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Success Profile: A Case Study of the African-American Women in the President's Office

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SUCCESS PROFILE: A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN
IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

by

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A DISSERTATION

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SUCCESS PROFILE: A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN
IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Pamela E. Ziegler-Ray

University of the Incarnate Word, 2019

Women and minorities have struggled historically in American society due to inequality, racism, and restrictions to advancement, and have turned to education to better their quality of life (Littlefield, 1997; Synnott, 2008). Research indicates there is growing concern about the lack of ethnic minority women at the higher education administrative level, especially for African-American women as the chief executive officer–university/college President (Kim, 2011). Seltzer (2017) has reported no change in the growth of African-American women university/college presidents. The basis for this study is the prevailing lack of information on African-American women's success factors in leadership roles in higher education, and lack of experiences with internal and external daily activities and leadership role activities necessary to remain a college president. The focus of this research identified two primary objectives. The first objective is to examine the African-American university/college presidents' successful experiences with higher education. The second objective is to investigate the internal and external daily lived experiences of African-American women university/college presidents that determine what was needed to remain in a successful presidency role.

A qualitative methodology was used to addresses research purpose and questions based on human experiences that occur in the natural environment (Holliday, 2015). An ethnographic

case study approach was used with six current and former African-American women university/college presidents. An ethnographic case study informs multiple forms of data (i.e., participant observation and interviews), to capture strong exploration, description, and provides perspectives from the context of a participant (Wolcott, 2003). It is inquiry used to study a cultural group by collecting data in interviews and observations in a natural setting (Hammersley, 2018; Yin, 2011). Case study research explores in depth events and activities, as well as processes for one or more persons (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Analysis of data was in two parts. The first part involved reviewing campus information and participant biographies after interviews to gather information about their professional and/or personal backgrounds; second, this researcher conducted confidential semi-structured interviews, and transcribed written and recorded data into a script format. The script format set the groundwork for the spoken word transformation into a more organized written context. The script form permitted words to stand out on paper and revealed emergent patterns and themes of words that helped with authentic data analysis.

Five major themes came from this study. Theme 1. Unintentional Ascension to Presidency. This theme reveals how participants did not seek out to be a university/college president, reached the presidency role unplanned, non-traditionally, and inadvertently. Theme 2. Knowledgeable of African-American Women History. Shared responses showed a considerable amount of historical knowledge about the plight of African-American women from childhood. Theme 3. Passion for Student Success. Each participant desired students to be their best and described ways to provide students with the tools necessary to be successful while at their institution. Theme 4. Passion for Teaching. Passion for teaching has a high level of enthusiasm, belief of importance, and showing of pride in the ability to teach in a program that supports

students reaching their goal of graduation. Theme 5. Mentorship. Participants discussed the importance of mentorship. They acknowledged how a mentor or confidant helped when there was a need to work through challenges or advise and support when they come up against obstacles.

Metaphorically speaking, the conclusions from the research show that it is "in her DNA." African-American women describe four "Rs" of daily lived experiences that contribute to success and achievements in a higher education environment. First is having radical passion for institutional excellence. For the purpose of this study, being radical is not a negative connotation, but, as the participants indicated, an ability to have an uncompromising voice represents an institution that fosters student success, effective teaching and learning, and promotes supportive community. Second, an ability to reflect on personal and professional experiences to know what does and does not work when leading a college campus. Third, these women presidents can relate to others with confidence. Fourth is a reciprocal role model. To be able to link with someone outside of the campus to think "aloud" or share ideas, while also being a model for others by balancing multiple roles as counselor, advisor, and supporter.

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Background

Historically, African-American women have played a critical part in the development of American higher education. They turned to higher education to obtain a better quality of life, despite being unwelcomed in American society because of inequality, racism, and restrictions to advancement. There is growing concern that equality for women college presidents has yet to be reached, and the lack of African-American women as the chief executive officer--college President (Ballenger, 2010). The present study investigates how African-American women college/university presidents' experiences work together to form the whole a profile that defines success and describes what is needed to remain in the role as a college president. This study is valuable to the field of higher education because it provides more insight into the factors affecting achievements of African-American women college presidents. Hence, it might be of greater importance to higher education programs preparing students, and chancellor or board of trustees when making hiring policies about the campus chief executive office.

African-American women college/university presidents have been explored in various research studies. Colby and Ortman (2015) reported that out of the U.S. population, 13% reported African-American. In a study by the *American Council on Education* (Kim, 2011, p.25), it was reported that of all women and men college presidents by race/ethnicity, 87% are Caucasian compared to 5.9% African-American, 1.5% Asian American, and 3.8 % Hispanic. The American Council on Education (Kim, 2011), suggested that growth of African American women college presidents has reached a standstill. Lloyd-Jones (2009) argues that the unexpected challenges that African-American women college presidents encountered are not caused by lack of qualifications, credentials, and expertise. Empirical studies have found

African-American women presidents are faced with complicated interconnections framed in matters of the glass ceiling, race, gender, and inequality (Byrd, 2009).

Statement of Problem

As a woman who has been in the field of higher education for over 10 years, this researcher believes women are considered a critical factor in higher education environmental achievements. Even though women now earn 58% of all bachelor's degrees and 45% of all doctorates (Lepkowski, 2009), a recent national survey found that women hold only 23% of higher education institution presidencies (Gillespie-Johnson, 2017). History has described a time when African-American women struggled through society. These struggles were due to issues of inequality, racism, and barriers to advancement (Gamble & Turner, 2015)**.** In *Presumed Incompetent*, one African-American woman tells stories of her experiences as a faculty member and acknowledges, "a choice for African-American women is to project an image of competence and professionalism" (López & Johnson, p. 22). History has described the unwelcoming treatment of minority women, in particular African-Americans, and the barriers erected to keep them from education, specifically in higher education (Jean-Marie, 2006). Hine (1997) pointed out that struggles started with slaves who worked in the "big house" with an inability to read and their having to teach each other how to read with the aid of the Master's children. President Lincoln, who recognized educational inequality, made a profound statement in a special message to Congress, "America should afford all an unfettered start and fair chance in life" (as cited in Brint & Karabel, 1989, p. 25).

Since 1986, the American Council on Education (Kim, 2011) has conducted an extensive study that focuses on women and minorities in higher education with specific data about African-American college/university presidents. The increase in women and minority college presidents

remains constant; however, the rate of growth for minority presidents in question is slower (American Council on Education, 2011). The American Council on Education (2011) reports in 2006, minorities account for more than 14% of college/university presidents but just 13% in 2011. Moreover, of all minority college presidents, 6% were African-American, 4% Hispanic, and 2 % Asian American. In addition, many minority college/university presidents were women with 34% African-American and 38% Hispanic, compared to 21% Caucasian women. However, compared to 66% African-American male, 61% Hispanic male and 75% Caucasian males, African-American women college/university presidents remain quite low (Kim, 2011).

This researcher has identified the problem to be twofold. First, the prevailing issue identified as a basis for this study is the lack of information on African-American women's success factors in leadership roles in higher education. There is a dearth in the prior research that focuses on success factors with African-American women college and university presidents. Some have been successful, and many others have not. There is a gap in the prior research that focuses on how African-American women college/university presidents in leadership roles in the higher education describe their experiences in terms of success and achievement. With the double disparity of gender and ethnicity, studies are limited that give voice to successful experiences of African-American women from the faculty to administrative level (Lloyd-Jones, 2009). Additionally, while many advances have occurred, the access and success for women is not always a priority when tracking women's accomplishments and challenges (Smith, 2015). African-American females perceive their success to be stifled at the (a) student; (b) faculty; (c) administrative; and (d) decision-making levels by being both minority and female (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013). Besides the disparities in gender and race that inhibit defining success, the issue of presumption of incompetence at the lower administrative positions may cause

African-American women to be less likely to seek to become college presidents, as well as to stay once they do take these roles. For that reason, finding a true definition of success is challenging for African-American women in academia.

The second issue identified by the researcher as a basis for the study is African-American women college/university presidents' lack of experiences with internal and external daily activities and leadership role activities necessary to remain in the higher education environment. The data continues to show an underrepresentation of this issue and poses ongoing arguments about the access and success African-American women college presidents face in decades of challenges. Harper, Patton, and Wooden (2009) argued that despite the increasing enrollment and graduation, African-American women in higher education continue to face discrimination which contribute to challenges of attaining success in higher education.

Unit of Analysis.

The analysis in the present research is the African-American women college presidents in American institutions of higher education. The roles of analysis include success and achievements in their leadership role in a higher education environment. African-American women college presidents have external/internal daily activities that describe their leadership role experiences in the higher education environment. According to Davis and Maldonado (2015), despite barriers of discrimination, negative assumptions and obvious doubts about their performance in a male dominated field, African-American women leaders in higher education rose to the top with tenacity and perseverance.

As universities make advances in diverse courses, faculty, and students, they continue to struggle with diversifying executive leadership. More research needs to be conducted to explore the slow gradual change (Wolverton, Bower & Hyle, 2009), but it does not preclude the barriers

that hinder career advancement for the relatively low number of African-American women leading a campus (Gamble & Turner, 2015). Therefore, addressing the research problem is vital because higher education programs with male dominated chancellor and trustee boards are experiencing a high level of concern about the integrity of hiring practices. Most importantly, examining African-American women college presidents who serve or served while facing issues of stereotypes or perceptions may honor their how they are portrayed in research (Fenwick, 2016); voices that are honored (Arao, 2016) result in more successful leader-to-institution matches (Craig, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the experiences of African-American women college presidents in southern and eastern regions of the United States. It identifies how their experiences contributed to defining a successful presidency role, and the internal and external experiences that are needed to remain in the role of college president. This is a qualitative research study using the combination of an ethnographic case study approach. The cast study approach used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to investigate experiences of African-American women college presidents serving or served in a higher education environment.

The populations composed of six African-American women who serve or served as a college president in an institution of higher education. The case study explored three serving presidents and three former college presidents. The participants' share lived-experiences through interviews that focused on questions centered specifically on the five dimensions outlined by Patricia Collins (2000), *Black Feminist Thought* theory. Thus, the purpose of this study was to illustrate meaningful lived experiences of African-American women college presidents defining

the profile of a successful college/university president role in two specific areas of the United States.

As a basis for the study, the researcher identified two primary objectives of the study. The first objective is to examine the African-American college/university presidents' successful experiences with higher education. Based on this objective, the researcher seeks to know how the presidents' experiences influence successful achievements in the higher education environment. Moreover, the objective is derived from Collins' (2000) *Black Feminist Thought* theoretical framework whereby the various components are proposed and proven to influence the achievement of African-American college president coming from the voices of those who lived the experiences.

The second objective is to investigate the internal and external experiences of African-American college presidents that determined what was needed to remain in a successful presidency role. This objective seeks to know how using the five key dimensions that characterize Collins' theory have an impact on the overall profile of a successful African-American college president (Collins, 2000) in higher education.

Target population and geographic location. The target population of the study was African-American women currently serving or served as a college/university president. The common characteristic of the present study's target population was that all the participants are African-American college or university presidents at a 2 year or 4-year institution of higher education. In addition, the geographical location of this target population was from 4 southern states and 2 states in the eastern regions of the United States. Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017) described the importance of credible data from a target population in which a researcher gathers information from a group with common "characteristics of interest" (p. 23).

Nature of the phenomena. The phenomenon under investigation is the lived experiences of African-American women college/university presidents. Van Manen (2016) posit that lived experience describes the first-hand impressions and an account of living with certain people, or conditions, and how this experience influences the perception, options, and choices in life. The African-American college presidents internal and external experiences in this context represent the choices, decisions, and knowledge gained that contributed to defining a successful leadership role at an institution of higher education.

Research Questions

Research questions are the basis of a study since they determine the methods or research designs, data collection techniques, analysis procedures, and reporting of the results. The present study seeks to explain how internal and external daily experiences of African-American women college presidents determine a successful presidency role. The study employs Collins (2000) five dimensions derived from the model of *Black Feminist Thought*, leading to the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment?

RQ 2: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment?

This framework explored five specific dimensions that identify how African-American women link their voice to the reality of lived experiences based on several factors of life that involve race, gender, and class. These dimensions include: (a) core themes of a Black woman's

standpoint, (b) variation of responses to core themes, (c) the interdependence of experience and consciousness, (d) consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint, and (e) the interdependence of thought and action (Collins, 2000). Thus, the first research question proposed to know how African-American women college presidents defined success utilizing Collins' five dimensions listed above. The second research question proposed to identify how African-American women college president described the internal and external daily in their leadership role activities at an institution of higher education.

Summary of Appropriate Methodology

The research methodology for this line of inquiry is a qualitative methodology. Marshall and Rossman (2011) acknowledged that strong qualitative studies explore, describe context, and use participants' frame of reference. It shares several forms of inquiry to help understand and explain the meaning of phenomena with minimum interruption of the real life (Merriam, 2002). This method of inquiry allowed for numerous qualitative strategies, with the most common being ethnography and case study (Merriam, 2002).

The researcher identified three major reasons why the research method is the optimal choice for the study. First, the qualitative method is the optimal choice for this study because it provided a depth of understanding and meaning through descriptions of things that are not possible with numerical descriptions. In addition, the actions of data collection, analysis, and interpretation allowed for innovation in the research design such as using an ethnographic case study to address the research problems.

A qualitative research method is used to address the research problem because the study's intent is to investigate and make an inquiry from the view of a population experience without disrupting the natural environment (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It examined how participants'

internal and external experiences of African-American college presidents contribute to defining a successful presidency role in a higher education environment.

Second, interviews with individuals and observations allowed this researcher to immerse herself in settings pulled together from common situations and things. Qualitative methodology is considered efficient in acquiring evidence that is associated with flexible fieldwork, and the goal of investigation is to gain understanding through description and discovery (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In qualitative methods, the researcher is the primary instrument, and uses interviews, observations, and documents to collect data to minimize the researcher's bias and assumptions about feelings and human experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Last, the qualitative research method is the optimal choice for this study because it is a very creative way of learning about participants and asks questions of participants that have knowledge of the research topic. For instance, the research focused on the experiences of African-American women college presidents' perspectives and preconceived ideas about the internal and external experiences that involve successful leadership activities in a higher education environment.

Overview of Research Design for the Study

A research design is the pillar of a study as it navigates all the processes or procedures used to execute a study. Merriam and Grenier (2019), describe research design as a logical strategy to implement elements of a study that address the research problem and questions. This present study used a qualitative research method, and an ethnographic case study design. The researcher identified three major reasons why the research design is the optimal choice for the study. First, an ethnography case study addresses a certain problem set in culture or a group of individuals. It was used to address the research problem focusing on a specific ethnic group; this

allowed this researcher to apply one or more methods, such as observations, reviewing documents, and semi-structured interviews including open-ended questions. This research was used to collect information about how experiences of African-American women college/university presidents contribute to the defining a successful presidency role in a higher education environment (Meyer, 2015).

Second, the ethnographic case study was selected to inform the design and validate the theoretical framework. It was relevant for the present study given it allowed me to explore "causality links," and provide an opportunity to study theory in real world time in which evidence demonstrated specific perspectives, opinions, and values of African-American women college presidents serving or have served at an institution of higher education (Fusch & Ness 2017).

Last, the research design allowed this researcher to explore understandings, perspectives, feelings and perceptions of individuals who have similar experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In addition, the interview selected participants for shared experiences that focused on questions addressing the five dimensions outlined by Collins (2000). Most importantly, it minimized the researcher bias and assumptions about feelings and experiences within a certain situation (Fusch & Ness 2017).

Target population. The target population of this study was a group of African-American women college/university presidents who serve or served at an institution of higher education. As defined by researchers, when generalizing the findings or conclusions of a target population, the researcher is interested in a common group of individuals (Gentles et al., 2015).

Theoretical Framework

As a guiding framework, a feminist theory base was chosen for this research. The study used an African-American Feminist theoretical perspective to understand the internal and external factors faced by African-American women in the top administrative office at institutions of higher education. In this paradigm, certain facets like race, gender, cultural background, social status, as well as the experiences of the participant play a significant role. A feminist philosophy emphasized a perspective to give voice and tell the unique stories of African-American women in the college president's office. Collins' (2000) theoretical framework was comprehensive on how African-American women have different and unique experiences based on several facets of life. She considers race, gender, and class of African-American women from historical perspective as it relates to the present.

Figure 1 shows how Collins' theoretical framework will be linked to the voice and experience of female African-American administrators in higher education who are traditionally overlooked. *In Black Feminist Thought*, Collins (2000) stated it thus:

> Despite the common challenges confronting African-American women as a group, individual Black women neither have identical experiences nor interpret experiences in a similar fashion. Differences among individual Black women produce different patterns of experiential knowledge that in turn shape individual reactions to the core themes. (p. 27)

Collins noted, "two basic components of Black feminist thought its thematic content and epistemological approach have been shaped by Black women's outsider-within stance embedded in traditional African-American culture" (p. 16).
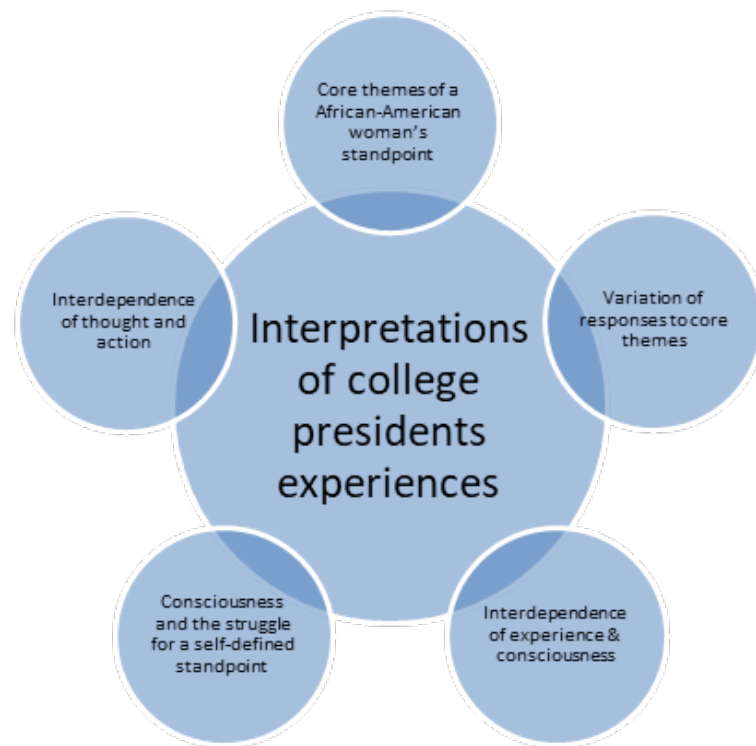
Figure 1. Linking experiences to theoretical framework.

Collins suggested, "Black feminist thought consists of specialized knowledge created by African-American women which clarifies a standpoint of and for Black women" (p. 22). Furthermore, she explains Black feminist thought encompasses interpretations of Black women's reality by "those who live it" (p. 22). To interpret the experiences of African-American women, the researcher used Collins framework with five key dimensions that characterize *Black Feminist Thought*: (a) Core themes of a Black woman's standpoint; (b) Variation of responses to core themes; (c) The interdependence of experience and consciousness; (d) Consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint; and (e) The interdependence of thought and action. Through these five dimensions, this researcher developed interview questions, analyzed data, coded common themes, and interpreted the interview data.

The first element is concerned with the core themes of a Black woman's standpoint. This is based on the concept that African-American women have common experiences based on race and gender. Collins suggests, "all African-American women share the common experience of being Black women in a society that denigrates women of African descent and this commonality of experience suggests that certain characteristic themes will be prominent in a Black women's standpoint" (p. 22). The second element focuses on difference of responses to core themes. Collins notes, "although all African women encounter racism, social class differences among African-American women influence how racism is experienced" (p. 24).

The third element of Black feminist thought, the interdependence of experience and consciousness, relates to the personal and professional experiences of African-American women, in addition to exposure to the cultural experiences which shape their everyday lives (p. 24). Because of unique experiences, the perspectives of and for African-American women are not expressed and adopted by all. Collins' (1990) components of philosophy point to a diverse force that gives voice to each woman's unique lived experiences. The fourth element, consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint, presents standpoints that bring awareness to the challenges in defining self.

Collins' (1990) fifth element, the interdependence of thought and action, deals with identifying experienced oppression and attempting to respond to it through some means of thought and action. Collins notes, "this interdependence of thought and action suggests that changes in thinking may be accompanied by changed actions and that altered experiences may in turn stimulate a changed consciousness" (p. 28). In other words, it addresses coping strategies to help deal with change.

According to Collins (1990), "African-American women as a group may have experiences that provide us with a unique angle of vision. But expressing a collective, self-defined Black feminist consciousness is problematic precisely because dominant groups have a vested interest in suppressing such thought" (p. 25). This type of domination implies that one must be what the dominant group views her to be. This form of suppression does not allow for self-articulation. Collins (1990) also notes:

> One fundamental feature of this struggle for a self-defined standpoint involves tapping sources of everyday, unarticulated consciousness that have traditionally been denigrated in White, male-controlled institutions. For Black women, the struggle involves embracing a consciousness that is simultaneously Afrocentric and feminist. (p. 26)

Significance of the Study

An investigation of the lived experiences concerning African-American women college presidents' profiles of success, and what is necessary to remain a successful president is warranted. These issues are important because there is a dearth in prior research that approached this topic from a qualitative line of inquiry focused on career pathways, and leadership styles. Furthermore, previous research has focused primarily on quantitative methodology, and assessment of African-American college/university presidents' credentials, leadership styles, coping with sexism, racism, discrimination, and unsuccessful priorities when leading a campus. Not to discount this type of research, however, very little of the prior studies research has contributed from a qualitative line of inquiry on successful experiences to attain and retain the college president role for African-American women.

As a basis for this study, the researcher identified two major reasons why this study is significant. First, the study is important because it offers research significance. This study is an extension of the prior research on African-American women college presidents. Prior research studied the underrepresentation of African-American women in executive leadership in higher

education (Carter & Peters, 2016), fighting glass-ceiling (Davis & Maldonado, 2015) and limited career advancement (Gamble & Turner, 2015). This study is significant because it is extending the prior research, practical experiences, and values to African-American women, community, and society.

Second, the study is important because it offers theoretical significance. This study will add to a body of literature that reveals how research gives voice to the African-American women college president. The basic data of information will un-silence the voice of a population working in a male dominated field. Most compelling is that the research will determine how African-American women are portrayed in literature (Fenwick, 2016). Last, this study is important to advance theory, and incorporate new research that help scholars create new knowledge about African-American women college presidents. Researchers can capture information about the African-American women's successful experiences in the college/university president's office (Davis, 2016).

Contributions of the Study

This researcher identified one key contribution of this study. This study makes a methodological contribution to qualitative research. Prichard and Trowler (2018) suggested that realizing qualitative research in higher education is important to the production of knowledge. This study makes a methodological contribution by offering a qualitative inquiry that is lacking in the prior research which was primarily focused on quantifiable research. In addition, this study offers a different line of inquiry that was not addressed in the prior research. Some of these unexplored research methods appear to be important and worthy of investigation in the context of African-American women college/university president.

Potential theoretical practical application of the study. The potential practical applications of the findings from the present study included developing policy about hiring practices for campus presidents. The Collins (2000) theorist framework can serve as model. The five specific dimensions that can aid policy makers in a selection process that involves the candidate to institutional match based on successful experiences. Specific hiring process can ensure best practices when an African-American women candidate is under consideration. Therefore, policy makers like chancellors and board of trustees might approach the development of interview questions based on the dimensions that include: (a) core themes of a Black woman's standpoint, (b) variation of responses to core themes, (c) the interdependence of experience and consciousness, (d) consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint, and (e) the interdependence of thought and action (Collins, 2000).

Value to the population, community, or society. Apart from exploring the success of African-American women college/university president's success based on experiences, this study fills the gaps suggested by McCurtis, Jackson, and O'Callaghan (2009) about developing minority leaders. As higher education is a male dominated field, another significance to the literature is presenting findings based on experiences that came from the voices of African-American women college presidents (Wilder, Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013).

The findings from this study are essential to the future of higher education programs, and the development of meaningful curriculum preparing African-American women aspiring to be a college/university president (Madsen, 2012). Another significant advance in literature in the field of higher education also suggested that decision makers need to know what works, and academic institutions are uniquely positioned to help fill positions with African-American women who have the knowledge and educational experience to lead a college campus (Kellerman & Rhode,

2014). Moreover, the study contributed to literature in this field since it adds to a list of elements affecting the success of African-American women in the college president's office.

Definition of Terms

Double-Whammy**.** African-American female higher education administrators face discrimination as both African-Americans and as females. The gender inequality exists for these African-American women because of the "double whammy" of higher education administrators has not changed from domination by Caucasian men (American Council of Higher Education, 2011; Stripling, 2012).

Ethnographic Case Study**.** The ethnographic case study is a design that link theory with practice, use own knowledge to develop an understanding of people, and learn about an environment (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Glass Ceiling. Glass ceiling refers to invisible barriers that block all women, including African-American women, from reaching their goals (Davis, 2016).

Higher Education Curriculum**.** Higher education curricula refer to a uniformed offering of courses offered with a focus on topics related to college and university education (Stough at el., 2018).

Institution of Higher Education**.** Refers to a level of education that award academic certificates and degrees. Some researchers suggest an academic value impact the efforts needed for campus leaders (Bok, 2015).

Racism**.** Racism in higher education refers to a long-standing problem trying to be disrupted when there is inequality and unfair treatment of an individual obtaining a college education (Harper, 2017).

Sexism*.* This refers to stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex is an attitude that has led some African-American women to feel alienated and disenchanted with higher education (Henry, 2017).

Turn-Over. Turn over refers to continuous level voluntarily leaving a position, and in higher education, at time it is found to be due to demands of the job (Jo, 2008).

Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

Assumptions. Assumptions are defined as what the researcher will assume of the participants of the study. Assumptions are described as an unexamined belief (Pyrczak, 2016). Conclusions in research are basically made from assumptions that are not yet proven. The researcher identified some assumptions about the participants involved in this study:

1. It is assumed that the participants responded honestly to the interview questions because they benefit directly from shared experiences and recommendations made from the study.

2. It is assumed that the participants were speaking about experiences because all participants were serving or served as a campus Chief Executive Officer.

3. It is assumed that the time allotted to conduct the study was adequate because the researcher obtained all the required information within the timeframe.

Limitations. Limitations of the study focus on the limits of the methodology. The study was limited by clear conditions that were identified for this research investigation. Limitations are factors in the study that cannot be controlled by the researcher (Pyrczak, 2016). The researcher identified some limitations as a foundation for this study:

1. The study was limited to a qualitative ethnographic case study.

2. There was a low number of participants which may not provide for a variety of settings.

3. There was a limitation with time constraints. The researcher interviewed six presidents and found that some interviews were cut short to about 60 minutes due to very busy schedules over a period of one month.

4. There was limitation with the gatekeeper's ability to understand the interview questions being asked and be able to relay information to participants to demonstrate full comprehension of each question.

Delimitations. Delimitation are defined as constraints to your study in terms of the scope and reach. Delimitations are factors in the study that limit its scope and dictates the direction of the study (Pyrczak, 2016). The researcher identified four delimitations regarding the scope this study:

1. The study was delimited to more states in the southern U.S. region, two in the eastern region of United States. The results may or may not be generally applicable to other regions.

2. The study was delimited to the lived experiences of only African-American women college/university presidents and not other key administrative roles.

3. The study delimited itself to using African-American women college/university presidents at Historically Black Colleges/Universities.

Summary of Chapter and Remainder of the Study

The chapter discussed some critical elements of this research study. This chapter discussed the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions. The chapter further discussed the rationale of methodology, nature of the research

design, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study. This chapter also discussed the background history, and current context of African-American college presidents. This chapter also discussed the standstill of African American women college presidents in the higher education environment (McConner, 2014). Lastly the chapter discussed how internal and external experiences of African-American women college president define the success of the campus chief executive officer.

Chapter Two describes the overall topic to be investigated, outlines the approach taken for the literature review, and the development of the problem from its beginning to its present form. Chapter Two presents a review of the present study based on books, and published articles about African-American women college/university presidents in preparation for the entire research. This chapter also discussed the topic, specific research problem, the theoretical framework, questions, research methods, and design elements.

Chapter Three discusses details of how the study was conducted for the possibility of duplication. The chapter also addresses the research methodology, covering the study design and procedures used for this investigation.

Chapter Four presents results obtained from this investigation in a summary of data analysis. Like a road map, this chapter provided a journey of data analysis, and identified emergent themes that derived from this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Each theme was identified with examples base on perspectives and insights learned from participants experiences.

Chapter Five provides an interpretation of results and discussion related to the research topic. It provides meaning of results and conclusion based on findings from the study. Last, this chapter also provides readers with a logical "take away message" about the topic of African-

American women successful college presidency roles in a higher education environment

(Korrapati, 2016).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to explore the lives of African-American women college/university presidents. This study will focus on understanding their lived experiences, gain insight into perspectives of what they define as a successful presidency, and what they think it takes to remain as the top campus leader.

Campus leaders experience certain challenges of life due to being both a minority and a woman. In addition, barriers like racism and sexism transcended into the existence of everyday life experiences for the African-American student, faculty, and administrator. Though challenging, African-American women's experiences allowed them to evolve into the top leader on a campus, a college/university president.

Figure 2 displays the literature review process in five parts. The first section discusses minorities in higher education. It begins with an historical overview of minorities in higher education to include groundbreaking laws to discontinue discriminatory acts and practices. The second section emphasizes the contributions by African-American women in higher education while facing barriers of racism and sexism. The third section discusses some challenges African-American women faced in higher education administrative roles. The fourth section describes the evolution of African-American women college/university presidents. The final section outlines Black Feminist Theoretical Perspectives.
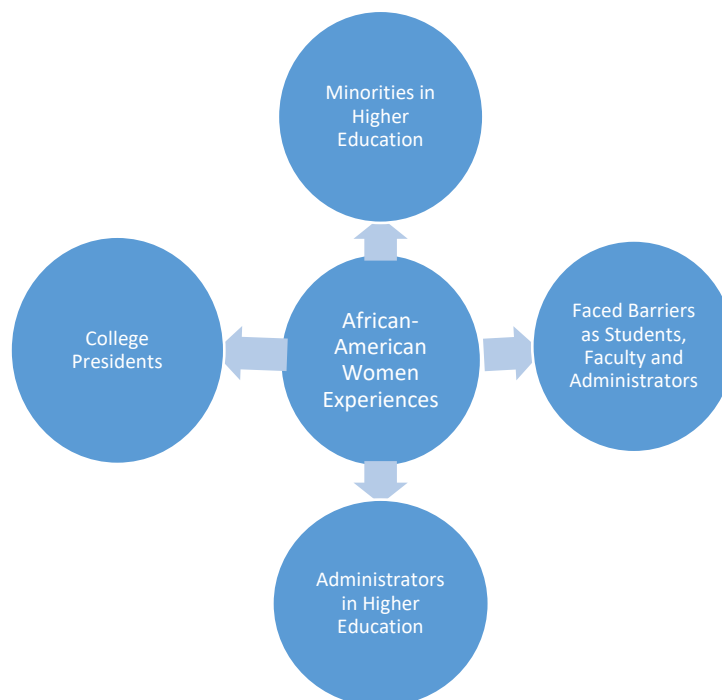
Figure 2. African-American women experiences in higher education.

Minorities in Higher Education

One landmark case, *Plessy vs. Ferguson of 1896*, was the first attempt to address legal

segregation of service areas in America to include restaurants, housing, and education (Kaplan &

Lee, 2007). Homer Adolph Plessy paid for a first-class seat on a train and was asked if he was

colored to determine if he needed to give up his seat on the train. Plessy felt this was not fair

when he paid the same price as *White* travelers, causing him to file a lawsuit that showed racial

discrimination. This landmark case prompted society to continue to look at equality in American

higher education through the lens of justice (Ballenger, 2010), which ultimately led to a more in-

depth look at racial inequality in education. Another landmark legal case was *Brown v. Board of

Education* (1954), which gave rise to equal education for all students and, eventually, the hiring

of minority faculty, staff, and administrators (Kaplan & Lee, 2007). This civil rights case

enhanced support for equal education of women in the higher education system, along with

ushering in the coeducation for women and colleges offering women the opportunity for

advanced degrees (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). For higher education, this has meant

protection from unequal treatment of minority students, faculty, and administrators on college

campuses across America.

Even with these historic federal decisions and gains in higher education, the number of

African-American women presidents in higher education remains low, and those who are in

these roles continue to face problems that affect their level of success; one of these problems is

retention of these presidents in American institutions of higher education. In Table 1, McConner

(2014, p. 79) presents landmark historical federal cases, laws, and movements. These landmark

decisions established new principles for change in existing laws. It provided measurable

standards that could be applied by courts in future decisions of laws or policies.

Table 1

Landmark Laws, Cases and Movement

Year	Federal Law, Case or Movement	Actions Taken
1896	Plessy v. Ferguson,	Reviewed by the Supreme Court to change policies on discrimination.
1950-1960	Civil and women rights movement	Movements in the legal system were challenged to address the problems of discrimination based on race or gender.
1954	Brown vs. Board of Education	Federal law gave rise to equal education for all.
1963	The Equal Pay Act	Federal law designed to alleviate wage difference between men and women

Note. Adapted from article by McConner, M. (2014). Black women in leadership: An assessment of the gender inequality and racism that exits among black women leaders in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, (29)1, pp. 78–87.

The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau reports that out of the U.S. population, 13% reported African-American (Liebler et al., 2017). Yet, in a study by the American Council on Education (2011, p. 25), it was reported that of all women and men college/university presidents, by race/ethnicity, 87% are Caucasian compared to 5.9% African-American, 1.5% Asian American, and 3.8 % Hispanic.

With advances in education, a wide range of challenges faced by African-American women presidents pertain to a complicated interconnection framed in matters of the glass ceiling, race, gender, and inequality (Byrd, 2009). The literature has prompted a variety of studies that address problems faced by African-American women leading a college campus. Lloyd-Jones (2009) argues that the challenges that African-American women college/university presidents encountered were often unexpected, and not caused by lack of qualifications, credentials, and expertise.

Researchers have argued that an ongoing change of American college campuses resulted from an increase of minorities at institutions (Carnavale, 2002). At a time when there is a demand for diversity, and gaps still existed among specific minority groups, the research about college-educated workforce is important (Van Der Linde, 2009). Hooks (1989) reminds us,

> The United States provides our society with the undeniable right to learn. The right to higher education is not limited to the middle and upper classes; it allows the less privileged, minorities, as well as both sexes, to receive an equal education. (p. 1)

The literature demonstrates how the demographics are changing in higher education, and why minorities need to be studied. Changing demographics are a major issue for higher education because colleges and universities have not brought minorities onto their campuses in numbers comparable to their representation in society (Thelin, 2004). In studies by the American Council on Higher Education (Cook & Kim, 2012; Kim, 2011), African-Americans and

Hispanics continue to trail Whites in the percentage of the college-age cohort enrolled in college. However, trends varied by gender. Young women surpassed their elders and young racial/ethnic minority men fell behind their peers in postsecondary attainment (American Council on Higher Education, 2011).

The American Council of Education (2011) found that between 1998 and 2009, total undergraduate fall enrollment increased for each racial/ethnic group. Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders had the fastest rates of increase and Whites had the slowest rate of increase. In 2009, more females than males were enrolled as undergraduates; the gender gap was largest for African-American undergraduates, with females accounting for 64% of African-American undergraduate enrollment (Kim, 2011).

In late 1990s, and into 2000s, a significant shift in proportions show an increase of race and gender groups enrolled in higher education. Cook and Córdova (2007) report that for the first time, young Hispanic enrollments on college/university campuses exceeded young Black enrollments (1.1 million), making Hispanics the largest minority group at 4-year colleges and universities. The percentage of bachelor degrees being awarded to diverse populations is on the rise. In 2002, it was reported that there was about a 25% increase of Latino men and women awarded BA degrees compared to 35% increase of African-American men and women (Carnevale, 2002). These significant numbers show that minorities will comprise an increasing share of the population in the nation's college campuses.

Musu-Gillette et al., (2016) reported that if trends continue, African-Americans will make up 14.5% of 18- to 24-year-old undergraduates, but will account for only 11.9% of undergraduates. In the same report, Latinos will make up 18.9% of the 18- to 24-year-olds but will account for only 13.1% of undergraduates. In essence, there will still be a large number of

African-Americans and Latinos underrepresented on college campuses by 2020. Based on these statistical reports, diversity on campus cannot increase unless the participation rates of enrolled minorities also increase.

Historical African-American Women in Higher Education Facing Barriers

African-American women in higher education made major historical contributions while facing barriers. In addition to dealing with the disproportionate numbers of African-American women in higher education, societal challenges also serve as obstacles for what they could be and do as educational leaders (Jean-Marie, 2006). Historically, while facing segregation, there are some African-American women instrumental in desegregating higher education. In the essay, *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses*, Marcia G. Synnott (2008) acknowledges the work of Lucille Bluford, Ada Fisher, Authorine Lucy, Vivian Malone, Charlayne Hunter, Lucinda Brawley, Henrie Monteith, and Cheryl Butler.

In the 1940s, Lucille Bluford (Synnott, 2008) was denied admission into University of Missouri School of Journalism. After losing admission and civil suits, from 1942-1944 Bluford made standing applications to the school of journalism. Although never admitted, she became publisher and majority holder of the Kansas City newspaper. In 1984, the University of Missouri awarded her a Missouri Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism, and in 1989, awarded her an honorary doctorate. Most powerful was her acceptance speech in which she claimed the award, "for the thousands of Black students who suffered discrimination all those years" (p. 199).

In the same timeframe, in another state, Ada Fisher was not accepted into the University of Oklahoma's law school. Finally, on June 18, 1949, she was the first African-American

admitted to the law school. Even though her academic grades were outstanding, her lawsuit brought a claim that was rejected due to racial identity. Fisher described the most humiliating experience was getting to class and behind a rail there was a sign marked "COLORED" and chair marked, "Colored Chair." Likewise, in 1955, Autherine Lucy was admitted to University of Alabama and upon arrival, denied admission because of her race. During the trial for the lawsuit, citing previous Supreme Court rulings, she was admitted only to meet more obstacles like being denied room and board. Her attendance in class also resulted in a riot on campus. As a result of Autherine Lucy's lawsuit, in 1961 Vivian Malone was admitted into the University of Alabama during a time when the governor was opposed to desegregation. To protect Ms. Malone, President Kennedy called on Alabama's National Guard. In May 1965, Vivian Malone is the first African-American to graduate from a predominantly Caucasian school. To no avail, Ms. Malone graduated after overcoming, "cross burning, telephone threats, five bomb explosions, and Governor Wallace stating he vowed to 'get the nigger bitch out of the dormitory'" (Synott, 2008, p. 48).

Like Vivian Malone, in 1963, Charlayne Hunter lived a lonely life on the campus of University of Georgia. After a riot broke out, she was returned home. A lawsuit was filed and Ms. Hunter returned to campus under the same protective order as Ms. Malone. In her autobiography, *In My Place,* she stated, "I had to lose my public self in order to find my place. I knew that work where other people lived would be the focus point, no matter their color or status in life." (p. 50). She became the first African-American to graduate with a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia. In 1963, Lucinda Brawley was the first African-American woman admitted into Clemson University. She met her husband, Harvey Gantt (also the first African-American male admitted and graduated), left Clemson, and continued her education at

the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Similar to Malone and Hunter's experiences of demonstrations by White students, cross burnings, and threats followed them. In 1963, Henrie Monteith also integrated into the University of South Carolina. Aligned with other public institutions facing desegregation, in 1968 Cheryl Butler became the first African-American woman to join the Virginia Tech Cadets School (Synott, 2008). Ms. Butler stated, "the race issue had been settled in mind before the gender issue" (p. 52). She then went on to describe how she was discriminated against when, "I was stationed down South" in Florida (p. 52).

Even though these women (and more) were notable change agents, they battled segregated admission and state policies. These life stories describe how they helped to empower African-American women to pursue personal interests during times when they were not welcomed. Today, generations later with twice as many African-American women attending college (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2006*)* and working in executive administrative roles, inquiries remain about how these women of historical measures remained calm while walking campus with their heads high (Synnott, 2008).

Another challenge faced in higher education by African-American women administrators is a male dominated culture. Patitu and Hinton (2003) highlighted the importance of African-American women being influential, pointed out that there appears to be a dependency on males for higher education administrators due to the few African-American female administrators trained for their positions. Thelin (2004) presented the significant challenges faced by African-Americans, and how explicit adversities stem from societal matters surrounding gender, ethnicity, and other outlying factors. The interconnection of race, gender, and social class has been used to argue a link of stereotypical challenges faced by African-American women in higher education (Byrd, 2009).

Patitu and Hinton (2003, p.79), noted that African-American women holding middle to senior-level roles or in executive positions experience barriers and issues affecting "retention, promotion and tenure, and job performance." They identified intense matters like "racism, sexism, homophobia, climate, isolation, salary issues, coping strategies, and institutional ethos, and the impact of these and other issues on the lives and work of African-American women" (Patitu & Hinton, p. 79). The authors also noted subthemes like lack of development and promotion derived from these challenges that described how the African-American woman is affected in daily life and work.

In 1985, Solomon argued that some historical events caused a re-examination of African-Americans women in higher education. He stated, "the forced reevaluation of society that accompanied the end of slavery logically extended to a reconsideration of the status of women" (Solomon, 1985, p. 45). In 1997, Hine points out that the challenges of racism and sexism provides insight on African-American women's experiences in higher education (Hine, 1997). It represents their participation through social, professional, and institutional contexts. Some parts of history support aspects of diversity for women in higher education (Thelin, 2004) such as more women in positions once male dominated.

LeMelle (2002) suggested that the Historically Black College and Universities system of higher education helped other groups form national associations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and National Association of Colored Women's Club. These groups formed and advocated for equality in preparing African-American men and women for the workforce. Van Der Linde (2009) argues that contributions of these groups are considered as a solution to decrease societal issues by filling jobs with people that are "equipped," and gives

someone a "place in society" (p. 1). As African-Americans gained access to higher education, so did the opportunities to work in higher education from faculty to administration.

African American Women in Higher Education Administration

Wolverton at el. (2009) point out that traditionally, higher education has been a male-dominated field. However, the 1960's women's movement provided opportunities for top leadership positions in higher education (Bower & Wolverton, 2009). In the early 1970's, the highest number of women administrators were found at women colleges, primarily in student services. Despite high numbers from earlier years, to date, there is an alarming rate of few women in administrative positions and has continued as Ivy League colleges reported the lowest number of female and minority administrators currently holding senior-level positions as a dean or higher (Hall, 2012).

The Chronicle of Higher Education (2013, p. 98) presented a report from five American Ivy League Universities starting that out of 11 senior level administrators, three to five were African-American women. Research was conducted that revealed an increase in full-time administrative positions in higher education, but only small percentages were African-American women (McCurtis et al, 2009). African-American women administrators in higher education have made inroads but progress has been slow, notably in the office of the college/university president. Wolverton at el., (2009) maintain that little has changed for the college president. They said:

> In *Same Look Different Decade*, a 2007 article in the *Chronical of Higher Education*, the author states, "The remarkable thing about the profile of the typical college president—a married, graying White man with a doctoral degree—is how little has changed over the last 20 years." (p. xii)

At present, African-American women college presidents continue to face obstacles. In the *Montgomery Advertiser*, McConner (2014) covered a story about Dr. Gwendolyn E. Boyd. Dr.

Boyd was a candidate for the college President of Alabama State University, and if elected, would become the university's first female president. At the time, the current trustee board wrote this in the contract, "For so long as Dr. Boyd is President and a single person, she shall not be allowed to cohabitate in the President's residence with any person with who she has a romantic relation" (p.10). The actions taken by this board of trustees shows the persistence of issues that continue to affect retention and promotion for African-American woman college/university presidents. Dr. Boyd served as the first female president of Alabama State University.

African American Women College Presidents

African-American women in higher education can be traced back to when Katherine Ferguson, an ex-slave, started the Katy Ferguson School for the Poor in New York in 1723 (Mosley, 1980). In the 1800s-1900s, through the coeducation of men and women at Oberlin College in Ohio, also known as "God's college," African-American women became involved in higher education (Solomon, 1985).

President Lincoln's era demonstrates his commitment to equality in a special message to Congress in which he made a statement that America should "afford all an unfettered start and fair chance in life" (Brint & Karabel, 1989). Then the First and Second Morrill Acts began the transition of a more formalized educational system that allowed "blacks" to be educated on a specified amount of property or land (U.S. Department of Higher Education, 2009) approved by states to build institutions of higher education. The First Morrill Act and the Second Morrill Act of 1890 allowed for further expansion of colleges; criteria excluded practices of inequality such as admitting students based on race (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2009). Thus, they were arguing for the importance of administrators looking like the students. There were influential

African-American women who went from educators to founders leading college/university campuses.

Dr. Mary McCloud-Bethune (Bethune-Cookman University, 2009) and Artemisia Bowden (Thurston, 2013) were founders of the Normal School for Girls; later it was turned into a university or junior college and each had long tenures in the presidency role. Dr. Bethune served Bethune Cookman for 38 years while Ms. Bowden served St. Philip's College the longest at 52 years. Each led in a style that many today would categorize as charismatic, visionary, and a servant leader model. Nahavandi (2009) described examples of charismatic leaders as confident, energetic, and excellent in communication and served as a role model. Autry (2001) describes a servant leader as one who looks and places the needs of others first. This best describes both women's role in servant leadership. Some characteristics displayed by both women are closely related to the description of a servant leader such as having foresight, empathy, and commitment to the growth of others (Scardino, 2012). Their achievements were of such great magnitude that it would be a disservice to not discuss each as pioneers as a president in higher education.

In 1904, Dr. Bethune founded a normal school for girls and turned the school into an institution of higher education, known today as Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida (Bethune-Cookman University, 2009). The University is designated as one of the oldest Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in America (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Dr. Bethune's strong belief in helping others also led to the opening of a hospital to provide services for African-Americans.

In 1902, Artemisia Bowden was hired to serve what was then the St. Philip's Normal School for Negro Girls, and for 52 years, she served as chief administrator (Thurston, 2013). Under her leadership, the school grew from an industrial school for girls into a high school and

later to the first junior college in San Antonio, Texas (St. Philip's College, 2009). In *St. Philip's College: A Point of Pride on San Antonio's Eastside* (Thurston, 2013). Ms. Bowden was considered ahead of her times and felt a need for young Black girls to see other women like themselves in education and leadership positions (Thurston, 2013). Ms. Bowden's goal was (Bowden Fact Sheet, 2009):

> To make good, true, pure women, because I believe the destiny of people rests in the hands of its women. They are taught morality in the truest sense of the word. Our highest ambition is to send from our institution true, God-fearing women, who are not ashamed of the truth and whose characters are spotless. (Bowden Fact Sheet, 2009, p. 1)

With the turn of century came more female students on campus, thus indicating that women need to see other women that look like them. Over time, an increase of African-Americans and women in administrative positions has led to the highest number hired at institutions in history, yet both African-American and women remains underrepresented (Hall, 2012). As noted in a study by Hamilton (2004) about American college presidents, there remain a disproportionate underrepresentation of women and minorities. Harris, Wright, and Msengi (2011) reported that in 2001, women represented only 21% of college/university presidents and minority women represented only 13% of college/university presidents. King and Gomez (2007) reported in another edition of *The American College President,* that there was a slight increase in women and minority representation of 23% and 13.6% respectively.

The American Council on Education (2011) reported that not only are women and minorities still underrepresented in higher education administration but the rate at which these two groups are "rising" to the presidency remains slow. In *The American College President*, Cook and Kim (2012, p. 14) reported, "since 2006, there has been an increase in female college presidents, yet, in the last six years there has been a decrease in the racial and ethnic diversity in this position." In *Inside Higher Education*, Seltzer (2017) reported in the latest version of

American College Presidents study by the American Council on Education, Caucasian female presidents increased, while Hispanic female college presidents slightly decreased. Yet the portion of African-American women presidents remained steady.

Black Feminist Theoretical Perspective

Definitions of Black feminism vary because the focus has been more on Black women in general and capturing the experiences to know how they understand their position in society. One of the foundational texts of Black feminism by Mary Ann Weathers (1969), *An Argument For Black Women's Liberation As a Revolutionary Force* argued for the liberation of Black women. She posits, that women must "start this thing rolling" because women face oppression and Black American women's oppressions due to discrimination triples (Weathers 1969).

A volume of essays essential to the many perspectives of black feminism comes from African American women, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought,* edited by Guy-Shetfall (1995). Guy-Sheftall's collection of essays is a retelling of histories of American, African-American, women's, and the world. The actions of many of these women centered on seeking education for themselves and others, teaching, and serving as administrators under challenging circumstances. Her essays traced the development of Black feminist thought from Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, and Frances E.W. Harper. Their contributions caused for the debates on Victorian beliefs of womanhood being submissive, domestic, and illiterate.

Sojourner Truth, an advocate for the rights of women was unable to read yet was a renowned speaker. Her 1851 famous speech, "*Ain't I a Woman*?" called for the recognition and acknowledgement of Black women (Guy-Shetfall, 1995). She stressed that hard-working Black women are to be treated the same as White women.

Like Truth, Maria Stewart's writings in the 1800's have emphasized speeches that pushed more toward political and educational issues. She lectured on topics in literacy, economics, and education. Steward stressed the importance for Black women to get an education and argued for traditional women to be more influential outside of the home. In essence, she pushed for Black women to seek a career through more formal education.

Comparable and in a contrasting point, Frances E.W. Harper, argued for continuing traditional women roles; yet this also suggested that women need to consider being more influential outside of the home. This argument attracted opposing the view that would not give up the beliefs of domestic duties of women. (Guy-Shetfall, 1995).

Another collection of essays and speeches that provided insight on Black Feminism is *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde (2012). She brought together fifteen essays and speeches over the past eight years of her life that tells primarily of her experiences as a Black lesbian feminist. Lorde (2012) expands and improves the meaning of Black Feminism through essays and speeches with a focus on sexism, motherhood, sexuality, transforming silence into language, and women redefining themselves.

Another pioneer in Black feminist thought, bell hooks (1984) used an integrated feminist theory developed from the experiences of White, middle-class women, and inserts and builds upon the ideas and experiences of women who have knowledge of both margin and center (African American women and other women of color). She believed that feminism can be productive for minority women by providing a perspective other than that of the White middle-class woman. Hooks (1984) defined feminism as:

> A struggle to end sexist oppression; therefore, it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates the Western culture on various levels as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion and material desires (p. 24).

Hooks (1984) stated, "its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular class or race of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives" (p. 26). In essence, her definition indicated that everyone should be involved in the struggle to end sexist oppression. As part of that struggle, African-American women and other women of color can utilize their "marginality" to implement social and organizational change.

Hooks (1989) argues that certain values and beliefs of the Black woman's voice was transformational, and socio-economic and political issues had stifled the voice of women. She wrote about the feminist movement and its impact on issues such as politics, gender, class, and education. The author's outspoken and blunt content could be applicable to arguments for qualitative research focused on using the female voice. The content of hooks' work provided a platform for a conceptual framework aimed at feminist theory (hooks, 1984, 1989, 1999). Most significant is an upfront examination of issues faced and experienced in daily life. Some content could be quoted to stress terms and concepts applicable to research about African-American women (hooks, 1989). Hooks (1984) argues that a singular point of view regarding a Black woman's experience is central to issues that plague the daily life of Black women. Hooks (1984) stated, "much feminist theory emerges from privileged women who live at the center, whose perspectives on reality rarely include knowledge and awareness of the lives of women who live in the margins" (p. 1).

Patricia Collins (2001) endorsed a broader aspect of Black feminism. Collins (2001) explains that a woman needs to move from a "single voice to collective voice," including more Black women (p. 11). In spite of these opposing approaches, Collins and hooks share a common viewpoint of marginality for the voices of African-American women. As both hooks and Collins

argued different viewpoints about the singular versus diverse voices of women, they still share a common concept of accommodating diversity in women.

Collins' (1990) *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* provides the theoretical framework for this study. Collins compared the ideas of traditional White feminism with that of Black feminism. Collins' (2000) key concepts that characterized Black feminist thought are: a) outsider with-in, b) individual activism, c) matrix domination, d) images, and 5) self-definition. She based her discussions on the idea that Black women have occupied marginal positions in society. They are outsiders because they are African-American women working in the White, male dominated world. Collins (1990) asserts that African-American females have made use of their marginality, their "outsider within status" to produce Black feminist thought that reflects on self, family, and society. She explains the reclaiming of the relationship between past and present intellectual tradition and used the Black feminists' theoretical frameworks to interpret intellectual traditions of previously silenced Black women.

Collins (2000) articulated that intersections of oppression are structurally organized by identifying with race, gender, socioeconomic status, age, and sexuality, and the unique experiences of these interactions make African-American's women experiences differ. She also points out that rejection of the dominant group's definition of Black women and Black women's imposition of their own self-definition indicates a "collective Black women's consciousness"(p. 13). Collins (2000) pointed out themes and the epistemological approach with a specialized knowledge created by African-American women that "clarifies a standpoint" of and for Black women. In *Black Feminist Thought,* Collins (2000) states:

> Despite the common challenges confronting African-American women as a group,
> individual Black women neither have identical experiences nor interpret experiences in a

similar fashion…Differences among individual Black women produce different patterns of experiential knowledge that in turn shape individual reactions to the core themes. (p. 27).

Individuals refer to themselves in many ways such as liberal, radical feminist, post-structural, critical, and *Black* feminist (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001). For instance, debates focus on whether an African-American woman's standpoint is associated with gender relationships or feminism vs. womanism. Nidiffer's theoretical framework propose an integrated model of leadership that connected "gender-related leadership competencies using a feminism standpoint" (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001, p. 9). The framework suggests that social and acquired competencies of leadership can be valued in both male and female leaders, pointing out the value of women's experiences and moving beyond the traditional male dominant voice in higher education (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001). Mojica (2011) posits feminism as female-centered, stemming from empowerment of the female; whereas, womanism looks at the whole person, and emphasizes equality across the board for men and women.

For this research, the literature by Patricia Collins points to unique and diverse aspects of life faced by African-American women in higher education working in a field dominated by White male voices. Collins (1990) suggested that we should move from a "single voice of Black women" to a more collective voice as a result of more diverse issues among women (p. 12). I chose Collins' argument as the basis for this study because it provides for the opportunity to capture diverse experiences.

Summary

In reviewing the literature, history, and research studies focused on African-American women's experiences in higher education from educators to administrators, I suggest that factors such as race, gender, and career advancement can be seen as main challenges. The literature

points out ongoing issues pertaining to "gender and inequalities" (Jones, 2006, p. 18). The literature highlights societal challenges that are making gradual changes, but not at such a pace that moves beyond issues of race and gender inequalities.

A feminist theoretical framework presents a blunt, yet straightforward, view stemming from harsh societal issues such as race, gender, and inequality, and continues to be a guiding force to highlight complex matters faced by African-American women. It is a lens from the perspectives of African-American experiences that cannot be discounted as a diversity issue to the faced in higher education. The importance of studying the African-American women college/university president is to also help others aspiring to this role and celebrate the exceptional lives and careers of successful women leading an American college campus in these difficult social times.

Current studies continue to raise questions about disparity in higher education administrative jobs. Change comes slowly. However, with qualitative research, the voice of the African-American woman administrator in higher education is examined. In the book, *Flat-Footed Truths*, Patricia Bell-Scott and Juanita Johnson-Bailey (1998) reminds us that the lives of women remain masked behind silence. Therefore, by examining the experiences that African-American women college/university presidents face daily we can gain perspective and insight. It breaks the silence of the African-American administrators in the academy, especially that of a woman in the college/university president's office.

Much of the literature talks about the career pathways and the small number of women in the presidency role. An optimistic future is possible through research about African-American women leading college campuses. More innovative studies are needed to help colleges across the

nation align with the background, unique skills, and abilities that an African-American woman

can bring to the role of college/university president.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology. Discussions in the data collection, management and analysis procedures, which are the next sections. Then a step-by-step description of the data collection, preparation, and organization processes is discussed. The next section is ethical considerations that includes processes for protection of participants, confidentiality, and anonymity of study participants. The final sections include discussions on limitations, and delimitations followed by a summary, and transition of Chapter 3 to Chapter 4. A restatement of the problem is next.

Statement of the Problem

The problem identified by the researcher are the experiences of African-American women college presidents in the higher education environment. There has been an increase in women and minority, yet a continued concern in the gradual and slow rate for growth of African-American women college presidents (American Council on Education, 2011). The researcher identified the problem to be two-fold. First, the lack of prior research that focused on African-American women college experiences in terms of success and achievement. Second, studies are limited that track achievements of African-American women college presidents with limited voice, especially at a decision-making level in a male dominated field (Griffin et al., 2013; Smith, 2015).

This research explored African-American women college presidents in American institutions of higher education. It examined external/internal daily activities that described the African-American women leadership role experiences in an institution of higher education. higher education environment. Despite barriers of discrimination, negative assumptions, and

doubts about their performance African-American women rose to the chief effective office in higher education (Davis & Maldonado 2015).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study seeks to explain how internal, and external daily experiences of African-American women college presidents determine a successful presidency role. Collins (2000) five dimensions from the model of *Black Feminist Thought* was used to address the research questions:

RQ 1: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment?

RQ 2: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment?

To answer the research questions, this researcher used two sources of data collection. A primary source of data for this study were the transcribed interviews from African-American college presidents. The interviews provided firsthand descriptive words and provided evidence for the experiences of the participants (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). A secondary source of collecting data was through using internet open sources to review the college presidents' biographies. In addition, this researcher used the internet to access the colleges' website to review archives of college history, mission and strategic priorities. The data from the primary and secondary sources were linked to keep the focus on trustworthiness while emergent themes (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012) derived from common experiences shared by the participants.

Qualitative Research

A research design is the backbone a study (Holliday, 2015). The overall approach for selected for this research study was qualitative research. Qualitative research is based on human experiences that occur in the natural environment (Holliday, 2015).

Qualitative research explores the relationship between what is being studied and the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The qualitative researcher captures participants' perspectives by using techniques such as observation and interviewing, while measuring and analyzing variables. This is the focus of quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative research is "concerned with experience as it lived, felt or, undergone" (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). This research that brought meaning and understanding to the experiences from voices of African-American women in a successful college presidency role. Merriam (2002, p. 6) explained:

> Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness and understanding the nature of that setting-what it means for participants in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that setting and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting.

A strong qualitative study explores, describes context, and use participants' frame of reference (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researcher identified three reasons why a qualitative methodology was the best choice for the study. First, a qualitative approach provided a depth of understanding meaning through thick-rich descriptions of things (Merriam & Grenier, 2019) that are not possible with numerical descriptions (Holliday, 2015). Second, a qualitative method addressed the research problem that was focused on a specific ethnic group, and allowed this researcher to apply one or more methods, such as observations, reviewing documents, and semi-structured interviews that include open-ended questions (Holliday, 2015). Last, this research

approach was used to collect information in real world time (Fusch & Ness 2017) based on perspectives, and insights of African-American women experiences that contributed to defining a successful presidency at an institution of higher education.

  Unit of analysis. The unit of analysis in this research is the African-American women college presidents in American institutions of higher education. The roles of this unit of analysis include success, and achievements of African-American women college presidents. The research analyzed the external/internal daily activities that described experiences despite barriers of discrimination, negative assumptions and obvious doubts about their performance in a male dominated field (Gamble & Turner, 2015; Parker, 2015). Therefore, it addressed the research problem that is critical for higher education programs preparing graduate students, and integrity of hiring practices than can result in more successful leader-to-institution matches (Crag 2015).

  Units of observation. The unit of observation in this study are colleges and universities. After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the African-American women college presidents were recruited, consent forms were completed prior to interviews. With consent, interviews were recorded. The data was collected from the participants based on insights and perspectives to identify the definition of a successful presidency based on internal and external experiences in a higher education environment.

Research Design

  Ethnographic case study research. This present study used a combination of ethnography and case study methods. The ethnographic case study was selected to inform the design and validate the theoretical framework. Hammersley (2018) argued that for ethnography to survive, the definition must be clearly defined as an inquiry used to study a cultural group by collecting data through observations, and interviews. Additionally, Hancock and Algozzine,

(2016) described doing case study research to explore in depth events and activities, as well as processes for one or more persons.

First, and as described by Wolcott (2003), this historic research ethnographic research methodology can be used to inform multiple forms of data (i.e., participant observation and interviews), to capture strong exploration, description, and provide perspectives from the context of a participant. Second, this researcher decided to use an ethnographic study so interviews and observations were done in a natural setting (Yin, 2011) of a group of African-American women in the culture of American institutions of higher education. Last, an ethnographic case study was selected to provide this researcher with an understanding of human behavior, and a complex phenomenon while understanding meaningful characteristics of daily lived experiences (Angers & Machtmes, 2005; Yin, 2011).

Site and Population Selection

Setting. For this study, the settings were American institutions of higher education that granted undergraduate, graduate, and advanced degrees. The location of choice will be at the discretion of the participant if she has retired or no longer serve as a seated college president. Campus visits will aid in learning about the environment of the participants. For those retired or no longer serving in the role will have an opportunity to describe the site(s) they served while in the presidency role. I was very flexible with challenging schedules. If time permitted in the schedule, a campus tour was granted, or if unable, with permission I walked around the campus on my own. Follow-up interviews were few, but a couple were completed by telephone.

Participants. The target population of this study was a group of African-American women college/university presidents who serve or served at an institution of higher education. The targeted population currently serve or served at a 2-year and/or 4-year American institution

of higher education. This researcher was interested in findings and based in a common group of individuals (Gentles et al., 2015).

The criteria for selection of current college presidents was crucial to showcase the competent and effective leadership needed to remain in the role of college/university president. She had to be with this same institution more than one year; be an African-American woman; and regarded herself as a career president, not using the position as a step to another higher-level position. The former college president must have served at least 2 to 5 years to ensure they had a full experience in the role.

Research Instruments

Specific strategies. In this study, data collection took several strategies. First, the participants were sent an email requesting their participation, introduced the topic, its objectives and reasons for the interview in the research study (See Appendix A). Second, the participants were requested to sign informed consent forms as a standard research practice researcher created an atmosphere that enabled interviewees to feel safe to respond freely to all the questions. (See Appendix B).

Next, semi- structured interviews with open-ended questions were created and centered on the research questions using Collins (2000) *Black Feminist Thought* theoretical framework. For this study, six participants were manageable to interview and obtain adequate information to address the research problem. The interview questions revolved around experiences of African-American women currently serving or served as president of an institution of higher education. The interviews were about 60-90 minutes long. With permission, all interviews were recorded using written notes, as well as digital recordings. Merriam (1988, p. 104), suggests that "written or mechanical recordings will be considered raw data from which findings will eventually

merge." This type of multiple sources was selected for recording data so that this researcher did not have to rely on memory or in case a mechanical devise error (Merriam, 1988).

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for common themes in about 25 to 30 single-spaced typed pages and coded based on the codes from Last, this researcher commenced asking questions, starting with establishing rapport, what is day like, belief in feminism, background in higher education and advise to those with aspirations to be a college president and hiring practices. Last, this researcher transcribed and cross-checked all interview sheets to ensure all responses were captured.

Moreover, participant biographies, and campus documents were reviewed to learn about the campus environment, target population educational and professional experiences attained, and achievements. For the population currently serving on a college campus, observation notes were collected.

Observation of participants. For current seated presidents, and as permitted, the researcher observed in the participant's settings (work and/or home life), and role during activities and interactions with others. An observation guide (See Appendix C) was used to capture descriptive and reflective notes. Merriam (1988) points out the following six distinct reasons for being a careful observer:

1. Pay attention to routine things that lead to understanding context.

2. Use triangulate findings from interviews, data collections and analysis.

3. Use one's own knowledge and experiences rather than relying on accounts of interviews.

4. Record what is happening at that moment to be used as reference points.

5. Provide knowledge of context or specific incidents to reference,

6. The participant has freedom to discuss or not discuss topics. (Merriam, 1988, p. 26)

Interview protocols and procedures. Interview questions for this study were designed from Collins (2000) *Black Feminist Thought* theoretical framework, and questions were developed within the model's five dimensions. Questions were created to guide the conversations about professional experiences, and probe into home life, when needed. The pattern of interview questions was based on Collins' Theory (See Appendix D). The questions were designed for "person to person," (Merriam, 1988, p. 71) interviews to obtain distinct information through conversation. According to Merriam (1988, p. 71), "the purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information."

Interviews were conducted with an allotted time of 60-90 minutes. This allotted time provided flexibility to work within the participants' schedules. If a participant's schedule allowed, additional interview time was made available. For the current sitting college president, this researcher worked collaboratively with key administrative support staff member(s) to schedule all appointments. For this type of research and participants that have very challenging schedules, this researcher expected to work with a gatekeeper, probably an administrative and/or assistant support staff member.

In a pilot study, done during my coursework, this researcher had first-hand experience seated college presidents staff members. This was direct experience with a gatekeeper. A gatekeeper is defined as a person who controls access to somebody (Yin, 2011). In the pilot study, the research found that scheduling an interview under the guarded eye of a gatekeeper was no easy task. However, from the pilot study, this researcher gained experience in the process of contacting an administrative support staff member (Assistant to the President or Executive Secretary) to review the purpose of the study and the interview questions prior to the interviews.

Patience and working in collaboration with the gatekeeper gave this researcher appropriate access to a participant, and if needed, ongoing access. As Yin (2011) noted, gaining and maintaining access in fieldwork can feel like an eventful experience.

Ethical Considerations

      Protection of human subjects: Ethical considerations. To ensure the best ethical practices for protecting human subjects for study, the format followed the approved Institutional Review Board (IRB) at University of the Incarnate Word protocol format to include a copy of the interview questions, email message with attached introduction letter/consent form. These types of IRB boards are responsible for protecting the human subject under "auspices of that institution" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 47). Once approved, all IRB forms and attachments will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my home office.

      An audio recorder with a lock feature was used to secure each recorded interview. The recorder was kept in a locked and secured area of my home. Computer files were kept under a secured password, known only to me. In a locked room, typed written information was stored on a locked travel thumb drive, and in a locked file cabinet. This research study will be shared with dissertation committee members, only. The content was submitted to the committee to review for written work in compliance with the current edition of American Psychological Association Manual. The committee will review this research study to ensure it also meets university guidelines for dissertation defense.

      Potential risks for harm. Minimal risks involved in this study included self-reporting data and quoting remarks based on personal statements made by participants, and numerous scheduled and/or unscheduled activities taking place during an observation. Self-reported data was limited by the fact that it might be difficult to verify as I had to take what people said in

interviews at face value. I quoted remarks made by the participants personal responses that was also audio recorded. To protect participants identity, and reputation based on personal responses during audio-recordings, I referred to participants during interviews as "Madam President." A pseudonym was also used to protect identity.

Key ethical criteria. Anonymity ensures honesty among participants. As the participation of the African-American women college presidents are voluntary, they could choose to withdraw at any moment with no consequence. No incentives were given to participate in the interviews as this was strictly voluntary. Names and personal information were not part of the investigation.

Procedures for obtaining informed consent. All procedures of data gathering during this investigation were per the Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies and per University of the Incarnate Word ethical policies to make sure the compliance of federal ethical regulations.

Data management procedures. Data obtained from this research was managed and stored according to IRB policies and procedures. The data gathered will be retained a minimum of three years after the research. As this data has minimal risk or impact to the participants, it will be stored in a secured location (travel thumb drive and personal cabinet with lock for hard paper transcription of interviews) with permitted access to only to researcher. A password was implemented on the computer that contains the data.

Data Collection

There were four methods used to gather information for this research study. These methods included fieldwork, interviews, and transcribing. Collecting data included open ended-interviews and questions to gain insights from participant experiences (King et al., 2018).

Fieldwork. In qualitative studies, collecting data may require the researcher to go to the setting or site (Nolen & Talbert, 2011). Fieldwork was very important for this study as multiple participants were at multiple sites. For this study, it allowed this researcher to go to a campus to observe the participant. It allowed the interview to be in familiar place. In addition, it allowed this researcher to visit the campus library to review any written materials and look at historical photos of the campus.

In-depth interviews. An in-depth interviewing technique was used to reveal findings based on experiences and perspectives of the African-American woman college/university president. Seidman (2012, p. 3) stated the purpose of in-depth interviewing is not "to test a hypothesis or to get answers to questions," but rather to garner an "interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." Patton (2005) argued that this form of interviewing allows the freedom to probe, explore, and ask questions about topics and subject areas that will enlighten the subject matter.

This researcher used less structured type of interview with open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were flexible and allowed for exploration through conversation while observing activity as it occurred during the interview. This researcher chose this unstructured process to allow responses to define the world of an African-American female college president in a unique way (King et al., 2018).

Thus, the open-ended and semi-structured research questions gave the participant an opportunity to describe her unique experiences and perspectives about being an African-American female college/university president. Moreover, open-ended questions allowed participants an opportunity to delve deeper into experiences. From the illustration of Yin's (2011) use of interview protocol to "guide conversation" (p. 139).

Ethnographic Interviews

In accordance with Skinner (2013) about ethnographic interview, to ensure a safe interview environment, the interviews for this study were set up to be like talking partnerships to transfer knowledge. The interviews allowed the participants to speak in their own voice that acquired knowledge from daily activities used to build on common experiences. For this study, these shared experiences were used to discuss findings and conclusion that could profile the definition of a successful college presidency for other African-American women.

Documents. This research reviewed official campus records such historical records and strategic plans to learn about an institution of higher education. Another document reviewed was participants biographies. The biographies were reviewed to learn more about background of participants, attitudes and beliefs. Documents were considered a good source of data for this study because it provided descriptive information, was easily accessible, and most important for a doctoral study, free (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Transcription. For this research, the first thing decided was to analyze and transcribe interviews, simultaneously (Stuckey, 2014). This researcher decided to do concurrent analysis and transcription so the recorded interviews could be studied in detail. Mero-Jaffee (2011) indicated that it is essential to the management and organization of data when transforming language. This research organized data from questions developed from a theoretical framework used to guide the investigation and presented research findings categorized into themes. Thus, the inductive mode of analysis was best for the research study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Data Analysis

Theoretical perspectives were used to analyze and interpret data that narrate a story about the daily life of six African American women in the college presidency or served in this type of

campus leadership role. Findings will be explained through a popular use of narratives that will tell a story (Merriam, 2002).

Analysis of data was in two parts. The first part involved reviewing campus information and background information after interviews. As the instrument and researcher, this prevented preconceived notions during data collection and analysis. Campus information was gathered from websites, reports and other historical manuscripts. Participants' biographies were reviewed to gather information about their professional and/or personal backgrounds.

The next part of analysis was transcribing after each interview. This researcher interviewed and transcribed written and recorded data into a script format. The script format set the groundwork for the spoken word transformation into a more organized written context. The script form permitted words to stand out on paper and revealed a pattern of words that helped with authentic data analysis.

This researcher reflected to any interview dynamics, including how the interview played a key role in building a relationship with the participant. The interviews were transcribed from the recorder into a scripted text. Context of the language served as an important tool used to transcribe. For instance, the interviewees' tone, pitch, and pauses were included as the exchange of information from the recorder to written text. At times, this was a little difficult because the spoken word differs greatly from written text; however, the script form developed into a seamless flow. Marshall and Rossman (2011) identified the difficulties of transcribing due to understanding that individuals do not speak in paragraphs or with the punctuation in mind.

Most importantly, for transparency of the theoretical framework, this researcher found challenges with making sense of meaning of certain phrases or words; the transcription was then dissembled and reassembled into a simplistic script format. In *Transparency in Transcribing:*

Making Visible Theoretical Bases Impacting Knowledge Construction from Open-Ended Interview Records, researchers argue for "transparency in research reports by analyzing and making visible ways in which a researcher's personal and formal theories become consequential in producing and using a transcript of an open-ended interview" (Skukauskaite, 2012, p. 2).

Beginning analysis occurred as data was gathered to add to validity and inform the next interview/observation. Repeated interviews and observations were completed over time. This researcher used two data tasks' analysis. Data was analyzed using what Merriam (2002) described as ethnographic and narrative analysis.

The task of an ethnographic analysis is using rich thick descriptions and to organize data in categories. After interviews were completed, and all other data were collected, each interview was transcribed verbatim, then analyzed and coded. According to Bogdan and Biklen, (2006):

> Developing a coding system involves several steps: You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data (p. 171).

After initial coding, this researcher listened to the recording while following the transcripts in order to understand and recapture interview discussions. This researcher was attentive to how the interview starts and what has occurred over the progression. This researcher read information more than once to look for emerging patterns and themes. Quotations were placed under the appropriate themes. This researcher utilized biographical data, the position, office, and personal profiles to organize information about the participant.

After the themes were identified and organized, this researcher separated the interviews into segments by reading and re-reading the transcripts thoroughly for readily identifiable themes and patterns. This researcher made notes in the margins or between phrases, and categorize the

areas of the interview guide, placing the topics of discussion under categories using the five dimensions in Collins' (1990) framework of *Black Feminist Thought*: a) Core themes of a Black woman's standpoint; b) Variation of responses to core themes; c) The interdependence of experience and consciousness; d) Consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint; and e) The interdependence of thought and action.

Through these five dimensions, this researcher was developed interview questions, analyze data, code common themes, and interpret the interview data. In narrative analysis, emphasis is on "stories people tell and how they are communicated" (Merriam, 2002, p. 157). The final manuscript placed emphases on the stories told by each participant. This researcher narrated stories of experiences to determine if a self-defined standpoint is articulated (Collins, 2001), and if the Black feminist consciousness is prevalent in the individual. African-American women must let others know what it takes to remain successful in the college/university president's office, and why women are equally important to men.

In sum, the data analysis process is in six steps.

Step 1. Thick rich descriptions. According to Merriam (2002) ethnographic and narrative analysis, interviews were completed and transcribed verbatim from recorded data. Fusch and Ness (2017) pointed out that thick data is about the quality, and interviews are one way to saturate data in qualitative research. There was not set number of interviews because the goal was to obtain as much data as offered by participants. It has been argued that one number could be found to quantify saturation of data because in a qualitative study, the "researcher takes what he can get" (Bernard, 2012). Context of the language was important to transcribe to include the interviewees tone, pitch, and pauses were included as the exchange of information from the recorder to written text.

Step 2. Transcription. The written recorded data transcribed. The accuracy of the transcription played an important role in determining accurate data, and dependability. After the first interview, analysis began to determine if researcher questions were being answered or interview guide needed revisions. As each interview was completed this researcher examined content to determine what was learned or still needed be elaborated on or uncovered. This researcher moved from raw interviews into script format. The script format captured spoken word transformation into a more organized written context. The script permitted words to stand out on paper and revealed a pattern of words so interpretations were ready to be coded (Stuckey, 2014).

Step 3. Coding. In accordance with Bogdan and Biklen (2006) there is no right or wrong way to do coding, and using a coding system, additional steps were developed: a) Search through data for regularities, patterns and topics discovered in data; b) Write down words and phrases on specified identified by specified colored sticky notes to represent these topics and patterns; c) Words and phrases became categories; and d) Sorted descriptive data are separated and given topic. After initial coding, this researcher listened to recordings and followed the transcripts. The researcher highlighted key words/phrases in distinct colors identical to the colored sticky notes to understand and recapture interview discussions. This researcher was attentive to how the interview started, and how it progressed over the course of each discussion. It was necessary to ensure that all statements included relevant and meaningful data with reference to the participants' unique lived experiences and perceptions.

Step 4. Emergent patterns. Information was read more than once by this researcher to uncover emerging patterns and themes. Quotations were placed under the appropriate themes. For transparency of the theoretical framework, this researcher made visible the theoretical bases

from the interviews recorded. Anfara and Mertz (2014) posit that theoretical framework can denote a study.

  Step 5. Emergent themes. After the themes were identified and organized, this researcher separated the interviews into segments by reading and re-reading the transcripts thoroughly for readily identifiable themes and patterns. This researcher made notes in the margins or between phrases, and categorize the areas of the interview guide, placing the topics of discussion under categories using the five dimensions in Collins' (1990) framework of Black Feminist Thought: a) Core themes of a Black woman's standpoint; b) Variation of responses to core themes; c) The interdependence of experience and consciousness; d) Consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint; and e) The interdependence of thought and action.

  Step 6. Narratives. This researcher utilized biographical data, the position, office, and personal profiles to organize information about the participant. Additionally, campus documents and other background information described by the participants were reviewed by this researcher. A narrative analysis was used to highlight stories told by each participant (Merriam, 2002). Stories were narrated based on experiences articulated in self-defined standpoints, and the prevalence of Black feminism being in the individual.

Role of Researcher

  For the study, this researcher served as the main instrument. As the primary instrument, this researcher used interviews, observations and documents to collect data to minimize the researcher's bias and assumptions about feelings and human experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Merriam and Greiner (2019) asserted that one of the characteristics of qualitative research is the researcher being used as the principal instrument to help understand the perception of the participant. Accordingly, these researchers claimed that the use of the researcher as the human

instrument is ideal for both collecting and analyzing the data since the primary goal of qualitative research is the understanding the phenomena (Merriam & Greiner, 2019).

As the researcher, it was important to describe my background, work, and personal experiences. It provided a lens into my experience and possible biases from which to view this research. As an African-American woman with over 15 years in higher education, this researcher can relate to some experiences. This researcher entered a faculty position as the youngest African-American women in a department which was majority White and male. Then, when promoted to serve as in administrative role, this researcher was the second African-American woman to serve as a Program Director of a program from its inception. During this time as the only African-American, and woman, amongst a group of peers. So, the "double-whammy" effect is something understood, completely. In conducting the research, there could be two opposing arguments for my role as the researcher. One could argue that this researcher's experiences may bring biases. On the other hand, based on the experiences, this researcher could relate to the experiences of African-American women in higher education from the faculty to administrative level.

Trustworthiness

Trust will be very important. This researcher worked hard to show commitment and ensure mutual trust, especially while interviewing everyone. A productive interview was important for his research. The figure provides a visual display of a productive interview for this study.

Figure 3 illustrates how all the dynamic factors were essential to obtaining and keeping my access while conducting the in-depth qualitative interviews. Kezar (2003, p. 400) listed some key concepts that relate to interviews but the two that stood out were "commitment and

engagement" and "mutual trust." Trust, commitment, and dedication played important roles in the relationship between me as the researcher and participants.
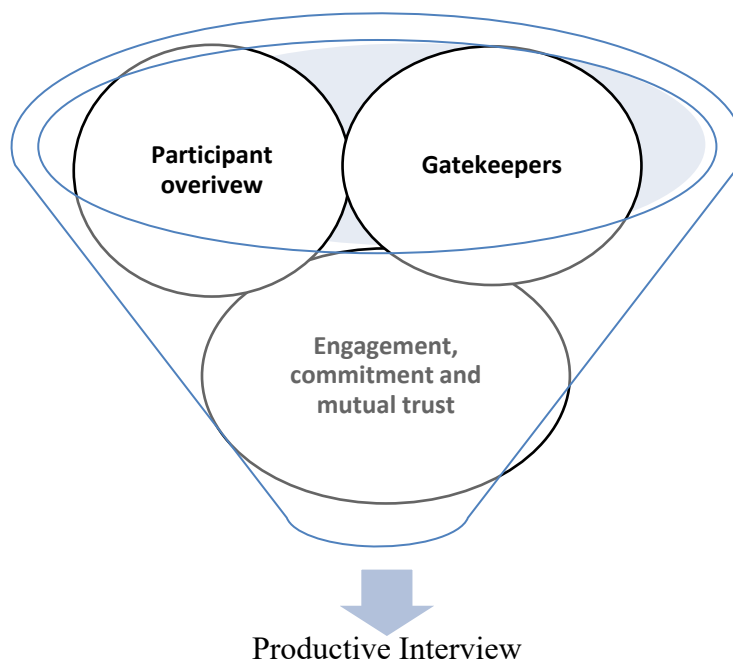
Figure 3. Key concepts to be used during a productive interview.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), inquiry is confirmed when participants assist in reviewing the data and clarify assertions and categories that were developed as part of the analysis of data. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011, p. 11), "*reliability, validity, objectivity*, and *generalizability*" stem from quantitative research. However, in qualitative research, trustworthiness and credibility progressed to "*credibility, dependability, confirmability*, and *transferability*" in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that trustworthiness is important to evaluating the worth of data. They also define trustworthiness involves establishing the following:

- Credibility confidence in the truthful of the findings.

- Dependability showing findings are consistent and could be repeated.

- Confirmability a level of neutrality; findings are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

- Transferability showing that the findings can be applied in other contexts.

Thick descriptions. The researcher used thick description to achieve what Lincoln and Guba (1985) described as external validity. The researcher will collect data from very detailed interviews. A report of detailed interviews will give the reader a visual glimpse of setting and insight regarding the responses. Descriptive details were used to evaluate conclusions drawn from times, settings, situations, and other people that may impact the daily life of the participant (Holloway, 1997).

Audit trail. The researcher ensured a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start to project development and reporting of findings. As discussed in Marshall and Rossman (2011), an audit trail gave way to transparency in data collection and analysis. To ensure a transparent audit trail, this researcher kept all details of plans and execution of the research in a private reflective journal. This also aided in reflexivity.

Member checking. In measuring trustworthiness, credibility is defined as the probability that "credible findings and interpretations will be produced" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.301). This researcher used member checking as a measure of credible data. The participant needs to have the ability to review what is to be reported in an effort not to be identified. Therefore, member checking, "the process of having this individual review statements made in the researcher's report for accuracy and completeness" (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 575) will be used to avoid misrepresentation.

Each participant received an electronic and hard copy of the study to check for accuracy and respond to any discrepancies. The researcher felt it was very important and necessary for the

review of information being reported because confidential information may be conveyed throughout interviews. Furthermore, member checking will be beneficial to revealing errors that can be easily corrected (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). This will allow for each participant to recall conversations and suggest information be added or removed. This type of trustworthiness is out of respect to each participant (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) and research integrity (Yin, 2011). This would also enhance the richness of data collected and in-depth rich information will provide an understanding from each participant's experiences (Patton, 2005).

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is an important strategy used in qualitative research to understand how it may impact characteristics and experiences of the researcher (Berger 2015). As a former college professor that moved into a mid-level administrative role, my work experience allowed me to observe some events experienced by an African-American women president. The journal helped me share my researcher experiences with the experience of study participants. The journal also tracked the moves in the position as a researcher (outsider) to where it fit in the study (insider). The journal provided time to reflect on aspirations to returning to higher education.

Additionally, it allowed the researcher to be accountable for research activities throughout this process. It also allowed the researcher to reflect on their own biases, values, and assumptions (Creswell, 2008). The journal gave the researcher an opportunity to reflect on each of the participant's responses associated with this researcher's role. It is expected that this research may become very emotional; writing about these emotions may capture the true essence of the research process. The journal also described some emotions felt by this researcher. For instance, being frustrated about the process, confused about some data, or perplexed in

interpretations. The journal was utilized to collect data, review notes from interviews, and release emotions. The journal remains locked in a file cabinet at the researcher's home.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations. Limitations of the study focus on the limits of the methodology. The study was limited by clear conditions that were identified for this research investigation. Limitations are factors in the study that cannot be controlled by the researcher (Pyrczak, 2016). The researcher identified some limitations as a foundation for this study:

1. Limitation was a rigid methodology because the study was limited to a qualitative ethnographic case study.

2. There was a limitation with time constraints. The researcher interviewed six presidents and fount that some interviews were cut short to about 60 minutes due to very busy schedules over a period of one month.

3. There was limitation with the gatekeeper's ability to understand the interview questions being asked and be able to relay information to participants to demonstrate full comprehension of each question.

Delimitations. Delimitation are defined as constraints to your study in terms of the scope and reach. Delimitations are factors in the study that limit its scope and dictates the direction of the study (Pyrczak, 2016). The researcher identified four delimitations regarding the scope this study:

1. The study was delimited to more states in the southern U.S. region, two in the eastern region of United States. The results may or may not be generally applicable to other regions.

2. The study was delimited to the lived experiences of only African-American women college/university presidents and not other key administrative roles.

3. The study was delimited to a population of university/college presidents that just happened to belong to the same international sorority for African-American college educated women.

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology that was implemented as part of the investigation. The chapter discussed the methodology that was implemented to conduct this qualitative research. Qualitative research is the best method to collect data to construct meaning, using in-depth interviews with African-American women college president for the dynamic reality of daily activities that describe a successful leadership role in a higher education environment. Last, the chapter discussed the research design selection, and instrument to be used to conduct the investigation.

The target population were African-American women who serve or served as a college president at an American initiation of higher education. The targeted population serve or served at an institution of higher education in which students were awarded and undergraduate, graduate or professional degree after complete studies at 2 or 4 years. The study explored the internal and external experiences that shaped a successful college presidency.

Data will be collected using in-depth interview questions that were developed based on the five dimensions of Collins (2000) *Black Feminist Thought* theoretical framework. Simultaneously, the collected data was analyzed, codes and transcribed. The collected data was recorded and saved, electronically. The data collected was kept in a locked in researchers office and will be kept saved redundantly for the time length required (three years minimum). For

security, electronic data was stored on a locked thumb drive and stored in a locked cabinet of the researcher's office.

Chapter 4 will discuss and analyze all the results obtained from the interviews. It discussed methods of analysis from transcribed interviews, and readings about campus history to learn from participant shared experiences. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusion and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 4: Findings and Results

This chapter present the results of analysis on qualitative data that was collected from six African-American women who serve or served as a college president. A combination of ethnography and case study methods was used for data analysis. Data was analyzed to explore how African-American women internal and external experiences shape the profile for a success while leading an institution of higher education. The collected qualitative data were coded and analyzed in accordance with procedures for ethnographic and narrative analysis. An ethnographic analysis was used through thick descriptions transcribed and organized into categories of emergent themes.

Overview of Chapter

This chapter presents key findings of the ethnographic case study on how African-American college president define success, and the experiences that shape their role leading an institution of higher education. This chapter contains sections that cover the results of data analysis based on data collection process that used field work, in-depth interviews, and review of documents such as biographies, historical archives, and strategic plans to learn the campus mission and strategic priorities. Data was analyzed using a simultaneous task of ethnographic and narrative analysis. After interviews, data was transcribed verbatim, and simultaneously organized into narrated scripts of rich thick descriptions to be coded for common emergent themes. The chapter ends with the conclusions drawn from the listed results to address the purpose of the study and the set research questions.

Summary of Study

This qualitative ethnographic case study was developed to answer the following research questions:

- RQ 1: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment?

- RQ 2: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment?

The recent literature on the problem indicates that African-American women college president experience barriers of sexism, racism and discrimination while trying to achieve and successfully lead an institution of higher education. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the lived experiences of a specific group of African American women college presidents that serve or served as a college president at an American intuition of higher education. Semi-structed interview were used to gather data for analysis. The interviews gathered were analyzed into organized into emergent themes and patterns.

Descriptive data. The specific problem identified is that African-American women college presidents face a variety of challenges while trying the successfully lead a campus. Six African-American women were interviewed for this study, and the purpose of exploring their lived experiences related to how they define and achieve a successful presidency role in a higher education environment. A total of six confidential interviews were conducted. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The participants interview answers were transcribed into a total of 29 pages, and recorded answers were transcribed for further analysis. Three observations were conducted for three seated presidents and collected six pages of typed field notes.

Transcription was analyzed in two parts using Yin's (2011) five phases that include: compiling, dissembling, reassembling, interpretation, and conclusion. The first phase was compiling and organizing data which was done in a script format. Second, this researcher

disassembled data using a color code of similar words or phrases. Third, this researcher

reassembled data seeking emerging patterns. In the second part, this researcher interpreted the

findings of the emerging themes as it addressed the research problems and answered research

questions. Then, the researcher presented some overall conclusions. Figure 4 points out how the

continuous five analytical phase (Yin, 2011) that contributed to how data was analyzed, and had

a focus on each phase to address the study in its entirety.
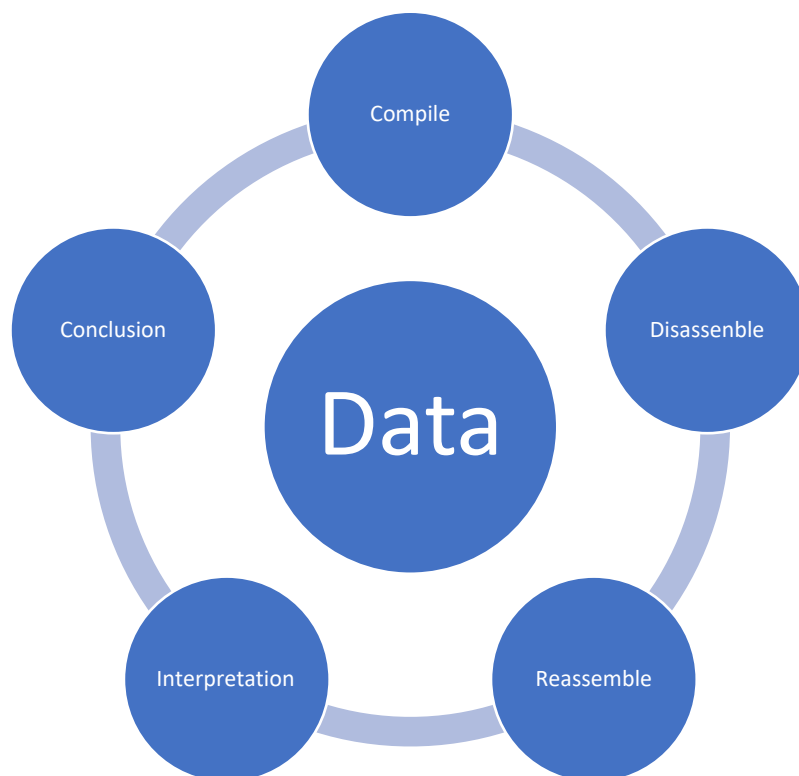
Figure 4. Continuous steps of Yin's five phase analytical cycle.

For the current seated presidents, observations of campus life and other activities were

made. For former presidents who served specific institutions, open internet access to their

websites, campus history archives, and strategic priorities were reviewed for additional data. A

total of 12 pages of field notes were kept in a private journal using the Observation Guide to

organize descriptive and reflective notes. The researcher used descriptive notes about the setting

and activities. The reflective notes were used to reflect on insights, interpretations and emotions of the researcher.

This researcher took notes as a reflective way to gather descriptions that were organized into common themes (Belton, 2009). The notes also served as a way of reflecting on insights and perspectives that had an impact on being a successful African-American college president (Mazanderani, 2017). According to the collected data, several participants did not intentionally seek or aspire to a college presidency. They all started in the field of education or their respective discipline that led them to become a college professor teaching coursework in their respective discipline. While further into the study, and to be discussed in the next chapter, it was also discovered that the majority of the African-American women recruited to participate in this study are members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. They can also be described as a diverse group with vast educational and professional backgrounds. Table 2 displays information about each participant's background as a chief executive officer of an institution of higher education. The table identified the participants by their pseudonyms, and their current status in the role of college president. It also lists the type of institutions of higher education where a participant currently serves or served as a president. There were participants that serve or served at a junior college or 4-year university. Some of institutions were private while others serve or served at a public intuition of higher education. While participants described different experiences, they shared a common story of rising to the presidency by taking what one participant describes as a "leap of faith."

Table 2

Participants

Participant	Current or Former	Type of Institution	Public or Private Institution Serving Institution
Madam President A	Current	University	Private HBCU
Madam President B	Former (Retired)	University	Public HBCU
Madam President C	Current	University	Public HBCU
Madam President D	Former/Current (Current- Government position)	Community College	Private &Public- PWI
Madam President E	Former (Retired)	University	Private HBCU
Madam President F	Former (Retired)	Community College & University	Public PWI & HBCU

Data Collection

Four methods of data collection were used. First, an email with consent forms was sent to request participation in the study. After signed consent forms, interviews for scheduled. There were three seated college presidents who extended an invitation to visit the campus. Two campus visits were made, but due to bad weather, and the participant's schedule, a telephone interview was conducted with the third. For participants who served as a college president in the past, skype and telephone interviews were conducted. Due to very demanding schedules, all participants were adamant about "carving out time" to participate in the study. Field work started with visiting a campus upon invitation to conduct in-depth interviews.

Procedure for obtaining informed consent. All procedures for gathering data followed the policies and procedures set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). First, participants

were sent an email to request their participation in this study, and the consent form was attached. After the participants signed consent form, interviews were scheduled. Consent forms were kept in a locked file in the researcher's home office.

Interview. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with six African American women college presidents. Face-to face individual interviews were conducted with each participant. For the African-American women college president currently serving, meetings were held on campus in their office. One seated president had to reschedule and asked for a meeting by Skype. Former college president interviews were via telephone or by Skype. Interviews were scheduled in advance to ensure enough time for discussion.

Data management procedures. To ensure confidentiality, participants were given label and letter ID, "Madam President A." No names of campuses, and other data that could be used to identify the participants were not used in written results. Protecting privacy also helped to ensure and create a positive unbiased environment that participants felt safe to have conversations. In depth interviews allowed for collecting personal and professional data regarding experiences, perspective and insights about defining a successful college presidency and the internal/external factors that contribute to the leading a college campus.

The participants responded to open-ended, and probing questions that were developed in a semi-structured interview protocol. The purpose was to develop emergent theme based on investigating how success was defined as a result of internal/external experiences while in a leadership role in a higher education environment.

The field work provided an opportunity answer the research questions as related to the participants leading a higher education environment. The fieldwork placed this researcher in the culture of the participants and helped the interviews be in a familiar place. Next, an in-depth

interview was conducted with each participant. The semi-structured open-ended questions were used to be flexible and probe when needed to reveal findings on topics based on experiences and perspectives of the African-American woman college/university president. The semi-structured questions also allowed this researcher to ask open-ended questions that plunged deep, and captured experiences that shaped the profile of success for African-American women college presidents. Research questions were developed that allowed for a conversation coming the voice of participants that gained the knowledge of leading a campus successful based on internal and external daily activities. The daily lived experiences were used to reveal similar experiences the present findings that define a successful college presidency for other African-American women.

The interview protocol contained questions that were developed by the researcher, reviewed and revise by the dissertation committee. The interview protocol was designed around the ethnographic interview principles (Fusch & Ness, 2017). All interviews were recorded using a digital voice record, and notes were taken during the interview and data analysis stages. After conducting the interviews, the recorded data was transcribed. Last, the research was analyzed while transcribing each interview. To study the interviews in great detail, the parallel of analysis during transcription allow this researcher assemble data into an organized formation from using the dimensions from Collins theoretical framework.

After all interviews and field work, this researcher reviewed campus historical records, strategic plans and participant biographies. The source of data was used to present information about each participant's vast knowledge and experiences as a result of their educational and professional background, values and below.

Data analysis. Data was collected in eight interviews with African-American women college presidents to determine how internal/experience experiences defined a successful

leadership at an institution of higher education. Each interview lasted about an hour, and the purpose for conducting the interviews for the further analysis was to address the specific problem and research questions. The problem identified by the researcher is African American women college presidents experience are faced with internal/external challenges in terms of success and achievements in their leadership at an American institution of higher education. The collected data presented in about 20 pages of interview transcripts were reviewed and coded according ethnographic analysis. The ethnographic analysis used thick rich descriptions transcribe verbatim and organize into categories. The ethnographic analysis was used to collect information in rich, thick descriptions, transcribe verbatim, and code words to discover emergent themes to answer the research questions. The data was analyzed in two parts with specific steps. First, the researcher recorded and transcribed each interview. Second, campus information and participant background information as reviewed after the interviews. This was done so not to cause any research bias prior to scheduled interviews.

Questions used in interviews were reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee, and university IRB to ensure validity and reliability. Trustworthiness was also important because with a low number of participants considered to be from an elite culture in the higher education environment. Confidentiality was key, especially for those currently leading a college campus. A membership check was granted upon request so that each participant would receive an electronic and hard copy of the study to check for accuracy and respond to any discrepancies. At this stage of data analysis, references to feminist theory applied as the framework for this research. For this study, missing data were not an issue because of its qualitative nature. The participants shared only those lived experiences intended to disclose and discuss. This aspect is

associated with limitations typical of qualitative studies. The detailed description of the data analysis process is provided.

Thus, in their own voices, African-American women college presidents told about their daily activities and achievements that contribute to a successful leadership role in the higher education environment. At the final stage of the data analysis process, the collected and validated meanings were synthesized to be presented as descriptions under each of the determined core themes. As a result of analyzing data, it was possible to present five core themes related to research questions, with synthesized data as supported by participants' experiences and statements.

The first identified theme covered unintentional ascension to presidency, and the second theme covers knowledgeable of African-American women history. The description of the African-American college women presidents' lived experiences related to these themes and the meaning ascribed to these experiences allowed the first research question in this study to be addressed. The third and fourth thematic category covers passion for student success, and passion for teaching. The fifth thematic category covers mentorship for the African-American college president. As a result, the discussion of the third through fifth themes addressed the second research questions.

In qualitative research, *credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability* are important approaches to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This researcher used five approaches to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility in this qualitative study. This researched used collected data using thick descriptions of each interview. Detailed interviews were scripted and provided a visual of settings, insights, and perspectives of each participants response.

The next step to ensuring trustworthiness was members checking. Member checking allowed the participants to obtain a copy of the interview. After the detailed interviews were organized into a script format, each participant received a copy. Each member was provided to copy to check for accurate responses and correct any errors. This also allowed participants the ability to remember conversations and offer any modification or suggestions to the information collected.

Lastly, as this researcher served as the instrument, reflexivity was used to track the progress of the study and be accountable for a non-bias approve to reflecting on interviews with each participant. This researcher kept a private journal. After each use, the journal remained locked in a file cabinet at the researcher's home. The journal was used to annotate conversations with schedulers and store field notes. The journal also allowed this researcher to reflect and release certain emotions like frustration with data, analysis and puzzled by interpretations. As each theme emerged, this researcher also noted points of being baffled how similar experiences evolved into specific themes.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic case study was to investigate the internal/external experiences of six African-American women college presidents to determine how they define a success and achievements while leading an American institution of higher education. The results of the study are presented in this section with a focus on addressing the problem that African-American women college presidents are presumed to be less competent, have a limited voice in a male dominated field, and barriers like the glass ceiling, dual racism and sexism. As a consequence, they face certain challenges serving as the campus chief executive officer. The results of this research indicate African American women college

president internal/external experiences related to the problem ascribe meaning to shaping a profile of achieving success leading an intuition of higher education. In essence, these women ascribe their experiences to attaining and maintaining a successful presidency.

Nature of the phenomena. Each participant gave a direct account of how certain daily internal/external activities influenced the conditions, perceptions and options leading in a higher education environment. Giving voice to their knowledge, the participants described distinct personal and professional experiences that characterized the decisions and choices essential to leading an institution of higher education, successfully.

Target population and geographical location. Six African-American women college presidents who serve or served as a college president of an American intuition of higher education were invited to participate in the study and address how they define success and achievement while leading a college campus. The phenomenon investigated in this study is related to the obstacles African-American women college presidents face when trying to achieve success while leading in a higher education environment. Referring to the internal/external experiences of African-American women, the study indicates what they define as success and achievements while being faced with faced with certain obstacles presents the result of themes.

Madam President A is in the third year as President of her university. She is the second female to hold this position in the history of college. Madam President A is an experienced leader in higher education serving as an interim President, Vice President and Chief Information Officer. She earned a bachelor's degree in engineering, Master's Degree in Administration, and Doctorate in Higher Education administration. She described her day as ongoing, moving from one event to the next. Then, her work included having to attend certain activities to defend or fight for the institution, like a mother would for her own child.

I'm finding myself running from thing to thing…living my life by blocks of calendar…then finding an email, now meeting with you, then another meeting…then I have a meeting one of my priorities on campus is recruiting or retaining more African-American males to be PreK thru 12 teachers. So, having a meeting with guy that have a similar program this afternoon…then after that I'm going to run out and do another event…it's a day of in and out of the phone booth, you're changing your rapport, like, you're going in and your fundraiser, you're going in as a fixer, you're going in and your like a mother because I have a small campus and I'm very maternal over my students, you're going in and you're being a presenter, you're going in building relationships. I do a lot of speaking in the community, so you must change your demeaner for that, but you must be your authentic self through all those different scenarios and all those different cloaks that you wear…I tried to be active in the community to raise the brand of the university. So that is even more cloaks…I co-chaired committees and one in particular on diversity/racism and that was a life growth experience for me because I always considered myself to be a criminal justice warrior and being president of an HBCU, you find yourself always constantly defending your existence and learning more about racism helped me understand…grasp even tighter the founding of these institutions and what they stood for, even in modern history we still have a very compelling role to play. So those experiences in the community helped me to be a better president because it helped me to grasp my mission even more…it gave me language beyond what I was feeling in my soul…women, sometimes a challenge for us, you feel something really strong, like what they call it women's intuition and sometimes hard to articulate it without emotion so that people feel it and perceive it and I think as a society we're getting closer to that, whereas, the year of the female where the characteristics we have as humans, are more recognized as advantages and pluses in the workplace…like have a spirit of discernment, like having empathy, understanding, caring, nurturing and being able to multi-task in a very powerful way…so, those things that are innate to being a woman are now characteristics we look forward but before we didn't want any emotion in the workplace…we weren't looking for empathy looking for person to build good team and relationship…I say all of this to say my outside experiences has made me a better leader. I still have some growing to do.

Madam President B is retired and has over 45 years of higher education experience. She earned her master's degree in English. She became the first African-American woman to earn a doctorate degree in English at a southern U.S. university. Madam President B served as faculty, administration to include department chair, interim vice chancellor, and chancellor/president. She became the first woman to serve as chancellor of a publicly supported, four-year institution of higher education in an U.S. southern state.

I have been waiting on you. I am doing good for an 82-year old. I am blessed to be able to still drive and get around and live alone. I did tell my children as soon as I get to a

point when I can't take of myself, I would move with one of them. I know all you have been through…I have been through it, as well.

Madam President C serving over 6 years as the institution's President, and as the university's first woman president in the history of the college. She holds a Doctorate of Education, a Master of Education, Education Specialist and Bachelor of Science degrees. Madam President C is a distinguished graduate of two leadership fellowship programs.

Pam, we can skip the formalities. You know I hold a very busy schedule, so, let's get to the questions, please.

Madam President D has over 40 years in higher education. She held various positions such as community college faculty member, chief student services officer, campus provost, college president and a former state government administrator. In several of those roles, she was the first African American and/or woman to serve in those capacities. Currently, she serves as president of a national organization that provides consultation, training, and technical assistance to institutions of higher education.

Non-stop as we enter strategic planning time! Ongoing busy…I ran two colleges and each level of on the go remained the same. This is how I was able to juggle the current position I hold because of a college president's schedule is ever moving and on the go.

Madam President E retired with over 46 years in higher education in public and private sectors of higher education. She earned her Ph.D. and completed post-doctoral leadership study programs in the United States and abroad. Madam President served a 10-year tenure of president/chief executive officer. Even during retirement, Madam President E maintains a busy lifestyle.

Ongoing from sunrise to sunset. How long will this take, again? No longer than 1 hour. I hope you are okay if we just skip this rapport section and you can just ask away. Sorry, but something just popped up on my calendar, but I did not want to reschedule as I remember these days of just trying to finish the research. At times, I don't feel retired.

Madam President F retired from higher education with over 32 years of experiences combined in corporate world, and higher education. She holds two master's degrees and a PhD, in addition to specialized certifications in leadership development. She moved through ranks, starting as a part-time adjunct professor to mid-level and executive level higher education administrative positions. This president described her day using the analogy of being like a track athlete.

> As, always, like a marathon. My schedule is so overloaded at times that I must color code it to ensure my priority, which is family. I started at 7am this morning with a community breakfast supporting a major donor that stills contribute to the institution where I served as President…must show that continued support.

The focus with each interview was to obtain data, and to provide "thick rich descriptions" (Denzil, 2001) to learn from the participants using their voices, and letting the stories provide insight and perspectives about serving or have served as a college/university president. To capture the complexity of experiences, thick-rich descriptions were organized as reoccurring themes emerged (Light, 2010). Next is a discussion with supporting data based on the experiences of all participants. As this is a complex subject matter, illustrative quotations were taken from each participant to show multiple responses based on participants' perspectives and insight. Five major themes came from this study:

1. Unintentional ascension to Presidency;
2. Knowledgeable of African-American Women's History;
3. Passion for student success;
4. Passion for teaching; and
5. Mentorship

The detailed analysis presents five themes; it is presented according to the principles of ethnographic narrative analysis providing text and structure of thick rich descriptions for the studied phenomena.

Research question 1. How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment?

Theme 1. Unintentional ascension to Presidency. This theme reveals how participants did not seek out to be a college/university president. The participants described how they reached the presidency role unplanned, non-traditionally and inadvertently. Some presidents discussed the value of reaching the role while working in higher and education, while other discussed coming from other disciplines. Research has reported that prior to holding a college presidency role, some presidents came from outside higher education (Gamble & Turner, 2015).

Madam President A described her journey to the presidency role as "non-traditional." She stated,

> I took a non-traditional path to the presidency…uhm, I started my career as an engineer, engineering undergraduate degree…married a military officer which gave me an opportunity to move around, if not I would have spent all of my time in Ohio…moving around with my husband stretched me. I never quite really grasped as like my passion but I rose through the ranks and did very well in my career…working 14-15 years and uhm, I always had this thing for teaching…taught at a university as a co-teacher in this Business introductory course about software, the big stuff then, Lotus, Word, ...whatever they called the applications at that time…can't think of them ..first modern day applications and relay liked it alike…they had this phenomenal program in which a corporate person come in co-teach with faculty member so that you get a practical experience in addition to the research part of it…really, really fascinating program…that gave me the fever for teaching. Then we moved and did some consulting on side…kept telling my husband that I am not really having fun at work. Then we got stationed in another state, and husband decided to retire after 20 years…took a leap of faith and quit my job and took a tenure-track teaching position at a community college. My family could not understand why I was doing this. My mother I was going through a change of life. I did for an academic year…there then they called it Dean of Information Technology or but it is basically the CIO and CIO quit spontaneously…the provost/VP of Academic Affairs came and asked me to do the job temporarily/interim because that what I had done in the corporate world and I had reached the glass ceiling at my corporate job…so, I did it for the interim and have been an administrator since. So, that's how I got into higher education. Spend a good portion of my career at a Historically Black College/University. Working on team of phenomenal people and president, rebuilding that institution and the reached another glass ceiling as Vice President of Administration and Finance but I did not have the doctorate. So, I uhm thought I was going to get a presidency but then it became very clear

to me that I was not going…he told me you don't have the doctorate and coming up on accreditation and the board is not going to hire someone without a doctorate…it just wouldn't go well. I went into a valley of questioning myself as a woman, what do I do with myself…traveling with my husband raising children…something I love dearly was the HBCU and even though I did not attend one, I believed very deeply in the mission. I was mad the university, mad at myself because I was talking about getting a PhD. I had the street credit but not the credential. As a woman, as a black woman like I know presidents that did not have the terminal degree but as a black woman I know I had to have every box checked. So, I applied to 3 schools and got into all 3. I applied to my alma mater but then I rescinded but realized but I did not want to relive my undergraduate life. The school I received my doctorate is where I applied, learned a lot about higher education and made some great contacts. I applied because it was only 2 years. I was 55, turning 56 and knew I did not want to be 60-62 trying to finish my doctorate. I wanted to do it really quickly. I got into all three but the one I selected was the best decision of my life because I made great contacts and it forced me to focus and I could be not focused some time. Got the doctorate and a now president that was in my cohort told me about this job and recommended me for this job. I did not want this job because it was a small school and did not want to small school with any financial problems. I wanted a football team and you know all the bells and of whistles. I wanted to be the president of a STEM school, like a Tuskegee or a Florida A&M, one of the bigger schools…Prairie View, uhm, but that is not what God had for me. So, I came on the interview to this campus, I was practicing because I had never gone through the process for a presidency. I did an interim presidency under a chancellor that is my mentor, but I did not interview for that, she selected me for it. So, I did the interview to practice and, here I sit 3 years later. I fell in love with the mission, university, the city. I don't regret it all…it's harder than what I thought it would be, well I should not say hard, I would say more complicated than I thought it was be…but I've prepared for the work…but it has more challenges to them that I think I did not anticipate the depths of them…but that is part of what I love, challenges…I think that is what keeps drawing me into it because this is a phenomenal place that has a lot of opportunities and I want to be a part of it, building it to its fullest capacity. So, that's my road to the presidency.

Madam President B shared that her rise to the presidency was unplanned. She indicated that due to an era in society, change was needed, and she was selected to be that change agent. Madam President B explained that because she had served with a president, she had gained some experience.

I had no advance training. I had a lot of experience in different positions at the university…chair of the English Dept, uhm…I was able to start an honors college…well, before that I was the assistant to a college President, a male, who just happened to be a classmate of mine in which we graduated from undergraduate school, together. I served as interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and that's when I went into the Chancellor/President interim position. When I went into the position, I had what I would

call a lot of "alligators" on my desks because…and that was one of the reasons the previous President had resigned…then the interim Chancellor called me about 11pm one night to ask me to take the Interim President position. I asked, "why" because they never had a woman in this position before. He told me I am going to be honest, if not you then they are going to send a "white" person down here and they cannot relate at this time…we did not want that to happen. I talked with my husband about it. My husband said, "well you've been in that office working alongside the President, so you should know what is going on. I also told my husband about the problems I was inheriting, and he said, you can handle it. So, I went into that position.

Madam President C made is clear that she planned to be in secondary education but not in higher education.

I was a non-intentional president. I never aspired to be a college president. I worked to be a competent and confident leader in whatever role I was in at the time. I started teaching in high school. I had no intention on being a college president.

Madam President D described an advertent rise from one discipline to higher education.

I was going to be a child psychologist but had to leave to take of my mother. So, I understand what you are doing so keep going and you can do it. You know that long wrong I traveled from San Antonio to Austin to earn my doctorate…it was not easy, but I finished in 23 months. After going through that I decided, heck might as well try college administration and did that for some time at the community college level. I moved to another state and served as a college President at 2 of the institutions there and this is when I was contacted by come and serve at the state government level.

As each participant shared their experiences, it was obvious they all had a significant level of strength and confidence. In *Answering the Call: African American Women in Higher Education Leadership,* Bower and Wolverton (2009) emphasized that passion is seen through the experiences shared when stories are told in one's own words.

Madam President E also described her start in secondary education, then moving into higher education to continue teaching with no intention of going into administration.

I started working in high school. Then I went onto a community college where I taught and worked as an advisor. Then I was asked about joining a university, but I had no PhD. I went in as a lecturer while working on my PhD. Then I moved in VP positions then offered a Presidency.

On the other hand, Madam President F described her rise as an unforeseen as she was

working in higher education to make extra money. She describes a spur-of-the moment

experience.

> I started as a PT faculty. This was the job to bring in extra money, only. Then I was asked to teach FT when another faculty member retired. I said, "no." Then the Department Chair called me to the office and here I thought I was doing something wrong. He wanted me to consider it for one year and if I did not like it, he would write an outstanding recommendation for me to go back into corporate America. I took the position then he retired and guess who was asked to consider being Chair, and I said, again with a firm, NO!!!!!!!!!!!! Oh, did I mention he was a white man? I left and worked for a company as VP…as they saw my teaching experience, the training area was so conveniently placed under my division…I thought oh my, I should have stayed in college. Well, guess what? Remember that Dept Chair? I received a call from someone that heard him talking about me…in a good way, I presumed, and a professor was needed. In fact, they needed someone with work experience as the program was undergoing problems. I went back FT. My family kept telling me to make up my mind, especially now I had a dissertation to finish. The other faculty helped me finish the dissertation and maintain a full-load. Then here we go…I became a Chair, Director, Dean, and VP. Then while attending a fellowship, someone asked if I ever thought about being a college President. I laughed, and to date, the joke was on me…. I became one…more years than it felt like, compared to some serving, today.

Theme 2. Knowledgeable of African-American Women History. The participants in this

study were asked about identifying with feminism. Their shared responses showed a

considerable amount of historical knowledge about the plights of African-American women from

childhood. Baker-Bell (2017) suggested that academia must shift to "better understand and

support Black women's work and journeys (p. 526).

> Dr. Maya Angelou said,

> I have great respect for the past. If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going. I have respect for the past, but I'm a person of the moment. I'm here, and I do my best to be completely centered at the place I'm at, then I go forward to the next place.

Madam President A stated,

> We spend a lot of time, as black women, being something for someone else, all the way back to history…there is a book, [ughhh!] I can't think of correct title but is a story about

slave women who were kept women that showed their personhood. It showed their hurt, how they were treated a certain way by men who they loathed, some of them falling in love with these men but they were still very strong women…I mean just think about that…back then they had to work all day, and still had to be the slave…a very powerful book. I believe in the saying by Dr. Angelou.

Madam President B said,

Do you know there are some HBCUs or even some universities that don't have a black history course? If they do…students need to know more about what we do and what we have done as black females.

Madam President C declared,

Black women tell their truths differently because our lives are different than our white female counterparts. We are the survivors of historic behaviors that denied and devalued our minds, spirts, bodies, families and all that would generally become the foundation for being "whole". Regardless, black women are HERE and here to lend our voices to the eradication of sexism, institutional hostilities, racism, ageism, homophobia and cultural and gender persecution that are rooted in some of our fundamental political and social established institutions.

Additionally, they described experiences in relation to how African-American women triumphed over their challenges through civil rights and women's movement eras. History plays a significant factor as one goes through experiences that can be challenging. Ferdinand (2018) argued that commonalities of historical past is connected to the present.

Madam President D acknowledged,

I would say I am an equalist. I believe that all people should be treated, equally. I grew in the Affirmative Action area…if you have equality qualified candidates…I am not sure I would classify…I grew up in the civil rights era and women's movement at the same time…you know, my grandmother and mother told me I could do anything…LOL…I don't know what I am. I'm, me and that's just who I am. It's interesting though because when I do get a chance, to hire women, I do. I have more female staff than I have male staff but that comes from having qualified people who have applied for the job. So, I don't know if I can honestly say that I am part of that movement in the stricter sense.

Madam President E pointed out,

I grew up in Civil Rights time, so I think that I can identify with equality for all. I think I could be considered a black feminist if I served as a model for other black women,

especially students on campus. It is not enough to see us on TV, we need to be seen in a realistic manner for young black women.

Madam President F implied,

We have a high tolerance level and I think it was from our history.

Research question 2. How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment?

Theme 3. Passion for student success. Each participant desired students to be their best. In *The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society*, Chickering (2014) wrote, "Cool passion seeks fulfillment by joining the forces of heart and mind, commitment and critical analysis" (p. 783). They described ways to provide students with the tools necessary to be successful while at their institution.

Madam President A emphasized,

My passion is to really give opportunities for people who have been marginally underserved.

Madam President B also talked about,

You go in wanting to make a difference…improve the environment and offerings that we have for students, improve quality of graduate…don't' worry about what people say or think about you, but do what you think is right in accomplishing goal of graduating students that are competent and capable.

Madam President C touched on,

My focus has always been on…making decisions that positions my university in the best possible way.

Madam President D proposed,

You can show you have added value to the institution.

Madam President E urged,

Yes, it can be hard job but what leadership role is not hard. Dig in with passion, purpose and perseverance and all will fall into place for the institution.

Madam President F declared,

We have a very nurturing spirit…I think it is the "motherly" thing in us, especially when I had to hear disagreements between students, faculty and at times the administrative team.

Theme 4. Passion for Teaching. Passion for teaching has a high level of enthusiasm and belief of importance. David (2016) proposed that an individual passionately committed, will draw commitment from others. The participants offered insight into their success based on a passion for teaching.

Madam President A expressed,

I always had this thing for teaching…took a leap of faith and quit my job and took a tenure-track teaching position at a community college.

Madam President B stated,

I wanted to be an English teacher from the time I was in the 10th grade.

Madam President C indicated,

Education was always a dominant influence in my life.

Madam President D implied,

I started as a community college instructor then went into administration.

Madam President E mentioned,

Then I was asked about joining a university, but I had no PhD. I went in as lecturer while working on my PhD.

One participant described showing pride in the ability to teach in a program that supports students reaching their goal of graduation. Researchers have found that students reflect on the best higher education professionals as those who "helped them be successful" (Bain, 2011, p.

10). Here, this president described an experience that was more student-centered rather than self-centered.

Madam President F said,

> I received a call from someone that heard him talking about me…in a good way, I presumed, and a professor was needed. In fact, they needed someone with work experience as the program was undergoing problems. I went back FT.

Theme 5. Mentorship. Participants discussed the importance of mentorship/coaching. Research has supported what these participants described as mentorship being helpful and a major contribution in their career advancement (Hill & Wheat, 2017). They acknowledged how a mentor or confidant helped when there was a need to work through challenges.

Madam President A relayed,

> Have a mentor and talk to your mentor. I do not have an executive coach, but I know woman who have, if you can afford it, even if someone you admire that will agree to do it and build a rapport with that person, ask that person for advice on what to do.

Madam President D exclaimed,

> I would tell them they need to have somebody outside of institution with whom they can bounce things off. People within the institution have long memories and if you do something, they will remember. My phrase is, "Presidents can't think out loud" because if I say I wonder what would happen; then the rumor mills would start, and fold would be whispering, do you know what she is planning? So, you need somebody outside the institution to give you a different perspective and if no more than to say, yes that's what I would do, or have you thought about this? A person to give feedback to build on whatever decision you are going to make.

One president expressed the urgent need to have someone that has your best interest in mind and want to support you to succeed. Madam President E said,

> If you don't have one, find one and fast, called a mentor. A mentor outside of the campus and one you can trust that he/she will not be spreading to others. This Presidency circle can be tricky and small, depending on who you know and confide in. People are always watching. Lead how you want them to see you daily. I would strongly advise to lead with integrity and consistency.

Each president lived through some unique experience. The experiences revealed being

the only woman in the room facing obstacles of sexism, racism, and discrimination. The

presidents' experiences also outlined how they overcame these obstacles that made major

contributions to their careers, while having the support from mentors or family.

Madam President C affirmed,

> I would caution African-American women to not use race or gender as a crutch or as prominent variable in developing their thinking behaviors. Quality leadership is void of gender variables. What matters is performance and outcomes!

Madam President C also further elaborated,

> As an African-American president, sometimes you are the "only one" in the room. I encourage African-American in that situation, to get out of your head and use those dynamics to your advantage! Engage directly and with confidence and from a knowledge base that contributes to the discussion.

Despite describing some experiences of not being welcomed, the presidents discussed

change and growth in the personal and professional lived experiences. In his book, *David and*

Goliath Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants, Gladwell (2013) explored "facing

conflict or overwhelming odds brings greatness and beauty and being an underdog can change

people in ways we often fail to appreciate." (p. 6).

Madam President A indicated,

> I'm evolving…in my mind this is not my last rodeo…God may have something different for me. In my heart, when I leave the presidency, I would like to be like a founder/co-founder, executive director of program still working to put young black males as educators in a non-profit or something that is inspiring young women to find their own space. Something with young people but not in higher education or an institution…I'll need a slower pace because I will be old. [laughing].

Madam President C provided a good example of coping,

> Put up with all stereotypes that come with being African-American and a woman. You have to learn to not let those programs or perceptions become your problem. I am an educator and I try to remember that usually the ignorance that comes with those people is because they do not have enough information to make their decision. Two examples: I have a Christmas party at my house. I invited 250 employees and not all come. They

were walking around my house and you could hear, "ooo, she has a piano and look at her artwork." I wanted so badly to say, "and I have flushed toilets, too. [LOL]…but then I realized that most of this is the first time most of them had been in the home of an African-American. You have to tolerate because you are dealing with a lack of information…timing is everything. I was in Rotary…women were not allowed in 1988 in 1999, only 2 women in the group, me and the other woman serving lunch. I asked them to please don't stop talking because I am here. Well, the joke was they had this secretarial position and had 3 viable candidates to give the job and did not know who to give the job. So, they decided to put extra pay in their envelopes to see what they would do with it. One gave it back said it was miscalculated, one put in the bank and by the time they figured they made a mistake I would have made some interest off of it and then the third spent it. The answer was, "the one with the biggest boobs." This man turned red…I told them don't worry, I taught child psychology and they don't have long attention spans. This one woman took her child and bartered with child and told that if you do not pick up extra items in basket, I will take the Swenson ice cream store parlor, no extra because child anticipating ice cream but the store line was busy so the child started running and parent pulled beside and slammed him down on stool, people were looking like they wanted to call child protective service.

Table 3 shows the identified core thematic categories with the related core occurrences of words or phrases based on study questions linked to Collins' (2000) theoretical framework. The detailed analysis of these five themes follows the table, and it is presented according to interview questions, and the structured descriptions for the studied phenomena.

Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has presented the results of the ethnographic case study with reference to the analysis of the collected data. The results of the analysis can be viewed as helpful in answering the research questions with reference to the revealed internal/external experiences of six interviewed African-American women college presidents. This analysis addressed the problem statement in which African-American college presidents face barriers when trying to achieve success when leading a college campus.

The following research questions were answered with the help of data analysis: (a) how do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment; and (b) how do

African-American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily? These research questions were formulated in alignment with the Collins Black Feminist Theory (2000). Feminist theory was selected as the framework for this research. Interviews were based on semi-structured interviews that allowed for uncovering the participants' unique meanings they attributed to their lived experiences that were directly linked with defining success and achievement while leading an American intuition of higher education. The analysis of interviews with the help of transcription and coding techniques allowed for determining emergent themes. Specific codes allowed for determining several key phrases or words. These specific codes represented African-American women college presidents lived experiences regarding challenges and being able to define a successful presidency.

As a result of using the transcribed interviews, and based on the descriptive phenomena of this study, five themes have been identified with reference to the highlighted codes. Among these thematic categories, two themes are related to the first research question, and they explain how African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment. These themes are (a) Unintentional ascension to Presidency and (b) Knowledgeable of African-American women history. Other three themes are helpful in order to address the second research question on how African-American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment. These themes are the following ones: (c) Passion for student success; (d) Passion for teaching; and (3) Mentorship. The last chapter provides a discussion of findings with a detailed description and critical analysis of five emergent themes in association with the research questions and purpose.

Table 3

Themes and Occurrences of Key Words/Phrases

Research Question (RQ)	Collins Five Dimension	Occurrences of Key Words/Phrases
RQ1	Dimension 1: Core themes of a Blackwoman's standpoint	
	Can you tell me a little about how you got started in higher education and how you became a college president**?**	Faculty Faculty then administrator Background Did not intend on becoming a president Someone saw qualities in me that said I could do the job Needed my skills in discipline that I had studied (i.e. counselor, teacher, computer engineer)
	What is the day in the life of Madam President [name]?	Very Busy Like a marathon Non-stop Ongoing
	In what way(s) do you identify with the Black feminism perspective/theory?	Lay foundation Civil Rights Era Women's Movement Equality
	What you believe to be the definition of success for you and why? How has the definition changed and/or evolved for you during the time serving as a president?	Set Goals for students to succeed Make a difference Accomplish goals for students Provide opportunities for all students Change agent Do things well Evolve because more opportunities More women More minorities More minority women
RQ1	Dimension 2: Variation of responses to core themes	
	If you were a chancellor or on the board of trustees, what would you like to see in recruitment and hiring practices?	Diverse members Evidence of knowledge/experiences Do not select based on friendship Knowledge/experiences with right "fit" Fairness Measurable outcomes
RQ1	Dimension 3: The interdependence of experience and consciousness.	
	What would you like to see happen in higher education programs preparing students, in particular, African-American women aspiring to be a college/university president?	Specialized courses in budgeting Specialized courses in strategic planning Teach better history of colleges/universities Professor teaching courses have administrative experience Bring in college presidents to talk with students Thinking behaviors Confide in someone outside the campus Link up with someone immediately

RQ2	Dimension 4: Consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint.	
	In what way did your background influence or bring awareness about your becoming a college/university president?	My husband attended an HBCU and had a lot of influence because I would see all those educated black people. It was contagious and wanted to be a part of it
		My parents were 2nd generation college graduates
		My mother was an educator
		Having strong parents as a support
		Accept some type of rejection as ignorance
		My mother allowed me to ask questions
	If you were guest speaker for a group of first year African-American women college presidents, how would you advise them what is needed to remain in the college presidency role?	Have a mentor and talk to your mentor; get one quick
		Self-care and be authentic self
		Have own morals, traits and code of ethics
		Listen to investor or stakeholders; shape strategic plan and implement; bring many people on the journey with you
		Do self-reflection; ask yourself tough questions like "what could I do differently?"
		Remember, it is not about you
Q2	Dimension 5: The interdependence of thought and action.	
	What are some challenges that come with being an African-American college/university president?	Lack of confidence
		Too much confidence
		High expectations
		Playing field not the same
		Stereotypes
	What are some advantages of being an African-American women college/university president?	Nurturers by nature
		Spirituality
		Role model
		Well versed and competent
		Collaborators
		Stand up for what's right
	If you were called to advise another African-American women college/university president considering leaving the position due to challenges of possible discrimination matters, how would you advise her on the ways to determine remaining in the college presidency role?	Quit on own terms
		Talk w/mentor for advice or executive coach
		Reflect and realize problems may not be your fault
		Make sure you are good fit
		Surround yourself with good people/bring others along
		Be well prepared
		Work harder than everyone else
		Self-care
		Develop morals/ethics

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of African American women college presidents in southern and eastern regions of the United States. It identifies how their experiences contributed to defining a successful presidency role, and the internal and external experiences that are needed to remain in the role of a college president. The study was guided by two questions:

• RQ 1: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment?

• RQ 2: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment?

The researcher identified two key research objectives in this study. The first objective was to examine the definition of successful experiences of African American college/university presidents' in higher education. Based on this objective, the researcher sought to know how the presidents' experiences influence successful achievements in the higher education environment. The second objective was to consider the internal, and external experiences of African American college presidents that determined what was needed to remain in a successful presidency role. This objective sought to know how using feminist theory had an impact on the overall profile of a successful African American college president in higher education.

This study was developed because of the need to gain insights of the lived experiences concerning African American women college presidents' profiles of success, and what is necessary to attain and remain a successful president. The results of the study should contribute

to the literature addressing the qualitative inquiry that is lacking in the prior research. Some of these unexplored research methods appear to be important and worthy of investigation in the context of defining success for an African American women college/university president in a higher education environment. The result would also advance theory and incorporate new research that help scholars create new knowledge to give voice to the African American women college president working a male dominated field. Finally, it should advance in literature in the field of higher education the idea that policy makers need to know what works, and leadership needs to match to academic institution.

Overview of Chapter

In this chapter, sections will review the research questions, summarize the study, findings and conclusions. It will discuss the research questions and theoretical framework, review conclusions and implications of the study that offer suggestions and recommendations regarding this qualitative study on how African American women college presidents describe successful achievements in a higher education environment. This chapter will also discuss the examination of data results from Chapter 4 to provide findings, interpretations and implications of the findings as it relates to how African American women internal/external daily lived experiences and leadership role at an institution of higher education. Suggested implications may also be obtained from this study. The conclusions will be used to inform theoretical, practical, and future implications. Furthermore, the study will make recommendations supporting future research.

Importance of the Study

The lived experiences of African American women college presidents are important to connecting education and research communities. It has a place in research communities in theorizing the lives of Black women. African American women have long faced the oppression

of multiple jeopardy due to race and sexism (King, 2016). They have also experienced not having a voice in a male dominated world of higher education. In an era when the double-whammy continues to be experienced by African American women, these women share powerful stories told in their own voices. While some experiences may have been challenging, what has been shared reflect rich descriptions the embark on journeys that have been very influential in the field of higher education.

Discussion

Research questions. The first research question investigated how African American women college presidents describe successful experiences while leading a college campus. The second research question examined how African American women college president described internal/external daily lived experiences and leading an institution of higher education. A set of data was collected from confidential individual semi-structured interview questions based on Collins' theoretical framework. Data was transcribed and analyzed into categories of emergent themes that answered each research question this researcher considers, "in her DNA."

The DNA double helix structure will be used as a metaphor to represent a blueprint of this qualitative study's conclusion. Scientist refer to the DNA function as a way of carrying information for growth and functions to work (Sinden, 2012). There is a backbone, and bases of genes that carry strands of information. Metaphorically, for this study Figure 5 shows that the DNA backbone is students. The bases of genes that carry information are the unique perspectives and insights participants shared about their experiences successfully leading a college campus. The achievements of success shared by these African American women college presidents concluded that to lead in higher education, one should be radical, reflective, relatable and a role model. The study answered the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences in terms of success and achievements in their leadership role in the higher education environment?

The first base is having a radical passion for student success. For the purpose of this study, being radical is not a negative connotation, but the ability to have a voice of passion to lead a campus. The African American woman college president must be radical with passion for success of the institution, students and faculty, and stakeholders. In connection with hooks (1989), outspoken content in which a single voice involves attention valuing positive communication, student engagement and cross-cultural understanding, and appreciation. Collins' (2000) framework points to the radical approach as taking a standpoint from a collective group of voices. While hooks and Collins argued different viewpoints about voices of women, there was a common belief for understanding there must be accommodations for diversity through collective voices.

The second base is being able to reflect on personal and professional experiences in order to know where you came from and understand where you are going. One must be able to reflect on background based on era of growing up and parental influence. Collins (2000) feminist theory identifies that women do not have identical experiences and that interpretations of these experiences differ. She explains that the relationship between past and present are used to interpret traditions that no longer silence Black women. In her newly released book, *The Ark of My Leadership Experiences: 21 Pearls of Leadership,* Dr. Adena Williams-Loston (2018) reflects on her journey in various leadership roles to include her college presidency tenures. She describes personal and professional experiences that guided her success and achievements in leadership roles in the higher education environment.

RQ 2: How do African American women college presidents describe their experiences with external/internal daily activities and leadership role in the higher education environment?

The third base is having the ability to relate to others with confidence who have similar experiences of oppression in discrimination-- be it race, gender, or sexism. Collins (2000) pointed out that a variety of discriminatory oppressions plague African American women in different ways, and while it may interfere with self-definition, they cope by being confident in creating a specialized knowledge. Yet, Niddifer (2001) acknowledged that women had valuable experiences stemming from building strong relationships.

The fourth base is a dual role model. This is a two-way capacity to learn from others, and the ability to be an example for others pursuing such a leadership role. Mentorship is important for African-American women college presidents as it is an effective way of breaking down a level of isolation (Carter & Peters, 2016). They further argue that mentorship can also provide insights from those who have served in the college presidency role, and the tools they used for success to assist others. This will also expose the obvious barriers that exist for African-Americans; there may not be so obvious; students, faculty, community, and decisions makers such as boards of trustees/regents.

The overall conclusion of the study is that African-American women college presidents describe success and achievement using unique individual experiences. In addition, the external and internal daily lived activities have a noticeable impact on their leadership role in the higher education environment. This may have been attributed to many factors. First, many of the previous qualitative studies provided a negative connotation did not welcome the voices of African-American women college presidents working in a male dominated field. Secondly, the

data came from a male dominated field that has now been shattered by the voices of African-American women. Metaphorically speaking, successes and achievements of African-American women college presidents are "in her DNA (see Figure 5)."
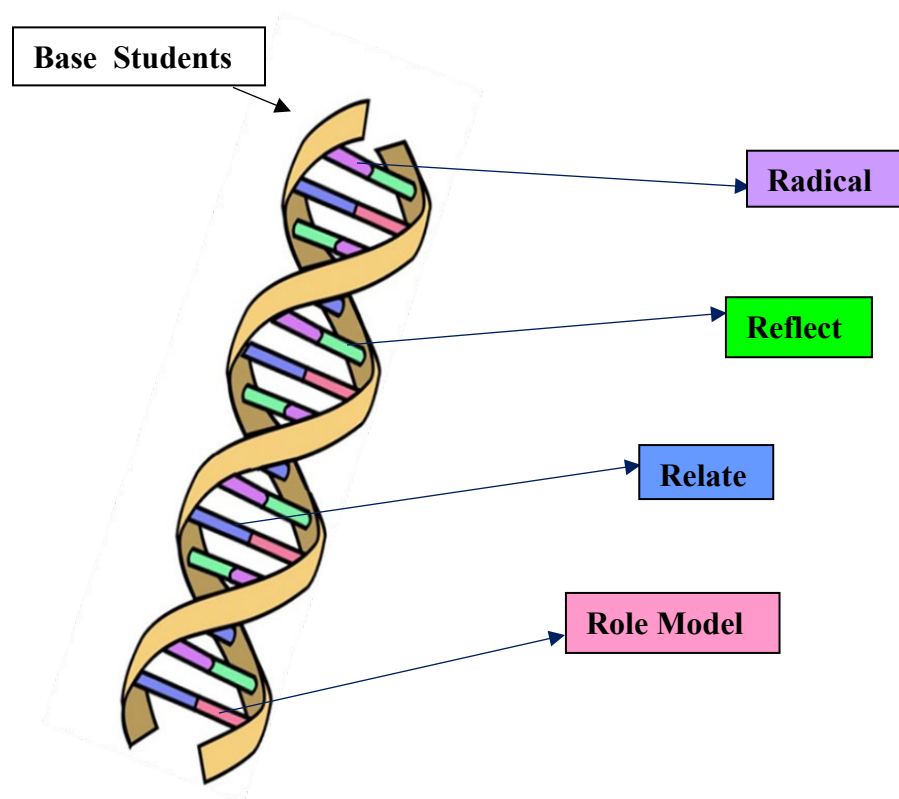
Figure 5. Metaphor of conclusions. African-American women describe achievement and success through what the research refers to as strands of the four R's of daily lived internal and external experiences that are "in her DNA."

Implications

From this researcher, there are some key implications to address and study. There are theoretical, practical, and future implications. The findings described have contributed to body of knowledge of how African-American college women presidents define success in the leadership role in a higher education environment. It also produced qualitative data that influenced how African-Americans daily lived internal/external experiences influenced their leadership while leading an institution of higher education. Balancing being radically passionate for students,

reflecting on personal/professional experiences, relating to others and having a role model can provide the tools and strategies needed for institution fit, attrition, retention, and the development and implementation of doctoral program curriculum in higher education (Commodore, Freeman, Gasman & Carter 2016). The sections of this chapter will present implications that can be made from these findings.

Theoretical implications. While literature talks about individual women referring to themselves in many ways such as liberal, radical feminist, post-structural, critical and Black feminist, this theory is no easy concept to grasp, especially as public opinion and roles about women continue to change (Alexander-Floyd, 2010). This study added to the body of knowledge that advances theory, integrate new research that help scholars create new knowledge about African-American women college presidents. This research reveals that African-American women empower the transformation of a higher education environment (Perlow at el., 2017).

First, this study added to a body of literature on feminism. In Meltzer (2014), Roxanne Gay asks, "As culture critics, we have to start advancing the conversation and asking questions that are more grounded in feminism, like 'How does feminism shape your life?" (p.1). The finding show that feminism gives black women's voices the ability to develop a profile that can transform awareness and attitudes in the workplace (Housee, 2018).

As discussed in Chapter 2, two experts on the issues pertaining to feminism/Black feminism are bell hooks and Patricia Collins. Both viewpoints are thought-provoking; they provide a platform to fill gaps about developing African American women college presidents. First, hooks' arguments are the most radical. Hooks (1984) has argued, "much feminist theory emerges from privileged women who live at the center, whose perspectives on reality rarely include knowledge and awareness of the lives of women…who live in the margins" (p.1).

Second, the theory proposed by Patricia Collins (2000) is that we should move from a "single voice of Black women" (p.16) to a more collective voice as a result of more diverse issues among women. Accordingly, while both argued opposing viewpoint, they acknowledged that aspects of women's voices were drowned out by common shared experiences of discrimination.

Third, the findings from this study capture information about strategies used by African-American women college presidents to describe success leading a college campus. It informs a body of knowledge that, despite carrying the weight and tensions of dual discrimination, fighting the glass-ceiling and restricted ascension, African-American women college presidents describe successes and achievement as a strength. Watson and Hunter (2016, p. 424) identified the strong Black woman race-gender schema as to: (a) be psychologically durable yet do not engage in behaviors that preserve psychological durability, (b) be equal yet be oppressed, and (c) be feminine yet reject traditional feminine norms. This study findings informs research that African-American women have an ability to carry societal challenges with grace and perseverance (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014).

Practical Implications. The findings from this study are essential to the future of higher education programs, and the development of meaningful curriculum preparing minority women for leadership roles in a higher education environment.

For professionals in the field of higher education, the results show that developing policy about hiring practices for campus presidents must first acknowledge that that the problem of dual discrimination exits. There must be equal opportunity for all. Carter and Peters (2016) also point out that organizations attitudes must change, embrace and value abilities as African American contributions are a result of their lived experiences. Collins' (2000) theorist framework can serve as a model. The five specific dimensions can aid policy makers in a selection process that

involves the candidate to institutional match based on successful experiences. Specific hiring process can ensure best practices when an African-American woman candidate is under consideration. From this study's finding, it was concluded that policy makers like chancellors and Boards of Trustees, must develop candidate interview questions to gain knowledge about a candidate's radical passion for student success, personal and professional experiences that identify achievements that can relate to the position offered, and that she can be role model to others with confidence who have similar experiences of oppression in dual discrimination

Future implications. Initial collected data specified that African-American women college presidents' voices are being unsilenced. The daily lived experiences help them describe how to lead in a higher education campus under one common goal, "student success." They define the leadership role as an ambassador for the success and achievements that are "in her DNA." This researcher found three key implications for future use of the study.

First, a possible line of inquiry would be to investigate the leadership roles of African-American women at all levels of executive leadership in higher education. This line of inquiry would investigate a group of African-American women serving as Provosts, Program Directors/Chairman, Deans, and Vice Presidents of an institution of higher education.

Second, another line of inquiry would to investigate the impact of sorority membership and offer insight to successful implementation of leadership development. This study did not investigate the daily lived experiences of African-American women serving in a leadership role at a predominately White institution compared to those serving at an HBCU and may be a future use of the study.

A third future line of inquiry would be to explore other women of color in leadership roles and engaging in organizational transformation as it pertains to the underrepresentation of

ethnic minority administrators (Lewis, 2016). The organizational transformations start at the level of decision makers or those developing policy. The findings from this study can fill gaps in literature about serve as framework for policy makers reorganizing/restricting board of trustee/regents. Although controversial, European researchers Gornitzka, Maassen, and De Boer (2017) found internal structures and external involvement presents for a more level centralized or collective decision making. In essence, board composition that represent equality in gender and ethnicity.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research. For future research, this researcher has identified three major recommendations in this subject area. First, a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research to compare voice of African American women leading college campuses to Caucasian women leading a campus. This type of study can let others know how African-American women can define their own destiny of "success" in the college president's office despite the negativity of race and gender inequality. This study can add to crucial discussions about understanding attributes and values needed to be a successful president. The extensive insight into the presidency would be a valuable tool that could increase aspiring applicants' chances of selection and success.

Second, an empirical line of inquiry to examine the need for diversity and changes in curriculum of higher education programs. Curriculum design involving diversity and race and measures of change informs best practices in the educational landscape of higher education (Gay, 2018). It can benefit from a better understanding of how to prepare minority women by valuing and listening to the student voice in designing curriculum (Brooman, Darwent & Pimor, 2015).

Third, a narrative study that tells stories about the African-American women college presidents' existence and experiences as the chief executive officers at institutions of higher education. This will also clear the road for others to know and share life stories of what is needed to be a successful African-American woman college president in higher education. The stories will add to research based on more women's perspectives and voices. For example, the interpretations based on feminist theory can connect the dots between internal and external realities coming from the voices of African-American women college presidents. The research can highlight the importance of learning from authentic experiences. By understanding the lived experiences of African-American women presidents, efforts to develop future African-American women presidents will be more focused on successful abilities and skills. It can result in more successful leader-to-institution matches in hiring and retention of these presidents.

Recommendations for future practice. Students in preparation or with aspirations toward a leadership role will benefit from the results of this study. African-American women in higher education or in graduate programs can begin developing a profile to determine if its "in her DNA" to serve as a college president. All minority women can take advantage of the ability to develop a profile based on findings from the study that describes success and achievements needed toward leading a college campus.

Those making policy about hiring practices will also learn about the daily internal and external activities the describe success for an African-American woman president. To determine an institutional match to fit, board of trustees/regents must acknowledge the biases and stereotypes they bring to the decision-making process.

The results from the study indicate further research that goes from theory to practice. Based on the results of this study, higher educational settings need to conduct internal research

that implies theory to practices that fits the culture of a campus that teaches Black feminist research. Explore what Davis and Hattery (2018) suggest as taking an in-depth look at the complex definitions of feminist research philosophies and methodologies, and development of curriculum in women studies or gender courses and programs.

Last, this research will add to the accumulated data that provide insight on the value a college president teaching college courses has in order to share best practices when dealing with students, faculty, community and board of trustees/regents. This type of information can provide knowledge on how stakeholders, such as students, faculty, educators, and the community have a stake in establishing programs, policies, and leadership development.

Implications for future research. The researcher has identified three major recommendations for future research on this subject area. First, minorities and women can benefit from reading and disseminating the results of the study. While this study may have shown some key aspects of how African-American women college presidents describe success and achievements influence minority women aspiring to this leadership role in a higher education environment. As such, those aspiring to this role can begin to build a profile of their personal and professional experiences to determine if its "in her DNA."

Second, graduate programs can review courses that build leaders in understanding radical passion, reflective teaching and learning, relationships, and mutual mentorship. By inviting minority women presidents to address students or review coursework to determine modification of tools and strategies in the curriculum with specified concentrations in higher education such as leadership, student affairs, and adult education programs to name a few. This future research will help graduate programs determine if they are preparing a new culture of leadership preparing an

institution or seeking a higher education environment becoming a student center college with a focus on preparing students for civic and economic success in society (McNair at el., 2016).

Third, as found in the results of the study, most of the participants were members in a Greek letter sorority, and the majority of which were members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®(AKA). It is recommended that in addition to putting out a book that lists members serving as college presidents and members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority a study of how the organizations have contributed to their climb of success and achievement in a leadership role such as a college president (Parks & Neumann, 2016). With a variety of leadership positions, the members can describe how the sorority helped in success and achievement in the leadership role in higher education. With grant opportunities, and additional resources, leadership development program can be used to strengthen a mentorship program devoted to developing leadership in specific career areas of higher education. Conferences sponsored by the sorority such as the Leadership Fellows program and AKA University Leadership Seminars are significant to giving voice to success, achievements, and mentorship (Alpha Kappa Alpha, 2018).

This study has major significance for those in the field of higher education. Many campuses are dealing with racial/ethnic diversity on campuses through institutional transformation, the best place to start is at the top. Despite dealing with dual discrimination of racism and sexism, the research finding showed that was not a focal point for making decisions that were successful. In fact, Madam President C stated:

> Higher education programs vary by intent, but I would caution AA women to not use race or gender as a crutch or as prominent variable in developing their thinking behaviors. Quality leadership is void of gender variables. What matters is performance and outcomes!

The study provides theoretical significance when determining the ingredients for receipt of success and achievement in leadership role for an African-American women president include. Theories regarding feminism, Black Feminism, womanhood are in place of research that is always evolving, and this study offers an opportunity to contribute to those theories. The participants' experiences were described from a collective group of influential voices. The influence of these women may not make public accolades, but have made for significant contributions to students, faculty, community, and decision-makers over time. This study provides research significance.

While some studies have investigated African-American women college president ascension, pathways and leadership styles (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015), the ability to shape a profile of success and achievement in this leadership role adds another part to the discussion. Other studies will be able to imitate data collection and analysis procedures to provide results coming from the voice of African-American women college presidents telling their own journey (David, 2016) about daily lived experiences that contribute to a successful leadership role in the higher education environment.

Conversely, the prior research consistently showed the underrepresentation of African-American women presidents and pathways to reach the leadership role faced with the dilemma of discrimination (Oikelome, 2017). Yet, voices in a male dominated field were heard while institutional transformation is underway for diversity on college campuses (Carter & Christian, 2015). Therefore, parts of this study may contribute to the literature addressing the needs of higher education programs to modify curriculum to allow for learning how to reflect, build mentorship, and leadership development programs that are competent and confident to lead a college campus.

This study provides useful information for board of trustees/regents or search committee who make policy, and board shortcomings is one of many impacts on hiring practices (Gasman, Abiola, & Travers, 2015). To affect change, hiring committee practices should be held accountable for track records to ensure qualified candidates are under consideration for knowledge and experience not race or gender. Policy makers should also be held accountable in presidential appointment. In a 2014 issue of *Inside Higher Education*, it was reported that the firing of then Alabama State University President, Dr. Gwendolyn Boyd was vital in sexism. This type of hiring practice has continued to expose the dilemma of discriminatory oppression that African-American women college presidents face today.

An area of the contract stipulated that Dr. Boyd could not cohabitate in the president's residence. This sparked much controversy, and an examination of what expert researchers like Gasman (2011) have argued the complexity of racism and sexism that African-American women college presidents face but learn to overcome with telling their stories of "what's in the DNA," this calls for resilience and confidence to successfully lead a college campus. In closing, one of the research participants proclaimed it best, Madam President A, stated:

"I am excited about the number of percent increase I see in sister presidents. I would love for us to spend more time together to share life experiences. We really do not have an organization to do that. I've talked with a few presidents about starting something like, particularly for black female college presidents…we rarely see each other than UNCF meetings but we don't get together, in private! We need to do a better job of lifting each other. We need to send a word of encouragement…we need to do that for each other. That is my wish…in your conclusion…next steps, write about something that gets us in a space. We go fast above but farther together, an African proverb that I love."

Despite some advancement, higher education continues to be a male dominated field (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Dominant male board of trustees/regents who serve are decision-makers and must be cognizant of an institutional match to fit based on candidate's knowledge and experience, not the "good old boys club." In the television show, "The Quad," board member asks the candidate, "you attended Ivies, you were the president of one of those fancy liberal arts colleges, share with me what you know about life at a Historically Black College?" The character, Dr. Eva Fletcher responds, "HBCU or Ivy, excellence is excellence!" (Brown & Hudson-Santiago, 2017).

Conclusion and Summary of Key Findings

The key findings of this study revealed that discussing obstacles faced in the workplace in terms of dual discrimination, African-American women were inclined to ascribe specific meaning to their lived experiences with the focus on four core themes. These topics relate to (a) Unintentional Ascension to Presidency, (b) Knowledgeable of African-American Women's History, (c) Passion for student success, and (d) Passion for teaching and (e) Mentorship. Referring to the results of this study, it is possible to state that African-American women college presidents identified certain career barriers, but described daily lived internal/external success and achievements in leading a college campus. These findings directly address the purpose of the study and answer the research questions while defining success and achievements assigned to their lived experiences.

In sum, the participants of the study mentioned dual discrimination of gender and racial biases and stereotypes, the prevalence of men in leadership positions, and how necessary it is work harder in comparison to their Caucasian peers. The African-American women presidents also indicated challenges and preconceived notions regarding their knowledge, experience, and

education. They also stated that African-American women were not viewed as college president material, and their leadership qualities were not like male college presidents. Compared to the ideas that exist about glass ceiling and challenges women face, these viewpoints represent many connotations of negative studies. Furthermore, the participants also mentioned specific barriers and biases, including stereotypes regarding African-American; this included the necessity to prove their competence, and to reject immature leadership qualities.

Thus, the results of the study allowed for answering the research questions. From the perspective of six current or former African-American women in administrators in higher education, though experiencing "the double whammy," (Logan & Dudley, 2019) the evidence in this study supports that African-American women define success of their leadership by fantastic four daily lived experiences: (a) radical, (b) reflective, (c) relatable, and (d) role model. All of these experiences occur because its "in the DNA." Even in the 21st century, from the perspective of African American women, they faced various barriers and challenges while trying to obtain teaching roles and administrative roles in higher education and ignoring certain experiences, fighting for support, and watching the promotion by men for men that were less educated and knowledgeable. Thus, they described some discriminatory practices due to negative perceptions of their abilities and skills associated with their gender and race.

More specifically, some participants discussed the assumptions of being an inappropriate candidate. With well-educated and qualified African-American women, barriers in the form of ignoring their competence and leadership skills continued as an obstacle. African-American women college presidents faced obstacles while trying to be an ambassador for student success, faculty effective teaching and learning, and community engagement. African-American women in higher education continue to be inappropriate candidates for promotion in their organizations

while moving from faculty to administrative level, even with the required experience and skills. They become discriminated against by while males and even some other African-American peers. In the face of adversity, women of color have proven that they succeed and achieve because its "in the DNA" to work hard through focusing on student success.

Referring to the nature of a qualitative ethnographic case study, it is possible to state that the research has more "positive" results because of the actual lived experiences of African-American women. In addition, two research questions were answered completely with reference to confidential semi-structured interview, and probing questions. The findings of this qualitative study have research, theoretical, and practical significance. The study contributed to research on authentic working experiences of African-American women presidents in the United States and added to the application of the Black feminist theory to discuss African-American women's ability to be define a success president in a higher education environment. The study also provided insights for a higher education consultant, executive headhunters and board of trustee/regents to remove any bias of dual discrimination, and consider success and achievement when determining institutional match-to-fit.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

DATE

Greetings [NAME OF PARTICIPANT]! I am Pamela E. Ray, graduate student at UIW working towards a doctorate degree in education with a concentration in higher education. This email is to request your participation in a research study about African-American female college/university presidents. This study is designed to explore SUCCESS PROFILE: A CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. The purpose of this study is to explore the lives of African-American women who serve or have served as college/university presidents in order to understand daily lived experiences and define what is a successful presidency. This research will examine perspectives on what it takes to remain as the top campus leader. All we learn in the study will be kept confidential. The University of Incarnate Word (UIW) Institutional Review Board has approved this dissertation research.

Attached, please find a copy of the consent form with detailed information for your signature. Please sign and return to me by [TIME] on [DATE]. After you have signed and returned the consent form, I will contact you to schedule a brief interview to gather your perspectives and insight.

If your schedule permits, it would greatly be appreciated.

If you have any questions, I can be reached by email at pray@student.uiwtx.edu or phone (210) 724-0189.

Sincerely,

Pam

Pamela E. Ray
Doctoral Candidate
University of the Incarnate Word

Appendix B: Introduction Letter/Consent Form

Consent to Take Part in a Study of
A SUCCESS PROFILE: CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
University of the Incarnate Word

Authorized Study Personnel:
Pamela E. Ray, Doctoral Candidate (Principle Investigator)
University of the Incarnate Word, Dreeben School of Education
210-724-0189 (Mobile)
pray4pxo@aol.com

Dr. Jessica Kimmel, Chairperson, Dissertation Committee
University of the Incarnate Word, Dreeben School of Education
210-724-0189 (Mobile)
pray4pxo@aol.com

Greetings! I am Pamela E. Ray, graduate student at UIW working towards a doctorate degree in education with a concentration in higher education. Your consent is being sought for a research study. You are invited to volunteer as one of six participants in the research project named above. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether to participate. Your participation is voluntary, and you may decide not to participate at any time.

The purpose of the research is to study experiences and gain insight from current and/or former African-American Female College Presidents. The study will use a Black Feminist theoretical perspective to understand how daily lived experiences work together to form a profile that defines the successful president, and what is needed to remain in the presidency role. Your voice will add to a body of literature that examines how African-American women's daily lives contribute to their natural abilities and skills that define successful leadership. It will provide ways for individuals aspiring to be a college president to self-reflect on not just what is "require" to fill the position, but what is needed to stay in the campus presidency role.

If you agree to participate in this study, the project will involve at least a one-day visit to your campus or skype interview to conduct a one-to-one interview that will be 1 hour in length. Per your consent, I would also love to take a campus tour given by you or your designee. A campus tour will provide an observation of the campus setting, and an understanding of situations you describe during the interview. If needed, one additional follow-up interview may be requested by telephone or Skype that will be 30-45 minutes in length. To make sure I remember accurately all the information you provide, an audio-recording of the interview will take place. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office and stored electronically on a secure server. It will only be seen by the research team during the study and for 2 years after the study is complete.

As this type of research involves collecting data in which I may quote your remarks in presentations, to protect your identity, and reputation based on your personal responses during audio-recordings I will refer to you as "Madam President." A pseudonym will also be used to protect your identity. It is expected that data will be collected over 6 months, starting 2018 Summer semester. The final research is expected to be done by Fall 2018, no later than Spring 2019.

There is no cost to you to be in this research study. You will not be paid for your participation in this research study. Everything we learn about you in the study will be confidential. The only persons who will have access to research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. If we publish with results of the study, you will not be identified in any way.

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study at any time, for any reason. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with the University of the Incarnate Word.

If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

If you have any questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have additional questions about your rights or wish to report a problem that may be related to the study, please contact the University of the Incarnate Word Institutional Review Board office at 210-805-3036.

Consent
Your signature indicates that you (1) consent to take part in this research study, (2) that you have read and understand the information given above, and (3) that the information above was explained to you, and you have been given the chance to discuss it and ask questions. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____
Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Name of Principal Investigator/Designee

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator/Designee   Date

Appendix C: Observation Guide

Observation Guide

Date: Time:
Place: Observer:

Descriptive Notes (setting, event description)	**Reflective Notes** (reflections, insights, confusion, interpretations)

Appendix D: Linking Theoretical Framework, Interview Questions and Emergent Themes

Collins Themes	Interview Questions	Five Themes
Core themes of a Black woman's standpoint.	Can you tell me a little about how you got started in higher education and how you became a college president? What is the day in the life of Madame President [name]? In what way(s) do you identify with the Black feminism perspective/theory? If you were the guest speaker for a group of doctoral African-American female students aspiring to be a college/university president, describe for them: What you believe to be the definition of success for you and why? How has the definition changed and/or evolved for you during the time serving as a president?	Unintentional ascension to Presidency Knowledgeable of African-American Women History
Variation of responses to core themes.	If you were a chancellor or on the board of trustees, what would you like to see in recruitment and hiring practices?	Provide opportunities with a passion for student success
The interdependence of experience and consciousness.	What would you like to see happen in higher education programs preparing students, in particular, African-American women aspiring to be a college/university president?	Mentorship
Consciousness and the struggle for a self-defined standpoint.	In what way did your background influence or bring awareness about your becoming a college/university president? If you were guest speaker for a group of first year African-American women college presidents, how would you advise them what is needed to remain in the college presidency role?	Passion for Teaching
The interdependence of thought and action.	What are some challenges that come with being an African-American college/university president? What are some advantages of being an African-American women college/university president? If you were called to advise another African-American women college/university president considering leaving the position due to challenges of possible discrimination matters, how would you advise her on the ways to determine remaining in the college presidency role?	