

## ABSTRACT

Levy Brown, Jr., AN EXAMINATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND UPWARD MOBILITY WITHIN THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (Under the direction of Dr. Crystal Chambers).  
Department of Educational Leadership, February 2016.

The purpose of this mix-methods study is to examine the association between leadership practices of African American administrators within the North Carolina Community College System and their upward mobility as indicated through a myriad of categories such as a high number of promotions and high organizational level. Secondly, the purpose of this study is to determine if self-identified leadership practices of African American administrators and the observed leadership practices as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner are similar. The NCCCS is currently the third largest community college system in the country. This type of study may help to illuminate opportunities for growth in the area of leadership and administrative diversity within the system that may translate to other systems in other states.

This study closely examined the leadership practices of ten African American senior level administrators. The administrators completed the LPI-Self survey while someone they supervise directly completed the LPI-Observer to provide feedback on the administrator's leadership style. Further, each participant answered eight open-ended questions related to upward mobility, career pathways, and career barriers. The findings revealed that these leaders exhibit various leadership practices in the workplace. However, *Enable Others to Act* is the practice exhibited most frequently by the participants.

The research study included various future implications and recommendations that contribute to study on African American senior level administrators in the community college setting.



AN EXAMINATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND  
UPWARD MOBILITY WITHIN THE NORTH CAROLINA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Levy Brown Jr.

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AN EXAMINATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND  
UPWARD MOBILITY WITHIN THE NORTH CAROLINA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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## **DEDICATION**

To my grandparents Aaron and Nina Brown, and Jesse and Mary Quinerly, it is harvest time.

To Evan Michael Brown and Mya Elyse Brown, you are bright and shining stars!

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

The dynamic environment of a community college requires institutions to develop strong leaders at every administrative level (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000). Within the community college setting, much emphasis has been placed on identifying future leaders. The identification and development of promising African Americans for leadership roles is relevant as a number of community colleges have an increasing number of African Americans and other ethnic minorities to enroll at their institution. Vaughan (1989) suggested that minority leadership at the community level is essential while seeking to serve a diverse local community. Concomitantly subsequent research suggests that some technical and community colleges have increased efforts to ensure that quality minority applicants are prepared to fill leadership roles that will become available (Bumphus & Neal, 2008). Nevertheless, African Americans represent 13% of community college student enrollments; however, only 10% of the executive/ administrative/ managerial positions in these organizations are occupied by African Americans (Walker-Anderson, 2007). Creating a pipeline for aspiring African American senior executives is important if community colleges want their senior administrative teams to be reflective of the campus community.

Beyond the issue of representativeness, concerns for a graying administration speak to a larger need for a diversified administrative community college workforce, especially at the senior executive level. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) administered a survey which revealed 45% of the 249 presidents surveyed planned to retire by 2007 (Shults, 2001). Few of those presidents are African American. In 2012, a survey of community college presidents revealed that 75% of those who responded planned to retire in the next 10

years (Tekle, 2012). Additionally, 15% of the respondents indicated they have aspirations to retire in the next 11 to 15 years from their community college (Tekle, 2012). Pluviose (2006) reported there were 40 African American community college presidents in 2006, a lower number than 10 years earlier and a smaller percentage than noted by Dembicki and Vaughan. In addition, a proportionately large number of chief academic officers and chief student affairs officers are nearing retirement (Shults, 2001).

Within the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), trends mirror national statistics as African Americans occupy 13% of the senior-level administrative positions, 35 of 254 senior administrative positions including deans and vice presidents. A myriad of factors may contribute to the system having a small percentage of this ethnic minority group serving in the aforementioned roles such as the perceived levels of academic preparedness, college culture, geographic mobility, and leadership perceptions (Stern, 2009). These factors may contribute to small percentages because they impact the ability of African American administrators to seek out, secure, and maintain top tier administrative roles within academia.

Community colleges are faced with a subpar number of well-prepared individuals entering the administrative ranks, while more experienced administrators are aging out and retiring (Riggs, 2009). Baker (2003) asserted that future leaders of tomorrow's community colleges must display the ability to facilitate change and innovations. In addition, these leaders should continually uphold the organization's mission, vision, and values amid times that are fiscally challenging. The Great Recession of 2008 had negative impacts on many states' local funding and even with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 provision of temporary relief for community colleges and other higher education institutions through 2011 (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, 2012). Community colleges in the

United States are experiencing a decline in state funding along with increasing tuition and fees (Campbell, 2010). As future leaders prepare to lead community colleges, they should have a sound understanding of the financial state of community colleges in order to advocate and lead institutions. This study is designed to enhance the body of research that exists concerning African American administrators and their leadership practices. Jogulu (2010) emphasized that leadership styles can be shaped by a number of experiences. Further, variations in leadership styles are due to cultural influences because people have different beliefs and assumptions about characteristics that are deemed effective for leadership (Jogulu, 2010). The way administrators who represent the racial majority perceive the leadership abilities of ethnic minorities may be a contributing factor as to whether administrators of color are able to experience upward mobility in the community college setting. Upward mobility can be defined through multiple measures. As defined by White (2009), upward mobility is a combination of high number of promotions, high annual compensation, and high organizational level.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A myriad of research exist about equity and about the representation of African Americans in senior-level administrative positions that generally lead to the role of college president (Harvey, 1999; Jackson, 2004; Slater, 1995). This literature generally focuses on the rise of both African American males and females to the role of community college president. However, a sparse amount of literature exists which examines the leadership styles of ethnic minorities and how it impacts their career advancement.

In addition, a few studies highlight a minimal increase in rates of doctoral degree completion, faculty tenure awards, or presidential hires among individuals of color (Perrakis, 2009). However, the literature does not provide many linkages between leadership

behaviors and upward mobility for African Americans in higher education. Senior administrators, selection committees, and others making hiring/promotion decisions and working with African American senior level administrators may benefit from learning more about the leadership behaviors and practices of these individual along with up and coming African American administrators.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between leadership practices of African American administrators within the NCCCS and their upward mobility as indicated through a myriad of categories such as a high number of promotions and high organizational level. Secondly, the purpose of this study is to determine if self-identified leadership practices of African American administrators and the observed leadership practices as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner are similar. The NCCCS is currently the third largest community college system in the country. This type of study may help to illuminate opportunities for growth in the area of leadership and administrative diversity within the system that may translate to other systems in other states.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Kouzes and Posner's (1983) leadership theory will be employed during the study of leadership practices demonstrated by African American administrators within the NCCCS. Kouzes and Posner (2003) asserted that leadership is defined as the ability to influence processes which affect interpretations of events for followers. Moreover, because leadership is a process, the first step is not to act but to understand. This theoretical framework provides readers with an understanding of multi-layered leadership practices versus just one particular leadership style. Kouzes and Posner's model is data driven and provides readers and users with a holistic

approach to understanding leadership. Over two decades of research has been conducted on leadership by Kouzes and Posner. These researchers examined the dynamic process of leadership; through the analysis of cases and survey questionnaires, they uncovered five exemplary practices (Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, Encouraging the Heart, Inspiring a Shared Vision, and Modeling the Way) which were common to personal best experiences (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was developed from the research results of Kouzes and Posner.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are designed to guide this study. Question one is the primary research question for this study:

1. Among African American senior level administrators, is there a relationship between leadership practices and their upward mobility?
2. What are the most common leadership practices among African American senior level administrators?
3. How do the scores on the LPI –Self compare and contrast among African American administrators?
4. How do the scores on the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer (direct reports scores)?

### **Overview of Research Method**

This study will use data collected via a mixed-methods approach through the Leadership Practices Inventory and a set of open-ended questions. The data collected will be used to examine the association between leadership practices of African American senior-level administrators within the NCCCS and their upward mobility. The LPI and eight open-ended

questions will be used to answer the overarching research question. Additionally, the LPI will be used to determine if the participants' self-identified leadership practices and the observed leadership practices are similar. And, the eight open-ended questions will be used in order to address upward mobility, perceived career barriers, and the participants' insight on African American leadership in the workplace. Further, emergent themes along with other important qualitative data should provide more insight about the study. The LPI is a thirty-question survey that is used to measure leadership behaviors of the individual who complete the assessment. Kouzes and Posner (1992) suggested that the LPI-self assists leaders in assessing their current level of individual leadership competencies and practices.

The LPI consists of in-depth interviews and written case studies from personal-best leadership experiences which generated the conceptual framework. Furthermore, the instrument consists of five leadership practices:

- Modeling the Way;
- Inspiring a Shared Vision;
- Challenging the Process;
- Enabling Others to Act; and
- Encouraging the Heart.

The actions that make up these practices were translated into behavioral statements (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). A combination of the data gathered from both the LPI and upward mobility questions set is the foundation of my study.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is designed to address that need by examining the leadership practices and behaviors of African American senior level administrators in the NCCCS. At this point, there are

a limited number of studies that focus on leadership practices/behaviors of African American community college administrators in the NCCCS or at the national level. Additionally, this study is significant because it will provide educational leaders, practitioners, human resources professionals, and boards of trustees with insight on the leadership practices and behaviors of African American senior level administrators. Potential leadership training models may be developed to increase the number of African American administrators assuming senior level positions within community colleges in North Carolina.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Challenging the Process* - The practice that identifies leaders as innovative, willing to seek new ways of accomplishing tasks, taking risks and learning from their mistakes (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*Senior Administrator* - Vice President, Associate Vice President, Assistant Vice President, Executive Dean, and Dean.

*Enabling Others to Act* - The leadership practice emphasizing the leader's ability to involve everyone necessary to ensure success of the project through support, encouragement, trust, teamwork and relationship building (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*Encouraging the Heart* - The leadership practice focusing on the need to recognize and encourage staff to complete tasks, build teams, motivate the team individually and care about people (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*Ethnic Minority* - Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native.

*Exemplary Leader(s)* - Ordinary people who accomplish extraordinary things in their organizations (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*Inspiring a Shared Vision* - The leadership practice referring to the leader's ability to envision the future and inspire others to take ownership of that vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*Modeling the Way* - The leadership practice that begins with clarification of personal values and involves building and affirming shared values that all can embrace (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*360-Degree Feedback* - A method that provides an individual the opportunity to receive performance feedback from his or her supervisor and peers, reporting staff members, coworkers and/or customers. The 360-degree feedback process allows each individual to understand how his or her effectiveness as an employee, coworker, or staff member is viewed by others and to assist each individual to understand his or her strengths and weaknesses, and to contribute insights into aspects of his or her work needing professional development (Heathfield, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

*Upward Mobility* - A combination of high number of promotions, high annual compensation, and high organizational level (White, 2009).

### **Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

Though African American leadership in community colleges is a meaningful topic, there are some limitations to this study. Community colleges in North Carolina reporting structures and titles vary from institution to institution. The study will only provide limited analysis of the self-perceived leadership practices of African American senior level administrators and observed leadership practices by a single direct report. The results will be based on self-reports of participants and their observers. This is important to note due to the nature of this study. As stated earlier, this study focuses solely on North Carolina community colleges. The findings of this study should not be generalized to African Americans working in community college

systems in other states. The applicability of results should be reviewed in conjunction with an assessment of environment and policy context.

Although the LPI is a widely used research instrument, it does not take into account all leadership variables (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The LPI is just one of many leadership inventories used to measure leadership. However, one of the primary reasons the instrument was selected is because of its validity rating. In research, validity addresses the issue of whether an instrument actually measures what it is supposed to measure and, whether its scores have meaning or utility for a respondent (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Over time a number of reviews of leadership development instruments have been completed. The LPI has been rated among the top, regardless of the criteria. In an assessment of 18 leadership instruments, the LPI received the top score in the areas of ease of use and psychometric soundness (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Other independent reviewers of the LPI noted: “The conceptual scheme in which the LPI is based upon is elegant and the test items on the LPI have excellent face validity along with psychometric validity (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Research by Zagorsek, Stough, and Jaklic (2006) suggested that an instrument’s measurement precision is crucial for the quality of the inferences and decisions based on that instrument; this is noteworthy when considering leader assessment in companies or academic theory building. In terms of reliability of the instrument, LPI seems to be more precise and reliable for respondents with low to medium leadership competence. It appears the reliability decreases for quality leaders (Zagorsek et al., 2006).

As a matter of delimitations, the study focuses solely on North Carolina’s community colleges and does not consider other sectors of higher education within the state (e.g. four year public universities, privates, and for-profit institutions). An additional limitation is the study only

examines a single state rather than multiple community college systems across the country. To that end, it may not be possible to generalize the overall results of the study. Further, the study examines leadership practices of African Americans and no other ethnic minority groups.

Although limitations exist regarding the study, the examination of African American leadership will provide board of trustee members, college presidents, and other key decision makers with information essential to evaluate African American educators poised to assume senior level administrative roles at community colleges.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1, an overview and background information on the study is provided. A review of pertinent literature on the subject matter is presented in Chapter 2. The researcher outlines and provides a more in-depth look at the methodology and procedures utilized in conducting the study in Chapter 3. An analysis of the data and presentation of the findings are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is a summary of the results and conclusions of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership practices of African American senior-level administrators and their upward mobility in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). In order to gain insight about the higher education system pertaining to African Americans in leadership, this chapter consists of an examination of literature that discusses the leadership crisis surrounding higher education generally as well as literature particularly focused on community college leadership and administration. I then focus on the research on African American leadership, upward mobility, career barriers, and leadership inventories. This comprehensive review of literature may assist researchers, scholars, and administrators in providing more insight on African American administrators from a national vantage point to the local level. Glen (2010) notes a need for more literature that focuses on acquiring and retaining minority employees.

### **Higher Education Leadership Crisis**

Higher education leaders are faced with meeting challenges that surpass the difficulty experienced by previous college and university leadership (Cohen, 1998). Postsecondary institutions in the United States are currently faced with sizable challenges that in some cases threaten their very existence (Stamm, 2009). These challenges are layered and multifaceted within the academy. They include factors such as a decline in endowment funding concomitant with an increase in public accountability. More specifically, public colleges and universities continue to be hampered by severe cost cutting measures dictated by massive reductions in state revenues (Stamm, 2009).

At the same time, higher education leaders have to give proper attention to the requirements of external agencies, such as accrediting bodies, and their ongoing demands for proof of quality. In context, accreditation ensures that institutions of higher education are providing quality academic programs, fiscal soundness, and organizational enhancement (Ruiz, 2010). However, there are questions regarding the value added of the demand for accountability through accreditation and fulfillment of the mission of higher education (Alexander, 2014).

Beyond accreditation, institutional leaders must contend with multiple sets of stakeholders who have both converging and diverging interests. This is evident more now than ever before in the academia. Yarbrough (2011) asserted that many current and prospective students, faculty, staff and others view the academy as being in constant crisis mode. Yarbrough (2011) suggested higher education's crisis consists of a myriad of complex, intertwined factors that include:

- increased defunding of many state institutions;
- growth and expansion in part-time and temporary instructors;
- ongoing developments in scholarly publishing that may require a rethinking of the standards used to determine job security at many senior institutions;
- the extent to which doctoral programs continue to produce more PhDs than current positions;
- the stalled diversification of the professoriate, especially regarding underrepresented minority populations;
- the critique of liberal arts education as less valuable; and
- the pressure at many institutions to seek higher productivity by scaling back course offerings and enlarging class size (Yarbrough, 2011).

Each factor mentioned factors into the national crisis that leadership will have to face in the future. More specifically, higher education leaders will need to be prepared to face these challenges.

With higher education institutions on the receiving end of these challenges, current and prospective students are being impacted as well. For example, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education (2008) reported the number of applications for student financial aid is exceeding the growth of student enrollment. The number of applicants that are eligible for federal financial aid along with the clearly demonstrated a need continue to increase (Connecticut Department of Higher Education, 2008). It is a phenomenon experienced nationwide (Stamm, 2009). Issues such as the increased need for student financial aid will continue to impact institutional leadership across levels of government. Ultimately, these issues compounded with other factors such as the changing demographic of students seeking postsecondary are key points that need attention from senior level administrators and higher education at large.

### **A Changing Demographic**

The changing landscape of higher education includes a variety of issues, including those stemming from changing demographics. Scholars and practitioners must consider the changing demographic of the country's population which has a direct impact on the landscape of colleges and universities. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that minorities may very well be the majority by 2050. Furthermore, California, Hawaii, New Mexico and Texas along with the District of Columbia, have ethnic-minority populations that have surpassed the 50% mark (Knight, Davenport, Green-Powell, & Hilton, 2012). The expected shift with ethnic minorities must be considered. Knight et al. (2012) also notes the minority shift is occurring while

graduation rates for all students within the academy continue to suffer. The 2012 graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students pursuing a baccalaureate degree at a senior institution in fall 2006 was slightly below 60%. Essentially, 59% of first-time, full-time students who began seeking an undergraduate degree in fall of 2006 completed a degree at that college or university (NCES, 2015). National data highlights that degree completion rates differ by race/ethnicity for students who entered a four-year college in fall of 2006 (NCES, 2015). The completion rates by race/ethnicity are as follows: White 42.6%; Black 20.5%; Hispanic 29.2%; Asian 46.3%; Pacific Islander 24.2%; American Indian 21.9%; and Two or more races 46.5% (NCES, 2015). Graduation rates along with other measures of accountability for which colleges and universities are judged by have a far reaching impact on the task and skill sets of higher education leaders. The changing demographic is reflective in regards to students and potential leaders.

While student demographics are changing, the overall numbers of persons serving in leadership roles within academia is increasing. Clauss-Ehlers and Parham (2014) notes that between 1992 and 2003 there was an increase of administrators across college and university campuses in respect to both women and men in every ethnic group. However, the overall growth of the ethnic groups is reflected in only a minor demographic shift (Clauss-Ehler & Parham, 2014). According to a report published by ACE in 2008, individuals who identify as White occupied 84% of key administrative/leadership roles in the academy. The statistics highlight that institutions of higher education has a lot of room for growth in the area of diversifying the administrative ranks.

## **Future of Higher Education Leadership**

The future of higher education leadership within academia may be filled with opportunities for emerging leaders to assume senior level positions. According to Klien and Salk (2013), there are 7,006 accredited colleges and universities in the United States of America. Within that number, approximately 60% of higher education institutions are classified as private colleges and universities (Klien & Salk, 2013). There are currently 992 public, 96 independent, and 35 tribal community colleges in the United States (AACC, 2015). Administrative retirement projections indicated a 50% turnover among senior leaders within the academy by early 2014 (Betts, Urias, Chavez, & Betts, 2009; Klien & Salk, 2013).

An array of literature points to the fact that higher education leaders are retiring at a high rate. Wallin (2009) asserts that impending retirements of a large number of baby boomer community college leaders is cause for concern when considering the leadership gap. Furtek (2012) highlights that four-year institutions are faced with the same retirement issues, some of which have been described as employing a top down approach dominated by “a good ole boys’ club.” All of these factors should be given consideration when discussing retirement in higher education.

Pending retirements will enable other up and coming leaders to advance within academia. Fullan and Scott (2009) suggested that institutions of higher education need to become more “change-capable” in order to overcome the economic and societal challenges that lie ahead. Higher education leaders face challenges in meeting the fluctuating needs of the current and future workforce. Community college leaders suggested they are ready to discontinue the traditional higher education paradigm in favor of practices that meet the needs of an increasingly competitive national and international workforce (Community College Journal, 2011). In the

past, higher education leaders had adequate state funding. However, present day leaders in the academy do not have a flux of funding. Bumphus (2011) noted that community colleges should find additional fundraising streams in order to become more sustainable. Moreover, Bumphus (2011) asserted that new metrics need to be developed in order for institutions to be held accountable in terms of the student success agenda. As current institutional leaders gray, those taking the helm should be prepared to focus on fundraising, student success, meeting workforce needs among other priorities to successfully lead in the coming years.

Promotion of inexperienced leaders is a challenge within higher education for most senior level administrators at colleges and universities. Beattie (2013) suggested that most university administrators have been promoted into leadership roles without adequate experience and training to enable them to anticipate and address unexpected outcomes of their decision- making, which in turn, supports a culture of maintaining the norm. However, today's leaders in higher education should seek to transform institutions.

### **Community College Leadership**

Trends in higher education writ large are not lost on the community college context. Most recently, community colleges have attracted much national attention pertaining to degree completion. One current proposal by President Obama calls for free community college tuition nationwide. Prior to the latest proposal, the nation has called on community colleges to assist with increasing the number of college graduates by 2020 (Eddy, 2013; The White House, 2009). The ability of community colleges to reach large segments of higher education and furtherance of this goal is clear. The United States currently has 1,132 community colleges, which serves 12.8 million students (AACC, 2014). Community colleges have experienced growth in numbers, size, and complexity. These institutions offer a myriad of ways for students to earn credit and continue

their lifelong learning experience through the completion of coursework. Yet, expansion of students has yet to be met with expansion in leadership.

Higher education organizations continue to experience challenges surrounding seasoned administrators retiring from their post. Senior-level administrative turnovers are expected to exceed 50% (Leubsdorf, 2006) in the next 10 years. According to Weisman and Vaughan (2006), community college presidents were an average age of 58. Currently, 53.5% of presidents are 61 years of age or older (American Council on Education [ACE], 2012; Eddy, 2013). As community college leaders continue to gray, there is a need to prepare for leadership transition and succession in order to sustain efficient and effective operations (Eddy, 2013; Nguyen, 2014).

The more senior executives approach 30 or more years of services, the more colleges will seek out the next generation of presidents whose leadership approach probably differs from earlier generations. Community college presidential leadership generations are described as follows:

- First generation. Founding fathers, who pioneered a new and democratic form of higher education.
- Second generation. Good managers, who led the colleges through a period of rapid growth and abundant resources.
- Third generation. Collaborators, who have drawn disparate groups together to leverage limited resources and make open access to higher education widespread (Sullivan, 2001).

In moving forward with a new leadership generation, it is important that old values are not lost, at least not the positive ones. Traditionally, community college leaders are committed to educational values of community, excellence, honesty and integrity, teamwork, innovation, and

staying on the cutting edge of technology (Hellmich, 2007). To sustain these values, new leaders must have the knowledge and experience sets to prepare them to face higher education's myriad set of challenges while keeping these complex organizations moving forward. Realizing the skills to knowledge gap faced by community college leaders, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism promulgated six core competencies for community college leaders (AACC, 2015).

The AACC (2015) suggest these competencies should be applied with an understanding of the following:

- a. Leadership can be learned. While it can be enhanced immeasurably by natural aptitude and experience, supporting leaders with exposure to theory, concepts, cases, guided experiences, and other practical information and learning methodologies is essential.
- b. Many members of the community college community can lead. The competencies will shift in importance depending upon the level of the leader. For example, it is more critical that a president be able to communicate effectively with the board than for a staff assistant to do so. Both, however, can benefit from mastery of the communication competency.
- c. Effective leadership is a combination of effective management and vision. Ideally, acquisition of management skills would precede vision. In reality the two skill sets often develop in tandem and are presented together in this competency framework.
- d. Learning leadership is a lifelong process, the movement of which is influenced by personal and career maturity as well as other developmental processes.

- e. The leadership gap can be addressed through a variety of strategies such as college grow-your-own programs, AACC council and university programs, state system programs, residential institutes, coaching, mentoring, and on-line and blended approaches. Important considerations that apply to all forms of delivery include sustaining current leaders and developing new ones (AACC, Retrieved from [http://www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/Events/leadershipsuite/Pages/six\\_competencies.aspx](http://www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/Events/leadershipsuite/Pages/six_competencies.aspx) 2015).

In conjunction with an understanding of one's leadership practices, these leadership competencies for individual community college leaders can help them thrive in their current and future roles.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The assessment of leadership occurs quite frequently at institutions of higher education. Leadership is described as playing a critical role, and often considered as a driving force in terms of the success or failure of an organization (Bass, 1990; Zagorsek, 2006). Over time, a number of leadership inventories have been developed by researchers seeking to learn more about leadership studies. To that end, there are countless ways to measure leadership behaviors and practices. However, the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is one of the most widely used inventories today that measure leadership across a multitude of disciplines (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The LPI developed by Kouzes and Posner (2003) can assist in identifying leadership behaviors of individuals who complete the leadership inventory. Due to the design of the LPI, it may also be used to assess other leadership competencies such as those highlighted by the AACC for leading community colleges. This leadership inventory focuses on five key leadership practices as developed by Kouzes and Posner. The leadership practices are as follows: Model the

Way, Challenge the Process, Inspire a Shared Vision, Encourage the Heart, and Enable Others to Act.

### **Model the Way**

Many leaders today seek to model a vision within organizations. William and Gordon (2006) suggest that modeling a vision establishes an environment of mentorship that will foster employees to support the organizations goals. Further, leaders with organizations tend to establish a few principles to show how individuals should be treated and the best way to pursue goals (Kavipurapu, 2012).

### **Challenge the Process**

Leadership is a concept that is connected to change and challenges. Within organizations leaders that challenge the process often times look for opportunities to change the status quo (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). Further, they seek out new ways to enhance organizations and take calculated risks while attempting to improve their organizational environment (Kavipurapu 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2014). More importantly, these leaders will serve as change agents within their organization.

### **Inspire a Shared Vision**

Many times within organizations, leaders have a variety of things that may motivate them to push towards a certain goal. Leaders that fall into the category of “Inspire a Shared Vision” are passionate and believe that they can have a positive impact on the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). Although a variety of leadership practices may be viewed as effective, leaders in this group are considered to be effective leaders due to their ability to provide sense, meaning, and purpose by developing a vision based on a combination of personal and organizational values (Kavipurapu 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2014).

## **Encourage the Heart**

Within organizations, leaders display strengths and weaknesses in their roles. In many organizations, a number of leaders are considered encouragers, and they like to celebrate accomplishments of their team (Kouzes & Posners, 2014). These leaders often times are open to recognizing employees or other colleagues' contributions. (Kavipurapu, 2012). Further, leaders consistently inspire those working with them to work hard, remain hopeful and persevere. Kouzes and Posner (2007) contended that acknowledging accomplishments creates positive synergy that encourages the hearts of those working hard to meet both personal and organizational goals.

## **Enable Others to Act**

In some organizations, there is significant value placed on teamwork. That culture is fostered by individuals who place value on collaborative work. Leaders who display this type of leadership behavior are categorized under, "Enable Others to Act". They foster collaboration and build spirited teams. Further, they develop an environment of respect, trust, and human dignity (Kavipurapu, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2014). Even more importantly, these leaders notice the strengths of others and make everyone feel empowered in terms of carrying out their jobs successfully (Kouzes & Posner, 2014).

## **Leadership Practices Inventory**

A general search of the term "leadership practices inventory" in the One Search database yielded over 29,000 articles/publications that were influenced by the LPI. The LPI was developed by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner over three decades ago. The leadership inventory has been used to study the leadership behavior of individuals in educational settings, the private sector and other arenas. I selected to use the LPI to learn more about the leadership behaviors of

African American administrators within the NCCCS due to its proven validity over time. Further, the instrument has been used in a number of studies which include postsecondary education, secondary education and private-industry.

The LPI has evolved in recent decades. Although the instrument has been used in a myriad of studies, the LPI validity and reliability is noteworthy. In research, it is important for researchers to understand the validity and reliability of the instrument selected to be used during a study. Hugo et al. (2006) postulates the quality of an instrument's measurement precision is vital relative to the inferences and decisions based on that instrument. Many studies have examined the reliability and validity of the LPI. A study conducted designed to measure the reliability and validity of the LPI in 2006 concluded the inventory indicates the LPI appears to a moderately reliable instrument that may be better for leadership development instead of identifying, selecting, or promoting leaders (Hugo et al., 2006). Recently the LPI response scale was changed to a 10-point Likert scale (1 = almost never, 2 = rarely, 3 = seldom, 4 = once in a while, 5 = occasionally, 6 = sometimes, 7 = fairly often, 8 = usually, 9 = very frequently, and 10 = almost always) (Kavipurapu, 2012). The purpose of this change, the increasing of options, is to allow for greater precision in responses and to decrease bias.

Currently, there is the LPI self-assessment and LPI observer instrument. Kouzes and Posner developed the two inventories in order for leaders to assess themselves, and for their colleagues to assess their leadership behavior. Kouzes and Posner (1992) suggest that the LPI-self assessment assists leaders in assessing their current level of individual leadership competencies and practices. Furthermore, leaders should be able to make the connection between strengths and areas of improvement.

### **Authentic Leadership Inventory**

Although the LPI was selected for the purposes of this study, a number of other leadership inventories exist today. Recently, the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) has been utilized in various studies. In order to gain a better understanding of the ALI, one needs more insight of the concept of Authentic Leadership. Yukl (2010) asserts that a number of differences between the definitions of authentic leadership along with authentic leadership theory need to be resolved before determining everything that should be captured in research on the topic. The ALI is used to measure the level of authentic leadership characteristics. There are various types of leadership inventories used that are similar to the ALI. Shamar and Eilam (2005) contend that an authentic leader has a “high level of self-resolution or self-concept clarity” (p. 399), in addition to self-concordant goals, self-expressive behavior, and the held belief that the leader role is central to their self-concept.

### **Leadership Competency Inventory**

A variety of companies and other agencies use instruments to measure leadership capacity. Rodriguez (2002) highlighted that many organizations use various types of assessments to identify leadership skill sets that current or aspiring leaders should exhibit. Yoon (2010) asserts that scholarly research about leadership is filled with studies that focus on the development, use, and validation of a large number of psychometric instruments to measure leadership practices and potential. The Leadership Competency Inventory (LCI) has been used by numerous organizations seeking to measure leadership skills (Yoon, 2010).

The LCI was developed by faculty members of Pennsylvania State University Continuing and Professional Education (PSUCaPE, 2007; Yoon, 2010). Further, the LCI has been used by

PSUCaPE to assess leadership training and development needs of personnel. It has been important in the management and development of individuals in organizations (Yoon, 2010). At the time of this writing, 34 organizations have used the LCI to assess the leadership development needs of their supervisors and managers.

### **Distributed Leadership Inventory**

Leadership is examined in a variety of settings, which include higher education, secondary education, and private industry. The literature reveals that distributed leadership has emerged in leadership theory over the past years. Although the literature on distributed leadership is plentiful, there is very limited research on the theory as it pertains to higher education. Bush and Crawford (2012) described Distributed Leadership (DL) as the most favored normative model of leadership. To that end, the understanding of DL in the educational leadership discourse is considered broad and contested (Bush & Crawford, 2012). However, DL and the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) are still relevant when discussing leadership theory. More specifically, the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) is a questionnaire that measures the perceived quality of the leadership and the extent to which leadership is distributed (Huplia et al., 2009).

The LPI was considered superior to the list of different scales. As such, it is the instrument of choice in this study.

### **The Local Context and Community College Leadership**

It is not enough to have a generalized set of skills. While general skills and competencies can be applied across a number of contexts, it is also important for leaders to consider local political, social, cultural and economic conditions. Hardy and Katsinas (2007) contended that rural community colleges make up 60% of all community colleges in the United States. Most of

these institutions are located in regions laden with suppressed economies, well above average levels of poverty, and limited college resources (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007).

Vargas (2013) adds that community college leaders should have an understanding of the political environment associated with higher education such as, legislation and the legislative process, lobbying and lobbyists, and developing relationships with political officials. In this vein, community college leaders would benefit from both having an awareness of local politics but also an opportunity to influence their respective political dynamics (Vargas, 2013).

### **North Carolina Community College System History and Current Employment Data**

As geographical context matters, the present study is limited to the State of North Carolina. The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is designed to open the door to quality, accessible educational opportunities, that minimize barriers to post-secondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals (NCCCS Mission, 2014). By focusing on one state, the cultivation of black leaders for senior executive positions in community colleges can be better understood within that state's political, social, economic, and cultural context.

Following World War II, the state of North Carolina's economy began to shift from agricultural to industrial (NCCCS History, 2014). As a result, state leaders understood the importance of a much-needed shift in how higher education would need to be offered. In 1950, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction authorized a study of the need for a system of tax-supported community colleges (NCCCS History, 2014). Findings in the study led the General Assembly in adopting the first Community College Act and providing funding for community colleges (NCCCS History, 2014). Further, the 1957 General Assembly provided funding to

initiate a statewide system of Industrial Education Centers. The centers were developed to train adults and selected high school students in skills needed to enter jobs in business and industry. By 1961, there were five public junior colleges emphasizing arts and sciences, and seven industrial education centers focusing on technical and vocational education (NCCCS History, 2014).

Today, the NCCCS is comprised of 58 community colleges that offer associate degrees, diplomas and certificates to citizens in every county in North Carolina. The System had an estimated unduplicated headcount of 826,471 curriculum and continuing education students during the 2011-12 academic year (NCCCS Annual Report, 2012). These statistics support the notion that community colleges in North Carolina will need to continue to fill senior level roles. Duree (2007) asserts that presidents and other senior level administrators and even faculty are retiring at alarming rates, which are creating vacancies.

However, there is a lack of diversity at the most senior level positions within the NCCCS. Data from 2013 reveals that whites made up 90% of the presidential positions while blacks made up 8% and, 2% identified themselves as unknown. Further, data from the NCCCS report that whites made up 83% of senior administrative positions while blacks made up 15%, and Hispanics made up 1%. The data clearly identifies the disparity of African Americans and other ethnic minorities occupying senior level administrative roles within the NCCCS.

### **African American Leadership in Higher Education**

Ethnic-minority representation among community college leadership is low despite efforts by various national organizations to aggrandize their presence in high level posts (Evelyn, 2007). According to National Council on Black American Affairs (2013), there were 84 African American presidents at the nation's 1,129 community colleges. Alexander (2010) postulates

these numbers should cause alarm, since minorities are projected to become the majority and make up more than half of the United States' population by 2050. According to U.S. Census Bureau projections, ethnic minorities will represent 54% of the country's total population with African Americans representing approximately 15% of that projection, totaling 60 million persons within the next 35 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). That figure, 61.4 million people is a population which rivals that of the state of Virginia. While the share of Latino populations in the United States is larger and Asian American populations are growing faster, Takaki (2008, p. 7), notes the importance of African American demographics as "African Americans have been the central minority throughout our country's history ... Indeed, the history of African Americans has been stitched into the history of America itself." Regarding the trajectories of Asian and Latino integration into U.S. society, Takaki (1998) notes the experiences of African and Native Americans as telling harbingers.

In 2013, 174,000 African Americans held a professional degree and 192,000 completed a doctorate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). These statistics are noteworthy due to the fact that a doctorate is required to serve as president of a community college. A study by the American Council on Education highlighted the EdD as the most commonly held credential (73%) by Chief Executive Officers at community colleges (Eddy & Rao, 2009).

Caucasians are about twice as likely as African Americans to hold professional or doctoral degrees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). As earning a professional or doctoral degree may lead to promotion and more leadership opportunities, the smaller population of African Americans in combination with the lesser propensity to attain a doctoral degree constrains African American pathways to community college senior executive leadership. In addition, in terms of leadership pathways most travelled, African Americans are more likely occupy senior

level administrative roles at four year Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) than most community colleges. Note that there are Historically Black 2 year institutions and as such HBCU and community college status are not mutually exclusive. However, it is important for African Americans with leadership potential to understand that there are more pathways to lead in higher education than through 4 year PWIs. There are currently 105 HBCU president/chancellor positions within the United States and numerous chief executive officer positions at PWIs. Ultimately, African Americans who display leadership characteristics may have an array of prospective opportunities.

African Americans with high-ranking positions at HBCUs, including president, chancellor, and provost, face some of the same challenges as their Caucasian counterparts. Stewart (2013) noted that some HBCU leaders are facing campus turmoil, scarce resources, and overall instability. The challenges have led to high turnover in key leadership positions. By December 2012, 20 out of 105 permanent presidential slots were vacant or recently filled (Stewart, 2013). The experiences of African American leaders at HBCU are very similar to the challenges faced by African American senior administrators in the community college setting.

### **Upward Mobility and Career Barriers**

Understanding leadership and one's leadership style in order to capitalize on promotional opportunities is important. Jogulu (2010) suggests that variations in leadership styles are due to cultural influences because people have different beliefs and assumptions about characteristics that are deemed effective for leadership. This is important in considering the way African American administrators operate within the workplace. Higgins (2000) asserted that the role of informal and professional networks play an important part of shaping one's career. Further, these networks give the social support and understanding of what is occurring within an organization.

In order to gain better insight on upward mobility and career barriers for African Americans in higher education, a historical and societal overview must be given. It is challenging to get an understanding of issues faced by African Americans seeking to progress professionally without background contextual information concerning the societal issues that once existed. Upward mobility issues for African Americans within society have been around since the days of slavery. Hughes and Hertel (1990) asserts that, under slavery, there already existed a “mulatto elite,” a segment of the Black population who, due to their lighter skin and blood relations to White slave owners, received benefits such as assignment of choice work tasks, training in skilled occupations, and for some, a clearer path to freedom.

A new concept of “minority culture of mobility” emerged in the African American culture (Neckerman et al., 1999, p. 946). The concept of “minority culture of mobility” came to fruition when African Americans first began to transition from their ethnic communities and filter into mainstream America (Neckerman et al., 1999). The culture is noted as providing a safe place to assist Black Americans cope with psychological stress and the logistics of daily life in a dominate Caucasian culture (which members of the Black middle class generally encounter at work and in educational settings), and gives an explanation of the relationships of class within the African American community (Neckerman et al., 1999).

Research shows that, even with African Americans making progress in their chosen career fields some challenges still exist. Cole and Omari (2003) contend that individuals from the Black middle class continue to deal with frustrations associated with tokenism, residential segregation, subtle and overt discrimination and a glass ceiling that limits their advancement. Unfortunately, the frustrations result in dissatisfaction and cynical thoughts (Cole & Omari, 2003). Though upward mobility is increasing in the workplace for African Americans, some

career development professionals are concerned that attention is still needed in this area (White, 2009).

On the one hand, Thomas and Gabaroo (1999) find that the making of minority executives is less random and mysterious than previously thought, and that certain interventions can positively affect the growth and advancement of minorities to the senior executive suite. In contrast, Eagly and Karau (2002) contend that prejudice can arise from the relations that people perceive between the characteristics of members of a social group and the requirements of the social roles that group members currently occupy or seek to occupy. Further, when colleagues operate through a lens of social perceptions, it may lead to them holding a stereotype about anyone they evaluate within an organization (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Yancey-Bragg, 2006). The leader being evaluated may be viewed in a negative manner by a colleague due to the evaluator's biases (Yancey-Bragg, 2006).

Unfortunately, such implications may have a lasting unwavering negative impact within the workplace. Often times, expectations and understood requirements cause fatigue with African Americans faculty and academic administrators within higher education institutions. Vereen and Hill (2008) outlined a number of variables that African American faculty face in terms of climate and stressors such as:

- Being seen as lacking in credibility (Jackson & Crawley, 2003),
- Encountering unintentional and intentional bias (Aguirre, 1995),
- Having to work to gain acceptance (Turner, 2002),
- Feeling as if they are the spokesperson for all African Americans (Allen et al., 2000),
- Being seen as someone who was hired as a token (Misra et al., 1999),

- Working with others who do not understand the meaning or consequences of being privileged (Goodman, 2000),
- Feeling as if every day they encounter unknown threats within academia in both overt and covert manners (Allen et al., 2000),
- Feeling pressure to get exceptional teaching evaluations (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004),
- Working diligently to be seen as a competent professional.

In short, African Americans are faced with a complex set of challenges in the workplace including racism, prejudices, stereotyping, and biases that result in employee discrimination through lower earnings, occupational and job segregation, disparities in employment decisions and performance evaluations, and barriers to informal networks and mentoring (White, 2009).

The challenges notwithstanding, a number of works identify navigational paths around barriers, of which mentorship is particularly significant. Although the topic of mentoring is approached through a number of different lenses, Chow and Chan (2008) assert that mentorship may be considered as the transfer of social resources necessary for career advancement. Further, Kay and Wallace (2009) note that mentoring is a process in which individuals receive the social and professional skill set imperative to developing and maneuvering the networks needed for career progression. And, mentoring provides the career and psychosocial benefits to professionals in the workplace (Kay & Wallace, 2009).

Mentors and their role are noteworthy when discussing upward mobility and career progression for African American administrators in higher education. Brown (1990) commented that mentoring is the process of seeking guidance from someone who has three distinct advantages: experience, perspective, and distance. Further, a mentor is an experienced

professional who can “show the ropes” to a less experienced and typically younger administrator in the field (Penny & Gaillard, 2006). To that end, the mentor/mentee relationship should not be complicated by supervisory relationships (Penny & Gaillard, 2006). Mentoring is a valuable part in leadership experiences, in particular with African American senior female administrators (Benson-Clayton, 2009). The term mentor derived from its roots in classical Greek literature: it means “steadfast” (Ross, 1998; Green, 2000, p. 13).

Caldwell and Watkins (2007) highlights that mentoring was important and assisted African American women in leadership roles to obtain and sustain their senior-level roles within higher education institutions. Although Benson-Clayton (2009) noted the importance of mentorship with African American senior female leaders, other literature exists on the impact mentorship has on African American males in academia. A study by Ortiz-Walters and Gilson (2005) investigated the mentoring experiences of African, Hispanic, and Native American protégés in academia who possessed a PhD. It was noted that protégés of color with mentors of color reported more relationship satisfaction, interpersonal comfort, and psychosocial and instrumental support than protégés of color whose mentors were dissimilar (Ortiz-Walters & Gilson, 2005). Beyond mentorship, it is important for aspiring leaders to have sponsors, people in positions of influence and/ or power who can make opportunities available for the upwardly mobile.

Other career barriers exist for African Americans in academia. Although many African Americans are seeking to become upwardly mobile within their organizations, some hindrances remain in academia.

## **African American Administrator's Impact on Students of Color**

In the 1960s and 1970s, a push for social equality led to an increasing number of ethnic minority students selecting to pursue higher education (Bailey & Smith, 2006). During that time, community colleges aggressively recruited minority students from underserved areas who had not previously pursued higher education. By 1976, community colleges had served 20% and by 1997, 46% of the minority students who enrolled in postsecondary education (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2007), the number of minority students served remained steady, with 34% of minority students accounting for community college enrollment. Further, the largest subgroup is the African American student population, which comprises 13% of total community college enrollment (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007). Though minority students are taking advantage of all types of higher education opportunities, community colleges are a viable option for minority students who otherwise would not enroll in postsecondary education at all (Boggs, 2010).

Minority students in the community college are some times less prepared academically. A number of them have to take a limited number of placement assessments in order to enroll at a community college (Boggs, 2010). Though enrollment can be seamless, retention of minority students may be viewed as a challenging topic for higher education administrators. Wild and Ebbers (2002) suggest that student retention is a significant measurement of the effectiveness of an educational institution. Three main items should be considered while addressing student retention: (a) definitions of student retention, (b) theoretical models for student retention and (c) current research and analysis of student retention in the context of the community college setting (Wild & Ebbers, 2002). In order to be effective, a community college must develop a plan to keep their students in class to complete their program of study. Wild and Ebbers (2002) suggest

that community colleges should develop peer group and faculty interaction to avoid isolation and incongruence.

African American student enrollment in college continues to increase nationwide (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2009). The number of African American students enrolled in higher education has increased by 42% since 1995 (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2009). Although African American students continue to pursue a postsecondary degree, some do not successfully graduate from a college or university. Students need to integrate into the culture of their campus (Tinto, 1993). This type of action may cause African American and other minority student issues as they take on the established culture of their institution (Brooks et al., 2012). In contrast, Museus et al. (2008) suggested that an underrepresented students' ability to affirm their cultural identity increases their chances of completing a degree. Further, higher education institutions that chose not to include the racial differences of their campus community decreased the academic and social involvement of those underrepresented populations (Museus et al., 2008).

Robertson and Mason (2008) suggested that university administrators make a sincere effort to recruit and retain African-American faculty, in order to assist with retaining African American male students. The non-existence of African American men on campuses decreases opportunities for non-African Americans to engage in face-to-face interactions that provide experiential learning about other people and their nature (Brooks et al., 2012; Cuyjet, 2006). Research by Gurin (1999) suggested that student learning increases in a diverse educational setting. Additionally, students are more equipped to become active participants in our pluralistic and democratic society after experiencing that setting (Gurin, 1999; Sullivan, 2006).

Allen (1992) compared student outcomes of African Americans attending Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). More importantly, the comparable outcomes were academic achievement, educational goals, career aspiration, demographic characteristics, personal adjustment to college, social involvement and student educational background (Allen, 1992; Brooks et al., 2012). The results showed that African American students who enrolled at PWIs experienced lower academic achievement due to having low academic aspirations which caused them to be doubtful about their decision to complete an undergraduate degree (Allen, 1992; Brooks et al., 2012). Equally important, African American students at PWIs also expressed less favorable relationships with faculty members and fellow students than students at HBCUs, as well as minimum engagement in relation to social involvement (Allen 1992; Brooks et al., 2012). Tinto (2006) contends that notable retention programs often stress the manner in which colleges and universities integrate students into mainstream social and intellectual campus life.

When students of color experience other ethnic minorities in leadership positions, whether it is faculty or administration, students become inspired (Sue, 2006). Moreover, students of color may begin to view their future career pathway in a more positive light.

### **Leadership Theory and African American Leadership**

The term leadership has existed for years. Stogdill (1974) noted the term “leaders” found in documents dating back to the 1300s; however, the term leadership came into fruition in the late 1700s. There are currently over 3,000 definitions of leadership found within literature. Many leadership theories and models describe leadership as one of the most complex and multifaceted phenomena in which organizational and psychological research has been applied to date (Badshah, 2012). Burns (1978) asserts that leadership is one of the most researched and least

understood phenomena on the planet. Furthermore, leadership is no longer simply captured as an individual characteristic or difference, but rather it is depicted in various models as dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and a complex social dynamic (Avolio, 2007; Yukl, 2006). Thoughts on leadership continue to evolve as time progresses and more researchers examine the topic.

Though there is a vast amount of literature on leadership theories in general, literature on leadership theories directly related to African Americans is very limited. However, there are some social theories that attempt to connect African American leadership and social movements. Further, some theories address social stereotypes of African Americans, women, and homosexuals (Peters, Kinsey, & Malloy, 2004).

Hopson et al. (2010) suggests that educational leadership definitions lack nuances that embrace cultural and racial realities in terms of the greater social and political picture. This notion leaves room for researchers to further develop the literature on leadership theories on African Americans and other ethnic groups. Leadership studies that focus on culture and race may give more insight on African American in leadership roles in higher education.

Northouse (2010) suggests that leadership is a process where an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. These thoughts on leadership suggest that all people may have equal access to become a leader within their field (Northouse, 2004). However, Gladwell (2005) offered a contrasting theory, which poignantly illuminates the fact that subtle yet unconscious discrimination and prejudice may have an impact on the objective identification of effective leaders and leadership characteristics in an organizational setting. As noted by Yancey-Bragg (2006), our beliefs may cause us to make subjective, instead of objective,

decisions. This may have a negative impact not only on leadership assessment and mobility, but also initial selection and mentorship into leadership roles.

### **Summary**

This literature review highlights a myriad of factors and complex issues in which African American administrators in leadership face in higher education with a more defined focus on community colleges. The literature shows that aspiring African American leaders and those who currently occupy roles have some systematic obstacles that may impact others' view of their leadership skills. Although a number of African Americans have served in leadership roles within academia, some bias may still exist from other individuals. More notably, research shows that African Americans are capable of serving in leadership roles in higher education. One of the most logical ways to assess leadership behaviors is through a proven leadership assessment tool. The literature on leadership assessment tools was robust. A number of tools are utilized by various organizations to gauge leadership potential and behaviors. During the review of literature, it was confirmed that the LPI was the most appropriate tool needed to answer the research questions associated with this study.

Research is needed to examine the perception of African American leaders in North Carolina community colleges. Moreover, additional current research on upward mobility, career barriers, and leadership is needed to address the needs of current and aspiring African American leaders. Overall, my study contributes to the literature by delving into factors that impact the ability of African American administrators to lead in community colleges and other higher education institutions.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the association between leadership practices of African American administrators within the North Carolina Community College System and their upward mobility as indicated through a myriad of categories such as a high number of promotions and increased responsibility. This mixed methods study will be directed by the following research question: Among African American senior level administrators, is there a relationship between leadership practices and their upward mobility? This chapter will highlight the primary research questions, sampling frame, research instrumentation, a positions table, promotions and other relevant data collection and analysis. The data may reveal that the participant's self-assessment may differ from the assessment of their direct reports.

A number of things have to be considered when selecting the type of methodology to employ while conducting research. Creswell (2007) asserts that researchers are faced with four important decisions when selecting an appropriate mixed methods design to use in a study. Those decisions are, "(1) the level of interaction between the strands, (2) the relative priority of the strands, (3) the timing of the strands, and (4) the procedures for mixing the strands. (Creswell, 2007, p. 64). Further, Creswell (2007) asserts that mixed methods studies are appropriate when you have both quantitative and qualitative data and both data types assist the researcher in better understanding the research problem. Creswell (2007) notes that fixed mixed methods studies are employed when quantitative and qualitative methods is predetermined and planned during the beginning of the research process, and the procedures are put into effect as planned by the researcher. For the purposes of this study, I will employ a convergent parallel mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2011). A convergent parallel design entails

implementation both the quantitative and qualitative strands in sync during the same phase of research, keeping both methods at equal priority level (Creswell, 2007). Both strands are kept independent during the analysis and then the results are mixed for the purposes of interpretation (Creswell, 2007)(see Figure 1).

### **Research Questions**

Due to the nature of this study, additional research questions have been developed:

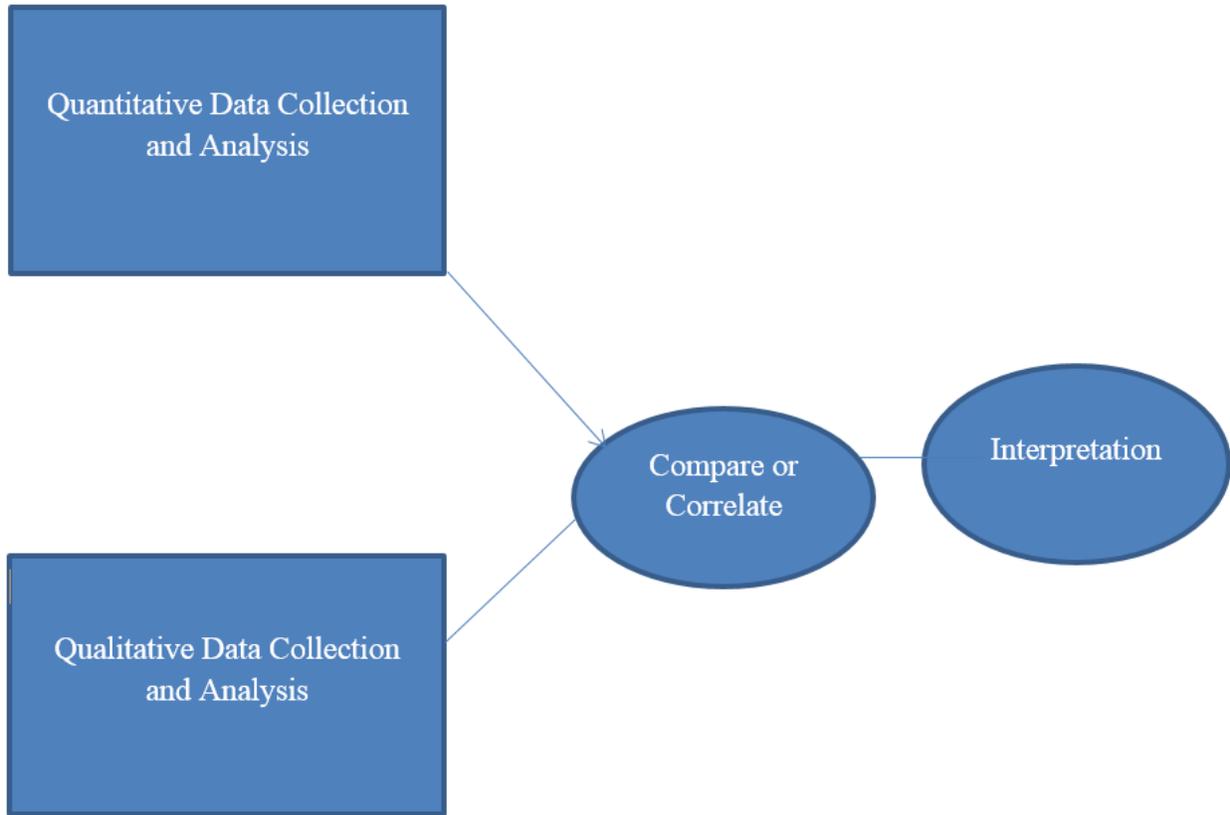
1. Is there a relationship between the leadership practices of African American senior level administrators and their upward mobility?
2. What is the most common leadership practice among African American senior level administrators in my sample?
3. How do the scores on the LPI –Self compare and contrast among African American administrators senior level administrators in my sample?
4. How do the scores on the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer (direct reports scores)?

### **Research Hypothesis**

Questions 1, 2, and 4 are exploratory and do not implicate hypothesis testing. To analyze the correspondence between LPI Self and Observer scores, the following hypothesis will be used:

$H_0$ : There is no statistically significant difference in LPI-Self scores and LPI Observer scores for African American administrators in the North Carolina Community College System.

In order to analyze this hypothesis, a paired samples *t-test* will be compared to LPI scores between African American administrators and their colleagues/direct reports.



*Figure 1. Convergent parallel design.*

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Research questions 2 and 3 will be answered through responses from the LPI- Self score report. The descriptive statistical aspect of this study will contribute to an increase of knowledge surrounding the status of what is taking place in higher education institutions regarding the leadership practices of African American executive leaders in community colleges. For research question number 1, data will be collected via interview with the researcher charting the career progression of administrators in the sample. The qualitative data here can give insight to the participants' thoughts and opinions concerning their own upward mobility, both opportunities and challenges. Further, I am interested in learning more about the emergent themes that may be illuminated as a result of this research. The qualitative responses will be coded with mobility patterns will be divided by thirds, most mobile over time to least mobile over time within the present data set. Those quartiles will be used to quantitatively compare mobility patterns to LPI leadership practices data, using a chi-square statistic.

### **Sampling Frame**

The population for this study consists of African American chief academic officers, chief student affairs officers, associate and assistant vice presidents of academic or student affairs, academic deans, student affairs deans and executive directors from approximately 10 institutions within the North Carolina Community College System. The study focused on 10 African American senior level administrators. Participants were recruited via personal phone calls and personalized email. The LPI will be administered by email. In addition, the researcher will survey one direct report of each administrator that participates in the study. Due to resource constraints, the researcher has determined employing a modified 360 analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to gain meaningful data on how these administrators are viewed by colleagues within the system. As noted earlier, 360-Degree Feedback is a method that provides

an individual a way to receive performance feedback from his or her supervisor and peers, reporting staff members, coworkers and/or customers (Kouzes & Posner, 2013). Direct reports will be identified through the College's website and organizational chart. The direct reports selected to participate are in a professional role and in a leadership position. There were 10 African American senior level community college administrators who participated in this study. A direct report for each leader completed the LPI-Observer which allowed the direct report to assess the leader.

### **Leadership Practices Inventory**

A myriad of instruments that measure leadership have been developed over the past few decades. However, for the purposes of this study, the LPI will be utilized, which was developed by pioneers Kouzes and Posner. The instrument has been used in a number of studies that have measured leadership behaviors in businesses, higher education institutions and governmental settings (Kouzes & Posner, 2013). The LPI was developed through surveying a large number of qualitative and quantitative research methods and studies. Kouzes and Posner (2013) assert that over 500 scholarly studies have utilized the LPI as the primary research tool to gain insight about the leadership practices of administrators in various settings. Further, in-depth interviews and written case studies from personal-best leadership experiences generated the conceptual framework, which consists of five leadership practices:

- Modeling the Way
- Inspiring a Shared Vision
- Challenging the Process
- Enabling Others to Act
- Encouraging the Heart

The actions that make up these practices were translated into behavioral statements (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). As noted earlier, the LPI has effectively measured leadership behaviors in the higher education arena. Goldstein (2007) utilized the instrument to examine the relationship between chief student affairs officers' and chief academic officers' perceptions of essential leadership characteristics and practices. Castro (2003) explored the LPI to look at the relationship between emotional competence and leadership effectiveness among academic deans in a higher education setting. Klien and Takeda-Tinker (2009) examined the satisfaction of full-time business faculty and in relation to their direct supervisors' leadership behavior. With such a large number of studies that have used the LPI in higher education, this further supports the researcher's rationale for employing the instrument.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection occurred during July and August of 2015. Further, the onsite interviews will take place at the conclusion of the online surveys being completed by participants. African American administrators that hold the positions of Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Dean of Student Services, Dean of Arts and Sciences and/or Dean of Curriculum were assessed during summer of 2015.

**Initial contact, confidentiality and security.** In order to encourage a seamless data collection process, study participants will be given a consent form highlighting the rationale of the study and further ensuring confidentiality of information provided to the researcher. The survey will be emailed to all African American administrators in the North Carolina Community College System that serve in the position of Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Associate or Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Associate or Assistant Vice President of Student Services, Dean

of Curriculum Programs, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Business and Industry, Dean of Health Sciences, Dean of Student Services, and Dean of Enrollment. The information concerning each administrator was obtained and substantiated through using the College's faculty and staff directory and online catalog. Each potential participant will be contacted via email and phone to confirm their agreement concerning being a study participant. All participants will be given specific instruction on how to successfully complete the electronic inventory.

The confidentiality of participants will be maintained via the LPI's security site that only the researcher has access to for the purposes of this study. Further, any face to face interview transcriptions will be saved on a password protected personal laptop. More importantly, I will be the only person with access to the data.

**Qualitative interview processes and procedures.** In order to best gain insight on the primary research question, the researcher decided to develop a set of semi-structured and open ended questions. Again, the primary research question is as follows: Among African American administrators, is there a relationship between leadership practices and their upward mobility? Creswell (2007) suggests using at least five open-ended questions. The following questions will enable the researcher to collect data that is more qualitative for the study:

1. What is your professional background, current position title, length of time in current position, length of time at current institution and previous two position titles?  
(Benson-Clayton, 2009)
2. Describe your work experience in the community college setting.
3. How would you describe your career experiences in the North Carolina Community College System?

4. What does upwardly mobile mean in terms of personal career path?
5. What have been the challenges to your career progression?
6. Do you think your mobility is the same as or different from your Caucasian peers?  
Explain.
7. Which leadership practices do you utilize in the workplace? Explain.
8. How do leadership practices influence your upward mobility and effectiveness?

### **Face-to-Face Interviews**

During the face-to-face interviews, the researcher provided time for clarification of answers. The researcher reserves the right to ask additional questions that may give more insight concerning the study topic. Though the LPI will be conducted via an online survey, the face-to-face sessions will occur in locations at the convenience of participants. The locations may include participants' place of business, homes, libraries, or other public dwellings. In the case of travel restrictions or other unforeseen circumstances, the researcher may interview participants via telephone or another technological medium. All interviews were recorded using a mini tape-recorder and transcribed by the researcher. Furthermore, the identity of the participants/informants will be kept confidential during this process.

### **Data Analysis**

The unit of analysis in this study will be African American senior level administrators in the NCCCS as the researcher will analyze the connection between leadership practices and upward mobility. In order to best describe the statistics to answer each of the research questions, supporting data which describes the research questions, followed by the statistical method used to answer each question. Once each participant completes a questionnaire, the researcher will transfer the data to a LPI response sheet. This process will be followed as recommended by the

LPI hand scoring instructions (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Further, when the data is obtained it will be entered into SPSS version 16.0 for analysis.

As noted earlier, this is a mixed-methods study which required face-to-face interviews as well. To that end, the researcher conducted interviews with participants and convert the responses into a word document. Creswell (2007) suggests that researchers will see themes emerge from interviews conducted during qualitative research. Once the data collection is complete, the researcher will begin to analyze the data. NVIVO was used to code emergent themes and gain a better understanding of what the participants have communicated. In summary, a combination of SPSS and NVIVO was used to analyze the LPI data and questions that are designed to illuminate upward mobility concerning the participants.

### **Positionality of the Researcher**

As an African American male administrator in the community college setting, I had to be careful not to insert my perception and/or biases into the findings. Patton (2002) asserts that researchers should allow findings to emerge without making assumptions about what the findings will ultimately be for the study. In qualitative research there are many ways to negate biases in the findings. For the purposes of this research, I engaged in peer debriefing. Lincoln & Guba (1985) assert that peer debriefing is a process of exposing the researcher to a peer who is not interested in paralleling an analytical session. Further, the debriefing process assists the researcher to explore thoughts of what may remain only implicit within the mind of the one inquiring (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Summary**

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the association between leadership practices of African American administrators within the NCCCS and their upward mobility in

the system. To that end, a comprehensive discussion of the methodology and procedures are outlined in Chapter 3. The methodology section was organized into six primary sections: (a) introduction; (b) research design; (c) population; (d) instrument; (e) data collection; and (f) data analysis and summary.

This study takes a close look at leadership behaviors and characteristics of African American senior level administrators. A sample was selected from 10 community colleges in North Carolina. Further, data was obtained through administering self and observer instrument protocol of the LPI to African American senior level administrators. An electronic questionnaire and face to face interviews were utilized to answer the primary research questions. The researcher used the computer software programs SPSS and NVivo to analyze data from the study. A complete data analysis took place and be presented in Chapter 4 of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

This study examined the leadership practices and upward mobility of African American senior level administrators in the North Carolina Community College System. The quantitative data were obtained through electronic surveys. Qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews and one phone interview session. The participants were purposefully selected by institutional size, region, and scope of position intentionality for this study; they serve as senior administrative team and have a broad scope of leadership responsibility on their campus. Data were collected to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the leadership practices of African American senior level administrators and their upward mobility?
2. What is the most common leadership practice among African American senior level administrators in my sample?
3. How do the scores on the LPI –Self compare and contrast among African American administrators senior level administrators in my sample?
4. How do the scores on the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer (direct reports scores)?

Data were collected using a convergent parallel design mixed methods approach. Data on leadership practices were collected electronically via a 30 question survey. Interviews were conducted to garner a sense of the participant's individual upward mobility, perceived career barriers, and personal leadership style. For the purposes of this mix-methods study, the researcher determined it was best to develop a set of semi-structured and open ended questions.

The semi-structured and open ended questions allowed participants to answer questions without restraint.

### **Profile of African American Leaders**

A total of thirteen participants were extended an invitation to participate in the study; ten accepted the opportunity and were interviewed for this research study. Selective sampling was utilized as the study participants represent a specific subgroup. The initial number of thirteen participants represents approximately 40% of the African American senior level administrators serving at community colleges in North Carolina. The ten participants who were a part of this study were notified that their responses would be kept confidential. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym in order to add richness to the study by providing each participant a designated name associated with a historically prominent African American leader. Neither the participant's current organization nor any institution that they have been associated with throughout their career was named in the study. Prior to the interviews, participants were told that their data may assist hiring managers, senior leaders, Board of Trustee members, and scholars become more informed about the topic of African American senior level leaders in community colleges. Table 1 highlights the professional title, institution size by FTE, classification, and number of direct reports for the senior-level administrator who participated in the study. A description of each participant, by pseudonym, and their educational and professional experiences follows.

#### **Sojourner**

This participant is an African American female senior level administrator who currently serves as Provost and Chief Student Development Administrator. She holds a master's degree and has completed some doctoral coursework. She has been at her current institution for

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	Professional Title	Institution Size Fall 2014	Classification (Rural, Suburb, Urban)	Number of Direct Reports
Sojourner	Senior Dean of Instruction and Success	0-500	Rural	12
Mary	VP of Academic Affairs	500-999	Rural	7
Zora	Curriculum Dean	3,500-3,999	Urban	7
Booker T.	VP of Student Services	0-500	Rural	5
Harriet	Curriculum Dean	3,500-3,999	Urban	6
Julian	VP of Student Services	1,000-1,499	Rural	3
Martin	EVP of Academic and Student Success	1,000-1,499	Rural	6
Alice	SVP of Student Development	7,500-7,999	Urban	6
Mildred	Provost and Campus Dean	500-999	Rural	6
Rosa	VP of Academic and Student Affairs	1,000-1,499	Rural	7

approximately 5 years. Sojourner began her career as a recruiter for a special program designed to assist dislocated workers with obtaining additional job skills. This participant has held various roles, including director, dean of continuing of education, dean of student affairs, and Senior Dean of Instruction and Student Success. Her career in the North Carolina Community College System spans 30 years.

### **Mary**

Mary is an African American female senior level administrator who currently serves as the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer at her institution. She holds a doctorate and has completed a nationally recognized leadership program for emerging leaders in higher education. Her higher education career began in the mid-1980s. Mary has served as a Chief Academic Officer and Assistant Provost. She has also served as a faculty member in the community college setting and lecturer at the university level.

### **Zora**

Zora is an African American female senior administrator who currently serves as dean of a curriculum division at her institution. She has been in her role for 8 years and is responsible for providing leadership of the largest division at her college. Zora holds a doctorate and has been engaged in global education initiatives. She began working in the community college setting in the late 1980s. This participant worked in student services and then transitioned to a faculty role. In addition to her work in the community college sector, she has worked in university settings.

### **Booker T.**

Booker T. is an African American male senior administrator who currently serves as Vice President of Student Services. He has been in the lead student services role for 8 years. He holds a master's degree and served as a financial aid administrator prior to taking on his current role.

His first role in education was as a teacher in the public school setting. Booker T. has been at his institution for sixteen years. He is also a native of the area in which he serves.

### **Harriet**

This participant is an African American female senior administrator who currently serves as an academic dean of the largest division at her institution. She has been employed at her institution for 34 years. She has served in her current role for over two decades. Harriet holds a master's degree and began her community college career as faculty. Her first teaching position was in a public high school setting.

### **Julian**

Julian is an African American male who is a senior level administrator. He currently serves as the VP of Student Services and holds a master's degree. Julian has held administrative and faculty roles at his current college. He has worked full-time in the community college setting for 22 years. Prior to joining the community college system, he held a position in which he served individuals who were identified as having mental health challenges.

### **Martin**

Martin is an African American male senior level administrator who currently serves as the chief academic officer and student services officer on his campus. He has been in his current role for three years. Prior to this role he served as VP of Student Affairs at his institution. Martin has been employed at his current institution for almost 6 and one half years. This participant has served in various leadership roles in the university and community college setting. Additionally, he has worked in multiple community college systems. His higher education career spans 17 years, with 11 years of those being in the community college setting.

**Alice**

Alice is an African American female senior level administrator who currently serves as a Senior Vice President at her institution. She holds a master's degree and is currently enrolled in a doctoral program. She has been in her current role for 8 years. Alice participant has served her current institution for 25 years. Prior to her work in the North Carolina Community College System, she worked at a community college in another state.

**Mildred**

Mildred is an African American female senior level administrator who currently serves as Provost/Dean for a campus. She has held the dean's position for 5 years and was promoted to Provost/Dean 1 year ago. Mildred holds a master's degree. She began her career in student services in the community college system. Mildred has been in the system for 14 years, and 8 years have been spent in an administrative role. Prior to joining the community college system, she worked as a social worker.

**Rosa**

Rosa is an African American female senior level administrator who serves as Senior Vice President at her institution. She holds a doctorate and has been in her role for 8 years. Rosa has been employed with her institution for 24 years. During her time as faculty, she was the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award. Prior to entering the North Carolina Community College System, she worked in health care.

A summary of participant educational and professional experience is found in Table 2. Two participants hold PhDs, and two others hold EdDs, resulting in 40% of participants holding a terminal degree. In addition to these four, one more participant is currently working towards a doctorate, leaving five participants (50% of the sample) with a master's as their highest degree.

Table 2

*Summary of Education and Higher Education Experience*

Pseudonym	Highest Degree Earned	Number of Years in Higher Education	Number of Years in Current Position	Number of Years at Current Institution
Sojourner	Masters and some doctoral coursework	30	5	5
Mary	PhD	28	3	3
Zora	PhD	27	8	8
Booker T.	Masters	16	9	16
Harriet	Masters	35	24	34
Julian	Masters	22	9	22
Martin	EdD	17	3.5	6
Alice	Masters and doctorate in progress	26	7	25
Mildred	Masters	14	1.5	14
Rosa	EdD	24	8	24

On average, participants have 24 years of experience in higher education (S.D. = 6.69), ranging from a low of 17 years to a high of 35 years. On average, they have spent 16 years at their current institution (S.D. = 10.33), with Mary having the fewest years at her current institution and Harriet having served at her institution the longest amount of time.

### **Analysis of Research Question One**

The first research question asks, “Is there a relationship between the leadership practices of African American senior level administrators and their upward mobility?” The participants’ LPI – Self mean scores and number of promotions since 2007 varied considerably. To analyze whether there was an association between leadership practices and upward mobility, the researcher created a table (see Table 3) compiling the number of promotions, mobility classification (see Table 4), and cumulative mean LPI-Self scores of the ten participants. The researcher used Pearson Chi-Square to find out whether there is a relationship between the participants’ leadership practices scores and their upward mobility over a defined period of time. The results from the chi square test shows that there is no significant relationship between the mean LPI-Self scores and upward mobility of the senior leaders in this study ( $X^2 = .350 p > 0.05$ ). These data findings are not meant to be generalized and stand to reason as the LPI is not posited by Kouzes and Posner (1983) to be indicative of upward mobility. However, this exercise does provide specific insight about the participants who were a part of this study and is useful in understanding the qualitative results.

### **Analysis of Research Question Two**

The second research question is, “What is the most common leadership practice among African American senior level administrators in my sample?” Study participants ratings were

Table 3

*Promotions, Mobility Overview, and LPI Mean Scores*

Participants	Total # of Promotions in HE	Least Mobile (no promotions from 2007 to 2015)	Most Mobile (one promotion or more from 2007 to 2015)	LPI Self Mean Scores
Sojourner	6		2	51.6
Mary	7		3	55.6
Zora	4		1	46.2
Booker T.	1	0		50.8
Harriet	1	0		46.6
Julian	2	0		55.2
Martin	7		3	57.0
Alice	4		2	44.4
Mildred	3		2	43.6
Rosa	3		2	53.4

Table 4

*LPI-Self Mean Self and Frequency Counts of Mobility*

Participant Name	LPI-Self Mean Score and Count	Mobile	Not Mobile	Total
Mildred	43.60 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Alice	44.40 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Zora	46.20 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Harriet	46.60 Count	0	1	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Booker T.	50.80 Count	0	1	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Sojourner	51.60 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Rosa	53.40 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Julian	55.20 Count	0	1	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Mary	55.60 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
Martin	57.00 Count	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.7	.3	1.0
	Total Count	7	3	10
	Expected Count	7.0	3.0	10.0

calculated for all five leadership practices as defined by Kouzes and Posner: *Modeling the Way*, *Inspiring a Shared Vision*, *Challenging the Process*, *Enabling Others to Act*, and *Encouraging the Heart*. All of the senior level administrators responded to six statements for each leadership practice. Table 5 highlights the descriptive statistics for the ten leaders. Further, Table 6 displays each participant's mean score and the associated standard deviations for answers to the LPI-Self.

Participants made use of each of the leadership practices. Based on the responses to the LPI-Self, African American senior level administrators posted high numbers in *Enabling Others to Act* (M=53.5; S.D. = 5.35). The second most commonly used practice was *Modeling the Way* (M=51.9; S.D. = 3.98), followed by *Encouraging the Heart* (M=51.2; S.D. = 5.77), *Challenging the Process* (M=47.8; S.D. = 7.23), and *Inspiring a Shared Vision* (M=47.8; S.D. = 6.68).

The LPI Norms database provides statistics on the assessment scores of over 1.1 million leaders who have taken the LPI-Self. This database shows that leaders had a tendency to exhibit leadership practices in the following order: (1) *Enable Others to Act* (M=49.34), (2) *Model the Way* (M=46.70), (3) *Encourage the Heart* (M=45.79), (4) *Challenge the Process* (M=44.69), and (5) *Inspire a Shared Vision* (M=43.59). Although the mean scores for the LPI-Self scores differ between the LPI Norms database and the African American participants for this study, the rankings of which leadership practice is displayed most frequently is the same.

During a thorough examination of the LPI-Self scores, it was concluded that the majority of participants with a doctoral degree scored higher on the five practices than those without a doctorate. Further, Martin, who has earned a doctorate, scored the highest of all participants on the LPI-Self. Martin scores highlights that his leadership practices are in the top percentile of leaders who have completed the LPI. Martin scored the highest in *Enable Others to Act* which

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for LPI-Self of African American Senior Level Administrators in the NCCCS*

Leadership Practices	M (LPI Scale is 0 to 60)	SD
Model The Way	51.9	3.98
Inspire a Shared Vision	47.8	6.68
Challenge the Process	47.8	7.23
Enable Others to Act	53.5	5.35
Encourage the Heart	51.2	5.77

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for LPI-Self Ranking from Lowest to Highest Ratings*

Participant	Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
Sojourner	51	51	54	55	47
Mary	53	55	55	57	58
Zora	50	37	40	51	53
Booker T.	55	47	46	58	48
Harriet	52	38	38	54	51
Julian	54	54	55	56	57
Martin	57	56	56	60	56
Alice	49	45	44	43	41
Mildred	43	45	39	46	45
Rosa	55	50	51	55	56
M	51.9	47.8	47.8	53.5	51.2
<i>SD</i>	3.98	6.68	7.23	5.35	5.77

was the most commonly used leadership practice with participants in this study. Conversely, Mildred had the lowest overall LPI-Self total. Although her overall score was the lowest, Mildred's highest rating was in *Enable Others to Act*, which is in line with other leaders who completed the leadership assessment.

### **Analysis of Research Question Three**

Research question three asks, "How do the scores on the LPI –Self compare and contrast among African American administrators?" The participants' LPI-Self scores varied among the ten senior administrators. Table 4 was developed to show the differences in the lowest rating, highest rating, mean, and standard deviation by the group. The lowest score for *Model the Way* was 43 and the maximum score was 57. For *Inspire a Shared Vision*, the lowest score was 37 and the highest 56. In the leadership practice of *Challenge the Process*, one leader scored a low of 40 and the highest rating was 56. The leadership practice of *Enable Others to Act* had the highest mean across the group of administrators. The lowest score for *Enable Other to Act* was 43 and the highest was 60. For the leadership practice of *Encourage the Heart* one participant to score a 41; however, the highest rating was 58. Table 7 shows a wide range between the lowest and highest rating of the administrators. Although the group collectively rated themselves the lowest on *Inspired a Shared Vision*, the group ranked themselves closer to the highest score of 60 in *Enabling Others to Act*, *Model the Way*, and *Encourage the Heart*.

### **Analysis Hypothesis for Question Three**

Research Question three focused on how the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer. The stated hypothesis for question three was, "There is no statistically significant difference in LPI-Self scores and LPI Observer scores for African American senior level administrators in this study." A pairwise *t* test was employed to compare and contrast the

Table 7

*Paired T-Test for Every Leadership Practices Analyzing the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer Scores*

Leadership Practices	LPI-Self Mean Scores	LPI-Observer Mean Scores	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	Paired <i>t-test</i> results
Model the Way	51.9	50.9	11.56	9	.273
Inspire a Shared Vision	47.8	47.7	15.04	9	.021
Challenge the Process	47.8	48.6	14.67	9	-.172
Enable Others to Act	53.5	53.9	7.23	9	-.175
Encourage the Heart	51.2	50.3	10.75	9	.265

LPI-Self and LPI-Observer scores of African American senior level administrators. With insight on the results of the *t* test for leadership practices, the researcher was able to determine that there is no statistically significant difference between the scores of the administrators and their observer's assessment. This supports the notion that the administrators' assessment of their leadership practices and their direct report thoughts on the leaders' practice is very similar. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Succinctly, the analysis of the data supports the notion that there is no statistically significant evidence that the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer scores differ for African American senior level administrators in North Carolina community colleges.

#### **Analysis of Research Question Four**

How do the scores on the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer (direct reports scores)? The participants' LPI-Self and LPI Observer scores varied among the senior administrators and their direct reports. Table 7 was constructed in order to show the differences in the mean scores for the self and observer for each leadership practice. Table 7 illustrates that both the administrators and their direct reports rated *Enable Others to Act* as the most commonly used leadership practice. These administrators' mean score on the LPI-Self was 53.50 (S.D. = 5.35), and the LPI-Observer score was 53.90 (S.D. = 6.80). The second highest rated leadership practice is *Model the Way*. The mean score on the LPI-Self was 51.9 (S.D. = 3.98), whereas the mean score on the LPI-Observer was 50.9 (S.D. = 9.38). *Encourage the Heart* was ranked third, with an LPI-Self mean score of 51.2 (S.D. = 5.77) and an LPI-Observer score of 50.3 (S.D. = 10.38). Lastly, *Challenge the Process* with a mean score of 47.8 (S.D. = 14.67) and *Inspire a Shared Vision* with a mean score of 47.8 (S.D. = 15.04) had the lowest mean scores for the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer, respectively. On average, the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer

scores are very similar when comparing the ratings for each leadership practice. Overall, LPI-Self and LPI-Observer mean rankings were very similar, with the exception of *Challenge the Process* being ranked 4 out of 5 in the observer category and having the same mean as *Inspire Shared Vision* in the self-column. There were no statistically significant differences between self and observer scores. A full 360 analysis could distinguish between selection biases as it pertains to the selection of observers. The analysis does lend credibility to the self-reported data.

Qualitative data were collected through personal interviews in order to gain specific insight on the upward mobility of each leader in this study. For the purposes of this research study, upward mobility is defined as the number of promotions and career growth opportunities for the participants. Ten African American senior leaders were interviewed during this study. Informants were asked the following eight questions:

1. What is your professional background, current position title, length of time in current position, length of time at current institution and previous two position titles (Benson-Clayton, 2009)?
2. Describe your work experience in the community college setting.
3. How would you describe your career experiences in the North Carolina Community College System?
4. What does upwardly mobile mean in terms of personal career path?
5. What have been the challenges to your career progression?
6. Do you think your mobility is the same as or different from your Caucasian peers? Explain.
7. Which leadership practices do you utilize in the workplace? Explain.
8. How do leadership practices influence your upward mobility and effectiveness?

Transcribed results of the interviews were analyzed for common themes. As stated earlier, NVivo Software was used to bring organization to these data that were collected by the researcher. The interview transcriptions and researcher notes for each participant were entered into NVivo. Once these data were entered, I started the coding process which involved me reading, rereading the interview transcripts, and listening to the voice recording of the transcripts. Each participant's transcript provided data which was organized under established codes. As the researcher, I reviewed new data that emerged and compared it to already established coded data which aided in providing invariability within the data. It is important to reiterate that a myriad of interview revisits took place during the process.

In qualitative research using codes is considered the most appropriate procedure for organizing data. Further, codes assist the researcher in finding patterns that may otherwise be challenging to identify in the copious amount of data collected during interviews (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

They are presented in Figure 2. Themes are: (1) Networking and Building for the Future; (2) Supervisor as Mentors and Sponsors; (3) Overcoming Race and Gender Barriers in the Academy; (4) Developing A Career Plan; (5) Supportive and Situational Leadership *How I Lead*; (6) Spirituality's impact on the Career During this study, six common themes emerged during the data analysis process. The common themes were (1) networking and building for the future; (2) supervisors as mentors and sponsors; (3) overcoming race and gender barriers in the academy; (4) developing a career plan and charting the course for career progression; (5) supportive and situational leadership "how I lead" (6) spirituality's impact on the career.

## Themes and Sub-Themes

- 1) Networking and Building for the Future
- 2) Supervisors as Mentors and Sponsors
- 3) Overcoming Race and Gender Barriers in the Academy
- 4) Developing a Career Plan “Charting the Course for Career Progression”
- 5) Supportive and Situational Leadership “How I Lead”
  - a. Paving the way, “It is not just about you”
  - b. Putting yourself out there, “Taking Calculated Risks”
  - c. Strategic and Bold “Double Work”
  - d. Willing to help others
- 6) Spirituality’s impact on the Career

*Figure 2.* African American senior level administrators in the upward mobility and leadership practices.

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Over the course of each interview, participants provided data on the themes noted in this chapter. However, topics such as supervisor and mentor support systems, in addition to race and gender barriers, were noted the most frequently by at least seven participants. Based on the findings these topics among others seemed to resonate with study participants.

### **Theme: Networking and Building for the Future**

Eight senior administrators in this study commented on how formal and informal networks have impacted their careers. Formal and informal networks in this study include professional organizations, committees, professional associations, and connections through colleagues and friends.

The majority of participants noted the simple fact that being able to pick up the phone and reach out to a colleague on or off campus was very instrumental to their success. Sojourner highlighted that she has a lot of people that she can reach out to when questions arise. Further, she indicated that some people are willing to exchange ideas. Sojourner also went on to share that after almost 30 years in the system, she feels comfortable speaking with colleagues at conferences and over the phone in order to get things done.

Zora noted that during her first week as dean she was the only African American dean on campus. She immediately called the Caucasian male who was the senior dean in terms of the number of years that he has served. She says, “Look, I am new and everything, however, I know that you all go to lunch and meet.” She said, “So where you all going for lunch today?” She went to lunch with that group and still meets with them on occasion. Zora asserted that her willingness to network helped her to learn the ropes at the institution and become a successful administrator.

Booker T. spoke about networking from the perspective of being African American leaders using their resources:

“I’m not sure in terms of other systems or other professions [that] you would have been afforded that opportunity of the professional developments. When you have difficulties in a situation, a particular situation, you get on the list serves and your group emails and get responses and some are great. Some are not so great, but they still provide it to you to utilize as you see fit their responses.”

Harriet noted the importance of staying in the information loop. She indicated that having contacts in various organizations is important as you build a network. Harriet stated, “I can easily pick up the phone and call the right people for an answer about curriculum or feedback on a personnel matter.” “I have called other administrators from across the state to discuss curriculum changes that were not being well received on my campus.” She also highlighted it is valuable to have contacts both inside and outside your current organization. The long time contacts have been a sounding board and offered feedback which allowed her to get a different perspective on implementing a new curriculum change or handling a difficult personnel matter.

Martin connected with the value of networking and being able to call on other administrators for feedback during his career. He believes in learning and connecting to multiple sources:

“You have to look outside of just your area of expertise. There have been several people that do not work in education at all that I have been able to learn immense amounts of leadership information on personal presentation and they shaped who I am and helped me be mobile in my career path, whether they have come from industry, where they have come from church.”

Alice noted that she is fortunate to be serving at an institution that is experiencing growth. She asserts that environment has allowed her to have a broad network that spans the

country. This participant believes these types of networks are important in contributing to one's professional success.

Although Mildred discussed networking, she spoke more specifically about African Americans connecting more frequently in the system. She indicated that she would love to see more African Americans professionals networking in the North Carolina Community College System. Mildred noted that she attended a black caucus event for African American community college professional to network. She commented that not many networking opportunities materialized after the meeting for African Americans seeking to connect with each other after that meeting.

The role of networking for African American senior level administrators resonated with strength during the interviews. Networking, whether formally or informally, was important to the study participants. These participants credited networking as an important part of their career progression as leaders.

### **Summary of Networking and Building for the Future**

Formal and informal networking benefitted the African American women and men in the professional setting according to the participants in this study. Eight out of ten participants commented on the positive aspects of networking throughout their career in academia. Most of the participants cited becoming active as one of the best ways to strengthen and develop a professional network. Based on the data, formal and informal networks are important in the community college environment and local community. Based on my time with the participants, I found these individuals to have what may be considered a quiet confidence. They are well connected professionally; however, they were a poised group of leaders.

### **Theme: Supervisors as Mentors and Sponsors**

Zora explained that her very first supervisor in the community college setting was a Caucasian male who advised her to get involved on campus as much as possible. He also encouraged her to begin serving in statewide organizations. Booker T. also spoke about having support from direct supervisors during his career. He noted that he had a supportive supervisor who served as dean of student services at the time to endorse him for a promotional opportunity and provided him with the opportunity to go back and earn an advanced degree. As Booker T. was completing the advanced degree, his supervisor announced his retirement and endorsed the participant as the next dean. He was promoted to dean and eventually to vice president.

Julian shared that prior to serving as vice president; his president asked what he wanted to do for the rest of his career. The participant responded that he wanted to lead student services and work hands-on with students. Julian was promoted to vice president in a relatively short period of time. His president at the time eventually promoted him to vice president.

Both Alice and Mildred also mentioned that the presidents at their respective institutions came to them specifically to discuss promotional opportunities at their College. They both felt they had support from their college president. Alice explained that her president mentioned some of the specific things that he was looking in a senior leader. Alice noted the following about her experience:

At my current institution we do not have a formal mentoring program, but I feel like people in key positions have seen something in me, and would pull me aside and say, “Maybe that was a good move, maybe this is not a good move.” As far as scripting positions, I do not think until I got into this position, because the president did come to me and handed me some books to read and said, “Here, I think you want to read these.”

One, I remember the title, because I bought several for my staff, is “Making Yourself the Obvious Choice.” He outlined some areas, basically saying, “These things are important to me in senior leadership.” I was receptive to that, going in not knowing that anything was going to come of it, which is something that I work with staff on now. A lot of time people may be positioning you for something, and that something may happen, it may not, but get what you can out of the experience while you can.

Mildred also discussed the power of having the college president’s endorsement and support.

According to Mildred, she had major support from her president at the time:

I remember when I was the associate dean, our president at the time; he came to me before they made me dean over the campus because that was an appointment for me. He came in and he said that he was fairly new coming to our institution and he was like, “I watch people and I notice the things that are happening. You are in this position, but I do not know if you are placed in the position where you can shine and fully realize your skill set. That’s when I went into the dean position.

During this study, each of the participants who had support from a supervisor, mentor, or sponsor greatly benefited from the actions of these individuals. The role of each support person has proven to benefit individuals seeking to grow within an organization. Carter, Ibarra, and Silva (2010) suggest that a sponsor is generally placed high within an organization and serves as an advocate for another person to be considered for promotions or extremely visible activities which lead to career advancement. In contrast, the role of a mentor is slightly different than a sponsor. A mentor is a person from whom one can obtain counsel, talk about issues that one cannot with an immediate supervisor, and examine techniques to solve problems that may take place in the work environment (Hewlett, 2013).

### **Theme: Overcoming Race and Gender Barriers in the Academy**

During the course of the interviews, eight out of ten participants noted they have experienced or recognized some type of bias related to their ethnicity or gender. Sojourner commented on race and ethnicity from a holistic perspective. She noted the following:

I think people have underlying thoughts or prejudices. Some they are aware of, some they are not aware of on how they deal with people. I have had to; again, let someone else present ideas just to make it acceptable. Now, do I know it is because I am a woman, or because I am African-American? Now, they do not come out and say it, but when we watch the pattern, I think that the case can be made. I have witnessed in working that the same idea that I may give is overlooked but can be repeated 15 minutes later or the day after and it's a wonderful idea. I have been attacked, for lack of a better word, or approached about things that they attributed to me that happened and then they found it was not me but someone else. Unfortunately, once they found out it was someone else making a program recommendation, it became a fantastic program.

While Sojourner is unable to disaggregate racism from sexism in her experiences, Mary was able to point decidedly at gender. One of her previous presidents said that she did not need the money because her husband made money.

She also shared her thoughts on how some men and other women may view women of color in the workplace:

I think sometimes people; men in particular, do not think women have a lot of sense.

They ignore responses and you have to repeat them several times. You can probably read about this that this has happened. I also think that sometimes if you are the only person of

color in the room, some people are going to stop everything and listen to you or they are going to give you the courtesy then ignore everything you have to say.

Alice shared experiences of sexism, attributing challenges in her career to gender. She shared that in meetings she felt that some men did not respect her opinion.

Mary also expressed the existence of sexism, noting that “there are women who do not like women in power. They may give you a harder time than anyone else.”

Booker T. noted that he faced challenges because of his ethnicity, gender, and age as an administrator. He commented that some seasoned veterans of administration at the time of his appointment to the senior leadership role challenged whether or not he could adequately perform the duties of the job because they knew he was a younger African American male. Ultimately, this caused him to pause and reflect. He stated, “I could have wilted and floated away in the wind because things were just that bad. They had me second guessing myself and my abilities.” Once he understood that he was working with people serious biases, he made up in his mind to move forward and work even harder in his role.

Julian, an African American male, noted community based biases and racist inclinations that raised concerns for his safety. He shared the following:

The guy who took over for me in my previous position told me that I would have some challenges in my new role as vice president. He stated, “When they have the Thursday night fire chiefs’ meeting, it is going to be at location “X”. Being new to the position I said, “Well I am not quite sure where that is.” He told me where it was. He said, “You are not going by yourself.” Why would he ask me whether I was going by myself or not? The County had an African American sheriff and emergency management officer. It so happened, this is the kind of thing that we all get it, the sheriff and emergency

management officer heard that I had got the job and they called me. They said, “We heard about the meeting at location “X” coming up. We want you to ride with us.” The sheriff said, “Listen. Do not drive there by yourself. Meet us at the store and we’ll drive together. We will get out and walk in with you.” We arrived at the meeting, three black men in a bar type of environment. The three of us had on shirts and ties. Nobody else in the building that we entered which was compromised of all southern Caucasian males had a shirt and tie on. The man in charge of the event did not say anything to the sheriff or the EMS director. When I walked in they said, “You are the big boy from XZ Community College.” I said, “No sir. My name is Julian. I am the associate VP.” The gentleman was wearing a t-shirt with a rebel flag on it. He told me that we do not wear any ties in here. I said, “Listen, sir. I work for the college. I am an administrator at the College and I am here to provide you with training. This is a part of my uniform.”

Mildred and Rosa did not feel that race and gender issues have impacted their careers. Rosa, an African American female, believes that all of her issues can be attributed to the positions that she has held in the system.

**Theme: Developing a Career Plan “Charting the Course for Career Progression”**

Mary noted that she intended on being a community college president at one time. She has completed several trainings but noted being an ACE fellow was very important as she studied with a chancellor at a well-respected four-year university. She learned a tremendous amount about higher education leadership during this time. The training and preparation was all a part of her career plan to be viewed as a viable candidate for any position in the academy. Further, Mary asserts that taking opportunities as they were available at the time helped her career trajectory.

Zora was very adamant about having a career development and growth plan. She knew when she applied to the PhD program at [institution's name] that she wanted to serve as faculty in the community college setting. Once she completed her doctorate, she starting applying for community college teaching positions. Zora shared insight about planning:

I am a big believer in planning, I am a big believer in you pay your dues. I'm the type of person who will do my research, what kind of degree do I need to have in order to get to this position? What kind of experience do I need to have in order to get to that? When I mapped out my plan, before I went to [institution's name] for my doctorate, I was like, okay. I then projected how long it takes me to be chair, then dean, so on and so forth. I am kind of in a holding pattern right now as the next step would be a presidency for me.

Booker T. noted that career planning meant being educationally prepared (credentials) for opportunities that may arise in the future. He pursued his advanced degree in order to be in the running for growth opportunities at his institution.

Martin commented that he did not have a master plan when he first began his tenure in higher education:

The journey for me has really been an interesting one because unlike a lot of folks, my personal experience, I didn't begin with a plan of action, which I think now, looking at my trajectory, it's part of me that wishes I had begun earlier in my career, formatting this plan of action and a way to attack my career development, but for me mobility has been a combination of factors. Mobility for me has been a combination of circumstances, because I do think part of career development for me, and part of my philosophy, is there are certain circumstances that will sometimes dictate for you how you can move professionally.

Alice commented that she has always wanted to do well professionally. However, she did not have a formal career plan initially. Career planning connected to credentials in her case. She mentioned that not having a master's degree earlier in her career hindered the obtainment of a dream job two times. Alice stated, "Hey, if I wanted to move up, I had to go get that piece of paper." Now as a senior executive she continues to realize the importance of career and educational planning and is a second year doctoral student.

### **Theme: Supportive and Situational Leadership "How I Lead"**

The participants interviewed for this study presented themselves as supportive and situational leaders. Sojourner shared that she likes to be informed about what is going on in her area in the work environment. In addition, to being informed, she demonstrates a supportive nature. She described herself as being active and involved. Sojourner noted that she frequently asks members of her team about what they need to be successful. The participant also noted that she likes to share her vision with faculty and staff so they understand the whole picture. She believes buy-in is when trying to promote a new idea or concept.

Mary offered these thoughts on her leadership style in the workplace:

I probably would describe myself as more of a servant leader because I feel my role is just that, serving. I am not an authoritarian leader, although if I have to make a decision, I will. Sometimes, you just have to move on it. People have said my leadership mode is fair in the workplace. I always do things that are important like saying thank you. I also try to use good listening skills. Finally, I do operate in the participatory lens as well.

Zora operates as a leader who asks, "What is it you need from me? What is it that I can do to help you?" Zora stated, "I make it more tolerable for department chairs by doing the institutional assessment stuff, helping them and doing that. I argue for the budget stuff

and more positions in their area. I do stuff that they don't have time to do and they don't want to do.” She asserts that she empowers direct reports to lead projects and to do things they are good at both on and off campus. Booker T. also primarily indicated that he operates under the guise of supporter and promoter. He stated, “I defend them when I need to. I'm one that says if there's a problem, a student problem, "You take a backseat. Let me handle this for you." Versus, you deal with that problem yourself. However, if it was something that they created, a problem that they've created, I also bring them in and say, "Okay. This is the situation, and this is the reason why." Furthermore, he noted that he tends to be calm in stressful situations.

While the majority of leaders within the study commented on one frame of leadership, Martin utilizes multiple leadership skills in the workplace. Martin commented on leadership:

I have found that it is better to be adaptable. As a leader, I utilize transactional, situational, and servant leadership. Truthfully, I utilize all those things, but I almost find now that in my current environment, that I have got to utilize elements of all of those in order to be successful. Based upon the nature of the business that we are involved in and how things change almost daily, and your culture, really plays a big part in how you have to lead the folks. I also use patience as a leader. My goal is to create sustained change. I prefer the baker's method as that ensures things stay in place.

Alice also self-identified as a situational leader. She noted that her leadership approach really depends on who she is working with at the time. Alice expressed that leaders should learn the tendencies of their staff and co-workers. Often times that will help the leader successfully deal with people on their level.

Similarly, Rosa notes that her leadership style in the college environment is adaptable and depends on who she is dealing with at the time. She has learned over time to approach people and circumstances differently.

The administrator's leadership style in the workplace emerged during most interviews. Although the leaders did not specifically reference Kouzes and Posner's leadership theory, some of the findings closely align with the description for *Enable Others to Act* and *Inspire a Shared Vision*.

As noted earlier in the study, *Enable Other to Act* is defined as follows: Leaders who foster collaboration and build spirited teams. Additionally, these leaders actively involve others and understand that mutual respect is what sustains superior efforts. Moreover, they strive to create an environment of trust and human dignity. These leaders also make others feel powerful and as they have a voice (Kouzes & Posner, 1983). The other leadership practice, *Inspire a Shared Vision*, is defined as follows: Individuals who passionately believe they can make a positive difference. These leaders envision the future, creating an ideal and unique of what the organization can become (Kouzes & Posner, 1983).

### **Sub-Theme: Paving the Way, “It is Not Just About You”**

Three participants were very deliberate in their tone about working for more than oneself. They all commented on paving the way for others in the profession. Sojourner referenced one of her first leadership roles. She commented that she understood quickly that it was not just about her job, but it was also about the person coming after her to work in a role. Sojourner stated, “My first full-time job would have been in college and in job training. I believe that's where my little intuition and counseling background began to flourish meaning that I had the opportunity to talk

with students one-on-one about their career goals, overcoming those barriers for them to meet those goals and for that short and long-term planning.

Julian spoke about being mindful that he could possibly “mess things up” for other African American professionals now and in the future. He stated, “If I go there and I steal or have an affair or drive drunk, I can mess it up for the next ethnic minority who they find that may want to become the vice president of student services.

Alice explained that she feels the need to always be on point in meetings and presentations, because she is setting the stage for other people. Further, she commented that you do not know if you are going to get a voice at that particular table again, so it is best to be very prepared.

#### **Sub-Theme: Putting Yourself Out There “Taking Calculated Risks”**

A few of the participants spoke about the importance of African American administrators taking “calculated risks”. Mary framed her thoughts as follows:

I think one of the things that we have to be very mindful of and strong, being that we are African American, and strong in, is courage. I think you have to have courage to really think out of the box and do things out of the box. Risk comes with that, high risk comes with that. I think if we as African Americans are going to make a difference, we have to be willing also to take that risk. Courage is what I think is important. For us to have courage, to make decisions that are right for us and not just status quo.

Although Martin’s and Mary’s pathways to senior leadership were different, Martin’s thoughts are similar about the risk taking in the work place. Martin remarked:

I think there is an element of risk that I think we don’t talk enough about where the size of things I mentioned, the circumstantial things, the personal drive, the education, staying

current and looking around, there is an element of understanding that sometimes you really have to step out there when an opportunity presents itself, and it may not be completely a comfortable one for you. That has been a personal journey and a personal triumph for me because I feel like there were instances in my career where I was not sure if I should or if I should not, or should I decide to go in a certain direction or not? I think there are elements of progress in that risk, because you are not quite sure exactly where you end up, but if the opportunity has a pathway that presents itself towards where you can be; you have got to be open to that.

Alice commented about being a strategic risk taker. She stated, “Sometimes you have to be able to say no to some things and yes to the right things.” She continued:

A lot of times African Americans want to be known as the “can do people”. However, you may run the risk of running yourself ragged doing everything, but not doing enough of the right things, whether that might be networking or something else to be seen, and be noticed, and be ready to move up.

### **Sub-Theme: Strategic and Bold “Double Work”**

The theme of doing more came across in quite a few of the interviews. Many of the participants commented on the fact that they have either worked harder to get noticed or have to work harder to stay on top. Booker T. referenced a time where he had to work extremely hard to address a particular issue while in a leadership role. Here is his account of the situation:

Through my tenure, there were periods of time where I found myself having to work really hard whether it is to address some things. It is funny because I took an approach on time. We have suggestion boxes on campus which provides students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to submit ideas anonymously. Well, I had taken a concern to our

administrative team one time. It was not my current administrative team and basically it was overlooked and thrown under the desk. Well, I took the approach of a different issue to say I am going to put it in the suggestion box. The presentation basically was the same. They took the suggestion box, read it. “Oh. Now this is a well presented situation,” and internally I’m laughing about it because I’m the only one around the table that knew I was the one that submitted the suggestion.

In terms of another relevant example of doing double work, Martin had some concise thoughts that resonated. Martin commented in on his experiences:

I feel like I have to work 20 times as hard in the settings that I am in quite often to present myself as someone who is viable for that next level or someone who can be viewed as my other counterpart. The work I put in sometimes is twice and three times, and so I think that is an unfortunate way to feel, but that’s just been a personal thing that, having been now almost, over 20 years in different settings and having been here now for the past seven, and being at the executive level, that is just a belief and observation it not totally grounded, but it makes me wonder, “if I were not black’ or not an African American man, would you be more comfortable with me, because my credentials are stellar and they stack up against any other person.

Mildred viewed doing double work as a necessity to leadership. She stated, “It means coming in early, sometimes staying late. It means helping in and doing even though they may not be your assigned duties you see what needs to be done. People respect you when you step up and doing what has to be done. I really think it builds trust.”

### **Sub-Theme: Willing to Help Others “Supporting and Mentoring Students of Color”**

The literature is filled with research that supports the benefits of African American administrators being visible and accessible to students of color on a college campus. Students, faculty, and staff who attend or work in higher education institutions with high levels of racial or ethnic diversity are exposed to structural diversity, which opens the door for new teaching and learning opportunities (Jackson & Phelps, 2004). Further, African American administrators may be called upon to support and mentor students of color on a continual basis in the academy. Higher education institutions may find African American administrators who connect with all students but more specifically students of color to be an asset to the organization. This in turn may become an opportunity for growth for some administrators seeking upward mobility in academia.

Zora explained that she looks to serve as a guide and mentor community college students. She spoke with energy when speaking about supporting students:

I know our students who are dealing with issues of access and poverty. Even with those students, I like to identify as very talented. They have a really sharp eye, so I tell them to think about going to graduate school. Sometimes nobody else will even talk to them about it; they might not understand all of the mechanisms involved of completing that next level degree. I am trying to get them to go on and some of them now, that I have taught, try to coach and mentor along the way. I feel like that was something that spoke to me.

Julian serves as the Chief Student Services Officer on his campus and speaks about impact on students. He believes that is one of the calls of his profession. Julian commented on supporting students through connecting them to a variety of resources such as financial aid and

internship opportunities. Ultimately, he commented on helping a lot of students to move on and complete their degree. One real experience really resonated with Julian. He spoke about mentoring an African American male student who was not engaged on campus. Julian noted the young man's appearance needed to be cleaned up a little. At the time, the student wore baggy clothes and had dreadlocks. After a few part-time job interviews failed, the young man approached the participant about making a change. Julian welcomed the dialogue with the young man. A few weeks later the student came back with a clean cut and better fitting clothes. As a result of continuing dialogue between the participant and student, the student made some positive life style changes. Julian went on to note that the student went on to graduate from the College, transferred to a university, and eventually obtained his master's degree.

Julian's account provides some insight into the positive occurrences that take place when an African American professional rises to the senior level of an institution. The senior leader connected with this student in a meaningful way and established an ongoing positive rapport. This supports Turner's (1994) assertion that academic success for African-American students is tied to their comfort level with the institution.

### **Theme: Spirituality and Its Impact of the Career**

Four out of Ten participants referenced spirituality briefly during the course of their interview. Sojourner expressed her thoughts on spirituality:

My philosophy is that I work for God. I am paid by my institution. I go and do the best I can do whether that it's recognized or it has nothing to do with whether I get along with someone or not or anything. I want to rest comfortably at night and know that I've done what I can do, that I have given my best because at the end of the day that is what is important to me. I do believe that my reward or my morality and my judgment are

valuable. I look to a Higher Power affirmation. To be honest, the older I get the more I rely on what is the next phase of life. I am strengthened knowing that one day I will see my mother. That I have given what I need to, to my family, to my father who is still with me. That is why I know I have to put it in balance. When I seek comfort I seek the great comfort of God.

Zora referenced her religious background as more of a training ground for leadership. She noted serving as the secretary of the choir as a little girl. According to the participant, being a part of the choir and serving in an officer role helped to prepare her for life and eventually work. Serving as an officer in the choir assisted her in building leadership skills. She credits the church environment with helping her gain organizational skills. The experiences allowed Zora to learn about leadership in a familiar setting with individuals from the community and family.

Harriet reflects on listening to certain ministers speak about leadership. She views DVDs and listens to CDs of ministers talking about leadership fairly often. Mildred also mentioned spirituality in relation to the timing of a higher power working things out for people in positions. She stated, "I am a spiritual person and I think that makes a difference." Mildred commented that she would not be where she is if the element of spirituality did not exist in her life.

### **Understanding Upward Mobility**

The participants in this study vitae show that each participant has shown some upward mobility throughout the course of their career. However, a more thorough examination of each participant's vitae supports the notion that some of leaders have been more upwardly mobile over the last eight years. Based on the analysis, Sojourner, Mary, Zora, Booker T., Julian, Martin, Alice, Mildred, and Rosa have been promoted at least one time in the last ten years. Sojourner, Mary, Martin, Alice, and Mildred have taken on greater responsibility within the last

three to five years. Mary has earned a doctorate, and is content in her current position. She is not currently seeking a higher level position. Harriet, the longest tenured community college administrator in this study, is a senior dean; she is not seeking additional career advancement. She is planning to retire soon. During the interviews, Martin, who has earned a doctorate, was the only participant to explicitly reference presidential aspirations. Both Mary and Zora expressed they were interested in becoming a president earlier in their career. However, they are currently focused on being the best at their current level. It would be interesting to understand further whether they are truly embracing their present status or if they are resigned to this role based on work conditions. Alice, who is working on her doctorate and could retire from the state system in a few years, has an interest in higher education policy work. Moving into the policy arena may or not provide upward mobility in terms of ascension in NCCCS. It could lead to lateral transitions elsewhere.

### **Pathways and Experiences**

The entry point to academia for each participant in this study was very different. Sojourner started her work in continuing education and later transitioned to student affairs work. She is now the number two administrator on her campus, providing leadership to the areas of academic affairs, student affairs, and continuing education. Mary began her career in higher education in a non-faculty role. Her first stint as a director was serving as director of Minority Affairs at a small liberal arts college. Mary's next set of professional opportunities continued to reflect upward mobility. Zora entered higher education professionally through a hybrid position which included admissions work and duties as a teaching assistant. As a result of her breadth of experience, she progressed upwardly and now oversees the largest academic division at her institution. Booker T entered higher education through the ranks of an entry level position in

student services. One would posit that learning the lower level position assisted this senior administrator in understanding the processes in student services from steps A to Z. Harriet entered higher education as a full-time faculty member in English. The participant's initial experiences as teaching faculty helped to prepare her for leading an academic division. Due to Julian's management experience prior to entering higher education, he entered the community college setting as a department chair. Julian then went on to be promoted to associate vice president (avp) on the academic side and later avp of student services. While in student services, he found a professional home and later was promoted to vice president of student services.

The final four participants all had notable entry points into academia. Martin entered higher education as an undergraduate program advisor at a university. He is one of three participants to start their pathway in the university setting. Martin has successfully made the transition to a senior level position in the community college environment.

Alice entrance into academia was in student services. She served as a student activities coordinator in the community setting. After that role, the participant was promoted to assistant registrar at another community college. She continued to gain a myriad of professional experiences and progress upwards within her organization.

Mildred's first position in higher education was in the community college environment as an academic advisor/counselor. Although she entered in as a student services professional, her pathway has led to a position as provost and overseeing a campus. The participant has upwardly progressed over a 14 year period of time in the community college arena.

Rosa began her tenure as a community college academic program director. She progressed from program director to dean and from dean to senior vice president over academic and student affairs at her institution.

In summary, each participant's pathway has been somewhat different related to their professional experiences. However, their mobility during certain periods of their career is evident. Based on education credentials, professional experience, and current role, only a few of the participants may be poised to rise to the chief executive officer role. Mary, Zora, Martin, and Rosa have earned doctorates and have both academic and student affairs experience. Further, Alice may also be a candidate once her doctorate is complete. Having that positionality and desiring to take advantage of it in that way are two different things, however.

### **Summary**

This chapter highlighted the results of the leadership practices as defined by Kouzes and Posner of ten African American senior level administrators employed at North Carolina community colleges. More specifically, it has been determined that the African American leaders most frequently use *Enable Others to Act* in the workplace. Additionally, the data yielded no statistically significant relationship between the mean LPI-Self scores and upward mobility of the participants. Further, insight is provided on the common themes that emerged while the researcher collected qualitative data for this study: (1) networking and building for the future; (2) supervisors as mentors and sponsors; (3) overcoming race and gender barriers in the academy; (4) developing a career plan, "charting the path for career progression"; (5) supportive and situational leadership, "how I lead"; and (6) spirituality's impact on the career. Additional research needs to be examined that may not have been captured under the common themes for this study. The utilization of Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Model shaped this study on leadership practices. The topic and leadership theory can be explored in a number of ways in the future. African American leadership in higher education especially in the community college

environment is relevant as diverse populations are continually selecting the community college environment as their starting place in higher education.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section summarizes the purpose of this study, the review of literature, the research methodology, and the findings. The next section presents conclusions inferred from this study, through the analysis of the data. The last section focuses on the discussion and potential research for the future.

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between leadership practices of African American administrators within the NCCCS and their upward mobility as indicated through a myriad of categories such as a high number of promotions and leadership role in the organization. Secondly, the purpose of this study was to determine whether self-identified leadership practices of African American administrators and the observed leadership practices as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner are similar.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the leadership practices of African American senior level administrators and their upward mobility?
2. What are the most common leadership practices among African American senior level administrators?
3. How do the scores on the LPI –Self compare and contrast among African American administrators?
4. How do the scores on the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer (direct reports scores)?

During this study, I found that there is no statistically significant relationship between the upward mobility and LPI mean scores of the African American senior level leaders who

participated in this study. However, the study did provide insight on the primary leadership practices of the leaders who participated in this study. It is important to note that *Enable Others to Act* is the most frequently used leadership practice of the study participant. As I conducted this research and studied these leaders, I found it to be an extremely empowering and rewarding experience. The experience was empowering and rewarding because these African American leaders have experienced challenges and obstacles but found a way to successfully navigate the terrain within the system. During my discussions with the men and women who participated in this study, I found them to be very passionate about their career, students, and community in which they served. I found these individuals to be well versed in the discipline of community college leadership from a variety of perspectives. As they described their challenges and leadership practices in the workplace, it became increasingly clear that the pathway towards senior leadership is not an easy journey. Further, maintaining the role of a senior level administrator takes certain acumen of skills, talent, knowledge, and understanding. The total combined years of service in higher education is 240, and that is noteworthy in a time when senior administrative life spans seem to be getting shorter in higher education. This type of sustaining power is impressive whether in North Carolina or in the western part of the country.

While this study covered a particular geographic area on the east coast, I believe other researchers would benefit from conducting research on African American leaders in different areas of the country. The study of African Americans in higher education grounded in leadership theory helps to provides more insight on this ethnic minority group leading in the academy. This in-depth study provided an understanding of the self-identified and observed leadership practices of ten senior level African American administrators in the NCCCS. Further, it focused on the upward mobility of these leaders, which highlighted challenges and successes during their

journey. It is my longing that boards of trustees, board of directors, boards or regents, chief executive officers, senior vice presidents, and others who influence hiring on community college campuses see the type of fine leadership ability and action that African Americans and other ethnic minorities will bring to their organization.

### **Summary of Findings and Common Themes**

This study examined the relationship between the leadership practices and upward mobility of ten African American senior-level administrators serving at community colleges in North Carolina. In order to give insight about the leadership practices and upward mobility of the study's participant, this section provides a summary of findings and common themes that emerged during the study. There were six themes that emerged as the study evolved. The common themes are expressed in line with how the participants shared their thoughts.

The initial theme of networking and building for the future emerged during this research study. Further, the second theme that emerged was supervisors as mentors and sponsors. Thirdly, overcoming race and gender barriers in the academy emerged as a theme. The fourth theme of developing a career plan also illuminated during research. A fifth theme emerged as supportive and situational leadership; the sub-theme of (a) paving the way, "it is not just about you" (b) putting yourself out there, "taking calculated risks" (c) strategic and bold, "double work" (d) willing to help others, "supporting and mentoring students of color" came to the forefront during the qualitative analysis process.

As documented, this is a parallel convergent design study and there are quantitative findings. Research question two examines, "What is the most common leadership practice among African American senior level administrators?" Participants made use of each of the leadership practices. Based on the responses to the LPI-Self, African American senior level

administrators posted high numbers in *Enabling Others to Act* (M=53.5; S.D. = 5.35). The third research question focuses on, “How do the scores on the LPI –Self compare and contrast among African American administrators in my sample?” The group of administrators rated themselves closer to the highest possible score of 60 in *Enabling Others to Act*, *Model the Way*, and *Encourage the Heart. Inspired a Shared Vision* was the lowest score for the African American leaders. The fourth research question focuses on, “How do the scores on the LPI-Self compare and contrast to the scores of LPI Observer (direct reports scores)?” The responses from the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer shows that both groups rated *Enable Others to Act* as the most commonly used leadership practice for the group of administrators.

### **Significance of Select Themes and Sub-Themes**

Networking and building for the future as a means of career advancement was highlighted by some participants in the study. Professional networks have been cited as being very important for career sustainability and progression for many years of women and ethnic minorities. Latimore (2009) reflects that a myriad of factors such as community involvement, family, and colleague support can provide the non-academic and emotional support that are critical to assist with career growth. These aspects along with other factors are important to the conversation of formal and informal networks. In the present study I found that a participant cited formal and informal lunch meetings provided them with networking opportunities. One participant also commented on the ability to pick up the phone and ask questions to trusted colleagues.

Further, an additional theme of supervisors as mentors and sponsors emerged during the research. Traditionally, African American professionals have been excluded from “outside of the office” relationships which caused them to be excluded from mentoring opportunities (Jenkins,

2005). In many cases, this may hinder the upward mobility of African American professionals seeking career growth. Jenkins (2005) purports that many companies understand the importance of growing young talent and are establishing mentor programs to support the upward trajectory of minorities. In the present study I found participants gave clear examples of how they have been mentored and sponsored by their supervisor. For example, Zora reflected on how her first supervisor at a community college advised her to become involved on campus. Zora, Booker T., Julian, Alice, and Mildred all attested to having being mentored or sponsored by a supervisor at some point during their career.

The theme of overcoming race and gender barriers in the academy emerged during the study. During the research phase eight out of ten participants commented that they have experienced or witnessed some type of bias in the workplace related to gender and/or ethnicity. One participant noted that she even faced opposition from other women in the workplace, while one (man) was actively coached to protect against racialized violence. Racism has played a major role during the exploration stage of career development for African Americans and other minorities and can have an adverse effect (Cohn, 1997). To some degree, participants within the present study were able to traverse challenges to make it to their current roles; however, it is unclear to what extent these struggles assuaged the desire of some participants for the presidency. Due to the ethnically diverse population of students enrolling at community colleges, there is a need for more African American community college presidents. Bradley (2009) asserts that organizations that are considered diverse have been labeled as successful overall. Further, the organizations employ a significant number of ethnic minorities at various levels of the organization, connect with other minority-owned businesses, and endorse companies that patronize minority-owned investment banks (Bradley, 2009). The benefits of these connections

are immeasurable for the institution and its community. Pitts (2007) suggests that student of color need college leaders who include mentors and role models, that have the same ethnic background.

Some of the women leaders within the study went on to note the importance of spirituality as foundational element to their well-being and career success. This notion is consistent with literature which indicates spirituality has been an important part of lives of African American women throughout time (Webb, 2000). Latimore (2009) found faith was as a pillar for African American women presidents. The In the study conducted by Latimore (2009) she notes that African American women presidents spoke about how their religious beliefs and faith has kept them and continues to give them strength every day (Latimore, 2009).

A portion of the participants in this study provided data that illuminates the importance of “developing a career plan.” Again, one participant was an ACE fellow, which is one of the highest professional development honors in higher education. She felt that African American leaders have to be prepared through training and education in order to get to the next level. Research has shown that many African Americans may consider themselves as being overly qualified in comparison to individuals from the majority population (Latimore, 2009). In the qualitative study conducted by Latimore (2009), seven participants commented that African American women generally obtained extra credentials. The credentials include a terminal degree and a highly recognized leadership certification in preparation for the position of chief executive officer at a college.

The sub-theme of “paving the way, “it’s not just about you” emerged during my interview with the leaders in this study. Sojourner, Julian, and Alice were candid about African American leaders being very mindful of their position and place within the organization. Julian

stated, “If I go there and I steal or have an affair or drive drunk, I can mess it up for the next ethnic minority who they find that may want to become the vice president of student services.” Julian’s and the other two participants are in line with the literature. Hytten and Bettez (2011) assert that many African Americans view their world in terms of resistance, oppression, and creative struggle. As a result, they enact processes for survival and take care of the community along with serving as role models for other people of color (Hytten & Bettez, 2011).

The theme of Supportive and Situational Leadership, “How I Lead” emerged during my time with the leaders who participated in this study. Although the leaders had some similarities, no two leaders described themselves in the exact same manner. Sojourner commented on the fact that she likes to share her vision with faculty and staff in order to ensure they have a good understanding of the big picture. Furthermore, she likes to demonstrate support for her team. Mary, Zora, Booker T., noted that they are supporters. In fact, Booker T. shared that he is a supporter and promoter of his employees. Lyons, Cho, and Michel (2011) assert that some African American female leaders have been described as transformational and transactional leaders due to their ethnic and gender experiences related to segregation. One of the most powerful attributes of transformational leadership connected with African American female leaders is their ability to flow with changes in order to move forward with new approaches to solving issues (Gron, 2009). With funding challenges and demographic shifts in the community college setting, leaders will need to be innovative and transformative as they lead community colleges. The literature does not specifically connect African American leaders to Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices. However, African American leaders in this study identified with using the practices of Enable Others to Act in the working environment.

At the end of the day there are no differences in LPI score patterns between participants and other leaders who take the LPI. In short they engage practices that are as good as other leaders and as such should be considered for upward advancement. The corollary of the lack of association between leadership practices and upward mobility and the congruency above is that there may be individuals who engage in good practices but are being overlooked for the presidency.

### **Implications for Chief Executive Officers and Boards of Trustees**

The leaders serving in senior level roles in this study had a variety of professional experiences throughout their career. Each of them had a different journey into their role of a senior leader in the community college setting. These individuals identified the most with Enable Others to Act as it pertains to their leadership practice. Their primary leadership practices consistent with what other leaders identified with in the LPI Norms database which highlights LPI results at the national level. The research conducted during this study purports that African American senior level administrators practice Enable Others to Act and their observers report they most often operate in that leadership practice. As a result of this study, there are some distinct implications for Chief Executive Officers and Boards of Trustees.

Based on the findings of this study, I contend that college presidents who are seeking to diversify their senior level cabinet positions on campus give meaningful consideration to recruiting qualified African American leaders. Community college presidents are positioned to communicate a diversity agenda through strategic planning; presidents can garner support from the board as they seek to diversify the campus community (Kezar, 2008). Moreover, presidents can develop committees within the organization to strategically examine and remedy diversity related matters such as a lack of people of color in faculty and leadership roles (Kezar, 2008).

Thompson and Louque (2005) found that more African American administrators are needed across the landscape of higher education. Historically white men have served as chief executive officers of community colleges across the nation. Although the landscape is changing at a slow pace, women and ethnic minority leaders are not close to having equal representation in senior leadership roles (Eddy, 2009).

In order for college presidents to build a more ethnically diverse senior leadership team, they will have to engage in actively recruiting quality ethnic minorities including African Americans. Land (2003) asserts the number of qualified leaders have declined due to job requirements, insufficient leadership preparation, and various demands. College leaders should develop detailed strategies that will provide guidance for minorities going into leadership roles (Bradley, 2009). In Jackson's study (2001) he made recommendations in an updated, two-round Delphi Technique program which was created to determine logical steps to assist Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) in their retention efforts of African American leaders:

- Commit to the principles of diversity and affirmative action
- Use recruitment as retention strategy
- Provide equity in wages and salaries
- Provide an orientation program (i.e., community and campus)
- Develop a mentoring program for junior and senior management
- Foster open lines of communication between the administration hierarchy and staff
- Empower the administrator to perform his or her job
- Promote the pursuit of professional advancement and development (i.e., learning and research. (Jackson, 2001a, pp. 103-107)

The strategies would help to alleviate voids that exist at the senior level administrative ranks in academia.

Current and aspiring African American administrators need to receive equitable opportunities for professional development through leadership training. Presidents and Board of Trustees can ensure that this occurs with support at the institutional level. Mentoring and leadership programs are found to be highly effective support pieces that increase the retention of African American administrators in the academy (Jackson, 2009). The leadership training may take place in variety of forms. Eddy (2009) asserts that organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges, the League of Innovation in the Community Colleges, and the American Council on Education offer specialized leadership programs. Further, some community colleges offer internal leadership programs and the North Carolina Community College System offers a leadership program for employees working in the state system. African American administrators would benefit from participating in the localized programs as well. The very ability to participate in a college sponsored program would bring about more networking opportunities. Similarly, African Americans administrators who participate in a system level program as provided by the system in North Carolina would experience state wide connections.

Boards of Trustees and college presidents should also consider African American administrators during succession planning. Campbell (2002) asserts that succession planning is a way for organizations to prepare to fill executive positions before a senior leader retires or vacates the role. Ward (2008) suggests that diversification at the most senior levels cannot take place without specific steps to achieve the goal. Therefore, those leading institutions must develop a plan for succession within the organization. Hawkins (2015) suggests that academia needs a system that focuses on the preparation of academic and professional administrators early

in their career. African American administrators should be considered as selection committees prepare to hire for cabinet level and chief executive officer roles. Welsh and Welsh (2007) highlighted that acceptable succession planning should be deliberate and should become a part of the fabric of the organization. Moreover, they suggest that succession planning gives each individual interested in growth an equal opportunity based on talents and dedication to the organization. With many senior level administrators aging out at community colleges across the country, African American current and aspiring administrators would benefit from being included in the succession plans of their organization.

With this new found knowledge, chief community college administrators along with governing boards in North Carolina can work to develop leadership institutes that will assist these leaders with honing their skills in the areas of *Encouraging the Heart*, *Challenge the Process*, and *Inspire a Shared Vision*. As a result, African American leaders would be able to practice more broad based leadership in the workplace. One thing that is very clear is that these leaders *Enable Others to Act* as defined by Kouzes and Posner in their academic setting. This is a way of positive uplift which has been displayed by African American leaders for many years.

### **Future Research Recommendations**

In the future, additional research may include African American administrators from other states and regions. Furthermore, an expansion of this type of study to include other people of color may be beneficial to the body of literature. Also, research that focuses on African American community college presidents and their leadership practices as defined by Kouzes and Posner would be a study of interest. The research would enhance the literature that already exists on African American leaders in the community college environment. Furthermore, the research would expand on the amount of leadership theory information available on African American

leaders in academia. In addition, my research focused on community college leaders; however, future research may focus on senior level university administrators and their upward mobility. An examination of the leadership practices of African American community college administrators in rural versus urban areas may provide insight on upward mobility and leadership in specific geographic areas.

In conclusion, the suggested research options would provide a myriad of vantage points for studying African American leaders in higher education but more specifically in the community college environment.

### **Conclusion**

The research conducted during this study exposed me to variety of successful African American community college leaders from across the state of North Carolina. As an aspiring senior executive leader, I count it an honor to research my selected topic and study veteran leaders who are thriving in their respective roles. The diversity of thought, experiences, and style that each of these individuals bring to the table is very important as community colleges seek to appoint senior leaders and select their next chief executive officer. Based on the research conducted during this study, African American leaders do not differ in leadership practices than any other group of people. Further, the experience of the group of proven leaders that were studied during this research, these individuals and others similar to them just need an opportunity to serve as a community college president.

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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



### EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

#### University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office

4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682

600 Moyer Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · [www.ecu.edu/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/irb)

### Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Levy Brown](#)  
CC: [Crystal Chambers](#)  
Date: 7/21/2015  
Re: [UMCIRB 15-001103](#)  
African American Leadership Practices and Upward Mobility

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 7/17/2015 to 7/16/2016. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
African American Administrator's Upward Mobility Questionnaire	Surveys and Questionnaires
Chapters 1 through 3 (7-1-15).docx	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Cover-Letter-7-1-15 L. Brown.docx	Consent Forms
Email to participants (7-7-15).docx	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
LPI Questionnaire.pdf	Surveys and Questionnaires

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

## APPENDIX B: KOUZES AND POSNER PERMISSION LETTER

**JOSSEY-BASS™**  
An Imprint of WILEY

# News

March 13, 2012

Levy Brown, Jr  
2415 Lillington Court  
Winterville, NC 28590

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your request to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in your dissertation. We are willing to allow you to **reproduce** the instrument in written form, as outlined in your request, at no charge. If you prefer to use our electronic distribution of the LPI (vs. making copies of the print materials) you will need to separately contact Lisa Shannon (lshannon@wiley.com) directly for instructions and payment. Permission to use either the written or electronic versions requires the following agreement:

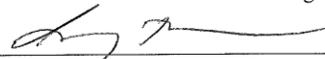
- (1) That the LPI is used only for research purposes and is not sold or used in conjunction with any compensated management development activities;
- (2) That copyright of the LPI, or any derivation of the instrument, is retained by Kouzes Posner International, and that the following copyright statement is included on all copies of the instrument; "Copyright © 2003 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. All rights reserved. Used with permission";
- (3) That one (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data be sent **promptly** to our attention; and,
- (4) That you agree to allow us to include an abstract of your study and any other published papers utilizing the LPI on our various websites.

If the terms outlined above are acceptable, would you indicate so by signing one (1) copy of this letter and returning it to me either via email or by post to; 1548 Camino Monde San Jose, CA 95125. Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Ellen Peterson  
Permissions Editor  
[Epeterson4@gmail.com](mailto:Epeterson4@gmail.com)

I understand and agree to abide by these conditions:

(Signed)  Date: 3/15/12

Expected Date of Completion is: Fall 2014

 **WILEY**

989 Market Street, Fifth Floor • San Francisco, CA 94103-1741

## APPENDIX C: COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant,

I am Levy Brown a doctoral candidate at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership department. I am asking you to take part in my research study entitled, "*An Examination of African American Leadership Practices and Upward Mobility within the North Carolina Community College System*".

The purpose of this research is to examine the association between leadership practices of African American administrators within the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and their upward mobility as indicated through a myriad of categories such as a high number of promotions and high organizational level. Secondly, the purpose of this study is to determine if self-identified leadership practices of African American administrators and the observed leadership practices as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner are similar. By doing this research, I hope to learn *Among African American administrators, is there a relationship between leadership and upward mobility?* Your participation is completely voluntary.

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are an African American senior level administrator in the North Carolina Community College System. The amount of time it will take you to complete this survey is 45 minutes. Please note the interviews will be conducted either over the phone or via Skype if needed. Additionally, the methods will be audio/video recorded. If you chose not to have your interview recorded, I will record all of your responses by hand. For clarity purposes, if you agree to take part in this survey, you will be asked questions that relate to your professional background and role such as what is your professional background, current position title, length of time in current position, length of time at current institution and previous two position titles?

This research is overseen by the ECU Institutional Review Board. Therefore some of the IRB members or the IRB staff may need to review my research data. However, the information you provide will not be linked to you. Therefore, your responses cannot be traced back to you by anyone, including me.

If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of ORIC, at 252-744-1971.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research.

Sincerely,

Levy Brown, Jr.  
Principal Investigator

## **APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS**

Dear Prospective Participant,

I am writing to request your assistance with my research study. At this time, I am conducting a study as a doctoral candidate at East Carolina University in the Education Leadership Program within the College of Education. I am requesting your participation as either an African American senior level administrator or the direct report of an African American senior level administrator interviewee in a mixed-methods dissertation study. My study is designed to examine African American leadership practices and upward mobility within the North Carolina Community College System. For the purposes of this study, senior level administrators are classified as Executive Vice President, Senior Vice President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Associate or Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Associate or Assistant Vice President of Student Services, Senior Dean of Curriculum, Dean of Curriculum Programs, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Business and Industry, Dean of Health Sciences, Dean of Student Services, and Dean of Enrollment.

It is my goal to learn if there is a relationship between the leadership practices and upward mobility of African American administrators. Further, I expect to learn if self-identified leadership practices of African American administrators and the observed leadership practices as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner are similar. The study should also share insight on the career progression of study participants.

This study will assist in alleviating the void in current research related to African American community college leaders and may be valuable in helping to enhance the professional pipeline for aspiring African Americans senior administrators. Please know that your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in this study as I will not use names but will use numbers to reference administrators and their direct reports in this study. The names of current or former community colleges, universities, or other places of employment will not be included in order to maintain confidentiality. As I noted earlier, this is a mixed-methods study so there is an electronic survey (quantitative) that will be sent via email. Equally important, there is a qualitative questionnaire that will be administered either face-to-face, by Skype, or phone. The qualitative questionnaire will be audio-taped for accuracy. Once everything is proofed the audio-files will be destroyed. Again, I realize that your time is of great importance. I am very willing to travel to the site of your choice within your city, Skype or conduct the interview by phone. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future and will make myself available to speak about this study. Thanks for considering being a participant in my study.

Sincerely,

Levy Brown, Jr.

# APPENDIX E: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

To what extent do you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. I praise people for a job well done.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 6. I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.                          | <input type="text"/> |
| 7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 8. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 9. I actively listen to diverse points of view.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 10. I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 13. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 14. I treat others with dignity and respect.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 15. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 17. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 18. I ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 19. I support the decisions that people make on their own.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 22. I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 23. I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on. | <input type="text"/> |
| 24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 25. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 27. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 28. I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.   | <input type="text"/> |
| 29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.  | <input type="text"/> |
| 30. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.   | <input type="text"/> |

## **APPENDIX F: QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What is your professional background, current position title, length of time in current position, length of time at current institution and previous two position titles? (Benson-Clayton, 2009)
2. Describe your work experience in the community college setting.
3. How would you describe your career experiences in the North Carolina Community College System?
4. What does upwardly mobile mean in terms of personal career path?
5. What have been the challenges to your career progression?
6. Do you think your mobility is the same as or different from your Caucasian peers? Explain.
7. Which leadership practices do you utilize in the workplace? Explain.
8. How do leadership practices influence your upward mobility and effectiveness?

## APPENDIX G: LPI NORMS SCORES

### Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) New Norms

November, 2011

	MTW	ISV	CTP	EOA	ETH
Valid	1373771	1373798	1373388	1373535	1373617
Missing	182912	182885	183295	183148	183066
Mean	46.70	43.59	44.69	49.34	45.79
<b>%ile</b>					
10	35.00	28.00	32.00	39.00	31.00
20	40.00	35.00	37.00	44.00	38.00
30	43.00	39.00	41.00	47.00	42.00
40	46.00	42.00	44.00	49.00	45.00
50	48.00	45.00	46.00	51.00	48.00
60	50.00	48.00	48.00	53.00	50.00
70	52.00	51.00	51.00	54.00	53.00
80	54.00	53.00	53.00	56.00	55.00
90	57.00	56.00	56.00	58.00	58.00

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