud.

**Politics in Educational Agencies**

Political realities cannot be separated from the others. As the driving forces of globalization and technology reshape the political landscape, politics have become “more transparent, the world more connected . . . dictators more vulnerable, and both individuals and small groups more empowered” (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011, p. 56). Political realities for all educational agencies include board policies and politics, unions and employment contracts, state politics and party power, and national trends that continually call for school reform. Examples of this include the adoption of the new state funding methodology (CDE, 2018) for school districts, Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and the accompanying accountability document, the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). At the federal level, school districts must comply with the ever-increasing political regulations such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; U.S. Department of Education, 2015), with the accompanying LCAP Federal Addendum Template, and the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Understanding the new political initiatives and their impact on education and the role of the educational leader may begin to bring more awareness to the existing barriers of females achieving educational leadership positions.
Not only do state policies and goals exist, but educational leaders must also implement and enforce local district changes, technological changes, and many other requirements for accountability (Crow & Weindling, 2010). From the local political standpoint, political challenges come from the school site, district level, and the community (Crow & Weindling, 2010). Politics should not be viewed as negative because when they are used appropriately and skillfully, they can manifest a cooperative nature as well (Björk & Blasé, 2009; Ferris et al., 2005; White et al., 2016).

**Developing Female Leaders to be Politically Savvy**

Although initially distrustful of women’s suffrage, after its passage in 1920 giving women the right to vote, Eleanor Roosevelt, playing a leadership role in several organizations including the League of Women Voters and the Women’s Trade Union League, promoted political engagement for women by example (Michals, 2017). Roosevelt surrounded herself with politically astute women such as Molly Dewson and Rose Schneiderman. She was head of the Women’s Division of the Democratic National Committee, recruited in 1928 to help Al Smith’s presidential bid. Her activities were widely covered in the media in the 1920s, and she became more publically recognizable than her husband when he decided to run for governor in 1928. Roosevelt became the most politically active and influential First Lady in history with her husband’s successful attempt at the presidency in 1932. She used her position to advance many of her progressive and egalitarian goals (Michals, 2017).

Much research has been conducted to determine the qualities that make women effective leaders in political and business arenas. EMILY’s List, a political action committee founded in 1985 by a group of women has supported hundreds of women to
get elected to political office (Przybyla, 2017). The committee of prochoice democratic women demonstrates its dedication to women making gains in the political arena. In 2016, women continued to be underrepresented in political roles, but a positive step forward was made when Hillary Clinton was named the presidential nominee of the Democratic political party in 2016. The Democratic political party’s nomination of Clinton was a national representation of a woman on the political forefront (Hampson, 2016). Zenger and Folkman (2012) recognized the skill and diversity that women had to offer in the realm of executive leaders. They believed that more women at the top would increase the overall effectiveness of leadership teams. Zenger and Folkman’s research confirmed that women have a clear advantage in the areas of relationships and communication when it comes to leadership traits.

Political intelligence has often been identified as an area that all leaders need to improve upon because its lack can have a negative impact on decision-making and getting things done (Bancroft-Turner, 2016; Reffo & Wark, 2014; White et al., 2016). The following six blocks to political intelligence are identified by White et al. (2016) along with recommendations for ways to overcome the blocks (see Table 2). It is vital for leaders to overcome any blocks to political intelligence because ignoring politics or practicing politics poorly can be a career-limiting error in judgment.

De Valk (2018) suggested that reframing organizational politics so that politics can be thought about in a positive manner will help women to avoid having their careers being hijacked by their political naivety. Many times, women feel that they are doing a great job; they are totally committed and focused on what needs to happen, and then someone less qualified gets promoted above them. They assume that they were working


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block to political intelligence</th>
<th>Recommendations to overcome blocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shyness</td>
<td>Find a mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn by observing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role-playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communications skills training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of those who may be more</td>
<td>Observe, listen, and learn from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politically savvy</td>
<td>seasoned politically aware leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The belief that “playing politics” is unethical</td>
<td>Identify the power players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek out ways to make others look good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showcase your own abilities and successes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on being right more than</td>
<td>Be aware you have a choice in how you feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accomplishing your long-term goals</td>
<td>Know what you are trying to achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on your circle of influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t get personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t take sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think win-win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training</td>
<td>Get a mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observe role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take time to reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of good role models</td>
<td>Pick leaders to observe whose style applies to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study politically astute leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


on the right stuff, but the reality is that the more experienced women become, the more they need to move on from what they are already good at and start building and demonstrating new and additional competencies. This includes becoming good at being politically savvy. If leaders want to be change agents, they need to have the ability to influence others (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). To be able to influence, a
leader must have a good understanding of how decisions are made and what the sources of power are in his or her organization. This is the definition of political savvy. Learning to “read” the people, the room, the culture, and the system will be a critical skill for tomorrow’s future transformational leaders.

**Benefits of Political Engagement**

According to Marcus (2015), political savvy is essential for a leader:

- It lets you and your teams get ‘big important stuff’ done
- It gives you authority
- It builds credibility as others want to see you can get the job done
- It builds trust as your troops expect you to manage in that way
- It will build your leadership reputation

Some political behavior in organizations can be uncomfortable, such as psychological game playing and self-serving behavior, which has nothing to do with the interests of the organization (White et al., 2016). These behaviors can encourage a negative mind-set about acquiring political skills. Political savviness is about being strategic and ensures that leaders are optimizing their influence. A leader can do that with authenticity and integrity because operating with integrity and being politically sophisticated is not an either/or proposition.

Organizations are clearly a complex labyrinth of egos, issues, rivalries, sacred cows, and personal sandboxes (Denker, 2019). Denker (2019) added that politically savvy leaders accept these facts and deal with them as common elements of organizational life. Leaders who understand the complexities of organizational behavior are able to influence others successfully within and outside of their direct area of
responsibility. They understand the underlying issues and context, the personalities involved, and they are able to get things done in this labyrinth with the least amount of disruption for maximum benefit; they are politically savvy (Denker, 2019; Marcus, 2015). Being politically savvy is a crucial competency for leaders to succeed at senior top-level positions in organizations for men and women alike.

**Influence.** A leader who is successful at having followers meet the requirements of specific goals is perceived to be influential (Douglas & Ammeter, 2004). The social interactions in an organization for the purpose of influencing followers are what Ferris et al. (2005) identified as political skill. Politically skilled leaders are characterized by the ability to understand others at work. They are more self-confident than those without political skill, and they demonstrate personal security with a calmness that is comforting to others (Treadway et al., 2004). Another characteristic of political savvy, which is generally considered negative in its definition, is the leader’s ability to manipulate others (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). However, in organizational politics, manipulation may be used to gain power for the good of the organization (Pfeffer, 2010). Unselfish social influence is at the heart of political savvy because one of the purposes of a leader is to manage shared meaning (Pfeffer, 2010).

Blickle et al. (2013) found that leaders with formal power who are also politically savvy are perceived to contribute more structure and to demonstrate more consideration for their followers. This, in turn, positively impacts the follower’s satisfaction. Consideration traits are demonstrated by the leader’s ability to fulfill the basic needs of interpersonal connectedness of the follower by developing a relationship of mutual understanding and trust (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). Shared meaning provides
followers with a sense of belonging and ownership that will enhance the goals of the organization (Pfeffer, 2010). Todd, Harris, Harris, and Wheeler (2009) suggested that individuals with political savvy are able to more effectively influence others because these skills provide leaders with the knowledge to read others and to use the information to help achieve valued organizational goals (Ferris et al., 2005).

**Positive outcomes.** A study by Hochwarter and Thompson (2010) investigated the moderating role of optimism on political outcomes relationships. Their findings confirmed that politics in general triggered increased stress and lowered satisfaction for individuals with high levels of optimism. However, those with high levels of political outcomes relationships and low levels of optimism remained fundamentally unaffected. This is contradictory to studies that suggest that favorable stress reactions, such as optimism, buffer individuals from adversity and the effects of threats (Joseph & Linley, 2005). This study advises that leaders who may have optimistic dispositions are more likely to experience greater disappointment with unsuccessful outcomes in the presence of heightened political perception (Hochwarter & Treadway, 2003). Additionally, optimistic individuals who adopt an invincible mentality may perceive other’s self-servicing behavior as unexpected and alarming (Fischer, Greitemeyer, & Frey, 2007). Despite perceived threats engendered by politics, researchers assert that political skill is necessary to operate an organization effectively and to create an environment where trust and positive relationships are the norms in the organizational structure (Ferris et al., 2005).

Fairholm’s (2009) research indicated that organizational politics can be useful in helping an organization reach its goals and cope with survival and organizational health
concerns. Although political activity can have both positive and negative results, its use is not in doubt—it is an instrument for securing organizational rewards.

**Relationships.** Politics can sometimes be considered an obstacle that affects the overall well-being of employees by provoking negative emotions and passive coping styles. These obstacles hinder one’s ability to access resources for job performance and decrease job satisfaction (C.-H. Chang & Lyons, 2012; Rosen & Levy, 2013). Studies now indicate that politics does have several positive associations with work outcomes and performance and that political savvy is necessary to mobilize energies. Kane-Frieder, Hochwarter, and Ferris (2013) found in their study that organizational politics actually strengthened positive work engagement and the work outcomes relationship of highly engaged individuals. Organizations that concentrate on team-based approaches (Harvey & Drolet, 2004) change the roles of managers and leaders to strengthen work outcomes relationships. Political savvy is becoming more critical for leadership success (Douglas & Ammeter, 2004) and knowing the appropriate behavior to engage in for specific situations.

**Political Styles**

According to DeLuca (1999) and White et al. (2016), organizational politics should not always be considered bad. DeLuca (1999) discussed the Political Style Grid, demonstrating that, in general, people view politics in a negative, neutral, or positive light, and they initiate, predict, or respond to politics with different levels of proactivity (see Table 3).

DeLuca (1999) suggested that mastering organizational politics by becoming more politically savvy is a proven ethical leadership approach that any organization and any individual can use to both influence positive change in an organization and achieve
career success at the same time. A leader who has political skill can make positive change even when negative organizational politics are severe.

Table 3

DeLuca’s Grid of Political Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action orientation values</th>
<th>Values orientation categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates (active approach)</td>
<td>Machiavellian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manipulator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks out for #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicts (somewhat active)</td>
<td>Protector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>File builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds (less active)</td>
<td>Cynic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I told you so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gossiper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Political Savvy: Systematic Approaches to Leadership Behind-the-Scenes, by J. R. DeLuca, 1999 (Berwyn, PA: EBG).

White et al. (2016) suggested that there are nine basic political styles (see Table 4) that can be sorted through the lens of the following behaviors: assertive, engaged, and passive:

Table 4

White et al.’s Nine Basic Political Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political styles</th>
<th>Goal initiative</th>
<th>Self-interests</th>
<th>Blended interests</th>
<th>Organizational interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
<td>Arranger</td>
<td>Strategist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>Balancer</td>
<td>Developer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Analyst</td>
<td>Adaptor</td>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These nine basic political styles will intersect as a leader responds to given situations that require various goals and initiatives. Each style has advantages and disadvantages, and it is up to the leader to determine which style provides the necessary value to the organization for resolving the current challenge (White et al., 2016). As cautioned by both DeLuca (1999) and White et al. (2016), when leaders identify the political styles they most relate to, they should also acknowledge that, in reality, they often display all of these styles at different times depending upon the situation.

**Political Strategies**

According to White et al. (2016), there are specific strategies that leaders engage in 19 external political strategies and 18 internal political strategies. External political strategies are those that involve groups outside of the organization. The following is not an exhaustive (White et al., 2016) but a comprehensive list that should be added to when other specific political strategies are found to be helpful (see Table 5).

According to White et al. (2016), identifying and understanding one’s own political styles and strategies will allow a leader to be more deliberate about the political choices he or she makes. Self-awareness is the first step toward competency in political engagement. Knowing one’s *default style*, as well as the fact that certain situations might indicate the need to engage in another style, will allow leaders to be more effective in the choices they make. Functioning with awareness and deliberateness will ensure the best interests of the organization in which leaders serve. Understanding the styles of others in the organization will give leaders the tools to function effectively within the interconnected and interdependent organizational structures.
Table 5

Political Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External political strategies</th>
<th>Internal political strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create a political vision</td>
<td>2. Uncover the informal norms ASAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You need to meet their needs, or they’ll never meet yours</td>
<td>3. Do your homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Simplify and clarify your message</td>
<td>4. Dig the well before you’re thirsty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Never let ‘em see you sweat</td>
<td>5. Link agendas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do your homework</td>
<td>6. Management by walking around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Know each decision maker’s agenda</td>
<td>7. Be open to their ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Be aware of political blind spots</td>
<td>8. Empower others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Coalition building is a long-term and necessary strategy</td>
<td>9. Make use of the chit system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. “Working the community” is usually neither interesting nor fun,</td>
<td>10. Expand the pie with “out of the box” thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but it’s necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Don’t wait to build networks until you need them</td>
<td>11. Many messengers – same message – bigger impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Include all sides</td>
<td>12. Be aware of internal political blind spots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Positive responses to perceived dangers win support</td>
<td>13. Where snipers dwell plan meticulously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to compete, intention to cooperate</td>
<td>14. Go slow to go fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Win-win solutions win more than win-lose solutions</td>
<td>15. Benevolent environments yield risk-taking and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Count how many of your natural constituents are voters</td>
<td>16. Knowing who trusts whom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Celebrate everything</td>
<td>17. Float the idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The theory of small wins</td>
<td>18. Use the accordion process to increase involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Use conflict resolution techniques</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A Gap in the Research

Despite the extensive research done regarding certificated school leaders and the positions they hold at LEAs, there is little literature to be found about classified managers. Women hold important classified middle-manager roles in educational agencies, but there is a lack of recognition and acceptance of those in classified positions being school leaders. Very little research addresses and examines what political strategies successful women classified managers perceive enhanced and supported their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency.

Summary

Although women have made progress in achieving equality in numbers in the workplace, the gender gap remains in educational agencies across the country in superintendent positions. Research shows that the majority of those who work in education are females, yet those who reach the top-level positions such as superintendent are predominantly males (Brunner & Kim, 2010; Cumings Mansfield, Welton, Lee, & Young, 2010; Dobie & Hummel, 2001; Fuller, 2013; Glass et al., 2000; Litmanovitz, 2011; Muñoz, Pankake, Ramalho, Mills, & Simonsson, 2014; Superville, 2016). At the time of this study, only 27% of women occupied the position of superintendent in the United States (Superville, 2016). Society continues to see leaders as being synonymous with being male (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women who have risen to the position of superintendent have proven that they are capable of taking the school district to the next level of excellence with a mastery of 21st-century skills.

Barriers still exist for women despite some positive results in high-level positions. They continue to face stereotyping, inequity in hiring practices, work-family conflict,
lack of mentorship, few sponsors, glass ceiling, and glass escalator barriers. Women have proven they can hold the job of superintendent, yet fewer and fewer aspire to the position because of the difficulty they face in ascending through the ranks (Brunner, 1999). Women and men both have unique gifts and traits that are needed in the workplace. The literature is clear that while it is still a man’s world, women are making an impact and changing the landscape. Learning the unique differences between the leadership styles of men and women in the workplace is the key to organizational success (Marcus, 2015; White et al., 2016).

Adapting and accepting personal leadership styles that incorporate the strengths of both women and men will allow women to gain parity in the workforce. Men in power positions have the ability to hire more males without having to address feelings of discomfort or gender dissonance (Annis & Gray, 2013). This phenomenon perpetuates the hiring of men and continues to keep the number of women in the highest leadership positions down. However, as more women reach top-level leadership positions, women will have the power to hire more women, thus putting an end to this cycle.

Despite the literature demonstrating that women have tremendous leadership capacity and skill, little research has been done to identify the politically savvy behaviors that female educational leaders exhibit in order to promote to cabinet-level positions (Garzaniti, 2017; Ryder, 1998). There is extensive literature about the challenges women have faced over the years, there is a significant amount of literature that focuses on women in the workplace, there is a lesser amount of literature found that discusses women certificated educational leaders, and there is very little literature that addresses female leaders in senior management classified leadership roles. The research indicates a
need to identify what this gap is attributed to and to determine whether it is a lack of political astuteness and engagement that limits women classified leaders from moving up in educational agencies.

The synthesis matrix, which helped to organize the research that was utilized in this study, can be found in Appendix A.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of Chapter III is to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative phenomenological study exploring the lived experiences of successful classified women in educational agencies and the political styles and strategies they use. The purpose and research questions are restated followed by a description of the qualitative research design, which provides a clear explanation of the selected method used to conduct the research. This is followed by an explanation of the population and methodology for selecting the sample for the study. The process of developing the instrument for the collection of data from the participants in the study is provided in the instrumentation section, following which is a discussion about the validity and reliability of the data. Data collection methods and approaches to data analysis are outlined, and the limitations of the study are identified. This chapter concludes with a summary analysis of the chapter’s important considerations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover and describe the political styles of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced from middle management to top-level management positions within an educational agency. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted.
Research Questions

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management level positions in an educational agency and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers?

Research Subquestions

1. How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?
2. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management level positions in an educational agency?
3. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to be promoted to senior management level positions in an educational agency?

Research Design

Research methods are ways of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data that researchers select for their studies (Creswell, 2014). The selection of a methodology is dependent upon alignment with the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research questions (Roberts, 2010). The three broad research approaches, based on specific philosophical assumptions, are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative research is the approach used to investigate and understand the meaning that individuals attribute to a social or human condition (Creswell, 2014).
The objective of qualitative research is to explore, analyze, and interpret the research participants’ experiences gathered through interviews, observations, and written materials (Patton, 2015). The researcher is immersed in the study while collecting data in the participants’ natural setting. There are many qualitative inquiry theories to choose from when determining the approach that is most appropriate to use: ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, heuristic inquiry, or systems theory (Patton, 2015). Selecting the right research method for the research study is crucial, especially when one recognizes and understands that research informs policy (Wilensky, 2001).

The researcher selected a phenomenological research methodology for this study with the intent to capture the stories of classified women managers’ lived experiences as they successfully advanced in their careers to senior management-level positions within an educational agency. A phenomenological research design was the best fit because phenomenology “seeks to make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experience” (Sanders, 1982, p. 355). Sanders (1982) also suggested that because phenomenology is a study of conscious phenomenon, conducting research by attempting to understand experiences provides the analysis needed to gain understanding and insight. Phenomenologists look for knowledge out of everyday experiences and believe that truth in the research process comes out of exploring those life experiences (Byrne, 2001). Participants provide the means for exploration through interviews, observations, and artifacts to discover and describe the real-life political styles and strategies of successful women classified managers as they experience advancement from middle management to senior management-level positions in an educational agency.
A phenomenology framework approach provided this study with the methodology to explore the “meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences” (Patton, 2015, p. 98) of women classified managers to determine if the participants utilized political styles and strategies in pursuit of senior management-level positions. The participants included women who had successfully advanced to senior management-level positions within an educational agency. This phenomenological study utilized interviews, observations, and artifacts of classified managers in the central coast region of California. Interviews were conducted with 15 women who described their lived experiences as they advanced from middle management to senior management-level positions in an educational agency and how the political styles and strategies they engaged in affected their ability to be promoted.

**Population**

Population is defined as “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). According to DataQuest, the California Department of Education’s (n.d.-b) web-based data reporting system, there are over 14,000 classified women managers working within the 58 county offices of education and 943 school districts in California. As such, the population for this study, also called the target population, was identified as all the classified women managers employed by the 1,001 local educational agencies (LEAs) in California.

**Sampling Frame**

The sampling frame is the actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is essentially a databank of potential
respondents that can be drawn from to invite to take part in a given research project. Because this was a qualitative study, access to all county office and school district classified managers within California was not feasible. The sampling frame for this research study included successful female senior classified administrators within educational organizations in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. According to DataQuest (CDE, n.d.-b), the number of successful classified women managers in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties was approximately 370 (see Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Population, sampling frame, and sample size. From About DataQuest, by California Department of Education, n.d. (https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/dataquest.asp).](image)

**Sample**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) referred to the sample as “the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected” (p. 129). Sample size in qualitative research requires a careful evaluation of the specific guidelines such as the purpose of the study, the focus of the study, the data collection strategy, and the availability of
participants’ time and resources (Patton, 2015). Typically, qualitative research design uses few participants for the studies, focusing on obtaining rich data from the perspective of a limited selection of the participants (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). For this study, a sample size of 15 participants was selected from among the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) award-winning successful women classified managers working for educational agencies in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties.

A purposive sampling strategy combined with convenience sampling was used for the selection of participants via predetermined criteria suggested by the research questions. This strategy allowed participants to be selected who were valuable sources of information (Patten, 2012), and supported and deepened the qualitative data analysis, as well as allowed for a more thorough interpretation of patterns and themes.

Criterion sampling was used as a method of narrowing down the purposive sampling to ensure that all participants of the study met the established criteria and could provide rich data through their experiences (Creswell, 2014). Combined with convenience sampling, this allowed the researcher to select participants based upon accessibility or feasibility (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The criteria used for this study included the following characteristics:

- They were females.
- They were classified managers with a minimum of 3 years of managerial experience within a school district or county office of education.
- They have been honored by ACSA, Region 10 (Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties) as classified female administrators of the year for exemplary leadership from 2014 through 2018.
Participants were classified managers honored through ACSA based on their ability to meet the following specific ACSA benchmarks:

- They promote student success through stewardship and engaging the school community.
- They ensure success through collaboration with stakeholders.
- They model a personal code of ethics.
- They develop professional leadership capacity, including understanding, responding to, and influencing the broader political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

The researcher was provided with a list and contact information, by the ACSA Region 10 consultant, of the award-winning classified female administrators of the year from 2014 through 2018. Contact was made with the identified award winners who met the award criteria as well as the research study criteria. From the list of classified women award recipients, the number was narrowed down to the first 15 women who returned the informed consent form (Appendix B) and who held senior management-level positions. The participants were all considered exemplary performers within ACSA and their places of employment.

**Instrumentation**

The researcher serves as the instrument of data collection in qualitative research (Patton, 2015), which introduces the potential for bias (Patton, 2015; Ryan, Coughlan, & Cronin, 2007). The interviewer must be a neutral medium through which information is shared in order to mitigate potential bias. This ensures that the researcher’s presence has no effect on the perceptions or answers of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This phenomenological study used a semistructured interview protocol, as well as
observations and artifacts, to collect the lived experiences data from the participants (Patton, 2015). For this study, the researcher asked questions from a script in order to draw out the responses from the participants, without leading them, to share their lived experiences of the political styles and strategies they used as they successfully promoted to senior management-level positions within an educational agency. The semistructured format guaranteed that each participant was asked the same open-ended questions by the researcher, which then allowed for follow-up questions that provided more in-depth and personally meaningful data to be collected. This methodology also ensured that the researcher had little control over the participants’ responses. The questions were intentionally developed to align with the research questions through an alignment table (see Appendix C, Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions) and to link to the literature as delineated in the synthesis matrix (see Appendix A, Synthesis Matrix) in order to discover the political styles and strategies women classified managers engage in as successful leaders in their organizations (see Appendix B, Interview Protocol).

Following a phenomenological perspective, participants shared their lived experiences and viewpoints surrounding the political styles and strategies they used to promote within an educational agency. The interview process occurred in a quiet, private room at the end of the participant’s day so that interruptions could be limited, and the participant was able to focus and share his or her experience fully with the researcher. The interviews are confidential but not considered anonymous. As a classified manager within an educational agency with her own biases, the researcher followed McMillan and Schumacher’s (2010) suggestions to keep a log book and reflex journal to document fieldwork throughout the interview and observation process. McMillan and Schumacher
described reflexivity as “a rigorous process of self-examination of the researcher” (p. 332). This can be accomplished through posing difficult questions to oneself for the purpose of self-scrutiny. The researcher had similar characteristics to those of the participants and had to remain mindful of how the interview analyses and observations were filtered through a personal worldview in order to remain unbiased and detached. Reflexivity is an important process in order to facilitate the establishment of credibility.

Knowing that subjectivity cannot be denied, qualitative researchers must perfect their interpersonal skills to more effectively conduct face-to-face interviews in a standardized format (Patton, 2015). It was the goal of the researcher to present as a neutral medium so that the interviewer’s presence would have no effect on the responses of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Observations for this study were based upon the research questions and recorded naturally occurring behavior. The observations were site based, and the data were gathered from public meetings where the participants had a role to play. Observing the political styles and strategies as the participants interacted with other educational leaders added to the efficacy of the study. Narrative evidence from observation logs was limited to the researcher. All participant identities in the study were protected through the use of pseudonyms to help ensure confidentiality. Table 6 describes the observation prompt and the alignment with the corresponding research question and relevant literature. Documents, reports, and other artifacts were collected from participants and reviewed in relationship to the guiding research questions.
Table 6

*Research Questions, Observation Prompts, and Relevant Literature Alignment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Observation prompt</th>
<th>Relevant literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For 15 successful classified women managers employed at Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties:</td>
<td>Observations will be completed during public board meetings and leadership meetings</td>
<td>ACSA journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?</td>
<td>What observations can be made regarding the interaction between the participant and the other managers?</td>
<td>White et al., 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcus, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fairholm, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?</td>
<td>What observations can be made regarding the strategies successful women use to communicate and “win” their point during leadership level meetings, board meetings, and other public school events?</td>
<td>White et al., 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marcus, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fairholm, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Validity and Reliability**

All research requires validity and reliability. The value of validity is sometimes questioned in qualitative research, but using appropriate strategies will increase the likelihood that research will be accepted and valued within the field of study (Patton, 2015). According to Silverman (2006), “Validity shows the soundness of the research methodology and the results generated, based on the extent to which the research remains in agreement with universal laws, objectivity, truth, and facts” (p. 472). Validity in qualitative research depends on the ability and effort made by the researcher because the researcher is the instrument. Validity is the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world (Patton, 2015). The high degree to which the questions in the interview protocol (see Appendix B, Interview
Protocol) and the observations aligned with the research questions (Patton, 2015) ensured validity for this study.

Reliability is the likelihood that repeating the study will produce consistent findings (Patton, 2015). Reliability is a measure of the stability or consistency of test scores. It is also considered a testing opportunity to determine if a research study could be repeatable. The danger of the single story was eliminated because of the sampling size that included three different counties with participants who were unknown by the researcher. Ensuring that the data are valid and reliable is of critical importance when doing a qualitative study. Careful data collection and data analysis techniques will support the validity and reliability of the study (Silverman, 2006).

**Expert Panel**

An expert panel was formed for the purposes of reviewing and perfecting the interview questions, ensuring their alignment with the research purpose statement and the research questions. The panel members were selected based upon being known in the professional arena for their expertise in classified administration within an educational agency. Panel members were successful women classified managers within the county of Monterey who were not part of this study to allow for the researcher to easily receive feedback from the members to validate the content and alignment of the interview questions. The Interview Observer Feedback Reflection Questionnaire (Appendix D) and the Field-Test Interviewee Feedback Questionnaire (Appendix E) were both used in the process of soliciting constructive feedback.
Internal Reliability

Data stability is shown when the “researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). In qualitative research, it is critical to outline the steps the researcher took to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Internal reliability examines the stability of the data. External reliability is not needed for qualitative research, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), because it measures the results of data specifically gathered when performing quantitative research. Creswell (2014) outlined several qualitative reliability procedures:

- checking transcripts to ensure there are no obvious transcription errors,
- making sure there is no shift in the meaning of codes during the process of coding,
- checking for intercoder agreement by cross-checking and comparing results,
- documenting procedural steps, and
- creating a case study protocol and database so others can replicate the study thereby enhancing the ability to assess the accuracy of the findings. (p. 203)

Intercoder Reliability

Following the steps outlined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the researcher identified, defined, and then further refined the codes. The first step was to transcribe interviews, review field notes, and sort the data into various categories depending upon the source of the information. Sorting through all the data allowed the researcher to get a broad sense of the complete story that was being presented and to reflect on its overall message. From there, initial codes were developed based upon the major topics identified. Next, comparisons were made for duplicate codes, and initial coding was
reviewed, tested, and revised as necessary. Primary essential codes, based upon the major topics that had some relation to each other, were interpreted and categorized. Emerging patterns were then identified that showed interrelationships in the data collected regarding the lived experiences of successful classified female administrators. Creswell (2014) cautioned that in addition to checking for accuracy in transcription, it is critical to be ever watchful for a possible drift in the definition the researcher applies to the codes. An independent researcher, who was a doctoral candidate with coding experience garnered from her dissertation research, evaluated the data coding to verify that the categories were logical for the data collected and that the data were appropriately ordered in a category system (Patton, 2015). Cross-checking of codes supported the reliability of the findings. Intercoder reliability for this study was set at 80% accuracy on 10% of the data (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). Testing was conducted on a small sample that met the established level of agreement to ensure the 80% intercoder accuracy.

Pilot Test

The goal of the pilot interview is to increase reliability. According to Patten (2012), “A test is said to be reliable if it yields consistent results” (p. 136). A pilot interview will also allow a test run of the interviewer to be better prepared for conducting the formal recorded interviews and for checking to ensure there is no bias reflected in the procedures, the interviewer, or the questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). An expert observer who had experience with conducting qualitative interviews watched the pilot interview in order to confirm that timing and proper engagement was achieved. The researcher used the interview protocol with a volunteer participant who met the
conditions of the sample but was not a subject in the actual study. This pilot test also allowed for any updates and corrections to be made to the interview questions (Lombard et al., 2002) based upon the feedback received from the observer. At the conclusion of the pilot interview, the researcher debriefed with the expert observer and the volunteer participant and course-corrected any items that were suggested needing adjustment in order to improve the interviewing technique. The feedback was of critical importance to refine the interview protocol and improve reliability. The Brandman Interview Observer Feedback Reflection Questionnaire (see Appendix D) and the Pilot Test Interviewee Feedback Questionnaire (see Appendix E) were used to collect feedback and make any changes as suggested by the feedback.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained permission from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) through a detailed online process. The BUIRB has the responsibility and authority to review and approve all research projects by Brandman University faculty and students involving human or animal participants. It will approve only experiments that conform to the professional standards as understood within the relevant discipline. According to Brandman University (n.d.),

The mission of the BUIRB is to protect the rights of human research participants in research studies to ensure:

- Participants’ rights to give informed consent
- Safety and protection from undue risk,
- Research is guided by ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and just as set forth in the Belmont Report
Research is conducted with the highest level of expertise and integrity.

Research complies with all applicable laws, policies, and regulations. (“The BUIRB’s Mission”)

After receiving approval from the IRB, the researcher was cleared to begin conducting interviews with the sample participants. Because of the nature of the research and the study being conducted primarily through interviews, this research project fell under the minimal risk category within the BUIRB process.

Lived-experience focused data collection was accomplished through in-depth, semistructured interviews, observations, and artifacts. According to Patton (2015), qualitative research allows for the collection of “what it was like to have been there” (p. 45) data, recording the time and place in which the phenomenon occurred. The participants’ experiences were captured through their stories and words. Open-ended interview questions were developed based upon the political styles and strategies as described by White et al. (2016) in *The Politically Intelligent Leader*. Skilled interviewing involves the art of listening and fully hearing the answers from the participants. The semistructured interview questions focused on capturing the lived experiences of the participants. Comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information from each participant’s interview, and through observations during leadership meetings and school district board meetings that the participants attend and at which they present information, provided for the triangulation of the data. The amalgamation of participants’ interviews and observations strengthened the efficacy of the study.
The data collection methodology included the adoption of a template, an observation log (see Appendix F, Observation Log) for recording observational data that identified the event, the setting, the participant being observed, the date and time of the event, and the recorded researcher reflections (Creswell, 2014). The interview protocol followed Creswell’s (2014) suggestions, including

- a heading describing event, date and time, place, interviewer, and interviewee;
- instructions for the interviewer to follow so that standard procedure is used from one interview to the next;
- the primary interview questions followed by subquestions;
- probes for the questions to ask participants to provide additional detail or to expand upon their answers if desired (see Appendix G, List of Probes to Use During Interview);
- space between questions to give the interviewer time to record responses and allow the participant time to think; and
- a final statement thanking the interviewee to acknowledge his or her contribution. (p. 194)

The researcher used the necessary authentications to ensure validity and was aware of the ethical concerns involved when conducting research of human participants. Confirming the accuracy of transcribed interview data with the participants was one way the researcher established that data were reported correctly. After the recorded data were transcribed, they sent to the participants by e-mail so that they could have an opportunity to ensure that their thoughts and ideas were captured accurately.
Checking the validity and efficacy of the observations was another point of assessment. The researcher followed McMillan and Schumacher’s (2010) procedures for transcribing data as outlined:

- Leave large margins to provide space for comments and coding.
- Provide spaces between interview questions and participant responses.
- Use highlights to differentiate between headers, questions, different participants, and comments.
- Use descriptive words to represent the participants’ lived experiences.

**Interviews**

Phenomenological research typically includes conducting interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interviewing allows the researcher to focus on capturing personal experiences about a phenomenon as described by a participant in a study. The assumption is that the participant’s perspectives regarding the research topic could be meaningful, knowledgeable, and explicit (Patton, 2015). Interviews for phenomenological research are generally conducted as informal conversations and are used as a guide to elicit the participants’ stories. The technique that the researcher determined to be most suitable for this study was a standardized, open-ended interview with a set of questions carefully constructed and ordered to take the participants through the same process. Open-ended questions assisted the researcher in gathering pertinent details surrounding the participant’s behaviors, practices, experiences, attitudes, and perspectives and allowed flexibility for probing and exploring certain topics in order to obtain greater depth. The researcher began with McMillan and Schumacher’s (2010) suggestions to ask noncontroversial background and demographic questions such as their
education level, their occupation, where they work, the size of their organization, the number of years they have been employed in education, and the number of years in their current position. These questions helped to establish the common characteristics of the participants being interviewed. After the noncontroversial questions that encouraged the participants to talk descriptively (Patton, 2015) were completed, the interview continued with questions specifically within the research framework that addressed the 19 external and 18 internal strategies of political engagement and provided substantive data for the study. The research questions for this study explored the types of political styles and strategies female administrators used and under what circumstances.

After the participants for the study were identified, the researcher provided each potential interviewee with the Research Participant’s Bill of Rights (see Appendix H) via e-mail as well as the informed consent form (see Appendix I). Each of the participants was also provided with a copy of the Inventory of Political Styles via e-mail (see Appendix J) 1 week before his or her scheduled interview. The participants were asked to complete the exercise in advance as background information in order to familiarize themselves with the various political styles as identified in The Politically Intelligent Leader (White et al., 2016) and as an introduction to the terms being used during the interview. Understanding their own political styles will assist the participants in answering the questions during the interview process. The results of the inventory were not collected. This was purely informational for the participants and was not part of the data reporting. The researcher was granted permission by White et al. on September 28, 2019, to use The Inventory of Political Styles for the purposes of this study only.
Interviews were conducted in a quiet setting that was most convenient to the interviewee to ensure that a proper reflection of lived experience was collected and offered participants a comfortable setting. The research was conducted primarily through scheduled face-to-face and one-on-one interviews. However, the researcher conducted telephone interviews, if necessary, to follow up on unclear responses that needed clarification. All interviews were audio recorded with participant permission and subsequently transcribed. The audio release form (see Appendix K) was provided to each participant at the beginning of the interview. Field tests conducted prior to the interviews confirmed that the questions were aligned with the purpose statement and the research questions. The semistructured interviews, which lasted approximately 1 hour, had the researcher acting as a facilitator, listening, observing, and asking follow-up questions of the participants to gather as much data as possible to address the research questions (Patton, 2015). During the interview, the researcher made every effort to build rapport, to maintain eye contact, and to make sure the participant felt comfortable and relaxed. Actively listening to and connecting with the participant resulted in more meaningful data being collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). See Appendix B for the Interview Protocol.

**Observations**

Observations were included to help the researcher provide a vicarious experience and deepen the understanding of the phenomena of successful classified women educational leaders. Nonparticipant observation was used because the researcher observed participants as an outsider (Patten, 2012) observing the interactions between the participant and other educational agency leaders. A direct benefit of observation is the
opportunity to learn things that the participants may not have been willing to talk about during the interview (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) also suggested that through observational fieldwork, the researcher may have an opportunity to see things of which the participants were not consciously aware. The researcher used the observations of successful classified female administrators to collect data identifying their behaviors during professional interactions with coworkers. Board meetings that were open to the public and agency leadership meetings that were readily available were used for observation purposes. Informed consent was not necessary because observations were only performed at public meetings.

Observation field notes included identifying the event, the setting, the participant being observed, and the date and time of the event (see Appendix F, Observation Log) in relation to which behaviors were repetitive and which behaviors were unique (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Both during the observation fieldwork and after the observation fieldwork, common themes within the responses gradually emerged. Patterns imposed themselves upon the researcher (Burgess, 1989) and coding categories were suggested by the patterns, identifying common concepts and repetitions (Saldana, 2016).

**Artifacts**

Board agendas, board minutes, leadership meeting documents, ACSA commendations, and news articles that involved the participants were reviewed to evaluate how the participants engaged in political styles and strategies. Prior to the scheduled interviews, the researcher requested that each participant bring the applicable documents, as suggested from the items previously mentioned that support their use of political strategies, to the interview. Themes were developed that comprised evaluating
which political styles and strategies were used and which were effective when the participants engaged with other leaders. The researcher reviewed the documentation for common themes in relation to the research questions that were supported in the literature.

**Triangulation of Data**

Quality control addresses the techniques that qualitative researchers use to establish the dependability, validity, and trustworthiness of the data (Patten, 2012). One of these techniques is to examine evidence from multiple sources when obtaining the data; another is to use various methods with which to collect data. Triangulation was the methodology applied to ensure quality control through interviewing the 15 participants and collecting that data on the research topic. The successful classified women leaders all provided similar information, which allowed the researcher to corroborate the data from one data source to another (Patten, 2012).

In using triangulation for this study, the researcher considered interviews, observations, and artifacts to be the multiple sources of data that could converge at some point, creating a triangle. This point of intersection is where the researcher may see a connection between the inference of the world implied by several different sources of data. Triangulation tests the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments and increases the chance to control, or at least assess, some of the threats or multiple causes influencing the results (Patton, 2015). It is not just about validation but also about deepening and widening one’s understanding of the topic being studied.

**Data Analysis**

For qualitative research studies, the researcher collects data and analyzes it in order to develop theories that explain the patterns noted in the responses of the
participants. This is called a grounded theory approach (Patten, 2012), which starts with open coding. Data analysis can be accomplished in several different ways for qualitative research (Patton, 2015). Coding the transcripts of the interviews by examining distinct, separate ideas or experiences, and then assigning descriptive themes, allows the analysis to be meaningful. Using the data gathered from interviews, observations, and artifacts, the researcher used the data analysis steps outlined by Creswell (2014) to examine the lived experiences of successful classified female administrators:

- Data analysis proceeded concurrently with the data collection and the documentation of findings.
- Data were narrowed down to focus only on data that support the research questions, discarding other parts.
- NVivo data analysis software was used to assist in analyzing and coding data.

The constant comparison concept of the grounded theory approach allows for each new element of data to be compared with all previous elements that have been coded in order to establish and refine categories (Patten, 2012). The researcher determined whether there was alignment between what the successful women classified administrators said about their experiences and what was documented during observations. Of equal importance, if any discrepancies were uncovered, they were included in the analysis. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) indicated that qualitative analysis is an “iterative, inductive process in which organizing the data into functional units is a crucial element” (p. 479).

The criteria for organizing data were developed from the research problem, the purpose statement, the research questions, the interview script, the researcher, and the
data collected (see Appendix L, Coding Form). These data elements were then coded as themes emerged. The fundamental goal in qualitative research is to uncover patterns in the data that allow the researcher to find meaning in the stories and to derive valid general statements about the connections among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Reading the transcribed interviews in their entirety will provide a clear sense of what the participants’ experience. The researcher determined whether any underlying meaning was expressed through the participants’ comments by comparing them to the field notes.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described data coding as beginning by identifying small pieces of data that can be understood by themselves, containing one piece of relevant information. With phenomenological studies, because the focus is on shared meaning and consciousness, creating codes and concepts that form the basis for descriptions and meanings must be done carefully. As common topics emerged, the major topics were analyzed to discover patterns, which were then categorized. The categories of codes that were used for the study included participant perspectives about their roles, the events that affected their employment, the political styles and strategies they used, and their relationships within their particular organization (White et al., 2016). Participant perspectives also included the method by which they communicated their specific employment experiences. For example, classified female administrators could share their experiences as an intermediary between cabinet-level management and staff. Words or phrases that the participant used to represent sequences of events, relationships, and organizational structure were coded and categorized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Political styles and strategies used by the participants were particularly significant.
and were analyzed and coded with extreme care. Coding was crucial to the research of identifying political styles and strategies that successful women managers use. The data from the interviews, observations, and artifacts were analyzed by the researcher and presented for each research question. The findings that emerged from the data analysis were identified and included for each research question. The analysis concluded with a table summarizing the findings in the study.

**Limitations**

All research designs are subject to limitations. Despite the fact that qualitative research provides the opportunity to amass a vast array of rich data useful for examining lived-experience phenomena, they also have limitations. According to Roberts (2010), limitations are usually areas over which the researcher had little control. This lack of research control could negatively affect the researcher’s ability to distinguish between repeatable practices and nonrepeatable results that emerged from those practices. It is important for the researcher to identify and acknowledge any shortcomings in the study by being open and transparent about them (Patton, 2015). All research participants interviewed were asked to remember and describe challenges they encountered in their workplace and provide details about their experiences. For some, the experience they shared with the researcher could be several years old. It could be maintained that a participant’s memory of the events and his or her level of willingness to share all pertinent information are limitations. Qualitative research introduces specific limitations, according to Patton (2015), including limitations on the situations that were sampled, limitations related to the time period during which observations occurred, and limitations
based on the selection of participants. There were four primary limitations in this study: time, sample size, geography, and researcher bias.

**Time**

Conducting qualitative research is time-consuming. When a researcher applies qualitative models of analysis to data, the process can be long and tedious because each piece of data must be examined in great detail before an analysis can be prepared. It can also take more time to gather qualitative data than quantitative data, and participants may not always be available to set aside a full hour to the interview process or may be interrupted due to work demands. The research window for this study was limited to 2 months, which also added considerable time constraints.

**Sample Size**

The relatively small sample size of this qualitative study may limit the ability to make generalizations about the experiences of female classified managers. If the sample size is too small, it may not be possible to identify significant relationships within the data set. This could limit the scope of the research because it may be too difficult to assess the impact the research has on real-world situations (Patton, 2015).

**Geography**

This study was purposefully limited to three counties—Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito—to allow the researcher sufficient time to personally interview all participants within a 2-month time period. This geographic limitation also allowed the researcher to be within a 2-hour commute of the interview participants.
Researcher Bias

The researcher had similar characteristics to those of the participants and had to remain mindful of how the interview analyses and observations were filtered through a personal worldview in order to remain unbiased and detached.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover and describe the political styles of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced from middle management to senior management-level positions in an educational agency. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted. This chapter included a detailed description of the research design and methodology, the population and sampling frame, and the criterion for participant inclusion. Through the use of open-ended interview questions and probes, the researcher collected rich, descriptive data on the experiences of the participants. The data collection methods, including interviews, observations, and artifacts were described and the coding and data analysis was explained as well as the limitations to the study. The primary goal of any researcher is to ensure credibility of the findings. The steps used to increase validity and reliability were identified, and a detailed description of the instrumentation was included. The limitations of the study were recognized and addressed with honesty and transparency. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data gathered and presents the findings of the study clearly and succinctly through tables and narrative description.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who hold a senior management-level position in an educational agency. The purpose was to discover and describe the political styles and strategies they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to advance in their careers. This chapter is organized in terms of the three research subquestions posed in Chapter I. It first describes the political styles that successful women classified managers use; it then reports the strategies that the participants experienced that enhanced their advancement; and it then examines the hindrances they experienced and the strategies they used to overcome the difficulties they experienced when advancing. Chapter IV concludes with a summary of key findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover and describe the political styles of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced from middle management to top-level management positions within an educational agency. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management-level positions in
an educational agency and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers?

**Research Subquestions**

1. How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?
2. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?
3. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

**Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection for this phenomenological research study consisted of in-depth interviews with ACSA award-winning classified women managers at local educational agencies in Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties. Following the Brandman University Institutional Review Board application approval, an e-mail was sent to each participant to formally request her participation and to schedule interview times and places as well as to collect artifacts and schedule observation times. The 15 interviews were conducted in a semistructured format to ensure consistency across all participants. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The 15 interview transcripts were the primary source of data for this study; artifacts and observations served as secondary sources of data to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. The semistructured interview protocol consisted of 14 questions and optional probes, which elicited in-depth
responses. Each of the nine political styles was investigated through three specific questions; each of the political strategies was investigated through an additional question with various probes. Prior to the interview each participant was provided with a copy of the Inventory of Political Styles (White et al., 2016) via e-mail. The participants were asked to complete the exercise in advance of the interview as background information in order to familiarize themselves with the various political styles referred to in the interview protocol. During each interview, the participant was provided with a copy of the questions, which also included definitions of the political strategies as identified in the Politically Intelligent Leader (White et al., 2016). The interviews were conducted in various locations based on the desire of the participant. The researcher gave each participant the choice of her workplace, the researcher’s workplace, or an off-site location. Each interview lasted between 48 minutes and 1 hour and 23 minutes, with an average length of 67 minutes.

Other Data Collection Sources

Using various data collection strategies allowed the researcher to triangulate the data. Along with the in-depth interviews, observations were conducted and artifacts were collected. Observation data were collected at public meetings during which the research participants presented information and responded to questions from board members and administrators. Ten observations were conducted with a length of time for each observation ranging from 10 minutes to 2 hours. Artifacts were collected from the research participants and analyzed. The researcher collected 31 artifacts, 25 generated content aligned with the interview results and the politically intelligent leader framework.
Population

Population is defined as “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). According to DataQuest, the California Department of Education’s (n.d.-b) web-based data reporting system, there are over 14,000 classified women managers working within the 58 county offices of education and 943 school districts in California. As such, the population for this study, also called the target population, was identified as all the classified women managers employed by the 1,001 local educational agencies (LEAs) in California.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame is the actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is essentially a databank of potential respondents that can be drawn from to invite to take part in a given research project. Because this was a qualitative study, access to all county office and school district classified managers within California was not feasible. The sampling frame for this research study included successful female senior classified administrators within educational organizations in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. According to DataQuest (CDE, n.d.-b), the number of successful classified women managers in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties was approximately 370.

Sample

For this study, a sample size of 15 participants was selected from among the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) award-winning successful women classified managers working for educational agencies in Monterey, San Benito,
and Santa Cruz counties. A purposive sampling strategy combined with convenience sampling was used for the selection of participants via predetermined criteria suggested by the research questions. This strategy allowed participants who were valuable sources of information to be selected (Patten, 2012). It also supported and deepened the qualitative data analysis as well as allowed for a more thorough interpretation of patterns and themes. Criterion sampling was used as a method of narrowing down the purposive sampling to ensure that all participants of the study met the established criteria and could provide rich data through their experiences (Creswell, 2012). Combined with convenience sampling, this allowed the researcher to select participants based upon accessibility or feasibility (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The criteria used for this study included the following characteristics:

- They were females.
- They were classified managers with a minimum of 3 years of managerial experience within a school district or county office of education.
- They have been honored by ACSA, Region 10 (Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties) as classified female administrators of the year for exemplary leadership from 2014 through 2019.

**Demographic Data**

To ensure confidentiality, all data were reported without reference to the names of the individuals participating in this study. Each participant was assigned a number from 1 through 15. No participant names or educational agency names were identified in this study. All 15 participants were successful classified women managers within educational agencies in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties.
Analysis of the Data

An analysis of qualitative data collected from 15 participants resulted in findings aligned to the political styles and strategies of the primary framework. The data from interviews were transcribed and analyzed, and the researcher looked for themes that could then be coded. When coding was completed, the number of sources and frequencies providing data for each theme were analyzed. The findings were then further analyzed for key findings, which led to conclusions.

Semistructured interviews made up the primary source of data for this research along with artifacts and observations. The three different sources allowed the researcher to triangulate the findings. In total, 15 interviews, 31 artifacts, and 10 observations were coded. Reliability was ensured through the observation and artifact data collections, which were combined with the in-depth interviews to triangulate data. A peer researcher, who has extensive experience in educational agencies and recently received her Doctor of Education degree, independently coded the transcribed data with a 92% overall agreement with the researcher.

Research Question and Subquestion Results

For this study, the researcher identified a central research question and three subquestions that aligned with the politically intelligent leader framework. The central research question was, “What are the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management-level positions in an educational agency and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers?” To answer this central research question, the researcher analyzed three subquestions:
1. How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?

2. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

3. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

**Subquestion 1.** This question states, “How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions describe their political style?”

The matrix (see Table 4, repeated here for ease of reference) reflects intersecting political style preferences as identified by White et al. (2016) indicating a range of initiatives, from assertive to passive, and goals from self-interests to organizational interests. This matrix is referred to throughout this chapter to discuss how the 15 participants of this study identified themselves and how their placement on the matrix had an impact on their rise to management positions within educational agencies.

Table 4

*White et al.’s Nine Basic Political Styles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal initiative</th>
<th>Self-interests</th>
<th>Blended interests</th>
<th>Organizational interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
<td>Arranger</td>
<td>Strategist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>Balancer</td>
<td>Developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Analyst</td>
<td>Adaptor</td>
<td>Supporter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. From The Politically Intelligent Leader: Dealing With the Dilemmas of a High-Stakes Educational Environment, by P. C. White, T. R. Harvey, & S. L. Fox, 2016, p. 71 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield).*
After completing the Inventory of Political Styles exercise, the participants identified their most commonly identified with political styles. Each participant had a total of 100 points to distribute among 10 questions that related to the various political styles, which resulted in scores that indicated each participant’s inclination toward a specific style. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Summary of Participants’ Political Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Assertive styles</th>
<th>Engaged styles</th>
<th>Passive styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenger (Self-interest)</td>
<td>Planner (Self-interest)</td>
<td>Balancer (Blended interests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for each style</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thirteen of the 15 participants identified most closely with the strategist political style, which is a style concentrated on organizational interests when considering goal allegiance. Strategists are open to and value ideas from all sides and place confidence in proposals where there is a process in place to seek input. They appreciate assertive risk-takers as they are risk-takers themselves. They admire those who model grace and courage under fire (White et al., 2016). Among those 13 participants, the scores for the strategist style ranged from a high of 47 to a low of 19. Only two of the 15 identified differently—both identifying as a balancer style, which is a style within the goal allegiance of balanced interests. Balancers think that they can solve problems by meeting the opposition halfway, but giving up half of what one’s goal is does not usually provide the best solution for either side (White et al., 2016). The second most common political style with which participants identified was the developer style, 10 of the 15 participants, which is also a style most focused with organizational interests. Developers truly believe in the mission of their organization but are not completely comfortable being the spokesperson for change (White et al., 2016). They are excellent preplanners and a person can count on them to make sure that the project in question rolls out successfully and that barriers are smoothed out before they become roadblocks.

Figure 7 shows the 15 women who participated in the research, indicating by percentage, that over half of the women, 52.23%, identified with a style that was predominately focused on organizational interests; 32.27% identified with a political style that was focused on blended interests, and only 15.40% identified with a style that was focused on self-interests.
Figure 7. Political style goal allegiance by percentage.

The strategist political style is strongly correlated to the *assertive/organizational interests* indicating that these women primarily have the organizational interests at heart. The challenge with this level of predominance in political styles, both with goal allegiance and initiative, is that women with a strategist way of addressing issues can devote so much time and energy to their work that they suffer burnout. A high level of idealism with this style means that women can and do experience disappointment when changes that they are striving to accomplish are blocked or are too slow in the implementation. Having a strong management team is crucial to a strategist to avoid the
downsides of their style and help them maintain a consistent strong level of energy and positive mental outlook.

The balancer style, which was the top style identified with for two of the 15 participants is a style placed right in the middle of the matrix—midway between passive and active, and midway between self and organizational interests. The value to the organization in having leaders who exhibit this style is their ability to understand the culture of the organization as well as to understand how people will respond to any proposed change. The downside to this style, according to White et al. (2016), is that a balancer’s preoccupation with morale and norms can sometimes impede progress and could cause the organization to give up some of the important aspects of a change plan.

Nine of the 15 participants identified that their lowest political style was challenger. This is also reflective of the characteristics of most women. The challenger political style is firmly in the self-interests section of the Nine Political Styles matrix (see Table 4). One of the qualities identified in the White et al. (2016) text for those who engage in a challenger style is that they often believe that they are more popular than they are and that they can be oblivious to the reactions of others. As is seen when defining the characteristics of women from Chapter II, this makes sense as women rarely believe in themselves to the point that their qualities are amplified; rather, women generally have a poor opinion of themselves and their positive attributes and will downplay any success even to the point of attributing that success to someone else—usually a man. Challenger styles also have a lack of consideration for the contributions and concerns of others, which flies in the face of the strategies used by successful women, which are discussed in the following strategies used section of this research.
Nine of the participants identified their lowest political style to be in the passive initiative category. Analyst, adaptor, and supporter styles typically utilize a passive approach when identifying initiative allegiance. The managers who identify with passive styles do not want to be out in front of potential changes, and they are slow to take risks. The passive allegiance is the lowest percentage of all initiative styles with which the 15 participants identified. As shown in Figure 8, 44.47% of the women identified with styles that aligned with the *assertive* initiative, 35.31% identified styles that aligned with an *engaged* initiative, and just 20.17% identified with styles that aligned with the *passive* initiative.

*Figure 8. Political style initiative allegiance by percentage.*
The strategist political style reflects an assertive style where people are willing to put themselves on the line for the interests of the organization by which they are employed. As defined in an earlier chapter, the qualities that women embody—the characteristics they display—support this finding. Women do not promote themselves well—and so would not necessarily use the political strategies that include a balance between self-interest and organizational interest.

Subquestions 2 and 3. When asked Subquestions 1 and 2—“What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted?”—the participants chose between five and eight strategies that resonated with them as the strategies they used most during their advancement journey. External strategies are those leaders use to help them cope with groups and individuals external to their agencies (White et al., 2016). Table 8 contains the external and Table 9 contains the internal political strategies as identified by White et al. (2016). The internal strategies are those that leaders use to manage the internal environment, which can be fraught with controversy, emotional issues, and difficult employees (White et al., 2016).

The top ranked political strategy with which the 15 participants identified, for both internal and external strategies, was to build trust. As discussed in Harvey and Drolet’s (2004) book, Building Teams, Building People, building trust requires the existence of five behaviors that clearly resonated with the 15 participants of this research.

1. Interdependence—a mutual need between colleagues
2. Consistency—can be counted on to do what you say
3. Honesty—build a solid reputation for honesty and integrity
4. Affability—be a likable leader with substance
5. Extension of Trust—extend trust and act in a trustworthy fashion. (Harvey & Drolet, 2004, pp. 21-23)

As discussed by White et al. (2016), when these five behaviors exist, there is a high probability that trust also exists. The women who identified most with building trust as a political strategy regularly display these five behaviors.

Table 8

*External Political Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th># of Participants who regularly use this strategy (frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create a political vision</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You need to meet their needs, or they’ll never meet your needs</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Simplify and clarify your message</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Never let ‘em see you sweat</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do your homework</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Know each decision maker’s agenda</td>
<td>✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Be aware of political blind spots</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Coalition building is a long-term and necessary strategy</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. “Working the community” is usually neither interesting nor fun, but it’s necessary</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Don’t wait to build networks until you need them</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Include all sides</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Positive responses to perceived dangers win support</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to compete, intention to cooperate</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Win-win solutions win more than win-lose solutions</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Count how many of your natural constituents are voters</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Celebrate everything</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The theory of small wins</td>
<td>✅ ✅ ✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Use conflict resolution techniques</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

*Internal Political Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th># of Participants who regularly use this strategy (frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build trust</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uncover the informal norms ASAP</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do your homework</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dig the well before you’re thirsty</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Link agendas</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Management by walking around</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Be open to their ideas</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Empower others</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Make use of the chit system</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Expand the pie with “out of the box” thinking</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Many messengers—same message—bigger impact</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Be aware of internal political blind spots</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Where snipers dwell plan meticulously</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Go slow to go fast</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Benevolent environments yield risk-taking and creativity</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Knowing who trusts whom</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Float the idea</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Use the accordion process to increase involvement</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The build trust strategy is also a clear companion to the most widely identified political style: strategist. Strategists need to trust their team in order to work together. It is very important to them to build a trusting relationship with coworkers early on and to maintain that relationship throughout their working partnerships. *Do your homework* and *include all sides* were two additional highly ranked external strategies. Gathering data, and doing a frequent environmental scan (do your homework), helps the strategist to identify the “hot buttons” for the people and issues that she wants to address and will allow her to collect information about potentially challenging situations. Including all
sides is most helpful when there are dissenting opinions and both sides need to be brought together. Forming a committee and including both supporters and resistors while the ideas are in the formative stage will give the strategist the opportunity to sort things out and reach agreement.

Internal strategies were more enthusiastically approached by the 15 participants of the study. They all seemed very comfortable identifying the internal strategies they used the most during their work days. Being open to others ideas and empowering others were close seconds to building trust. Being open to other ideas, actually listening to all of their ideas, not just the ones that align with yours, shows respect for others. Even if the strategist does not find any salient points in her thoughts, showing consideration and respect for others is just good politics. Empowering others includes being intentional about giving those around the strategist important work to do, the discretion to do their jobs, and the resources needed to do their work.

These strategies fall right in line with the characteristics of women as identified in Chapter II. According to Bailey (2014), some of the characteristics most commonly attributed to women, such as empowerment and collaboration, are the characteristics that are most commonly exhibited by successful transformation leaders. Women are more likely to engage in a relational approach to work than men, and they may also be more apt to balance dominant approaches along with softer interaction styles in a given situation, as opposed to men who tend to favor a strictly dominant approach (Matthew et al., 2013). Women are also less likely to advocate for themselves, less likely to ask for what they want, and less likely to initiate negotiations (Bowles et al., 2007; Kray & Thompson, 2004; Marcus, 2015). Fairholm (2009) suggested that there is little evidence
that women have different political power needs than men; however, he also concluded
that women express their need for power in different ways and they exercise power in
different ways depending upon the situation. Women’s use of political power is more
relationship oriented, whereas that of men is more task oriented.

None of the 15 participants chose the external strategies of *create a political
vision* and *count how many of your natural constituents are voters*. Only one of the 15
participants chose *never let 'em see you sweat* and *working the community*. As classified
women managers, this is probably most telling of the lack of being politically astute, that
an elected board member or perhaps a superintendent might more regularly engage in
these strategies.

It was interesting that the internal strategies that the participants who identified as
strategists did not use included some of the strategies that a team member would need to
use when working with a strategist, for example, the *ability to compete but the intention
to cooperate, finding ways to link agendas*, and *digging the well early*. However, this
lack of identifying with these particular strategies might mean that the 15 participants
identified as strategists but did not work with other strategists in their organizations,
hence the lack of identification with the strategies that work with strategists.

**Additional Results of the Interviews**

The most open-ended question in the interview protocol was, “Please share with
me some of the barriers you encountered as you were attempting to move upward in your
advancement journey.” This question garnered a variety answers for which 11 themes
emerged after coding participants’ interview transcriptions. They are shown in Table 10.
Table 10

*Additional Themes Discovered Through Interviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional themes which emerged</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imposter syndrome</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation (it’s who you know)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must work, harder, longer, better as women</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-image</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good enough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid to ask for help as you will appear incompetent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recognizing themselves to being politically engaged</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not authentic—because they feel they have to be something they’re not</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education industry is more accepting of women at the top</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified managers get overlooked</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 1: Imposter syndrome.** Seven participants identified imposter syndrome as a primary reason for not achieving the level of recognition and top-level positions they strived for until later in their careers. Imposter syndrome can be a major hindrance to career advancement as women suffer from chronic self-doubt and a sense of intellectual fraudulence that overrides any feeling of success or external proof of their competence (McKee et al., 2008). The following comments illustrate the participants’ thoughts regarding imposter syndrome.
I’m able to seem confident even though I’m not. I seem to have the ability to change and be flexible in certain situations. Sometimes I have to talk myself into a change that’s coming, but I don’t ever grouse about it. I stay positive. I think as women we need to stop apologizing. Women apologize for everything, and then get eaten alive in an organization. (Participant 6)

I’ve always had this feeling that someone would “out” me—that someone would tell my boss that I don’t have the experience, education, brain power, to do that job that I’m currently holding. I’ve always felt that way. (Participant 8)

I got my job, but I know if I blow it in any way I’ll be gone. (Participant 10)

**Theme 2: Code-switching.** This was a theme primarily identified by the women of color who participated in the study. Three participants spoke very clearly about changing who they were and the way they spoke in order to fit in with the dominant representatives. Code-switching is a behavior whereby women, in an effort to fit in or to ingratiate themselves to others, act or talk more like those around them. Following is a comment from one participant that clearly speaks to this issue of code-switching.

I think the biggest hindrance is implicit bias—people make assumptions (especially with woman of color) about you just by looking at you. So, I code switch a lot—I wear different hats to behave a different way in every situation.

From the earliest times of when I was growing up I learned quickly about the way walk the line between “selling out” by acting “too” white. (Participant 4)

**Theme 3: Mentorship.** Six participants spoke about the benefits of having a great mentor who helped to guide them through the challenges of achieving top positions
within organizational agencies. What was most interesting about hearing about this area of their lived experiences is that all of the women participants’ mentors were men.

It’s about the relationships you build—it’s always about the relationships.

(Participant 7)

I had a great mentor. He insisted that I apply for the H/R job at my current educational agency even though I felt like I wasn’t ready—but, because he knew me better than I knew myself and knew the position was a good fit, I applied and got it. (Participant 3)

When I saw my mentor’s belief in me, I felt like I had more belief in myself.

(Participant 13)

Mentorship is really important to me—powerful supporting presence in all my business life—whether at MCOE or within districts. We can learn from the person in the same day way we teach that same person. (Participant 1)

I met the most beneficial mentor ever in my current organization and I cultivated relationships that allowed me to promote and helped the organization in ways that enhanced our reputation across the state and with our districts immensely.

(Participant 2)

In a prior position, I knew the superintendent well, and I was so inspired by him—he was in it for all the right reasons—dedicated his entire life to school. He was a brilliant PR specialist—genuine and wonderful mentor. I have tried to model my behavior after his. (Participant 14)

**Theme 4: Affiliation.** All 15 participants agreed that affiliation and membership in organizations was important to their success. However, not all participants agreed that
ACSA was the organization that was most beneficial in creating the networks they needed in order to secure promotions. Many participants cited job-alike membership, such as Personnel Administrative Services Steering Committee (PASSCO) and Business Advisory Steering Committee (BASC), both subcommittees of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) organization in California, which provides support to the 58 county offices of education, and California School Public Relations Association (CAISPRA), to be much more instrumental in their rise to the top. Several comments from participants sum up their feelings in this area.

It’s more about “who you know” than about politics though. (Participant 3)

Being a member of something makes some difference—even if you don’t want to be in a “club” you need to force yourself as that’s how you get seen and “earn” the recognition. (Participant 9)

It’s all in who you know . . . and then having the skills to back it up. (Participant 11)

**Theme 5: Must work harder, longer, better as women.** This was a common theme throughout each of the interviews and has been shared by other successful women in their fields. Indra Nooyi, the chief executive officer of PepsiCo, reflects on her rise to the top as having to work 50% to 100% better than her male counterparts when she was rising up through the ranks in the workforce because women were held to higher standards than men (Fast Company, 2017). This lament was echoed by Serena Williams (2019) in her first-person essay in *Harper’s Bazaar* regarding the 2018 controversial U.S. Open match after which she asked herself, “Why is it that when women get passionate,
they’re labeled emotional, crazy, and irrational, but when men do they’re seen as passionate and strong?” (para. 5). Following are comments from participants:

I went to school and worked my butt off—letting my personal relationships and my health suffer for a few years until I got the program off the ground.

(Participant 10)

Ultimately women are focused on the perception that others have—and on how other people think about them—hard to be vulnerably honest—women judge each other very harshly. Emotionally more stingly harmful. (Participant 5)

I actually told one prospective employer—I’m single with no children so I can dedicate 24 hours a day to you. (Participant 14)

There is so much discrimination against women still in the MOT area that I definitely have to work harder in order to be seen as an expert in my field compared to men. (Participant 9)

Sometimes it’s a cultural thing—and a generational thing—being a hard worker and feeling as though you have to prove yourself with others. (Participant 11)

You have to go through a lot of growth to get to the management level positions so it doesn’t surprise her that most of the women managers are strategists.

(Participant 12)

**Theme 6: Low self-image, not good enough.** Three participants were specific in admitting to feeling not good enough for most of their careers. Their experiences were not imposter syndrome, but simply a real feeling that they were not good enough for the job they were doing.
My barriers are about self-doubt—I have never believed in myself. I’m slowly starting to change, but it’s a real shift for me. Women are competent people—we’re our own worst enemies. (Participant 11)

Barriers might have come internally from her—not really external forces that created barriers for her. I’ve always been my own worst enemy. (Participant 7)

You have to do the right things even though you are fearful you won’t succeed. (Participant 13)

**Theme 7: Afraid to ask for help, will appear incompetent.** Very similar to Theme 6, but unique enough to code as a separate entry, this was a theme that three participants identified to be a quality they recognized in themselves that probably held them back. The following comment from Participant 13 summed up the feelings of several of the participants:

We’re not successful because we feel we have to prove ourselves. We feel like we should do it all ourselves—we CAN do it all ourselves, but when we don’t ask for help we tend to alienate others—primarily the men colleagues.

**Theme 8: Lack of recognition of their own political astuteness.** Without exception, all of the participants interviewed were not comfortable identifying the actions they took as being “political.” There was a complete aversion to being identified as “playing politics.” They had learned to identify political engagement as a negative activity and did not want to “admit” to being politically engaged. Politics was a “game” people played to do more harm than good. Participant 5 summed up the thoughts of the other participants quite eloquently:
I associate politics with the national stage—not really with what we engage in here at work. I wanted my program to be away from the main building to as not to have to engage in politics.

**Theme 9: Not authentic**—because they feel they have to be something they’re not. Similar to code-switching and imposter syndrome, this theme merged from seven of the participants and was well summed up by Participant 14:

I’ve become really good at reading the climate within the organization. I really truly have no ego—I’m good at her job and I’m smart—but, I don’t need to be celebrated, I want to make other people look good.

**Theme 10: Education industry is more accepting of women at the top.** Four of the participants, completely not recognizing their leadership qualities, shared that they thought they would not be in a position commensurate to the position they hold in their educational agency if they had entered into a career in private industry. They completely discounted their skill, ability, expertise, and all sorts of leadership skills. The following are comments from two of the participants:

Education is a place where women’s skills are accepted—they work hard and are dedicated to their jobs. (Participant 12)

Education in general is more open to women—great trend that more women are becoming successful—more recognition of work/life balance—and how women fit into that equation. Allows women to make other career moves with that conversation happening. (Participant 14)

**Theme 11: Classified managers get overlooked.** Five participants specifically spoke about the challenges of being in the classified service as opposed to being a more
known school certificated employee such as most teachers, principals, and superintendents.

I feel like I have a lot to offer the organization and my belief in my role within the organization—I think I could offer even more if I advanced up a level. But I do feel comfortable where I am based upon my interaction with the current LEA staff above and below me. (Participant 2)

There is a bias towards classified staff—we have an invisibility that we have to overcome—we’re so well-rounded. I always felt inferior as a classified manager until I got to my current level. (Participant 3)

Some classified leaders need to be conscious of the level of education that certificated staff/leaders have by definition—because of the certification process they need to go through to even be a teacher at any level. (Participant 4)

We’re organizational leaders—we aren’t school leaders—we handle the support for every single other person in this organization. It’s so important to have strong leaders in classified roles—we will never be harmonious unless we all understand how the certificated AND classified managers work together. (Participant 7)

I think because classified women leaders feel the inequity in leadership men vs. women—everybody brings something different to the table and we should all recognize that” (Participant 13)

Summary

Chapter IV presented the results of the analysis of the data collected for this study. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the political styles and strategies used by successful classified women managers in
educational agencies. Data were summarized and coded from 15 different interviews, 10 observations, and 13 artifacts to illuminate the lived experiences of successful classified women managers and the political styles and strategies they used as outlined in the White et al. (2016) politically intelligent leader framework. Key findings highlighting political styles and strategies, as well as goal and initiative allegiances, were identified and explained in regard to how successful women advance within educational agencies.

Thirteen of the 15 participants identified most closely with the strategist political style, which is a style concentrated on organizational interests when considering goal allegiance. Nine of the 15 participants identified that their lowest political style was challenger, which is a style concentrated on self-interest. Over half of the women participants, over 52%, identified with a style that was predominately focused on organizational interests. Over 30% identified with a political style that was focused on blended interests and only 15% were focused on self-interests. This indicates that the majority of women classified managers within educational agencies are focused on the organization rather than themselves and that they approach their jobs with a more assertive than passive initiative.

Of interest, but not contributing to the body of knowledge for the research framework, is that many of the participants who were interviewed, nine of the 15, started their careers as classified staff-level employees within an educational agency. They established themselves as hard workers at that level, and because they were “known entities,” when there were open positions at the manager level, they were encouraged to apply for those higher level positions. Three of the five had a mentor who counseled them in their bid for the management position they currently hold.
Most of the participants felt negative about the topic of politics. Several felt neutral. None felt as though engaging in politics was of benefit to themselves or the organization with which they worked. Many indicated that they thought the very word politics should be changed in order to avoid the negative connotation it carries.

There was also a sense of frustration among the classified women managers when talking about their roles as leaders in educational agencies. Many commented on the fact that they, as classified staff, feel “invisible.” There is always an explanation that follows when classified staff members tell someone what they do, whereas if they tell people they are a teacher, a principal, or a superintendent, the acceptance and understanding of their position is clear. Many of the participants of the study expressed how pleased they were to contribute to research that brought to light who a classified manager is and how he or she supports educational agencies.

Chapter V provides a final summary of the study including major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research as well as concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This phenomenological study was conducted to describe the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management-level positions in an educational agency and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers. Chapter V presents a summary of the purpose of the study and research recommendations for future research as well as concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to discover and describe the political styles of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced from middle management to top-level management positions within an educational agency. In addition, it was the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced or hindered their ability to be promoted. The study was guided by the following central research question: “What are the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management-level positions in an educational agency and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers?” The following three subquestions guided data collection and analysis:

1. How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?
2. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

3. What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?

This research was conducted through interviews, observations, and the review of artifacts. Fifteen semi-structured interviews with ACSA Region 10 award winners provided the primary data for this study.

**Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection for this phenomenological research study consisted of in-depth interviews with Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) award-winning classified women managers at local educational agencies in Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties. The 15 interviews were conducted in a semistructured format to ensure consistency among all participants. The 15 interview transcripts were the primary source of data for this study; artifacts and observations served as secondary sources of data to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. The semistructured interview protocol consisted of 14 questions and optional probes, which elicited in-depth responses. Each of the nine political styles was investigated through three specific questions; each of the political strategies was investigated through an additional question with various probes. Prior to the interview, each participant was provided with a copy of the Inventory of Political Styles (White et al., 2016) via e-mail. They were asked to complete the exercise in advance of the interview as background information in order to
familiarize themselves with the various political styles referred to in the interview protocol. During each interview, the participant was provided with a copy of the questions, which also included definitions of the political strategies as identified in the *Politically Intelligent Leader* (White et al., 2016). The interviews were conducted in various locations based on the desire of the participant. The researcher gave each participant the choice of her workplace, the researcher’s workplace, or an off-site location. Each interview lasted between 48 minutes and 1 hour and 23 minutes, with an average length of 67 minutes.

**Other Data Collection Sources**

Using varied data collection strategies allowed the researcher to triangulate the data. Along with the in-depth interviews, observations were conducted and artifacts were collected. Observation data were collected at public meetings during which the research participants presented information and responded to questions from board members and administrators. Ten observations were conducted with a length of time for each observation ranging from 10 minutes to 2 hours. Artifacts were collected from the research participants and analyzed. The researcher collected 31 artifacts, 25 generated content aligned with the interview results and the politically intelligent leader framework. Reliability was ensured through the observation and artifact data collections, which were combined with the in-depth interviews to triangulate data.

**Population**

Population is defined as “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). According to
DataQuest, the California Department of Education’s (n.d.-b) web-based data reporting system, there are over 14,000 classified women managers working within the 58 county offices of education and 943 school districts in California. As such, the population for this study, also called the target population, was identified as all the classified women managers employed by the 1,001 local educational agencies (LEAs) in California.

**Sampling Frame**

The sampling frame is the actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is essentially a databank of potential respondents that can be drawn from to invite to take part in a given research project. Because this was a qualitative study, access to all county office and school district classified managers within California was not feasible. The sampling frame for this research study included successful female senior classified administrators within educational organizations in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. According to DataQuest (CDE, n.d.-b), the number of successful classified women managers in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties was approximately 370.

**Sample**

For this study, a sample size of 15 participants was selected from among the ACSA award-winning successful women classified managers working for educational agencies in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. A purposive sampling strategy combined with convenience sampling was used for the selection of participants via predetermined criteria suggested by the research questions. This strategy allowed participants to be selected who were valuable sources of information (Patten, 2012), and supported and deepened the qualitative data analysis as well as allowed for a more
thorough interpretation of patterns and themes. Criterion sampling was used as a method of narrowing down the purposive sampling to ensure that all participants of the study met the established criteria and could provide rich data through their experiences (Creswell, 2014). Combined with convenience sampling, this allowed the researcher to select participants based upon accessibility or feasibility (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The criteria used for this study included the following characteristics:

- They were females.
- They were classified managers with a minimum of 3 years of managerial experience within a school district or county office of education.
- They have been honored by ACSA, Region 10 (Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties) as classified female administrators of the year for exemplary leadership from 2014 through 2018.

**Demographic Data**

To ensure confidentiality, all data were reported without reference to the names of the individuals participating in this study. Each participant was assigned a number from 1 through 15. No participant names or educational agency names were identified in this study. All 15 participants were successful women classified managers who held top-level decision-making positions within educational agencies in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties.

**Analysis of Data**

An analysis of qualitative data collected from 15 participants resulted in findings aligned to the political styles and strategies of the primary framework. The data from interviews were transcribed and analyzed looking for themes that could then be coded.
When coding was completed, the number of sources and frequencies providing data for each theme were analyzed. The findings were then further analyzed for key themes, which led to conclusions.

Semistructured interviews made up the primary source of data for this research along with artifacts and observations. The three different sources allowed the researcher to triangulate the findings. In total, 15 interviews, 31 artifacts, and 10 observations were coded.

All 15 participants agreed that affiliation and membership in organizations was important to their success. However, not all participants agreed that ACSA was the organization that was most beneficial in creating the networks they needed to promote. Many participants cited job-alike membership, such as Personnel Administrative Services Steering Committee (PASSCO), Business Advisory Steering Committee (BASC), both subcommittees of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) organization in California, which provides support to the 58 county offices of education, and California School Public Relations Association (CAISPRA), to be much more instrumental in their rise to the top.

Also of interest is that most of the participants interviewed started their careers as classified staff within an educational agency. They established themselves as hard workers at that level and because they were “known entities” when there were open positions at the manager level, they were encouraged to apply for those higher level positions. Many of the participants had a mentor who counseled them when they were ready (or not ready, but in line for) to apply for the management position they currently held.
Major Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to describe the experiences of classified women managers in educational agencies who advanced to cabinet level (top level) positions and the political styles and strategies they used to advance within their organizations. Three subquestions relating to each element of the central question guided the analysis of the data collected. This analysis of data resulted in key findings within each element of the central research question. In total, five key findings emerged.

Research Subquestion 1

*How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management-level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?*

Thirteen of the 15 participants identified “strategist” as the political style they related to the most. This style falls within the *assertive* and *organizational interests* section of the Political Styles Matrix (White et al., 2016). Organizational interests as a goal allegiance was identified with 52.23% of the participants and assertive was the most identified initiative allegiance with 44.47%. The participants of this study predominantly identified with strategist, organizational interests, and an assertive focus as they go through their work day. Strategists are leaders who empower others; they are always open to others’ ideas. They are coalition builders and are skilled at building networks in support of the organizations for which they work. Each of the participants that was interviewed clearly exhibited these characteristics. Each participant also had experienced the down side of the strategist style; all were somewhat idealistic and could be mired down in disappointment when change was blocked or was slow to succeed.
**Research Subquestion 2**

*What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?*

The political strategy that 14 of the 15 participants chose as their top go-to strategy was to build trust, and this was utilized when considering both external and internal strategies. The build trust strategy was also a clear companion to the most widely identified political style: strategist. Strategists need to trust their team in order to work together. It is very important to them to build a trusting relationship with coworkers early on and to maintain that relationship throughout their working partnerships. It was also evident throughout the interview process, that there were many times the participants used a combination of several strategies to increase their effectiveness as leaders.

**Research Subquestion 3**

*What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to be promoted to senior management-level positions in an educational agency?*

The 15 participants of this research did not identify any of the specific strategies listed in the White et al. (2016) text as strategies that they felt hindered them. What they articulated during the interviews were the same old biases against women that have been felt by women for centuries. They felt discriminated against, they felt they had to work harder and longer than men, they felt they were always trying to prove themselves, and if they “grew up” in the organization, despite their concerted efforts to earn degrees and
better themselves, they felt that they were not recognized as competent options for
positions.

What has been clearly established through this research is that women do not
recognize that they are politically astute; they do not even recognize in most cases that
politics is a positive thing in their workplace. However, when there is a discussion about
the actions they take and how they truly do exhibit great political skills, they reluctantly
agree that perhaps they are politically astute after all. That maybe the word *politics*
should be changed when when discussing their everyday interactions at their educational
agency in an effort to make change—but this researcher posits that it is more important to
get the word politics accepted into the vocabulary of women. In trying to make sense of
these findings, it is interesting to note that the actions successful women take all have to
do with securing the necessary means for getting things done in securing support from
partners and superiors or in enlisting other contributors to carry out the organization’s
work. The persuasion that is vital to carrying out this work and for achieving the desired
outcomes IS the political astuteness that women have and do not recognize as such.

**Unexpected Findings**

Women talk the talk, but do not always walk the walk. On the surface, they say
all the right things, but there appear to be times where, in their core, they do not really
believe in what they are saying. They frequently respond with classic characteristics of
imposter syndrome. The most critical reason to resolve this phenomenon is that many
times, employees who experience impostor syndrome suffer from emotional exhaustion,
which leads to conflicts between work and family life and possibly dissatisfaction with
both.
The 15 women who were interviewed did not recognize that the work they do every day includes using political tactics. They did not recognize the political engaging they do on a daily basis as they build coalitions and move their agendas forward. They did recognize the importance of networking and identified that their affiliation with like-minded professionals provided them with the added oomph to move up in their careers.

One other finding that was a surprise to this researcher was that the women participants who started their management careers at district-level positions felt they had learned more about being politically intelligent than when they had moved to a county education level. This was a curious finding as on the surface one would assume that county offices were more political as they generally have an elected superintendent as well as elected board members, whereas at school districts, the board members are elected, but the superintendent is hired by the board.

**Conclusions**

This study identified the political styles most widely used by successful women managers as they advance in their careers within educational agencies. This study also identified the political strategies most widely used by successful women managers. As a result of the study’s major findings, the following conclusions were formed regarding understanding the political styles and strategies of successful women classified managers.

**Conclusion 1**

Successful classified women managers within educational agencies identified most with the strategist political style. They were all highly active in pursuing initiatives that advance the vision of the organization. The women participants were all clearly susceptible to suffering burnout and had all done so early on in their careers. They had
experience and, to a certain extent, learned the lesson that sacrificing their personal lives for work goals did not create balance in their lives and in the long run did not make for a positive mental outlook.

**Conclusion 2**

Successful classified women managers use the external and internal political strategies of building trust most frequently. Building trust requires the existence of five behaviors that clearly resonated with the 15 participants of this research.

1. Interdependence—a mutual need between colleagues
2. Consistency—can be counted on to do what you say
3. Honesty—build a solid reputation for honesty and integrity
4. Affability—be a likable leader with substance
5. Extension of Trust—extend trust and act in a trustworthy fashion. (White et al., 2016, p. 31)

As discussed by White et al. (2016), when these five behaviors exist, there is a high probability that trust also exists. The women who identified most with building trust as a political strategy regularly display these five behaviors.

**Conclusion 3**

Successful classified women managers are not cognizant that they are being politically astute when they use their strategist styles and building trust strategies to accomplish everyday tasks within an educational setting. According to White et al. (2016), identifying and understanding one’s own political styles and strategies will allow a leader to be more deliberate about the political choices he or she makes. Self-awareness is the first step toward competency in political engagement. Leaders who
know which political style they identify with most strongly, as well as knowing that there are situations that might indicate the need to engage in another style, will be more effective in the choices they make. Functioning with awareness and deliberateness will ensure the best interests of the organization in which leaders serve.

**Conclusion 4**

Women continue to experience the same challenges in their rise to top-level management as they have for decades. Feeling like they have to work harder and longer than their male counterparts, coupled with their feelings of inadequacy and having to pretend to be something that they are not, are hurdles that women struggle with every day. Women must intentionally decide to engage in political behavior to overcome their lack of participation in organizational decision-making.

**Conclusion 5**

Becoming more politically astute and understanding the variety of political styles and strategies that can be engaged will help women in their rise to top-level management positions.

**Implications for Action**

The theory of understanding and identifying the specific political styles and strategies used by successful women classified managers is an emerging field of study for women leaders. There is a significant opportunity for the findings and conclusions of this study to add to the body of knowledge regarding how women intelligently use politics to become accomplished change leaders. There is a huge need for educating women in what being politically intelligent and politically engaged means. Women need to recognize that being a politically intelligent leader is something to be proud of and to
practice until they excel at political engagement. As Marcus (2015) said, “Political savvy is a skill, not a trait” (p. 25). Being a politically intelligent leader is the way to accomplish great things and until women understand that “playing” politics is not a bad thing, they will not be able to fully realize their dream of changing the world into a better place.

**Implication 1: Developing Self-Awareness**

Political intelligence has often been identified as an area that all leaders need to improve upon because its lack can have a negative impact on decision-making and getting things done (Bancroft-Turner, 2016; Reffo & Wark, 2014; White et al., 2016). Women need to work on this area more than men as they are many times hampered by self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy. Through attending personal and professional development training, women will become self-aware, confident leaders who perform more effectively within their educational agencies.

**Implication 2: Recognizing Politics to Have More Than a Negative Connotation**

As stated by Marcus (2015), “Although hard work and performance are important, they are not the sole basis for advancement; women must get savvy about workplace politics if they are serious about their careers” (p. xiii). A basic recognition of what political intelligence means and how their current actions might fit into the definition will allow women to enhance their power to affect organizational decisions.

**Implication 3: Enhancing Professional Recruitment**

There is a need for this study to occur for female classified managers because it is urgent that if reasons exist where qualified women in classified middle management positions are not advancing to the top-level positions, they need to be addressed.
Ensuring that educational agencies are recruiting and hiring the most qualified employees is of the utmost importance. This research could have an impact on changing the way recruitment flyers are prepared, questions are developed for interviews, and on the perceptions of interview panels when considering the best candidates for open management positions. Human resource managers should use a political skills assessment for management position candidates to ensure that they are prepared to work in the political climate at the educational agency.

**Implication 4: Providing Personal Development**

Another impact will be in identifying whether or not the level of political astuteness of classified women managers is a roadblock they are experiencing in advancing in their careers. Giving up one’s power and influence by not increasing personal political astuteness results in giving up one’s ability to affect the decision-making process (Marcus, 2015).

**Implication 5: Establishing Training, Workshops, and Certificate Programs**

This research could provide a catalyst for organizations such as ACSA to include, within their 3-year strategic plan for 2018-2021, a professional development segment that is specific to teaching political astuteness and political strategies. ACSA, CASBO, and other organizations should develop seminars to prepare leaders to identify and understand their own political styles and how leading with political intelligence increases their capacity to interact strategically.

**Implication 6: Creating Strong Change-Leaders for Educational Agencies**

As the Hechinger Report (2011) suggests, what leaders have learned about the art and science of reforming a failing school confirms that school leadership is the key to
recovery—and the more critical a school’s predicament, the greater the need for strong leadership. The classified service is a critical component to ensuring the success of educational agencies, especially in the areas of fiscal solvency where the chief business official is generally a classified manager, and in facilities maintenance, where the maintenance and operations director is generally a classified manager. It is imperative that leaders encourage and support women classified managers to make the transformational change that is needed in educational agencies today.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings resulting from this research study, there are several recommendations that could broaden and strengthen the study. Other genders, other industries, and other venues could be studied. Additional research studying the same information but from different viewpoints would add to the body of knowledge of successful women managers.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that this same research protocol be applied to women classified managers who are not at the top level of their desired career path. Determining if there is a difference between the political styles identified with for top-level women classified managers as compared to entry-level women classified managers and comparing data for similarities and differences would add to the study.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that this same research protocol be applied to successful men classified managers in educational agencies. Determining if there is a difference between the political styles identified with for top-level women classified managers as compared
to top-level men classified managers and comparing data for similarities and differences would add to the study.

**Recommendation 3**

It is recommended that this same research protocol be applied to women staff-level employees who are not yet managers in educational agencies. Determining if there is a difference between the political styles identified with for top-level women classified managers as compared to non-management-level women classified managers and comparing data for similarities and differences would add to the study.

**Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that this same research protocol be applied to successful women managers in other states. Determining if there is a difference between the political styles identified with for top-level women classified managers in California as compared to top-level women managers in other states and comparing data for similarities and differences would add to the study.

**Recommendation 5**

It is recommended that this same research protocol be applied to successful women managers in other industries. Determining if there is a difference between the political styles identified with for top-level women classified managers as compared to top-level women managers in other industries and comparing data for similarities and differences would add to the study.
**Recommendation 6**

It is recommended that a single long-term case study be considered to examine the political styles and strategies of a classified woman as her career moves from entry-level staff to a top-level management position within an educational agency.

**Recommendation 7**

It is recommended that a structured program be developed where women are trained to be mentors of other women. The natural distancing that many senior women engage in is frequently the result of them taking pride in achieving their top-level positions through their own hard work rather than because of the assistance of others, and feeling that other women should have to prove themselves just as they did. However, women supporting other women is powerful, and a strong formal mentoring program would result in senior women opening doors for those coming behind them to actively support their career advancement.

**Concluding Remarks and Reflections**

I am grateful and humbled to have been allowed access to the experiences the 15 women participants shared with me during my research interviews. Many times, I felt sad as I listened to their personal journeys and then usually exultant with them because of the struggles each of these women have gone through and what they have overcome in their journeys to the top. Such obstacles they have overcome. Each journey was so personal. While transcribing the interviews, just in recalling the stories, brought tears to my eyes a second time. These women are strong competent women who have often thought they are not good enough—have each done things because they did not know
they had options. It feels like a sacred trust to hold each of these women’s journeys in my hands and to treat them with the dignity and seriousness they deserve.

This study has had a profound impact on my understanding of women and how they use and do not use political styles and strategies in order to be politically intelligent leaders. It does not surprise me that the successful women I interviewed fell into this category. However, just in looking at the results of the research done, it is clear that women are engaged in and are politically intelligent. As White et al. (2016) indicated, “To be political is to be expedient, advisable, prudent, tactical, and wise” (p. 119). The participants in my research were all of those things. I would like to think that by providing the participants with the information in the White et al. politically intelligent leader framework that I have opened their eyes to what being politically astute really means and how they already engage in politics in ways that they did not recognize before. I believe our discussions around the interview questions brought some self-awareness, that will, as White et al. suggested, “provide that first step toward the competence that will help you deal more effectively in the political arena” (p. 67). In summary, what was discovered during this research is that successful classified women managers use the strategist political style more than any other style. They concentrate on organizational goals and work themselves to the bone commonly experiencing burnout and sacrificing other areas of their lives in order to have a career in which they can make a difference. Successful classified women managers also feel that building trust is the political strategy that they use most and that has been most effective in their careers. There are still many societal biases for women to overcome, but each research study will hopefully bring
additional awareness to everyone so that this can become a world that demonstrates equal
worth for women and men in all areas.

On a personal note, I was humbled to know that the results of completing my own
Inventory of Political Styles matched the accomplished women who participated in my
study showing the same top style for me: strategist, and the same least like me style:
challenger. I believe that this additional encouragement from the inventory and from the
stories of the successful women interviewed will bring about positive future results for
me and for those who read this dissertation and take to heart White et al.’s book, The
Politically Intelligent Leader.
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## APPENDIX A

### Synthesis Matrix

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APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

My name is Colleen Stanley and I am currently the Senior Executive Director of Finance for the Monterey County Office of Education. I am also a doctoral candidate with Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I began my career as a classified account clerk and have worked my way up to a middle management level position. My particular interest lies with the classified service within educational agencies and how successful women describe the political styles and strategies they use to promote to senior management level positions.

I am conducting interviews with 15 ACSA award-winning female Classified Managers in Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties. You were asked to participate because you are one of those classified women managers and your experience and expertise are important and will make a positive contribution to educational agencies by ensuring that they have the advantage of promoting the best person for each position. I thank you in advance for sharing your knowledge and skills.

Each of the study participants were sent the Inventory of Political Styles one week before their interview timeframe. They were asked to complete the inventory as part of their introduction to the terms being used during the interview. The results of the inventory will not be collected. This is purely informational for the participants and will not be part of the data reporting. The inventory will help give participants the background that will aid them when sharing their answers to the interview questions. Permission was granted to the researcher by the author on September 28, 2019, to use The Inventory of Political Styles for the purposes of this study only.
I have a set of interview questions that I will be reading from. This will help me to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating female classified leaders will be conducted in the most similar manner possible. I would like to assure you that any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported as a group without reference to any individual or any educational agency. After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you by e-mail so that you can check to ensure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

The interview is scheduled for one hour. At any point during the interview you may ask me to skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether.

1. How long have you been a classified employee? What level position did you start with and what are the positions you’ve held on your move up to management?

2. What is the size of the local educational agency (LEA) at which you are currently employed?

3. How long have you been an ACSA member and attended meetings or conferences?

4. Share with me a little about the position in which you are currently employed.

5. How do you perceive politics in your organization? Positive, Negative, or Neutral?
   a. Why do you see politics as positive or negative or why they are neutral?

6. Please describe an instance where you perceived politics as having a positive effect for you or your organization?
7. Can you describe a time when you experienced political behavior having a negative effect for your or your organization?

8. Using the following table to remind you of the different political styles from the Inventory of Political Styles, to which political style or styles do you most closely relate?

Use the following information to refresh your understanding of each style (White et al., 2016):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nine Political Styles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal Initiative</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arranger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategist</td>
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<td>Engaged</td>
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<td>Planner</td>
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<td>Balancer</td>
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<td>Developer</td>
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<td>Passive</td>
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<td>Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
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</table>

- Challenger - politically active and aggressive in pursuing goals aligned to self-interests, willing to step up when action is needed
- Arranger - midway between self-interest and organizational goals, useful diplomacy skills, skilled in building coalitions and planning strategically
- Strategist – highly active in pursuing goals of the organization, courage to take risks in support of the organization, use a variety of strategies to realize organizational vision
- Planner - exercises moderate initiative in political activity, focused more on self-interests than organizational goals
- Balancer - midway between passive and active in political behavior, also midway between self-interests and organizational commitment
- Developer - committed to organizational goals and priorities, will engage in moderate levels of political activity
• Analyst - dedicated towards self-interest, passive in approach, slow to take risks, slow to adopt changes
• Adaptor - midway between organizational support and self-interest, risk averse and passive political style
• Supporter - enthusiastic supporter of organization, but risk averse and passive in any political activity

9. If you have advanced in your career and currently hold the most top-level position you have strived for, what political style(s) did you engage in to achieve this position?
   b. Did it differ from the political style you most closely relate to? If so, discuss why you think that might be.

10. As you moved upward in your career position what are some of the political styles you found helpful in supporting your advancement journey.
   a. Probe: Can you provide an example for one of the styles and how it worked for you?
   b. Probe: Are there some styles you used that were more beneficial to your career advancement than others?

When considering the following political strategy questions please use the below definitions:

**External political strategies** are those that involve groups outside of the organization.

• Build trust
• Create a political vision
• You need to meet their needs, or they’ll never meet yours
• Simplify and clarify your message
• Never let ‘em see you sweat
• Do your homework
• Know each decision maker’s agenda
• Be aware of political blind spots
• Coalition building is a long-term and necessary strategy
• “Working the community” is usually neither interesting nor fun, but it’s necessary
• Don’t wait to build networks until you need them
• Include all sides
• Positive responses to perceived dangers win support
• Ability to compete, intention to cooperate
• Win-win solutions win more than win-lose solutions
• Count how many of your natural constituents are voters
• Celebrate everything
• The theory of small wins
• Use conflict resolution techniques

**Internal political strategies** are those skills leaders use to manage the internal organizational environment.

• Build trust
• Uncover the informal norms ASAP
• Do your homework
• Dig the well before you’re thirsty
• Link agendas
• Management by walking around
• Be open to their ideas
• Empower others
• Make use of the chit system
• Expand the pie with “out of the box” thinking
• Many messengers – same message – bigger impact
• Be aware of internal political blind spots
• Where snipers dwell plan meticulously
• Go slow to go fast
• Benevolent environments yield risk-taking and creativity
• Knowing who trusts whom
• Float the idea
• Use the accordion process to increase involvement

11. As you moved upward in your career position what are some of the strategies you found helpful to support your advancement journey.

   a. **Probe:** Can you provide an example for one of the strategies and how it worked for you?
b. Probe: Are there some strategies you used that were more beneficial to your career advancement than others?

12. Please share with me some of the barriers you encountered as you were attempting to move upward in your advancement journey.
   a. Probe: Can you provide an example of how one of those barriers impacted you?
   b. Probe: Where there any strategies you used to overcome these barriers that you have not already mentioned.

13. If you don’t feel that there were political strategies that you used to advance in your career within your organization, what do you believe were the reasons you were successful in advancing? If there were no barriers you experienced, are there other actions or things that helped support the advancement of your career?

14. Is there anything you would like to add to your answers to the prior questions that you feel would help me in identifying the reasons classified women managers are successful (or not successful) in their attempts at promoting within an educational agency?

**Interview Closing Comments**

This is the end of our time together, and I would like to thank you so much for spending this hour with me. I will be in contact after the conversation has been transcribed so that you have the chance to review the material, and will certainly share the results of my research with you once it has been completed.
## APPENDIX C

### Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions

<table>
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<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Protocol Items</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Central Research Question</strong></td>
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<td>What are the lived experiences of successful women classified managers within California’s central coast region who advanced to senior management level positions in an educational agency, and the related political styles and strategies they perceived affected their ability to advance in their careers?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subquestion #1</strong></td>
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<td>How do successful women classified managers who hold senior management level positions in an educational agency describe their political style?</td>
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<td><strong>Subquestion #2</strong></td>
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<td>What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive enhanced their ability to be promoted to senior agency?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subquestion #3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What political strategies do successful women classified managers perceive hindered their ability to advance in their careers to senior management level positions in an educational agency?</td>
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APPENDIX D

Interview Observer Feedback Reflection Questions

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set/experience. Gaining valuable insight about your interview skills and affect with the interview will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher, you should reflect on the questions below after completing the interview. You should also discuss the following reflection questions with your ‘observer’ after completing the interview field test. The questions are written from your perspective as the interviewer. Provide your observer with a copy of these reflective questions prior to the field test interview. Then you can verbalize your thoughts with the observer and they can add valuable insight from their observation. After completing this process, you may have edits or changes to recommend for the interview protocol before finalizing.

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?
2. Were the questions clear or were there places when the interviewee was unclear?
3. Where there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing?
4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regards to the preceding descriptors?
5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regards to the preceding descriptors?
6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?
7. Are there parts of the interview that seemed to be awkward and why do you think that was the case?
8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would it be and how would you change it?
9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?
APPENDIX E

Field-Test Interviewee Feedback Questions

While conducting the interview you should take notes of their clarification request or comments about not being clear about the question. After you complete the interview ask your field test interviewee the following clarifying questions. **Try not to make it another interview; just have a friendly conversation.** Either script or record their feedback so you can compare with the other two members of your team to develop your feedback report on how to improve the interview questions.

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe what you do as a leader when working with your team or staff?

2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?

3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked?

4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?

5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview.
### APPENDIX F

**Observation Log**

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**Political Styles and Strategies**

- □ Evidence that participant used a specific political style when addressing board members or leadership team members
- □ Observe participant succeeding in accomplishing set out goal
- □ Observe body language from both presenter/participant and receivers
- □ Evidence that participant used various strategies to achieve goal

**Researcher Reflection**

Narrative Evidence:
APPENDIX G

List of Probes to Use During Interview

1. What did you mean by…?
2. Do you have more to add?
3. Would you expand upon that a bit?
4. Why do think that was the case?
5. Could you please tell me more about…?
6. Can you give me an example of…?
7. How did you feel about that?
8. What would that look like?
9. How did others respond to that?
10. How has your approach changed over time?
Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB
Adopted
November 2013
APPENDIX I

Informed Consent

Informed Consent—Interview

Information About: Exploring the Political Style and Strategies Used by Women Classified Managers Who Have Successfully Advanced to Top Level Decision-Making Positions Within an Educational Agency

Responsible Investigator: Colleen Stanley, Doctoral Candidate

Purpose of Study: You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Colleen Stanley, a doctoral student from Brandman University. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to discover and describe the political style of successful women classified managers who advanced from middle management to senior above management level positions in an educational agency. In addition, it is the purpose of this study to explore and understand the political strategies that they perceived enhanced and supported their ability to be promoted.

Why is this research being done? This study aims to capture the lived experiences of successful women classified school managers. The objective is to discover which political styles and strategies were used by these successful women as they moved up through the ranks at an educational agency to senior management level positions.

Who are potential participants? Potential participants include successful classified women managers who have been awarded by ACSA, Region 10 in the last three years.

What is expected of the participants? For those who agree to be participants, they will decide to take part in the research study by signing the informed consent document. Participants will complete an interview with Colleen Stanley, researcher. All interviews will audio recorded. A transcript of the interview will be sent to the participant for review and correction. The interview can be paused or discontinued at any time by the participant. Artifacts gathered by the researcher will be kept strictly confidential and in a locked location only accessible to the researcher.

How much time is required from the participant? Then individual interviews will take approximately one hour. The interviews will be audio recorded and a transcript of the interview will be sent to the participant for review. Anything that the participant feels is in error or should be omitted, will be addressed by the researcher. The audio recordings will be kept in a secured electronic file, accessible to only the researcher for review of the conversation for validity of the responses. The electronic files and transcription will be destroyed no longer than five years after the research is completed. The observations will take approximately one to two hours depending on the activity/setting being observed.
Where will the interviews and observations take place? The interviews will take place at an agreeable, private location that is comfortable for the participant. The observations will take place at the location of the board meetings or leadership team meetings where the participant will play a role.

What benefit can the participants consider? Participants will not be compensated for her contribution, but will agree to participate on a voluntary basis. Participants may feel rewarded knowing that they have made a contribution to the field of research in political styles and strategies used by successful classified women managers.

How will the participants’ confidentiality be protected? The researcher will keep all recorded interviews, observation documentation, and artifacts in a locked location only accessible to the researcher. Pseudo names will be used for all participants with the exception of the signed consent form which will be kept secure by the researcher and then destroyed at no longer than five years after the research study is completed.

What risks can the participant expect? There is minimal to no risk of physical, psychological, social, or financial risk to participate in this research. By participating in this study, I agree to complete an interview with researcher, Colleen Stanley. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be scheduled at a location comfortable and agreeable to me. Completion of the interview will occur between September and November, 2019.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with the research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping my identifying documents in a locked drawer accessible only to the researcher.

b) Potential benefit of this study will include my contribution of experience to the literature on the political styles and strategies used by successful classified women managers. The findings of the study will be available to me at the conclusion of the study. I will not be compensated for my participation. I willingly participate on a voluntary basis. At any time I wish to discontinue my participation in the research, I can do so; however, I will need to contact Colleen Stanley to alert her of my discontinued participation.

c) If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact Colleen Stanley, researcher, at cstanley@mail.brandman.edu or by cell phone at (xxx)xxx-xxxx.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it, and I hereby consent to the procedures set forth.

Printed Name of Participant & Role

Signature of Participant
Appendix J
Audio Release Form

Research Study Title: Exploring the Political Style and Strategies Used by Women Classified Managers Who Have Successfully Advanced to Top Level Decision-Making Positions Within an Educational Agency

I authorize Colleen Stanley, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate to record my voice. I give Brandman University and all persons or entities associated with this research study permission or authority to use this recording for activities associated with this research study.

I understand that the recording will be used for transcription purposes and the information obtained during the interview may be published in a journal/dissertation or presented at meetings/presentations.

I will be consulted about the use of the audio recordings for any purpose other than those listed above. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising correlated to the use of information obtained from the recording.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the above release and agree to the outlined terms. I hereby release all claims against any person or organization utilizing this material.

__________________________________________________________________________  ______________
Signature of Participant                              Date
APPENDIX K

Inventory of Political Styles

Name:________________________________________ Date:________________

Directions

The Inventory of Political Styles consists of ten major questions presented in bold print. Each question has a group of nine alternative responses (a-i). For each question (numbered 1 – 10), you will spread a total of 10 points on any alternative, but no more than 10 points altogether for the entire question.

- The highest number of points should be allocated to those alternatives that are most like the way you would respond or feel.
- Zero or the lowest number of points should be allocated to alternatives that are the least like the way you would respond or feel.

Write your points on the line next to the letter code (N-A) at the end of each alternative.

Scoring the Responses

When you are finished, record the points for each response on the scoring sheet. Total the points for each letter code and fill in the summary box at the bottom of the scoring sheet.

For Example:

Sample Question 1: Given the opportunity to select an activity for an evening out, I would most likely choose:

- a. reading T 0
- b. visiting an art gallery X 0
- c. a jazz concert Q 0
- d. fast food and arcade games Y 1
- e. parachuting out of a plane V 3
- f. riding my Harley U 4
- g. practicing my swing at a driving range N 0
- h. surfing W 2
- i. dinner with friends at my place Z 0

Total Points

10
Inventory of Political Styles: It is important that you answer the questions as realistically as possible. Describe the way you actually tend to behave on the job, rather than how you think someone should behave.

1. **When the boss directs that all employees will have to participate in a new training program to improve efficiency and asks for volunteers for the committee to plan it, I tend to:**

   a. Volunteer to develop the plan myself since that way it will be done right and fast. Committees just slow things down.  
   
   b. Let the boss know I like this idea and I’ll do my best to help him implement the new plan.  
   
   c. Tell committee members to go with “proven” solutions rather than somebody’s brainchild.  
   
   d. Agree to serve on the committee to guide newer staff members in learning how to plan a program that will benefit others.  
   
   e. Gather information and prepare an analysis of alternatives that I can share with committee members.  
   
   f. Offer to negotiate a deal with the union to schedule training sessions on a shared cost basis, with half the time during the work day and half the time after work hours, to keep costs down and employees happy.  
   
   g. Speak enthusiastically to others about this opportunity to improve the way we do business.  
   
   h. Understand why the boss needs this training program, but worry that making employees participate will ruin morale. I don’t want to actually sit on the committee, but I suggest to the committee reps that they should look for some incentives for participation.  
   
   i. Volunteer to chair the committee and come up with a collaborative process that will involve all levels of staff in determining how the program will be implemented.  

2. **When there is a promotion available in this organization, I tend to:**

   a. Examine the requirements, wait to see who else applies, look at the person I’d be working for, talk to that person’s staff about his style, weigh my chances, consider my current boss’s reaction, but probably decide I’m happy enough where I am.  
   
   b. Attempt to find out how much competition there is for this job before making my decision to apply, since I don’t want to anger my present boss who doesn’t want to see me leave. Fortunately, I have lots of letters of recommendations from the past in my file if I decide to apply.
c. Talk to the personnel director to discuss how my qualifications align with the organization’s vision, use my networks to learn more about whether my values and styles are a match with those of the new boss and colleagues, call on my mentor to review my resume and help me “bone up” on my interviewing skills.

Q ________

d. Share what I know about the culture of that department with others in my network of friends and associates whom I believe would be a good fit for the position.

X ________

e. Try to find out if that department is comfortable with coasting or whether they are ready for some important changes. If they are, I “call in my chits” with those I’ve done favors for and ask them to write letter of recommendation for me.

V ________

f. Struggle with the decision to apply, since I’m happy where I am, but would enjoy being a greater part of moving the organization forward. If I learn that a colleague is applying, I probably won’t apply because I don’t want to destroy the harmony in our relationship.

Y ________

g. Volunteer to sit on the interview committee, since I have a good understanding of the job, know a lot of people, and can check references on any of the applicants I don’t know.

Z ________

h. Not even consider applying since I love my job and the people I work with, and even though the money would be better, it’s not worth giving up the security and stability of what I have.

U ________

i. Encourage a talented colleague to apply for the job and help that person with resumes and interviewing techniques.

W ________

3. When I am a member of a committee to negotiate an agreement on behalf of our organization, I tend to:

a. Lay out our interests. Elicit their interests. Try to find creative ways to connect ours to theirs to come up with a creative solution.

Z ________

b. Look for ways to reduce the level of conflict and acrimony, and try to inject some optimism into the situation.

Y ________

c. Assist the team in reaching our objective, but help others to accept whatever is the final outcome even if we don’t reach our objective.

U ________

d. Provide some coaching for our chief negotiator to help him gain insights about the other side’s tactics and to help him find win-win solutions.

W ________

e. Although I’m not the chief negotiator, I have good connections with the other side. Therefore, to get things moving, I would hold confidential bargaining talks with the
other side.

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<td>f.</td>
<td>Try to find out what the other side really wants in order to get this impasse solved. Then try to talk the chief negotiator into giving them as much of what they need as possible, so that morale does not go down the tubes.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>g.</td>
<td>Involve both sides in collaborating on creative solutions that support our organizational goal. Look for solutions that benefit both sides. Use strategies that build relationships and trust.</td>
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<td>h.</td>
<td>Take careful notes during negotiations so that we can document who said what and where we had reached tentative agreement.</td>
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<td>i.</td>
<td>Keep my opinions to myself and follow the lead of the chief negotiator who gets his direction from the board. In caucuses, suggest that we ask for evidence of the problems.</td>
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4. When communicating with my “reluctant-to-change” boss over a new program I need to propose for our organization, I tend to:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Attempt to show him how this program is aligned with the organizational vision and also his own goals.</td>
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<td>b.</td>
<td>Provide information about alternatives, but not push too hard one way or the other so that I don’t alienate him.</td>
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<td>c.</td>
<td>Talk to him about what could happen if he doesn’t go ahead with this change that is so important to the organization’s success.</td>
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<td>d.</td>
<td>Share with him what’s on the grapevine about this program and how popular the idea is with our clients, although staff has some reservations about it. Ask him what he thinks would make it work.</td>
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<td>e.</td>
<td>Provide evidence of where it’s worked elsewhere and share with him that I normally share his views about change, but I’ve spent a year researching it and this one looks like it could be okay.</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>f.</td>
<td>Have one or two people he trusts and respects join me in the presentation to help him see the advantages of the change.</td>
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<td>g.</td>
<td>Work around him by first getting the support of his supervisor, with whom I play golf twice a month.</td>
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<td>h.</td>
<td>Tell him this is really something my staff needs, but I’ll support whatever he decides.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Accept that there is little chance for new programs and keep doing the best I can with what’s available.</td>
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5. A big meeting has been called by the boss to discuss a major problem in the organization as a result of a recent change in delivery systems. Jobs could be at stake. In this meeting, I tend to:

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<tr>
<td>a. Keep quiet but pay close attention.</td>
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<td>b. Indicate my support for necessary changes.</td>
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<td>c. Offer assistance in analyzing the problem and generating solutions.</td>
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<td>d. Share anecdotes about how the problem is affecting clients and point out some of the good things that are happening as a result of the change. I look for ways to develop a solution everyone can live with even if it costs more money than we had planned.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>e. When we're on our way out to our cars, I congratulate all of those who spoke up at the meeting.</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>f. Since jobs are at stake, come prepared with good reasons why I should not be regarded as responsible for this situation and be subtle in suggesting possible sources of the problem.</td>
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<td>g. Bring the analysis I did prior to entering the program that shows the downsides I predicted, as a way to help us look for solutions to the problems we are encountering.</td>
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<td>h. Discuss political fallout from the problem and suggest the group brainstorm some strategies that would restore credibility.</td>
<td>Z</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Search for lessons that can be learned from the problem and suggest setting up a committee of stakeholders to plan for future steps that will prevent a recurrence.</td>
<td>Q</td>
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6. A big committee of which I am a member is responsible for developing an important new program. The committee will be reporting on this program at an upcoming board meeting. In this meeting, I tend to:

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<tr>
<td>a. Provide a copy of all the documents and committee minutes I’ve taken and give the board alternatives rather than a firm recommendation, since it’s their decision.</td>
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<td>b. As a hardworking member of the committee, be there to show support for the board’s decision.</td>
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<td>c. Give examples and advise board members as to how this program will contribute to organizational success.</td>
<td>W</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Although I am skeptical of this board’s willingness to accept our committee’s proposal, I prepare the materials for the agenda, showing places where the program has been successful.</td>
<td>N</td>
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</table>
e. Show how this program relates to the organizational vision and give credit to the teamwork and creativity of the committee members.  

f. Having primed some of the board members ahead of time to make sure they were receptive to the proposal, make sure that the speakers include people the board respects.  

g. Describe staff and client reaction to this program concept so far and be prepared with suggestions as to how we can alleviate possible concerns.  

h. Sit with my committee during the presentation to give them encouragement but let the others do the talking.  

i. Offer to be the main presenter. I enjoy this role, and it gives me an opportunity to show what I can do, which doesn’t hurt my career goals.  

7. There is an employee uprising against the director of the department where I work. I am the team leader for these employees and report to this director also. A small group of representatives come to me for advice. In this situation, I tend to:  

a. Listen to their concerns. Ask them what strategies they’ve considered to open up communication between the staff and the director. Model the organizational values in my conversation.  

b. Serve them coffee and cookies, listen to their story, and be sympathetic, but tell them I’m sorry, but I have to stay out of it.  

c. Since I know there’s nothing they can do to change things, let them know that this director is well connected and that it wouldn’t be a good idea to pursue this.  

d. Tell them we all have to just do our best and ride it out.  

e. Since I’m pleased to finally have a mover and shaker in the driver’s seat, I feel these staff members are whiners. I give the director a “heads up” that these people are complaining about his leadership style.  

f. Suggest that they ask the director to meet with them to listen to their concerns, presented in a calm and respectful way. Coach them in how to handles the conference for best results.  

g. I’m concerned about morale in the department, so I agree to talk to the director for them. I give the director some ideas about how to resolve the situation by giving the staff some of what they want.  

h. Since I have the trust and respect of both the staff and the director, I offer to set up a meeting with them and him.
also offer to be there to mediate the conversation.

i. I help them to look at alternative strategies and consequences to determine an appropriate course of action. After that, they are on their own to follow up, since I’ve learned not to take on other people’s problems as my own.

8. As the new manager of a department, I’ve just learned that my predecessor has been undermining me with my supervisor, my staff, and my clients. My predecessor has been promoted in the organization and is well thought of. In this situation, I tend to:

   a. Look for common interests with my predecessor and try to find a common project to work on so that we are interdependent for success in our respective roles.

   b. Seek the advice of my mentor. Brainstorm alternatives. Keep careful records of incidents, correspondence, and email messages with everyone as a precaution.

   c. Do my job as well as I can and let my work speak for itself.

   d. Avoid getting involved in the politics and “go to the balcony” to stay calm, objective, and avoid overacting. I stay optimistic that everything will work out.

   e. Feel I realistically have no chance of surviving this. I start preparing for my departure and looking for work elsewhere.

   f. Build positive relationships and networks around common goals and interests with the people in my department and my clients, as well as the executive staff, so that they are less likely to believe false stories.

   g. Fight fire with fire by suing the same tactics to let people know how he is maligning me and to seek their help in discrediting his actions with the executive staff.

   h. Keep informal communication lines open with all parties to learn what’s going on and to set the record straight with my staff and clients. I work on learning more about the culture and the key opinion makers so that I can avoid the sacred cows as I move forward.

   i. Look for a win-win alternative with my predecessor. Tell those who are concerned about the “politics” that these things are natural during times of organizational change and they should just avoid taking sides.

9. Clients are very upset with some changes that have been made in the service structure. Although the changes have been ordered by the CEO, the staff is blaming me for problems and lack of follow-through on promises. In this situation, I tend to:
a. Slow down. I will study the problem and avoid taking more risks.  

b. Tell them I’m just following the CEO’s direction, and I completely understand their concerns.  
c. Attend a meeting with them but get my supervisor, who has more experience, to facilitate the meeting and do the talking so that I can listen and reflect. I really support both the CEO and the staff.  
d. See this as a natural human reaction to changes and accept their input. Provide honest information about the reasons the changes were put in place and ask for their patience in allowing me to implement necessary changes in my operation. Tell them I’ll help them develop their skills in the new program.  
e. Tell them changes need to take place if this organization is going to stay afloat. Let them know their jobs are at stake if we do not turn the operation around. After all, I’m there to cut losses, not win popularity contests.  
f. Meet with them to listen to their concerns. Develop a plan to address their issues and still maintain the integrity of the organizational goals. Collaborate on next steps.  
g. Present all my documentation and records clarifying the situation and demonstrating that their concerns, in fact, have no basis. Share with them my action plan for implementing the change.  
h. Tell them that you believe things will get better if they just give the new system a chance. Share stories of other places in the organization where it’s been well received, to build optimism. Ask them what would make them feel more comfortable with the change.  
i. Try to discover what their real interests are and look for ways to address these interests and the organization’s needs as well. Try to link my agenda with theirs to achieve a mutually acceptable solution.  

10. I work for someone who is incompetent and impulsive. He seems to be a favorite with the upper levels of administration but does not have a good relationship with most of his staff because when things go wrong, he blames them. He has given me an assignment that has the potential for blowing up politically. In this situation, I tend to:

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<td>a. Try to find out what the boss really needs and meet him halfway by suggesting some solutions that will work for him and save me from taking a risk that could blow up.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>b. Stand my ground and let him know that I think this is a bad idea and that unless he withdraws the assignment, I will go</td>
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c. Consider alternative approaches that could provide a safer route to the goal. Recognize that I am powerless to avoid this assignment and prepare for the political explosion, for which I will probably get blamed.

d. Get a few people the boss trusts to help me explain to him the potential consequences of this assignment and develop creative solutions that meet his interests and avoid the political fallout.

e. Use honesty and compassion in dealing with him by pointing out the reasons for the likely failure of this project and by diplomatically showing him the potential impact on his own job security.

f. Support his decision, but plan my defense when it blows up.

g. Accept his direction, and hope for the best possible outcome.

h. Talk to him about my prediction of a political explosion, and give him some coaching about involving staff in decisions before he makes major policy changes.

i. Let staff know that we have to go forward with this new project, and I would appreciate their support and help. I would be optimistic with them about getting through it.

Scoring Sheet

Scoring the Responses

When you are finished, record the points for each response on the scoring sheet. Total the points for each letter code. Then fill in the summary box at the bottom of the scoring sheet.

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Summary Boxes

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Answer Key:

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<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Strategist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Balancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Supporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Arranger</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX L

Coding Form Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: How do you feel about your organizational politics? Positive, Negative, or Neutral?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX M

Copyright Permission

Inventory of Political Styles

Colleen Stanley <cstanley@mail.brandman.edu> Sat, Sep 28, 4:01 AM (8 days ago)

to Patricia

Hello Dr. White,

May I have your permission to use the Inventory of Political Styles that you included at the end of your book, The Politically Intelligent Leader?

I would like to have my interview participants take the "inventory" to familiarize themselves with the political style terms so when I do my interviews we will all be "singing from the same song-sheet".

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Upon your approval I would replicate the "inventory" and send it to the participants via email.

Colleen Stanley

White, Patricia Sat, Sep 28, 11:46 AM (8 days ago)

to me

Hi Colleen,

Yes, you have my permission to use the Inventory of Political Styles in your dissertation research. Please be sure that the copy you send out shows that is copyrighted and can be reproduced only with permission of the author.

Good luck with your study.

Dr. White

Dr. Patricia Clark White
Interim Dean, Professor
School of Education