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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND BEHAVIORS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN  
EXECUTIVES FROM DIFFERENT ECONOMIC SECTORS

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

by

Jacqueline M. Johnson

October, 2015

June Schmieder, Ph. D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the three strongest, graceful and loving women I know, my mother and grandmothers. My mother has always been a pillar of love and strength in my life. I thank you for your enduring support and for always answering the phone simply excited to hear my voice. Having you as my mother has and always will be my most precious treasure in life.

To my Granny Johnson, she was and forever will be the angel God lent me. We shared a kindred spirit that could not be denied. She taught me to love, dream and be true to myself. I will forever remember her fierce courage when taking her brown skinned grandchildren into stores that were hesitant to serve us because of the color of our skin and she would demand service like anyone else in the room. I realize now the courage that took and I am forever humbled. Words cannot express my gratitude for being blessed to have her in my life. I know her wings are dancing in the sunlight in heaven.

To my Granny Phillips, fondly known as Maudie, you are an essence of grace and God's true love. Your strength, wit and candor keeps everyone on their toes and instilled in me that you must reach for the stars with fierce abandon. Thank you for continuing to light up a room and being a true messenger of God's love.

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Student Services Manager/Assessment Specialist, Hawaii Resources – 2006-2008. Developed individualized student curriculum and behavioral plans for implementation in school and home settings. Managed student assessment staff consisting of pediatricians, psychiatrists, teachers and mentors.

Director of Student and Academic Affairs, K-12, Inc. – 2002-2006. Chief Academic Officer for all curricular and associated marketing programs. Developed and implemented curricular plans aligned to the Multiple Intelligences and Bloom Taxonomy models. Maintained curricular support materials for staff in the Online Module

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Johnson, J.M. (2015). Leadership Styles and Behaviors of Women in Leadership”. International Journal of Arts and Sciences Conference, Paris, France.

Johnson, J.M. (2014, October). Leadership styles and behaviors of African American women in leadership. Paper presented at the Southern California Diversity in Leadership Conference, Long Beach, CA.

J.Johnson Hirt et al., “Evaluating Online Learning: Challenges and Strategies for Success”, U.S. Department of Education (July 2008)

## ABSTRACT

The leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives across multiple economic sectors were studied using an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Senior leaders from 6 of the following sectors Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military, and Nonprofit were surveyed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to quantitatively assess their leadership styles and behaviors. A subset of survey respondents from each sector were interviewed 1 on 1 to provide contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on leadership styles in general and the development of their individual style in particular.

The preponderance of the relatively limited published studies on the leadership attributes of African American women have involved one or more of the following design methodologies: (a) use of qualitative methods, (b) focus on a single sector of the economy, (c) inclusion of a range of leadership positions from middle to senior management within their sample size, and (d) exploration of the obstacles and barriers encountered by the women during their journey to leadership.

The purpose of the present research augmented the scope and results of the previous work. MLQ data from a numerically significant sample of executives, coupled with the interview narratives, potentially provided the necessary quantitative and qualitative underpinnings to support and/or reshape findings from the past studies. Expanding the scope to include leaders from different sectors furnished insight into potential sector-specific influences on leadership styles; and tightening of the sampling process to include only senior-level leaders in organizations reduced experimental variability and insured a pool of participants with extensive leadership experience. The obstacles and barriers facing African American women

leaders received the most attention in prior studies and therefore is not a key focus of this work. However, salient information gleaned from interviews concerning their impact on leadership styles have been reported.

It is expected that the data and information from this study has yielded a more comprehensive evaluation of the leadership styles and behaviors of these African American women executives in particular, and potentially enabled meaningful comparisons with previously published findings on such leadership characteristics in general.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

Prior to the 1960s many employees believed that women should not be eligible to hold employment due to their inability to devote themselves to the duties and responsibilities. The Fair Employment Act of 1946 addressed discrimination based on race, creed and nationality, but despite the Act very few women of African descent filtered into the workforce. Many Non-African American women attempted to persevere in the workforce, but were stifled by laws in the 1950s that forced them out of their jobs due to marital status and child rearing responsibilities. In the early to mid-1900s companies could decline employment on the basis of whether or not a female candidate was married or had children. Companies believed that married women and mothers were unfit to maintain a job. Many businesses prior to 1964, curtailed the employment of women based on how many children a woman had and her domestic duties. Earlier generations believed that women were responsible for the majority of domestic and childrearing responsibilities and would therefore, be unable to devote themselves to their jobs. Men however, were not expected to be primary partners in childrearing and domestic responsibilities, so on average they were able to devote longer hours and extensive travel for the sake of their professions. Overall, employers leaned towards hiring men because they were able to work longer hours and required less time off due to domestic issues. Ironically, some of these misconceptions still hold bearing today.

The 1960s introduced the Civil Rights Movement and society realized that women and African Americans had been overlooked in many aspects of the laws being implemented throughout the country. The Civil Rights Movement spanned between 1954 and 1968, spawning campaigns of civil unrest, non-violent protests and civil disobedience. The 1964 Civil Rights



Act of 1964, Voting Rights of 1965 and the 1968 Fair Housing Act required society to look at the injustice taking place in the United States and begin to discuss the need for change.

Unfortunately, the uphill battle for women of all races was not over yet. In 1961, John F. Kennedy proposed the idea of *Affirmative Action* in an attempt to abolish bias based on race when hiring individuals for jobs funded by federal monies. However, many jobs not sponsored by the federal government continued to judge men and women based on the color of their skin and could do so within the constraints of the law. The government began to question segregation and equity laws and it was becoming obvious that equitable change was on the horizon. Meanwhile, African American women sat in the background rejoicing in the national changes despite the acknowledgement that some of the changes they were witnessing in regard to women and equality did not yet pertain to them.

In 1964, laws were adopted that limited the days and hours women were permitted to work. Some states required rest periods, weight lifting guidelines and documentation of how many hours women were allowed to work at night due to their perceived family duties (Dobbin, 2009). The government also had the ability to oversee if a job was appropriate for women under any circumstances they deemed appropriate. It is believed that African American women were victims to employer's who did not want to hire them and were able to exercise that right under the law (Parker, 2005). The discrimination laws increased the amount of jobs that were given to men, largely in part to avoid the legal complications enforced when hiring women. Some believed that the Civil Rights Act decreased the amount of employers who hired women rather than foster equality.

Luckily, many women, regardless of race did not approve of the ongoing degree of discrimination despite legal actions to change. They attempted to forge a path for women to

continue addressing concerns and strive for equality regardless of race, religion or gender. In attempts to improve the rights of women, Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and additional amendments for the advancement of women in the workplace. The Civil Rights Act introduced Title VII, which was created to stop discrimination based on race, religion and gender. Lyndon Johnson and his administration felt that women could be productive employees and beneficial partners in the workforce. With progress came additional struggles and the road to equal opportunity began an upward battle. As women entered the workforce and competed for male dominated jobs, issues arose like pregnancy leave, family flex time, childcare, sexual harassment and equal pay. Lawsuits began to flood courtrooms and new laws and amendments were born.

All aspects of equality whether it be race, religion or gender are filled with evolving, ongoing steps. Vast research and laws continue to surface in an ongoing attempt to forge the barrier between workplace success and family responsibilities. Within the evaluation of gender equality the question of race equality rises to the surface. As time marches on, there is possibility that progress will begin to be seen as needed for both sides of the paradigm, male and female, at which time employees may be viewed the same. However, there are minimal bodies of research to support the experiences of different racial groups in leadership. One of those racial groups is that of the African American Women. It has been over 35 years since the Civil Rights Act was signed and although there has been some improvement; our society is still struggling to decrease discrimination on the basis of gender, race and religion.

### **Statement of Problem**

“Half of the United States population is women and yet only 16-20% of all leadership positions are held by females” (Tarr-Whelan, 2009, p. 2). The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought new

advancements and opportunities for women, and yet society's view towards women in the workplace has not advanced comparatively. Tarr-Whelan (2009) found the following:

Research stated that by 2010, there would be more women than men in the workplace, however, men would occupy over 75% of the executive management positions in Fortune 500 companies. "In the year 2011, the nation's workforce consisted of 46.7% women. African American women consisted of 5.2% of all individuals employed in management and other leadership positions and represent 28% of the Nation's labor force. (Tarr-Whelan, 2009, p. 4-5)

Among Fortune 500 companies in 2011, women of color held 3% of all board seats compared to 13.1% of board seats held by white females of those positions being Board of Director positions of Fortune 500 companies. Some of the obstacles women encounter may stem from internal and societal barriers and discrimination. As African American Women continue to enter leadership positions in both traditional and non-traditional sectors, it is crucial that their experiences be articulated (King & Ferguson, 2001).

The majority of leadership research is based on a stereotypical image of middle-class, Caucasian men and women (Parker, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative that organizations begin to consider how other groups such as African Americans adapt and succeed within society's systems of race, gender and socio-economic levels (King & Ferguson, 2001). Collecting data regarding traits and experiences of African American women in leadership positions may be used to empower potential leaders by providing candidates with the skills to be successful within structures of power (Stanley, 2009).

Discrimination is defined as making a distinction in favor or against a person or thing based on a group, class or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on an

individual's merit. African American women did not begin to join the workforce at a significant percentage until the 1970s (King & Ferguson, 2001). The influx of African American women in leadership has increased and continues to be a topic of discussion as industry begins to evaluate cultural differences within the 21<sup>st</sup> century global community. Researching diverse perspectives of leadership allows us to introduce fresh perspectives on traditional organizational communication issues (Allen, 1997).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This body of research is based on the evolution of African American Women Leaders and the experiences and behaviors they demonstrated as they achieved success in their positions. All intrinsic leaders possess skills that aid in their success. Unlike white men, African American women do not have generations of individuals with years of equal success to compare themselves to, providing even more reason to identify their strengths and create supportive mentoring and coaching material for their predecessors (Byrd, 2008). To collect data, this dissertation hosted interviews and MLQ Questionnaire data of twelve to twenty-one African American Women across six different economic sectors.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions assisted in identifying the key leadership styles and behaviors of African American women leaders who participated in this study as pertinent factors in their success in leadership positions:

1. What are the leadership styles and behaviors of successful African American women as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire?
2. What is the self-perceived leadership style of successful African American Women?

3. Are these styles and behaviors common across different economic sectors or sector specific?

### **Significance of Topic**

With more African American women entering the corporate workforce, an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by African American leaders could prove to be imperative in creating racially diverse working environments. As employers hire culturally diverse employees for executive positions, identifying consistent characteristics amongst African American women may assist corporations in creating equitable and cohesive work environments.

There is an array of data regarding African American women in education and religion but a scarce amount of research pertaining to African American women in leadership positions across multiple economic sectors. The fact that women were successful in the fields of education and religion during the Civil Rights movement has led to a perception that women may have encountered more opportunities in those sectors at the onset of the civil rights movement (Stanley, 2009). Thus posing the question of whether or not women experienced more varying obstacles dependent on the economic sector in which they sought employment. Studies indicate that the face of leadership is changing and African American Women are now holding leadership positions, in however small amounts, in predominately white organizations (Catalyst, 2004). The field of Human Resource Development lacks theoretical foundations that explain how race, gender and social class may affect an individual's experience and potentially alter their capacity to successfully learn and perform (Stanley, 2009).

Interviewing, collecting data and documenting experiences and insights from successful African American women in leadership may assist in expanding data in which to empower new executives joining the workforce. As the percent of women in corporations increases,

expanding the body of data regarding their experiences will assist in transforming society's stereotypical expectations of an effective leader. The antidiscrimination laws, The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1991, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Equal Pay Act, fill courtrooms with examples of bias and discrimination in the workplace. As organizations increase their level of diversity, the need to confirm that discrimination in organizations continues is a vital component in initiating change. (Katz & LaVan, 2004).

Through research and sharing experiences within organizations, racial and gender biases may begin to subside. Collectively, through the years seminal research has been conducted regarding the leadership styles and behaviors of traditional white male leaders, but minimal research has been conducted regarding the identified characteristics of African American women leaders. This study evaluated similarities in both leadership style and behaviors.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Due to a lack of African American women in the workplace prior to 1970, the library of research regarding leadership styles and behaviors is scarce. Many researchers have studied successful African American women in higher education institution, but very little about leadership roles in corporate America where the typical executives are middle-aged, upper class, white males. Some of the data collected to date, stated that the decreased number of African American women in the industry is due to stress factors specific to societal racial challenges. Some of the common documented stressors include (King & Ferguson, 2001):

- Isolation within work organizations
- High visibility due to race and gender
- The need to invest in industry building with more prestigious executives
- Personal overload from participation in two or more cultures

- Pressure to fulfill societal race and gender expectations
- Dealing with the ambiguity of being a leader in non-customary positions
- Accepting the lack of similar mentors

Various researchers refer to additional cultural stress incurred by African American leaders to be brought on by the need to be role models to more than two races (White, African American, Hispanic, and Native American). Despite the commonalities between the stressors reported by African American women and those of their counterparts, it is instrumental in identifying the disconnect associated with power and personal efficacy (King & Ferguson, 2001). The commonalities amongst women in leadership are vast and play a pivotal part in any women's future in leadership regardless of the color of their skin. The feminist movement of the twenty-first century provided us with a United States in which women flew to outer space, directed movies, served in the Supreme Court, ran for president and enlisted in the armed forces (Collins, 2009). Unfortunately, the questions regarding how to balance a household, support a marriage and raise independent children still remains a mystery, but the steps women have taken towards freedom has surpassed the dreams of the feminists that forged amongst the masses towards freedom before them (Collins, 2009). Gloria Steinem, was asked by the New York Times, if a black woman with Obama's qualifications had run for president in 2008, would she have been taken seriously and she answered, " Gender is the most restricting force in American civilization. She stated the question was, who must be in the kitchen rather than who can serve in the white house." (Collins, 2009, p. 29)

## Assumptions

The goal of this dissertation was to provide needed research in assisting future leaders of culturally diverse organizations through the recognition of leadership styles and behaviors of successful Female African American leaders. Patricia Parker (2005) stated that in the new millennium organizations would benefit from (re) conceptualizing leadership through a multicultural perspective. African American women pull strength from their experiences and historical background, known as Afrocentric epistemology. Afrocentric epistemology is based upon the historical connections to the fundamental connections of African American history (i.e., slavery, racial domination, and oppression; Collins, 1996). The historical experiences of African American women emanates with discrimination and facing the intersection of race and gender (Collins, 2009).

Catalyst conducted a study in 2004 titled, *Advancing African-American Women in the Workplace: What Managers Need to Know* that investigated the effects of racism and sexism in the corporate sector. In particular, the study identified the following:

1. African American women in business faced barriers related to race-based stereotypes and lack of company support.
2. African American women encountered a *double outsider* status. Double outsider status identifies that white women and African American man have either gender or race in common with the traditional white male leader. Due to the fact that African American woman do not share either characteristic, they lack a commonality and reports support that they have experienced exclusion from informal networking and discussion in the workplace.



3. African American women felt they were subjected to the historical legacy of slavery. They felt uncomfortable discussing diversity programs and felt opportunities of advancement were declined over time due to the inability to discuss various levels of diversity in the workplace.

Studies regarding the challenges African American Women face have identified a race specific term called the *Concrete Ceiling*. The Glass ceiling has been traditionally a descriptive of the challenges women have faced in the work place to strive to eliminate inequality relating to equal pay and advancement opportunities. The Concrete Ceiling is described as an additional rung in the ladder representing the specific challenges of African American women in the workplace. The Concrete Ceiling has been said to be more difficult to pass through and virtually impossible to see past the obstacles to glimpse a view of the hypothetical corner office (Catalyst, 1999) The premise behind the statement retrieved from the 1999 Catalyst statement represents the historical barriers and impositions that block African American women from obtaining their goals in the workplace. Research supports that the backgrounds and racial struggles of African American woman were closely tied to their success in the workplace (Gaetane, Williams & Sherman, 2009). Utilizing an Afrocentric epistemological framework, the experiences of “African American women provides an in-depth understanding of the intersectionality of race and gender. Intersectionality provides a breadth of explanation of how life experiences, race, class and gender represent indicators for power and sometimes forms of oppression” (Collins, 2000, as cited in Alson, 2005, p. 677).

Historically in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there have been more examples and research of white women succeeding in the workplace, providing exposure and common comparison for young woman entering the workforce to aspire to follow and emulate. Despite strides in race and

gender growth, there still remains to be minimal examples of successful African American women in Corporate America for young women to mentor and emulate, thus the comment regarding the Concrete ceiling providing less ability to see themselves in a large corporate office in the corner, running the organization.

As more research is obtained and the percentage of African American women running Fortune 500 corporations increases, we may begin to see a shift in the race/gender paradox.

### **Definition of Terms**

Various terms related to race and gender equality will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

The following defined terms are:

- *African American*: this term refers to an American citizen from African decent; may also be referred to as Black.
- *Afrocentric*: this term refers to topics that emphasize the African culture.
- *Attributes*: this term refers to skills, leadership styles and behavior.
- *Culturally Diverse*- this term refers to the quality of diverse or different cultures, as opposed to a monoculture.
- *Epistemology*- this term refers to the study of knowledge in reference to limits and validity.
- *Ethnography*- this term refers to a qualitative study in which a cultural group is studied in their environment over a period of time.
- *Phenomenological*- this term refers to a qualitative study in which research is conducted regarding a phenomenon explained by participants.
- *Predominately White Institution*- this term refers to institutions that traditionally consist of a white student body.

- *Predominately White Organization*- this term refers to corporations and or organizations that traditionally consist of white employees.
- *Women of Color*- this term refers to women belonging to a racial group not categorized as Caucasian.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduced the topic of African American women in leadership, describes the problem, presents the research questions, outlines key definitions, highlighted the research limitations and assumptions, and discussed the significance of the study.
- Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature relevant to this study, which includes a history of the feminist movement, suffrages, and sex/gender differences and an overview of various leadership styles and behaviors.
- Chapter 3 outlines research methodology, which includes an overview of the survey and interview process, research design and the selection process of participants.
- Chapter 4 includes data and profiles of the selected participants across six disciplines and analysis of collected data.
- Chapter 5 summarizes the study and discusses the data collected in a conclusion format. Future research recommendations are included.

### **Summary**

Chapter one encompassed the (a) the problem, (b) the purpose of the study, (c) research questions, (d) significance of the study, (e) assumptions posed from the study, (f) limitations of the research, (g) definitions of research terms, and (h) an outline of the research process. The low numbers of African American in leadership positions continues to be much lower than those

of other gender/race subgroups. Despite the increase in the number of African American woman graduating from college and entering the workforce, only a minute amount go on to work in the highest ranks of Corporate America. The purpose of this study is to identify the leadership styles and behaviors utilized by African American women executives across different economic sectors. The use of historical obstacles and cultural traditions will be reviewed and discussed as possible attributes that contribute to the skills of African American Women Executives.

Three research questions provide the framework of the study and guide the fundamental design and organization of data collected through interviews and participant survey participation. The research questions focus on identifying styles and behaviors that aid to the advancement of African American women in the workplace.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone. Whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life – all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that create something.

-Sandra Day O'Connor, *Sandra Day O'Connor: U.S. Supreme Court Justice, 2009*

### Introduction

It is through collaboration, mentoring and seeking the knowledge of those that trench the untraveled roads before us that give us the strength and knowledge to find our own destiny. The following study of Leadership Styles and Behaviors is a study of a group of women who have found success and have taken the time to share their stories in the hope of opening doors for those that will come after that were not open to them.

Chapter 2 Literature Review consists of:

- a) Introduction
- b) Background History
- c) Advancement and Movement
- d) Perceptions of Women in the Workplace
- e) Diversity in the Workplace
- f) Summary

### Background History

“In the year 2000, the nation's workforce consisted of 46.5% women with only 11.7% of those jobs being board of director positions of Fortune 500 companies” (Gregory, 2003, p. 2).

As more women climb the ranks of business corporations there still remains to be an imbalance between advancement opportunities for women vs. men. More women are in the workforce

than ever before and yet society still envisions men in the driving role of business corporations. There are various misconceptions surrounding success of women in business. Some of the obstacles women encounter are due to internal barriers and some are from societal stereotypes that stem from previous decades.

The Civil Rights Movement paved the way for equality throughout the country. The government attempted to initiate laws for equal opportunities for women. With laws ranging from the type of responsibilities and number of hours women were allowed to work. All of these decisions were made by the employer and provided legal loopholes to discriminate against women without breaking the law. Although these laws were created to protect women, they led to increased discrimination instead. The discrimination laws increased the amount of jobs that were given to men, largely in part to avoid the legal complications enforced when hiring women. Some believe that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 decreased the amount of employers who hired women rather than foster equality. Many corporations chose not to hire women as to avoid additional paper work and government involvement and they were able to do so without breaking any laws at the time.

Although laws and societal views began to change after the Civil Rights Amendment, success for women in the workplace came with a price. Some of the statistics from the Civil Rights movement surprisingly continued to view women as second-class citizens. There were various examples of gender discrimination such as; until 1970, women could be fired for becoming pregnant. There was no paid maternity leave at the time and no guarantees that if a woman chose to stay home for six weeks without pay that her job would be available upon her return. The workforce felt that pregnancy was voluntary and therefore should not be covered under insurance or job security. For many women, becoming pregnant equated to quitting their

jobs and ending their careers. Congress responded to this issue by creating the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) in 1970. This amendment ensured that a woman could not be fired due to pregnancy and that all pregnancy medical concerns must be covered like any other employee health issue. The Act required that employers could not refuse to hire a woman based on the fact she was pregnant as long as she would still be able to complete the job in which she was hired.

If a woman was unable to perform her current job responsibilities the company was required to institute temporary disability laws until after the pregnancy; at which time the employee was able to resume regular job duties. The Pregnancy Act also addressed the inability to not hire or promote a woman based solely on whether a candidate was pregnant or not. The PDA Act created a new advancement for women in the workplace. The laws represented by the Act would forge new frontier for integrating woman into leadership positions. Women would no longer have to choose work over family or vice versa.

With the support of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act came the issue of maternity leaves and flex time in 1978. France instituted maternity leaves in 1913 and the United States followed just a short 65 years later with the PDA Act. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) followed in 1993, when men began to sue for equal rights to spend time with their families after a birth, adoption, or illness of a family member. The Family and Medical Leave Act provides unpaid leave up to 12 weeks without jeopardizing your job status. Providing work environments, The Civil Rights Movement paved the way for equality throughout the country. The government attempted to initiate laws for equal opportunities for women. With laws ranging from the type of responsibilities and number of hours women were allowed to work. All that are conducive to

assisting with the well being of employees are filled with a plethora of laws, amendments and court cases.

All aspects of equality whether it be race, religion or gender are filled with evolving, ongoing steps. Numerous research and acts continue to surface in an ongoing attempt to forge the barrier between workplace success and family responsibilities. The process of balancing professional and personal aspects continues to challenge leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Gregory, 2003).

The results of the civil rights movement, Title VII Civil Rights Act 1964, made it illegal for companies to participate in activities that discriminated against employees on the basis of race, color, gender, religion and or nationality. In 1965, Title VII was amended to include the subgroups of age and disability to the discriminated groups in which legal action could be enforced (Kochan et al., 2003.) The act was written to ensure companies and organizations provide employees the opportunity to work in an environment that does not discriminate. Despite the Acts of 1964 and 1965, women and minority groups continue to face obstacles in the workplace.

### **Advancement vs. Movement**

There is no doubt that the plight of women has improved through the centuries from that of our founding first ladies. In some countries women are still viewed as property and very few receive formal education. Millions of women and children, throughout the world are sold and traded as slaves in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and arranged marriages still occur against the wishes of the bride in various households across the world every day. In comparison to some cases in the world, there is no doubt that American Women have more opportunities and civil rights than those of some of their counterparts. However, although their plight may appear more promising



than some, it should not validate complacency.

Despite the acknowledgement of the inequality of women throughout the world, change is still stagnant in regards to equal pay promotion and presence in government and corporate environments. Women make up over 50 % of all college graduates and yet they fall far behind in representation in the workforce throughout the world (Sandberg, 2013). Out of 195 countries, women run only 17 and only 20% of global parliament seats. Although more women are graduating from college and in many countries surpass the graduation rate of men, the number of women in corporate America has remained low for the last two decades (Buckalew et al., 2012). As of 2012, 21 women held CEO positions in Fortune 500 companies, with 14% in executive office positions, 18% elected positions and 17% board positions (Sepand, 2015). The numbers drop even more drastically when reviewing the statistics for African American women in the same positions. Women of Color hold only 4% of corporate positions, 5% elected positions and 3 % board positions. The proverbial glass ceiling has appeared to have reached new heights, with women continuously failing to slide up the reins and grab what they have strived to obtain academically in comparison to their male counterparts.

Monetary compensation continues to fall short as well with women earning 77 cents for every dollar a man earns (Gornick & Hegewisch, 2011). Over the span of 41 years, the salary for women has increase 18 cents. (Gornick & Hegewisch, 2011). The numbers are sobering as we continue to watch women enter academic institutions, only to be faced with similar disappointment as the suffragettes pioneers faced years ago. The suffrage leaders that forged their way for the rights of women dates back to the 1800s when a handful of brave women dared to verbalize the inequality of the sexes (Baker, 2006). Their sacrifices have been left out of most history books, but their work is interwoven throughout the majesty of opportunity available to

women today. Dating back as far as 1848, brave women such as Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton campaigned for a woman's right to vote, have fair child custody rights, equal education opportunities and dress reform to name a few (Baker, 2006). The women of the suffrage combined their efforts under the united front of the right to vote by the 1860's and suspended their efforts during the Civil War to support their troops and government (Baker, 2006). Despite the suspension of visible efforts their perseverance had not wavered. The Sisters of Suffrage reunited after the war and banded together to support the efforts of the Emancipation of Slaves. For several years after that, the plight of the Suffrage Sisters aligned closely with that of African American slaves. They aligned themselves to the same moral code and rights for both women and African American as they found their civil liberties and desires aligned. From 1885 to 1910, the movement traveled across the United States lobbying for the right for women to vote and in turn address the need for equal education opportunities and fair pay to name a few (Baker, 2006). Some believe that while African American slaves had the voices of some white males to fight for their liberties, the Suffrage sisters had only themselves (Baker, 2006). Their work would go unacknowledged for numerous decades, but their efforts would not die in vain, for the steps they marched to change the plot of the American woman would take shape in the centuries to follow.

### **Perceptions of Women in the Workplace**

So, why despite all the advancements throughout history to provide women with the same opportunities as men in the workplace do we continue to choose men for the job? It appears to stem from the very basic ways in which society views the sexes. Despite education and experience, it appears that the human mind is wired to view males and females a certain

way. A research study sponsored by IBM addressed some of the dilemmas facing women in the workplace. (Tarr-Whelan, 2009).

The study addressed three principles:

1. Perception- women are perceived as too sensitive and indecisive, but if they demonstrate strong will or decisiveness, they are labeled as cold-blooded or insensitive. Many male and female employees have stated that they feel uncomfortable and intimidated by assertive female leaders.
2. Higher Threshold – women are held to a higher standard in the workplace. Many female executives state that they have to work twice as hard to be acknowledged for their efforts and to be considered for promotions as men.
3. Competent vs. Personable – when women display “typical male” leadership behaviors, such as decision making, assertiveness and being proactive, they are perceived as not personable or too pushy. The same behaviors displayed by a man are consistently perceived as those of a strong, dependable leader.

In *What's Holding Women Back?* (Wellington, Kropf, & Gerkovich, 2003), a Catalyst survey investigated the barriers towards advancement based on an instrument they called, *The Perception Gap*. The Perception Gap (Wellington et al., 2003) identified that despite the increase of female executives who share the same educational backgrounds; the societal perception differences remain vast. The Catalyst research stated that the lack of advancement opportunities has little to do with educational background and more to do with barriers out of their control, such as: exclusion from informal networks, lack of female role models, lack of accountability on the part of senior leadership and limited visibility. Of the group surveyed by Catalyst, two-thirds of the women and more than half of the male CEOs agreed that male senior

management repeatedly fails to assume responsibility to provide balanced treatment and training for both men and women executives. Although, some of the imbalance is unconsciously executed, its effects on insuring balanced advancement for both genders are crucial (Wellington et al, 2003).

For many women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the issue has become how to break through the perceived views of leadership qualities in men and women and attempt to change them. Some women executives argue, that the issue at hand is not to learn the stereotypes and outsmart them, but rather to demand that society no longer acknowledge them, by forcing employers to accept candidates for the qualities they have. In *Big Girl's Don't Cry: The Election that Changed Everything for American Women* by Rebecca Traister (2010), the complex dichotomy of gender bias was investigated. Hilary Clinton gave a valiant fight in confronting not only men's bias regarding women in power, but fellow women's fear of supporting one of their own through the treacherous fields of change (Traister, 2010). Throughout the campaign, Hilary faced verbal and written attacks too despairing to repeat here on paper. The media attacked not only her character, but also her appearance. Many attacked Hilary for her assertiveness, her ability to field off attacks from the media and her constituents. Many felt her campaign depicted the need for more work to be done in gender equality as women continue to forge into male dominated industries. Ironically, female presidents have successfully served in other countries with less discord than that exhibited in Hilary Clinton's attempt to win a US Presidential candidacy (Traister, 2010).

Traister (2010) stated that Pat Schroeder responded regarding her campaign for Congresswoman of Colorado as saying: "Inasmuch as a female candidate could exercise choice in how to present herself, the decision was often to try to pass as masculine. To come across as

traditionally female, and thereby not traditionally powerful, was to call into question an ability to command, to defend the nation, be taken seriously by world leaders (p.70)”.

For many, the mindboggling game that renders necessary to achieve high level positions in our country have become too overwhelming for some to continue to pursue.

Various female leaders have identified the need to acknowledge their objectives and create external supports to aid in success as one of the primary keys to facing the “Leadership Gap” in the workplace. The leadership gap is a phenomenon in which women are identified in a large percentage of lower-level leadership positions than men (Powell & Graves, 2003). Although the barriers are typically perceived as bias towards women, the concept may affect other ethnic and racial groups (Northouse, 2010). There are various opinions on how to alleviate the leadership gap, one being to expand the list of potential candidates. Promoting a diverse group of women in leadership roles assists in creating greater productivity (Northouse, 2010). Implementing this concept supports the need to expand gender and race diversity in the workplace. Catalyst 2004 study (as cited in Northouse, 2010) states that as the number of women in leadership increases, so will overall financial success.

There are numerous theories on how to bridge the Leadership Gap, one being to decrease pressures that prevent women from accepting high-level positions by implementing methods that motivate and empower women to succeed. Meaning was as a focal point of motivation for female leaders in *How Remarkable Women Lead* by Barsch, Cranston and Lewis. Their research supports the idea that meaning inspires female leaders and aids in their ability to lead through creative and memorable approaches. Instilling a sense of purpose and laying a solid framework in which to achieve their objectives. Barsch, Cranston, and Lewis (2009) present five principals that they have identified as paramount for a woman’s success in leadership.

1. Meaning- identifying the paramount purpose of their personal and professional goals. Acknowledging what inspires an individual to persevere is the primary foundation of their principals. By identifying the meaning, Barsch et al. (2009) recommends utilizing it as an anchor throughout the process.
2. Framing- outlining a course of action and determining the manner in which to execute your goals.
3. Connecting- locating mentors and creating fellowship with other like-minded women. For many women the pull to be home with their families is a strong deterrent to pursuing leadership positions. Providing opportunities to work and talk with women battling the same questions and concerns may assist in creating a balance between work and home. (Barsch et al.,2009).
4. Engaging- taking ownership of opportunities. Be assertive and voice your opinion. Face down your fears. (Barsch et al., 2009, p.10)
5. Energizing- learn to balance family and community responsibilities to ensure long-term success. Barsch et al. (2009) states that the combination of all 5 principles creates a sense of energy when women can visualize a successful balance in their lives. The primary objective for any leader regardless of race or gender is perseverance, too often society, questions a women's right to utilize that attribute.

As women continue to strive for advancement in the workplace, individuals will need to consciously strive to overcome some of society's innate views on gender. In the studies conducted by Kate Ludeman and Eddie Erlandson (2006) and the Alpha Male Syndrome, they investigated the societal expectations of both male and female leaders. Their research has created a foundation in which woman in the workplace can integrate into their coaching and

future approach for moving up the corporate ladder. The Alpha Syndrome pyramid addresses four different types of alpha tendencies that are apparent in both males and females. The difference is in how the sexes demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of each type. The research collected by Ludeman and Erlandson is used in various coaching practices throughout the nation. The Alpha Syndrome pyramid is also used as a coaching tool to empower women on how to address different personalities in the workplace. Alpha tendencies and types are both positive and negative (Erlandson & Ludeman, 2006).

The four types are:

1. The Commander- Decisive, authoritative, charismatic
  - Strength: The commander is a born leader. He or she sets the tone for the team and empowers others to meet the company's goals at any cost. Commander Alphas are usually charismatic, decisive and empowering.
  - Weakness: In a commanders attempt to motivate and lead a group, they can sometimes be domineering and push their employees too hard; resulting in burnout and increased turnover. They can also be too competitive to the detriment of a team or company.

A typical Male Commander vs. Female Commander: Although a female commander may have all of the above strengths and weaknesses, she tends to pay attention to how she treats others more than men do. She may be driven by her mission, but she is more likely to motivate instead of dominant. Research has also repeatedly stated that female commanders soften their aggression with maternal nurturing (Erlandson & Lederman, 2006).

2. The Visionary- High Standards, trusts instincts

- Strength: Visionaries are big thinkers. They are known as dreamers with ingenious ideas. He or she sees into the future. They are known for moving organizations in new and profound directions. They encourage others to follow their dreams as well.
- Weakness: Visionaries come across as arrogant and overly opinionated at times. They are sometimes known as being seen as wasting time trying to chase unattainable goals. In their attempt to make their dreams come true they sometimes lose sight of the resources and steps needed to obtain their goals.

A typical Male Visionary vs. Female Visionary: Female visionaries tend to ignore the naysayers comments, but instead of becoming frustrated like the male visionaries, they tend to collaborate with the team and expand their ideas and goals. An example of a successful visionary is Meg Whitman, who took her idea of E-bay to investors for support. When the investors responded with hesitation Meg collaborated with other founders and investors to support her ideas and strengthen her proposal. Unlike typical male visionaries, she didn't give up, instead she collaborated and expanded her vision and EBay was launched (Erlandson & Luderman, 2006).

### 3. The Strategist- objective, analytic, data driven

- Strength: The strategist is a systematic, methodical, brilliant thinker, who is data and fact driven. The traditional strategist has the ability to see pattern and problems before conflict ensues.
- Weakness: The strategists' attempts to solve problems. Strategists are often viewed as opinionated and unwilling to collaborate well with others. They are unlikely to share their feelings or connect emotionally on a professional and personal level.



A typical Male Strategist vs. Female Strategist: Female strategists have the ability to be analytical without being viewed as opinionated and stubborn. They need to develop their tools before utilizing them to persuade others. They are motivated by their personal achievements more than receiving status and success from outside factors. One of the most prominent differences of a female strategist is their ability to balance head and heart professionally and personally (Erlandson & Luderman, 2006).

#### 4. Executor-disciplined, action oriented, facilitates teamwork

- Strength: Executors are the individuals on the team that ensure things get done well and on time. Executors are accountable and dependable. They are results driven and are very efficient at motivating others to complete tasks promptly and efficiently.
- Weakness: In an executors attempt to get things done, they are sometimes known for being micromanagers and having unrealistic expectations. They are known for seeing only one side of the situation versus the big picture. They can be impatient and easily discouraged when faced with negative outcomes.

A typical Male Executor vs. Female Executor: Unlike the male executor, their female counterpart is able to cajole and motivate employees to achieve the goal objectives without micromanaging. The female executor usually has the ability to minimize bad news while empowering those around her to get the job done (Erlandson & Luderman, 2006).

The attributes of alpha males and females can play a fundamental part in how women approach success in the workplace. Although the study of male and female alpha traits is not a finite science, it does provide a basis in which to learn about personalities on a broader plane (Erlandson & Ludeman, 2006). Being familiar with the different types of personalities can be

instrumental in creating a positive work environment. Through studying different types of leadership styles and personalities, a leader is able to organize and implement their marketing approach in any boardroom. The objective for many climbing the corporate ladder is the need to know what makes people strive for success to integrate different personalities and styles to achieve goals.

Women integrate a combination of transformational and transactional leadership and tend to possess communal qualities more than agentic qualities, routinely exhibited by men. (Carli & Eagley, 2007) Communal qualities demonstrate compassion, empathy and kindness. Agentic qualities demonstrate assertiveness, ambition, dominance, and self-confidence. Although women may demonstrate both sets of qualities, one gender tends to innately move towards one or the other. Ironically like some of the other misconceptions, women who demonstrate agentic characteristics are often thought of as pushy or too aggressive. While a male demonstrating the same traits is often considered charismatic and a productive leader. The possibility that men and women may present different leadership styles supports the concept that a leaders' behavior is a major cursor of their effectiveness and chance for advancement (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

In an attempt to bridge the gender divide, studies support the idea that transformational leadership is a feminine style. Although, transformational leadership is an effective style for men as well, it may be more imperative that women possess these skills to offset the societal responses regarding assertive female leaders (Eagley et al, 2003). Research conducted by Carli & Eagley (2007) supports the idea that women are often disliked and considered untrustworthy when filling leadership roles that exert authority over males. Negative connections with females in leadership may be lessened when combined with expressions of empathy, support and a caring

smile (Eagley et al, 2003). It is apparent that the attributes required to succeed as a woman in leadership are a complex dual combination of both masculine and feminine characteristics.

Both men and women portray transformational leadership styles, but studies present the possibility that various innate female behaviors may lend themselves to various transformational leadership characteristics. Women are more prone to transformational leadership due to their interpersonal skills in mentoring and building effective leaders (Spruell, 2012). Walker (2011) expresses the concept that transformational leadership challenges the behavior and self esteem of both the follower and the leader. It was not until the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century that society began to report data regarding women in leadership, with even less documented about African American leaders (Chemers, 1997). Collectively researchers hope to generate leadership interest amongst African American women and collect more data in which to successfully transcend the racial lines (Walker, 2011). Women tend to possess individual styles that accent encouragement, participation, excitement and the desire to inspire others to achieve, all of which are exemplary leadership qualities. For many studies the question is whether or not the behaviors displayed by some women are independently feminine or masculine behaviors, or rather a combination of both.

Women in Leadership ranging from Meg Whitman to Margaret Thatcher agree that it takes a combination of male and female behaviors to be a successful leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Leadership used to be defined as power distributed in a pyramid starting from the top down, but the 21<sup>st</sup> Century brings a new approach to leadership in which collaboration and empowerment takes a front seat to working with employees and colleagues. Daniel Goleman (1998) presents the need to display sensitivity and empathy in the workplace to increase productivity and success. Goleman's theories are supported throughout behavioral and Alpha personality studies.

The ability to support and nurture a healthy organizational culture is becoming a common request in large corporations, such as IBM, Pixar and Google. (Goleman, 1998) Healthy work environments breed trust and cooperation where employees are able to collaborate and expand their ideas with the support of their colleagues. Theorists support the idea that male and female leaders working together create more dynamic and creative outcomes.

Carl Jung believed that each person consists of male and female energies that together create a balanced person. When studying various successful female leaders it is imperative that they possess empathy as much as they possess the ability to be decisive and assertive. The key to success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for women may be finding the balance between both egos and implementing them to their fullest potential.

The National Center for Education Statistics states that women earn 58% of all Undergraduate and Master's degrees (Freeman, 2004). With the increase of women obtaining further education it is becoming imperative that society embraces the unrecognized talents of women. One question that remains unsolved in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is whether or not the skills that our leaders need to succeed are truly gender specific.

### **Leadership Styles and Behaviors**

The study of leadership and what defines an effective leader has been a subject for research for over 75 years (Vinger & Cilliers, 2006). Despite thorough research, there has been no definitive answer to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders. This study is implementing the factors of transformational leadership as presented in the Full Range of Leadership Model identified by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ measures the behavior in seven different areas: (a) individualized influence (b) Charisma (c) inspirational

motivation (d) intellectual stimulation (e) individualized consideration (f) contingent reward (g) management-by-exception and (h) laissez-faire.

High scores in the areas of motivation and intellectual stimulation on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is a strong indicator of being a transformational leader (Northouse, 2014).

In a meta-analysis study by Eagly and Johnnassen (2003), their research showed that the women leaders who participated in the study were more prone to demonstrate transformational leadership characteristics than their male counterparts. Women tended to participate in more of the contingent transactional leadership behaviors. Men tended to be more transactional and laissez-faire in the study. Despite the fact that the differences between men and women in the study were minimal, their findings in regards to women in leadership were optimistic in that the women leaders tended to be more successful in their interaction with employees and productivity due to their ability to relate and acknowledge personal and professional needs and concerns as often characteristic of transformational leadership (Eagly, Johnnassen, & Van Engen, 2003).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership was first introduced in an article titled, “Rebel Leadership” in 1973 by Downton (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership is defined as leadership that emanates trust and loyalty amongst employees and work teams.

Transformational leaders empower employees to strive to achieve beyond their initial expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1994b). The component of Transformational leadership creates an intrinsic motivation to transform change and generate self-motivated productivity in the workplace. Followers’ are more receptive to transformational leadership more so than other styles because their values, morals, professional goals and ambitions are often put into

consideration by a transformational leader with whom they are directly reporting to. Followers often coached to form relationships in the workplace and with the components of transformational leadership they are encouraged to engage with each other, discuss commonalities and strive to work together to increase their capacity to institute paramount change (Northouse, 2014).

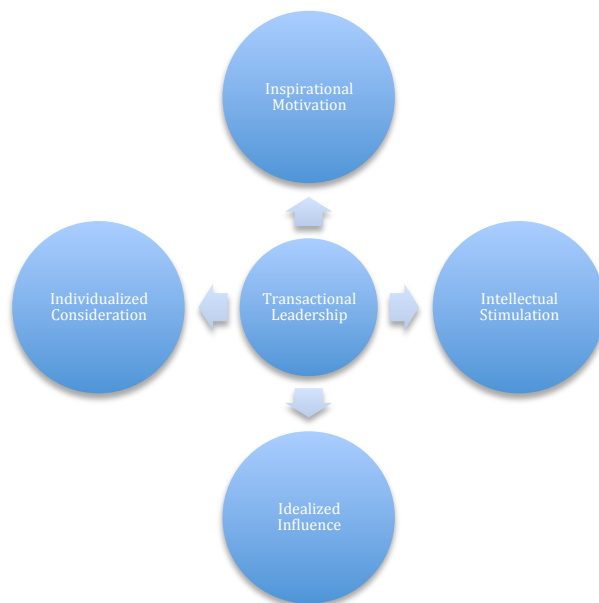
There are four transformational leadership components (Avolio, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1994):

1. Idealized Influence (charisma) – provides role models that display strong leadership behavior that employees wish to follow (Bass & Avolio, 1994).
2. Individualized Consideration – provides support for individualized training that ensures future opportunities due to increased trust in the future.
3. Intellectual Stimulation – providing followers with the desire to be creative and view problems from a different perspective.
4. Inspiration Motivation – Modeling behaviors that develop a new creative way of communication using symbols and images (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Gandhi, Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy are a few of the names that theorists have used as examples of transformational leaders (Northouse, 2014). Charismatic and Visionary leadership often closely align with transformational leadership as well. Charismatic Leadership is very similar to transformational leadership, but it defines the leader as having innate gifts that allow them to inspire and accomplish extraordinary change (Northouse, 2014). In addition to possessing innate abilities to motivate and inspire others, charismatic leaders demonstrate strength, confidence and a strong sense of value and urgency that attracts followers to follow and participate in their efforts to transform. The four traits identified in Charismatic

Leadership are dominant, desire to influence, self-confident and strong moral values (Northouse, 2014). Northouse (2014) states that Charismatic Leaders must emphasize the intrinsic rewards and deemphasize the extrinsic rewards. In short, Charismatic leadership is effective because it assist the followers to find identity and personal cause in their work and organization (Northouse, 2014).

Visionary leadership is the other add-on discussed as a complimentary thread of transformational leadership. Some theorists challenge the validity of visionary leaders stating they are just extraordinary minds or scientists like Albert Einstein. However, there are researchers that believe there are leaders that take their leadership aptitude to another level in which they provide a vision for an entire corporation or environment. Their thoughts are often too vast for the general public to believe at first until they become a reality. Some have called Bill Gates and Steve Jobs visionaries as their ideas for the future of technology seemed obscure at first and now have become a staple in numerous households across the world (Kahney, 2009).



*Figure 1.* Elements of transformational leadership

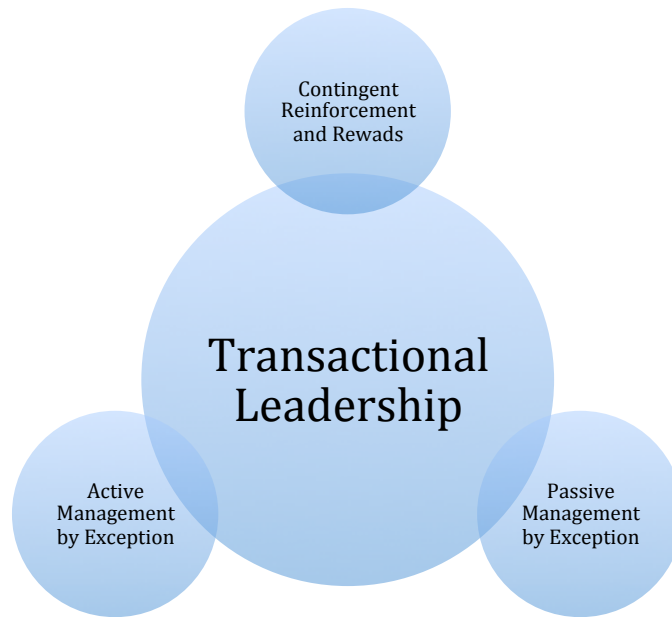
## **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional Leaders do not intertwine the personal morals or needs of their employees or followers to enlist their assistance with a job. Transactional leadership is based on the foundation of many leadership styles in that it is based on a reward system. The employee participates in work activities because they will receive something such as a promotion or bonus as compensation for their efforts. Unlike transformational leadership, the rewards of transactional leadership are seldom intrinsic in nature. Transactional leaders provide incentive to followers based on benefits they will receive personally.

Transactional leadership is based on three major elements:

1. **Contingent Rewards-** An exchange between leaders and followers to gain reward for effort. An example is the interaction between a manager who promotes a bonus program for employees that sell a predetermined amount. The employee is driven by the monetary reward and achieves on that basis.
2. **Management by Exception-** This form of exchange has two types, passive and active. An active management by exception example would be that of the leader who micro manages her employees and corrects them at all times if they do not meet her expectations. This form of leadership usually utilizes negative feedback and reinforcement when working with employees or followers (Northouse, 2013).
3. **Passive management by exception** example is a manager who does not tell an employee they are not meeting expectations until they are written up for corrective action or fired.





*Figure 2:* Elements of transactional leadership

Bass supports a combination of transactional and transformational leadership together as he feels the two compliment each other (Vinger & Cilliers, 2006).

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership**

The last in the Full Range of Leadership Model is the Non-leadership factor called Laissez-Faire leadership. Laissez-Faire leadership is based on the French meaning of “deliberate abstinence of involvement” (Northouse, 2013). An example of Laissez-Faire Leadership would be a manager who never trains or informs employees of changes or expectations. This form of leadership provides very little if no support for employees to learn or prosper within the workplace.

### **Leadership Traits/Behaviors**

The trait approach to leadership has been a phenomenon since the twentieth-century when researchers began to question if great leaders were born with leadership traits or if they are

acquired. The theory was called The Great Man theory, because it was based on the great leaders such as Gandhi, Lincoln and Joan of Arc (Northouse, 2013). Research supported the idea that great leaders were born leaders and that leaders could not learn how to lead. Many researchers did not agree with that conclusion and proceeded to do further studies. After years of research, studies have compared leaders and followers and looked for significant differences. Despite the differences, research supports the idea that traits are merely a part of a more complex combination for success (Ricketts, 2009). Modern theorists support the concept that leadership is a combination of traits, behaviors/styles and situational characteristics (Ricketts, 2009). Stodgily (1974) conducted surveys that supported the theory that leaders do not make great leaders just because they possess specific behaviors but rather the behaviors must be relevant to the leadership situation as well. (Northouse, 2014).

Table 1  
Studies of Leadership Traits and Behaviors

Theorists	Leadership Traits/Behaviors
Stodgily (1948)	Intelligence, Alertness, Insight, Responsibility, Initiative, persistence, self-confidence, sociability
Mann (1959)	Intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion, conservatism
Stodgily (1974)	Achievement, Persistence, Insight, Initiative, Self-Confidence, Responsibility, Cooperativeness, Tolerance, Influence, Sociability
Lord, DeVader and Alliger (1986)	Intelligence, masculinity, dominance
Kirkpatrick (1991)	Drive, Motivation, Integrity, Confidence, Cognitive Ability, Task Knowledge
Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader (2004)	Cognitive Abilities, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness, Agreeable, Motivation, Social Intelligence, Self-Monitoring, Emotional Intelligence, Problem Solving

*Note: Studies of Leadership Traits and Behaviors (Northouse, 2013)*

Table 1 contains years of research from theorists that have conducted numerous interviews and discussions in search of what they feel are the pivotal leadership behaviors and how they are attained. Despite the ongoing discussion of whether or not behaviors are learned or innate, one thing the majority of researchers agree on is the fact that a great leader does not succeed with behaviors and styles alone. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996) provided supporting research on the theory that leaders tend to possess different traits than those of their followers.

Stodgily defined the concept that great leaders must demonstrate a combination of leadership styles and behaviors that are specifically helpful for the situation. With that theory, Stodgily supported that a successful leader in one situation, may not be successful in another. Stodgill's theory stifled his ability to identify one set of traits as those needed to be a successful leader (Northouse, 2014).

John Kotter's research also investigated other components that he felt were needed in conjunction with leadership traits to make a great leader. Dr. Kotter identified the need to integrate the whole individual (i.e.; personal background, skills and abilities) and a desire to continue to improve as a leader, thus his reference to lifelong learning (Kotter, 1996). Dr. Kotter's research supports the study of African American women in the workplace as their personal background and competitive drive from both internal and external challenges may affect their leadership style and success. Table 3 provides an overview of Dr. Kotter's principles from his book, *Leading Change*.

<p><b><u>Personal History</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inborn Capabilities</li> <li>• Childhood Experiences</li> <li>• Job and educational Experiences</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Competitive Drive</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of Standards</li> <li>• Desire to do well</li> <li>• Self-confidence in competitive situations</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Life Long Learning</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to seek new challenges</li> <li>• Willingness to reflect honestly on success and failures</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Skills and Abilities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• Leadership Skills</li> <li>• Other Skills</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Competitive Capacity</u></b>          Capability of dealing with an increasingly competitive and fast-moving economic environment.</p>

*Figure 3:* The relationship of lifelong learning, leadership skills and the capacity to succeed in the future

### **Perceptions of African American Women in the Workplace**

There is minimal data pertaining to successful African American women in corporate leadership. Traditionally, all races were placed in the general context of one race and gender, women. However, when Women of color began to seek mentoring and coaching to ascend the corporate ladder they encountered a lack of knowledge to assist them in their quest. Similar to the data obtained about women not having the opportunities to be accepted in predominately male activities and groups that enhance male camaraderie, etc. there may be challenges specific to that of the African American female. As more Women of Color step up into leadership positions, specifically for the sake of this study, African American women, it is imperative we begin to bridge the gap.

Linda La Rue, a black commentator, once said, “White Women are suppressed and Black are oppressed ” (Collins, 2009, p. 203). Regardless of society’s view on Women’s rights, the lineage of women black and white who have campaigned for freedom was long and sometimes treacherous.

Despite support from white males and females to open doors for African American women, the challenge often unspoken is that within the African American race itself (Collins, 2009). Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress in 1968, said that as a black person, she was no stranger to prejudice, but what she was not prepared for was the discrimination she faced from her own culture. Ms. Chisholm ran against an African American man who was a former Freedom Rider. Her opponent did not stand on platform of wanting a African American voice in Congress, but rather the voice of a man (Collins, 2009). Ms. Chisholm was humbled by the fact that she felt she had been discriminated far more during her career because she was a woman than for the color of her skin (Collins, 2009).

Melissa Korn (2013) of the Wall Street Journal stated in her article *Black Women Leaders Face More Criticism* employees are more likely to be allegiant to leaders that resemble a white male in time of crisis. She referenced the reality that black males and white females have one common characteristic with a typical white male leader, but black women do not, leaving them at a disadvantage according to her research (Korn, 2013).

The Woman’s Movement is filled with numerous names that fought and continue to fight for equal rights for all women. Pioneers like Jeannette Rankin, Molly Yard, Virginia Woolf, Margaret Atwood and Gloria Steinem fought for women’s rights regardless of the color of the their skin. Overcoming sexism and racism creates a dichotomy that African American women

must encompass in their day-to-day life. Women like Ms. Chisholm raise the question that African American women need not only be prepared to face the possible disapproval of those non-African American colleagues, but those of their own race as well (Perry & Gundersen, 2011). Some researchers believe that success for African American executives is based more on how they face the seismic balance between racial prejudice and gender inequality than the dynamic of the leadership position itself (Perry & Gundersen, 2011). As African Americans have moved through the realms of secondary to first class equality the question has often been posed whether the individual needs to change or the environment in which they find themselves.

Providing data and role models specific to an individual race may provide insight and experiences that diminishes in the success of future female leaders and the diverse cultural makeup of 21<sup>st</sup> Century organizations. Some of the data collected in this study may provide insight to mainstreaming mentoring to address the needs of future leaders. “It is tempting to think that African American women were born with more courage or resourcefulness. But that’s no more true than any other stereotype. The values that have assisted African American women in survival are communicable” (Hine & Thompson, 1998, p. 308).

This provocative statement portrays the voices of two historians that have chronicled the lives of African American women from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their findings identified a need to learn about the culture and the attributes innate or acquired, not to separate, but provide a common ground in which to advance within a culturally diverse world (Hine & Thompson, 1998).

In the book, *Black Womanist Leadership: Tracing the Motherline* by King and Ferguson, various theories of leadership amongst African American Women were reviewed. King and Ferguson (2009) acknowledge theoretical leadership principles as

deriving through experiences and cultural views. Throughout the lineage of African American women there stems a strong emphasis to that of mothers and women, often referred to as the Motherline. The Motherline signifies an intergenerational chain of women who raised and sheltered their own and others children. Mothers are mothers regardless of their race, but there is some research that supports the fact that due to slavery, oppression, racism and other variables, African American women predominately held the role of both matriarch and patriarch in the home. It was not uncommon for aunts, grandmothers, and friends to assist in the rearing and support of the family in the absence of fathers, grandfathers and uncles (King & Ferguson, 2009). The principals of Motherline are entrenched deep in both spiritual and historical data that provides insight into the cultural aspects that may affect the diverse workplace.

King and Ferguson (2009) state that for generations African American women expressed their strength through their work. Despite, the challenges and changes that have occurred in history, through research and historical review, some believe the way African American girls were raised may have been different from that of their Non-African counterparts. Enough so, that it may have left a footprint on the makeup of their leadership styles. To establish a model of feminism leadership based solely on one race, excludes all others view on the theory of leadership (King & Ferguson, 2009).

Johnetta B. Cole (2011) one of the contributing authors in the book, *Black Womanist Leadership*, shared a statement that she feels may provide insight into the characteristics that some African American women demonstrate in the workplace:

“The experience is inevitable. Even if a child attends an elite school or lives in a liberal neighborhood, that child will be hurt by racism. There is no denying every woman has carried their burdens, the simple request is that the story be heard. Acknowledgement that African American parents, particularly mothers have had the responsibility of attending the wounds racism inflicts on a child and the task of counseling them to rise above the pain that surrounds them” (Cole, 1993, pp. 72-73).

Ibarra, Carter and Silva (2010) reference, a Catalyst Survey from 2008 consisting of 4,000 male and female business executives. In recent years there has been an increase in female leadership coaching to help maintain a higher percentage of female executives in the workplace nationwide. In an attempt to hire, promote and sustain a female workplace component, companies have turned to mentoring to provide guidance and support for their executives. In the 2008 Catalyst Survey 83% of female executives stated that they have had at least one mentor in comparison to 76% of their male counterparts. Twenty-one percent of women say they have had four or more mentors in comparison to 15% of their male counterparts (Ibarra, Carter & Silvia, 2010).

Ibarra, Carter and Silva (2010) pose the question within their research on whether or not mentoring provides the same career benefits for both men and women. The survey showed that 72% of men received more than one promotion while 65% of women who participated in the same type of leadership mentoring/training. The survey also pointed out that in a control group of over 4,000 male and female executives all of which earned MBA degrees from prestigious worldwide colleges; there was a difference in salary based on gender. Consistently the survey stated that women executives were paid \$4,600 less in their first job and held lower level management positions than those of males.



Through extensive study, Ibarra, Carter and Silva (2010), recommended that corporations stop coaching and provide sponsorship programs for female executives instead. By partnering emerging female leaders with veteran male executives, research is projecting a change in gender attitudes in the workplace. In *The Best –Performing CEO’s in the World*, HBR January-February 2010, it was discovered that women were more likely to be hired by another corporation than their own. These findings led Ibarra, Carter and Silva to investigate the dynamics within corporations and the level of acceptance amongst new and veteran executives. Ibarra, Carter and Silva (2010) feel there are distinct differences between coaching and sponsoring. Sponsoring allows executives within the organization to share their hands on experience within the corporation in which the female executives work. It also, allows existing executives to witness firsthand the bias that may unconsciously exist within their establishment and gives them the opportunity to rectify it. In providing a two-folded opportunity to change, the sponsorship reinforces that advancement within the workplace requiring both genders to change their views of women and learn to work together on an equitable platform.

Rooke and Torbert (2005) presents a view of women in leadership through the eyes of the developmental psychologist. The Seven Transformations of Leadership are based on a study with Susanne Cook-Greuter and an extensive consulting history with companies such as Trillium Asset Management, Volvo, Hewlett-Packard, NSA, Deutsche Bank, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Aviva. Their research was collected using a tool called the Leadership Development Profile. This tool requests that executives define themselves as leaders and identify what the researchers define as individual Action Logic. There are seven identified types of Action Logic in which each survey participant is placed after evaluating their response.

Table 2

*Seven Types of Action Logic*

Action Logic Type	Brief Characteristic:
Opportunist	Extremist
Diplomat	Avoids Conflict
Expert	Rules by logic and expertise
Achiever	Promotes teamwork
Individualist	Operates in Unconventional ways
Strategist	Generates Organizational/Personal Change
Alchemist	Promotes Social Change

Numerous studies have investigated the means in which women can alter their style and their male counterparts can learn to perceive those characteristics as clear incentives of change in the workplace. The law firm of Dickstein Sharpiro reported a 50% increase in women attorneys and a salary increase of \$364,000 in 1994 to \$815,000 in 2004 for both men and women partners. The law firm's research stated that an increase in female leadership contributions was taking place due to the following characteristics (Frankel, 2007).

- Female leaders are collaborative leaders seeking the opinions of others before making final decisions. Therefore nurturing an open and supportive environment.
- Due to our society's perception that women can take care of home, work, etc. all at once, it is no wonder that women are comfortable and effective multi-taskers.
- Women tend to visualize the global view when finalizing decisions.

Despite the challenges in the workplace, research continuously supports the effectiveness of female leaders and the inherent need for both male and female characteristics in productive leadership. Through acceptance of female leaders and the inherent gifts they bring to the leadership arena, the future is destined to increase female leaders in corporate America.

## **Diversity in the Workplace**

As diversity increases in the workplace the need for programs to raise consciousness are crucial. With nearly two thirds of African American college graduates being women, it is imperative that data is collected and implemented in the mentoring industry. Traditionally women have been told to seek mentoring to tailor their leadership approach, but what do you do if you have little to null data to work with. That is the case with African American women. Despite the fact that more African American women are starting their own businesses at a growing incline, it is imperative that the industry collects data to support women of color in the workplace (Spruell, 2012). Nearly two-thirds of all African American undergraduates are women (Spruell, 2012). Despite the challenges women face, they are moving ahead and achieving their goals and ambitions.

African American women held 3% of all Fortune 500 companies from 2010-2011. However, an overwhelming 11.3% of board seats were held by African American women (Spruell, 2012). The transition from silent worker to recognized leader appears to be occurring more readily for African American women. As industries continue to embrace culturally diverse employees, it will be imperative that researchers provide data to support both employee and employer.

Matthew Arnold a famous poet once said, If ever the world sees a time when women shall come together purely and simply for the benefit and good of mankind, it will be a power such as the world has never known. Although the journey for gender balance is far from over, we have seen an increased number of women in leadership in the last four decades that have left our society intrigued. Our intrigue with women in the workplace can be traced back as far as

World War I when the government recruited women to keep industry afloat while their husbands went off to war. We watched the intrigue as laws and amendments were passed to ensure that women were given the same rights as men to vote, own property, work and raise a family if they chose to. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has experienced numerous women who have paved the road of opportunity for women moving forward. Nancy Pelosi was the first woman Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Meg Whitman CEO of the largest online store EBay, Ruth Simmons the first African American president of an Ivy League university, and Maya Angelou, world-renowned poet, educator and activist to name a few. Although all of these women regardless of ethnicity faced obstacles it is evident that they persevered and utilized their innate leadership abilities to rise to the high ranks of success that they have accomplished.

Discrimination, racism and inequality have plagued society for centuries and African American women in leadership are no exception, but the foundation of all success stories is the ability to overcome stereotypes and dare to strive for change. Women in leadership are pioneers, scholars and visionaries that lead by example and leave stories and legacies that those who come after them will use as stellar examples of progress. The mission to define workplace equality is multifaceted and complex. The answers will take years of analysis and research. Bias will be conquered in some work environments and remain constant in others. One thing is definite- the role of African American women in leadership is evolving and more and more female leaders are in the workplace. More corporations and executives are ready to embrace the opportunity to collaborate and acknowledge differences to produce a stronger and more cohesive method of leadership.

Rooke and Torbert (2005) evaluated both genders equally instead of separating their characteristics. Their approach applies emphasis on evaluating groups and allowing individuals

to learn valuable skills from each other. Rooke and Torbert (2005) pose a very profound question. Where does the responsibility of race and gender bias lie? With the individual casting the bias. This approach deems insightful as we move forward in our studies of presenting the possibility that change can take place in many different forms, while addressing the same paramount question opening the door to endless possibilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

There is vast research available regarding male characteristics in the workplace in which to compare and evaluate differences between the sexes and therefore support the choice to conduct a *mixed* research model. Although the chosen topic relates to individual perspectives therefore, leaning towards a qualitative research approach, research such as a study sponsored by IBM that addressed some of the dilemmas facing women in the workplace may supply a combination of qualitative and quantitative examples to review (Tarr-Whelan, 2008). Although various research utilizes leadership style over behaviors to assess the effectiveness of a great leader, this dissertations evaluates both components to provide an insight into the leadership styles, skills and behaviors of a select group of African American Women leaders in the twenty-first century.

In a 2014, 963 African American Women in Fortune 1000 companies in entry and mid-level position were surveyed about the challenges they face in the workplace. The data stated there are various barriers facing African American women in the workplace that are often over looked and or ignored in the news and other business research documents. The survey defined the barriers faced by African American women in the workplace to include (Sepand, 2015).

1. Frequent questioning regarding their credibility and authority
2. Lack of institutional support
3. Negative race-based stereotypes

Despite some data similarities with that of the reports on Asian-American and Latino women in the Catalyst data collected in 2003, Catalyst Senior Director of Research Katherine Giscombe states that there are unique obstacles African American women face in the workplace. Due to historical ramifications of slavery, legal segregation and discrimination based on race in our country, racism is often an off-limits topic in the workplace (Sepand, 2015). Due to race being a delicate topic of discussion, it appears to have been swept under the rug and often not addressed in the workplace amongst other places.

Catalyst's Senior Director of Research, stated that their organization has attempted to raise awareness regarding the issues of women of color managers and leaders. They have found that as they increase their research around the topic, more interest has been generated from companies about women in racial and ethnic groups (Sepand, 2015).

In an additional research report conducted by Catalyst titled, Women of Color Report a 'Concrete Ceiling' Barring Their Advancement in Corporate America, women identified imperative obstacles that they felt were out of their realm of control and required a change in the mindset of employers and the workplace climate as a whole. Forty-seven percent of the over 1,700 participants surveyed from leading U.S. companies, identified the following obstacles and or concerns (Sepand, 2015):

1. Lack of influential mentors or sponsors
2. Lack of informal networking with influential colleagues
3. Lack of company role models from the same racial/ethnic group
4. Lack of high visibility projects

Corporations have taken notice to the research filtration out of research

powerhouses such as Catalyst by creating diversity programs. Approximately, 75% of all Fortune 500 companies have implemented diversity programs, but unfortunately only 33% of the African American Women surveyed feel that these programs effectively create supportive environments. Thirty-six percent feel the programs foster respect for their cultural backgrounds and 37% of the African American women surveyed envision their advancement opportunities as declining in the future in comparison to those of their Latina and Asian American counterparts (Catalyst, 1999).

With the incline of corporate racial/ethnic awareness corporations some corporations are acknowledging the need to discuss the concerns of Women of Color in the workplace. However, the approaches being taking appear to not be addressing the needs of their employees as of yet and at staggering low levels of satisfaction.

Senge (1999) states in Systems Thinking that an organization must apply this view to problem solving the situation by identifying the *problems* within this system and discussing solutions instead of reacting to parts or events. Delving within the layers of the diversity programs, organizations may benefit from addressing the barriers of African American women in leadership success as a systemic problem with various components that must be researched and acknowledged to prevent the continuous unintended consequences women are facing in the workplace such as the feeling of segregation and inequality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Rose Mary Wentling from the University of Illinois discussed the need for diversity training programs in her research entitled, Diversity Initiatives in the Workplace (Wentling & Palmas-Riva, 1997). The study looked at trends of diversity in the workplace and the need for discussion and or groups to be formed and utilized. The growing trend of diversity in the workplace and society as a whole is the impetus for initiatives that address diversity. Wentling

(1997), refers to the issues schools have encountered integrating different cultures without proper awareness and acceptance of cultures and traditions. The same can be said for the workplace. As demographic changes and the global marketplace expand, the need for a greater level of tolerance expands. The University of Illinois study identified six strategies for working with diversity (Wentling & Palmas-Rivas, 1997):

1. Training and education programs
2. Organizational policies that mandate fairness and equity for all employees
3. Mentoring programs for minority employees
4. More systematic career guidance and planning programs
5. Performance appraisal systems that are non-discriminatory
6. Outreach programs, such as internship programs, scholarships, targeting recruitment in the community

Training programs vary from organization to organization and vary in their success level as well. Research and outreach within each individual workplace must be considered in order to create and maintain a successful program. Each organization possess it's own unique culture that must be considered (Wentling & Palmas-Rivas, -1997). Wentling & Palmas-Rivas's study addressed four key principles to consider when implementing diversity programs.

1. Integrate the program within the organization's education and training systems
2. Combine the programs with other diversity initiatives
3. Involve all employees; including top-level management
4. Include an accountability component



As the facets of leadership and diversity in the workplace evolve, so will the research surrounding effective programs to bridge the divide of diversity and effective organizational success.

### **Summary**

“ They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.”

-Martin Luther King Jr., *I Have a Dream Speech*, 1963

Chapter 2 provided an overview of challenges all women have faced throughout history spanning as far back as the suffrages movement and their quest for equality to wear what they wanted, earn an education and be treated as human beings versus property.

As women continue to enter the workforce and their position strengthens more research surrounding their leadership styles and behaviors will surface. Chapter 2 reviewed the elements of transformational and transactional leadership, as they will be identified in this study as a key factor of the makeup of successful African American women executives across economic sectors.

The history reviewed in Chapter 2 sheds light on the similarities of the fight for civil rights amongst all women regardless of color and introduced the dichotomy of race and gender and the additional obstacles that may entail.

Research presented the percentage of female college graduates and the lack of female faces in boardrooms across the nation and the even smaller percentage of women of color in those positions. The perceptions of race and gender in the workplace leave some researchers seeking answers that even decades later we have no answers to.

The need for further research is imperative. Continuing to evaluate various leadership styles and behaviors provides a common ground in which we can find similarities and venture to increase diversity in the workplace.

As more young female girls head off to school with dreams of being anything they want to be when they grow up, I think it is imperative that we share the history of where women have originated and for this study, where African American women have come from and where they have yet to venture. The more faces that young African American girls see running businesses, corporations and governments the more solidified their belief in achieving their dreams will become.

From the hearts of women destined to see equality for all women like Mary McLeod Bethune, Bettye Collier-Thomas, Rosa Parks, Barbara Ransby and Dorothy I. Height the journey is not over, but it appears the road may be widening.

### Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This study explored the leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives across multiple economic sectors. This chapter presents the research design and methodology used to conduct this investigation, as outlined in the flowchart displayed in Figure 4.

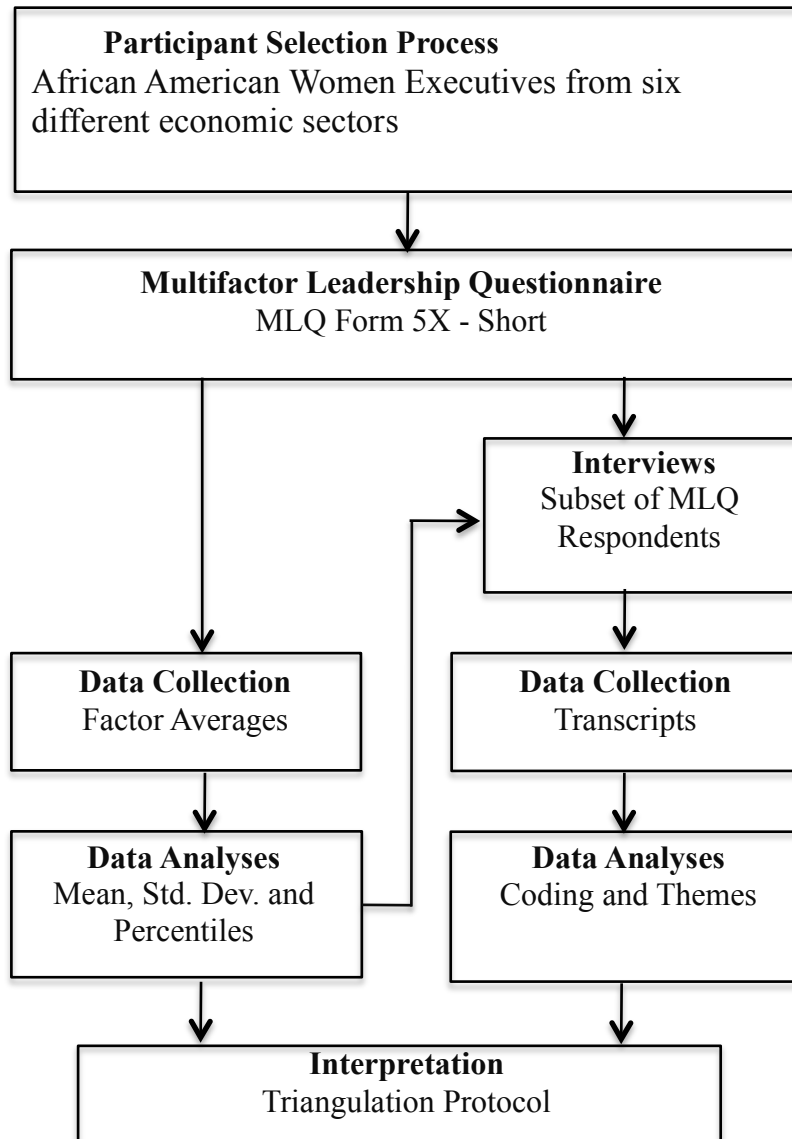


Figure 4. Flowchart of the research design and methods used in this study.

The graphic also highlights the following major topics covered in the chapter: (a) restatement of research questions, (b) participant selection process, (c) human subjects considerations, (d) mixed methods design, (e) data collection processes, (f) data analysis processes, (g) validity of the research design, and (h) summary.

### **Restatement of Research Questions**

The previously mentioned research questions that led to the selection of this design and methodology are:

1. What are the leadership styles and behaviors of successful African American women as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire?
2. What is the self-perceived leadership style of successful African American Women?
3. Are these styles and behaviors common across different economic sectors or sector specific?

### **Participant Selection Process**

Non-random or purposive sampling designs were used to identify and select the potential participants: executives in each of the following economic sectors: Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military, and Nonprofit. Non-random sampling occurs when the number of elements in a population is either unknown or cannot be individually identified (Kumar, 2011), which is the case in this study. There is sparse published data providing estimates of the population of African American women executives in sectors such as those above. However, approximations inferred from recent data on women executives in general suggest that the population is less than roughly one to two percent of the total available executive positions in most of these sectors (Lapovsky, 2009; Rhode & Kellerman, 2007, Threlkeld, 2010).

While the intent was to seek participants from all six of the economic sectors, the minimum goal was to select at least five participants each from at least four of the sectors for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) phase, and a sub-set of at least two of these participants from each of the four sectors for the interview phase. It was intended that the participants from each sector would possess the extensive leadership experience gained from serving in senior management position(s) within their organizations. Their titles varied according to the norms of their sector, but their authority and directional control remained within the top two to three levels of the organization's leadership. For example: (a) in Academia, the leaders held the rank of dean of a college or higher, (b) in Business, the rank of corporate vice president or higher in a Fortune 1000 corporation with responsibility for an integrated business unit or corporate function, and (c) in Government, the rank of deputy director or higher with responsibility for a local, state or federal department.

Additional criteria that were considered were the participants' time of service in their executive position, the number of direct and indirect reports, and their years of experience in the sector.

In order to identify the participants for these purposive samples, a selection process was used containing the following steps:

1. Input was sought from professional associates, executive coaches, university faculty, professional societies, social organizations and family networks were used to identify and compile a list of potential participants that fit the criteria stated above.
2. Initial contact with the potential candidates were made through a telephone call or email, at which time a description and outline of the study was presented and a request was

made for their participation. They were informed that their participation was completely voluntary with no penalty for declining participation.

3. When the candidate agreed to participate in the research, a package was sent to her via email containing the Study Cover Letter and Introduction (Appendix A), the Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix B), the Demographics Work Sheet (Appendix C), and a URL Hyperlink for access to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).
4. Directions in the Cover Letter requested that the participant sign the Letter of Informed Consent and return it with the completed questionnaire.
5. The subset of MLQ respondents were purposively selected for subsequent interviews and were contacted by telephone or email to confirm their participation and discuss logistics.
6. All participant responses and results from the assessment methods were held in the strictest confidence, and no names or affiliations were documented or discussed throughout the course of the study without prior written notice and IRB clearance.

### **Human Subjects Considerations**

This study abided by the posted policies and procedures set forth in Pepperdine University's Protection of Human Participants in Research policies and procedures guidelines. As stated on the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Web site, the goals of the IRB are: (a) to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects and (b) to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations. The required process included completing an online National Institutes of Health IRB seminar and submitting an explanation of the research to the IRB prior to submission of the formal Pepperdine IRB Application for Approval of Research Project. The formal Application that was submitted to the IRB can be found in Appendix D.

In accordance with sections 46.116 and 117 of the IRB policies and procedures guidelines, all participants in this study provided a signed letter of consent, giving legal documentation and authorization to proceed. Moreover, the signed consent letter addressed the provision for privacy and confidentiality issues surrounding this study. The research plan, which was discussed in detail in the sections of this chapter on Mixed Methods Approach and Data Collection Procedures, utilized the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and one-on-one, semi-structured interviews that established and validated quantitative and qualitative research instruments, respectively. To ensure qualitative member check, the researcher will build rapport within interviewees to increase validity and credibility. To further insure confidentiality, the demographics worksheet, MLQ results, digital interview recordings, transcripts and summaries were assigned identifying codes. Once the interviews were completed, a copy was sent to the interviewees for review, allowing them to confirm that the data collected did not contain information that might in any way risk the participant's criminal or civil liability, financial standing, employability, or reputation (Petran, 2008).

The researcher maintained and saved the data for this study on a computer and a USB storage drive. As specified in the National Research Act and Pepperdine University's policies, regulations, and procedures, all consent forms, correspondence, MLQ results and scripted interview notes were kept in a secure location during the period the research was conducted. The information will be kept safe for at least 5 years from the completion of the study. Once completed and finalized in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined by Pepperdine University's guidelines for dissertation research, all materials will be deleted from the computer and the forms, correspondence and notes will be shredded and disposed of securely.

Every participant was informed of the purpose of the study along with the benefits of participating. Specifically, as a benefit, the researcher shared individualized MLQ results with each participant. Copies of the MLQ were purchased from the publisher for use in this study, and with this purchase, authorization was given by the publisher to distribute the instrument and to include it in the dissertation.

### **Mixed Methods Design**

An explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was utilized in this study. It involved a two-phase process based on the assumption that collecting diverse types of information best provided a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected, analyzed, and then the results were used to plan (or build onto) the second qualitative phase. The quantitative results typically informed the types of participants to be selected for the qualitative phase. The overall intent of this design was to have the qualitative results explained in more detail the initial quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). The respective, well-documented quantitative and qualitative assessment tools utilized in this research were: (a) the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the perceived leadership styles and behaviors of the participants, and (b) one-on-one interviews with a selected subset of MLQ respondents providing both contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on the development of their individual leadership style.

**The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.** The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X-Short) is a 45 question, Lickert-scale, self-reported inventory, which took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Developed by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio at the Center for Leadership Studies at Binghamton University in New York (Bass & Avolio, 2000),



the instrument is published and distributed by Mind Garden, Inc., Redwood City, CA (Bass & Avolio, 2004). A sample copy of MLQ Form 5X-Short can be found in Appendix E.

The questionnaire is a structured, verbal, omnibus measure of leadership styles, covering what is known as the Full Range Leadership (FRL) model. The MLQ contains 45 questions or items that identify and measure key leadership and effectiveness behaviors associated with transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant (Laissez-Faire) leadership styles. The items are split into nine leadership factors or discrete variables, each of which is measured by four highly inter-correlated items that have very low correlation with items of the other eight factors. The range of effective and ineffective behaviors in the MLQ is typically broader than other leadership surveys commonly in use. Therefore, it is more suitable for administration at all levels of organizations and across different sectors (Bass, 1998).

The reasons for the selection of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as the quantitative instrument for this study were as follows:

1. The instrument's ability to discriminate between the factors within the leadership styles, including Idealized Influence (IA and IB), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), Individualized Consideration (IC), Contingent Reward (CR), Management by Exception—Active (MBEA), Management by Exception—Passive (MBEP), and Laissez-faire (LF ; (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994).
2. The range and sensitivity of the factors measured provided a relatively precise and granular assessment of the leadership styles of the participants of this study.
3. The MLQ has been used in nearly 300 research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses around the globe. These research programs have demonstrated this

instrument to be both a valid and reliable measure of the constructs of FRL Theory (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

4. The questionnaire is available in both print and online format.

MLQ Form 5X-Short Validation: The self-administered MLQ 5X has undergone several iterations since 1985, but the core items that were pooled from several sources have been validated using four different methods based on nine samples ( $N = 2,154$ ). First, the authors completed a series of factor analyses with the MLQ 5R (i.e., the rater version of this instrument wherein a 360° measurement is made of the leader), to provide a base for selecting items that exhibited the best convergent and discriminant validities, which is evidence for construct validity. Second, the authors conducted a Partial Least Squares analysis using an earlier version of the MLQ combined with the 1995 version of the MLQ 5X to select the current items. Third, the authors recognized the need to expand the definition of charismatic leadership within their instrument, so they developed and added the factors of Idealized Influence—Attributed (IA) and the Idealized Influence—Behavior (IB). Fourth, six scholars in the field of leadership were asked to make recommendations for modifications to the instrument based on a conceptual FRL model. These recommendations were included in the final development phase of the MLQ5X (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Petran, 2008).

MLQ Form 5X-Short Reliability: Correlations among the MLQ 5X and 5R factor scores for the total 2004 U.S. sample of  $N = 27,285$ , yielded reliability coefficients that ranged from 0.69 to 0.83. This indicates a high level of consistency in the results. (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Subsequent published results have provided strong evidence supporting the validity and reliability of the current MLQ5X (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Indeed, they have confirmed the viability of the proposed nine-factor MLQ model, using two very large

samples (Study 1:  $N=3368$ ; Study 2:  $N=6525$ ). Although other researchers have still been critical of the MLQ model, since 2003 none has been able to provide disconfirming evidence of the theorized nine-factor model with such large sample sizes as those published by Antonakis et al.

**One-on-one interview.** In the second phase of the study, one-on-one interviews were conducted with a subset of MLQ respondents. The criteria for their purposive selection was based on their MLQ results, economic sector and their willingness to candidly share their professional and personal experiences for the purposes of this study. Appendix E provides a representative list of the interview questions that were asked during the interview process.

**Interview protocol:** The interviews were conducted face-to-face or telephonically, depending on the location of the participants involved. In either case, care was taken to ensure that the executive was in as comfortable a setting as possible, promoting open discussion. The interview employed a semi-structured, converging question approach (Thomas, 2003) in which the questions were general and open ended, with the remaining questions being more focused on the MLQ results and their personal leadership experiences and challenges. The questions (Appendix E) were developed, and refined after analysis of the MLQ results through use of a phenomenological approach, which provided an overall orienting lens across the dimensions of gender and race (Creswell, 2014). A phenomenological approach is particularly effective at eliciting the experiences and perceptions of the participants from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions (Moustakas, 1994). The duration of each interview was 45 to 60 minutes.

**Interview question validation.** To validate both the content and structure of the questions, the final version was sent to experts in qualitative interview methods to review, edit and approve.

Pilot interviews were conducted to check for any bias introduced by the interviewer, questions, or procedures.

### **Data Collection Processes**

Data Collection for this explanatory sequential mixed methods study implemented two distinct phases: the quantitative MLQ phase and the qualitative one-on-one interview phase (Creswell, 2014).

The total score for the 45-question MLQ Form 5X-Short completed by each participant was composed of an average score for each of the nine leadership factors, which in turn is the average score for the items (i.e., questions) within that factor. Based on the MLQ's Likert-scale, which ranges from 0 to 4, a score greater than 3 for a factor typically indicated the presence of that factor. To qualify as having transformational, transactional or passive/avoidance leadership style tendencies, the participant had to demonstrate at least one of the leadership factors within that particular style. For example, for transformational leadership, the participant demonstrated at least one of the five transformational leadership factors (IA, IB, IM, IS, or IC). The transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant leadership averaged factor scores within the FRL model were collected for each participant.

Data from the second or qualitative phase were collected by means of digitally recording each interview with the expressed consent of the participant. Digital recorders generally have a much higher signal to noise ratio than analogue cassette tape recorders, which reduces the risk of lost data and results in faster and more accurate transcriptions. Digital recordings also provide a better means of backing up and archiving the interview, as well as keeping the data secure and the participants confidentiality protected. The recordings were transcribed through use of a computer software package HyperTranscribe.

## Data Analysis Processes

The quantitative and qualitative databases were also analyzed separately in this mixed methods design. The quantitative results were then used to plan the qualitative follow-up. One important area is that the quantitative results cannot only inform the sampling procedure but it can also point toward the types of qualitative responses that may be expressed in the second phase.

Software packages such as IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) Version 22.0 and Microsoft Excel were used to enter, manage, and analyze the nine averaged leadership factors compiled for each participant and the nonrandom sample of participants who completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The mean, standard deviation and t- statistics for the participant sample distribution were determined to compute a normalized percentile table of the nine factors with which to compare each participant's score. The MLQ is not designed to encourage the labeling of a leader as transformational or transactional. Rather, it is more appropriate to identify a leader as *more transformational than the norm of the participant sample or less transactional than the norm*. Another option for analysis is to also compare each participant's factor score to the norm tables provided in the MLQ Manual for a sample size of 27,285 participants in the United States. In either case, the comparison yields the percentile for that factor (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Accordingly, The transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant leadership factor norm-referenced scores within the FRL model were reported for each participant.

The quantitative results were used to purposively select the subset of MLQ respondents help tailor the interview questions for the second phase, include the mean cases, extreme or outlier cases, significant predictors, insignificant results and group or sector differences.

A software package HyperTranscribe was used to aid in coding, annotating, sorting, retrieving and analyzing each interview. Since the interview protocol employed a semi-structured, converging question approach in which the questions were both open-ended and focused on the MLQ data, the strategy that was employed in analyzing the qualitative data was to use procedures of theme or category development (Guest, 2013). This accentuated the need for flexible coding tools within the software package for developing themes within the raw data and encoding it prior to interpretation. In the data analysis process, the quantitative and qualitative results was analyzed sequentially and separately to examine different aspects of the overall research questions. Both sets of data are not integrated until the interpretation phase in the discussion section of the study. The intent of this section is to specify how the interview findings help explain and/or expand the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) findings (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation is the technique that was used in the interpretation phase because it was proven to be an effective protocol in mixed method approaches (Fielding, 2012).

### **Validity of Research Design**

The validity of the MLQ and interview instruments has already been discussed in their respective sections. However, in the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach additional validity concerns and sources of error may arise, particularly with respect to participant selection, participant sampling and integration or interpretation of the two sets of analyzed results (Creswell, 2014).

In order to minimize errors associated with participant selection, application of the aforementioned selection criteria were implemented to ensure that the participants fulfilled the qualifications for executives in their particular economic sectors. These criteria reduced experimental variability and provided a pool of participants with extensive leadership

experience. With respect to sampling, significant errors can be introduced by drawing on different samples for each phase of the study, which minimizes the importance of one phase building on the other. To diminish this effect, a subset of participants for the interview phase were drawn from the same sample used in the MLQ phase. The interpretation process was key to reducing sources of error through the use of a triangulation protocol that is used in mixed methods design to cross-validate and compare different data sets to see whether any patterns occur (Petran, 2008).

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the proposed research design, methods and procedures that were utilized to study the leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives across multiple economic sectors were described.

The participant selection process was presented which included the sampling method, selection criteria, and communication protocol in conjunction with the human subjects considerations. The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach, which employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and one-on-one interviews as the respective quantitative and qualitative assessment instruments for measuring the leadership styles and behaviors, were explained and discussed. The MLQ is a tool for measuring the factors of leadership within the Full- Range Leadership (FRL) model. For the purposes of this study, the MLQ provided the self-described leadership factors within the major leadership constructs (transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive/avoidant leadership) that is more comprehensive than other leadership style surveys commonly in use. The semi-structured, converging question, interview method was applied to a sub-set of MLQ respondents to build

directly upon their particular quantitative results for the purposes of explaining them in greater detail. The validity and reliability of the two instruments were also discussed.

Finally, The data collection and data analysis procedures were presented within the context of the mixed methods approach and the potential validity concerns and sources of error inherent in the design were detailed and discussed.



## Chapter 4: Results

“Many African American Women have been denied the luxuries of failures, nervous breakdowns, leisured existences or anything else that suggests they are complex, multidimensional characters. They must swallow their pain, gird their loins against trouble and persist in spite of adversity.”

-Trudier Harris, *Saints, Sinners, Saviors: Strong Black Women in African American Literature*, 2001

### Chapter Structure

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership styles and behaviors of African American Women executives across multiple economic sectors. Chapter 4 details the participation selection process, data collection process, data analysis, validity of the research design and summary. The data for this study was obtained from face to face and telephonic transcribed interviews and the completion of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire administered via a certified Mind Garden URL link provided by the researcher prior to the interview process. An explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was utilized using two-phases based on the assumption that collecting diverse types of information provides a more in depth understanding of the research objectives than that of a quantitative or qualitative research method alone (Creswell, 2009).

The sample size was based on the low percentage of African American Women who have successfully achieved positions in the top one to two tiers of leadership in one of the six identified economic sectors. Creswell (1998) recommends that a sample size for research range from 5 to 25 participants to ensure saturation. This study included 21 participants for the quantitative component and 12 for the qualitative component to ensure an adequate sample size for the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach chosen for this study.

Women have advanced in several sectors, some holding positions equal to their counterparts and in some situations earning the same as well (Manning & Curtis, 2012). Unfortunately, these advancements may not always apply to that of African American women in leadership positions (Sanchez-Hudes & Davis, 2010). This study addressed the types of leadership styles and behaviors demonstrated in the quantitative data as well as elements of experiences and personal aspects that support their leadership styles in the qualitative interview process.

### **Research Overview**

Identifying leadership styles and behaviors of African American women through a non-random, purposive sample design to identify and select potential participants; executives in each of the following economic sectors: Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military and Nonprofit demonstrated by serving in senior management positions within their organizations. The research questions the study addressed were:

1. What are the leadership styles and behaviors of successful African American women as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire?
2. What is the self-perceived leadership style of successful African American Women?
3. Are these styles and behaviors common across different economic sectors or sector specific?

### **Participant Profiles**

Twenty-one African American women participated in the study. The participants were identified leaders holding executive positions in the top two tiers of leadership across six different economic sectors. Each participant possessed extensive leadership experience gained from serving in senior management position(s) within their organizations, their titles varied

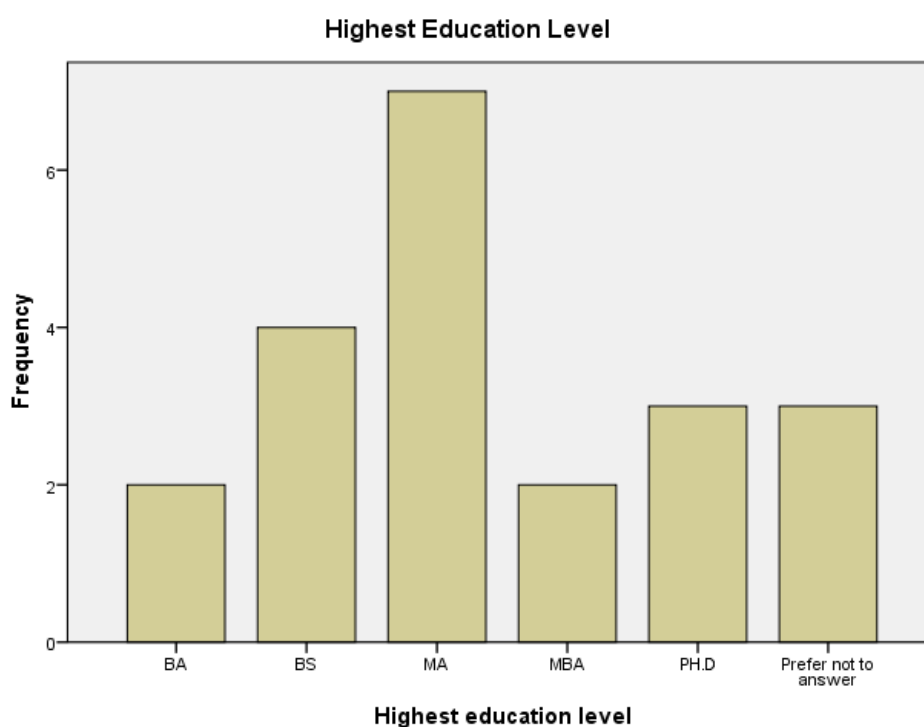
according to the norms of their sector, but their authority and directional control were maintained within the top two levels of the organization's leadership schema. For example: (a) in Academia, the leaders held the rank of Dean of a college or higher, (b) in Business the rank of corporate vice president or higher in a Fortune 1000 corporation with responsibility for an integrated business unit or corporate function, and (c) in Government, the rank of deputy director or higher with responsibility for a local, state or federal department.

Participants' time of service in their executive position, the number of direct and indirect reports and their years of experience in the sector were also a consideration in the data collection and analysis of the study and participation selection process.

The researcher personally contacted each participant via phone and email to discuss the Participation Selection Process (Appendix A), Study Cover Letter (Appendix B) and Letter of Informed Intent (Appendix C) and reviewed the dissertation objectives, procedures and confidentiality parameters prior to being granted access to the quantitative phase of the study. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire consisted of 45 questions used to measure the individual key factors and behaviors. The MLQ provided a benchmark to identify leadership styles and effectiveness.

The participants ranged in age from 36 to 80, with a median average age of 52. Twelve participants were purposively chosen based on their sector, years of experience, title and willingness to participate. The interview participants were contacted individually and a 45 to 60 minute period of time was scheduled to complete an audiotaped, transcribed interview via face to face or telephonically. One interview was completed face to face and eleven were completed telephonically due to demographics and scheduling parameters. The average interview took 52.67 minutes and all questions were answered within the allotted time. The final question

provided the participants with an opportunity to share additional experiences and suggestions for further research opportunities. All Participants identified themselves as African American women born and raised in the United States of America. The participants reported earning seven Master's Degree, four Bachelor of Science Degrees, two Bachelor of Arts Degrees, two Masters of Business Administration Degrees, three Doctoral Degrees and two preferred not to answer.



*Figure 5.* Bar chart for frequencies of highest education levels.

In addition to the participants' academic backgrounds each participant was asked to share her years of service in the identified sector in which they currently work. The years of experience averaged in each economic discipline across six sectors were identified as (5) in Academia with an average of 18.6 years of experience, (5) in Business with an average of 22.2 years of experience, (2) in Non-Profit with an average of 20.5 years of experience (2) in Military

with an average of 27.5 years of experience, (2) in Law with an average of 26.5 years of experience, (3) in the field of government with an average of 20.33 years of experience and (2) participants who did not declare a sector for an average of 19.5 years of experience. The average mean of all participants across all six sectors was 22.60 years of experience.

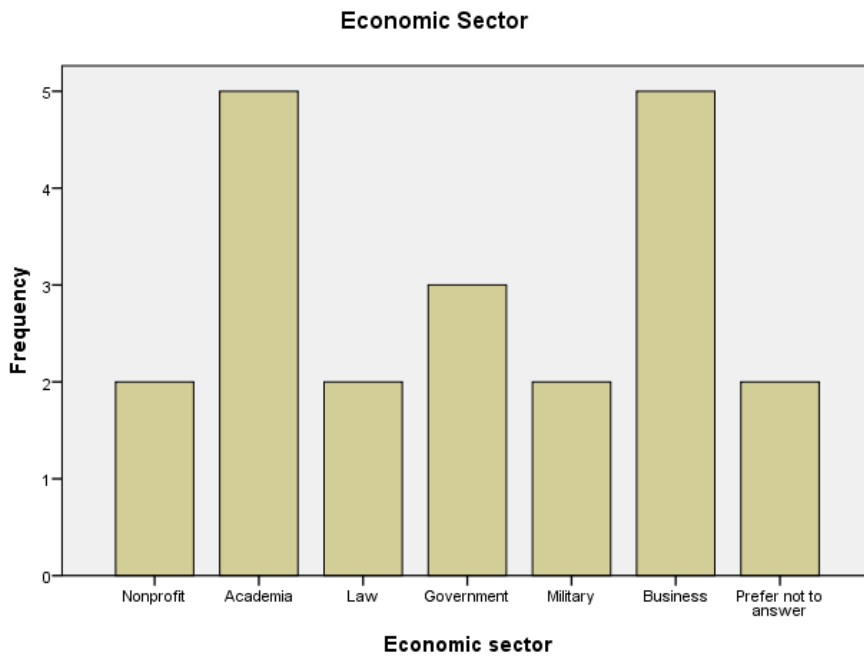
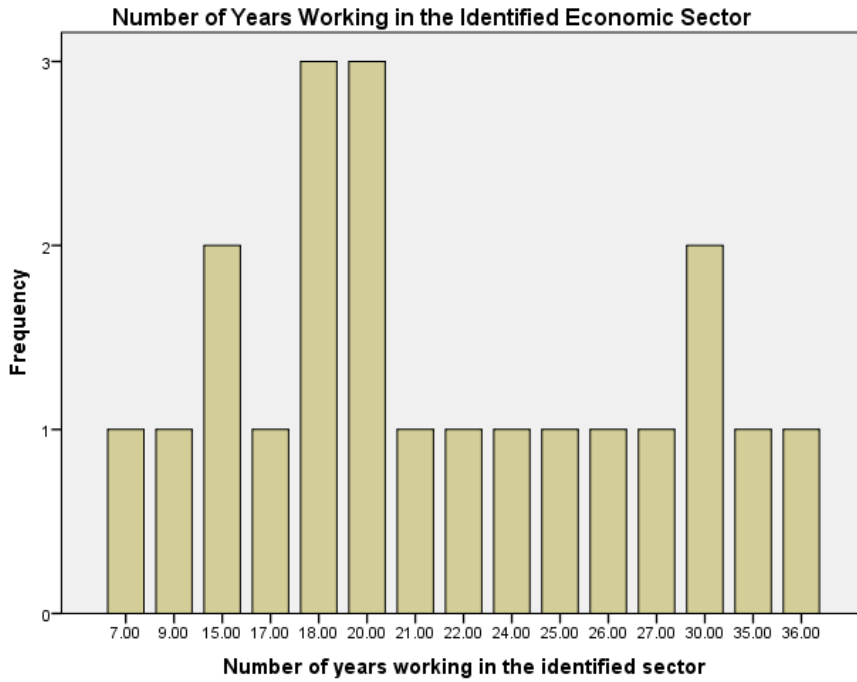


Figure 6. Bar chart for number of years worked in identified Economic Sectors



*Figure 7.* Bar chart for number of years working in identified sectors

## Quantitative Results

A total of 21 African American women participated in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The majority of the participants worked in the fields of academia (5, 24%) or business economic sectors (5, 24%). Most of the participants had spent between 11 and 20 years working in the identified economic sector (9, 43%). Most of the participants had a M. A. degree (7, 33%). Frequencies and percentages for demographical data are presented in Table 1.

Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages for Demographics*

Demographic	<i>N</i>	%
What is the current economic sector you are working in?		
Nonprofit	2	10
Academia	5	24
Law	2	10
Government	3	14
Military	2	10
Business	5	24
Prefer not to answer	2	10
Number of years working in identified economic sector?		
1 – 10	2	10
11 – 20	9	43
21 – 30	8	38
31 – 40	2	10
What is your highest education level?		
B. A.	2	10
B. S.	4	19
M. A.	7	33
MBA	2	10
PH. D.	3	14
Prefer not to answer	3	14

**Reliability**

Due to the sample size Cronbach's alpha tests of reliability and internal consistency were conducted on the scales; one test per scale. The Cronbach's alpha provides mean correlation between each pair of items and the number of items in a scale (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2006). The alpha values were interpreted using the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2010) where  $\alpha > .9$  excellent,  $> .8$  good,  $> .7$  acceptable,  $> .6$  questionable,  $> .5$  poor, and  $\leq .5$  unacceptable. Results for transformational leadership indicated excellent reliability. Results for transactional leadership indicated poor reliability. Results for laissez-faire leadership indicated unacceptable reliability. Due to the low Cronbach's alpha coefficients for transactional and

laissez-faire leadership, results must be interpreted with caution for these variables. Reliability statistics for the three composite scores from the research data are presented in Table 2.

Table 4

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics for the Three Leadership Styles*

Scale	No. of Items	A
Transformational leadership	20	.91
Transactional leadership	8	.59
Laissez-faire leadership	8	.37

### Research Question One

What are the leadership styles and behaviors of successful African American women as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire?

For transformational leadership, a majority of participants scored between a 3.00 and 3.99 (12, 57%), out of a possible 4.00. For transactional leadership, most participants scored between a 2.00 and 2.99 (13, 29%), out of a possible 4.00. For laissez-faire leadership, a majority of participants scored between a 0.00 and 0.99 (17, 81%), out of a possible 4.00. Frequencies and percentages indicated that transformational leadership was the dominant leadership style chosen by successful African American women.

Participants at a lower frequency identified Transactional and Laissez-faire leadership styles.

Frequencies and percentages for the three leadership styles are presented in Table 5.



Table 5

*Frequencies and Percentages for Leadership Styles*

Leadership style	<i>N</i>	%
Transformational leadership		
0.00 – 0.99	0	0
1.00 – 1.99	2	10
2.00 – 2.99	6	29
3.00 – 3.99	12	57
4.00 – 4.99	1	5
Transactional leadership		
0.00 – 0.99	1	5
1.00 – 1.99	2	10
2.00 – 2.99	13	29
3.00 – 3.99	5	57
Laissez-faire leadership		
0.00 – 0.99	17	81
1.00 – 1.99	4	19

*Note.* Due to rounding, not all percentages may sum to 100

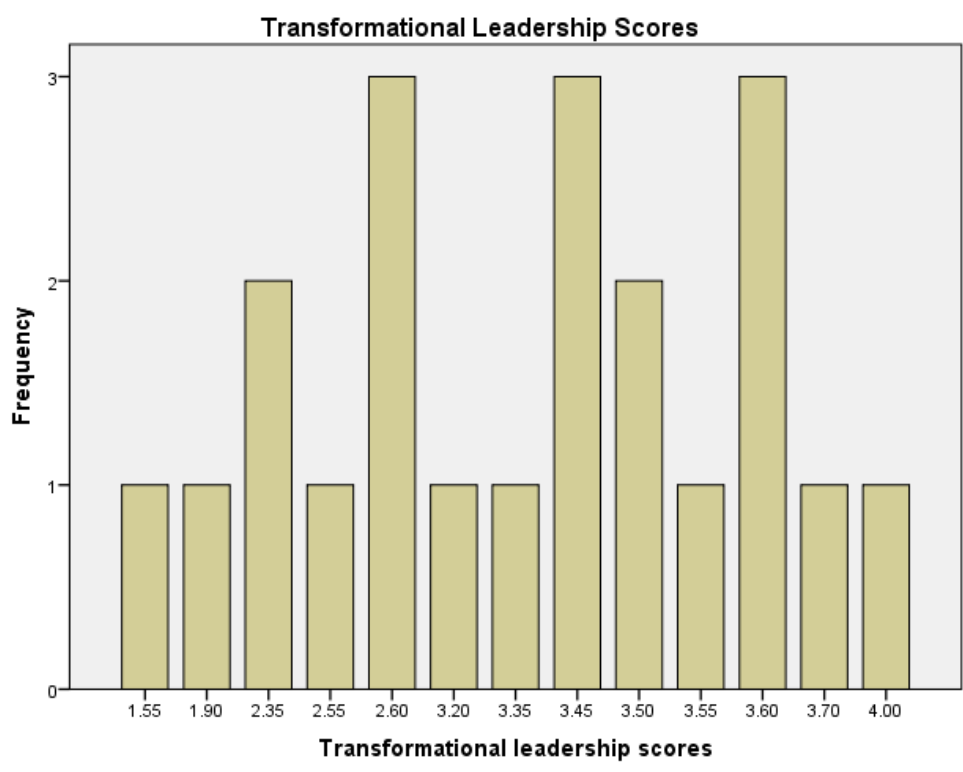


Figure 8. Bar chart for frequencies of transformational leadership scores.



Figure 9. Bar chart for frequencies of transactional leadership scores.

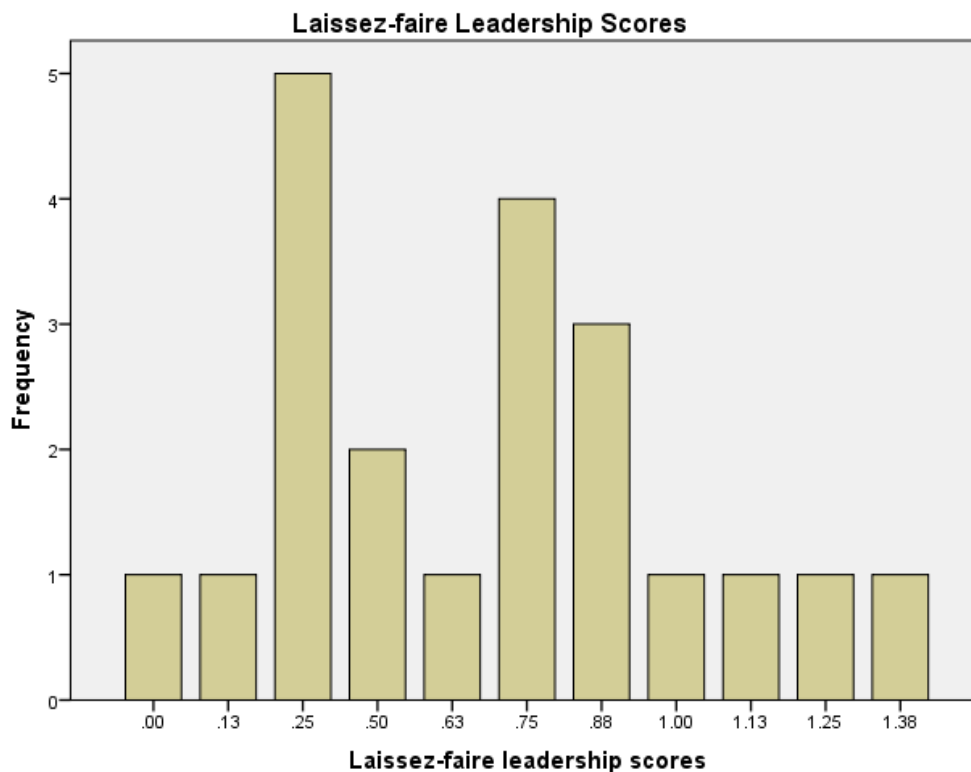


Figure 10. Bar chart for frequencies of Laissez-Faire leadership scores.

Transformational leadership scores ranged from 1.55 to 4.00, with  $M = 3.07$  and  $SD = 0.67$ . Transactional leadership scores ranged from 0.75 to 3.25, with  $M = 2.46$  and  $SD = 0.62$ . Laissez-faire leadership scores ranged from 0.00 to 1.38, with  $M = 0.64$  and  $SD = 0.39$ .

Descriptive statistics of continuous variables are presented in Table 9.

Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviations for Continuous Variables*

Scales	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Transformational leadership	1.55	4.00	3.07	0.67
Transactional leadership	0.75	3.25	2.46	0.62
Laissez-faire leadership	0.00	1.38	0.64	0.39

## **Qualitative Data Collection**

Twelve African American women who completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire were chosen by the researcher to participate in a one-on-one telephonic or face-to-face interview. Selection for the interview process was based on individual MLQ results that showed variances and or the need for additional clarification. A subset of economic sectors, years of experience and educational background were considered when choosing the 12 interview participants. Two women from each sector were chosen to participate in the qualitative phase of the study.

The qualitative phase of the study was based on seven questions (Appendix H) related to leadership styles, behaviors and experiences that have affected their careers in leadership. Research question number two was addressed during the interview process. The researcher scheduled each interview. The interview questions were not provided ahead of time.

After the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings using HyperTranscribe. The HyperTranscribe files were opened in HyperResearch and the responses were reviewed, analyzed and coded into a Hyper Research file.

The selected participants names and collected data were coded to provide anonymity under the Pepperdine (IRB) International Review Board Guidelines. Qualitative and Quantitative data analysis were examined and coded for review throughout the study. Interview transcripts and code documentation was evaluated by two additional reviewers to identify consistencies and inconsistencies. All findings were discussed with the researcher. Participant confidentiality was upheld throughout the review process by assigning codes to identify the transcripts.

Twelve interview recordings produced 714 minutes of recordings, 48 pages (Times New Roman, single-spaced, 12-point font of transcription). The researcher condensed the transcripts to 18 pages; single spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, tables and graphs.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Twelve African American women participated in the interview portion of the study. All six of the sectors were represented.

### **Research Question Two**

What is the self-perceived leadership style of successful African American Women?

Ninety-eight percent of all women interviewed perceived themselves as transformational leaders. Two percent of the participants felt they were a combination of a transformational and transactional leadership. Their Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results supported their perceptions.

Through transcript software interpretation similarities and or differences regarding specific topics were identified from the participants responses during the interview process. Personal quotes, experiences and philosophy topics were ranked and categorized by their frequency. Participants' personal experiences and views on their leadership styles were shared through direct quotes and stories.

Participant #3 stated that she feels her role as a transformational leader consists of observing people collectively, scanning the environment and situation before integrating core values and deliberately initiating change in the company or department.

Participant #9 believes that her transformational leadership style is to be proficient in her area of expertise and exude the ability to teach that to others. Through empowering her team she feels that she thus possesses the ability to execute and implement success in others.

Participant #2 perceives herself as a leader who navigates politics with the discipline to keep structure in the face of adversity and motivates a group of various levels of personalities and strengths to success. She feels that transactional leadership plays a pivotal part in motivating individuals that are innately persuaded by gratification versus internal gratification.

As stated in Dobbs (2010) book, *Transformational Leadership*, is based in the trust of the leader. Trust is not given freely, and no leader can mandate trust. Trust like respect is earned. Each participant expressed that there had been paramount mentors in their lives that had shaped their experiences as leaders. All participants were the first women to hold the positions they were currently working in. They did not feel that they had role models or mentors who could speak to their specific leadership experiences as women in the positions they were serving in, but they did express gratitude to others who although may not have served in the top two tiers of leadership in their sectors, had made a profound difference in the types of leaders they have become.

Ninety-two percent of all participants identified faith and a strong belief in God as one of the prominent influences in their professional lives and formation of their leadership style and success. Participant #7 stated that her strong faith in God helped her face the consistent reminders of inequality she has faced throughout her career. She stated that when superiors who doubted her ability due to gender and race confronted her, she found strength in the belief that through faith she could overcome all obstacles placed before her.

Participant #11 stated that faith is critical. She shared that life became lonely as she climbed the corporate ladder as an African American woman. There were few people she could trust or relate to. She believes that faith provided comfort during those uncertain times and gave her the strength to persevere. Participant #6 father was a pastor and instilled the belief that the

only people she had to prove her abilities to were God and herself. “As a young female executive, I prayed everyday I walked in the office for the strength to lead, inspire and withstand the racial inequality placed upon me by of some of my counterparts.” She shared that through prayer she was able to look past the non-supporters and begin to teach her team the value of equality for all employees, allowing her to create one of the largest diversity training programs in her industry. “Racism equals anger and hostility, there’s no room for that type of wasteful behavior in a productive work environment”. Participant #6 expressed that one of her greatest accomplishments was when one of her superiors who always referred to her as an African American leader, no longer made reference of her race and simply introduced her as the strongest member of his team.”

In addition to Faith and Religion, 75% of the participants acknowledged their parents as one of the top influences in their life and career. Eight of the 12 participants credited their mothers as pivotal role models that instilled a strong work ethic and ability to withstand adversity. Participant #1 attributed her success to her mother, who raised her alone with a limited education and income. Her mother raised her with a strong conviction to aspire to be anything she dreamt of becoming, despite societal barriers prevalent when she was a child. She expressed how that statement and self-esteem instilled by her mother, helped her surpass numerous obstacles and achieve unimaginable professional goals.

Table 7

*Frequencies of outside influences on Self-Esteem and Leadership Behaviors*

Influences	N	%
Education/Educators	1	.083
Religion/Faith	11	.916
Employers/ Management/CEO	5	.416
Parents	4	.33

Participants were asked if they had encountered any significant leadership challenges in their growth as leaders. Ninety-eight percent of the 12 one-on-one interview participants stated that race played a large factor in the challenges they felt they had experienced in their professional sectors. Although the majority of participants shared specific, vivid accounts of individuals or groups that presented concerns, hesitations or refusals to allow them to proceed on their professional tract, none of the women appeared to allow those obstacles to stop them from forging ahead with their careers. Participant #8 shared a story of her CEO/Superior telling her he thought she was the best candidate to move up the ranks of command, but he warned her the industry would never allow her to be promoted to the top tier of leadership. She thanked him for his advice and support and successfully excelled to the second tier of management after a successful 37 years in the industry. Never feeling defeated, but instead proud that she had pushed the *concrete ceiling* as far as her economic sector would permit at the time.

Participant #4 eloquently shared that although race is often the uncomfortable obstacle for some of her counterparts, it does not have to dictate her success or ambition. She also shared that allowing yourself to be obsessed with the racism that divides is detrimental to both corporate and personal success.



### Research Question Three

Are these styles and behaviors common across different economic sectors or sector specific?

To address research question three, a Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to determine whether significant differences exist in the leadership styles between the different economic sectors (nonprofit, academia, law, government, military, and business) of successful African American women. A Kruskal-Wallis test is used to assess for differences in a scale or ordinal dependent variable by a single nominal independent variable and is the non-parametric equivalent of the ANOVA (Morgan, Leech, Gloekner & Barrett, 2007).

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to assess if there are significant differences in transformational leadership by economic sectors (nonprofit, academia, law, government, military, and business). The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test were not significant,  $\chi^2(5) = 5.21$ ,  $p = .391$ , suggesting there were not differences in transformational leadership by economic sector. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for transformational leadership are presented in Table 5, Appendix I.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to assess if there are significant differences in transactional leadership by economic sector (nonprofit, academia, law, government, military, and business). The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test were not significant,  $\chi^2(5) = 8.38$ ,  $p = .137$ , suggesting there were not differences in transactional leadership by economic sector. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for transactional leadership are presented in Table 5.

Table 8

*Kruskal-Wallis Test for Differences in Leadership Styles by Economic Sector*

Leadership style	Mean Ranks						$\chi^2(5)$	P
	Nonprofit	Academia	Law	Government	Military	Business		
Transformational leadership	9.50	7.60	11.25	6.00	11.25	14.00	5.21	.391
Transactional leadership	8.00	9.60	7.00	4.00	14.25	14.30	8.38	.137
Laissez-faire leadership	8.50	8.50	12.00	12.17	10.00	10.00	1.23	.942

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to assess if there are significant differences in laissez-faire leadership by economic sector (nonprofit, academia, law, government, military, and business). The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test were not significant,  $\chi^2(5) = 1.23, p = .942$ , suggesting there were not differences in laissez-faire leadership by economic sector. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for laissez-faire leadership are present.

### Chapter Summary

In synopsis, this chapter reiterated the purpose of this study and the identified research questions. Participant profiles, demographics, significance of the demographic analysis, research data collection and analysis were presented.

This chapter also provided findings based on the participant experiences of twenty one African American Women in Leadership and their journeys to success as they pertain to the research topic. The study found that Transformational leadership was the dominant leadership style demonstrated amongst the study participants with a lower frequency of response scores identifying Transactional and Laissez-Faire leadership styles. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results strongly supported the identified self-perceived leadership style of African American Women as transformational leadership per one-on-one interviews.

Quantitatively utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results and a non-parametric equivalent of the ANOVA, Kruskai-Wallis Test, the results suggested that there were not distinct differences in regards to the dominant tendency towards Transformational leadership across economic sectors. Qualitatively through one-on-one interviews some participants expressed perceived differences in leadership styles based on personal experiences within specific economic sectors.

Chapter 5 will present results, conclusions and recommendations for future areas of research to expand upon pertaining to these findings and the data collected in this study

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

### Introduction

Senge (1990) stated that there is a connection between how women and men seek leadership positions. He believed that women in senior positions tend to be more ambitious about their job objectives due to their ability and societal expectations to simultaneously maintain a home as well as a career. The McKinsey survey supports Senge's data that consisted of over four thousand employees of leading companies identifying that a higher percentage of women than men aspire to fill C-suite positions, although the majority of the positions are still held by men. African American women have made pivotal contributions to the workforce throughout the decades, however there is still minimal research and documentation of their beneficence (Barsch & Yee, 2012). Madame Noire (2012) once stated that the strength of women who rise from the ashes of slavery have provided immeasurable contributions to America.

Twenty-one women were chosen to participate in this study based on their perseverance, dedication and leadership accomplishments and contributions to their chosen economic sector. Hundreds of women have marched, spoken and led our country on a trail for gender and racial equality through the years, and although gender and race laws have been implemented since the Civil Rights movement, many African American women still feel their ability to move up the corporate ladder is hindered by a consistent racial divide. In *Blackwards: How Black Leadership is Returning America to the Days of Separate but Equal*, Ron Christie (2012) states that the fabrics that held the United States together after World War II have begun to unravel. The same ties that held us together are the very threads that are tearing us apart today. The

current outcry for racial and gender equality have driven individuals to identify themselves as part of their identified group instead of their national amalgamation (Christie, 2012).

### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership styles and behaviors utilized by African American women executives across six different economic sectors. The six identified economic sectors were: Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military and Nonprofit. The use of historical obstacles and cultural traditions were reviewed and discussed as possible attributes that contribute to the skills of African American Women Executives. Three research questions provided the framework of the study and guided the fundamental design and organization of data collected through interviews and participation in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Survey (MLQ). The research questions focused on identifying styles and behaviors that aid to the advancement of African American women in the workplace. The study was executed utilizing a mixed methods approach allowing further research to be conducted in both qualitative and quantitative arenas.

The White House Project founded by Marie Wilson shared the need for more female presence in the workplace and specifically in power positions such as government. Ironically, it is believed that America leads in gender advancement, according to Ms. Wilson the United States rates sixty-ninth in the world (Tarr-Whelan, 2009). In some other countries such as Norway, laws have been passed requiring publicly traded companies to hire a mandated percentage of women. Due to these laws being implemented, Norway's publicly traded company's average at least 40% of women on their boards compared to the United States 17% (Tarr-Whelan, 2009). These statistics are based on women in general and leave the women of color in the one to two percentile.

Findings rendered from this study support various theories and hypothesis shared in previous research, some of which were discussed in Chapter two. The perceptions of African American women in leadership have numerous facets that intertwine to portray their experiences in Corporate America. Although several companies are diligently attempting to create diversity within their companies through mentor programs, there are specific challenges for women of color in relationship to mentoring. All of the interviewed participants expressed an element of experiencing loneliness in their current positions due to the fact that they do not have mentors or role models that have previously held similar positions to the ones they are currently in or strive to achieve. Research supports that without the proper coaching or training of experienced African American women a decrease in women who move up the corporate ladder occurs (Manning & Curtis, 2012). Women interviewed for this study shared that it was difficult to envision surpassing the concrete ceiling when they had never witnessed anyone else achieving that goal. The concrete ceiling is the equivalent of the glass ceiling for African American Women as described in Chapter 2. For white women the ceiling is believed to be glass because others have achieved leadership positions and therefore, those aspiring to achieve personal advancement have mentors and successful role models in which to reference and or metaphorically glance through the glass to see a similar face or individual. For African American women there is no one in which to imagine or visualize in the corporate office in which they aspire to achieve. There is no glass to see through, thus the reference to concrete.

In a study conducted by King and Ferguson (2009), the recommended further research posed the concept that African American girls may attend the same schools, live in the same areas as their Non-African American counterparts and regardless of those similar opportunities and characteristics they may encounter racism at some point in their childhood, regardless of age

or socioeconomic attributes. Acknowledgement that African American parents, particularly mothers have the responsibility of attending to the scars that racism inflicts. Those mothers are left to instill in their child to rise above the pain and move forward to follow their dreams despite the hurtful words and actions of others (Cole, 1993). The research obtained in this study supports this hypothesis. The women interviewed for this study shared personal experiences in which varying socioeconomic and educational opportunities were similar if not better than those of their Non-African-American counterparts and yet their level of determination and perseverance surpassed those of their peers and colleagues. All of the participants involuntarily expressed an inner determination to prove themselves on a personal and professional level due to the racism they have encountered in their lives. Participant #6 referenced the first time she encountered racism as a child. She was born and raised in a predominately upper class, white neighborhood and had not encountered being treated differently until third grade when a student called her a derogatory name and requested a different seat located away from her in the classroom. She remembers being devastated and confused. She went home and shared her experience with her parents, who told her, there would always be people who would think you are different or less than they are, as hard as it may be, ignore them, work harder, be stronger and know that you are just as special as they are, you just may have to prove it more. Her story resonated with every participant in the study, despite different settings, varying generations and experiences the moral was the same. Every woman interviewed in this study shared their moment, the moment they realized that some people in the world viewed them as different or less than. A common thread across all of these successful African American women in leadership was what they took from their moments. They all perceived their introduction with racism as a catalyst to strive to achieve, to prove their commonality and abilities.

In response to the King & Ferguson (2009) study that posed the question of whether or not African American girls are raised differently than those of their Non-African American counterparts, the experiences shared in this study, answer their hypotheses with a resounding yes. Research supports that African American girls are raised differently, but not necessarily because their parents set out to do so, but rather because it appears society had required them to. A person can experience real damage, real distortion, if the people or society paint a picture for them as being confined, demeaned or contemptible (Harris-Perry, 2011). *In Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*, the observation of strength amidst African American women are discussed. The women within the study stood strong in their conviction that despite facing barriers along their climb up the corporate ladder, they were aware that they had something to prove. Their credibility was always in question more so than some of their counterparts and although that was an unfair playing ground, they continuously felt the desire to stand up and rise to the expectations placed in front of them. Several participants stated that although there have been days that they did not want to face the daily challenges of being an African American leader, they felt compelled to do so, not only for themselves, but for those that would come after them. Participant #9 shared that everyday she wakes up and faces the challenges and opposition that is commonly faced by African American women in her position, not because she wants to, but because that's what she's been called to do, in hopes that some day the world will finally see more commonalities than differences amongst the racial divide.

The participants of this study did not feel they had experienced a lack of institutional support overall. Although, some individuals were told up front they would only be allowed to reach a certain level of leadership due to their gender and race, they fondly referred to one or two individuals within the company who attempted to mentor and support them to the levels in which



they aspired. Ironically, although the majority of individuals they worked amongst did not support their advancement, the few that supported them changed their entire outlook on their experience with the institution and its employer climate. All the participants did agree however that the lack of company role models from the same racial/ethnic group was apparent in all of the corporations in which they have been employed.

Despite effective mentoring programs, the study supports that it is not enough to just speak of diversification, an organization must present dissimilarity amongst their employees, from entry level to C-Suite positions. National data does not support the premise in which employees are told equal advancement opportunities and salary is attainable for all women. However the percentages are still several points below for that of African American women. Because of that disparity, several women within the study felt the mentor programs they had encountered were hypothetical or insincere, because the companies providing the training could not provide successful examples in their own workforce. Although, the majority of the women who participated in this study did not allow the lack of productive mentoring programs to deter them from their goals, they did express concern for future generations of African American women. They feared that without implementing stronger mentor programs, the cycle would continue and future generations may continue to experience a bleak future in corporate America.

Through one on one interviews many of the participants shared things they wish they had encountered in the workplace during their climb up the corporate ladder: (a) More support from higher management regardless of race. Reinforcement that the executives in a corporation backed their advancement goals. (b) Display diversity within the corporation first before requesting diversification from the employees. (c) Creating personal mission statements that are shared with management as well as individuals that support their endeavors. (d) If the

organization does not employ a diverse group of leaders, have leaders from outside the organization come speak to the company that does not have that type of diversification in place to share their experiences and insight.

Despite several women such as Michelle Obama who did not have a another first lady to seek advice from or be mentored by, feeling alone in the rise to leadership is not a racial difference as much as a reality for those that pursue careers not yet tapped by women and in this study, African American Women. Michelle Obama forged her own way and has dealt with scrutiny in uncharted territory, this too for the woman who agreed to participate in this study, share their stories, their triumphs and their defeats. Amidst their sharing, each voice rang out one very similar tune, one of hope for the women yet to come, the girls who too will have that moment when they are told they are different, that their road to opportunity may be lined with less turbulence those that walked before them.

### **Profile of Participants**

Non-random or purposive sampling designs were used to identify and select the participants, executives in each of the following economic sectors: Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military, and Nonprofit. Non-random sampling was used when the number of elements in a population is either unknown or cannot be individually identified (Kumar, 2011), which was the case in this study. There is sparse published data providing estimates of the population of African American women executives in sectors such as those above. However, approximations inferred from recent data on women executives in general suggest that the population is less than roughly one to two percent of the total available executive positions in most of these sectors (Lapovsky, 2009; Rhode & Kellerman, 2007)

While the intent was to seek at least five participants from at least four of the sectors for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire phase, and a sub-set of at least two of these participants from each of the four sectors for the interview phase, the researcher collected data from 21 participants across all six economic sectors and two participants from each of the six sectors in the interview process. All participants from each sector demonstrated extensive leadership experience gained from serving in senior management position(s) within their organizations. Their titles varied according to the norms of their sector, but their authority and directional control were within the top two levels of the organization's leadership. For example: (a) in Academia, the participants held the rank of dean of a college, provost and president (b) in Business, the participants held the rank of corporate vice president or higher in a Fortune 500 or 1000 corporation with responsibility for an integrated business unit or corporate function, and (c) in Government, the participants held the rank of deputy director, assistant chief of police or higher with responsibility for a local, state or federal department. Additional criteria that was considered were the participants' time of service in their executive position, the number of direct and indirect reports, and their years of experience in the sector. Overall, the participants demonstrated an average of 6.2 years in their current leadership positions.

In order to identify the participants for these purposive samples, a selection process was implemented:

1. Input was sought from professional associates, executive coaches, university faculty, professional societies, social organizations and family networks to identify and compile a list of potential participants that fit the criteria stated above.
2. Initial contact with the potential candidates was made through a telephone call or email, at which time a description and outline of the study was presented and a request was

made for their participation. At that time they were informed that their participation was completely voluntary with no penalty for declining participation.

3. If the candidate agreed to participate in the research, a package was sent to her via email containing the Study Cover Letter and Introduction (Appendix A), the Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix B), the Demographics Work Sheet (Appendix C), and a URL Hyperlink for access to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).
4. Directions in the Cover Letter requested that the participant sign the Letter of Informed Consent and return it with the completed questionnaire.
5. The subset of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) respondents that were purposively selected for subsequent interviews were contacted by telephone or email to confirm their participation and discuss logistics.
6. All participant responses and results from the assessment methods were held in the strictest confidence, and no names or affiliations were documented or discussed throughout the course of the study.

This study abided by the posted policies and procedures set forth in Pepperdine University's Protection of Human Participants in Research policies and procedures guidelines. As stated on the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Web site, the goals of the IRB are: (a) to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects and (b) to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations. The formal Application was submitted to the IRB and can be found in Appendix D.

## **Mixed Methods Design**

An explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was utilized in this study. It involved a two-phase process based on the assumption that collecting diverse types of information best provided a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. In the first phase, quantitative data was collected, analyzed, and then the results were used to plan (or build onto) the second qualitative phase. The quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be selected for the qualitative phase and the types of questions that will be asked of those participants. The overall intent of this design was to have the qualitative results explained in more detail than the initial quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). The following well-documented quantitative and qualitative assessment tools were utilized in this research: (a) the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the perceived leadership styles and behaviors of the participants, and (b) one-on-one interviews with a selected subset of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) respondents to provide both contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on the development of their individual leadership style.

**One-on-one interview.** In the second phase of the study, one-on-one interviews were conducted with a subset of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) respondents. The criteria for their purposive selection were based on their MLQ results, economic sector and their willingness to candidly share their professional and personal experiences for the purposes of this study.

**Interview Protocol:** The interviews was conducted face-to-face or telephonically. In either case, care was taken to ensure that the executive was in a comfortable setting which promoted open discussion. The interview consisted of a semi-structured, converging question

approach (Thomas, 2003) in which the questions were general and open ended, with the remaining questions focused more on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results and their personal leadership experiences and challenges.

### **Data Collection Processes**

Data Collection for this explanatory sequential mixed methods study proceeded in two distinct phases: the quantitative Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) phase and then the qualitative one-on-one interview phase (Creswell, 2014).

The total score for the 45-question MLQ Form 5X-Short completed by each participant was comprised of an average score for each of the nine leadership factors. Based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Lickert-scale, which ranges from 0 to 4, a score greater than 3 for a factor typically indicates the presence of that factor. To qualify as having transformational, transactional or passive/avoidance leadership style tendencies, the participant had to demonstrate at least one of the leadership factors within that particular style. For example, for transformational leadership, the participant demonstrated at least one of the five transformational leadership factors (IA, IB, IM, IS, or IC). The transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant leadership averaged factor scores within the FRL model collected for each participant.

Data from the second or qualitative phase was collected by means of digitally recording each interview with the expressed consent of the participant. Digital recorders generally have a much higher signal to noise ratio than analogue cassette tape recorders, which reduces the risk of lost data and results in faster and more accurate transcriptions.

For more than 30 years, using telephone interviews has become more prevalent and is preferred when: social cues and visual context are not inherently important to the analysis of information,

access to participants is limited due to worksites such as residential or governmental locations, or when a specific site for the interview is not required (Irvine, 2012, Opdenakker, 2006).

The three research questions addressed in this study were based on the responses collected from twenty-one African American women across six economic sectors. The responses for referring to the research questions were based on their interview responses and Likert Scale Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) responses. From the data collected in the sequential experiential mixed methods process the following questions were addressed:

### **Research Question One**

What are the leadership styles and behaviors of successful African American women as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire?

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X-Short responses were on a 45 question, Likert-scale, self-reported inventory, which took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Developed by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio at the Center for Leadership Studies at Binghamton University in New York (Bass & Avolio, 2000), & Avolio, 2004). A sample copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X-Short can be found in Appendix E.

The questionnaire provided a structured, verbal, omnibus measure of their leadership styles, covering what is known as the Full Range Leadership (FRL) model. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) measured key skills and effectiveness behaviors associated with transformational, transactional and passive/avoidant (*Laissez-Faire*) leadership styles. The items are split into nine leadership factors or discrete variables, each of which is measured by four highly inter-correlated items that have very low correlation with items of the other eight factors (Bass, 1998).

The instrument identified factors within the leadership styles, including Idealized Influence (IA and IB), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), Individualized Consideration (IC), Contingent Reward (CR), Management by Exception—Active (MBEA), Management by Exception—Passive (MBEP), and Laissez-faire (LF; (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994). The core items were pooled from four different methods based on nine samples ( $N = 2,154$ ). The participant completed a series of factor analyses with the MLQ 5R that provided a base for selecting items that exhibited the best convergent and discriminant validity in the results (Bass & Avolio, 2004). An overwhelming response from the data collected supported the answer for research question one indicated transformational leadership as the dominant leadership style amongst the women surveyed.

**Other Findings.** Ten percent of the participants that completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) acknowledged a need to combine two of the leadership styles to be a successful leader. The premise behind the need for integrating both transactional and transformational leadership surfaced from their desire to personalize their work environment by addressing employees that respond to a transactional environment more efficiently than an environment powered by transformation alone. One participant felt that all three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) needed to be implemented to provide success for all employees by identifying individual learning and response styles.

### **Research Question Two**

What is the self-perceived leadership style of successful African American Women? Ninety eight percent of all participants interviewed perceived themselves as transformational leaders. As indicated in research question number one, 10% of the participants were identified as a combination of two or more additional leadership styles as indicated in the Multifactor



Leadership results as well as their self-perceptions. Dobbs states in his book, *Transformational leadership: A Blueprint for Real Organizations*, that transformational leadership involves five key skill sets:

1. **Build a culture.** A successful transformational leader must create an environment that is conducive to the business's culture. The business culture must align with the employees, the mission and the customer base that supports the company to be successful.
2. **Improve esprit de corps.** A French word meaning *spirit of the body* represents the essence of the organization. Creating a common goal and vision that provides enthusiasm and incentive to define and achieve goals.
3. **Communicate issues and actions.** Concise, consistent communication is the most powerful and productive tool for a transformational leader (Ronquillo, 2011).
4. **Change the financial results.** Companies exist to provide a return on investment for their stakeholders and employees. The pivotal measurement of a successful leader is to improve the financial dynamics of the organization.
5. **Leave behind a cadre of future transformational leaders.** The majority of transformational leaders move from one challenge to another. However, the primary characteristic of a successful leader is to train and mentor other leaders to ensure a continuous legacy of transformational change well after the original leader departs from the organization.

**Other Findings:** All 21 of the participants expressed their innate desire to inspire and cultivate a sense of partnership and leadership in their direct reports. Participant #6 spoke of the daily initiative she implements in which she takes time to listen to ideas and concerns regarding

the current project at hand and proactively attempts to implement group suggestions on a weekly basis. The need to cultivate a team and create a collaborative environment where all members of the team from the administrative assistant to the director of the project feel their opinions are heard by upper management were repeatedly mentioned throughout the interview process.

Eighty five percent of all participants referenced that a strong religious base played a pivotal part in their success. They felt it assisted them in their self-perception and perseverance. Participant #2 credited her success to the strong religious foundation her family bestowed upon her as a young child. She felt being taught that we are all the same and all worthy of the freedom to dream was what gave her strength amidst some very racially intense moments in her career. The interrelation between religion and success for African American women is noted as an area of further research from data collected in this study.

### **Research Question Three**

Are these styles and behaviors common across different economic sectors or sector specific? Due to the sample size of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, a Kruskai-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was conducted that identified no significant differences between sectors regarding leadership styles. However, personal perceptions were shared during the interview process that spoke to perceived differences within sectors. Such as, participants in the academic sector felt that due to the high percentage of women in the industry comments were expressed that moving up the industry ladder may have been easier than that of other economic sectors, predominately held by men. However, once they reached the top two tiers of the organization they felt they experienced the same level of resistance, as did their peers from other sectors.

Other Findings: Despite economic sectors the participants in the study felt that transformational leadership was the best approach to transition and inspire colleagues and team

members to work proactively in industries and or positions primarily held by men. The participants unanimously agreed that leadership at the top two tiers was a very challenging place to be, due to the lack of mentors and examples of leaders that have achieved the same level of success. Participant #11 stated that life in the C-suite is extremely lonely. You attempt to reach out to others that have held the same position or seek a mentor like your white female counterparts and you are stifled by the realization that as an African American woman in your industry those options are often not provided. If someone, had told me how isolating leadership could be, I would have never believed him or her. Beverly Guy Sheftall states in her book, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought* of Fire states that we have not ended racial caste in America, we have merely redesigned it. Guy (1995) supported the comments of some of the participants that stated Non-African American women have greater opportunities to display their abilities due to the standing of their race in our society.

Participant #11 response echoed by 90% of the women surveyed for the study, that expressed loneliness and an inability to celebrate their achievements like so many of the counterparts do. Participant #9 stated that when I am promoted I seldom tell anyone, because they either don't understand the challenges I overcame to get there or they feel I am boasting. Sharing your accomplishment are neither boasting nor insignificant, they are the badges of honor we all wear as African American Women that sing to the world, "We are the same. We have dreams and we have the right to achieve them regardless of our countries history and the color of our skin."

### **Limitations of the Study**

Retaining women in roles of leadership becomes a problem due to the inequalities, isolation and discrimination they encounter in the workplace (Giscombe & Mattis, 2002; Mitra,

2003). Due to the small percentage of African American women holding leadership positions in the top two tiers of organizations, the pool in which to choose from across six economic sectors was a very small percentage of the population. Therefore the sample size for this study consisted of 21 highly qualified and successful women who were willing to participate in a two-fold mixed methods study and share their personal journeys. Twenty-one women were chosen to participate in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and a subset of twelve participants for the interview portion. Due to the small sample size broader correlations within the study were not plausible. However, integrating a mixed methods approach utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) does provide extensive quantitative correlations with previous studies for future research.

### **Implications**

The goal of this study was to identify the dominant leadership style amongst a subset of African American women across six different economic sectors. Secondly, to evaluate if there were any similarities or differences between the participants identified leadership styles and what they perceived to be their leadership style approach. Third, whether or not leadership styles amongst African American women varies between economic sectors. Despite the small sample size, correlations were made utilizing valid and reliable measurement tools.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Despite heightened awareness for the need of diversity in workforces and equality for women in the workplace. The need for future research in the arena of African American women in executive positions is vast. In a study conducted by David Autor (2010) from the Center for American Progress unveiled that African American women with bachelor's degree or higher earned less than their white female counterpart. With various studies that support the

discrepancies faced by African American Women executives in the workplace the need and benefits for additional research in this arena are pivotal. The interview portion of this study identified four areas of future research based on the contributions expressed by the participants and data collection completed by the researcher.

The following areas of further research were identified:

1. A parallel study of leadership styles and behaviors between various ethnic groups and genders based on Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) research. Numerous studies have been conducted involving the completion on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) survey with white male executives. However, very little research has been conducted regarding various subsets of women from different demographics and ethnic backgrounds. A study that surveys female leaders across economic sectors amongst various subsets of women such as African American, Hispanic, Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans, which could be compared to that of their white male counterparts who have completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) may provide insight and pivotal aspects of leadership behavior and future diversity in the workplace. Pursuing further research into the motivational catalysts and the possibility of innate leadership characteristics amongst various subgroups may provide fundamental support in which to improve mentor programs and overall leadership opportunities and success for women of varying demographic and cultural backgrounds. Despite the fact that in 1960 83% of African American women were working in the workforce compared to 37% of their white female counterparts. Nearly half of those reported African American women were employed as servants and or maids (Gregory, 2003).

Although there are cultural differences and varying numbers in the workplace, minority female groups are reported to encounter similar challenges:

- Female women identified as minorities, races other than white, are less likely to be promoted and when promoted, are more likely to have waited longer to be promoted than that of their white female counterparts (Gregory, 2003).
- Female women from minority subgroups are paid less than those of their white female counterparts (Gregory, 2003).
- Minority women are less likely to achieve executive positions.

Varying conclusions may be derived through further research and evaluation amongst an array of demographic and cultural control groups.

2. A study evaluating the level in which race plays a factor in achieving executive level positions based on age. Conducting a study that investigates the possibility of varying racial self and group perceptions. In the following study the overwhelming majority of participants regardless of age felt that they were constantly made aware of their ethnicity and the affects in which that had in relation to their professional success. Further research could be conducted to expand upon the findings to determine if a larger sample size may present more similarities and differences amongst African American Women and other minority groups regarding their experiences in the workplace. Thus addressing the question of whether or not millennium or varying generational executives feel they are experiencing the same barricades as those of their older counterparts across one or more economic sectors. Numerous studies have been conducted regarding discrimination against older women regardless of race in the workplace. Ironically women are considered an older executive in their early to mid forties versus their male

counterparts who are not identified and or experience the effects of age based company decisions until their mid to late 50s (Gregory, 2003).

3. A study delving in to the affects of faith in the success of African American women holding executive positions. Ninety two percent of the participants in this study stated that their belief in God was one of the influences in their professional lives and formation of their leadership style and success. Further study into the facets of how faith assisted in the motivation and perseverance of African American Women executives may support further mentor opportunities and programs for minority women and youth. Numerous participants of this study shared compelling personal experiences of how faith empowered them to withstand hatred, bigotry and societal induced low self-esteem. Several women stated that if it were not for the role God plays in their lives they would not have accomplished the achievements they have aspired to. With the participants spanning in ages across six decades with numerous years of experience, one cannot help but be intrigued by the power of faith in these women's careers and how it played a transformational difference in their lives. Further research regarding faith and it's affects on African American Women in leadership and women overall may prove to be an intriguing extension from the preliminary findings derived from this study.

4. The effects on African American women executives due to the lack of successful mentoring programs based specifically on the needs of women of color.

It is a prevalent fact that due to the reality of the glass and concrete ceilings for women in Corporate America, the need for mentoring programs has increased. Programs that address the desideratum for effective diverse workplaces are prevalent. Research states that most African American women generally do not have influential or powerful mentors in the workplace, thus causing deficiencies in their ability to become visible in senior leadership positions (Mullen,

2009). Mentoring may be one facet of leadership advancement, but research supports the concept that through mentoring the mentee often experiences increased performance, promotion rates, increased income, greater job satisfaction and enhanced leadership ability (Hill & Bahniuk, 1998). Further research in this arena may prove to be pivotal in catapulting leadership advancement and diversity in the workplace.

### **Conclusion**

Change is an evitable tool. Researchers and theorists around the world are conducting studies surrounding the dichotomy between race and gender and the challenges intertwined within. Women consist of half of the population and yet still fall short when represented in leadership positions. The intent of this study was to provide an opportunity for a subgroup of African American female executives to share their journey up the corporate ladder. Their triumphs and their tears and examine whether the journey is the same for all women. The data uncovered in this study launches a new passage of discovery and opportunity to examine further why the percentage of African American women in the top two tiers of leadership are substantially lower in comparison to their counterparts. This study poses thought provoking questions and the need for further research to one day close the racial divide in the workplace, providing an environment for future leaders to be judged by their ability rather than the color of their skin. The question may no longer be are African American women provided the same opportunity as much as to ask, are we as a society providing the same level playing ground from which they are permitted to flourish.



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## APPENDIX A

## Study Participation Cover Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my dissertation research project on Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African American Women Executives from Different Economic Sectors.

In the following email you will find all of the necessary research materials and instructions needed to participate in the study. Included in the Participation package you will find:

- Letter of Informed Consent (2 copies)  
(Please sign one copy and return it within two weeks of receiving this email. Please keep the other copy for your records.)
- Project Abstract
- Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire URL link  
The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X-Short) is a 45-question, self-reported inventory that takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. It was developed by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio at the Center for Leadership Studies at Binghamton University in New York (Bass & Avolio, 2000). URL is provided in the email.
- Once you sign and agree to the terms of the informed consent and participate in the MLQ, you will be contacted to participate in an interview. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be completed via face-to-face, via vid or telephonically.

Please feel free to contact mew2 if you have any questions regarding the research project.

Sincere Thanks,

Jacqueline M. Johnson, M.Ed.  
Doctoral Candidate of Organizational Leadership  
Graduate School of Education & Psychology  
Pepperdine University

## APPENDIX B

## Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Education Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages Spoken:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's (partner's) Education and Profession:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Children's (Gender and Year of Birth):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Education and Occupation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Father's Education and Occupation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Siblings (Gender and Year of Birth):

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## APPENDIX C

## Informed Consent Form

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Jacqueline Marie Johnson, Doctoral Candidate  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Title of Project: Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African  
American Women Executives from Different  
Economic Sectors

1. I \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Jacqueline Marie Johnson under the direction of Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez., Dissertation Chairperson. This research study is being conducted for the requirements of a doctoral degree and Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology.
2. The overall purpose of this research is:  
The leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives across multiple economic sectors will be studied using an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Senior leaders from three to four of the following sectors (Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military and Non-profit) will be surveyed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to quantitatively assess their leadership styles and behaviors. A significant subset of survey respondents from each sector will also be interviewed one-on-one to provide contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on leadership styles in general and development of their individual style in particular.
3. My participation will involve the following:  
The completion of a demographic data sheet and participation in a face-to-face or telephonic interview that will last between 45 to 60 minutes. The study is expected to begin in June 2014 and conclude in October 2014. The study shall be conducted in person or via phone.
4. I understand that the possible benefits to society or myself from this research are:  
The purpose of the present research is to augment the scope and results of the previous work. MLQ data from a numerically significant sample of executives, coupled with the interview narratives, will potentially provide the necessary

quantitative and qualitative underpinnings to support and/ or reshape findings from the past studies. Expanding the scope to include leaders from different sectors could furnish insight into potential sector-specific influences on leadership styles; and, tightening of the sampling process to include only senior-level leaders in organizations reduces experimental variability and insures a pool of participants with extensive leadership experience. The obstacles and barriers facing African American women leaders have received the most attention in prior studies and therefore is not a key focus of this work. However, salient information gleaned form interviews concerning their impact on leadership styles will be reported.

5. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include:  
Inconvenience regarding time taken away from my schedule to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview. Additionally, I will be asked to respond to questions regarding aspects of my personal and professional life experiences. If at any time I am uncomfortable answering these questions, I can choose to not participate.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
7. I understand that the investigator will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others/
8. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. The investigator, Jacqueline M. Johnson can be contacted via phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email at [jmjohns6@pepperdine.edu](mailto:jmjohns6@pepperdine.edu) if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact XXXXXXXX, IRB Manager at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, via phone at 310.568.5753 or by email at XXXXXXXX@peppperdine.edu.
9. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

---

Participant's Signature

---

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## APPENDIX D

## Pepperdine IRB

## Application for Approval of Research Project

Date: March 20, 2014

IRB Application/Protocol #:

**Principal Investigator: Jacqueline M. Johnson**

School/Unit:  Faculty  Staff  X-Student  Other  
 GSBM  GSEP  Seaver  SOL  SPP  
 Administration  Other:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Telephone (work): XXX-XXX-XXX

Telephone (home): ( ) -

Email Address:

Faculty Supervisor: **Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez** (*if applicable*)

School/Unit:  GSBM  X-GSEP  Seaver  SOL  SPP  
 Administration  Other:

Telephone (work):

Email Address:

**Project Title:** "Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African American Women Executives from Different Economic Sectors"

Type of Project (Check all that apply):

Dissertation  Thesis  
 Undergraduate Research  Independent Study  
 Classroom Project  Faculty Research  
 Other:

Is the Faculty Supervisor Review Form attached? X- Yes  No  N/A

Has the investigator(s) completed education on research with human subjects? X- Yes  No  
 Please attach certification form(s) to this application.

**Is this an application for expedited review? X- Yes  No**

If so, please explain briefly, with reference to Appendix C of the Investigator's Manual. This study complies with federal regulations 45CFR 46.101b, which meets the University's

Institutional Review Board criteria for Expedited Review. Specifically, this research will not use any members of the protected groups of participants (i.e., fetuses, pregnant women, prisoners,

mentally handicapped persons, minors) and will use established educational tests (MLQ and interviews) free of identifiers that could in any way divulge the participants' identity. To further assure confidentiality, the demographics worksheet, MLQ and the digital interview recordings will be assigned an identifying code. Once the interview is completed and transcribed, a copy was sent to the interviewee for review, allowing her to confirm that the data collected did not contain information that might in any way risk the participant's criminal or civil liability, financial standing, employability, or reputation. Furthermore, at no time during the study will the researcher apply deceptive techniques to gather data or coerce the participants in any way.

1. Briefly summarize your proposed research project, and describe your research goals and objectives:

The leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives across multiple economic sectors will be studied using an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Senior leaders from at least four of the following sectors (Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military, and Nonprofit) will be surveyed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to quantitatively assess their leadership styles and behaviors. A subset of survey respondents from each sector will also be interviewed one-on-one to provide contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on leadership styles in general and the development of their individual style in particular.

The preponderance of the relatively limited published studies on the leadership attributes of African American women have involved one or more of the following design methodologies: (a) use of qualitative methods, (b) focus on a single sector of the economy, (c) inclusion of a range of leadership positions from middle to senior management within their sample size, and (d)

exploration of the obstacles and barriers encountered by the women during their journey to leadership.

The purpose of the present research is to augment the scope and results of the previous work. MLQ data from a numerically significant sample of executives, coupled with the interview narratives, will potentially provide the necessary quantitative and qualitative underpinnings to support and/or reshape findings from the past studies. Expanding the scope to include leaders from different sectors could furnish insight into potential sector-specific influences on leadership styles; and, tightening of the sampling process to include only senior-level leaders in organizations reduces experimental variability and insures a pool of participants with extensive leadership experience. The obstacles and barriers facing African American women leaders have received the most attention in prior studies and therefore is not a key focus of this work. However, salient information gleaned from interviews concerning their impact on leadership styles and will be reported.

It is expected that the data and information from this study will yield a more comprehensive evaluation of the leadership styles and behaviors of these African American women executives in particular, and potentially enable meaningful comparisons with previously published findings on such leadership characteristics in general.

2. Estimated Dates of Project:

From: June 15, 2014

To: December 31, 2014

3. Cooperating Institutions and Funded Research. Circle and explain below; provide address, telephone, and supervisor as applicable.

3.1  Yes X-No *This project is part of a research project involving investigators from other institutions.*

3.2  Yes X-No *Has this application been submitted to any other Institutional Review Board? If yes, provide name of committee, date, and decision. Attach a copy of the approval letter.*

3.3  Yes X- No *This project is funded by or cosponsored by an organization or institution other than Pepperdine University.*

Internal Funding (indicate source): Student Funded

External funding (indicate source):

Funding Status:  Funded  Pending Explain, if needed:

#### 4. Subjects

4.1 *Number of Subjects: 20 - 25 Ages: 40 - 70*

*Discuss rationale for subject selection. The participants will not be asked to divulge their age. As executives in their particular sector, which requires extensive experience, it is estimated that their ages could range between 40 and 70. Moreover, considering the high profile nature of some of their positions, their ages could already be in the public domain, e.g., corporate websites, press releases, news stories, etc.*

4.2 *Settings from which subjects will be recruited. Attach copies of all materials used to recruit subjects (e.g., flyers, advertisements, scripts, email messages): The subjects will be recruited from the following sectors: Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military and Nonprofit. Initial contact will be made through a telephone call and/or electronic mail. The content of the email will differ from subject to subject, depending upon whether I know them personally, who referred them, etc.*

4.3 *Criteria for inclusion and exclusion of subjects: See Appendix A.*

4.4  Yes X-No Will access to subjects be gained through cooperating institutions?

If so, discuss your procedures for gaining permission for cooperating individuals and/or institutions, and attach documentation of permission. **You must obtain and document permission to recruit subjects from each site.**

4.5  Yes X-No *Will subjects receive compensation for participation? If so, discuss your procedures.*

4.6 Describe the method by which subjects will be selected and for assuring that their participation is voluntary. See Appendices A, B, C and D.

## 5. Interventions and Procedures to Which the Subject May Be Exposed

- 5.1 Describe specific procedures, instruments, tests, measures, and interventions to which the subjects may be exposed through participation in the research project. Attach copies of all surveys, questionnaires, or tests being administered. See Appendices E, F, G and H.
- 5.2  Yes X- No Are any drugs, medical devices or procedures involved in this study? Explain below.
- 5.3  Yes X-No Are the drugs, medical devices or procedures to be used approved by the FDA for the same purpose for which they will be used in this study? Explain below.
- 5.4  Yes X-No Does your study fall under HIPAA? Explain below.

6. Describe all possible risks to the subject, whether or not you consider them to be risks of ordinary life, and describe the precautions that will be taken to minimize risks. The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to the subject's dignity and self-respect, as well as psychological, emotional, and behavioral risk. Discuss the procedures you plan to follow in the case of adverse or unexpected events. N/A

7. Describe the potential benefits to the subject and society.

## 8. Informed Consent and Confidentiality and Security of the Data

- 8.1  Yes X-No Is a waiver of or alteration to the informed consent process being sought? If yes, please attach the **Application for Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent Procedures form**. If not, describe the ability of the subject to give informed consent. Explain through what procedures will informed consent be assured.
- 8.2 Attach a copy of the consent form. Review the *Instructions for Documentation of Informed Consent* in Section VII.A of the Investigator Manual. See Appendix C.
- 8.3  Yes X-No Is the subject a child? If yes, describe the procedures and attach the form for assent to participate.
- 8.4  Yes X-No Is the subject a member of another vulnerable population? (i.e., individuals with mental or cognitive disabilities, educationally or economically disadvantaged persons, pregnant women, and prisoners). If yes, describe the procedures involved with

obtaining informed consent from individuals in this population.

- 8.5 If HIPAA applies to your study, attach a copy of the certification that the investigator(s) has completed the HIPAA educational component. Describe your procedures for obtaining Authorization from participants. Attach a copy of the Covered Entity's HIPAA Authorization and Revocation of Authorization forms to be used in your study (see Section XI. of the Investigator Manual for forms to use if the CE does not provide such forms). If you are seeking to use or disclose PHI without Authorization, please attach the **Application for Use or Disclosure of PHI Without Authorization** form (see Section XI). Review the HIPAA procedures in Section X. of the Investigator Manual. N/A
- 8.6 Describe the procedures through which anonymity or confidentiality of the subjects will be maintained during and after the data collection and in the reporting of the findings. Confidentiality or anonymity is required unless subjects give written permission that their data may be identified.

Participants will complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire via the Mind Gardens URL secured database. All participants' information will be unlabeled with name and contact information to secure anonymity. Participant interviews will be recorded and transcribed and locked in a secure file box.

- 8.7 Describe the procedures through which the security of the data will be maintained.

All data will be saved in a password-protected database via Mind Garden, Inc. secured database system. All interviews will be coded anonymously and saved via digital recording and transcribed. They will stored in a locked file box.

I hereby certify that I am familiar with federal and professional standards for conducting research with human subjects and that I will comply with these standards. The above information is correct to the best of my knowledge, and I shall adhere to the procedure as described. If a change in procedures becomes

necessary I shall submit an amended application to the IRB and await approval prior to implementing any new procedures. If any problems involving human subjects occur, I shall immediately notify the IRB Chairperson. I understand that research protocols can be approved for no longer than 1 year. I understand that my protocol will undergo continuing review by the IRB until the study is completed, and that it is my responsibility to submit for an extension of this protocol if my study extends beyond the initial authorization period.

---

*Principal Investigator's Signature*

---

*Date*

---

Faculty Supervisor's Signature  
(if applicable)

---

Date

### **Appendices/Supplemental Material**

Use the space below (or additional pages and/or files) to attach appendices or any supplemental materials to this application.

#### ***Appendix A***

##### ***Participant Selection Process***

Non-random or purposive sampling designs will be used to identify and select the potential participants: executives in each of the following economic sectors: Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military, and Nonprofit. Non-random sampling is used when the number of elements in a population is either unknown or cannot be individually identified, which is the case in this study. There is sparse published data providing estimates of the population of African American women executives in sectors such as those above.

While the intent is to seek participants from all six of the economic sectors, the minimum goal is at least five participants from at least four of the sectors for the Multilayer Leadership Questionnaire phase, and a sub-set of at least two of these participants from each of the four sectors for the interview phase. It is intended that the participants from each sector will possess the extensive leadership experience gained from serving in senior management position(s) within their organizations. Their titles can vary according to the norms of their sector, but their authority and directional control must be within the top two to three levels of the organization's leadership. For example: (a) in Academia, the leaders will hold the rank of dean of a college or higher, (b) in Business, the rank of corporate vice president or higher in a Fortune 1000 corporation with responsibility for an integrated business unit or corporate function, and (c) in Government, the rank of deputy director or higher with responsibility for a local, state or federal department.

Additional criteria that will be considered are the participants' time of service in their executive position, the number of direct and indirect reports, and their years of experience in the sector.

In order to identify the participants for these purposive samples, a selection process is being used which contains the following steps:

7. Input is being sought from professional associates, executive coaches, university faculty, professional societies, social organizations and family networks to identify and compile a list of potential participants that fit the criteria stated above.
8. Initial contact with the potential candidates will be made through a telephone call or email, at which time a description and outline of the study is presented and a request is made for their participation. They will also be informed that their participation is completely voluntary with no penalty for declining participation.
9. If the candidate agrees to participate in the research, a package will be sent to her via email containing the Study Cover Letter (Appendix B), the Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix C), the Demographics Work Sheet (Appendix D), and a URL Hyperlink for access to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.
10. Directions in the Cover Letter will request that the participant sign the Letter of Informed Consent and return it with the completed questionnaire.



11. The subset of MLQ respondents that are purposively selected for subsequent interviews will then be contacted by telephone or email to confirm their participation and discuss logistics.
12. All participant responses and results from the assessment methods will be held in the strictest confidence, and no names or affiliations will be documented or discussed throughout the course of the study without prior written notice and IRB clearance.

## *Appendix B*

### *Study Cover Letter*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my dissertation research project entitled “Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African American Women Executives from Different Economic Sectors”.

In the following email you will find all of the necessary research materials and instructions needed to participate in the study. Included in the Participation package you will find:

- Letter of Informed Consent (2 copies)  
(Please sign one copy and return it within two weeks of receiving this email. Please keep the other copy for your records.)
- Project Abstract
- Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire URL link  
The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X-Short) is a 45-question, self-reported inventory that takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. It was developed by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio at the Center for Leadership Studies at Binghamton University in New York (Bass & Avolio, 2000). URL is provided in the email.
- Once you sign and agree to the terms of the informed consent and have completed the MLQ, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview . The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be completed via face to face-to-face, video (e.g., Skype, Facetime, WebEx) or telephonically.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding the research project.

Sincere Thanks,

Jacqueline M. Johnson, M.Ed.  
Doctoral Candidate of Organizational Leadership  
Graduate School of Education & Psychology  
Pepperdine University

### *Appendix C*

#### *Letter of Informed Consent*

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Jacqueline Marie Johnson, Doctoral Candidate  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Title of Project: Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African  
American Women Executives from Different  
Economic Sectors

1. I \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Jacqueline Marie Johnson under the direction of Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez, Dissertation Chairperson. This research study is being conducted for the requirements of a doctoral degree and Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology.
2. The overall purpose of this research is:  
To study the leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives across multiple economic sectors will be studied using an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. Senior leaders from Academia, Business, Government, Law, Military and Non-profit sectors will be surveyed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to quantitatively assess their leadership styles and behaviors. A significant subset of survey respondents from each sector will also be interviewed one-on-one to provide contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on leadership styles in general and development of their individual style in particular.
3. My participation will involve the following:  
Completion of the demographic data sheet, completion of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (15 minutes) via email, and possible participation in a face-to-face, video or telephonic interview (45-60 minutes). The study is expected to begin in June 2014 and conclude in October 2014.

4. I understand that the possible benefits to myself, or society, from this research are: Improvement and extension the current understanding of the leadership styles and behaviors of African American women executives. To date, the preponderance of the relatively limited published studies on the leadership attributes of African American women have focused on the use of qualitative assessment methods, a single sector of the economy, and a broad range of leadership positions from middle to senior management within the same sample size. The intent of the present study is to augment the scope and results of previous studies. MLQ data, coupled with interview narratives, to provide necessary quantitative and qualitative underpinnings to support and/or reshape the past findings. Expanding the scope of the study to include leaders from different sectors could furnish insight into potential sector specific influences on leadership styles; and tightening the sampling process to include only senior-level leaders in organizations reduces experimental variability and insures a pool of participants with extensive leadership experience.
5. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include: inconvenience regarding time taken away from my schedule to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (15 minutes) and to possibly participate in a one-on-one interview (45-60 minutes). Additionally, I will be asked to respond to questions regarding aspects of my personal and professional life experiences. If at any time I am uncomfortable answering these questions, I can choose to not participate.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
7. I understand that the investigator will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others/
8. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. The investigator, Jacqueline M. Johnson can be contacted via phone at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email at XXXXXXXX if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact XXXXXXXX, IRB Manager at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, via phone at 310.568.5753 or by email at XXXXXXXX@peppperdine.edu.
9. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy

of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

---

Participant's Signature

---

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

---

Principal Investigator

---

Date

## APPENDIX D

## Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Economic Sector: \_\_\_\_\_

Education Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in current position: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years with organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Place of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Order: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### Research Design, Instruments and Methods

The research design and methods used in this study employs an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach which involves a two-phase process based on the assumption that collecting diverse types of information best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. In the first phase, quantitative data is collected, analyzed, and then the results are used to plan (or build onto) the second qualitative phase. The quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be selected for the qualitative phase and the types of questions that will be asked of those participants. The overall intent of this design is to have the qualitative results explain in more detail the initial quantitative data. The respective, well-documented quantitative and qualitative assessment tools that will be utilized in this research are: (a) the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the perceived leadership styles and behaviors of the participants, and (2) one-on-one interviews with a selected subset of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) respondents to provide both contextual details regarding their MLQ results, and to elicit additional perspectives on the development of their individual leadership style.

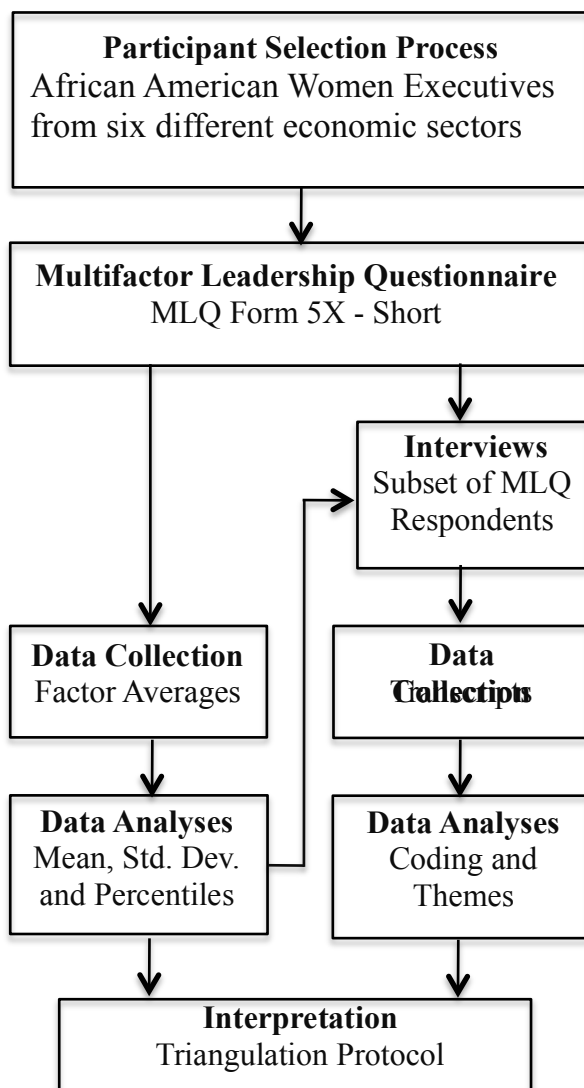
The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X-Short) is a 45 question, Lickert-scale, self-reported inventory, which takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Developed by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio at the Center for Leadership Studies at Binghamton University in New York, the instrument is published and distributed by Mind Garden, Inc., Redwood City, CA. A sample copy of MLQ Form 5X-Short can be found in Appendix G. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has been used in nearly 300

research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses around the globe. These research programs have demonstrated this instrument to be both a valid and reliable measure of the constructs of the Full Range of Leadership Model.

In the second phase of the study, one-on-one interviews will be conducted with Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) respondents. The criteria for their purposive selection will be based on their Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results, economic sector and their willingness to candidly share their professional and personal experiences for the purposes of this study. Prior to the interview, the participant will be sent a list of the questions (Appendix H) to be discussed.

## APPENDIX F

## Flowchart of the Research Design and Methods





## APPENDIX G

## Sample of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

For use by Jacque Johnson only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on February 7, 2014

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, If not always
0	1	2	3	4
16. I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved .....	0	1	2	3 4
17. I show that I am a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." .....	0	1	2	3 4
18. I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group.....	0	1	2	3 4
19. I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group.....	0	1	2	3 4
20. I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action.....	0	1	2	3 4
21. I act in ways that build others' respect for me .....	0	1	2	3 4
22. I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures .....	0	1	2	3 4
23. I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions .....	0	1	2	3 4
24. I keep track of all mistakes.....	0	1	2	3 4
25. I display a sense of power and confidence .....	0	1	2	3 4
26. I articulate a compelling vision of the future.....	0	1	2	3 4
27. I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards.....	0	1	2	3 4
28. I avoid making decisions .....	0	1	2	3 4
29. I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.....	1	2	3	4
30. I get others to look at problems from many different angles .....	0	1	2	3 4
31. I help others to develop their strengths.....	0	1	2	3 4
32. I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.....	0	1	2	3 4
33. I delay responding to urgent questions.....	0	1	2	3 4
34. I emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission.....	0	1	2	3 4
35. I express satisfaction when others meet expectations .....	0	1	2	3 4
36. I express confidence that goals will be achieved.....	0	1	2	3 4
37. I am effective in meeting others' job-related needs .....	0	1	2	3 4
38. I use methods of leadership that are satisfying.....	0	1	2	3 4
39. I get others to do more than they expected to do.....	0	1	2	3 4
40. I am effective in representing others to higher authority .....	0	1	2	3 4
41. I work with others in a satisfactory way .....	0	1	2	3 4
42. I heighten others' desire to succeed .....	0	1	2	3 4
43. I am effective in meeting organizational requirements.....	0	1	2	3 4
44. I increase others' willingness to try harder.....	0	1	2	3 4
45. I lead a group that is effective .....	0	1	2	3 4

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It is your legal responsibility to compensate the copyright holder of this work for any reproduction in any medium. If you need to reproduce the MLQ, please contact Mind Garden [www.mindgarden.com](http://www.mindgarden.com). Mind Garden is a registered trademark of Mind Garden, Inc.

## APPENDIX H

### Interview Questions

This interview is the second phase of a study that explores the leadership styles and behaviors of certain African American women executives across multiple economic sectors, including Academia, Business, Government, Healthcare, Law, and Nonprofit.

1. What is your definition of the term “Leadership”?
2. In general terms, how would you describe your leadership style?
3. With respect to your Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results:
  - (a) Are the results consistent with your perception of your leadership style?
  - (b) If not, in what way do they differ?
  - (c) Will the results help you in better understanding the preferences, attitudes and behaviors characteristic of your leadership style?
4. Are there any past experiences in your career that most influenced the development of your leadership style? If so, could you describe them?
5. Are there leaders that have had an impact on you during your career?
  - (a) If so, could you describe their impact?
  - (b) Of these leaders, did any have leadership styles that you used as benchmarks for your personal development?
6. Have you faced any significant leadership challenges in your growth to your current position? If so, could you describe the lessons learned from them?
7. Are there any final comments that you might have relative to the topics that we have covered or improvements that I could make in my interview method?

## APPENDIX I

## Kruskai-Wallis for Differences in Leadership

**Table 5**  
*Kruskal-Wallis Test for Differences in Leadership Styles by Economic Sector*

Leadership style	Mean Ranks						$\chi^2(5)$	<i>p</i>
	Nonprofit	Academia	Law	Government	Military	Business		
Transformational leadership	9.50	7.60	11.25	6.00	11.25	14.00	5.21	.391
Transactional leadership	8.00	9.60	7.00	4.00	14.25	14.30	8.38	.137
Laissez-faire leadership	8.50	8.50	12.00	12.17	10.00	10.00	1.23	.942

## APPENDIX J

## IRB Approval Letter

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

November 10, 2014

XXXXXX

Protocol #: E0814D03 Project Title: Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African American Women

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Leadership Styles and Behaviors of African American Women*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Schmieder-Ramirez, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

**Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

In addition, your application to waive documentation of informed consent has been **approved**.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware

that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in

the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to “policy material” at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).



6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045 | 310-568-5600

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu). On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D. Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez, Faculty Advisor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thema Bryant-Davis".