DISSERTATION

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-IDENTIFIED LESBIAN AND GAY SENIOR HIGHER-

EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS REGARDING THEIR LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Submitted by

Thomas S. Christo

School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2015

Doctoral Committee:

    Advisor: Linda Kuk

    Marlene Strathe
    Laurie Carlson
    Eric Aoki

ABSTRACT

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-IDENTIFIED LESBIAN AND GAY SENIOR HIGHER-

EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS REGARDING THEIR LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators regarding their self-identity and coming-out in the workplace, and their perceived effectiveness as leaders at higher-education institutions. Senior administrators in this study were second line, and reported to the President/Chancellor or Provost of an institution; their titles generally were Provost, Vice President, or Dean. Past research studies did not specifically address the self-identity and perceived leadership effectiveness of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators at colleges and universities, and the effect their coming-out had on their workplace experiences.

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach within a constructivist paradigm. After the initial participants were recruited for the study, a snowball technique of purposive sampling was used to identify additional participants. In-depth interviews were performed with eight participants who were self-identified as Gay or Lesbian and who occupied a senior administrative position at a college or university in the United States for at least 3 years.

The analysis of the findings from the lived experiences of the senior administrators in the workplace revealed four main themes, which were memorable leadership experiences, coming-out in the workplace, Lesbian and Gay identity and leadership effectiveness, and multiple self-identities of Lesbian and Gay leaders in the workplace. The lived experiences of these self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators were affected by their past and present

experiences; they described those experiences as memorable, either as accomplishments or as challenges. The participants' choice to come out at their workplaces was affected by the "comfortableness" they felt with their coworkers, the partners in their lives, the needs of LGBT students, and the views of the institution president or other influential individuals. The participants perceived their Lesbian and Gay identity to be both an integral part of their self-identity, which they reported to have "very successfully" integrated into their leadership, and of their leadership effectiveness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my chair, Linda Kuk, for her unending patience and perseverance in driving me to reach my fullest potential as a doctoral student. I would also like to thank my committee members for their relentless editing and perfecting of my dissertation. My heartfelt thanks go to the participants who took time from their busy schedules to grant me interviews. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my cat Maurice, who has been my closest companion and greatest admirer. He has sat on my desk behind my computer terminal close to the hot air vent through many classes of my doctorate program. He persisted and accompanied me day and night while I worked to finish term papers, and complete my dissertation. He never tired of my company.

DEDICATION

This dissertation would not have been possible without the loyal support of my husband of 18 years, Bill, who spent many evenings without me as I took courses in a doctoral program and spent many hours doing final papers and completing my proposal and dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Higher-education institutions would not be able to function without dedicated and hardworking senior administrators who have a broad perspective of those institutions' goals and their students' needs. One of the main roles of senior administrators is to oversee student services, academics, finances, and research activities at colleges and universities.

The job titles for senior administrators at public and private higher-education institutions include senior executives and chief functional officers, academic deans, and associate/assistant academic deans (*Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2012). Usually, senior administrators are second line and report to the President or Chancellor of an institution; their titles generally are Provost, Vice President, or Dean. They sometimes begin their careers as professors, chairs, or practitioners and later move into senior administrative positions.

The campus climate in which senior administrators work in colleges and universities is affected by whether or not the institution is inclusive, welcoming, provides opportunities fairly, and supports its commitment to academic freedom (Rankin, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). Because higher-education institutions are reflections of society, many of them have the same struggles and challenges related to diversity and inclusion. Recently, increased inclusion and opportunities for Lesbian and Gay students, faculty, and administrators to express themselves freely, and to be accepted, are reflected in the policies and recruitment efforts at some higher-education institutions around the country. But these policies have been applied unevenly and inconsistently (Rankin et al., 2010).

Organizations such as Campus Pride, a national nonprofit group, have provided answers to comprehensive questions about current campus climate for students and faculty at campuses across the country. Campus Pride's assessment after having done a comprehensive survey was

that some changes have been made to policies and programs, but these changes alone do not address problems such as heterosexism or homophobia on today's campuses. Therefore, it is also important for Gay and Lesbian contributions and voices to be expressed in the intellectual life of higher-education institutions (Rankin et al., 2010).

In addition, to fulfilling the need for diversity and inclusion at colleges and universities, Lesbian and Gay candidates are very desirable labor pools from which to recruit potential employees into an institution. From a recent survey of 2,952 respondents, which the researchers Hewlett and Sumberg (2011) distributed, Lesbian and Gay employees were found to be "ambitious (71%), committed (88%)," "willing to go the extra mile for employers," and better educated. "Forty-eight percent of Lesbian and Gay respondents had graduate degrees compared to 40% of their straight counterparts" (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011, p. 28).

Because Lesbian and Gay individuals are a highly desirable labor pool from which to recruit potential employees and are an important part of workplace diversity, several global organizations have become more sensitized and have worked to invest resources into making it a top priority to ensure that their workplaces provide a safe and welcome climate for these individuals. In order to recruit and retain more Lesbian and Gay employees, these organizations are providing more benefits for Lesbian and Gay employees, such as domestic-partner benefits and strict antidiscrimination policies that cover sexual identity and gender identity (Catalyst, 2013). Therefore, researchers have recommended that it be the goal of employers to foster a work environment that is "hospitable to all workers," and that doing this could be "a key goal for worker morale" and an ideal way "to boost retention" of Lesbian and Gay employees (Hewlett & Sumberg, 2011, p. 28).

A concern that arises for Lesbian and Gay senior administrators and their leadership positions at higher-education institutions is self-identity. Self-identity, sometimes referred to as one's personal identity, encompasses the categorization by individuals of unique traits, characteristic, and attributes that they perceive differentiates them from others (Banaji & Prentice, 1991). Understanding the ways individuals perceive their self-identity or who they are may be critical to leadership effectiveness because that awareness helps one to assist in connecting individuals to their feelings, attitudes, and reasons for their behavior (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002; van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004).

Self-identity is a complex phenomenon that has been found to have both cognitive and affective components that take into account several subidentities. For example, subidentities such as self as a parent or self as spouse may either share or have different goals, attitudes, and expected behaviors (Aron, 2003). Therefore, subidentities are dynamic and vary from individual to individual, and they are connected to specific social contexts. In addition, an individual's subidentities may be different according to his roles or positions in different social contexts (Abes & Jones, 2004, 2007; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). A subidentity may even be evoked by another individual in a particular social context—for example, an unexpected call someone gets from her boss over the weekend while she is attending a family reunion might evoke a different subidentity than that which is usually apparent at work.

Lesbian and Gay individuals' self-identity, however, may be different from how other individuals see them. The perceptions of others are often shared by a heteronormative majority, who are aware of society's sometimes negative attitudes toward homosexuality (Warner, 1993). The term *heteronormative* describes an assumption of the inherent superiority of heterosexuality, which ignores the lives and experiences of Lesbian and Gay individuals and includes the

presumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual (Rankin, 2003). Lesbian and Gay self-identities are also closely tied and formed as a reaction to the feedback these individuals may receive about their sexual identity from highly regarded others such as peers, mentors, and family members who play a critical role in identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Furthermore, although the integration of highly regarded others' perceptions is an essential part of an individual's identity development, it is different and particularly crucial for Lesbian and Gay individuals. In fact, the first identity-development theory for Gays and Lesbians was focused on sexual identity and was based on stages (Cass, 1984). The theory described how Gays and Lesbians' internalized feelings progressed from denial to acceptance, with the last stage of the process being *identity synthesis*. The theory also advocated that Lesbians and Gays form a composite identity that encompasses "a person's theory held about self with regard to social situations, and derives out of interaction with others" (Cass, 1984, p. 144). Finally, the theory proposed that the process of first becoming aware of, then accepting, and then managing one's Lesbian and Gay sexual identity is an integral part of that individual's whole identity.

The management of Lesbians and Gays' sexual identity in the workplace has been found to be an essential element in their lives (Ragins, Singh, & Cornell, 2007). An individual's sexual identity in that environment is not an observable physical trait or personality characteristic, and any discrimination by others is based on either the knowledge or suspicion of an individual's sexual identity (Ragins & Cornell, 2001). Although sexual identity is not a choice, the degree to which an individual wishes to reveal it remains one.

It is not surprising that some Lesbian and Gay employees have chosen not to reveal their sexual identity in the workplace. The effect of disclosing one's sexual identity, or coming-out, is

usually based on a series of decisions made by individuals throughout their careers, and may even change when they move from one job to another. Such disclosure is also viewed by some Lesbian and Gay employees, however, as a strategy that is simultaneously "personal, political, and professional" (Renn & Bilodeau, 2003, p. 7).

Unfortunately, the risks of disclosure that may be associated with individuals' sexual identity and being Lesbian or Gay, whether they are faculty members or administrators in the current sociopolitical context means that, for some individuals, colleges and universities still may be sexually discriminatory institutions (Pichler, Varma, & Bruce, 2010; Rottmann, 2006). According to the *2010 State of Higher Education for LGBT People* report, based on a survey of 6,000 individuals, more than "half of the faculty, students, and staff *felt* the need to hide their sexual identity (43%), or gender identity (63%) to avoid harassment and discrimination" (Rankin et al., 2010, p. 10). Previous studies (Rankin, 2003, 2005; Rankin, & Reason, 2009) have also identified "LGBT individuals as the least accepted group when compared to other under-served populations and, consequently, more likely to indicate deleterious experiences and less than welcoming campus climates based on sexual identity" (Rankin, et al., 2010, p. 9).

Therefore, a Lesbian or Gay's professional decision to either come out or not, and the degree, may ultimately "shape a career trajectory in ways that may enhance or inhibit opportunities to achieve a senior position" (Renn & Bilodeau, 2003, p. 7). As a result, Lesbians and Gays often need to decide their degree of being out with different individuals and in different situations in the workplace (Balsam & Mohr, 2007).

The problem is not whether they have the ability to choose, but that some Lesbian and Gay employees who have decided not to come out in the workplace (52%) may be at a disadvantage and have reported feeling stalled in their careers compared to those (36%) who did

reveal their sexual identity (Hewlett, & Sumberg, 2011). Lesbian and Gay employees who concealed their sexual identity and chose not to come out also were reluctant to share their experiences and activities with coworkers outside of the workplace. Most importantly, closeted workers reported feeling anxious about how their colleagues and managers evaluated them, and they used a lot of their daily resources to hide their sexual identity, which may have left them with fewer resources for doing their jobs (Hewlett, & Sumberg, 2011). Few studies have investigated the influence this scenario may have had on their perceptions of effectiveness as leaders in their organizations.

In contrast, there is evidence to suggest that when Lesbian and Gay individuals feel more comfortable and safe in the workplace, both employers and employees could "stand to gain." Employees who do come out have reported feeling "respected and valued, and studies have shown positive associations between companies' inclusive policies and consumer brand selection." In other words, strong Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) programs "breed loyalty in employees and customers alike" (Catalyst, 2013, para. 2).

Yet, there may be reasons that explain why some Lesbian and Gay employees have chosen not to reveal their sexual identity and come out. According to the Williams Institute on Sexual Identity Law and Public Policy in 2011, in a report on an aggregated number of surveys, Lesbian and Gay employees experienced, and their heterosexual coworkers witnessed, discrimination in the form of being passed over for a job promotion (Sears & Mallory, 2011). Therefore, the decision to come out at the workplace for Lesbian and Gay employees is complicated, and may be influenced by several factors, including even fear after having witnessed the perceived discrimination of coworkers based on their sexual identity (Brenner, Lyons, & Fassinger, 2010; Ragins et al., 2007).

Because a Lesbian and Gay's self-identity and sexual identity is a socially constructed concept within a heteronormative society, acknowledging those identities could influence an individual's effectiveness as a leader in an organization. The more recent definitions of leadership, compared to earlier ones, stress a "broader range" of leadership traits and interactions, emphasizing the importance of "inclusion, collaboration, and diversity" (Fassinger, Schullman, & Peterson, 2010, p. 202).

Recently, it has also been established that leadership has nothing to do with a person's attitudes, beliefs, marital status, gender, sexual identity, and physical or emotional traits (Arwood, 2005). In fact, "leadership is an identifiable set of skills and practices that are available to all of us," and not just a few select individuals in society (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 23). "The theory that there are only a few great men or women who can lead us to greatness is just plain wrong" (p. 73). Therefore, leadership can be learned by any individual and is an accumulation of one's life experiences. An individual's self-identity is a key to one's development as a leader (Hall, 2004).

Likewise, in order for leaders to be effective in an organization, they need to raise their awareness of self-identity according to the contexts in which their leadership takes place. A current theory surrounding leadership and leadership "fit" is that leadership is contextual and concerns the process of leading and the effects that the environment, both internally and externally, have on the organization; that context interacts with leadership and determines its success or failure (Povah, & Sobczak, 2010). In comparison to previous leadership theories that have been advocated that took a more person-centered approach, "context-centered leadership goes further and focuses more broadly on demands that the environment makes on the leader and includes both internal and external factors, such as the internal organizational culture and the

external conditions in the marketplace" (p. 41). Therefore, there exists, theoretically, a connection between a leader's effectiveness, and the environment she or he leads.

Essential to this paradigm shift, however, is that a leader not only knows how to lead in a situation, but also knows what to do in the situation to be successful. This means understanding the context in which the leader is making decisions and being aware of what works within a given situation. Thereby, in this paradigm shift, leadership moves from one that is an "individualistic ideal" to one that is more of an "collective ideal," and the situation should be analyzed while one is considering the context (i.e., environment) in which leadership takes place (Schyns, Kiefer, Kerschreiter, & Tymon, 2011).

Furthermore, recent efforts to create policies of diversity and inclusion on university and college campuses have been viewed with growing acceptance, but the diversity and inclusion issues that are specific to Lesbian and Gay senior administrators may have been overlooked, or even misunderstood (Johnson, 2009). Sexual identity is separate and different from one's gender, ethnic, and racial characteristics because these identities develop in the presence of a group identity. In addition, Lesbian and Gay individuals are born into a society that is predominantly heteronormative in which it is assumed, as noted previously, that everyone who is heterosexual is normal (Warner, 1993). Therefore, the diversity and inclusion issues of Lesbians and Gays may be different too.

Despite the diversity and inclusion initiatives that are now in place, and the belief that colleges and universities have traditionally been a fertile ground for political, cultural, and social changes for Lesbian and Gay movements, higher-education institutions still may need the findings of more research concerning Lesbian and Gay senior administrators' lived experiences on their campuses. This research should aim to understand the perceptions of this group related

8

to their self-identity, coming-out in the workplace, and leadership effectiveness in a predominantly heteronormative environment of higher education (Schmidt, Githens, Rocc, & Kormanik, 2012). What is not known is whether and how leaders' Lesbian or Gay self-identity might impact their leadership in higher education (Fassinger, Schullman, & Peterson, 2010).

Fortunately, there is an ongoing movement nationally by colleges and universities "toward increased employment protections for Lesbian and Gay individuals, and [with] the mounting evidence of extensive discrimination faced by this group in employment settings, it seems important to understand heterosexism from the organizational decision maker's perspective in order to be able to remediate bias and discrimination in employment decisions" (Pichler, Varma, & Bruce, 2010, p. 2551). Many colleges and universities have changed in the past decade and have become increasingly more progressive in their attitudes, and more sensitized to promoting and retaining Lesbian and Gay senior administrators who are an integral part of implementing institutional goals. There is still some evidence, however, that Lesbian and Gay Senior administrators have experiences of job discrimination, and that they may fear coming-out or being open about experiences outside the workplace, or that others may overlook or misunderstand such issues as self-identity. And these issues may be impacting their ability to lead effectively (Pichler, Varma, & Bruce, 2010; Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010; Schmidt, Githens, Rocc, & Kormanik, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators regarding their self-identity and coming-out in the workplace, and their perceived effectiveness as leaders at higher-education institutions. Senior administrators in this study were

9

second line, and reported to the President/Chancellor or Provost of an institution; their titles were generally Provost, Vice President, or Dean.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for this study:

(a) What are the lived experiences of self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators as leaders at US higher-education institutions?

(b) How have Lesbian and Gay senior administrators made the choice in their present positions to come out at their workplaces?

(c) How do Lesbian and Gay senior administrators perceive their own leadership effectiveness?

(d) How have Lesbian and Gay senior administrators integrated their self-identity into their leadership, and how effective do they believe this has been?

Queer Theory

In this study, Queer theory was used to "shed light on general problems and questions of access, equity, learning, and leadership" that "persist across all sectors of postsecondary education" (Renn, 2010, p. 131). The term *Queer* in this particular case was used to transcend the terms *Gays, Lesbians,* or *Homosexuals,* and to call these terms into question (Halpin, 2003). The terms *Homosexuals* and *Gays* were used to refer to a group of individuals composed predominantly of White males who were associated with forming the Gay movement in the United States (Sedgwick, 1991). Queer theory recognized and acknowledged the gains and growth of that Gay movement. Therefore, the term *Queer* was used to be more inclusive of individuals of different races, ethnicity, or genders (Mertens, 2010).

Queer theory, which continues to evolve, concerns the intricacies of the construction of an individual's identity, and the ways that identity performs in social situations according to the context of Western culture (Mertens, 2010). Oftentimes, writers use "a postmodern or post structuralism identity to critique and deconstruct modern theory" (Mertens, 2010, p. 20). Most theorists work to tear down the traditionally held beliefs in Western culture that identity is singular and fixed. Instead, they advocate that an individuals' identity can be multidimensional, and multifaceted too.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is considered to be one of the leading advocates and scholars of Queer studies in academia, and a leading contributor to the development of Queer Theory. Sedgwick (1991) has used literary criticism to question the dominant discourses of sexuality, race, and gender, and her concept of the "closet" and coming-out as tools to investigate the basic binaries of identity. Her belief is that the historical precedent of describing an individual's sexual identity as a binary is sorely inadequate (Sedgwick, 1991).

Finally, Queer theory was used in this study because it advocated that it is impossible to move outside current conceptions of sexuality. Therefore, no one can actually be defined as either completely heterosexual, and so an insider, or completely homosexual, and therefore an outsider. Therefore, if one attempts to define oneself as *out* of the closet that can only have meaning compared to those non-heterosexuals who are *in* the closet. Likewise, if one defines oneself as being outside the definition of the norms of sexuality, that only has meaning compared to those who are inside the defined norms of sexuality. It is precisely because one term is used to define the other that a researcher can only negotiate the limits and study "how the boundaries" between each of them have been "created, regulated, and contested" (Namaste, 1994, p. 224).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was that it might help to reveal some of the perceived barriers that may have been constructed in the heteronormative structure of higher-education institutions. The challenges and struggles to overcome some of these perceived barriers could be revealed in the lived experiences of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators for others to comprehend, and could be used to learn strategies to navigate around them. Oftentimes, the support and coaching opportunities for Lesbian and Gay individuals to acquire this knowledge may be few, and far between.

This study could also provide some insights and strategies to better understand the so-called "lavender ceiling" from the narratives of the workplace experiences of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators who may have dealt with it and experienced it first hand in their lives or career paths (Arwood, 2005; Unger, 2008). These experiences could be an indispensable asset to Lesbians and Gays who are aspiring to be senior administrators and who may be at different points in their careers, but traveling in the same direction and following similar paths.

Finally, the results of this study could contribute to the body of knowledge about the perceptions of Lesbians and Gays' regarding the impact of their self-identities and coming-out on their leadership effectiveness at higher-education institutions. In turn, higher-education institutions could use the results to be better prepared to create policies specifically geared to Lesbian and Gay administrators. The policies could be more inclusive and avoid perceived discriminating practices or fears Lesbians and Gays may experience in a predominantly heteronormative environment.

Delimitations

A purposeful sample using a snowball technique was drawn from the self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators known by the researcher, his peers in higher education, and the participants who were interviewed for this study and who suggested other participants. The interviews took place at colleges and universities in the United States. The participants occupied a senior-administration level position at a higher-education institution for at least 3 years. The senior administrators who were interviewed were second-line administrators and reported to the President /Chancellor or Provost of an institution; their titles generally were Provost, Vice President, or Dean. This sample did not include college presidents or chancellors.

This study excluded Bisexual and Transgendered individuals and was not representative of the community of LGBTQ individuals who were senior administrators at college and universities. The conscious decision was made to exclude Bisexuals, who could be viewed as straight in some public spheres and might be able to enjoy the benefits of acceptance that came with assumed heterosexuality in a heteronormative environment. It was also the case that Bisexuals may choose to be associated with, but also may have chosen not be to be identified as Gays or Lesbians (Baumgardner, 2008). In contrast, Transgendered individuals perceived their true gender to be opposite to their biological sex. Transgender individuals also decided to undergo physical, psychological, and emotional changes to become what they believed to be their true gender (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008).

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the purposive sample and snowball technique that was used to select participants; the resulting sample was not representative of all Lesbian and Gay senior

administrators who were leaders in higher education. Consequently, this work cannot be generalized to all Lesbian and Gay senior administrators.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms and definitions are used:

Coming-out. A term used to describe the voluntarily process that individuals may go through by making public in varying degrees and ways their sexual identity, preferences, or gender identities. The process can also be referred to as *being out,* which means not concealing one's sexual identity, preferences, or gender identity. The term *outing* or *being outed* is used for making public the sexual identity, preference, or gender identity of another individual who would prefer to keep this information confidential.

Gay. Adjective commonly used for male homosexuals to describe individuals whose primary sexual identity is toward individuals of the same sex.

Heterosexism. The term used for the assumption that all individuals are or should be heterosexual. The term excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer individuals while it acknowledges those factors for heterosexual individuals. Some may describe use of the term as a subtle form of oppression that acts to reinforce Lesbians and Gays' invisibility.

Homosexuality. A term used to describe individuals who feel physically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex. The term originated in the field of psychiatry and once was used to label individuals who were considered to be mentally ill, or to have a condition that was treatable and could be cured.

14

Lavender ceiling. Term used to identify when homophobia and heterosexism are an established part of an organization's culture and impede the career development and promotional advancement of Lesbian and Gay individuals.

Lesbian. A term that refers to a woman whose primary sexual identity is toward individuals of the same sex.

Self-identity. A term that is used to describe ones consciousness of the unique traits, characteristics, and attributes that an individual perceives which differentiates that individual for others. This consciousness and self-identification may vary depending on the role and place of the individual within a social system.

Senior administrator. An individual who is a second-line administrator and reports to the President/Chancellor or Provost of a higher-education institution; the individual is generally titled Provost, Vice President, or Dean.

Sexual identity. The term used to describe an individual's innate and enduring sexual attraction to someone. Sexual identity is fluid; oftentimes individuals use a variety of terms in combination to describe their own sexual identity. This term is sometimes confused with *sexual preference,* but that is very different because it implies a choice.

Researcher's Perspective

When my family moved to the Long Island suburbs, it seemed as though they had found Nirvana. While I was growing up and becoming an adolescent in Long Island, it became apparent to me that this was a place of intolerance where the voices of the minority were not being heard. People of color were bused into my local school, and from a place that no one in our neighborhood would ever visit. It also became apparent to me that my sexual identity was

15

not the same as most of the neighbors, the families portrayed on television, and the stories told in books. My desires and attractions as a male were for those of the same sex.

What was once a Nirvana became a prison for me where my dreams had to be hidden, my hopes stifled, and my sexual identity never allowed to speak its name. Although I was only a young man, it became apparent to me that the challenges and struggles of other individuals—people of color, women, and religious minorities—were closely aligned to mine. Therefore, from then until now, my research and interests have always been associated with other individuals who were identified as being members of minorities or marginalized. It was not until the formation of my dissertation topic that I realized an individual's sexual identity was a socially constructed concept and could influence one's leadership style. Therefore, this topic became the focus of my dissertation study. My Gay identity and my attachment to the topic have been both an advantage and a disadvantage to doing my research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review encompasses the areas of Lesbian and Gay self-identity, Lesbian and Gay leaders in different heteronormative educational environments, feminist epistemology and its relationship to the study of Lesbian and Gay leaders, and Lesbian and Gay leadership specifically in higher education. The literature was not rich in content for Lesbian and Gay leaders in particular, or for senior administrators, and it primarily focused on measuring the attitudes of those who interact with Lesbian and Gay individuals.

As they pertain to Lesbian and Gay studies, race, gender, and sexuality simultaneously operate in every social situation. These factors occupy both dominant and subordinate positions in institutions that have social hierarchies embedded in them (Warner, 1993). These factors were not treated as personality traits or characteristics in the literature, but social constructions that may provide options to individuals in some areas and restrict opportunities for others.

The first part of the review discusses the concept of Lesbian and Gay self-identity, its definition in the literature, and the research studies that used the model and theories of identity development. Beginning with the Cass (1979) Lesbian and Gay identity-development model, other alternative theoretical frameworks were reviewed. This review is followed by that of the research studies which have used these models or theories either as the basis for analysis, or to prove the model's or theory's validity.

Finally, Abes and Jones (2004) conducted a recent study with Lesbian college students, which was based on an integrated, nonlinear model of multiple identity dimensions and "intersectionality"; this study provides a sharp contrast to the model that was first introduced by Cass (1979). This section concludes with a recent study that was performed by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) that reconceptualized a model used by Abes and Jones (2004), based on Jones

and McEwen's (2000) study of multiple-identity dimensions that drew on feminist theoretical conceptualizations of multiple identities or intersectionality.

The second part of the review focuses on heterosexism, and its relationship to a Lesbian and Gay individual's identity as a leader in the workplace. The research that was reviewed related to the feelings and attitudes of others in the workplace toward those who were leaders with a same-sex sexual identity. The remainder of the literature in this section was concerned with the effects of coming out and revealing one's sexual identity in varying degrees, and the implications of doing so for an individual in the workplace. In a recent study by Guittar (2013), it was found that the meaning of coming-out varies greatly from one individual to another and can even be dependent on "one's life circumstances, social environments, and personal beliefs and values" (p. 183).

In the last section, the research of the experiences of Lesbian and Gay leaders in different educational settings was reviewed. The research in this area was limited and consisted of administrators, teachers, and college students as Lesbian and Gay leaders. The attitudes of their followers was also included in some of this research, especially that from the past decade, with many high schools, colleges, and universities forming Lesbian and Gay centers, clubs, and activities.

Self-Identity of Lesbians and Gays

Lesbian and Gay identity is socially constructed, and the attitudes and perceptions of others toward Lesbian and Gay individuals vary widely. Historian and philosopher Foucault argued that sexual identities were socially constructed, and that sexual identities were shaped by social and historical forces. In other words, they have histories (Foucault, 1978). Most social researchers have agreed that factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity are

essentially socially constructed. Although these identities are simultaneously expressed and operate in any social situation, sexual identity needs to be differentiated from gender, ethnic, and racial factors because those identities develop more readily as the result of the presence of a group identity. In other words, sexual identity is invisible, and its stigmatization provides a lack of role models and an open group identity (Bringaze & White, 2001).

Some researchers have attempted to conceptualize identity development for Lesbian and Gay individuals (Brady & Busse, 1994; Cass 1979; D'Augelli, 1994; McCarn and Fassinger, 1996; Troiden, 1988). The resulting models and theories that have been used since their conception, sometimes in hybrid forms, serve as a basis for some research studies (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Cass, 1984; Fassinger, & Miller, 1997; Marszalek, Cashwell, Dunn, and Heard, 2004).

Stage models and theories have also been criticized for their linearity, lack of flexibility, and inability to explain the tendency for some individuals to backtrack in their development. In addition, the explanation of Lesbian and Gay identity development and its association to coming-out for an individual may be a more subtle development, and may happen in degrees at different times, with different people, even in different circumstances. In fact, Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that self-identity is also developed by valued others. For senior administrators in higher education, this could mean faculty, mentors, and family members had a role the development in their self-identity. However, "the predominance and persistence of stage models in the research literature and in current educational practice suggests that they represent with some accuracy the developmental process" (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005, p. 26).

Cass (1979) was the first to create a Homosexual Identity Formation (HIF) model consisting of six stages of identity, which was based on her experiences with homosexuals from

doing clinical work in Australia (p. 219). This was also the first identity-development model for

Lesbians and Gays that focused on sexual identity. This stage-based model explained an

individual's identity development from denial to acceptance and ending in identity synthesis

(Cass, 1979, 1984).

Cass (1984) later did a study that assessed the validity of several aspects of her six-stage

model. The responses of the 166 participants in the study on the Homosexual Identity

Questionnaire (HIQ) were that they identified themselves as being in one of the six

developmental stages. This data was compared to how well the stages corresponded with the

respondents' scores, which were based on items that described the stage descriptions of the

model. Cass (1984) hypothesized that the participants who chose a particular stage in their

development would score higher on the items that described that stage. Results provided some

support for the validity of the descriptions and for the order of the stages, although the data

described a four-stage instead of a six-stage model. The resulting instrument consisted of 210

items, which measured an individual's place in one of six stages: 1) Identity Confusion, 2)

Identity Comparison, 3) Identity Tolerance, 4) Identity Acceptance, 5) Identity Pride, or 6)

Identity Synthesis. One of the limitations of this study, in addition to the model's linearity and

inability of individuals to backtrack, was the small sample, and that the majority of the

participants were White.

Marszalek et al. (2004) used the Gay Identity Questionnaire (GIQ) in their study. The

GIQ was originally designed by Brady and Busse (1994). The GIQ is a brief measure that is also

used by clinicians and researchers to identify Gay males in the various stages of homosexual

identity formation. Like Cass's (1984) HIQ, the GIQ is based on the HIF model and is a shorter

version of it. The GIQ was administered to a sample of 78 Gay men, and it was found that a

relationship existed between Gay identity development and cognitive development. In addition, the findings, which were based on statistically significant results, "provided evidence that Gay identity development can be categorized by concrete and abstract frames of reference" (Marszalek et al., 2004, p. 103). The researchers also stated that limitations of their study were a convenience sample attained from the Gay community centers in Broward and Palm Beach counties in Florida, and that the majority of the participants were White.

Troiden (1988) believed that homosexual identity development was not a linear process that moved from one stage to another in a step-by-step fashion, but instead, identity development was a "horizontal spiral" very much like a "spring" viewed from its side. Troiden's (1988) model consisted of four stages: 1) sensitization, 2) identity confusion, 3) identity assumption, and 4) commitment. Progression through the stages happens in a back-and forth or up-and-down manner. Finally, the movement may sometimes overlap or even reoccur in different ways for different individuals. Because they are not born with a sexual identity, Troiden (1988) also viewed the process as being a way for individuals to perceive themselves and adopt a lifestyle. Troiden (1988) also believed that homosexual identities are based on an individual's generalized perception of the self as "different" from the time one is a child.

D'Augelli (1994) defined six aspects of Lesbian and Gay identity using a stage model, called a life-span model, but added another essential component—the three cultural and social factors in which Gay and Lesbian identities emerged: personal subjectivities and actions, interactive intimacies, and sociohistorical connections. In the context of these factors, the six self-identity developmental phases were 1) exiting heterosexual identity, 2) developing a personal lesbian-Gay-bisexual identity status, 3) developing a lesbian-Gay-bisexual social

identity, 4) becoming a lesbian-Gay-bisexual offspring, (5) developing a lesbian-Gay-bisexual intimacy status, and (6) entering a lesbian-Gay-bisexual community.

Bilodeau (2003) did a study of the development of transgendered students at a large Midwest university. The study used an adaptation of the D'Augelli (1994) Lesbian and Gay identity-development lifespan model to study transgender college students. Interviews were conducted with two transgender-identified students to examine their developmental experiences in relation to each of the stages of D'Augelli's model. The findings revealed that the experiences of coming-out for the two students were closely aligned with the six stages of the model. Bilodeau and Renn (2005) used the same six-stage model as a theoretical framework for an exploratory study of LGBT student leaders using a qualitative case-study method. The participants were a purposeful sample of seven LGBT-identified undergraduate students. The researchers found that the data collected generally conformed to the D'Augelli's six-stage model. An important finding of the study was that, although the processes of the model were triggered by leadership experiences, the development of sexual identity through the stages of the model was not linear, but instead iterative.

McCarn and Fassinger (1996) created a four-stage Lesbian identity-development model using existing racial and gender identity-development models designed by other researchers. They claimed that their model differed from other identity models in that it had "two parallel branches that are reciprocally catalytic but not simultaneous: individual sexual identity, and group membership identity" (p. 521). They also referred to phases instead of stages. Therefore, their model was different because it not only viewed self-identity as being an individual process, but also included the development of a group identity that an individual has with a minority group. The four phases were identified as 1) awareness, 2) exploration, 3)

deepening/commitment, and 4) internalization/synthesis. Finally, although the phases were directional, an individual could revisit earlier phases in a different context.

Fassinger and Miller (1997) did a study with a sample of 34 Gay men to determine whether McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) Lesbian Identity Development model could also be applied to Gay men. The results supported the model, in terms of both individual and group processes, and the designated phases. It was also found that the model is applicable to Gay men. Therefore, very much as Cass (1984) found in her study, McCarn and Fassinger (1996), determined that Lesbian and Gay "identity development might be a four stage process rather than a six stage process" (p. 47).

The last phase in McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) model of Gay and Lesbian identity development, *internalization/synthesis,* is labeled similarly to Cass's (1970) last stage of development, *identity synthesis.* In addition, although Cass's (1984) study validated her six-stage model, the specific measurements of the mean scores for stages one and two, and stages five and six, did not differ significantly. Therefore, her findings implied that identity development might, in fact, be a four-stage model instead of a six-stage one. She also reported in her study that the weight of the evidence of the "discriminant analysis" supported a six-stage model. D'Augelli (1994) also defined six aspects of Lesbian and Gay identity, and used a stage model called a life-span model. Finally, Fassinger and Miller (1997) in their study found that the four phases in McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) model were flexible. Troiden's (1988) model also had four stages and was not linear; the stages could even overlap or reoccur. Therefore, an individual could move in one direction, but that movement might not be sequential. In fact, an individual could move into different stages at the same time.

23

Finally, Abes and Jones (2004) conducted a study of Lesbian college students' self-identity, which provided an alternative to the traditional stage models that were first introduced by Cass (1989). The Abes and Jones (2004) study found that "contextual" factors were important in the perception of self-identity for Lesbians in higher-education institutions. The study proposed that an individual has multiple identity dimensions such as gender, race, social class, religion, and sexual identity. In their qualitative study, which was grounded in a constructivist paradigm, they explored the perceptions of 10 Lesbian college students using in-depth interviews to understand the interaction of the students' sexual identities with other factors such as class, religion, race, gender, and social class. The study used narrative inquiry to explore the stories that revealed the "inner selves" of the participants, using three open-ended interviews. The data collected was subjected to a comparative analysis. The study found that socially constructed identities involved a complex interaction with other, multiple personal identities that an individual may form. Therefore, designing studies to capture that complexity and interaction is difficult because the participants may not understand the importance of one factor of their self-identity in relation to another factor. For example, in the Abes and Jones (2004) study, one participant, Carmen, perceived no relationship between her sexual identity and her ethnicity, although her narrative of the two was tightly interwoven.

The purpose of the Abes et al. (2007) study was to "reconceptualize" the model used in the earlier Abes and Jones (2004) research, which was based on Lesbian identity development through integrating the factors of "intra personal, cognitive, and interpersonal domains of development" (p. 13). Abes and Jones (2004) had used the Jones and McEwen (2000) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity Development, which was not linear, but instead "a fluid and dynamic one, representing the ongoing construction of identities and the influence of changing

24

contexts on the experiences of identity development" (p. 408). Abes et al. (2007) found that it was important to acknowledge meaning-making in the identity-development model of the Lesbian students who were interviewed in the Abes and Jones (2004) study.

The Abes et al. (2007) study consequently provided a "richer portrayal" not only of *what* college students perceived among their personal and social identities, but *how* they had come to perceive them. Therefore, the concept of *intersectionality* recognizes that there are "concurrent, nonhierarchical experiences of multiple identities" (Abes et al., 2007, p. 7).

Abes et al. (2007) believed that the concept of sexual identity for some individuals is firmly rooted in the core of their self-identity, and primarily formed internally. In other individuals, self-identity is influenced more by external factors. For example, an external factor could be an individual's environment and the feedback from others that form an individual's social identity, such as family members, heterosexual peer groups, or career decisions, which in turn, may be manifested in a positive or negative self-identity for some individuals.

Abes et al. (2007) stated that individuals' meaning-making of multiple dimensions of their self-identity is a more holistic view of the development of their self-identity in a particular context. It was also suggested by these researchers that future research should consider other contextual factors that could influence individuals' sexual identity, such as campus culture or climate.

Recently, Guittar (2013) did a qualitative study of 30 LGBQ individuals who have come out to differing degrees who had been recruited for the research by employing both snowball and purposive-sampling techniques. The author used a grounded-theory approach with a constructivist philosophical paradigm, and in-depth interviews. The participants in this sample were racially and ethnically diverse, and consisted of 12 men and 18 women. The author stated

that getting a diverse sample was a difficult task, and that most studies of LGBQ individuals are based on middle-class whites. Of the participants Guittar interviewed, 15 identified as Gay, 9 as Lesbian, 3 as Queer, 1 as Pansexual, and 2 who preferred not to identify. The findings were that a single meaning of coming-out could not be formed without taking into account the variations of what that term meant to the participants. One factor of coming-out that all participants did agree upon was that it was transformative, and an ongoing process. For some participants, the process was more of a journey than an affirmation; but coming-out did mean more than just acknowledgment to one's self. Respondents also considered revealing one's sexual identity to either close friends or relatives as partially coming-out, and revealing to everyone who wanted to know as fully coming-out. An important conclusion of this study was that its findings align with the proponents of Queer theory in that participants "who are further removed from conventional dualistic thinking (i.e., they think beyond a gender binary) were more inclined to deemphasize coming out to family and friends and focus instead on coming out as a personal journey of self-affirmation" (Guittar, 2013, p. 184). Guittar (2013) stated that, although the sample was ethnically diverse, one limitation of the study was that it did not include those who identify as Black (2 were Bi-racial), or Bisexual.

Lesbian and Gay Self-Identity in a Heteronormative Workplace

D'Augelli (1994) defined heterosexism as "the belief that 'normal' development is heterosexual and that deviations from this identity are unnatural, disordered, or dysfunctional" (p. 312). The concept of heterosexual privilege, as defined by Washington and Evans (1991), was later labeled by Warner (1993), a literary critic, and social theorist, as *heteronormative,* a form of hegemony. According to Alden and Parker (2005), heterosexism sets the stage for the assumption that is often made at institutions that everyone in the world must be heterosexual. As

a result, Lesbians and Gays must create their own identities with two societal barriers in place: "the social invisibility of the defining characteristic of their identity" and the "social and legal penalties" that are attached to its overt expression in society (D'Augelli, 1994, p. 314).

Heterosexism, which in this case is ingrained in the cultural norms and customs of higher-education intuitions, can be defined as an ''ideological system that denies, denigrates and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship or community" (Herek, 1992, p. 89). Herek (1993) believed that colleges and universities only began a few decades ago to recognize, and respond to attacks and biases aimed at Lesbians and Gays on campus. In his study at Yale University in 1993, he reported that the majority of Lesbians and Gays in his study were forced to live in a world of secrecy and fear. Furthermore, Herek (1995) believed that it was essential to challenge existing institutional structures that assume an environment of heterosexism.

Herek (2002) also conducted a study that was designed to assess gender gaps in a wide variety of heterosexual respondents' attitudes toward civil-rights issues, stereotypical beliefs about Lesbians and Gays, personal discomfort with Lesbians and Gays, and affective reactions to Lesbian and Gay people. Using data from a 1999 national Random Digit Dialing (RDD) survey ($N = 1,335$), this study examined gender gaps in heterosexuals' attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays, and a variety of other topics related to homosexuality. The data were collected in a national telephone survey between September 1998 and May 1999. All interviews were conducted by the staff of the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. Respondents were included in the analyses if they indicated that they were heterosexual.

The findings of this study revealed that the respondents were more willing to support employment nondiscrimination in the abstract than to endorse enactment of a law. The

27

discrepancy was nearly twice as great among heterosexual male respondents when compared to female respondents. Most respondents opposed same-sex marriage for Lesbians and Gays, with no significant difference by gender/sex. On responses to the follow-up question about domestic partners, both male and female heterosexuals were more likely to regard Lesbianism than being Gay as a choice. Gays were more likely than Lesbians to be perceived as child molesters. Men expressed significantly greater discomfort than women around Gay men, and women expressed significantly greater discomfort than men around Lesbians.

In questions about the recognition of same-sex relationships, Herek (2002) also stated that Heterosexual men responded significantly more negatively to Gay men than to Lesbians and adoption rights. It was suggested that future research needed to examine further the "antecedents and correlates of attitudes" toward Gays and Lesbians, and also "whether (and how) they differ for heterosexual men and women" (p. 60). The significance of this research was that it also demonstrated the importance of differentiating Lesbians from Gays, and heterosexual women from heterosexual men when measuring attitudes in a research survey.

A more recent study done by Chonody, Siebert, and Rutledge (2009) found that 211 students enrolled in a human-sexuality course in a southeastern university changed their attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays. The authors used a pretest-posttest design on the Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality. A paired *t*-test was used to determine whether there were significant changes between the pretest and posttest, and in the subscales of the Index of Attitudes Toward Homosexuality. The findings had important implications for the study done previously by Herek (2002) with a different sample. Although the males in the sample scored significantly higher than females on the pretest, their scores changed more on the posttest. Therefore, the exposure to a course on human sexuality had made significant changes in the attitudes of both female and

28

male Heterosexual students in this particular higher-education environment. A limitation of the study was that it used a convenience sample, and the course on human sexuality was an elective, rather than a required course.

Several studies of teachers in education have illustrated the way heteronormativity is both handled and is prevalent in educational settings (Lieder, 2001; Lugg & Koschoreck 2003; Rankin, 2003; Waldo, Hesson, & D'Augelli, 1998: Wallace, 2002). Two studies of Lesbian and Gay populations in education have been done using narrative inquiry. Valadez and Elsbree (2005) studied the role of Latino culture and Queer culture, and the role Queers of color play when negotiating the crossing between cultures within an educational setting. Hidehiro, Reece-Miller, and Santavicca (2010) examined the lived experiences of six Lesbian and Gay teachers who worked in primary and secondary school settings in the Midwest region of the United States.

Both of these studies focused specifically on the way Lesbian and Gay teachers manage their sexual identity in relation to their teacher identity in a heteronormative environment. In the Hidehiro et al. (2010) study, the teachers' experiences were examined in respect to their teaching in a heteronormative environment such as many Lesbian and Gay teachers have to navigate in order to pursue their career aspirations. The findings of Hidehiro et al. (2010) revealed that the six teachers survived by keeping their sexual identity separate from their identities as teachers for a number of reasons. The importance of this study was that it used the personal experiences of Queer teachers in the Midwest, and it focused on the specific ways they constructed and maintained dual identities as a strategy in a heteronormative educational environment.

Valadez and Elsbree (2005) studied two teachers, one a bilingual Latino man and the other a monolingual White woman, in San Diego County, an area also known as a borderland because

29

it encompasses the area of the Mexico and US borders. The word *Queer* as used in their study

addressed and encompassed a broader range of individuals who were not only Gay, Lesbian,

Bisexual, and Transgendered, but also "inter sexed, and individuals that were questioning their

sexuality" (p. 172). Unlike the teachers in the Hidehiro et al. (2010) study, these two teachers

were openly Queer in their work and personal relationships. The authors used three stories to

demonstrate their "queer border crossings," and defined four different characteristics of being a

queer coyote, or being *"valuable, dangerous, and undesirable all at the same time to those who*

want to cross the border" (p. 175). The significance of their study was that it gave a viable

alternative to the strategy of dual identities used by the teachers in the Hidehiro et al. (2010)

study.

In the Valadez and Elsbree (2005) study, the two teachers acting as Queer coyotes made

it possible for Lesbian and Gay students to cross the boundaries of the heteronormative

environment of education. Although they were working in secret, their goal was to make

possible Queer border crossings for their students and colleagues while they were being

responsible for educating both queer and straight individuals.

In some ways, the Valadez and Elsbree (2005) study agreed with Washington and

Evans' (1991) conclusions that having heterosexuals as advocates or allies and educating them is

part of an effective strategy for overcoming heterosexual privilege and crossing heteronormative

boundaries. In fact, a recent study by Henderson and Murdock (2011) researched the

implications of evoking transformative learning in heterosexuals early in the higher-education

experience. In their study, a teaching tool called a *guided image*, which is a narrative of thoughts

and suggestions, was used to guide a class of college students' imaginations. The guided-image

activity was used by a teacher in an introductory sociology college classroom to "invoke the

30

sociological imagination" (Henderson & Murdock, 2011, p. 186). In total, 58 students were enrolled in the course; and on the day the guided-image activity was introduced, 47 students were present. Henderson and Murdock (2011) found that when the opportunity arose for heterosexual college students in this study to understand the difficulty of being Lesbian and Gay, and the limitations of those identities, the guided imagery provided a way to "challenge previous ideologies, nurture empathy for the 'other,' and apply sociology to the 'real world' in which students live everyday lives" (p. 196). A total of 98% of the students had reported having "negative emotions" when responding to open-ended questions. The emotions most commonly reported were "loneliness, shame, fear, and anger" (p. 195). In addition, the findings revealed that many students had increased their empathy for Lesbians and Gays, and that the process had both affected their personal development and academic experiences. Some limitations of the study were that it was an in-class exercise. Therefore, students experienced the negative emotions in an artificial environment and knew they did not have to remain in that environment, and they were not able to report how it would feel to be in the others' shoes for an extended period of time. Finally, the majority of students in the sample were White.

Troiden (1988), who also developed a four-stage model of identity development for Lesbians and Gays, believed that the ability to select to be out or not enabled Lesbians and Gays to choose the degree to which to integrate their sexual identities with their environments, and the ability to select the different degrees and ways. Therefore, their coming-out to others and their identity development is "emergent," and never really "fixed or absolute," and "always subject to modification" (p. 112). There have been few studies in higher education that investigate coming-out in an environment of heterosexism at higher-education institutions.

A recent study by Brenner, Lyons, and Fassinger (2010) used two samples, one of 311 participants and the other 295 participants from an online national study of same-sexed attracted individuals to test the hypothesis of predicting the performance of Lesbian and Gay employees based on the model of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB). The model was designed to theorize the way that the organizational climate for heterosexism can predict workplace "outness" for sexual minorities. In this study, it was hypothesized that organizational climate for heterosexism is related to what was termed *stigmatization salience,* which in turn is related to sexual identity disclosure by an organization's employees. The instrument used was the Organizational Tolerance for Heterosexism by Waldo (1999), which was designed using four vignettes related to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual sexual-orientation discrimination events, and the respondents' ratings of the organizational responses to complaints about the events. Workplace outness was measured by Mohr and Fassinger's (2000) Outness Indicator, which measured the respondents' outness in different aspects of their lives. For stigmatization salience, the researchers designed six items to measure the level of negative self-awareness about Lesbian or Gay sexual identity.

The findings of the Brenner et al. study revealed "support for the notion that perceptions of organizational climate for heterosexism are directly predictive of workplace outcomes" with a medium to large effect size (p. 329). Therefore, when employers were perceived as taking action against a climate of heterosexism, the employees were more apt to be out to their colleagues, direct reports, and customers. In addition, stigmatization salience was also found to predict workplace outness, with the focus on an individual's stigmatized negative minority sexual orientation being related to fewer individuals coming-out in the workplace. The relationship between the level of heterosexism and individual outcomes was ascertained, and although it

32

related to organizational outcomes to some degree, the effect sizes were small compared to those for individual outcomes. The authors concluded that organizational compliance, or the efforts to prevent, diagnose, and respond correctly to wrongful behavior, and its relationship in this study to outness was not significant. The authors believed that organizational compliance may be more complex, and other variables may moderate the association (e.g., job security, identity development). A limitation of this study was that the findings cannot be used to generalize to other samples with Lesbian and Gay employees because oftentimes, as in this sample and similar studies, the sample was drawn from states that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Connell (2012) did a study in which she interviewed 45 Lesbian and Gay teachers and administrators from California and Texas schools. In this study, only one interviewee had described herself as completely closeted. The rest of the interviewees reported that they were out in varying degrees. Connell described the teachers being out on a continuum that consisted of out only to those not employed at their schools, out to only close friends and other LGBT coworkers, and out to everyone at the school including students and their parents. Differences also existed between the two states from which the samples were drawn. California had more teachers that were out to everyone, compared to Texas, which had more teachers out only to close friends and other LGBT coworkers. Policy protections were a big factor and a theme that emerged from the interviews with the Lesbian and Gay teachers. Some interviewees even accepted positions on the basis of the school's nondiscrimination policies.

A contribution of this study was that it revealed the way that a school's culture or climate can shape the way individuals come out in the workplace. Therefore, for the interviewees to come out, many factors both cultural and political were an issue, and the teachers were definitely

influenced by the occupational context. In fact, the study found that context-specific factors such as the school's environment, and the Gay-friendliness of the school, shaped the interviewees decision-making process and their expression of their sexual identity. Therefore, coming-out in this study was also a social phenomenon that was heavily influenced by both the structural and cultural context of a school. A limitation of this study, besides the small convenience sample that derived from a snowball technique, was the lack of interviewees of color who may have made the decision of coming-out from a position of "multiple marginalities" (Connell, 2012, p. 176).

Feminist Epistemology

By the 1980s, there was an "explosion of research" on the effects of leadership on organizational culture and conditions. The effects leaders had on particular situations and their relationship to organizations took a center stage. During this time, there were also significant advancements for women and feminists who were establishing their voices and influencing the language and the interpretation of knowledge in leadership studies (Bass, 1990).

An assumption that has been made in Lesbian and Gay studies is that the study of race, gender, and sexuality share a common epistemology (Weber, 1998). Therefore, the 1980s was also a pivotal point in the study of Lesbian and Gay leaders because the research of the period provided a pathway for the study of leadership that was more diverse and advocated research approaches that would amplify some of the silenced voices of minorities. The research in this area encompassed women and leadership, and feminist discourse, and it has influenced leadership at most college and universities.

Sprague and Kobrynowicz (2004), in their article "A Feminist Epistemology," stated that the use of the positivist research paradigm and the scientific method had its advantages compared

to earlier research philosophies which "relied on faith and revelation." They believed that "the emphasis on systematic procedures presents knowledge claims in a context that is open to critique, argument, even refutation" (p. 79). According to the authors, feminists have criticized the way knowledge has been generated in social research using a positivist paradigm, and the role of objectivity in attaining knowledge. They claimed that some feminists state "objectivity may be unattainable" and others even "question whether it is desirable" (p. 84).

Although the authors raised the issue of the preferred research methods of feminists as qualitative, and consisting of long, detailed, unstructured interviews with small samples that are unlikely to represent a population that had unstructured working styles, they did not offer any research methods or paradigms as alternatives. Yet, an important conclusion that could be drawn from this article is that unless the model of how research is done traditionally eliminates the inherent domination of the researcher over the participants, a connection can only be made with other researchers, and not with the groups that are being studied.

Lesbian and Gay Leadership Effectiveness in Higher Education

By the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, it had become clear that leadership was not defined by ethnicity, skin color, gender, or sexual identity. There is a significant body of research concerned with the leadership skills and abilities of LGBT students on college campuses in professional associations, academic clubs, and athletic teams (Griffin, 1992; Herek, 1986; Leider, 2000, 1994; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). These research studies addressed the leadership style preferences of LGBT college students, which are often open to unique challenges and demands in the academic community. The students in most of these studies were out to their family, friends, and classmates. The workplace experiences of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in their quest to be leaders in higher education may be similar and

may encompass many of the same challenges and demands of LBTQ students on college campuses.

Renn and Bilodeau (2005) explored the relationship between students' involvements in the leadership of LGBT student organizations and the outcomes that were associated with leadership development and LGBT identity. The research question posed was "What, if any, is the relationship between involvement in leadership of an LGBT student organization and student outcomes related to leadership development and LGBT identity?" (p. 343). The researchers believed there were common themes in the literature that were associated with leadership skills, which were not unique to student leadership experiences in identity-based groups. Nonetheless, these skills were acquired differently for women, people of color, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgendered students because they were acquired in a different context.

The theoretical framework used by Renn and Bilodeau (2005) was the leadership identity development (LID) model. This model assumes that there are six stages of leadership development through which an "individual moves to an increasingly complex, deeper understanding of leadership, community, and self in relation to others" (p. 347). Based on the exploratory nature of the research questions, the researchers selected a grounded-theory approach. They selected a purposive sample of 15 LGBT-identified student leaders and activists from three institutions in the Midwest. They used open-ended interviews and applied the LID model to the data. The findings confirmed that involvement in leadership and activism promoted the development of leadership identity that was specific to LGBT identity. The significance of this study was that it found LID model to be a powerful tool with which to analyze and understand identity-based leadership experiences. It also pointed out that there is a need to learn much about identity-based leadership in general and, in particular, LGBT student leadership.

The literature related to LGBT administrators in organizations encompasses leadership, heterosexism, sexual identity, coming out, and overcoming the challenges of a being a minority, and sometimes being a marginalized group in society. Unfortunately, the research of Gay and Lesbian leaders in higher education is sparse. The four studies that were reviewed either involved both Gays and Lesbians or addressed just one group.

Andreas (2005) studied the interrelationship between Lesbian leaders and community-college experiences, values, priorities, practices and identity. This qualitative phenomenological study involved five Lesbian administrators from Washington State Community College. The findings suggested that Lesbian college administrators possessed many of the same values, priorities, and practices that were identified to be necessary for the new generation of community college leaders. The significance of the findings of this research study was that the reason the Lesbians possessed many of these qualities was that they belonged to a minority group. A limitation of this study was that only community-college administrators were studied who may have worked in a unique culture and environment from other types of colleges in the United States. Therefore, the findings cannot be transferable to other higher-education institutions.

Another study by Kenny (2008), which also took place at a community college, studied Lesbian leaders. The purpose of this study was to explore, through their own stories and journeys, the way Lesbian leaders influence and transform the dominant community college culture. In this study, five Lesbian leaders were interviewed, but each held a different position at different levels within a community college: Director, Associate Dean, Dean, Executive Vice President, and President/Executive Dean. This qualitative "micro ethnographical" inquiry posed two research questions: 1) In what ways do Lesbian leaders of community colleges influence the dominant heterosexual community college culture? 2) In what ways do Lesbian leaders of

community colleges transform the dominant heterosexual community college culture? The researcher found that the "five lesbian leaders influenced and transformed dominant, homonegative, and hegemonic community college cultures" (p. 195). In addition, this influence assisted other Lesbian leaders in the community college "to come out, stay out, and make a difference in their lives" (p. 185). The significance of this study was the fact that these Lesbian leaders decided to actively challenge and expose the exclusiveness of a dominant culture of heterosexism and come out in order to transform the experience for other individuals at the college such as students, staff, and faculty. The author concluded by stating that her dissertation would not have been possible without the ground-breaking research of Andreas (2005).

Atwood (2005) conducted a study of Lesbian and Gay leaders using a concept borrowed from the workplace known as the *glass ceiling,* which has been used as an analogy for women and minorities who hit an invisible, but hard-to-overcome ceiling in their quest to attain higher-level positions in an organization. The author applied the concept, but changed the name to the *pink ceiling* for Lesbians and Gays in the workplace. In fact, the author even used a survey instrument that was originally designed and administered by the US Merit Systems Protection Board entitled "A Question of Equity: Women and the Glass Ceiling in the Federal Government." But the author revised the term in order to study how Lesbian and Gay workers confront similar barriers as women do in the workplace (p. 49). The study used a concurrent mixed-methods approach in which quantitative and qualitative data were gathered using on-line surveys. The survey, which was administered to 111 respondents, reported data in seven separate sections: demographic and work experience data, career information, future plans, general observations, open response question, general relationship to data from the glass-ceiling

survey, and a summary of the first four sections. The findings revealed that Lesbians and Gays

experienced a similar type of glass ceiling to women in their career aspirations.

In the results that were reported, the significance of this study was that it identified

factors that affected the promotion of Lesbians and Gays. The first factor was sexual identity,

which was rated as having a "somewhat negative effect by 34.9%" and "very negative effect by

12.8% "of the respondents. The second factor identified a heterosexual as having a "very

positive effect by 11.8%" and "a somewhat positive effect by 30.9 %" for the same respondents

(p. 64). Therefore, this research suggested that Lesbian and Gay employees perceived that their

ability to advance in an organization was being impeded if they had a different sexual identity.

More importantly, the researcher concluded in the recommendations for further research that

"qualitative research within one or more organizations, consisting of in-depth interviews with

Gay and Lesbian employees, their coworkers, managers, and the executive leadership, could

yield more rich and varied data" (p. 103).

Last, Coon (2001) conducted a qualitative cross-sectional study that researched the

leadership characteristics that were common to Gays and Lesbians who were out and occupied

high profile positions. Using a sample of 21 Lesbians and 29 Gays, the author used opened-

ended questionnaires and a Leadership Practice Inventory that was designed and tested for

reliability and validity. This study was significant in that it found that the sample perceived

limitations that exist for Gay and Lesbian leaders who oftentimes had to overcome the challenges

of homophobia and heterosexism. In addition, the study found that Lesbians and Gays existed in

a world of heterosexism that prevented them from enjoying the same basic rights and freedoms

as others. Finally, it was also found that Lesbians and Gays were not like other marginalized or

minority groups in that they are "socialized" in their youth to be a member of a predominantly heterosexual society.

Coon (2001) concluded that Gays and Lesbians, who came out felt more empowered, and that coming out had significantly improved their leadership experiences. A limitation of this study was that it depended on the writing skills and abilities of its participants instead of face-to-face, in-depth interviews, which may have enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions or probe when necessary for a deeper understanding of the responses.

Although the last four studies of Lesbian and Gay leaders summarized here were closely aligned and related to the current research topic focused on Lesbian and Gay senior administrators' leadership, those studies did not specifically address the self-identity and perceived leadership effectiveness of college or university senior administrators, or the effect their coming-out had on their workplace experiences.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators regarding their self-identity and coming-out in the workplace, and their perceived effectiveness as leaders at higher-education institutions. Senior administrators in this study were second line, and reported to the President/ Chancellor or Provost of an institution; they were generally titled Provost, Vice President, or Dean.

The following research questions were posed for this study:

(a) What are the lived experiences of self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators as leaders at US higher-education institutions?

(b) How have Lesbian and Gay senior administrators made the choice in their present positions to come out at their workplaces?

(c) How do Lesbian and Gay senior administrators perceive their own leadership effectiveness?

(d) How have Lesbian and Gay senior administrators integrated their self-identity into their leadership, and how effective do they believe that has been?

Paradigm and Theoretical Perspective

According to Creswell (2007), philosophical assumptions influence researchers' views of the nature of reality as ontology and also affects how researchers know what they know through epistemology, describe the role of values through axiology, decipher the language of research as rhetoric, and unravel the process of the research design and methodology. The philosophical assumptions they adopt are acknowledged implicitly through the researchers' philosophical worldviews, the research design they have chosen, their strategies of inquiry, and the research method that they have used (Creswell, 2009).

Therefore, for this qualitative phenomenological study, a social-constructivist paradigm was used. Social constructivists believe that individuals develop subjective meanings from their experiences. Constructivists reject the view of positivists that there is an objective truth waiting to be discovered. Instead, truth and meaning is constructed out of the engagement of the researcher with the world. The constructionist stance also maintains that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

The constructivist philosophical paradigm was ideal for this study of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators. Constructivist researchers are concerned with the context of the place where the participants live or work, and the process of interactions that takes place between the participants and others (Creswell, 2007). This study addressed Lesbian and Gay senior administrators' lived experiences and explored their perceptions regarding their self-identity and coming-out in the workplace, and their perceived effectiveness as leaders at higher-education institutions.

Finally, constructivists stress the importance of having an understanding that should be from the point of view of the individuals whose lived experiences occur within a social reality. Although the lived experiences may have occurred outside the awareness of Gay and Lesbian senior administrators, it was brought to consciousness from their telling of the experiences of their daily lives in the workplace at higher-education institutions.

Axiology

In the axiology of the constructivist research paradigm, the basic ethical concerns of the participants who were being studied were defined by the Belmont report and other governing boards, but the study also stressed the importance of the researcher remaining in a neutral position as an "objective observer" and "getting the facts right" (Mertens, 2010, p. 16). This

study borrowed from the ethical concerns of feminists who advocate the utmost respect for human relations between the researcher and participants, and the upholding of social justice (Mertens, 2010).

Ontology

The ontology of the constructivist paradigm recognizes that there are multiple interpretations of reality. Therefore, it allows for the existence of "multiple mental constructions," and acceptance of these multiple interpretations of reality as being equally legitimate (Mertens, 2010, p. 16). There is no objective reality that can be known.

In this study, the researcher was aware that senior administrators had not found or discovered the knowledge of their workplace experiences, but instead had constructed or created them. When analyzing the data that was collected, however, the researcher allowed for the categories and themes to "emerge as they have been constructed by the participants" (Mertens, 2010, p. 16). The study adopted a feminist approach to defining the construction of self, and viewed the self as "relationally" and 'interactionally' composed, with "its construction being historically, culturally and contextually specific, and also subtly changing in different interactional circumstances" (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p. 195).

Epistemology

In the constructivist paradigm "the inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process" that centers on the meaning of knowledge as it is defined through a "more personal, interactive mode of collection" (Mertens, 2010, p. 19). Therefore, the data and its interpretation are grounded in contexts and persons that are separate from the researcher's.

In this study, a feminist epistemology was used to give voice to a group of participants who were Lesbian and Gay administrators who may have been historically denied that voice. In

other words, the model for the epistemology for this study that was used replaced the traditional control and domination of the positivist paradigm with one of connectivity and nurturing. This approach thereby enabled the formation of a relationship with the Lesbian and Gay senior administers in the study that could be viewed as a "constructed collaboration" (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004, p. 91).

Participant Selection

According to Creswell (2007), it is crucial to know whom to sample. In the case of this study, the choice was made based on the critical factor of the accessibility and convenience of the participants because not all Lesbian and Gay senior administrators are officially out or recognized. In this study, it was critical to find individuals who were "accessible, willing to provide information, and distinctive for their accomplishments," and who were able to shed light on a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, p. 119). The individuals who were interviewed for this study were self-identified Gays or Lesbians who occupied a senior administrative position at a college or university for at least 3 years; were from colleges and universities in the United States; and were not presidents and chancellors, but those reporting directly to them.

A snowball technique of purposive sampling was used to select the participants. A snowball technique is a nonprobability sampling in which the researcher begins by initially identifying a few individuals who meet the criteria of a participant for the study. These participants are then asked to identify other potential participants that they may know. The process is repeated until the researcher has collected sufficient data from a number of participants (Merriam, 2009).

Therefore, the first step in the sampling process was to identify, from the available population, one or more participants who met the criteria of being a self-identified Lesbian or

44

Gay senior administrator in higher education in the United States and had occupied that position for at least 3 years. Colleagues and professional acquaintances the researcher knew well were used to help identify the initial participants who fit the criteria of being a participant in the study; these potential participants were part of the researchers' personal network of colleagues, friends, or associates. An email was sent to these individuals that consisted of an Invitation to Participate in Study and a copy of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix A and Appendix C), which were approved by the Colorado State University's (CSU's) IRB. The email was sent only to a private email account from a secured and firewalled computer that was password protected and could be accessed only by the researcher; it was not part of a network.

Once the initial participants were identified, additional potential participants for this study were selected using a snowball technique. Therefore, in the second part of the sampling process, the researcher asked the initial participants who consented to take part in the study to assist in identifying other potential participants who would be willing to be interviewed. In addition, gatekeepers in higher education who knew individuals who would make good candidates were encouraged to send the email to other potentially interested or eligible persons, even if the gatekeeper could not participate.

To minimize the risk of violating any potential participants' privacy when using the snowball technique, a Snowball Recruitment Letter (see Appendix D) was sent by the initial participants' or gatekeepers' and not by the researcher instead of the individuals being identified to the researcher. Interested potential participants contacted the researcher by email or phone. In this way, the researcher did not contact the referred individuals and had no information about them without their knowledge or permission.

Additionally, maximum variation was used as a sampling strategy. Maximum variation sampling is a "strategy for purposeful sampling" that compensates for small samples by "capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation" (Patton, 2001, p. 172). Therefore, in this study, as the participants were identified, other participants were chosen based on the variation they would provide to the study. The variation in this study included participants from institutions or states that did not have Lesbian and Gay benefits or the option for them to marry, to ensure that different types of work environments were included in the study. In addition, participants were included who worked in public and private colleges and universities in both urban and rural areas of the United States.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended a sampling size that achieves a point of saturation or redundancy. This is the point at which there is no new information that can be gained from additional participants selected through the purposeful sampling or a snowball technique. In their more recent study, for example, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found the point of saturation for the themes in their study of women in two West African countries. In this study, they systematically documented "the degree of data saturation and variability over the course of thematic analysis" (p. 1). The researchers discovered that theme saturation had been achieved after the first 12 of their 60 in-depth interviews. In fact, after only six interviews, the basic elements for their meta-themes were present.

In the present study, the interviews were performed until there was sufficient depth of information and redundancy of data to fulfill the purposes of the study, and to answer the research questions. As the study progressed and evolved, the researcher continued to interview

participants until the point of redundancy in emerging themes was reached, and no new information emerged, and nothing new could be added by performing additional interviews.

Therefore, from a population of self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators at colleges and universities in the United States that were available, a sample of eight participants was interviewed for this study. The interviews were performed with an emphasis on the researcher listening and following the directions of the participants. The researcher came prepared and remained open-minded during the interviews, shared concerns, and was aware of asking leading questions.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach within a constructivist paradigm. Phenomenology was first introduced by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), a German mathematician who felt that scientific research and the use of positivism was an inadequate explanation of the world around him (Husserl, 1931, 1970). Husserl preferred the word *act* to define the experiences that have meaning because the meaning of a phenomenon is in the act of experiencing it, and not in the object itself (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl believed that anything that was "outside immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way, the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 4).

Moustakas (1994), who was heavily influenced by Husserl (1931), stated that from his perspective some of the common elements of phenomenological research were that it withholds judgment, maintains an open view of the world, attempts to describe things as they actually are, and meanings are interpreted through the use of self-reflection. Therefore, the researcher is encouraged to reflect first inwardly on his perceived meaning of the experience, and then outwardly to shift that reflection to the ones being interviewed.

47

Knowledge and understanding are believed to be integrated and take place in a world that can be explained through the lived experiences of individuals (Bryne, 2001). This means that everything should be regarded from the "perspective of consciousness," and that one is "to look at all objects from the perceptive of how they are experienced, regardless of whether or not they 'actually' are the way they are being experienced" (Giorgi, 2009, pp. 87–88). Therefore, this phenomenological approach to the study of the lived experiences of Gay and Lesbian senior administrators at higher-education institutions allowed their individual voices to be heard, and their experiences of coming-out in the workplace as leaders to be captured. Participants were encouraged to reflect on past experiences in relation to current ones.

According to van Manen (1990), the objective or purpose of phenomenology is to reduce lived experiences to the essence of the phenomenon, which means "to capture a certain phenomenon of life in a linguistic description that is holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive" (p. 39). Phenomenology as a methodology was best suited to the research questions of this study because it captured the first-person accounts of the unique experiences of self-identified Gay and Lesbian senior administrators presently at higher-education institutions in the context of their coming-out in their workplaces. This methodology was also used because it collected the lived experiences from the individuals who had experienced the phenomenon, and it reached out to the Lesbian and Gay leaders to engage their voices, which may have been sometimes excluded by a heteronormative environment (Mertens, 2007).

Data-Collection Methods

In this phenomenological study, in-depth interviews were used as a method of data collection for the Lesbian and Gay senior administrators to gather "data on the topic and

questions" for the study. The interviews were conducted to "involve an informal, interactive

process" utilizing "opened ended comments and questions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114). In-depth

interviews are a particular field of research in the data-gathering process designed to generate a

focus on specific research questions such as the ones that were formulated in this study.

The interviews were recorded and notes taken to facilitate the interview, and to ask

follow-up questions. The face-to-face interviews took place in a private setting that was chosen

by the participants, or was done electronically if that was not possible, using Skype conferencing

software, at a time that was both convenient and appropriate for the interview.

The face-to-face interviews were recorded using a Sony ICD-AX412 Digital Voice

Recorder. SKYPE version 6.110.102 conferencing software was used for this process. The

interviews were recorded using SKYPE Recorder 0.7.21.0 software on a HP Compaq 8200

Desktop computer. Before the interviews were performed, the consent form was sent to the

participants by email using a private email account from a secured home computer; the form had

to be signed and returned by participants (see Appendix A). When the form had been read,

signed, and returned electronically to the researcher, the interview was scheduled according to

the availability of each participant.

The Sony digital voice recorder that was used to record the interview was kept in a

locked drawer, which could only be accessed using a key that was retained by the researcher.

The HP Compaq 8200 Desktop computer and the files that were created on it, including any

notes or the reflective journal, were labeled using pseudonyms and kept on the computer, which

was firewalled and had a password that could be accessed only by the researcher. The data and

consent forms for the study are to be kept for 2 years, once the study is over and the research has

been documented to the satisfaction of the dissertation committee; after that time, these contents will be destroyed. Any written notes or correspondence will also be shredded.

Open-ended, guiding interview questions were used by the researcher to elicit the most information in the time that was allotted for the interviews, which in this case was to be from approximately fifty to ninety minutes (Law et al., 1998). Pertinent follow-up questions were asked of the participants during the interview to add to the richness, depth, and accuracy of the data that was collected.

The interviews were transcribed using a rigorous and thorough orthographic and verbatim account. Therefore, nonverbal expressions such as utterances were also transcribed (Gibson & Brown, 2009). A transcription service called REV, which had a verbatim option and which was highly recommended by colleagues and students, and was rated by several consumer organizations as safe and secure, was used. The files were submitted from the interviews in their digital form, from either the face-to-face or the SKYPE recordings, and were securely stored and transmitted using 128-bit SSL encryption, the highest level of security available. The company REV never shares files or personal information with anyone outside of the company. The files are only visible to the professionals who transcribed them and have signed a strict confidentially agreement. A copy of that confidentiality agreement was kept on file by the researcher. Requests can be made by the researcher to the company at any time to delete files that were submitted. In addition, the interviews were recorded with no identifiers, used pseudonyms, and were transcribed using the same pseudonym. As previously noted, they were kept in a safe, secure, and locked place to which only the researcher had access, and the transcribed interviews were never moved from that secured place.

Hatch (2002) stated that, in phenomenological research, interviews are the principal way to collect that data and the *researcher* is responsible for designing the instrument. Therefore, the guiding interview questions that were asked by the researcher were based on the research questions and the review of the literature that was done for this study. The guiding interview questions were formed predominantly from research studies about Lesbian and Gay self-identity formation, and the attitudes and beliefs concerning Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in their roles as leaders in higher-education institutions (see Appendix B). The guiding interview questions were designed by the researcher to capture the "wholeness" of the experience rather than just fragments or pieces of it, and to obtain the experiences of the participants from their first-person accounts (Moustakas, 1994).

The guiding interview questions that were used were open-ended and began with a question that was related to participants' present position and responsibilities (see Appendix B). This introductory question was used to break the ice and allowed the participants to open up to the interview process. It also set the stage for a "trusting" and open environment that the participants found comfortable for expressing themselves (Moustakas, 1994). The rest of the guiding questions were designed to encourage participants to provide information about their lived experiences as leaders in their present positions, to encourage them to provide detailed information about their experiences concerning the phenomenon of coming-out in the workplace, and to explore their beliefs about being a Gay or Lesbian leader in higher education, and the impact of that role on their leadership effectiveness.

The guiding interview questions did not vary over time, and the only words that were changed were used to address the individual participants (i.e., Lesbian or Gay), and this standard was verified by an analysis of the transcripts from the interviews that were performed (Mertens,

51

2010). The researcher kept in mind the importance of maintaining the consistency of the questions so that the same information was collected from each participant.

In addition, Wolcott (1995) recommended that, at the end of an interview, questions be asked such as "Do you have any suggestions about the interview?" (p. 115), and "Are there topics we should had explored that I haven't asked about?" (p. 116). This approach was used to achieve two objectives: It encouraged a feeling of mutual respect and willingness to collaborate with the participant, and it also enabled the researcher to discover more about the interview that was captured. Oftentimes, participants elaborated on previous questions that were asked in the interview. This protocol also ensured that each interview captured the unique lived experiences and the phenomenon of the participant as a Lesbian or Gay senior administrator in the workplace environment.

Finally, the transcribed transcripts were analyzed immediately upon getting them back from the REV transcribing service, and again, to make any changes the participants requested after completing their member checking. The changes were made after the transcribed interviews were sent to the respective participants for them to read; if necessary, any material was altered on the transcript that they deemed to be inaccurate or that may have compromised their anonymity. The transcripts were also read by the participants for completeness and transparency. This process allowed for early data analyses and assisted the researcher in doing subsequent interviews effectively. In fact, the reading of the transcripts enabled the researcher to judge the effectiveness of the interviews, identify common themes or threads compared to other interviews, and acquire new information. Reading the transcripts immediately after the interviews were transcribed also gave the researcher an opportunity to discover whether any gaps existed in the data collection before the data analysis was performed (Hatch, 2002).

Data Analysis

The process of *phenomenological reduction* was used to analyze the data that was collected from the in-depth interviews in this study (Cohen, 2001). In this process, the researcher engaged in a *reflexive analysis* (Finlay, 2003, 2005), or the process of "moving back and forth in a kind of dialectic between experience and awareness; between studying the parts and the whole" (Finlay, 2008, p. 6). The objective of this reflexive analysis was to come as close as possible to understanding the experiences being lived by the participants. In addition, the researcher identified themes or trends emerging from the data as they related to the experiences of the participants; these themes were the basis for phenomenological descriptions (van Manen, 1990). Finally, the researcher determined the common themes that emerged from the experiences of the participants in the study, and created a "composite description" that represented "the essence of the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007).

Before the data was analyzed, the researcher was sure to remain cognizant of any past knowledge and experiences as a leader and in performing duties at an institute of higher education. Therefore, bracketing, sometimes referred to as *epoche* (suspension)*,* was adopted before the analysis of the data from the interviews was performed (Sandberg, 1995). The objective of the bracketing was to ensure that "the researcher did not let" his "past knowledge be engaged" while interpreting the "mode or content" of the present lived experiences of the participants (Giorgi, 2009, p. 96). According to Ihde (1971), in order for a researcher to follow phenomenological *epoche* required "that looking precede judgment and that judgment of what is 'real' or 'most real' should be 'suspended' until all of the evidence is in" (p. 36). In this case, that meant until all of the interviews were performed.

Therefore, after identifying a phenomenon, the researcher of this study of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators bracketed his past knowledge or experiences in the workplace from those of the participants (Giorgi, 2009). The reflexive question was asked by the researcher to determine what was bracketed: "Did my past experiences in higher education or the workplace have potential to either reduce or magnify the significance of this phenomenon to the 'essence of meaning being constructed' (Myerhoff & Ruby, 1992)?". Likewise, it was essential for the researcher to keep in mind that bracketing is "positioned between the researcher and the research project," and it involved "personal and professional selves," and the "integration and awareness of each aspect in regard to the research process" (Tufford & Newman 2012, p. 87).

After the adoption of bracketing, the transcripts of the interviews of the lived experiences of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in their present position at higher-education institutions were subjected to a process of phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological reduction is a deliberate attempt of the researcher to remain open to a phenomenon being studied (Groenewald, 2004). This approach to the data analysis was best suited to the research question of this study, "What are the lived experiences of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators as leaders at higher-education institutions?" The first-person accounts of the participants' lived experiences provided the data that was used to analyze and explore this research question.

Step one of the analysis was to have a total immersion in the data, which was achieved by reading and rereading the transcripts several times (Cohen, 2001). The researcher also listened repeatedly to the digital audio recordings of the interviews. This enabled him to engage in an "active and sustained reflection," and to "dwell with the data and interrogate it" (Finlay, 2008, p. 5). In this first step, in order to understand the phenomenon that the participants have experienced, "significant statements, sentences, or quotes" were highlighted, defined, and

isolated (Creswell, 2007, p. 25). In this process, the researcher identified specific statements from the transcripts that gave insights about the lived experiences of the participants, and he listed the expressions relevant to those experiences. The significant statements were extracted from the verbatim transcripts and put into a table and viewed collectively without being in any sequence or order; doing this was for the purpose of identifying the perspective of the participants who had lived the experiences of coming-out in the workplace as senior administrative leaders in higher education as self-identified Lesbians or Gays (Moustakas, 1994).

In step two of the analysis, a method known as *horizontalization* was used to analyze the highlighted significant statements, sentences, or quotes from step one. The researcher used horizontalization. or analysis " in a state of openness and freedom, [which] facilitates clear seeing, makes possible identity, and encourages the looking again and again that leads to deeper layers of meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96). This second step enabled the researcher to identify themes that were treated as equally important, and to uncover the layers of meaning that were derived from the lived experiences of the senior administrators. In this step, the researcher studied the identified significant statements, and identified clusters in the statements that were then used to create themes or meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). When evaluating the significant statements, it was determined whether the expression contained a moment of the experience that was necessary to an understanding the phenomenon. Excerpts from literature review were used to shed light and meaning on the terminology that was used by the participants in the study.

Step three was to analyze the themes from step two to create a list of the recurring, central, and dominant expressions, and to identify the themes that captured elements of the fundamental meaning of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The words or phrases from the interviews of the Lesbian and Gay senior administrators' lived experiences were highlighted and

defined according to where the themes or trends appeared in the transcripts and that were identified in step two. This analysis of the actual words from the participants' lived experiences was used to establish the themes, or trends. In this step, the researcher used the themes, or meaning units, to provide a description of what was experienced, and how it was experienced by the participants from the different points of view of their Lesbian and Gay identities, and their positions as senior administrators in higher education (Moustakas, 1994). This process is called *imaginative variation*, and it was used to form the underlying textual structure of the phenomenon.

Step four was used to determine the common themes that emerged from the participants in the study, and whether the themes formed groups or clusters of meanings. The common themes that emerged were used to create an exhaustive description of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon. This type of description is often referred to as a *situated structural description* (SSD) (Polkinghorne, 1989). SSDs were created for each participant, and then a comparison was made of the participants in order to identify shared themes.

In this fifth step, the researcher knit together the shared thematic horizons of the participants that had emerged in order to create a composite textual description that was representative of the integration of the participants' lived experiences (Conklin, 2007; Moustakas, 1990). Therefore, in this fifth step, based on the textural and structural descriptions that were created, a "composite description" that represented "the essence of the phenomenon" and "focuses on the common experiences of the participants" was created (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). This fifth step of the data analysis allowed for full, rich, and thick descriptions of the findings, which were necessary in a phenomenological study (Tuckett, 2005). This process is also referred to by Moustakas as "intuitive integration" (1994, p. 100).

The process of the phenomenological reduction was performed until saturation occurred. Saturation was determined by the level at which the data analysis no longer provided any new themes or cluster of meanings that contributed to the composite textual description of the essence of the meaning of the phenomenon of the participants (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Trustworthiness

The examination of trustworthiness is crucial to ensure credibility in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One vital factor in qualitative research is the rigor, trustworthiness, and authenticity of the data collection. Another is the inclusion of the participants in a "balanced way" in the research process, and keeping them aware of their respective constructions of reality, and of acting on their own behalf (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that member checking is the most integral, and important part of establishing credibility because it provides an opportunity for participants to evaluate what they intended to say, correct any errors or wrong interpretations, and possibly volunteer any additional information. More importantly, member checking provided an opportunity for the participants in this study to evaluate the soundness of the data and confirm the data record that was transcribed.

Member checking was part of a strategy so that the participants were able to self-correct during the research process (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). In this study, it allowed the participants to provide assurance, using feedback, that there was not any misinterpretation of their statements or experiences.

In qualitative research, another way of achieving credibility is by keeping a reflective journal. The researcher had shared some common experiences of the participants and could easily have projected his own feelings about those experiences onto the participants of the study.

For example, the researcher has worked in higher education, in both administrative and faculty positions, and conceivably could have shared some of the lived experiences of the participants who were also employed in higher education. Therefore, to remain aware of the influence of prior experiences or knowledge, the researcher kept a reflective journal and incorporated the practices of reviewing parts or all of the data and its interpretations, in order to identify personal feelings and their potential effects on data collection and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A reflective journal provided a way to record the researcher's affective experiences during the study, and also provided a place to reflect what was occurring during the research process and to record how the researcher felt about the experience (Hatch, 2002).

Drawing upon a reflective journal also provided an "inside view of the research process," enabling the researcher to make "connections between theory and practice" (Watt, 2007, p. 82). Evaluating the journal also permitted the researcher to consider the study in light of the knowledge that he had gained from taking leadership courses. This assisted the researcher in discovering the meanings of those experiences as they pertained to the Lesbian and Gay senior administrators who were interviewed. Finally, rereading and reanalyzing the journal before and after each of the interviews assisted the researcher in recognizing the meanings that may have been attached to past experiences as a Gay leader in higher education.

The researcher followed Lincoln & Guba's (1985) "Procedures for Auditing Naturalistic Inquiring." The researcher identified the processes that were in most need of an audit trail and then established a record of the audit processes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher tracked and documented the following audit trail processes—the administrative stages of the proposal and dissertation, and the collection of raw data, which included recordings, transcripts, and written notes (see Appendix E). The trail that was documented consisted of the stages of the data

58

analysis, including how the raw data was reduced and analyzed; the process of evaluating emerging codes and themes that were used as the foundation for future patterns and categories; the documentation of the findings; and the formation of the conclusions and recommendations (Akkerman, Admiraal, Brekelmans, & Oost, 2008).

Furthermore, it was difficult to gauge the influence that member checking, a reflective journal, and establishing an audit trail had on the analysis and findings that had emerged from the participants' lived experiences as Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in their current positions at higher-education institutions. Therefore, in addition to these methods, self-dialogue, reflection, reading of phenomenological resource methods, and a heightened sense of self-awareness were used by the researcher to evaluate his place and feelings, and maintain his awareness of them throughout the study.

Ethical Considerations

In the research process, ethical considerations should be a forethought and not an afterthought (Mertens, 2010). Some participants who were interviewed had experienced some of the discrimination that has been well-documented in several studies since the mid-1980s (Rankin, 2003). According to Rankin (2003), this experience, in effect, may have also "isolated them socially or emotionally" (p. 27). As a result, some were more guarded and cautious than others. Therefore, my first ethical concern was the confidentiality of the interviews and my utmost regard for the personal nature of their lived experiences (Jones, Torres, & Armino, 2006).

Confidentiality. The steps for confidentiality and the security of the participants have been clearly outlined in the participant selection and interview process portions of this content. To further confidentiality for this study, the participants were requested before the interview began to refrain from using dates and places, and names of persons, especially last names. The

data transcripts were read several times to ensure that there with no identifiers such as names, dates, times, or places before the transcripts were sent to each participant for member checking. Finally, the methods and procedures for the interviews were outlined by the researcher in the informed-consent document that was signed by each participant before the interview was performed (see Appendix A).

Use of interviews. A second ethical concern was the technique of using interviews to evoke the thoughts and feelings of Lesbian and Gay leaders. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) defined these instances in the interview process as "ethically important moments in doing research—the difficult, often subtle, and usually unpredictable situations that arise in the practice of doing research" (p. 262). One strategy that was used was to have a set of procedures to address and respond "to these ethical concerns if and when they arise in the research" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 276). The procedure that was strictly followed in this study was that if the researcher determined at any point in the interview process the participant did not seem to be emotionally prepared to continue being interviewed, the interview would be paused and any recording devices stopped. If the participant stated that she could not continue the interview, the interview would have been stopped. All recordings would have been deleted, and any notes taken, shredded. The situation did not arise in this study.

Accuracy and reliability. A third ethical concern was to be sure that an accurate and reliable account of the participants' lived experiences as Lesbian and Gay leaders was being captured. According to Merriam (2009), capturing an accurate account was essential because "We retell the respondent's accounts through our analytic 'redescriptions'" (p. 34). Therefore, besides the researcher providing the participants with copies of the transcripts for their review and approval using member checking, and ensuring the confidentiality of their information, the

60

design of the interview questions was an essential ingredient to gathering their lived experiences. Each question was analyzed so that it was "culturally appropriate and sensitive to the participant's self esteem" (see Appendix B). It was also essential to interpret the responses to those questions accurately based on solid evidence, to prevent the creation of any harm to a "marginalized group" that was being studied (Jones et al., 2006, p. 164). As a precaution, sometimes the researcher restated the participant's answer, and asked the participant if that was an accurate summary of his response, to be sure that the response that was being recorded was clearly understood.

Insider and outsider perspective. Many researchers have postulated that Lesbian and Gay communities have expressed a justified and overwhelming concern that there may have been a lack of critical reflection about gender and sexual identity when research studies are performed (Mertens, 2010). Therefore, it was essential for the researcher, as an insider, to have had a critical reflection of his gender and sexual identity, and to be aware of its effects of both those identities on the participants in this research study. In this case, the reflective journal and self-reflection assisted the researcher in attaining that goal.

Furthermore, because an interview process was used to collect the lived experiences of the senior administrators, there were times that Lesbian and Gay participants questioned the researcher's experiences or reflections. It was impossible for him to claim that his place was that of an insider if the expression of feelings about himself lacked insight and had not been well analyzed. Reflexivity is essential in qualitative research in order to have an "understanding of both the phenomenon under study and the research process itself" (Watt, 2007, p. 82). A lack of reflexivity and self-awareness could have cast doubt on the researcher and his questions.

Therefore, his own experiences and the meaning of those experiences were also accounted for using self-dialogue, and keeping and reading a reflective journal.

Finally, the researcher answered questions within reason that the participants posed that were relevant to the interview process. At the same time, the researcher's opinions about the participants' responses were never expressed during an interview.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The first part of this chapter offers the reader an overview of the participants, followed by a brief synopsis of the responsibilities of each at their present positions, and some background of their career experiences, which each shared. This content is in no specific order and is designed to give the reader some understanding of the work experiences of each senior administrator. The second part of the chapter includes the main themes restated as subheadings, and, under each, the subthemes that emerged from the participants' descriptions. Verbatim extracts from the participants' interviews support the main themes and subthemes. The data analysis revealed common themes that emerged and reflected the participants' lived experiences as Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in higher education. The four main themes are memorable leadership experiences, coming-out in the workplace, Lesbian and Gay identity and leadership effectiveness, and multiple self-identities of Lesbian and Gay leaders in the workplace. The analysis of the findings addressed and answered comprehensively the research questions posed for the study.

Finally, the use of maximum-variation sampling provided participants with different descriptions of their memorable experiences, leadership effectiveness, coming-out in the workplace, and self-identity. Ultimately, this methodology provided the most information-rich data for studying the findings in depth. As a result, the researcher was able to learn a "great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77).

Overview of Participants

Eight participants were interviewed in this study. Maximum-variation sampling was chosen as a strategy to ensure that the sample included individuals from different work environments and locations in the United States. In this case, the participants were four women

who identified as Lesbians, and four men who identified as Gay. One participant stated he was a Latino man, one woman stated she was Black, and one woman stated she was "half black, and half white," or Biracial. The other five participants stated that they were White. Five of the participants were in colleges or universities on the East Coast of the United States; the other three participants were on the West coast and in the Southwest and Northwest regions. Two participants worked at community colleges. Seven participants were partnered or married, and one was single. The ages of the participants ranged from late 30s to late 50s. Finally, three of the participants were located at colleges or universities in rural areas, and the rest were located in urban institutions.

The names provided for the findings are pseudonyms, which the researcher made a conscious decision to use, to give the reader a sense of the importance of the human element of the analysis and the experiences participants shared. If the presented findings might compromise anonymity, which occurred in rare instances, the word *participant* was substituted for the pseudonym. Expressions such as *my boss,* or *partner,* or *coworker* were substituted for the actual names of individuals who may have been mentioned in the interviews. The names for the institutions or locations participants used in the interviews were substituted with generic terms such *college* or *university,* or the city, state, and locality.

Cindy

Cindy was an Assistant Vice-President of Academic Affairs and reported to the Provost. She worked closely with an extensive group of campus colleagues on different levels and guided strategic planning and policy development, promoted campus-wide academic initiatives, and was involved with budgetary and development initiatives. She had been at her present position for about two years, and before that had 5 years of experience as a senior administrator.

Jill

Jill was a Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and reported directly to the president of the university. Her responsibilities included faculty affairs, broadly construed promotions, tenure processing, faculty hiring, and academic affairs such as program reviews, college reviews, and strategic planning. She has been in her present position for 6 years. She had begun her career as a faculty member and been in higher education for more than twenty-five years.

Clark

Clark was Vice President for Student Affairs and reported directly to the president of the college. He was responsible for the nonacademic student services on campus who report to his office; these services included health/wellness, counseling, services for students with disabilities, student life, student development, housing/residential life, dining services, and the bookstore. He had been in his present position for 2 years and had worked as a senior administrator for 10 years. He had begun his career as a residence-hall director at a college.

Olivier

He was an Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and reported to the president. He was responsible for the office of admissions, academic advising, registrar, financial aid, first-year experience, and testing. He had been a senior administrator for 5 years and was currently seeking new employment.

Jennifer

Jennifer was Deputy to the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs and reported to the Vice Chancellor. Her primary responsibilities were policy development, professional development, training of staff, and creating public and private partnerships to advance the college's mission of

supporting student success on its campuses. She had been in senior administration for about eight years. She originally began her higher-education career as a residence-hall director.

Michael

Michael was Vice Provost for Student Affairs and reported directly to the provost of the university. Approximately twenty-five departments reported to him in his role as the senior student-affairs officer; these departments included human resources, budget, special projects, facilities, and six associate vice presidents. He had been in the position for 10 years. Previously he was a senior administrator for 16 years at another university.

Patricia

Patricia was Vice President for Academic Affairs and reported directly to the president of the college. Her responsibilities included the oversight of the academic-affairs division, including all the deans, faculty, and academic administration, and the priorities for the college, which included the college's strategic plan. She had been a senior administrator for 8 years, and had occupied her current position for about two years. She began her career as a faculty member.

Charles

Charles was the Dean of Students and reported to the president of the college. He was responsible for the out-of-classroom experience, which included the departments of Recreation Services, Student Leadership, Student Involvement, Orientation, Residence Life, Alcohol and Other Drug Services, Student Conduct. He worked closely with the Dean for Advising and Co-Curricular Programs. He had occupied different senior administrative roles in the past 10 years, and the current one for about three years.

Theme 1: Memorable Leadership Experiences

The theme of memorable leadership experiences emerged from the experiences of out

Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in this study. Participants sometimes expressed this

theme as a metaphor of "coming full-circle" and realizing that a career aspiration, project, or

strategy had been brought from its inception to its successful completion with the cooperation of

their teams under their leadership while they were visibly out in their careers. They expressed

their satisfaction for that leadership experience in different ways. Jill described the experience as

memorable because it reflected her expertise and effectiveness as a leader, and her ability to

navigate the process.

> Getting to the other side and watching my provost manage a contentious process and sort
> of how to strike a balance between allowing the process to be pushed and moved in
> useful ways, to be extended for more kinds of important subjects, without just knocking it
> completely off the rails, which is easy to do in academic context. (Jill)

Making a notable impression on the organization with their leadership skills and ability to

get everyone involved was an important factor in participants' experiences being memorable.

Olivier expressed that his most memorable leadership experience involved the "whole college

community":

> One of the positive experiences that I've had when there was developing a strategic
> enrollment management plan and, you know, getting the whole college community
> involved in the planning and the putting together of the strategic enrollment management
> plan. (Olivier)

Jennifer thought her most memorable experience was getting the image of student affairs

division at her college changed:

> …the process of basically realigning the priorities of our division, and doing so because
> we were trying to elevate the role of student affairs, and increase the respect and the work
> that people saw us doing. And so that meant that we had to shift how the organization
> worked. And in the past, the organization had kind of been, for lack of a better word, a
> dumping ground. (Jennifer)

Finally, the older and more experienced Lesbian and Gay senior administrators focused on the importance of their career aspirations and the long road they had traveled to arrive at the end of it. Michael, who was now Dean of Students, reflected on his career and did so with nostalgic emotion about his experience with a longtime good friend of his and a class project when they were both young undergraduates.

> My best friend there, and one of my best friends in college—she's now the associate VP at a university. She reminded me of our very first task together, my first semester as an undergraduate. We were sitting next to each other and the professor asked us, this is very like probably the first week, first class, "Project yourself 25 years from now; what would be your dream job?" And I remember hers and she remembered my dream, and when she reminded me, I said, "Oh yeah, I remember that"; but my dream was, and this is back in the fall of 1979, to be the Dean of Students. (Michael)

Accomplishments

The findings revealed that most of the participants remembered and were proud of accomplishments that they were responsible for achieving as out Lesbian and Gay leaders. Most often, the accomplishments they experienced concerned strides in developing new programs or personnel, and moving their institutions and themselves ahead in the right direction. Cindy expressed pride over the progress and success of a new program:

> I am now running a very large project, which is a partnership with an external company to do our online RN-to-BSN program for the first time in an accelerated format. (Cindy)

Michael said he was instrumental, since he began in his new position, in recovering from the recent financial crash of 2007, which had imposed the need for budget cuts and layoffs.

> I think we've, we really turned the corner, and we've gotten a lot more going further ahead now than we were even before the budget cuts so we've really been able to enhance our staffing capacity here significantly, which is great. We're now at, when I started in this role we had about 200 staff, and now we have about 260. Some of that was reorganization. We didn't … they're not all brand new, but there was some areas of the campus that got moved over to Student Affairs, but also a significant number of those are brand new programs and offices that we've developed over the last 5 or 6 years. (Michael)

68

Patricia viewed her accomplishment as an opportunity to do something for her institution that she was passionate about:

> My passions is professional development, so it's always fun to be able to develop a new team and, and what leader doesn't love the opportunity, painful as the transition is, to be able to hire a team of your own. That's been a pleasure over this past year. (Patricia)

Charles felt his accomplishments as a Lesbian and Gay leader were not only something he had an investment in, but also something that could possibly help to change the institutional environment for other LGBT employees. In this case, they also affected his partner. Charles had found out that the categories designated on the employee-benefit forms were not "representative" of his "family" in a state that did not recognize Gay marriage. He decided to address the issue with the VP of Human Resources.

> When I got the forms that all new employees receive, I had either the option of choosing … Employee Only, and the next category was Husband and Wife … I didn't have a wife, but I wasn't also just an Employee Only. And I was really frustrated by that because, there was obviously this policy on the books that the domestic partners were welcome and able to be included and there was all of this rhetoric around inclusivity, and there wasn't a box that fit me. I went to HR and talked about that and what that conveyed, and that really wasn't representative of my family. They agreed to change it, and change the form and uploaded new forms, and so now today, it says Employee Only, and the next one is Employee plus Spouse, and then Employee plus Spouse plus One Child, etc. (Charles)

Challenges

Most participants remembered some challenges in their role as Lesbian and Gay leaders. The findings revealed that the challenges included their being hired for newly created positions or departments, training new team members, and acting as change agents in their role as out Gays or Lesbians. Most participants who described their memorable challenges were still in the positions in which those had occurred, and they felt that the experience had made them stronger and better leaders. A challenge that one participant described as "jarring" was when she

realized, "There are very few minorities. When I was hired, I think there was one other Black working at the school … period."

Jennifer felt that when she was first hired the need for strong leadership was missing from her department, and she also had to become a change agent and an out Lesbian in her new position:

> Nobody was really doing a whole lot. There wasn't any strong leadership, and nobody had a strong background in student affairs … when I first came on board, I had to put into place accountability issues as simple as calling in when you're not going to come to work, to larger accountability issues, which were deliverables around our strategic plan, setting goals and benchmarks, and doing assessment processes, and things like that. (Jennifer)

Patricia remembered that she had encountered "a lot of change," which was a challenge for her as a leader:

> Well, we have gone through an incredible amount of transitions; and when I started I had to pretty much hire almost an entire new team. Fast forward to now, I'm kind of going through that process again because most of the people that I put in place for interim roles, so that there have been a lot of changes from a leadership perspective. (Patricia)

Charles's memories as a new hire were that the role demanded both his experience as an administrator and his skills as a leader to handle some of the challenges of a new position were similar to what many participants expressed were similar when they were first hired:

> So much, unstated things, lots of things that weren't even written down that have been sort of passed down over time that adds a new leader into that environment; it's hard to catch up. There was a steep learning curve, and you're certainly at a disadvantage in terms of advocating for resources for your people, even understanding the pathway to traverse to get things done. … and a memorable experience, of course … 6 weeks after I was hired, the person who hired me, left the institution, so I started a brand new job; and 6 weeks later I didn't have a boss; and then about another month after that, the President decided he would leave. (Charles)

Theme 2: Coming-out in the Workplace

The theme of coming-out in the workplace emerged from the experiences of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators at their institutions, and they sometimes used the metaphor of this

70

experience being a delicate "balancing act." For example, Charles felt that sometimes coming-out and maintaining that balance could be "disturbed," in his case by having to defend his rights as a Gay man: "Well, we don't allow that," and I said, "You don't have the choice. It's the law."

Participants sometimes referred to coming-out in the workplace as a recurring and seemingly unending process, describing it as "we come out over and over again" with different individuals, in different situations, and at different times. Patricia also felt that at times this was the case: "I started to feel constantly about the, you know, the coming-out over and over … because you need [to do] it in different things."

The findings revealed that coming-out in the workplace was different for everyone, and that the degrees of coming-out change as the result of environmental factors and circumstance. This often means that, in different situations and conditions, the same participant may be out to a different degree. Cindy commented warily about her experiences at a previous institution where she was cautious about coming-out to particular individuals, "It was a very punitive environment for that sort of thing, and [I] watched people lose their jobs and have to deal with that. I've been there … so I know the feeling." She continued, explaining how coming-out at her present institution was very different:

> I'm not hiding anything and, you know, if it doesn't come out, it doesn't come out, but it's not because I'm hiding it. And so I'm able to have easy discourse Ah, so, I just handled this very differently, because I wanted to be different. I did not want to be who I was at the old school, which was fearful of being found out and what the repercussions to my career would be after that. (Cindy)

Certain factors were related to the participants' coming-out in the workplace, such as their social interactions with others, their level of comfort in particular social environments, and the individuals who were present in those social environments, all of which affected the degree to which most of the participants came out. For example, Michael felt coming-out for him was not anything that he needed to do formally at his workplace: "It's quite obvious to me and, you

71

know, I don't go around parading and telling everyone, but they all know." While Olivier had a

quite different and frustrating experience in his previous workplace. "I don't have a wife, I have

a husband … it's like, how do we come out over and over? … definitely what I experienced

there." For Michael, this was not an issue that he ever gave much thought to since he had

graduated with his master's degree and began working as an administrator in higher education.

> Sometimes I have found myself, at times, walking that fine line because my staff knows, of course, a lot of students know … I'm living right on campus, while walking our dog. I mean, it's quite obvious to me, and I don't go around parading and telling everyone, but it's… they all know. And, 2006, was it eight or …? I've got some of them at the house, so students have met him. I mean, I'm very comfortable with that, but I guess I'm not going to be outspoken on Gay issues to the extent that some people think I should be. I think a lot of it, from me, because as society as a whole has embraced it and accepted it, as well. That is no longer something that you feel like you have to hide it, be ashamed, which I felt a lot of it sometimes, but it was not a good place to be. (Michael)

Although the experiences of the participants varied concerning their coming-out in the

workplace, some of them had similar experiences in that respect with certain types of individuals

in the workplace. Therefore, the role of the individual in the participants' experiences had an

effect on their coming-out in the workplace.

Role of Partner

Most study participants were partnered**,** and it became clear that several times during the

course of the interviews they had stressed the importance of the "role of their partner" in their

coming-out in the workplace. Some participants were not initially out, but after they had met

their partner, not only was their decision to come out affected, but also they sensed that attitudes

about Lesbian or Gays in their workplace had begun to change. As a case in point, Jill

remembered with fond nostalgia, "I fell in love with someone, a junior faculty member … the

acceptance of our colleagues was very generous … it felt like crossing a certain kind of

boundary." Evidently, shortly thereafter, her college was recruiting for a new Vice Provost, and

the school's goal was to be "elevated" in others' perception to diversity inclusion. Jill felt that

her coming-out because of her partner had changed the environment in which that recruitment took place.

> We were recruiting last year for a new Vice Provost for institutional-diversity inclusion, having decided to bring that office in to the Provost office and elevate it. And we ended up recruiting a woman of color who also is a Lesbian, and brought her partner with her; and so my partner and I were sort of able to be part of that recruiting. (Jill)

The majority of participants felt that the role of their partners, at the time of the recruitment for their present position at a college or university was an integral part of the coming-out process, and that their partners were crucial to their decision to accept the position. Cindy remembered clearly, "Even during the interview process, I asked questions about having my partner." Jennifer felt strongly about the role her partner played in her decision to come out: "I couldn't have imagined going to another job and not being out." She recounted the experience when she got her present position and the importance of her partner as she negotiated her benefits:

> I actually had a conversation with the vice-president about how I was going to be compensated in comparison to the person down the hall who was a straight woman, who just got married, and had known her partner for a year. I'd known my partner, at that point, for a decade. And she was going to get health insurance for her husband; How come I wasn't going to get my health insurance? And could we somehow have that reflected in my compensation? (Jennifer)

Charles felt that, although he was "fully out" in his career, the fact he had a partner was an integral part of coming-out and taking advantage of opportunities for advancement. In fact, he remembered his partner was so integral to his coming-out that "not only did they fly me here for the second interview with the President, but they flew my partner in as well." Charles expressed the importance of the role of his partner's inclusion in his coming-out in the workplace this way,

> I didn't want to compartmentalize my life or decide what I would and wouldn't talk about in the workplace. We already have to do that, I think, enough. Politically, there's always political work that needs to be done about who do you say to what, but I wasn't going to

73

hide an entire part of my life … my husband and I have been together for a long time. Not only would that be hard to hide, that's a huge part of your life, but I'm also interested in sharing that with my work, you know, and as appropriate. (Charles)

Participants also revealed that their experiences of not coming-out to particular individuals in the workplace because "some people may not be comfortable" were also affected by having a partner. Olivier thought that unless someone else mentioned his husband, or the fact he had one, it was never something he volunteered in a conversation at work. Olivier felt, "I'm also very mindful of not bringing up, you know, my husband or my … any mention about a relationship."

Furthermore, the one participant who stated that she was "single" stressed the importance of having a partner specifically as it related to her experiences as a Lesbian in the workplace. She felt strongly that others who were not partnered in the workplace made it difficult for them to relate to her life as a Lesbian there: "I wouldn't imagine that 'they' would have the same worldview of you as someone who is single or just recently in a relationship, or whatever." The participant felt that being single and integrating one's experiences as a Lesbian in the daily workplace conversations could be a challenge: "Can you integrate your experiences when you're just dating, or single? … that changes things a lot … how do you find those segue ways to bring things up?"

Therefore, the study revealed that the role of the participants' partners was an integral and essential part of coming-out at their workplaces, and that their being out as a couple on their campuses or at work-related events was important. Finally, some of the partnered participants also felt it might be a challenge if they were a single Lesbian or Gay senior administrator in the workplace. Charles remembered from his 27 years of experience as a married Gay professional and posed a rhetorical question:

I've always been a professional, who's married, and so I've never really thought about it, but I do believe that it actually is easier to come out because there's so many more ways, easier ways to introduce it. If I were single, how do you convey that you're Gay if you're single, in an interview? (Charles)

Role of Coworkers

Some participants expressed their coming-out process to and the role of their coworkers metaphorically as "breaking ground" at their institutions. Charles explained his coming-out process to coworkers as "We wanted to be hospitable; my partner and I as new community members invite people to our house … that actually was sort of breaking ground." Other participants described the process as having to "step back" and reemerge or "come out again" as new coworkers were hired or particular situations occurred in their lives. Michael reflected that, in the past, "there are a couple of incidents that I think for me, I felt myself retreating a little bit during … I mean it was part of the coming out process." He gave an example from his experiences of running into some students while he was having a drink at a local Gay bar: "I remember running into a group of students, at a bar in the city, and I knew them, and it kind of freaked me out at that point, I was like, you know, so I left."

Some participants felt that the process of coming-out to coworkers was a daily one because of their environment or the coworkers involved. Cindy felt that was her experience of having to explain to coworkers that she had a mother-in-law. She expressed some frustration when she was recalling the experience:

> I think every day for me is a coming out, which I don't think really straights will have (laughs) to worry about that much, but every day is a coming out because you're in a situation where, you know, my mother-in-law just was in hospice, her status this past week. She had a stroke. And so here I am explaining, 'My mother-in-law,' and they're like, 'Oh, I didn't know you were married.' I'm like, 'Yeah, my wife's,' you know, so I'm very straightforward about how I say things, and even in email, I send it out and make sure folks don't have to guess. (Cindy)

Participants often used the word *comfortable* when they were describing the evaluation process they used for coming-out to coworkers. When talking about coming-out to the coworkers that he interacted with on a daily basis, Olivier stated "I thought that it was extremely important for them to be as comfortable as they possibly can with somebody who is GLBT."

Most participants often described the balancing acts of coming-out and gauging the comfortableness of the environment as one that was difficult and complicated to maintain in the workplace. Clark felt that in his coming-out process to coworkers, "I think sometimes I have seen some nonverbal cues expressing discomfort." In response to that sense of discomfort, he stated emphatically, "I choose not to address those because those are the problems of the person." Other participants felt more "comfortable" if everyone involved was also discussing their personal lives. In fact, several participants felt strongly that they did not want be the "one" bringing up their personal lives with coworkers. Clark stated he had a protocol: "I don't bring up my husband, my cats, and my home life when it's not a normal part of the conversation."

Some participants used a formal meeting with coworkers to ensure the comfortableness of coworkers about their coming-out. Patricia remembered using a meeting to come out to coworkers and to ensure comfortableness:

> I had a meeting where I pulled my whole team, and then proceeded to share some of my love for them, so that they would feel comfortable, you know, and you get this is a part of me, and that I was open about it, and that I was hoping that they'd be comfortable with it, and they were. I'm talking about that we should see LGBT members who identify as such, out in the community. (Patricia)

> Jennifer remembered that she had a similar meeting to come out to her coworkers.

> Well, for example, I wanted to be intentional about telling my team, specifically, because then I would say something later about my girlfriend … there wouldn't be any sort of awkward pauses, or, you know, by "Just going to Pride," or when they ask about what I'm doing on the weekend, or what I'm involved in that I didn't really have to censor or change, because I was just forward about it from the beginning. (Jennifer)

Most participants expressed that having other Lesbians or Gay coworkers who were already out at the college or university, even if they were in different departments, made them feel comfortable about coming-out. Some participants who may have known of other Lesbians and Gays working at particular colleges and universities stated that was an important consideration when they applied for jobs. Jennifer remembered when she first arrived at her college and her experience interacting with other Lesbian coworkers:

> There were supervisors and higher level administrators that were also out; Lesbian or Bisexual women. And so, you know that absolutely was one of the reasons why I went there. In fact 2 co-chairs of the search committee were Lesbians that interviewed me. It was really … when I asked the question, "What is like to be a Lesbian here … working here?" They could give me multiple examples, not to mention the fact that where I was, in a western state, was known as a really safe and affirming place for … particularly for Lesbians. (Jennifer)

Role of Institutional President

There were certain factors in the workplace that contributed to the comfortableness of the participants' coming-out, and the findings revealed that the institutional president played an important role. Some of the key words or expressions that participants used to describe their institutional president's role in coming-out in the workplace *were accepting, fair in dealing with me, reaching out to me,* and the treatment of *other LGBT individuals reporting to the president.* Cindy had received a letter from the president and committee members who interviewed her for a position, and she described her experience succinctly: "I accepted the job because I felt like he was accepting of me."

Some participants reported to the institutional president, but even those who did not felt that their experiences with the president were an important factor in their coming-out in the workplace. Jennifer stated flatly, "…the president wrote an e-mail to me, asking if I would apply for the job." Charles expressed proudly that "the president asked me to carry" a time-honored

symbol of the university "for the convocation of students." Clark reflected on and expressed his past experiences with the president and his wife:

> When it comes to the president I'm kind of in a strange situation. My president who I've worked with for many years retired in December. He and his wife had both met my husband numerous times; in social and work situations. And there was no problem or concern there. We have an interim president now who is … I don't honestly know if he knows that I'm Gay or have a husband. It hasn't been a topic of conversation. (Charles)

Although the study found that not all participants had positive experiences with their intuitional presidents, but the interaction they did have had an effect on their coming-out experiences in the workplace. Michael, who did not report to the president, remembered, "I didn't usually see him that much, so of course I never told him because he would have a problem with it." Olivier, who reported to the president, remembered that his experiences of coming-out changed after the "president's assistant just called and invited me and my wife." Olivier recalled his experience with trepidation:

> I didn't realize he didn't know that I was guy in a same sex relationship …. I called back the administrative assistant and I told her, I said, "Well yeah, I'd be happy to join the president, but I just want him to know that I don't have a wife. I've got a husband and if he's okay with that." And kind of felt that was a turning point, and the president was never the same for me after that … I just, you know, felt that he wasn't as warm and welcoming as he was prior to that interaction. (Olivier).

Role of LGBT Students

Some participants stated they did not have much interaction with students. Four participants stated that students were a reason to be "out," "visible," and "active" in the LGBT community, and to be mentors or "role models." One of the reasons these participants gave was that they felt coming-out and "crossing boundaries" on the campus could assist some LGBT students. For example, Jill felt that the fact that as a Lesbian with her partner, "we are surely the most visible Gay couple at the university; known by a country mile … it did feel like crossing a kind of a boundary." Clark expressed that, from his experiences, students were important to his

78

coming-out and being visible as a Gay man in the workplace, and he gave an example of

assisting a particular student:

> Assisting the students who come in as really, mostly, not all, but mostly as immature high school seniors or community college transfers and seeing them and working with them as they progress to young adults, to responsible members of society … that's also … that's why I've been in this field of work for 28, 27 years … so towards the end of the year, what I did was to make sure that he knew that I was openly Gay man and he knew he could talk to me about anything … he did talk to me about relationship issues and about work issues school issues, and family issues. And he said, "Well, I think I'm Gay." I said, "Okay … what is it that you wanted to tell me about that?" (Clark)

Some participants felt that as senior administrators it was important for them to come out

to create a "welcoming" and "inviting" environment for LGBT students on campus. Charles felt

that making himself and his partner visible by inviting students for special occasions to their

home and being out on campus affected his relationships with students.

> I think that my relationships with students are impacted when I have partner and when I have students to our home …I think our students know that I'm Gay and that I'm married, because again, small residential colleges, it happens. It's a very tight community. I actually think it does impact that relationship, but positively I mean, that's what I would say, that students think I'm cool. I might actually raise sometimes whether this is a good policy for LGBT students … but my job is not to do that. (Charles)

Finally, Olivier, who was somewhat closeted at work, still felt it was important in his

position to be visible and be a role model to students.

> I remember meeting with the adviser for the GLBT sitting organization … I do remember the adviser coming to me afterwards and saying, "You know, that really meant a lot to the students that you actually took the time to come and speak with, and then welcome them." so I … felt that it was important to advocate for all students. I did not say that I was. And in hindsight, if I were to do it again, I probably now would 'cause I do think it is very important for GLBT students to see other GLBT members in these types of positions, and to see them as role models. (Olivier)

Role of Other Influential Individuals

The findings revealed that the other influential individuals for participants included

board, cabinet or trustee members, presidents, donors, and religious individuals. All of the

participants had experiences that included at least one influential individual, and sometimes two,

which warranted special treatment or an exception in regard to their coming-out in the workplace. They described these influential individuals as being someone in a particular setting who could make them feel "uncomfortable" about coming-out, or could "make or break your career," or metaphorically, someone who could "close doors." For instance, Clark described from his experience that he was aware of coming-out and the role of influential individuals: "There were other people listening who could be, you know, might have been offended by that conversation." Similarly, Olivier recalled a situation around his encounter with an influential individual:

> I wasn't in a comfortable situation. Like I remember also, meeting … speaking with one of the board of trustee members who also made some comment about "your wife," and thinking to myself that because these are people who can make or break you. I mean especially when you're at this level; you're at the mercy of the board of trustees and the administration … even something that of course I would have had to discuss with the cabinet that probably was another uncomfortable situation. This person happened to be a minister as well, so I had another layer of uneasiness in responding, but I'm responding truthfully as well. (Olivier)

> Charles remembered a similar incident with an influential individual at his college:

> I can remember sort of not divulging the fact that I was Gay, at a board meeting here in my first year, and I went to the board meeting and it was at a reception or a dinner. One of the board members came up and said, "Why is your wife not here tonight?" … that feeling kind of in the workplace that I can remember, where I sort of decided to not say anything. But usually, you know, someone said that in a different setting, like, oh, you know, "Do you have a wife?" I'd be like, "No, but I am married to a man." (Charles)

Some participants felt they had experienced the possibility of causing the influential individuals "discomfort." Patricia gave an example of not coming-out to an influential individual this way: "If I have a donor to the college who has very conservative values, am I going to talk about my girlfriend in that meeting? … probably not."

Finally, most participants made a conscious decision to remain closeted in the presence of influential individuals or a group of individuals who were being addressed in a particular

situation. Jennifer recalled her not coming-out when she was addressing a group of individuals in a particular situation, and she expressed the importance of fulfilling her purpose as a leader:

> I was helping high school students who were low income, first generation, predominantly Puerto Rican, Catholic or Pentecostal, to help get them prepared to go to college. If I were going to stand up there and announce that I was a Lesbian, in front of all those folks, it was not going to serve my mission of what I was trying to accomplish in my work. And it wasn't going to serve my larger purpose of … supporting these families and these children. The children that we began to know who were Gay and Lesbian, or struggling with their identity. I would come out to them and support them. (Jennifer)

Theme 3: Lesbian and Gay Identity and Leadership Effectiveness

Most of the participants in the study said they had never thought about the interaction of their Lesbian and Gay identity as it related to their leadership effectiveness. Most of them needed some time to reflect on how they had integrated their Lesbian or Gay identity into their leadership, but they eventually did make connections. In fact, several of them felt that their Lesbian and Gay identity was an integral part of their leadership effectiveness. Clark's reaction was similar to most of the others because he felt that his Gay identity was an integral part of his leadership effectiveness: "My initial response was going to be 'I don't think that it's had an effect, because it's been such an integral part of who I am' … I'm going actually, not say that."

But as noted, most participants expressed they had not given the issue much thought and were not "conscious" of the integration. Many participants felt they had integrated their Lesbian and Gay identities into their leadership as senior administrators. Cindy felt, "I never have to think about the integration … but I think I do a pretty darn good job." Olivier expressed that he had not given it much thought either: "I've never really tied in the Gayness to the effectiveness as a leader … but, you know, now that you're asking me…"

Michael initially stated,

> Actually I don't think I consciously insert it in a way of thinking myself and my Gay self and my work self … just I am who I am and I feel like I need to start seeing it now, [laughs], but I don't think of it consciously. (Michael)

81

After reflecting, though, he remembered that his identity as a Gay man had enabled him to connect with a broad array of individuals from different backgrounds and needs:

> I really thought a lot about being Gay and why and the kind of leader I am, but I think there is some connection there. I think the characteristics, the traits, and such and I think again my sensitivities. I mean to some degree I think play a big role in that and my ability I think to connect with a broad array of people. I didn't mean to imply early on when I said if I was a heterosexual White male I could do that because I know heterosexual white males who are very open. (Michael)

Many of the participants shared the same sentiments.

Acceptance of Others

Most participants described the effect of the participants' Lesbian or Gay identities on their leadership effectiveness as enabling them to be more "accepting of others" in the workplace. Jill noted that being a Lesbian and a leader in the workplace had prepared her to be more open and accepting that "not everybody's going to agree with you; it's just having some tolerance for being, for moving past those kinds of mistrust, or judgments."

The words many participants often used in terms of their acceptance of others were *attuned* or *aligned* with others, or able to be *nonjudgmental* or *unbiased* about others. Clark expressed that being a Gay man had prepared him to be more accepting and open to matters of fairness, and the importance of the rights of others: "I think I am more attuned to issues of harassment and bullying and assisting those in need."

Many participants used the terms *diversity* or *inclusion,* often in conjunction with the idea of being more accepting of others in the workplace. Olivier talked with pride about his ability to be accepting when dealing with others, and that he felt it had made him a better leader:

> I've always prided myself in not being judgmental on anybody's life or what they can do and be, accepting. I did have a lot of conversations with the team, talking about acceptance, and being very aware of the student populations that we're recruiting and that we're bringing into the institution and the type of support that's needed. I'm Gay and I'm much more aware of discrimination and things like that… so I figure it's made me a

82

better leader in that sense and also I totally believe that I am. It's made me be more accepting of others who are happy on different things as well. You know, if I expect people to accept me for whom I am, then I need to be able to accept other people for who they are as well, so I feel that as well has made me a better leader. (Olivier)

Some participants conveyed that their staff had perceived them differently as Lesbian and Gay leaders, which impacted their effectiveness. Michael felt strongly that being Gay, and having had a painful coming-out process, had made him more sensitive to approaching others:

> I think my leadership style; perhaps I intend to be … I think my staff sees me as extremely approachable, sensitive, and conscientious. I feel like I have a strong connection to marginalized staff; they feel comfortable with me. But I think that is a trait that has allowed me, because I went through a painful, compared to my some of my friends, particularly difficult coming-out process, that has I think informed me and made me kind of the way I am into my approach to other people. (Michael)

The study results also revealed that a connection existed for many participants between their experiences of being part of an underrepresented population and understanding diversity and inclusiveness. In this context, Patricia believed she was a more effective advocate of diversity:

> I think for me, it truly something that I'm invested in, seeing institutions grow in a more diverse way. I can very much speak with the heart of an underrepresented population, and so, while the conversation isn't always going to be about Lesbian or LGBT community, there are a lot of conversations about underrepresented individuals and to how do we serve that, and can speak from those experiences, that can be transferable to other experiences that we can imagine for other populations. … you're not going to find an executive who's not focused on diversity. (Patricia)

Charles expressed that he had been effective as a leader and a Gay man in advocating inclusiveness: "I think that I use my leadership role where appropriate to move the needle in terms of the inclusive practices and policies." Finally, Clark felt he was an effective leader because he was more open to accepting input from different sources:

> I think because of my experiences as a Gay man living out in this world … the fact that my leadership style is very … I guess the word I could say is very community-based. So I look for input from all areas. And I try to steer clear of, you know, kind of command and control leadership where it's "My way or the highway." That's not who I am as a person. (Clark)

Fostering Trust

Most of the participants stated in different ways that fostering trust was essential to being an effective leader, and that being "genuine," "open" or "honest" about their Lesbian and Gay identities was critical to fostering that trust. They often connected the word *trust* to being "authentic" or "genuine." Cindy posed some questions when expressing how she felt about trust and its importance to followers: "Who follows someone they can't trust? Who follows anyone they can't identify with?"

Many participants believed that openness and "authenticity" about being a Lesbian or Gay, and the trust that approach fostered, were important to their leadership effectiveness. They closely related being authentic and fostering trust. Charles expressed the importance of being authentic to being an effective leader:

> I think that there's parts and pieces of me that I share with people so that this isn't the only piece, the Gay identity isn't the only personal piece that I share, and so I think they've been affected because I'm real. I mean, you know we're whole people and know when we share our whole selves, and we think, seem more authentic, and authenticity is huge in this field. I think if people imagine that you have spin on your words or you're jockeying for something or you're only telling them half of the story to serve yourself or your interest, there's a loss of trust. I think authenticity is huge, and so as a result, hiding my Gay identity or not talking about the Gay identity would be the same as talking about it too much. It has to be sort of at the right level, neither over-shared nor under-shared. (Charles)

Olivier believed that being open and honest about his lifestyle was essential to being an effective leader:

> I feel that the decision for me to say I'm gonna be open and honest about my lifestyle is a leadership trait, to be able to say, "Yeah, I am what I am and there is nothing wrong with me and just out of respecting that it's the next person in regards to what their sexuality is." I do feel that a good leadership trait to be open and honest about it. I think that that's what it's gonna take to change the culture and change what society feels about the GLBT community. (Olivier)

Patricia expressed the sentiments of many other participants about being an effective leader, and the integral role of being a "genuine" person that individuals can trust:

84

I think that the idea of what I think makes a good leader is that genuineness about really getting to know who that person is. You know, even if the pieces that they share aren't always directly related to your performance, they still point to just a genuineness about understanding and building trust. And, you know, that trust is built through sharing of information, sharing of experiences, and so I think that's also very helpful. (Patricia)

Finally, Jennifer believed that her openness about her Lesbian identity and the "power of example" were essential for her to be an effective leader:

I also have a certain amount of power of example, because I'm exposing folks at senior leadership about … I'm demonstrating what a competent, powerful Lesbian leader can look like, and be like. And so how … how effective have I been? I think every day I come to work and people know that I am Lesbian helps recreate a new story about what it means to have women Lesbian leaders. (Jennifer)

Theme 4: Multiple Self-Identities of Lesbian and Gay Leaders in the Workplace

In this study, self-identity proved to be a complex and oftentimes complicated phenomenon that defied simple analyses or explanations. Frequently, participants described their multiple self-identities (sometimes referred to as subidentities) as Lesbian and Gay leaders in the workplace using different flags, either on a door of their offices, projected on a screen, or waving in front of their houses or apartments on campus. The flags represented to the participants' multiple self-identities, on display for all to see; they described the flags as being represented using "the college's or university's flag," the "US flag," or the Gay Pride flags. Patricia remembered a flag she put up on her office door: "And I also immediately put up one of those LGBT flags on my door, so as a safe zone type of space." Charles declared, "I can wave the Gay flag, but I can wave other flags too."

The research findings also revealed that, depending on the circumstances, many of the participants felt that their self-identities as Gays or Lesbians were not a priority. Cindy felt that "it's as important for them to know me as a leader even before they know me as a [laughs] Lesbian leader." Clark expressed the sentiment in a different way: "The fact that I am a Gay

man is one facet of an entire personality, an entire being that I am." Charles was more aware, when he entered a room in the workplace, of being identified as young rather than as a Gay man:

> I guess if anything, I would say the age is in that moment. When I walk into a room, age … because I am a leader at a young age, and have been for so long that that feels like the thing that actually disadvantages me more, in my mind, and I work against, so I try to, you know, not try to work against, but I know that I'm going to have to prove myself. (Charles)

Other factors about the participants' perceptions of their self-identities as leaders also were important. Jill noted that, from her experience, she had other identities in her position as a leader:

> Okay, here's this intellectual identity which you know, within the circle of your discipline that is kind of recognizable and so forth, and how do you take it into a line of work that's about application or institutional policy, or being present as when you're a leader of an institution, not someone who's advocating for the value of parts of your field and the value of this way of thinking. But you know, what it means to be a supervisor of others, be a director of others, with this identity. (Jill)

Most participants stated from their experiences as Gay and Lesbian leaders that the perceptions of their multiple self-identities in the workplace by other individuals were not always clear. Jennifer described her experiences as a Lesbian who had multiple identities in the workplace this way:

> You're sitting in a room, you know, different people, different backgrounds and different genders, and if all of a sudden they start saying things, and you wonder, "Well, is it because I'm an out Lesbian? Is it because …?" You know, I mean, as I get older, you think, "Is it because of my age? (laughter). People of color, Gays, and Lesbians, Bisexual, Transgender folks, and people from lower economic class; people with disabilities and people who are not Christian, those folks experience, what we call the target identities, or have experiences of discrimination on a more regular basis. I understand that we have multiple identities that sit in both places; that I experience privilege in my dominant identities as a White person, for example. And then I experience discrimination, and lack of access to systems and privilege, because of my target identities, as a woman and as a Lesbian. (Jennifer)

Charles believed that, as a Gay man, he perceived that his boss saw him as someone who was more available: "I didn't have any quote *family commitments*." He was surprised to find his

boss was more aware of his being a Gay man. "I mean, he wasn't supportive of, as my boss had said to me, he would not be supportive of a Gay man advising the fraternity."

Many participants stated that managing their multiple subidentities in the workplace was challenging, and they were aware of that. Patricia's statement reflected the sentiments of some other participants who were senior administrators and sometime felt alone in their positions and unable to relate to other Gays and Lesbians who were similar to them in the workplace.

> I guess alone is the best word, because it's not isolating, it's just that if you don't have other people, then you're the only one, so if you're the only one, it can feel alone in that regard. It'd just be nice to have more of a community of more of these people at this standard, who are also out and specifically, you know, even in I think my local community. You bring up something like, the weekend, "Oh yes, I remember a weekend when …" it's like (laughs), it seems like everything you say to that person is … it's a reason to bring something up, so you don't want to be that person. I don't think it's easy, in terms of being seamless. Right now, I think I'm intentional. And I mean, that's a good thing. So, do I think it can ever be easy? I don't know—Maybe, maybe not. (Patricia)

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity was found to be a factor in the self-identity of the participants, both for the three participants who identified as Black, Bi-Racial, or Latino and for the three participants who identified as White. The participants who were not White felt their ethnic identities were obvious, and what that they and others were most aware in workplace. One participant spoke candidly about her ethnic identity:

> I knew from the pictures that I [laughs] was seeing up for, you know, 'cause I look at myself as a Black person, and a Lesbian, right? 'Cause you can't … hide the black. [Laughing] So, I'm sorry if this is too candid.

Some participants believed that their ethnic identities "added another layer" to their identities of being Gay or Lesbian and complicated their identity in the workplace:

> So being a Latino and I guess it did add another layer of being a Gay Latino working with people who have prejudices, I mean, racism and everything … and I guess I'm not gonna get in, you know, with … not only the Gays thing, but being a Latino, and so I do feel that there has been some level of racism towards me just because I'm a Latino.

Some participants felt that their ethnic identities at their institutions were sometimes ambiguous, and that they had to account for the institution's culture:

> I'm half black and half white, so I represent a minority in that, but not as well … Right now, we are primarily a white institution. So, I come from the pre-dominant race, and we want to have our faculty and staff reflects the diversity of our student base. That's actually another challenge, but the culture, there's a lot of differences, that I picked up on over this last year, which caused me to adjust my style a little bit; to account for some of the cultural differences.

The participants who identified as White felt their experiences as Gays or Lesbians differentiated them from White heterosexual male or female counterparts in the workplace. One participant believed that "as a White Gay male, and I think in that way, it actually gets some credibility as a leader that I understand and can appreciate diverse issues." Another participant felt that Black heterosexual women who "express their opinions" openly may "immediately get labeled angry. "And I think the same thing can happen to Lesbians in the workplace that are White."

Some participants explained others viewed them differently as Gay males, and not the same way as White heterosexual men:

> I think as a White male, if I was a White heterosexual male I think I would be … a lot of my staff will see me differently. But as a member of a community that has been marginalized, I feel that I can, I have a stronger connection and I think not just stereotypes, but I think my sensitivities … I mean my struggles I have gone through in my identity have helped me be more understanding of staff and students, faculty, which have also gone through whatever, a sense of marginalization they've had. So I think that is actually has been a positive thing.

Finally, another participant made a similar statement about being a Gay male:

> People may make the assumption that White men can be sort of privileged and out of touch that they wouldn't understand what it would be like to be a woman or Black or GLBT. I think by being Gay, helps sort of, to address that issue. Plenty of people say, "Oh, another White straight male," right? Well, they can't say that about me [laughs]. Right?

Gender Identity

The participants who were women described that their identity as a woman superseded their sexual identity of being a Lesbian and was sometimes a much more important factor in their perceived role and identity as leaders in the workplace. The relationship of gender to their identity as a Lesbian was found to be interrelated, but each also resulted in distinct and separate experiences in the workplace. Jill felt it was essential to emphasize, based on her academic experience in gender studies and sexuality and the fact that she was both a leader and a woman that being a woman did not reflect a single identity or class.

> I mean it's always one thing that matters most, and has mattered, in dealing with anything identified with women, including my involvement with women's' gender and sexuality studies program here at the university, and not identical in interests, and not identical in terms of experiences of maternity. So it's just sort of, not speaking of women as a monolithic group. In terms of scholarship, in terms of my involvement with woman genders and sexuality studies, and continues to be important to me in representing and advocating the interests in women in the academy that we not do so … on the basis that women's experiences are all identical. (Jill)

The complexity of the interaction of gender and sexual identity was a factor for the women participants for different reasons, but their gender took precedence as an identity factor. Jennifer expressed that when she was in a meeting with other senior leadership, she first identified as a woman. "I'm the only woman in the room. Mostly, I'm surrounded by White men"; "on top of that, to be the only out Lesbian or Gay person in the room," she felt she was being treated differently because of different stereotypes of women, and of Lesbians:

> That's the case; is that when I look around, the senior leadership here at this institution, I don't know of any other "out" person across the board, at the senior leadership. And so, when I'm sitting at the table, and I have dynamics of men telling me I should smile more, or male leaders saying, you know, that I come across too serious, because I am not fitting into the stereotypical image of what a woman is supposed to do and act like, then I get labeled. And I think that label is the fact that I'm a Lesbian, gives people more license to feel entitled to give me that label, because it's reaffirming their stereotypes. (Jennifer)

The study revealed that most of the women participants experienced the scarcity of women in senior leadership or "at their level" being emphasized as an important issue for them. Patricia described that as an "out executive at this level" she did not have the professional role models of women growing up in her generation, or for that matter, in higher education:

> As a woman who grew up in a time, I'm in my 40s, and growing up in a time that was sort of right before we had a lot of substantial female role models in a professional capacity, sure there was a couple, females, strong, powerful representations, like a Barbara Walters, or an Oprah, or something like that, but for the most part, there hasn't been a whole lot of that, role models in higher education. You're starting now to see a lot more female college presidents, but that hasn't always been the case. So, when I look, and I thought, "My Gosh, I'm looking for role-models and I don't see them, because I want to know what does it look like on the next level," you know as a president, as an out president and executive at that level, as opposed to this level. (Patricia)

Sexual Identity

Most study participants believed that their sexual identity was an integral part of their self-identity, but that it did not define them. Many noted that their sexual identity in the workplace was in connection with concerns of being labeled or stereotyped "the Gay VP" or "the Lesbian Boss." Cindy expressed that she prided herself on overcoming Lesbian stereotypes:

> They have this stereotype of what that looks like and I'm very stylish. I have my Michael Kors. I have my high-heel shoes. I wear 4-inch heels, I'm, you [laughs] know so, I'm very coiffed all the time. (Cindy)

Many participants felt that their sexual identity was an integral part of their self-identity, but not something they had to announce. Oftentimes, they described it as something they did not want to "push" on anyone. Clark explained that he had a protocol in the workplace for his sexual identity: "If they ask me questions that they want to learn … I'm happy to help them there."

Jennifer described how she was careful to read people before discussing her sexual identity in the workplace: "I have learned very well how to read a group … to read people and to know when they will be open and ready to hear about my life." Olivier, who had been partly

90

closeted at work, stated he wanted to be honest about his sexual identity, which was "liberating"

for him, and a trait a leader wanted to portray to be effective:

> It was a very conscious decisions I made from the very beginning that I was not gonna be in the closet and that if anybody asked that I would, you know, be truthful about the responses, but not that I was gonna go out there and stand on a platform and make that public announcement. It was never my intention and I never did that, but I never hid it or, if somebody asked, I answered honestly and truthfully… I would say a life changing experience because it was very liberating to be able to feel like, I'm not gonna hide it any more. (Olivier)

Michael explained clearly about not being defined by his sexual identity as a "Gay VP,"

similar to how a friend had been known at a different university:

> I'm a VP for all students, and so he was not happy with me for declining that … so there's periodically this thing that you know people will … I probably have purposely not been. I have not immersed myself within the community in that regard, because I fight not to be seen as that and I think maybe that goes back to my younger professional life when this one person who is I think wonderful person was very outwardly Gay. I mean told everyone he was Gay and there was… he's always being mentioned by folks as the "Gay VP." I knew since then there had been more, some other Gay VPs, those Gay men, and women had become VP's, but I just don't want that to be how I was going to be defined. (Michael)

Charles had expressed his philosophy and echoed the sentiments of many of the other

participant about their sexual identity and its relationship to his being a leader in the workplace:

> My job is to think about all of our students, and sometimes the LGBT piece become very important, and sometimes it's not. It's more about income or students who come from warm climates here, and we have a really bad winter: Do they have the money to buy the winter coats that they need? Gay identity isn't the only personal piece that I share as a leader. (Charles)

Responding to the Research Questions

This research study was guided by questions that pertained to the lived experiences of

senior higher-education administrators. The findings of the study addressed and provided

answers to the following research questions:

(a) Research question 1: What are the lived experiences of self-identified Lesbian and

Gay senior administrators as leaders at US higher-education institutions?

(b) Research question 2: How have Lesbian and Gay senior administrators made the choice in their present positions to come out at their workplaces?

(c) Research question 3: How do Lesbian and Gay senior administrators perceive their own leadership effectiveness?

(d) Research question 4: How have Lesbian and Gay senior administrators integrated their self-identity into their leadership, and how effective do they believe this has been?

Further and more specifically, the four main themes and the subthemes that emerged from the findings address the particular areas that each research questions addressed.

Research Question 1

The lived experiences of self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators were affected by their past and present experiences in their positions, and they classified their memorable experiences as accomplishments or challenges in the process of achieving either the goals of their institutions or of their careers. The lived experiences that most participants remembered were ones that they found "satisfying," or "fulfilling," or that they were "passionate" about; and they used their "skills" and "abilities" to either succeed or to overcome obstacles as leaders.

Many participants expressed that they had been responsible for completing a long-term goal of the college or university, which they considered to be an accomplishment as a leader. Many of them had also expressed pride in developing new programs with the cooperation of the entire "college community."

The senior administrators who had been in higher education for 20 years or more stated it was an accomplishment to "come full circle" and successfully reach career goals and realize their

aspirations. Most participants remembered their notable accomplishments as those of being a "change agent," or "reorganizing a department" and surviving the "transitions" that doing so may have entailed. Some participants said that the experience of changing the environment for Gays and Lesbians was memorable to them because it could help in the future to pave the way for other Gays or Lesbians who may encounter similar situations at their institutions.

Many participants felt that it was a challenge to overcome obstacles or barriers as leaders. Many remembered that after they had arrived at their new jobs they discovered there was a lack or change of leadership, little documentation, a "steep learning curve," and the absence of established policies to guide them. Some participants experienced the lack of diversity as a challenge for them to identify as Gay and Lesbians, and in terms of their ability relate to their coworkers. In their perceived role as leaders, the same participants expressed that it was important to be a "representative" in promoting diversity and changing the "culture" of their institutions. Finally, another challenge that some participants expressed was how to connect to other Lesbian and Gays at the college or university where they were employed, or in the local community.

Research Question 2

The Lesbian and Gay senior administrators stated that they made the choice in their present positions to come out at their workplaces based on the "comfortableness" of their coworkers, the importance of their partners in their lives, the needs of LGBT students, or the views of the president of the college or university. The participants expressed that they made "conscious" "strategic" or political decisions not to come out in certain situations or environments in the workplace because of influential individuals, who included board, cabinet, or trustee members, and presidents, donors, and religious individuals.

The resulting differences in coming-out in the workplace for many of the participants meant experiences of coming-out on a daily basis to different individuals, and at different times and in different ways. Some participants expressed a frustration over this phenomenon, but describing that it was something Gay and Lesbians had to contend with in the workplace and not something that "straight people" had to do.

Many participants used the metaphor of a "balancing act" to describe their choice of coming-out process in the workplace between one of being "comfortable" and one of being "honest" or "open" about being out as a leader. The balance could at times be disturbed when there was a conflict of interest between their Gay and Lesbian identity and the policies and culture of their institutions. Many participants also described this precarious balancing act as "walking a fine line." Despite some of the challenges, they felt that they had made a choice to come out in the workplace and "not hide it."

Although the participants were out at their workplaces, they stated different strategies to come out to coworkers, and to ensure "comfortableness." They described the strategies as using their "visibility" on campus, usually with their partners; posting the Gay Pride flag on their office doors; communicating to others about their personal lives; or inviting students to events at their houses. Some participants described formal strategies they had chosen, such as staff meetings, to come out while ensuring that everyone at the meeting could express their feelings about their doing so.

Participants, even the one who was single, expressed the role of their partners as a critical factor in their coming-out in the workplace, and one that they mentioned often as a factor in their choice to coming-out in the workplace. They felt that they were focused on including their partners at the university or college, beginning with their being recruited for their present

positions, and continuing in their negotiating benefits or salary compensations, and in events to which heterosexual employees brought their spouses. The participants also expressed that "they could not imagine going to another job and not being out" because of their partners' integral role in their lives, and that it was impossible for them to imagine not having their partners be part of their workplace experiences.

The participants who had daily interactions with students described their choice of coming-out "visibly" and actively as an important way to be "available" and assist LGBT students and be "role models" or "mentors" to them. As leaders, these participants believed their visible coming-out had a positive effect on their relationships with students and their ability to relate to them honestly and openly. They expressed their impact as senior administrators on LGBT student organizations or clubs, and that to be "visibly out" and to "set examples" was important in these contexts.

Participants described other factors such as the president of the college or university, or other influential individuals as playing a less important, but still significant, role in their choices to come out. They felt that the president inviting them to apply for the position, or asking them to represent the institution at a special event, and invite them to events that included their partners, were important but not crucial factors that affected their coming-out. Some participants noted that their experiences with the president were not positive, which resulted in them being "cautious" and "wary" about choosing to come out in the workplace. Finally, they often described influential individuals as those who might feel "uncomfortable" with participants' coming-out, and who could "make or break" their careers, or "close doors." The participants expressed that they made a "conscious" and "strategic" decision to remain closeted temporarily in the presence of such influential individuals.

Research Question 3

Most study participants were not aware of, unless they were asked to consciously think about it, the role their identity as Lesbians and Gays played in others' perception of their leadership effectiveness. Many of them had admitted they had never really given it much thought. After reflecting, most stated that their Lesbian and Gay identities were an integral part of their leadership effectiveness. Some participants felt that their sensitivity was an important trait to have as a leader, to better connect to a broad array of individuals from different backgrounds and needs. Many participants felt that their ability to be more open and accepting of others, and nonjudgmental or unbiased about dealing with others prepared them to be effective leader.

Many participants felt that, because their staff perceived them differently as Lesbians or Gays, they were "extremely approachable, sensitive, and conscientious," and that this perception had impacted their leadership effectiveness. Some individuals expressed that they were effective leaders because of their perceived role as "advocates of diversity" because they were from an underrepresented population, and aware of the importance of inclusiveness. Some participants perceived they were effective leaders because they were accepting of input from different voices in the community. Those individuals provided input based on their own experiences of being out Gays or Lesbians in the workplace.

The most important perception that most participants perceived about their leadership effectiveness was the fostering of trust that their openness and "honesty" about being a Gay or Lesbian engendered. The word *trust* was often connected to being a genuine or authentic leader by the participants. Most of the participants felt that "authenticity" was the key to being an effective and trusted leader. Some of the participants felt that a genuine leader is viewed by her

96

followers as one who can be trusted, and the genuineness is closely tied to the individuals' ability to represent herself honestly.

Finally, the "power of example" and "authenticity" as leaders and senior administrators was a perceived key reason many participants gave for their success in becoming effective leaders and integrating their Gay and Lesbian identity into their leadership. Many of them said that, to be effective leaders, it was essential for them to be daily examples of Gays and Lesbians in workplace, for everyone to see.

Research Question 4

Most participants experienced being a Gay and Lesbian as a complex, intricate part of their self-identity to be integrated into their leadership. Often they described using flags as a metaphor for their integration of their self-identity, and most felt they could "wave the Gay Flag"and"other flags too." Most participants felt that they had been "very effective" integrating their self-identity as Lesbian and Gays into their leadership, but that doing so was also an ongoing and evolving part of their identity as leaders; they also explained that other identities were integral to their being a leader, too. They said it was essential that they also identify and attend to the needs of individuals from different economic backgrounds, geographic locations, and cultures.

Several participants described their self-identity as complicated by the fact that they also identified with their gender or ethnic identity, which made the integration of their self-identity as Gays or Lesbians challenging. Most of these participants felt perplexed to find that, when the diversity of coworkers in their workplace environments was missing, their ethnic or gender identities were more visible than their Gay or Lesbian identities.

The women participants recognized that they had integrated their Lesbian identity into their leadership effectively, but that their identities as women were often more important to their perceived roles as leaders. These participants said they had experienced stereotyping based both on their gender and being Lesbians in the workplace. They described their experiences regarding the relationship of their gender as being interrelated with being a Lesbian, but with distinct and separate self-identities. They believed that their first identity was being a woman, then a minority, and on "top of that," a Lesbian in the workplace. They voiced concerned about the lack of "role models" who were senior administrators or higher-education presidents. The experiences of the women participants also were different from each other because two of them also identified with their ethnic identity; therefore, their experiences as women who were Lesbians were also different.

The participants who identified as Black, Bi-Racial, or Latino believed that their ethnic self-identity was the identity that others in the workplace observed. They believed their ethnic identity "added another layer" to their identities as Lesbians and Gays and left them open to the possibility of discrimination for other reasons. They found that integrating their multiple identities was more of a challenge in the workplace. Similarly, they felt that how they were treated as leaders was ambiguous at times. They also found it difficult to discern which of their identities was being addressed; this was especially so in the case of the women, who had another layer to complicate the perceptions of others.

The participants who identified as White experienced that their identities were differentiated from their heterosexual male or female counterparts at the college or university. As a comparison, these participants expressed that "their credibility" related to the ability to appreciate issues of diversity was not the same as that of White heterosexuals because the

98

participants had experienced issues of discrimination, marginalization, and struggles as Gays and Lesbians although they were White.

Finally, the participants in this study experienced some challenges being one of few Gays or Lesbians who were identified in the workplace. One of the common challenges was the expectation of others that they conform to stereotypes. However, the participants prided themselves on overcoming the stereotypes of Gays and Lesbians, and for not being known as a leader who was the "Gay VP" or "Lesbian boss." As previously discussed, they described that their sexual identity as Gays or Lesbians was an integral part of their self-identities as leaders, an essential part, but by no means a defining one, of who they were as persons; it was not something they felt needed to be "pushed" or "announced." For these individuals, being a leader meant to be a leader of "everyone," and their followers should see them not as a Gay or Lesbian leaders with only one "personal piece" that could be "shared," but as good leaders with many "facets" to share.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators at colleges and universities regarding their self-identity and coming-out in the workplace, and their perceived effectiveness as leaders at higher-education institutions. The eight participants in this study were second-line senior administrators who reported to the President/Chancellor or Provost of their respective institutions. The titles of the participants generally were Provost, Vice President, or Dean. Four major themes emerged from an analysis of the study participants' words, which reflected their lived experiences as senior administrators in the college and university workplace. These themes were memorable leadership experiences, coming-out in the workplace, Lesbian and Gay identity and leadership effectiveness, and the multiple self-identities of Lesbian and Gay leaders in the workplace.

The chapter begins with a discussion and interpretation of the study's themes and how they relate to the literature. An overview of critical theory follows, including its relationship to the Gay and Lesbian participants' coming-out process, including the descriptions of their multiple self-identities in a heteronormative environment. The discussion continues with implications of the study's findings for colleges and universities, and for their Lesbian and Gay senior administrators. The chapter concludes with some recommendations for further research regarding Lesbian and Gay senior administrators, and of other leadership at higher-education institutions.

Discussion of Themes

The discussion of both the main themes and subthemes that emerged in this study occurs in the context of and relates to the reviewed research. The subsections that follow offer further detail about those themes and subthemes.

Memorable Leadership Experiences

A common thread in the memorable leadership experiences of this study's participants related to their coming-out experience at some point since the beginning of their careers. The study revealed that, for the participants, being out in their leadership experiences played an important role in their successes. Many participants found that these leadership experiences paved the way to promotions and advancement to other positions. This finding supports the research of Hewitt, and Sumberg (2011), which indicated that out employees were increasing their opportunities of being promoted over closeted workers. It also supports the research of Coon (2001), whose findings showed that Gays and Lesbians who had come out occupied high-profile positions, felt empowered, and had significantly improved their leadership experiences in a heteronormative environment. Finally, the current study is aligned with that of Renn and Bilodeau (2005), who found that the LGBT identity development and leadership development of college students reinforced each other: The more out these student leaders became in their environments, the more reasons they found to pursue other leadership positions.

Accomplishments. The subtheme of accomplishments emerged from the memorable leadership experiences of the participants in this study. Characteristics they used to describe themselves included dedication to the college or university goals, commitment to improving the institutional environment, and willingness to perform difficult work—qualities that might be on the wish lists of many employers seeking desirable employees. This outcome supports the research of Hewitt and Sumberg (2011), which found that Lesbian and Gay employees were a highly desirable pool from which to recruit for an institution because they were "committed," "ambitious," and better educated than their straight counterparts. Oftentimes, meeting their objectives required current study participants to put in extended hours, deal with challenging

101

policies, and go the extra mile for their institutions as leaders in sometimes newly defined positions.

Many of these participants shared the common perspective that acceptance and being treated fairly and equally on campus were important factors that they considered carefully before they accepted a position. This finding supports prior research outcomes that indicate campus climate and environments were important to retaining qualified Lesbian and Gay employees who were out (Abes et al., 2007; Lyons & Fassinger, 2010; Rankin et al., 2010). Abes et al. (2007) found that it was important for future research to consider other contextual factors that could influence an individual's sexual identity, such as the institution's campus culture or climate. Rankin et al. (2010) also found that colleges and universities that advocated inclusiveness, fostered welcoming climates, and offered equal opportunity were more likely to attract qualified administrators, faculty, and students.

Some participants in the current study expressed the importance of being offered the same employee benefits offered to heterosexual couples; they experienced such measures as a "memorable accomplishment." They expressed the satisfaction of advocating for themselves and for other Lesbian and Gays, and of having the same living arrangements on campus, family status for their partners, and equivalent medical and tax benefits of straight couples. By claiming equal status as Lesbians and Gays in the workplace, some participants may have been challenging the accepted norms of the benefits offered to heterosexual couples and confronting a "climate of heterosexism" in their workplace. This outcome is similar to what Lyons and Fassinger (2010) found in their study, which suggested that employers who were perceived as taking active measures against a "climate of heterosexism," and were instead fostering one that was friendly to LGBT employees, were more likely to have Lesbians and Gays visibly out to

102

their coworkers and staff. Similarly, the research of Catalyst (2013) found that to successfully

recruit and retain more Lesbian and Gay employees, institutions needed to explicitly offer

benefits, such as domestic-partner benefits, and have clear antidiscrimination policies firmly in

place concerning sexual identity and gender identity. The importance of Lesbian or Gay leaders

receiving the same benefits traditionally afforded to heterosexual coworkers may also be an

important factor in their perception of being on equal terms with heterosexual leaders in a

"heteronormative" environment.

Challenges. Some participants in the current study expressed the challenge of arriving at

their institutions for new positions and discovering that there were few other minorities in the

workplace. One participant stated that this experience was an "unexpected" challenge, and

described it as having a "jarring" effect on her. This study also revealed that some participants'

genders and ethnic identities were perceived as more obvious to others than their "invisible"

sexual identities. Their comments indicated that it was a memorable leadership challenge for

some participants to interact with others in the workplace and share experiences, and that their

genders or ethnic self-identities were visible, but were no more important to them than their

Lesbian or Gay identities, which were undetectable. These findings about the ambiguities

around the participants' visible and invisible identities in the workplace are consistent with those

of Abes and Jones (2004), who noted the importance of contextual factors in the external

perception of self-identity for Lesbians in higher-education institutions. These researchers found

that "socially constructed identities" evolved differently, and that some individuals did not

understand the complexity of the interactions between the subjects' sexual identities and other

identities. For example, they found that some participants in their study did not understand the

significance of or the interaction between their sexual self-identity as Lesbians and their ethnic identities.

Coming-out in the Workplace

A common thread that wove through this main theme for the participants in the present study was their experience of coming-out, in their words, as maintaining a "balancing act" and "walking a fine line" between feeling comfortable as leaders with their sexual identity and the process of coming-out to others in the workplace. The results of this study revealed that the degrees of coming-out differed and were affected by the time, place, and composition of each participant's experiences in the respective work environments. Although the participants stated they were out in their present workplaces, an experience each individual perceived differently, they had not been out to the same degree in every position they had occupied in their careers. These results are consistent with prior research findings that indicate not all Gay and Lesbian individuals are out to the same degree in the workplace (Connell, 2012; Guittar, 2013). Connell (2012), in a study of Lesbian and Gay teachers and administrators, also found that the participants were out in varying degrees. Similarly, participants in a recent study by Guittar (2013) described their coming-out process as an "on-going process" of revealing partially or fully their sexual identity to different individuals at different times. Furthermore, the finding of Abes et al. (2007) was that no one meaning of coming-out could be expressed inclusively that encompassed the variations of the meaning for all participants in their study.

Participants in the current study were affected by other employees who were out, and as a result were more comfortable coming-out themselves. This outcome is consistent with the finding of Kenny (2008), who noted that the efforts of Lesbian leaders who were actively out at a

community college "made a difference" for other Lesbians or Gays, and encouraged them to "come out" and "stay out."

Based on the participants' reported social interactions in the work environment and the role of their coworkers, partners, LGBT students, the institutional president, or other influential individuals, several subthemes emerged from the coming-out experiences they described in the current study. For example, the study revealed that different individuals and circumstances in the workplace affected the participants' coming-out. Both where their coming-out process occurred and who was present influenced their experience. Therefore, the coming-out process was not just a personal experience of self-identity or an affirmation that occurred for the participants when they were alone. The current finding that the coming-out process was an integral part of social interactions is similar to that shown in the research of Marszalek et al. (2004), which was based on Cass's Lesbian/gay identity model (1984). The Marszalek et al. study found that the importance of social interactions in the formation of Lesbians' and Gays' identities, and their coming-out experiences were strongly influenced by the social interactions the individuals had with others.

In addition to the current participants' social interactions with others in the workplace, the results in the present study suggest that their perceived "comfortableness" in that environment significantly affected their choices to come out. This factor may have accounted for the differences in the coming-out experiences participants experienced when they moved from one job to another, and sometimes to a different area of the country or from an urban to a rural campus. The study results suggest that the degree of comfortableness with their work environments could easily change when participants accepted a new position at a different institution. This finding supports that of Pichler, Varma, and Bruce (2010) about the importance

105

of work environments, and that the coming-out experience could change when an employee moved from one position to another. Changing jobs sometimes entailed different choices in coming-out for several of the employees in that study.

Role of coworkers. Many participants in the current study experienced coming-out as a continuous process relative to coworkers, a process that sometimes entailed moving back and forth, "retreating," or "coming-out over and over again" to different individuals and circumstances. Some participants expressed that it was not unusual to have to "step back," and reemerge or "come out again." In this context, the ability to step back and revaluate the circumstances, and wait until the circumstances or environment changed, seemed to be one of the more common strategies participants used. Stepping back may have served as a useful survival mechanism for those who were visibly out and yet had to remain politically astute as senior administrators in their positions. These experiences were similar to what Bilodeau and Renn (2005) found in their study regarding the coming-out experiences of their subjects. For their participants, the development of sexual identity was not linear through the stages of Cass's Lesbian and Gay development model, but instead was iterative, and one could even move backwards.

Similarly, results from the current study suggest that participants' experiences coming-out to coworkers are not reflected in the early-stage models that some researchers advocated (Cass, 1979, 1984; D'Augelli, 1994). Other researchers also have found those earlier versions to have rigid linearity and lack of flexibility, and to be ineffectual in explaining the reasons individuals may backtrack in the coming-out process (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Fassinger & Miller, 1997; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Troiden ,1988).

Instead, the current study results indicated that the participants' experiences of coming-out to their coworkers were not linear and could sometimes move back and forth. The participants explained the process as coming-out and "stepping back," or "coming-out all over again." In their work environments, many participants felt the need to retreat or step back when they were coming-out because of the circumstances or because of particular individuals, and doing this may have served as a useful survival mechanism. These results support prior findings in the research, which also described individuals' coming-out experiences as a conscious and "iterative," with movement back and forth through the identity-development stages, and sometimes more than once (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Fassinger & Miller, 1997; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996).

The coming-out process that participants in this study described, and its employment as a strategy, was also similar to previous research that found Lesbian and Gay employees experienced the process as a strategy that was simultaneously "personal, political, and professional" for them (Renn, & Bilodeau, 2003, p. 7). Renn and Bilodeau also found that the ability of a leader to be intuitive and to react quickly to social cues and evaluate different individuals in their work environments might be a political strategy Lesbians and Gay leaders in their study used.

Role of students. Four participants in the current study had regular interactions with students and felt it was important for them to create a welcoming and inviting environment for LGBT students on campus by choosing to come out, and be visibly out. The reasons they gave for this perspective included advising and mentoring LGBT students, and providing important role models for them. These participants perceived their choice to come out as one that enabled LGBT students to approach them and ask them to be mentors, and also enabled the participants

107

to advise the students on ways to navigate the traditional boundaries of heterosexism within the institution.

To provide a review of and context for the terms in use in the current discussion, the term *heterosexism* in the literature has been defined as the assumption that everyone is heterosexual, which institutions often make (Alden & Parker, 2005), and this assumption is sometimes ingrained in the cultural norms and customs of colleges and universities (Herek, 1992). Warner (1993) labeled the term *heterosexism* as "heteronormative," a form of hegemony.

The current finding that Lesbian and Gay participants chose to come out because they wanted to mentor or advise LGBT students was not supported in the literature that specifically addressed the administrator's role at higher-education institutions in mentoring or advising LGBT students. This finding, however, is associated with those of several prior studies of Lesbian and Gay teachers in education that dealt with the prevalence of heteronormative environments in educational institutions (Lieder, 2001; Lugg & Koschoreck, 2003; Rankin, 2003; Waldo, Hesson, & D'Augelli, 1998: Wallace, 2002). This current finding also is related to some extent to Valadez and Elsbree's (2005) findings that teachers had helped make it possible for Lesbian and Gay students to cross the traditional boundaries of their heteronormative environment at their educational institution.

Role of partners. All but one of the participants in the current study were partnered. Everyone with a partner stressed the essential and critical role of their partners in their coming-out in the workplace. The participants clearly expressed that, from the time of their recruitment for a new position to their acceptance and retention of those positions, their partners were indispensable in their decision to come out in the workplace. The participants could not imagine *not* including their partners, along with their family of pets or children, in everyday

conversations with coworkers at events where heterosexual spouses or families were invited, and as visible presences on campuses. The participants experienced their respective partners as integral to their lives and happiness, and as essential in the support of their sometimes challenging work.

Many participants said they would not have taken their professional positions unless their partners had been accepted on campuses; and the positions they did take seemed to be pathways for advancement to senior career positions. The participants had to make a choice early in their careers to include their partners as an essential part of the decisions they made on that career path and journey. Their choice to make their partners an integral part of their coming-out represents a challenge to the traditional heterosexual family values once attributed to senior administrators at colleges and universities.

In addition to its assumption that everyone is heterosexual, heterosexism on campuses is a subtle form of oppression that reinforces the invisibility of Lesbians and Gays (D'Augelli, 1994; Herek 1992, 1993, 1995; Washington & Evans, 1991). The finding in this study regarding the visible presence of their partners at participants' institutions in terms of both employment and coming-out supports the Herek (1995) study, which found it was essential for individuals to challenge existing institutional structures, which may have been designed and put into place to reinforce an environment of heterosexism. The current findings also reflect those of some prior studies, which suggest that exposing heterosexuals to the lives of Lesbians and Gays may fostering a feeling of empathy in and change the attitudes of some heterosexuals toward individuals in these groups. For example, heterosexual college students enrolled in courses about Lesbians and Gays relationships, or exposed to images of Lesbians and Gays relationships, both of which were designed to challenge preconceived ideologies, had the effect of making

109

"significant" positive changes to those students' attitudes toward Lesbians and Gays (Chonody, Siebert, & Rutledge, 2009; Henderson & Murdock, 2011). The results of those studies seem to imply that the first steps in changing a traditional environment of heterosexism may be to challenge the established attitudes and belief systems of the heterosexuals within it. Participants in the current study became a part of the higher-education institution, and then acted to redefine its traditional structures.

Another notable outcome from the present study was that some participants experienced feeling "guarded" or "cautious" and "uncomfortable" about coming-out in their previous positions and so chose not to reveal too much about their personal lives to coworkers in those positions. Besides their work environments, participants sometimes gave social or political reasons for being cautious. Similarly, prior research studies found that some faculty members, or administrators, may have been experiencing the need to be cautious about revealing their sexual identity based on the sociopolitical environment that has commonly existed at some higher-education institutions (Pichler, Varma, & Bruce, 2010; Rankin et al., 2010; Rottmann, 2006). Additionally, the current study results are in line with those of Hewlett and Sumberg (2011), who reported that Lesbian and Gay employees who felt the need to hide their sexual identity at work were also careful in general about sharing personal experiences with coworkers.

The past experiences of many of the participants in the present study suggest that participants were careful to assess the policies a university or college had in place concerning Lesbian and Gay discrimination before they accepted a job offer. The partnered participants were concerned not only about the policies for themselves, but also for their partners and families. This finding concurs with those in Connell's (2012) study, which indicated that Lesbian and Gay teachers and administrators accepted positions on the basis of a school's

nondiscrimination policies. Many participants in Connell's study appeared to want to know more about the policies a university or college had posted on its website concerning Lesbians and Gays. Similarly, the participants in the current study also wanted to be sure before they considered job offers that the institutions' posted policies would protect them from discrimination. A reason for this cautious approach may be that current laws in the United States concerning Lesbians and Gays still vary from state to state, and sometimes from one institution to another.

Role of other influential individuals. At different times in their careers, the participants in the present study experienced the need to hide their sexual identity when they were confronting influential individuals, and they made a conscious decision that it was inappropriate to come out at that time. They viewed influential individuals as those who would be uncomfortable about the participants' sexual identity, and who could "make or break" careers, or "close doors" of opportunities.

As noted previously, current participants often used the word *comfortableness* to gauge their coming-out process. Others said they experienced a temporary stepping back, which may have occurred as their intuitive response to changing levels of comfortableness and the need to assess the situation further before acting. They did not come out, and thus omitted their visible sexual identity in their interactions with influential individuals. The participants were aware that this action left those individuals only with their own assumptions about the participants' personal lives.

Several current participants also stated that their coming-out to other individuals who were not influential would have been different. This perspective is similar to what Balsam and Mohr's (2007) study revealed, that Lesbians and Gays oftentimes carefully gauge their degree of

111

coming-out based on their current work environments. Renn and Bilodeau (2003) noted similar

results in their study of the degree of Lesbian and Gay individuals' coming-out. The participants

in their study indicated that their choices to come out were based on the effect doing so might

have on their career paths to achieving senior positions. Other studies focused on individuals

concealing their sexual identity in the workplace show similar results (Rankin et al., 2010; Sears

& Mallory, 2011). For instance, Rankin et al. (2010) found that half of the respondents in their

survey of universities and colleges experienced the need to hide their sexual identity in the

workplace. Likewise, Sears and Mallory (2011) found that Lesbians and Gays hid their sexual

identity if they had witnessed others in the workplace who had come out and as a result may

have been passed over for a job promotion.

Lesbian and Gay Identity and Leadership Effectiveness

Most participants in the current study indicated they had not given much thought to how

their Lesbian or Gay identity had affected their leadership effectiveness. They were aware of

their self-identity, especially the role of their sexual identity as out Lesbian and Gay leaders, and

they may have hesitated in their responses because no one had asked them to consider this issue

previously. When they had reflected on it, many said they felt that their Lesbian and Gay

identity was an "integral" part of their leadership effectiveness.

In fact, a specific finding was that their Lesbian and Gay identity was a critical

component of leadership effectiveness because it served to connect the leaders to their feelings,

attitudes, and motives for their behavior in the workplace. This result is relevant to prior

research findings, although not specifically to Lesbian or Gay senior administrators; other studies

found that it was important for leaders in general to perceive their self-identities or who they are

as individuals (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002; Hall, 2004; van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

Acceptance of others. A subtheme that emerged in this study was that, from the participants' perspective, being Lesbian or Gay leaders meant they were more accepting of others in the workplace and could remain nonjudgmental or unbiased. Many participants equated being more accepting of others with understanding diversity or inclusion. They felt that, like other minority populations, they had experienced similar circumstances and so were more attuned to the struggles of minorities and the issues of diversity and inclusion. They perceived that they had gained the respect of marginalized groups by overcoming workplace adversity, and they connected that ability to being effective leaders and successful senior administrators. This outcome supports that of an earlier study, which emphasized the importance in the 21st century of a "broader range" of leadership traits and interactions, and the essential role of leadership skills such as "inclusion, collaboration, and diversity" (Fassinger, 2010, p. 202).

Another aspect to this finding was that most current participants felt their unique identity as Lesbian or Gay contributed to their leadership effectiveness because it reflected their status as members of a marginalized group and so was integral to their leadership effectiveness in that context, as well. This perspective aligns with Andreas's (2005) study suggesting that Lesbian administrators embraced the same values, priorities, and practices that had been identified in the literature to be the qualities of a "new generation" of community-college leaders. That study noted the Lesbian leaders possessed many leadership qualities because they belonged to a minority group. Additionally, this finding aligns with that of Renn and Bilodeau (2005), who noted that leadership qualities were "acquired" in "different ways" and in different contexts based on participants' gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity.

Fostering trust. The subtheme of fostering trust also emerged from the lived experiences of the participants in the current study. They stated that coming-out in the

113

workplace was critical to fostering trust in their followers and essential to their leadership effectiveness. In their words, fostering trust meant being "genuine," "open," and "honest" about their Lesbian and Gay identities. They often connected the word *trust* to being an "authentic" or "genuine" leader. This is consistent with what Coon (2001) found in her study of Lesbian and Gay leadership effectiveness, which suggested that Lesbian administrators who were out role models of "honesty and integrity" for their followers were also perceived as effective leaders.

Multiple Self-Identities of Lesbian and Gay Leaders in the Workplace

The theme of having multiple self-identities and the subthemes of ethnic, gender, and sexual identities emerged from the current findings. The participants' self-identities defied simple explanations and had been formed differently in each individual. Based on their experiences in the workplace, participants also noted they had developed multiple subidentities. They explained that their identity as Lesbian or Gay was not their primary one. Rather, it existed in addition to other multiple identities and sometimes more than one subidentity.

Examples participants used to express their multiple identities in the workplace included being "a leader," an "intellectual," a "young person," "single," a "husband," a "wife," a "woman," a "Black woman," a "Bi-racial woman," a "Latino man," and a "White" woman or man. These examples show that Lesbian and Gay self-identity is an intricate and often complex phenomenon, and is dependent on social contexts and the presence of other individuals in the workplace. Similarly, in her research, Cass (1984) found that managing an individual's Lesbian and Gay identity was an integral part of managing that individual's whole identity. The current finding also aligns with outcomes in the work of Ragins, Singh, and Cornell (2007), which emphasized the importance of sexual identity in the lives of Lesbians and Gays in the workplace.

Current participants often expressed their multiple self-identities differently according to the specific roles each individual played in various social contexts. For example, an environment in which their sexual identity was not the focal point could evoke another self-identity, which might take precedence. These results suggest that participants were constantly assuming multiple identities in the workplace as part of their interaction with others. A shift in the social context might evoke another self-identity, which aligned with or took precedence over the previous identity. This evidence is consistent with earlier studies that have supported the view that individuals have multiple subidentities (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Abes & Jones, 2004, 2007), and that the subidentity of leader was connected with specific social contexts in the workplace. This view also parallels that of van Knippenberg et al. (2005), who found that leadership and identity were closely linked in the workplace, and that self-identity was being formed with the daily informal and formal interactions between coworkers and managers.

Ethnic identity. A subtheme of ethnic identity emerged from the experiences of three participants in the present study. For them, ethnic identity in the workplace added another layer of complexity to their self-identity. They perceived that others may have been seeing their ethnic identity first because it was obvious, and not the "invisible" fact that they were Lesbian or Gay. They also sometimes found it difficult to determine whether or not they were experiencing discrimination because of their ethnic identities or because they were Lesbian or Gay. Although the two identities intersected, these participants experienced them differently and, in this case, reported that they were perceived differently by others, a finding consistent with the outcomes of the research Abes et al. (2007) did.

Current participants reported that their ethnic identity both interacted and interfered with, or took priority over, others' perceptions of their sexual identity. In this context, previous

115

research has noted that sexual identity is different from other identities because it is not visible and also lacks role models or an open group identity; consequently, it needs to be differentiated from gender, ethnic, and racial factors that develop in relation to a group identity (Bringaze & White, 2001). The current study again aligns with Coon's work (2001) and her observation that Lesbian and Gay identity is different from those of other marginalized or minority groups because Lesbians and Gays were born into a society that assumed they were members of a predominantly heterosexual culture.

Gender identity. A second subtheme, gender identity, also became evident in the experiences of the women participants in the current study. They noted that their gender identity often superseded their identity as a Lesbian leader in the workplace. They described the relationship between their self-identity as Lesbians and that of being one of the few women in the workplace as interrelated, but that others perceived these identities to be separate. Others found the participants' gender to be visible and separate, unlike their sexual identity, whose visibility depended upon the context of the situation and upon the individuals who were present. Oftentimes, for example, when the majority of those who were present in a specific context with participants were men, the perception of gender took priority over that of sexual identity. This difference is consistent with prior research that found the interaction of gender and sexual identity was perceived differently by others when contextual factors were taken into account compared to when they were not (Abes & Jones 2004; Abes et al., 2007; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Fassinger et al., 2010). For example, Abes and Jones (2004) and Abes et al. (2007) found that contextual factors were essential to understanding how the self-identity of Lesbians in higher institutions is perceived by others, and that these factors encompassed multiple identities which may include gender, race, social class, religion, and sexual identity. Further, based on their study

116

of Lesbians, Jones and McEwen (2000) developed a model they called the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity Development. They used this model to describe their findings about the interaction of gender and sexual identity as "a fluid and dynamic one, representing the ongoing construction of identities and the influence of changing contexts on the experiences of identity development" (p. 408). Finally, using a model they developed, Fassinger et al. (2010) found that gender identity interacted with sexual identity, that these identities affected the leader and the followers, and that the interaction between the two was dependent on the composition of the group composition.

Sexual identity. A final subtheme that became apparent as an essential part of self-identity development in the workplace for participants in the current study was sexual identity, which was also integral to their formation of self-identity as leaders. The participants often identified and acknowledged "valued others" as mentors. They identified these individuals as essential to their sexual identities as Lesbian and Gay leaders; they included their bosses, the institutional president, and other Lesbian and Gay leaders among this group. As mentors, these "valued others" were important in guiding many of the participants' careers, and in confirming their sexual identity as an important factor of their self-identity as leaders. In similar results, Chickering and Reisser (1993) also found that "valued others" helped the development of individuals' self-identity, and for Gays and Lesbians, this support was in the form of feedback they may have received about their sexual identity. In addition, although this support was integral to the participants' self-identity as Lesbian and Gay in the current study, it was the not the only identity that participants expressed they wanted to be defined or labeled with in the workplace.

117

Discussion of Queer Theory

As noted in chapter 1, Queer theory does not advocate the use of traditional terms to define the self-identity of Lesbians and Gays; it does not attempt to make a reference to any specific sexual identities. Therefore, the terms *heterosexism* or *heteronormative* as used here imply that Gays and Lesbians are not part of the so-called normal or predefined heterosexual structure. This heteronormative structure has been in place traditionally within higher-education institutions in the United States. In earlier research, use of the term *heterosexism* has meant that employees at higher-education institutions have followed the rules and regulations that are either explicitly or implicitly stated and that are designed to reinforce and uphold heteronormative environments (Lugg & Koschoreck 2003; Rankin, 2003; Renn, 2010; Waldo, 1999; Waldo, Hesson, & D'Augelli, 1998).

Outcomes of the current study indicate that the participants did not uphold, but instead confronted heterosexism in the context of two types of challenges. They indicated they had experienced both kinds of challenges when they confronted the heteronormative environment of the institutions where they worked. The first challenge to heterosexism, which was in place to define traditional families, was in the context of their partners. The participants confronted heterosexism by choosing to be out, visible, and open about their partners and their private lives as Lesbians and Gays. The second challenge to heterosexism arose from the discrepancy between the workplace definitions of employee benefits and the benefits participants and other Lesbians and Gays received for themselves or their partners when those benefits had not traditionally been offered to Lesbians and Gays at their institutions. Participants revealed they had experienced challenges in both these instances when they confronted in the heteronormative environment of their institutions.

Queer theory does not recognize the concept behind the term *heterosexism* because the term advocates its existence based on the binary of two fixed sexual identities that are in opposition to each other (Sedgwick, 1991). Additionally, the term *Queer* was not used to identify participants in the present study. Consequently, the study contains no data or results that indicate the participants identified their Lesbian and Gay sexuality through comparisons to heterosexuals. Instead, they differentiated their multiple identities through their resistance to what they perceived as the attempt of heterosexism to impose a definition about their sexuality on them. The references to Queer theory in this paper are intended to provide a context and to help explain the various ways Lesbians and Gays choose to come out. Queer theory also helps to explain the multiple identities that formed when these participants did come out, a process that was not rigid, fixed, or absolute, but instead fluid, dynamic, and evolving (Abes et al., 2007; Sedgwick, 1991).

Finally, Queer theory in this discussion is intended to provide a theoretical framework to support an explanation of the themes that emerged in the study as participants revealed their coming-out processes and the formation of multiple dimensions of their Lesbian and Gay self-identities. As noted earlier, these self-identities were formed in different ways that included the intersection of gender and ethnicity (Abes et al., 2007; Mertens, 2010).

Implications of the Findings

The following recommendations come from the findings and main themes of this study. The implications of the research have led to the following insights and functional suggestions for colleges, universities, and their senior administrators to consider implementing as part of an ongoing process to transform traditional, heteronormative environments to those in which Lesbian and Gay senior administrators can be fully integrated and effective.

Memorable leadership experiences. The Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in this study found their leadership experiences to be memorable in their role as "change agents" who challenged existing employee benefits offered only to heterosexual couples. Similar experiences could be part of a necessary process that occurs when Lesbian and Gay senior administrators choose to be out and comfortable in their workplace. Such experiences also reflect the growing awareness that college and universities are changing their policies concerning benefits for Lesbian and Gays. Such increased awareness may lead colleges and universities to consider all their senior administrators, including those who are Lesbian and Gay, as they evaluate the benefits they offer to their administrators.

The suggestion that employers take steps to challenge a heteronormative environment is consistent with other research that found employers who had acted to change the "climate of heterosexism" were more likely to have Lesbians and Gays visibly out to their coworkers and staff (Coon, 2001; Lyons & Fassinger, 2010). As a result of such action, out Lesbian and Gay senior administrators are more inclined to question existing heteronormative benefits at their institutions, which could change the benefits not only for themselves, but also for other Lesbians and Gays in their workplaces. Results from the current study, which corroborate previous research, suggest that colleges and universities that support their Lesbian and Gay senior administrators' efforts to send a positive message to others might also result in attracting other qualified Gay and Lesbian senior administrators who have chosen to be out (Rankin et al., 2010).

Coming-out in the workplace. The senior administrators in this study were found to be visibly out in their workplaces in varying degrees and ways, and they gauged their choices about coming-out according to the "comfortableness" of their work environments. Coming-out in the workplace and being honest and genuine about themselves was an essential part of their self-

120

identities as leaders. Both colleges and universities, and Lesbian and Gay senior administrators can benefit from the current evidence that indicates the process of coming-out may occur in stages or gradations, but that the progression is not always linear.

Sometimes Gay and Lesbian senior administrators in this study had to step back or retreat in the presence of individuals who expressed discomfort with their sexual identity. For Lesbian and Gay senior administrators, this suggests there may be particular circumstances or times when they appropriately choose not to come out; and those situations may be social or political, depending on the events and interactions of those within their work environments. This scenario was not a common or frequent occurrence for current participants, but all of them at one time or another had experienced similar disruptions in the process and found them unsettling.

Similar experiences in the coming-out experience could also manifest for other Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in workplace environments that are predominantly heteronormative in design. Until the present work environment evolves and becomes more accepting of Lesbian and Gay differences, this stepping-back survival mechanism may be a necessary response to a heteronormative environment. Colleges and universities whose leadership recognizes the need for changes in their work environments to avoid this potential situation will be better able to address the issue and make efforts toward creating a more inclusive, accepting environment.

Both the current research and other findings suggest that the coming-out process occurs in relation to the inherent heterosexism in the workplace of higher education (Alden & Parker, 2005). It is also important for first-level university and college leaders and their Lesbian and Gay senior administrators to be aware that the coming-out process evolves and changes in relation to social encounters with others in that environment. For example, many Lesbian and

121

Gay senior administrators in this study stated that coworkers or staff often assumed that they were married to a person of the opposite sex, and that their mother-in-law or father-in-law was the mother or father of someone of the opposite sex. Most participants had developed strategies for responding that sometimes varied in different situations. As a result, their coming-out to others at work reoccurred.

Lesbian and Gay senior administrators can learn from these results that it is important to be prepared to backtrack and reemerge in the coming-out process when circumstances and individuals in their work environments change. College and university administrators also can learn from this research that their campuses are often still heteronormative environments that may be riddled with assumptions and ideas that reinforce heterosexism among employees and others at all levels within the institution. Lesbian and Gay senior administrators may need to be prepared to respond appropriately when such assumptions and ideas are evident.

Lesbian and Gay identity and leadership effectiveness. In the current study, fostering trust was an essential part of being an effective leader for Lesbian and Gay senior administrators. This information is important for Lesbian and Gay senior administrators who may be making the choice as leaders to come out at their colleges or universities. Participants also revealed that being out and fostering trust was an essential part of forming meaningful relationships and bonds at work. These leaders confirmed that forging relationships and alliances was crucial for them to accomplish their objectives and goals at their institutions of higher education. Colleges and universities can use this data to support the choices and efforts of their Gay and Lesbian senior administrators to come out in the workplace. Such top-level support will help create a work environment in which these senior administrators can be more effective leaders.

122

Multiple self-identities of Lesbian and Gay leaders in the workplace. The implication is clear in both current and previous research that Lesbian and Gay identity is integral to the formation of self-identity, and that self-identity is an essential component to being an effective leader (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002; Hall, 2004; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). This information can be an invaluable resource to help administrators of colleges and universities understand the importance of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators being comfortably out in the workplace as they develop their self-identity and their effectiveness as leaders.

Furthermore, it is important for colleges and universities to know that, according to the Lesbian and Gay leaders in this study, sexual identity was not the only component of their perceived effectiveness. These senior administrators agreed that an effective leader must have other qualities, which they expressed as being a "leader for everybody," and being known as a leader who was "accepting of others" and "open" to everyone's opinions and ideas. They also said it was important for a leader to be fair, respected, and a daily example of integrity to the others with whom they worked.

It is important for college and university leaders who wish for their institutions to be inclusive to keep in mind that sexual identity, although important, was not a defining characteristic the Gay and Lesbian senior administrators in this study focused on. They clearly did not want be characterized by their sexual identity, and they did not want that to be another minority label. In fact, most participants wanted to be perceived as multidimensional and multifaceted leaders and not as stereotypes of Lesbians or Gays.

The Lesbian and Gay administrators in this study expressed other identities as being equally important to their self-identity. For instance, others in the workplace perceived their gender and ethnic identities before they did their sexual identities. They also indicated that in

123

their workplace experiences these other identities were essential in identifying with others. It is important for college and universities to take into account that both the sexual and other identities of Lesbian and Gay senior administrators are being perceived differently by others, vary in individuals, and even intersect. When colleges and universities are considering the needs and wants of minorities in their workplaces, this research offers valuable insight about considering these other identities as separate and unique, and addressing their equal importance. Further, these multiple identities are integral to the self-identities of leaders, and they may require diverse responses by colleges and universities within the workplace (Abes et al., 2007).

Finally, Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in this study expressed the need to be viewed as leaders who could be trusted and whose self-identity was "genuine" and credible. They noted that sharing their personal lives with others about their partners and families was an integral part of being out, of integrating their sexual identities in the workplace, and of being perceived as "authentic" leaders. Colleges and universities can benefit from the knowledge that Lesbian and Gay senior administrators want to be perceived accordingly, and that fostering trust in this regard might be a fundamental part of successfully achieving long-term goals that are linked to the missions of their institutions. In other words, the research supports the view that it is in the best interest of college and universities to remove any barriers to being open and honest about themselves in their workplaces that may presently exist for Lesbians and Gay senior administrators (Arwood, 2005; Unger, 2008). That environment would enable Lesbian and Gay administrators to feel more comfortable with their sexual identities and to more easily integrate their multiple self-identities in their workplaces. In turn, it would both assist Lesbian and Gay senior administrators and signal others that the work environment is a safe and welcoming one in

which they can come out and share their personal lives with others (Lyons & Fassinger, 2010; Rankin et al., 2010).

Further Research

The findings of this study led to several suggestions for future research focused on Lesbian and Gay leadership in higher-education intuitions. The study participants were often surprised to discover that more researchers had not addressed their concerns of coming-out and the issue of sexual identities at colleges and universities.

This study revealed that some participants expressed a keen interest in being mentors or role models to others LGBT students, and leaders. It addressed those interests only in light of the coming-out process in the workplace. More research concerning the desires of mentoring or coaching for other Gay and Lesbian leaders in the workplace, and the availability of programs at colleges and universities to encourage that mentoring and coaching, would be valuable.

Additionally, few studies were available that addressed the intersection between Lesbian and Gay identity and ethnic and gender identity, which were found in this study to be complex and integral parts of self-identity for Lesbian and Gay leaders. Further research is needed. Most importantly, more research into the complex ways genders, ethnicities, and sexual preferences may combine to form multiple identities for Lesbian and Gay leaders would be a valuable addition to the available literature.

Last, this study identified that the correlation between Gays and Lesbians' self-identity as leaders and their perception of how others viewed them in the workplace was sometimes critical, both in helping them define their sexual identity and in determining their leadership effectiveness at work. Additional research could focus on these factors and expand the limited data currently available.

REFERENCES

Abes, E., & Jones, S. (2004). Meaning-making capacity and the dynamics of lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(6), 612–632.

Abes, E. S., Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2007). Reconceptualizing the model of multiple dimensions of identity: The role of meaning-making capacity in the construction of multiple identities. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(1), 1–22.

Akkerman S., Admiraal, W., Brekelmans, M., & Oost, H. (2008) Auditing the quality of research in social sciences. *Quantity and Quality*, *42*(2), 257–274. doi:10.1007/s11135-006-9044-4

Alden, H. L., & Parker, K. F. (2005). Gender role ideology, homophobia and hate crime: Linking attitudes to macro-level anti-gay and lesbian hate crime. *Deviant Behavior, 26*, 321–343.

Andreas, M. (2004). *The interrelationship between being lesbian and its impacts on community college leadership.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Oregon State University, Corvallis.

Aron, A. (2003). The self and relationships. In M. R. Leary & J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 442–461). New York, NY: Guilford.

Arwood, T. (2006). *Sexual identity and leadership: The pink ceiling.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Louisville, Kentucky.

Balsam, K. F., & Mohr, J. J. (2007). Adaptation to sexual orientation stigma: A comparison of bisexual and lesbian/gay adults. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54,* 306–319.

Banaji, M. R., & Prentice, D. A. (1994). The self in social contexts. *Annual Review of Psychology, 45,* 297–332.

Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership; Theory, research, and managerial applications*. (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Baumgardner, J. (2008). Look both ways: Bisexual politics. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Bilodeau, B. L., & Renn, K. A. (2005). Analysis of LGBT development models and implications for practice. *New Directions for Student Services, 111,* 25–39. doi:10.1002/ss.171

Brady, S., & Busse, W. J. (1994). The Gay Identity Questionnaire: A brief measure of homosexual identity formation. *Journal of Homosexuality, 26*(4), 1–22.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101.

Brenner, B. R., Lyons, H. Z., & Fassinger, R. E. (2010). Can heterosexism harm organizations? Predicting the perceived organizational citizenship behaviors of gay and lesbian employees. *The Career Development Quarterly, 58*(4), 321+. Retrieved from https://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/501349406?accountid=12768

Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual identity formation: A theoretical model. *Journal of Homosexuality, 4*(3), 219–235.

Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. *Journal of Sex Research*, *20*, 143–167.

Catalyst. (2013). Tips for creating an LGBT-inclusive workplace environment, *Profiles in Diversity Journal.* Retrieved from: http://www.diversityjournal.com/10103-tips-for-creating-an-lgbt-inclusive-workplace-environment/

Chickering, A. W., & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and identity* (2nd ed.). New York: Jossey Bass.

Chonody, J. M., Siebert, D. C., & Rutledge, S. E. (2009). College students' attitudes toward gays and lesbians. *Journal of Social Work Education, 45*(3), 499–512. Retrieved from https://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/209795798?accountid=12768

Chronicle of Higher Education.(2012). Median salaries of senior college administrators, 2011–12. College and University Professional Association for Human Resources. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Median-Salaries-of-Senior/137507/

Conklin, T. (2007). Method or madness: Transcendental phenomenology as knowledge creator. *Journal of Management Inquiry 16*(3), 275–287.

Connell, C. (2012). Dangerous disclosures. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy, 9*(2), 168–177. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13178-011-0076-8

Coon, D. W. (2001). *Study of gay and lesbian leaders*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Seattle University, Washington.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. (2009) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (3rd ed.). University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NE. Sage.

Creswell, J. (2013) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (4th ed.). University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NE. Sage.

D'Augelli, A. R. (1994). Identity development and sexual identity: Toward a model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development. In E. J. Trickett, R. J. Watts, & D. Birman (Eds.)*, Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context* (pp. 312–333). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

De Cremer, D. & van Knippenberg, D. (2002). How do leaders promote cooperation? The effects of charisma and procedural fairness. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(5), 858–866.

Diamond, L. M., and Butterworth, M. R. (2008). Questioning gender and sexual identity: Dynamic links over time. *Sex Roles, 59,* 365–376.

Fassinger, R. E., & Miller, B. A. (1997). Validation of an inclusive model of sexual minority identity formation on a sample of gay men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *32*(2), 53–78. doi:10.1300/J082v32n02_04

Fassinger, R. E., Shullman, S. L., & Stevenson, M. R. (2010). Toward an affirmative lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender leadership paradigm. *American Psychological Association*, *65*(3), 201–215. doi:10.1037/a0018597

Finlay, L. (2003). Through the looking glass: Intersubjectivity and hermeneutic reflection. In L. Finlay and B. Gough (Eds,), *Reflexivity: A practical guide for researchers in health and social sciences*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing.

Finlay, L (2005). Reflexive embodied empathy: A phenomenology of participant-researcher intersubjectivity, *Methods Issue: The Humanistic Psychologist, 33*(4), 271–92.

Finlay, L (2008). Introducing phenomenological research. Retrieved from http://www.lindafinlay.co.uk/phenomenology.htm

Foucault, M. (1978). The history of sexuality, vol. 1: An introduction. New York, NY: Vintage.

Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach.* Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press

Griffin, P. (1992). From hiding out to coming out: Empowering lesbian and gay educators. *Journal of Homosexuality, 22*(3/4), 167–196.

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(1), Article 4. Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/3_1/pdf/groenewald.pdf

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006) How many interviews are enough? *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59–82. doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(2), 261–280. doi:10.1177/1077800403262360

Guittar, Nicholas A. (2013). The meaning of coming out: From self-affirmation to full disclosure. *Qualitative Sociology Review 9*(3), 169–187.

Hall, D. T. 2004. Self-awareness, identity, and leader development. In D. V. Day, S. J. Zaccaro, & S. M. Halpin (Eds.), *Leader development for transforming organizations*: 153–176. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Halpin, S. A., & Allen, M. W. (2004). Changes in psychosocial well-being during stages of gay identity development. *Journal of Homosexuality, 47*(2), 109–126.

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Retrieved from Project MUSE database, http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780791487945

Henderson, A., & Murdock, J. (2011). Getting students beyond ideologies: Using heterosexist guided imagery in the classroom. *Innovative Higher Education, 37*(3), 185–198 doi:10.10 07/s10755 -011-9198-4

Herek, G. M. (1986). The social psychology of homophobia: Toward a practical theory. *Review of Law and Social Change, 14*(4), 923–934.

Herek, G. M. (1992). The social context of hate crimes: Notes on cultural heterosexism. In G. M. Herek & K. T. Berrill (Eds.), *Hate crimes: Confronting violence against lesbians and gay men* (pp. 89–104). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Herek, G. M. (1993). Documenting prejudice against lesbians and gay men on campus: The Yale Sexual Orientation Survey. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *25*(4), 15–30.

Herek, G. M. (1995). Psychological heterosexism in the United States. In A. R. D'Augelli & C. J. Patterson (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan* (pp. 321–326). New York, NY: Oxford Press.

Herek, G. M. (2002). Gender gaps in public opinion about lesbians and gay men. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 66,* 40–66.

Hewlett, S., & Sumberg, K. (2011). For LGBT workers, being "out" brings advantages. *Harvard Business Review*, *89*(7/8), 28.

Hidehiro, E., Reece-Miller, P.C., & Santavicca, N. (2010). Surviving in the trenches: A narrative inquiry into queer teachers' experiences and identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 26*(4), 1023–1030.

Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology* (trans. by W. R. Boyce Gibson). New York, NY: Collier.

Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Ihde, Don. (1971). *Hermeneutic phenomenology.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Johnson, R. B. (2009) *Workplace climate, degree of outness, and job satisfaction of gay and lesbian professional staff in higher education.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.) The University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2000). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development, 41*(4), 405–414.

Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, J. (2006). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Kenny, R. (2008). *Lesbian leaders in action: Influencing and transforming community college culture*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.) Oregon State University, Corvallis.

Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2007) *The leadership challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Law, M., Stewart, D., Letts, L., Pollock, N., Bosch, J., & Westmorland, M., (1998). Critical review form for qualitative studies. McMaster University Occupational Therapy Evidence-Based Practice Research Group. Retrieved from http://www.usc.edu/hsc/ebnet/res/Guidelines.pdf

Leider, S. (2000). Sexual minorities on community college campuses. Eric Digest ED 44781441. Los Angeles, CA: Eric Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, University of California at Los Angeles.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lugg, C. A., & Koschoreck, J. W. (2003). The final closet: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered educational leaders. *Journal of School Leadership, 13*, 4–6.

Lyons, H. Z., Brenner, B. R., & Fassbinger, R. E. (2005). A multicultural test of the theory of work adjustment: Investigating the role of heterosexism and fit perceptions in the job satisfaction of lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52,* 537–548.

Marszalek, J. F., III, Cashwell, C. S., Dunn, M. S., & Heard, K. (2004). Comparing gay identity development theory to cognitive development: An empirical study. *Journal of Homosexuality, 8*, 103–123. doi:10.1300/J082v48n01_05

McCarn, S. R., & Fassinger, R. E. (1996). Revisioning sexual minority identity formation: A new model of lesbian identity and its implications for counseling and research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *24*(3), 508–534. doi:10.1177/0011000096243011

McIntosh, Mary. (1968). The homosexual role. *Social Problems*, *16*(2), 182–192.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. M. (2010). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morse, J. M., Barrett M., Mayan M., Olson K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 1*(2), 13–22.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Myerhoff, B., & Ruby, J. (1992). A crack in the mirror: Reflexive perspectives in anthropology. In K. J. Ahern, K. J. (1999) Pearls, pith and provocation: Ten tips for reflexive bracketing, *Qualitative Health Research,* 9(3), 407–411.

Namaste, K. (1994). The politics of inside/out: Queer theory, poststructuralism, and a sociological approach to sexuality*, Sociological Theory, 12*(2), 220–231.

Patton, M. Q. (2001). Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3rd ed.). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 0761919716

Pichler, S., Varma, A., & Bruce, T. (2010)*.* Heterosexism in employment decisions: The role of job misfit. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 40*(10), 2527–2555.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R. S. Valle and S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience* (pp. 41–60). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Povah, L., and Sobczak, K. (2010). A context-orientated approach to leader selection: A strategy for uncertain times, *People & Strategy, 33*(4), 41–47.

Ragins, B. R., & Cornwell, J. M. (2001). Pink triangles: Antecedents and consequences of perceived workplace discrimination against gay and lesbian employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(6), 1244–1261.

Ragins, B. R., Singh, R., & Cornell, J. M. (2007).Making the invisible visible: Fear and disclosure of sexual identity at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(4), 1103–1118.

Rankin, S. R. (2003). *Campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people: A national perspective*. Retrieved from The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy website, http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/CampusClimate.pdf

Rankin, S. (2006). LGBTQA students on campus: Is higher education making the grade? *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education, 3*(2/3), 111–117.

Rankin, S., & Reason, R. (2009). *Campus climate assessment and planning*. Washington, DC: ACPA Books and Media.

Rankin, S., Weber, G., Blumenfeld, W., & Frazer, S. (2010). *2010 state of higher education for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender people.* Charlotte, NC: Campus Pride.

Renn, K., & Bilodeau, B. (2003). *Coming out as a leader: The development of leadership identity among lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgender students.* Paper presented at the ASHE Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon.

Renn, K. A. (2010). LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher*, *39*(2), 132–141.

Renn, K. A., & Bilodeau, B. L. (2005). Queer student leaders: An exploratory case study of identity development and LGBT student involvement at a Midwestern research university. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 2*(4), 49–71.

Rottman, C. (2006). Queering educational leadership from the inside out. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 9*(1), 1–20. doi:10.1080/13603120500389507

Sandberg, J. (1995). Are phenomenographic results reliable? *Journal of Nordic Educational Research, 15*, 156–164.

Schmidt, S. W., Githens, R. P., Rocco, T. S., & Kormanik, M. (2012). Lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people and human resource development: An examination of the literature. *Human Resource Development Review, 11*(3), 328–350.

Schyns, B., Kiefer, T., Kerschreiter, R., & Tymon, A. (2011). Teaching implicit leadership theories to develop leaders and leadership: How and why it can make a difference. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 1*(3), 397–408.

Sears, B., & Mallory, C. (2011) *Documented evidence of employment discrimination & its effects on LGBT people.* Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

Sedgwick, E. (1991). *Epistemology of the closet.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sprague, J., & Kobrynowicz, D. (2004). A feminist epistemology. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & M. L. Yaiser (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on social research* (pp. 78–98) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology & epistemology* (2nd ed.) London, England: Routledge.

Troiden, R. R. (1988). Homosexual identity development. *Journal of Adolescent Health Care, 9*, 105–113.

Tuckett, A. G. (2005). Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher's experience. *Contemporary Nurse, 19*(12), 75–87.

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in qualitative research. *Qualitative Social Work, 11*(1), 80–96. doi:10.1177/1473325010368316

Unger, D. W. (2008). Breaking through the lavender ceiling. Echelon: The Source for GLBT Business Professionals. Retrieved from http://www.echelonmagazine.com/index.php?id=516

Valadez, G., & Elsbree, A. R. (2005). Queer coyotes: Transforming education to be more accepting, affirming, and supportive of queer individuals. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 4*(3), 171–192.

van Knippenberg, B., van Knippenberg, D., De Cremer, D., & Hogg, M. (2004). Research in leadership, self, and identity: A sample of the present and a glimpse of the future. *Leadership Quarterly, 16*(4), 495–499.

van Knippenberg, D., & Hogg, M. A. 2003. A social identity model of leadership effectiveness in organizations, *Research in Organizational Behavior, 25,* 245–297. Elsevier Ltd.

van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London, Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.

Waldo, C. R. (1999). Working in a majority context: A structural model of heterosexism as minority stress in the workplace. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46,* 218–232.

Waldo, C. R., Hesson-McInnis, M. S., & D'Augelli, A. R. (1998). Antecedents and consequences of victimization of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people: A structural model comparing rural university and urban samples. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 26,* 307–334.

Wallace, D. L. (2002). Out in the academy: Heterosexism, invisibility, and double consciousness. *College English, 65*(1), 53–66.

Warner, Michael (Ed.). (1993). *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Washington, J., & Evans, N. J. (1991). Becoming an ally. In N. J. Evans and V. A. Wall (Eds.), *Beyond tolerance: Gays, lesbians and bisexuals on campus.* (pp. 195–204). Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.

Watt, D. (2007). On becoming a qualitative researcher: The value of reflexivity. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(1), 82–100. Retrieved from: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR12-1/watt.pdf

Weber, L. (1998) A conceptual framework for understanding race, class, gender and sexuality. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 22,* 13–32.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

You have been invited to take part in a research study about the perceptions of self-identified Lesbian and Gay senior administrators, and their effectiveness as leaders at higher-education institutions. This study will be conducted by Thomas Christo of Colorado State University, School of Education and Human Resources Studies, Doctoral Program in Community College Leadership (CCL). His faculty sponsor and Chair is Dr. Linda Kuk, also at Colorado State University.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Take part in an interview regarding your lived experiences as a Lesbian or Gay senior administrator in your present position at your institution. The interview will take place either in-person or online via Skype at a time and location that is convenient for you.

Your interview will be audio taped. You may review these tapes and request that all or any portion of the tapes be destroyed. Participation in this study will take 60 to 90 minutes of your time to answer the open-ended questions and discuss your experiences. In addition, a "member checking" activity will be performed, which should not take more than an hour of your time. The transcribed interviews will be sent to you to read, and, if necessary, any material on the transcript that you deem to be inaccurate can be altered.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research beyond those of everyday life. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks. Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research may help the investigator understand the perceptions of Lesbian and Gay senior higher-education administrators regarding their self-identity and their leadership effectiveness.

Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by assigning code numbers to each participant so that data is never directly linked to an individual identity. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. During the interviews you have the right to skip or not answer any questions you prefer not to answer.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Thomas S. Christo at 646-457-7923, or tsc1@nyu.edu. You may also contact my faculty sponsor, Dr. Linda Kuk, at 970-491-5160 or email her at Linda.Kuk@colostate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655, or email her at Janell.Barker@ColoState.EDU. Please feel free to print a copy of this consent for your own information. Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document, which is one page.

I agree to the conditions and terms of this consent form. Inputting your name and date and returning via email will be considered your electronic signature for participants who will not be participating in in-person interviews.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

CSU#: 14-4866H
APPROVED: 4/2/2014 * EXPIRES:
3/25/2015

APPENDIX B: GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thank you, for agreeing to this interview today. As I had stated in my letter, I'm studying

Lesbian and Gay senior administrators in higher education; you had agreed to be interviewed and

that will be really be helpful in doing this study.

Before we begin: Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1) What are your current professional title and responsibilities?

2) What are some memorable experiences related to your role as a leader in your present position?

3) How have you, as a Lesbian or Gay leader, chosen to come out in the workplace?

4) What factors affected your choice to come out in the workplace?

5) What effect do you think your identity as a Lesbian or Gay has had on your effectiveness as a leader?

6) How have you chosen to integrate your Lesbian or Gay identity into your leadership?

7) How effective do you believe that integration has been?

APPENDIX C: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

Senior Administrator, Title

University or College Name

Address, City, State and Zip Code

Date

Dear Mr/Ms/Dr:

My name is Thomas Christo, and I am a doctoral candidate at Colorado State University in the School of Education and Human Resources Studies. My faculty sponsor is Linda Kuk, PhD, an Associate Professor at Colorado State University in the School of Education and Human Resources. This letter is being sent to you from an individual who has agreed to participate in the study, and s/he feels that you would provide excellent information for this research.

I am writing you to ask for your assistance in collecting data from self-identified Lesbian, or Gay senior administrators in higher-education institutions in the United States. The title of my dissertation is *The Perceptions of Self-identified Lesbian and Gay Senior Administrators, and Their Effectiveness as Leaders at Higher Education Institutions.* Participants in this study are self-identified as Lesbian or Gay, senior administrators, second line, and report to the President/ Chancellor or Provost of an institution; they are generally titled Provost, Vice President, or Dean. If this letter was sent to you in error, please feel free to discard it.

If you feel you qualify as a participant, I would like to invite you to participate in a 60- to 90-minute, face-to-face or SKYPE interview to discuss your experiences as a Lesbian or Gay senior administrator at your higher-education institution. Higher-education institutions could use the results of this study to be better prepared to create policies specifically geared to Lesbian and Gay senior administrators.

In addition to the 60- to 90-minute interview, I would like to ask you to participate in a "member checking" activity, which should not take more than an hour of your time. The purpose of the member-checking activity is to ensure that the transcript that is produced from the interview is an accurate representation of it.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss. The interview will take place at a location and time that is designated and convenient for you.

The consent form for this research is attached to give you additional information about the study. If you would like to participate in this research or should have any questions or concerns, please contact me Thomas Christo at 646-457-7923, or email me at tsc1@nyu.edu. You may also contact my faculty sponsor, Dr. Linda Kuk, at 970-491-5160, or email her at Linda.Kuk@colostate.edu. If you should have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research study, please contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-7243, or email her at Janell.Barker@ColoState.EDU.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas Christo, MBA	Linda Kuk, PhD
CSU Doctoral Candidate,	Associate Professor and Principal
and Co-Principal Investigator	Investigator
646-457-7923	School of Education
tsc1@nyu.edu	970-491-7243
	Linda.kuk@colostate.edu

APPENDIX D: SNOWBALLING RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear [Mr./Ms./Dr. Last name],

Thank you for your interest in recommending potential candidates for the study of *The Perceptions of Self-Identified Lesbian and Gay Senior Higher Education Administrators Regarding Their Leadership Effectiveness.* The participants in this study are self-identified as Lesbian or Gay, second line, and report to the President/Chancellor or Provost of an institution; they are generally titled Provost, Vice President, or Dean.

I am sending an email to ask whether you would be willing to pass along the enclosed information to friends and/or colleagues who qualify and may also be interested in participating in this study. You are under no obligation to share this information, and whether or not you share this information will not affect your relationship with the researcher. If this email has been sent in error, you may discard it.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tom Christo

Enclosed: Invitation to Participate in Study
            Informed Consent Form - CSU#:14-4866H

APPENDIX E: AUDIT TRAIL OF STUDY

Date(s) (2014)	Description of Task(s) Performed	Classification
1/21	Approved proposal from doctoral committee	Approval
2/07	Approved proposal revised and additions made for CSU- IRB	Preparation
2/10	Proposal submitted to CSU – IRB and forms filled in on website	Approval
3/31	Revisions Requested by IRB – CSU forms revised (3), and resubmitted	Revisions
4/02	Formal Approval and letter from CSU – IRB - CSU#:14-4886H	Approval
4/28	Email sent to recruit initial participants in study	Recruitment
4/28– 5/15	Consent Forms received from participants who agreed to the interviews (5)	Consent Forms
5/16	Snowball recruitment letters sent to participants who agreed to assist by sending the materials to colleagues, and friends.	Recruitment
5/16– 5/28	Consent Forms received from referred participants who agreed to the interviews (4)	Consent Forms
5/07	Participant 1 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
5/10	Interview 1 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
05/10	Member checking and initial review of Interview 1	Data Analysis
5/11	Interviewed 1 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
5/13	Participant 2 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
5/16	Interview 2 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
5/16	Member checking and initial review of Interview 2	Data Analysis
5/16	Interviewed 2 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
5/16	Participant 3 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
5/19	Interview 3 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
5/19	Member checking and initial review of Interview 3	Data Analysis
5/19	Interviewed 3 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
5/20	Participant 4 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
5/23	Interview 4 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
5/24	Member checking and initial review of Interview 4	Data Analysis
5/26	Interviewed 4 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
5/28	Participant 5 interviewed in office at workplace	Data Collection
5/31	Interview 5 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
6/01	Member checking and initial review of Interview 5	Data Analysis
6/02	Interviewed 5 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
6/02	Evaluation of ongoing themes, categories and saturation	Data Collection
6/03	Decision to continue interviews	Data Collection

6/03	Participant 6 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
6/06	Interview 6 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
6/07	Member checking and initial review of Interview 6	Data Analysis
6/09	Interview 6 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
6/20	Participant 7 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
6/23	Interview 7 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
6/25	Member checking and initial review of Interview 7	Data Analysis
6/28	Interviewed 7 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
6/29	Evaluation of ongoing themes, categories and saturation	Data Collection
6/30	Decision to continue to interview	Data Collection
7/02	Participant 8 interviewed on Skype	Data Collection
7/06	Interview 8 transcribed and reviewed	Data Collection
7/07	Member checking and initial review of Interview 8	Data Analysis
7/08	Interview 8 reviewed and read several times for initial themes, and categories that emerged and used "bracketing"	Data Analysis— Steps 1 and 2
7/09	Evaluation of ongoing themes, categories and saturation	Data Collection
7/12	Decision to discontinue interview process - point of saturation	Data Collection
7/14– 7/26	Compile interviews gathered and use 'horizontalization' to segregate significant statements, expressions, and quotes	
0727– 08/14	Analyze the interviews again from steps 1 and 2 above to create a list of the "recurring" "central" and "dominant" expressions	Data Analysis— Steps 3
8/28– 09/14	The common themes that emerged formed groups of "clusters" of meanings to create an "exhaustive" description of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon.	Data Analysis— Steps 4
09/18– 09/28	The compiled interviews were "knit" together from steps 3 and 4 to create a composite textual description that was representative of the integration of the participants' lived experiences	Data Analysis— Step 5
09/29– 10/01	Proposal revised into final dissertation – Edited, revisions made in content, added material to reflect present conditions, and data analysis details to accurately reflect actual procedures used	Preparation
10/02– 10/04	Short Biography of participants compiled from Interviews	Chapter 5— Findings
10/05	Major Themes and Subthemes found in Step 4 stated in Introduction to chapter 4 – Separate document begun used for editing, and revising it.	Chapter 5— Findings
10/06	Essence of phenomena reevaluated, edited and added to separate document with analysis from Chapter 4	Data Analysis— Stage 5
10/07	Chapter 4 added to edited and revised Dissertation	Preparation
10/08	Dissertation—with Chapter 4 added, edited, and revisions made in content, added material to reflect present conditions of chapter 4 and accurately reflect and update procedures used	Preparation
10/8– 10/14	Template for Chapter 5, Introduction, Addressed the Research Questions—3rd draft	Preparation

10/14	Revised Dissertation sent to Chair for edits, comments, and/or additions and will be used to form chapter 5	Approval
10/20	Dissertation Returned by Chair with Edits—Chapter 4 approved with revision, and additions requested including adding Chapter 5	Review
10/20–10/26	Added to Chapter 4—Took Research Question Answered from Chapter 5, edited them several times, and put in Chapter 4. Added Discussion of the Themes, Implications of Findings, and Future research, edited several times.	Preparation
10/26–10/27	Final Dissertation with revisions and additions, updated Appendices, and double-check of alignment, and formatting.	Approval
10/29	Dissertation returned by chair with edits- Chapter needs rewrite of discussion of themes and implication of the findings	Review
11/3	Dissertation with revised chapter 5, and edits in chapters 3 & 4 APA checked and spelling of citations, formatting of spacing and headings, etc.	Approval
11/4 – 11/14	Corrected faulty spelling, grammar, punctuation, and incorrect word usage • Checked specific citation content, format, and sequence in text and References, and ensured that citations and References are consistent with each other and completed according to APA/CSU style guidelines • Verified consistency and accuracy in spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, use of numerals vs. words, and fonts • Identified edited inappropriate figures of speech, ambiguity, incorrect statements • Ensured consistency of voice and tense, and changed passive to active constructions wherever appropriate • Checked key terms, vocabulary lists, index, and other similar matter for consistency within established criteria • Verified all URLs within the manuscript, made appropriate corrections if/when possible, and identified those that require further correction or research • Removed wordiness, triteness (overused or unoriginal content), and inappropriate use of jargon • Made additions and deletions of content (including rewriting). Concentrated on Chapters 4 and 5. • Assigned new levels to headings and subheadings to improve logical structure • Smoothed transitions and moved sentences to improve readability.	Preparation
11/21	Sent final copy to chair and committee for Defense on 12/8	Approval
12/8	Dissertation Passed – Edits and revisions made and sent to Chair	Approval