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Female African American Higher Education Chief Executives: An Explanatory Mixed Methods Study of Their Use of Personal Power to Dismantle Self-Sabotage

A Dissertation by

La Toya T. Davis, née Goodrum

University of Massachusetts Global

A Private Nonprofit Affiliate of the University of Massachusetts

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2022

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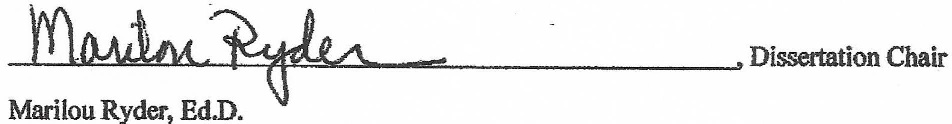
A Nonprofit Affiliate of the University of Massachusetts

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of La Toya T. Davis, née Goodrum is approved.



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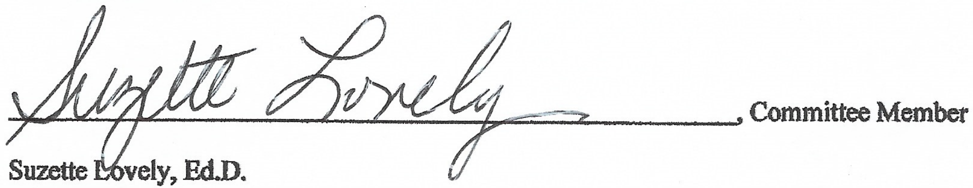

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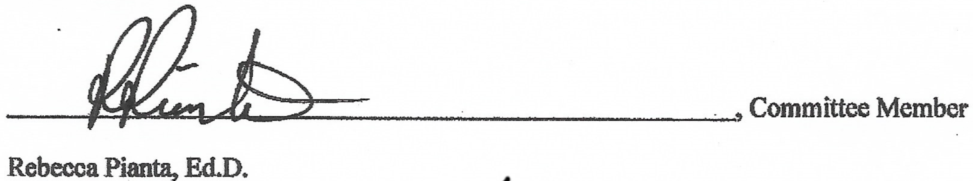

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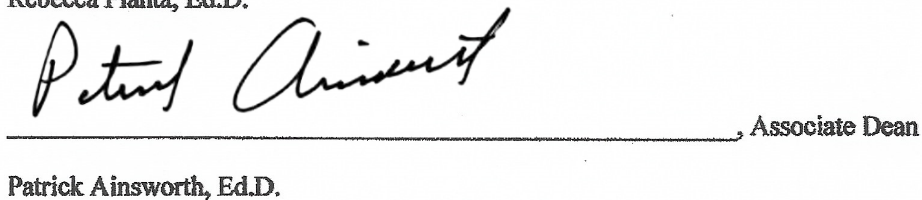

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April 2022

Female African American Higher Education Chief Executives: An Explanatory Mixed Methods Study of Their Use of Personal Power to Dismantle Self-Sabotage

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~And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work~ 2 Corinthians 9:8

ABSTRACT

Female African American Higher Education Chief Executives: An Explanatory Mixed Methods Study of Their Use of Personal Power to Dismantle Self-Sabotage

by La Toya T. Davis, née Goodrum

Purpose: The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Methodology: This explanatory mixed method study identified and described the lived experiences of eight female African American higher education chief executives across the United States. This research design encompassed a sequential data collection method using an electronic survey instrument to collect quantitative data, followed by one-one interviews for qualitative data collection. Based on the collection of survey and interview data, the researcher was able to triangulate data using the trends, categories, and patterns of self-sabotaging behaviors and the methods used to overcome them.

Findings: Data examination revealed that female African American higher education chief executives engaged in nine self-sabotaging behaviors during their quest to executive leadership positions. The behaviors adversely impacted their career advancement and mental and physical wellness. Intersectionality was a contributing factor to the development of self-sabotaging behaviors. The top three self-sabotaging behaviors identified were *fear and worrying, thinking too small,* and *not taking time for reflection*.

The top three strategies identified to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors were *building a power web*, *honest self-expression*, and *cultivating self-intimacy*.

Conclusions: African American women participate in self-sabotaging behaviors throughout their leadership careers. The intersectionality of gender and race, childhood upbringing, and cultural background were influential in the development of self-sabotaging behaviors. The study also found that self-sabotaging behaviors adversely impact career development. African American women utilize a variety of strategies to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors. *Building a power web* was the number one strategy identified by female African American higher education chief executives to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors.

Recommendations: Further research is recommended to identify the self-sabotaging behaviors, and their impact on female college athletic executives, religious leaders, and other women striving for leadership positions. It is also recommended that research be conducted using different research methods.

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PREFACE

One faculty researcher and seven doctoral students discovered a common interest in exploring specific self-sabotaging behaviors of women and gay males in leadership and the strategies used by these leaders to overcome self-sabotage. Through their shared interest, a thematic study was conducted by the seven doctoral students to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female leaders and gay males and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of the study was to identify strategies employed by female leaders and gay males to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. An explanatory sequential mixed methods study was developed utilizing a theoretical framework adapted from Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003) to group female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching domains of women's personal power.

To ensure thematic consistency and reliability, the seven doctoral students worked in collaboration with one faculty member to develop the purpose statement and research questions. The survey instrument, interview questions, and study procedures were utilized in previous thematic research studies by Pianta (2020), Thomas (2020), and Crews (2020). All instruments were compiled through collaboration and research of the thematic group, and alterations were supported through alignment with Ryder and Briles (2003) theoretical framework. Each researcher administered an online survey to female leaders to identify the self-sabotaging behaviors they experienced and the impact they had on their career development. Following the survey, the researchers individually interviewed their study participants to explore the impact the self-sabotaging behaviors

had on their career development and to identify the strategies that study participants employed to overcome them.

The term *peer researchers* was used throughout the dissertation to refer to the other researchers involved in conducting this thematic study. The peer researchers studied female leaders and gay males in the following fields: Ashley Sandor, female secondary principals, John McCarthy, K-12 gay male school leaders, LaToya Davis, female African American higher education executives, Davina Bailey, female higher education deans, Tatiana Larreynaga, female Latina C-Suite millennials, Kristen Miller, female assistant superintendents, and Heather Vennes, female charter school Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and superintendents.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

According to Northouse (2016), leadership is the aptitude to influence a group of individuals toward a common goal. These factors contribute to the power of leadership to effectively influence vision, purpose, values, team building, commitment levels, and the overall direction of organizations and groups. Bolman and Deal (2013) support this notion by indicating that elements such as accessibility, symbolism, vision, communication, storytelling, grit, and other influential traits are effective leadership characteristics. Accordingly, these leadership characteristics are believed to empower organizations to achieve desired outcomes. However, effective leadership fundamentals are traditionally associated with male leaders, which has been influential in constructing structural barriers for women in quest of leadership positions. This research is supported by O'Neill and Blake-Beard's (2002) report that "masculine behaviors have been equated with being a successful manager and feminine behaviors have not. [Such] gender stereotyping leads people to perceive that women have less power" (p. 55).

A more recent study of the Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) QualityScore data, a system used internationally to analyze governance and institutional board structures (Governance QualityScore, n.d.), found that global representation of females serving on public boards reached 16.9% in 2016. In the United States, 28% of Russell 3000 Boards – an organizational index that analyzes ethnic, gender, and racial diversity among board directors - have one-fifth of their seats held by women (Illinois State Treasurer, 2020). "In Germany, more than 90% of executive board members are men" (Huang, Diehl, & Paterlini, 2020, p. 347). These findings paint a vivid picture of the underrepresentation faced by women on a domestic as well as global scale. Longman

and Anderson (2016) refer to this underrepresentation as the most persistent challenge women face in positional leadership. Albeit women have evolved, there are still challenges with the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles across a broad spectrum of sectors such as religion, medicine, sports, judicial, and education to name a few.

Historically, systemic barriers have operated as a hindrance to women in their quest to obtain leadership positions. Bolman and Deal (2013) support this assertion by suggesting an innate co-relation between leadership roles and male activity. Thus, a cultural norm of male dominance in leadership positions has been accepted from generation to generation throughout all corporations and institutions. In other words, effective leadership is traditionally associated with men. As a result, the tendency for women to internalize the supposition that leadership is a male activity has become an acceptable cultural norm. Kiner's (2020) research further expands this internalized assumption by stating the following:

> Women can and do internalize patriarchal messages that women are not as strong, competent, and capable as men. This is known as *internalized sexism…* In addition, successful leadership has long been defined by men. With few women role models, professional women have emulated men in order to find acceptance and get ahead. (n.p.)

Moreover, Brown, Park, and Folger (2012) suggest that in response to gender related structural barriers, women are prone to subconsciously self-handicap. Crews (2020) supports this suggestion by indicating that "barriers can be interrelated with many self-sabotaging behaviors manifesting as a result of internalizing structural barriers and

societal gender bias" (p. 39). Both suggests that women internalize the cultural association between leadership roles and male dominance, and in response, engage in self-sabotaging behaviors on their journey to becoming leaders. These factors contribute to Ruderman's (2006) research that also suggests that the true evidence of progress will occur when women feel positively defined in all professional fields and internally empowered.

Background

The global and domestic experiences of women and their quest to attain leadership roles lend vastly to the historical experience of Black women in leadership, and their challenges with systemic, ethnic, and gender biases across all spectrums, including higher education. Historically, male dominance has played an intricate role in creating structural barriers for women. Thomas (2020) supports this assertion by pointing out a systematic cultural assumption that male dominance is required in leadership positions to sanction organizational success. Consequently, the masculinity associated with leadership is often the foundation of the insecurities and self-inflicting barriers in women as they journey to become leaders. Therefore, exploring barriers that women, particularly African American women, face will increase societal understanding of how male dominance contributes to external structural, systemic, ethnic, gender, and internal barriers.

Overview of Women in Leadership

While women have evolved in the workforce across multiple sectors throughout the 21st century, gender-related gaps tell a story of the barriers women encounter on their leadership quest. For example, a 2007 study reported that women comprise 7% of senior

executive roles in Fortune's Global 100 companies, with 2% at the CEO level (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Ironically, the same study found a percentage increase in female investors, business owners, and women workers. While this research provides insight into the improvements for women in the workplace, there are still disparities in reaching leadership positions. Carr, Gunn, Kaplan, Raj, and Freund (2015) support this claim when taking a closer look at women's advancement in educational and medicinal research. The research found that women expressed an increased difficulty in attaining senior level positions and believed this to be a deterrent to recruiting women.

According to Chin (2011), "women are still underrepresented in leadership roles in corporations, institutions of higher education, and the political sectors…women now make up 23% of American CEOs...[and] few women reach the top in higher education" (p.1). However, Bolman and Deal (2013) have suggested that women's educational gains has added to their talent pool and has created CEO opportunities at PepsiCo, IBM, Xerox, and Hewlett-Packet, as well as a female president at Harvard in 2007. Despite these cultural shifts, research findings suggest that the number of women in leadership roles remains, significantly underrepresented.

Historical Perspective of Women in Leadership

According to Crews (2020), professional job opportunities became available after the majority of American men were sent to participate in World War II. Before the war, women worked as homemakers and caretakers while men worked in more professional settings. Hence, World-War II marked a major turning point for women by providing opportunities to work outside of the home. Such changes prompted campaigns to recruit women into the workforce to fill the vacated positions and maintain economic health.

“Rosie the Riveter” (2019) illustrated a specific United States of America (USA) recruitment campaign entitled the Rosie the Riveter Campaign, which produced a 27 to 37 percent increase in the female workforce population between the years of 1940 and 1945.

Historically, the Rosie the Riveter Campaign is one of the most significant conscripting campaigns and is responsible for beyond 310,000 women joining the USA workforce, with most of the positions in aviation among other roles (“Rosie the Riveter,” 2019). Subsequently, this pivotal moment in history was the foundation toward reshaping the culture that traditionally aligned men with professionalism in the USA. According to Crews (2020), while “many women returned to homemaking; still others wanted to work in more prominent roles and provide value differently” (p. 25). Therefore, women thrived in positions that were once male dominated. As a result, women found independence and empowerment to earn wages and move toward power roles.

While it is true that there have been pivotal moments in history that provided women with opportunity, there are still traditional barriers that women face during their professional progression. For example, in a more recent study, Ferguson (2018) stated that “the leadership role is perceived as an agentic role most closely connected to the stereotypic male role” (p. 410). To put it another way, women are perceived as having a communal leadership style, while men are more task-oriented and firm, thus causing the perception that men are innately more suitable for leadership roles. To further this thought, Bolman and Deal (2013) discussed the 2008 presidential election challenges of Hillary Clinton to prove that she had enough toughness and grit to become the

commander-in-chief without her strength taking a back seat to her feminine nature. Ultimately, what is at stake here is the continued burden women face to live up to what is believed to be traditional feminine roles, while maintaining competence in exercising power.

Historical Perspective of African American Women in Leadership

Historically, women have faced structural and systemic barriers as a result of deeply rooted gender role beliefs and sexism. In addition to these barriers, African American women have faced the burden of navigating racism and sexism in the USA (Greene II, 2018, n.p.). While there has been ample research on leadership and gender centered on predominantly white women, there has been little research on African American women in leadership roles (Christo-Baker, Roberts, & Rogalin, 2012). Nevertheless, the Civil War was a pivotal moment for African American women, and many of them demonstrated leadership during that era. Lange (2015) reported the critical role of African American women during the war, specifically the building of networks established by Harriet Tubman on her journey to assist slaves in escaping to freedom, which resulted in her becoming a Union Army spy for the war. Equally important, African American female leaders were not only fighting for the freedom of enslaved men and women, but prominent figures like Sojourner Truth focused on women's rights. While the Civil War caused a delay in the Women's Rights Movement, their efforts created stronger pathways for women's rights post-Civil War (Lange, 2015).

As Black women progressed through the 20th and 21st centuries, they were often regarded as the catalyst for Black radical movements. Radical tradition refers to the activism in revolutionizing the American Society toward justice and change. According

to Greene II (2018), “to understand [Black Lives Matter] BLM as it exists today, we need to realize that African American women have long been at the forefront of radical activism, organizing, and theorizing” (n.p.). Accordingly, while African American women have evolved and hold leadership positions in the workplace and their communities, researchers have confirmed that there is still an uphill battle against gender and race discrimination. McDowell and Cunningham (2009) contend that the continued and conscious efforts of Black feminists to empower African American women to fight against restricting oppressions such as the intersecting of class, gender, and race.

Historical Perspective of African American Women in Higher Education

Between 1986 and 2006, there was a 10% increase in female college presidents, indicating a gender disparity in higher education institution's advancement of women in chief executive level positions (Bellenger, 2010). Similarly, African American women continue to struggle with advancement to higher education leadership positions. Espinosa, Turk, Taylor, & Chessman (2019) asserted that a 2017 American Council on Education (ACE) study reported that 30% of college presidents were female, 9% of which were Black women. Rarely are African American women found holding lead positions in Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). Harley (2008) noted the disparity in the percentage of tenured women, tenured men, and African American women has not changed over the course of 30 years.

The double jeopardy of being both African American and female has plagued Black women in higher education since the 1800s through the civil rights movement. A more recent study by Davis and Brown (2017) analyzed both historical and contemporary perspectives, noting “in the fall of 2013, of the post-secondary degree-granting

institutions, only 6% of faculty were Black… Black women represented would be far less than 6% of all faculty working in 2013" (p. 1). This suggests a continued underrepresentation of African American women in traditional PWIs. Over the last two decades, colleges and universities have attempted to remedy the underrepresentation of African American women and other diverse applicants by acknowledging the systemic and structural barriers that have plagued the collegiate system. Such barriers include "class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and disability differences among people" (Wyatt-Nichol, Antwi-Boasiako, & Austin, 2019, p. 79).

While recent years depict PWIs continued attempts to drive discussions for diversity, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have long aimed for racial and social justice pre-and post-Civil War. According to Stefon (2019), HBCUs were incorporated before the Civil War in response to racism and discrimination against Black youth seeking higher education. These educational institutions found it their social responsibility to embrace equity, social justice, and inclusion. Moreover, African American women have long lived this social responsibility, and have gone unrecognized for their contributions and leadership to educational movements in providing the resources necessary for Black students to thrive in the face of adversity (Jean-Marie, 2006). Yet, while African American females comprise 62 to 75 percent of the HBCU student population, only 25% of the one hundred HBCUs have female presidents, a 5% reduction from 2016 ("Women HBCU Presidents," 2019). Hence, the gaps in women's leadership at most higher education institutions continue to have adverse impacts on student success since scholars suggest that diversity fosters student creativity, empathy, and cultural competence (Cooke & Jacobs, 2018). Furthermore, historical research

contends that Black women have been vital to the extension of educational opportunities to their communities, school and district leadership, and the quality of student education (Coleman, 2021; Fairclough, 2000), all which influence student success.

Barriers Impacting African American Women in Higher Education Leadership

Historically and contemporarily, African American women have made significant contributions to education. However, external and internal barriers continue to impede their advancement to leadership roles in higher education. McDowell and Carter-Francique (2017) discussed how African American women, even in the HBCU system, face stereotypical occupational barriers, based on traditional views of what roles are more suitable according to gender. Furthermore, Chin (2011) reaffirmed the use of structural gender bias by asserting that "terms like ―he looks like a leader; he is presidential; which, in turn, are influenced by social constructions of leadership which are associated with the social construction of gender roles" (p. 2). Again, here lies the double jeopardy of being both African American and a woman. This double jeopardy can also be described as intersectionality. "In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in a paper as a way to help, to understand, and to explain the oppression of African American women" (Wesley, 2021, n.p.). While gendered biases hinder women, African American women are also hindered by ethnic barriers. Gasman, Abiola, and Travers (2015) provided an example of how the president of Penn dined with some of the most educated and influential African American constituents in 2012, who challenged her dearth of promoting African American faculty to senior roles. The university president attributed this to a lack of qualified candidates to fill senior positions. Ironically, she was surrounded by qualified candidates, lending to the idea of

subconscious internal beliefs that African Americans are not qualified for senior-level positions.

As a result of systemic barriers such as racism, stereotyping, and male dominance, African American women tend to internalize these external barriers, further impeding their advancement. Characteristics such as racism, stereotyping, and male dominance can be an internal barrier for women on their quest for leadership. Moreover, Brown et al. (2012) supported this concept by declaring that women tend to self-handicap in response to systemic obstacles. On the surface, barriers appear to be external; however, Crews (2020) implored that "barriers can be interrelated with many self-sabotaging behaviors manifesting as a result of internalizing structural barriers and societal gender bias" (p. 39). In other words, women internalize gender and race discrimination, and male-dominated leadership roles as a systematic reality, and in turn, they respond by unintentionally engaging in self-inflicted behaviors. Brock's (2008) research supports this notion by stating that "most viewed women who engaged in sabotage as insecure about themselves" (p. 216). These factors contribute to how external barriers can cause internal conflict and insecurities in women's belief in their capacity to be effective leaders. Such internal conflicts and insecurities can also be described as internalized racism. Blakesley's, (2016) research contends that internalized racism is a process where individuals from marginalized groups subconsciously or consciously absorb the beliefs, stereotypes, and undervaluing imposed by dominant groups. Hence, these external barriers perpetuated by sexism and racism further deepens the internal conflict experienced by Black women.

Statement of the Research Problem

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the majority of higher education degrees received by Black students are earned by Black women, earning 66% of undergraduate degrees and roughly 65% of graduate degrees (Paige, 2018). Despite their educational advancement and qualifications, Black women are still vastly underrepresented in senior level leadership roles within higher education. Harley (2008) supports this assertion by reporting that Historically Black Colleges and Universities are the usual concentration for African American women; however, 90% of the leadership and professorship at PWIs are mainly white males. Consequently, these factors are key contributors to many colleges and universities' decision to move toward establishing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) positions, which are mainly held by African American women. However, their capacity to embody the full manifestation of leadership is still limited. According to a more recent study, Chief Diversity Officers lack pertinent resources of power such as hiring, sanctioning authority, and budgeting resources (Nixon, 2017, p. 302). Hence, not only is there an underrepresentation of Black women in higher education leadership, but when such roles are assumed, there are limitations attached to them.

The research proposes gender and racial systemic and structural barriers as foundational components that impede Black women's advancement in attaining higher education leadership positions. Walkington (2017) stated that "Black women faculty…face a double-bind of racial and gender discrimination at every level of academic life. This double minority status leads faculty and students to view Black women scholars as less capable" (p. 52). For example, racial stereotyping and implicit

socially constructed belief systems obstruct Black women from advancing to executive-level positions. Howard-Hamilton (2003) supported this assertion by reporting that inequities and stereotypes of African American women still exist and operate as roadblocks. In conjunction with racial barriers, the association of leadership with male dominance creates dual obstructions in the advancement of African American women in higher education.

In response to gender and racial structural barriers, women develop insecurities and question their leadership abilities. Brown et al. (2012) suggest that the societal standard of male dominance and leadership can serve as an internal barrier for women in their quest for leadership positions. In other words, women internalize these structural norms, which become a self-inflicted mental barrier in and of itself. Crews (2020) concurred with this notion by asserting that many self-sabotaging behaviors that women experience stem from social and structural gender bias. Additionally, when factoring in ethnicity, African American women who are overlooked tend to suffer from invisibility and insecurity, causing them to self-isolate, a self-sabotaging barrier (Miles, 2012).

Hence, there is a problem in African American female representation in higher education chief executive level positions. Despite the qualifications of Black women, experience and the need for equal access, underrepresentation, and unequal access continues to occur in higher education (Miles, 2012). This problem of unequal access to leadership positions has negatively impacted African American women by causing insecurities, a dearth of advancement opportunities, and self-sabotaging behaviors that further hinder their progression. A possible cause of this problem is socially constructed gender and racial systemic barriers (Jones, 2006).

There is existing research on the impact of self-sabotaging behaviors on women's careers in educational leadership, county government leadership, superintendency, and judicial leadership (Brock, 2008; Crews, 2020; Pianta, 2020; Thomas, 2020). However, this topic has not been broadly studied in female African American higher education chief executives. Therefore, a study of the self-sabotaging behaviors Black women in higher education have experienced and their methods to overcome them will open opportunities for future research in an under-studied population. Breeden (2021) contended that while Black women have evolved in college admission and graduation, research has been limited regarding their experiences in executive level positions in higher education. In addition, extended research on this topic will add diversity to the existing knowledge of the impacts of these behaviors on career advancement, and possibly provide women greater access to high level leadership positions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Research Questions

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?

2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?
3. What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Significance of the Problem

As of December 2019, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 50.04% of American jobs were held by women with the exclusion of self-employment and farmworkers, an increase from the previous year (Law, 2020). Despite the rise of women in the workforce, women represented roughly a third of management positions. In contrast, Black women held only 4% of executive level positions (Catalyst, 2020). These numbers are demonstrative of the disproportion of women in executive leadership roles. Equally important, an American College President Survey conducted in 2017 reported women hold 30% of college president-level positions, while women of color comprise 5% of that population (Moody, 2018).

Existing literature presents data that attributes Black women's inequity in higher education chief officer roles to external barriers. Tevis, Hernandez, and Bryant (2020) contend that such barriers include racial stereotyping, profiling, and socially constructed gender biases. However, there is a deficiency in the literature that focuses on self-sabotaging behaviors that create internal barriers for women, specifically African American women that should be explored. According to Ausmer (2009), it is difficult to exclusively study gender, without analyzing the social construct of race. Therefore, a study of female African American higher education chief executives may oblige Black

women to approach higher education leadership positions with the knowledge of gender and race barriers that can lead to self-sabotaging behaviors. Results from this study can provide insight about how African American female leaders in higher education use personal power to dismantle self-limiting behaviors. Meyers (2002) supports this notion by suggesting that the myths and stereotypical beliefs of gender and race have worked against the African American woman, specifically in the academy. Therefore, this study can help Black women to recognize external barriers and identify and counter self-inflicted barriers to help them progress in higher education leadership.

Research contends that colleges and universities implement diversity practices to provide students and staff an unbiased holistic experience (Miles, Hu, & Dotson, 2013). Such practices are believed to shift the organizational culture to one that embraces cultural change. For example, between 2020 and 2021, the United States experienced civil unrest in the wake of the George Floyd death, the Corona Virus pandemic, and higher education racial inequalities, prompting collegiate institutions to strategize toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (Clayton, 2021). These strategies allowed diverse student populations to feel valued and see themselves reflected in leadership and coursework (Clayton, 2021). Therefore, it can be inferred that the diversity represented in African American female leaders is significant to moving higher education toward social justice and motivating student populations to have a voice, and to become future leaders. Wyatt-Nichol et al. (2019) posits that, "evidence of a changing society and workforce creates an imperative to educate and prepare students to work in diverse organizations and communities" (p. 80). Therefore, the study of self-sabotaging behaviors and methods to overcome them could help Black women achieve higher education leadership positions,

breaking barriers of race and gender to encourage the student body to embrace diversity. Smith, Wessell, & Polack (2017) support this research by indicating that educational diversity will foster a student-centered learning environment that will effectively prepare students to engage in diverse settings.

Empowering Black women to advance to executive leadership positions in higher education to create a more diverse and effective educational learning environment is significant to the future of academia and the abolishment of societal inequities. Furthermore, this study can also play a significant role in adding to the knowledge of the existing phenomena of empowering women through the lens of self-sabotage, and the use of personal power to dismantle them. According to Thomas (2020), research suggests societal benefits when women are empowered professionally and personally. Therefore, this study will add to the body of knowledge by looking into an understudied population and identifying the methods African American women use to become empowered by dismantling self-sabotage and advancing in their careers. Moreover, this study could bring a deeper understanding of the impact of external barriers on Black women's self-sabotaging behavior and the overall body of higher education. These factors will contribute to a closer exploration of personal power methods to overcome self-sabotage and assist colleges and universities in creating better pathways for African American women to attain executive leadership roles at higher learning institutions and move society closer to embracing equity and inclusion.

Definitions

The Academy. Institutions of higher education (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

African American. The term is used to describe the ethnicity or source of origin of Americans of African descent (Quander & Froneberger, 2019). For this study, African American is used interchangeably with Black.

Agentic. Stemming from the word agency, the term is used to describe an individual's use of power to control their own destiny and goals (Bjerede, 2017).

Barriers. Factors that impede the progress and advancement of an individual or society (Crews, 2020).

Barriers, Gender. Factors that impede the progress and advancement of an individual or society, based specifically on gender identification.

Barriers, Internal. Self-inflicted practices that hinder the progress and advancement of an individual.

Barriers, Racial. Factors that impede the progress and advancement of an individual or society. This term racial is based specifically on the physical characteristics commonly shared through ancestry and source of origin (Merriam-Webster, n.d).

Barriers, Structural. Factors that impede the progress and advancement of an individual or society based on "historical, cultural and social psychological aspects of our currently realized society" ("11 Terms," 2016, n.p.).

Barriers, Systemic. "A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity" ("11 Terms," 2016, n.p.).

Black. "[Relates] to any of various population groups of especially African ancestry often considered as having dark pigmentation of the skin but in fact having a

wide range of skin colors" (Merriam-webster, n.d). For this study, Black is used interchangeably with African American.

Civil War. A United States war ranging from 1861 to 1865 between southern and northern states regarding states' rights, westward expansion, and slavery ("Civil War," 2009).

Chief Executives. In this study, this term refers to individuals holding the following positions in higher education: presidents, vice presidents, chancellors, vice chancellors, and provosts.

Discrimination. The unfair treatment of individuals, based on specific identifiers such as gender, age, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Dismantle. To destroy, disconnect, or overcome existing practices and behaviors.

Disparity. "A noticeable and usually significant difference or dissimilarity" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This term is synonymous with disproportion.

Ethnic. "Of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Root word of ethnicity.

Gender bias. Unreasoned judgement, based specifically on one's viewpoint on gender or gender roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Glass ceiling. A term used to describe the invisible limitations and hindrances that women face in their quest to organizational leadership positions (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000).

HBCU's. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, where the predominant student population is identified as African American or Black, established prior to 1964 (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Typically located in the U.S. southern states.

Leadership. "A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2016, p.6).

Male Dominance. Twentieth century term used to characterize the imbalance of power between men and women, with men having the majority of influence throughout society (Best & Luvender, 2015).

Personal Power. "To act from a position of strength rather than react out of fear and limitation" (Lerner, 2012, p. xv).

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). Colleges and Universities where 50% or more of the student population is identified as European American or white (Lomotey, 2010).

Racial discrimination. The unfair treatment of a group of individuals, based specifically on physical traits and ancestral origin ("Racial discrimination, 2022").

Role congruity. "A prejudice toward female leaders [proposing] that perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to 2 forms of prejudice: (a) perceiving women less favorably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles and (b) evaluating behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leader role less favorably when it is enacted by a woman (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Self-Sabotage. Self-inflicted barriers that hinder the progress and advancement of an individual (Ryder & Briles, 2003). This term is synonymous with internal barriers.

Sexism. A term used to describe oppressive unfair treatment or discrimination (Burgess, 2021), based specifically on gender or sex identification.

Stereotype. Inaccurate and misinformed societal generalizations of a specific group of people (Burgess, 2021).

Underrepresented. The inadequate representation (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Often referred to a group of people in organizations, and societal class levels

Delimitations

This study was delimited to female African American higher education chief executives across the United States of America. This population included women who 1) identify as African American or Black; 2) are of the female gender; 3) currently hold the position of president, vice president, chancellor, vice chancellor, or provost; 4) have held the position for at least one year; and 5) hold a position at a private not for profit four-year university.

Organization of the Study

The organization of this study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter I presents the historical and current background of women in the labor force and their quest to attain leadership positions, with specification of African American women in higher education. Additionally, Chapter I details the significance of the study, the purpose statement, and research questions. Chapter II provides an in-depth review of the literature pertaining to female work professionals, with specifications pertaining to African American women through the lens of conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Chapter III offers extensive details on the data collection methodology and research design. Chapter IV presents a discussion of the collected data with an analysis of the findings. Chapter V provides

recommendations for future research, a summary, and the conclusion. Lastly, appendices and references will follow chapter's I-V.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the literature related to the historical perspective of African American women during their quest to higher education chief executive positions. The beginning of Chapter II provides an overview of women's professional history, followed by the history of women during their path to leadership. Additionally, Chapter II provides a historical overview of African American women and their experience with educational leadership, including external barriers. Following the inclusion of external barriers, Chapter II examines associated theoretical considerations, in addition to the women's personal power conceptual framework used for this study. Using the combined theories of Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003), this literature review details existing literature on the self-sabotaging behaviors of women in pursuit of leadership roles and describes the methods that female leaders can use to overcome such behaviors. Finally, this review uncovers research gaps and identifies opportunities for future research.

Overview of Women in Leadership Roles

After traveling to over 140 countries, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter published a book entitled *A Call for Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power.* In this book, President Carter identified gender related injustice, marginalization, and violence against women as the world's greatest challenge (Longman & Anderson, 2016). Although the book focused primarily on inequalities in third world countries, the U.S. is not exempt from such gender related challenges. Longman and Anderson (2016) contend that while the U.S. may lead the global economy, the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles is evident across the U.S. corporate sector, noting that only 25.1% of

women hold management and senior level positions. Furthermore, a 2011 study reported that 23% of American CEOs were comprised of women (Chin, 2011). The percentages between 2011 and 2016 represent a 2% increase within a five-year span, further lending to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2021) reported that women complete baccalaureate and graduate level degrees at a higher percentage than their male counterparts at 66% compared to men at 60%. Ironically, while there is a higher percentage of women holding college degrees, there is still a disparity in women in executive leadership roles. Northouse (2016) contends that:

> Women are still underrepresented in the upper echelons of America's corporations and political system. Women are among the leadership ranks in American organizations, occupying more than half of all management and professional positions (51.4%; Catalyst, 2014c) and a quarter of all CEO positions (26.8%; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). However, more elite leadership positions show a different story; women represent only 4% of Fortune 500 CEOs (Catalyst, 2014c), and hold only 16.9% of the Fortune 500 board seats and a mere 14.6% of the Fortune 500 executive officer positions (Catalyst, 2014c). (p. 398)

To further the concept of the disparity of women in executive suite leadership roles, Bolman and Deal (2013) assert that while the percentage of female investors, small business owners, and workers continue to accelerate, they still represent only 7% of the senior executives in Fortune's Global 100 companies. Recently, Women Business Collaborative (2021) reported an increase in female Fortune 500 CEOs at 8.2%; however, while there is an increase in female executives, there is much room for progression as

there is still a massive leadership gap between men and women. Therefore, while the presence of female leadership has evolved over time, the executive leadership suite across organizations still represents a disparity in female presence.

The Inception of Feminist Movement

The inception of the feminist movement started during the late 19th and early 20th centuries at the Seneca Falls Declaration, where north of 300 American men and women gathered around the subject of women's equality (Rampton, 2015). *History.com Editors* (2019) report that the Seneca Falls Declaration is where abolitionists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott declared the following sentiments: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal" (n.p). The now famous statement represents one of the most crucial moments in history that ignited the suffrage movement focused on women's right to vote. In fact, according to the Fifteenth Amendment of 1868, only men were distinct as voters and US citizens ("Voting Rights," n.d.).

The Fifteenth Amendment told the story of the systemic roots of male dominance in American society. Nevertheless, to provide women with a voice in government, Elizabeth Stanton demonstrated leadership abilities to counter the male dominance represented in the US Constitution. Accordingly, she co-founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) along with Susan Anthony, another radically driven woman passionate about women's suffrage (DuBois, 1998). Unlike the American Women Suffrage Association (AWSA), which primarily focused on voting rights, there was more controversy surrounding the NSWA because it aimed to ensure that women experienced societal equality (Lange, 2015). In other words, while the NSWA feminist

movement was ignited based on women's inability to vote, the movement moved not only in the direction of equal opportunity but rather to create a culture that viewed women as equal citizens.

The inception of the feminist movement was a foundational piece that not only propelled women toward equal rights, marriage equality, and self-sufficiency, but also toward leadership. According to Keohane (2020), it's natural for women to become ambitious for leadership roles after experiencing social expectation changes under the leadership of females. To expand, the author declares that women are inspired by the examples of leadership portrayed by women who take a stand for social change. Consequently, if not for the Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthonys of society, "it would never have occurred to a young girl that she might someday be CEO of a company, head of a major NGO, member of Congress, dean of a Cathedral, or president of a university" (Keohane, 2020, p. 241). Based on the author's statement, feminist movements and other movements towards social change are key factors in women's push toward obtaining leadership positions.

Journey to Positions of Power

Throughout the 21st century, women have experienced an evolution in the workforce across multiple sectors. Yet women continue to experience gender-related gaps that communicate the barriers that women face during their quest to positions of power. Watkins and Smith (2014) expanded on gender related gaps, by noting that while women have made considerable gains in climbing the corporate ladder, they primarily land middle management positions and are still underrepresented in positions of power. Ironically, the increase in female business owners, investors, and workers has not been

significant enough to offset the gender disparities in leadership positions. A 2007 study found a mere 7% of the senior executive roles in Fortune's Global 100 companies were comprised of women, noting only 2% at the CEO level (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Therefore, while research delivers awareness into the advancements for women in the workplace, there are still inequalities in reaching leadership positions.

According to Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller (2003), "women's presence in more powerful line positions is even lower: only 7 percent of Fortune 500 corporate line officers are women… Last but not least, only 4.1 percent of top earners are women" (p. 43). Albeit research still suggests that women have progressed toward positions of power over the last decade. For example, a 2006 study indicated an increase in women's positional power roles since the inception of the feminist movement (Ruderman, 2006). The indicated increase in women's positional power has been recognized in the twenty-first century. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), by 2012, some of America's largest corporations such as IBM, Hewlett Packard, Xerox, and PepsiCo were led by women CEOs. However, while women have evolved in gender equality and leadership roles, they are still underrepresented in many other sectors, specifically higher education, and politics. Subsequently, Chin (2011) continued to paint the picture of the underrepresentation of female leaders in corporate, political, and educational sectors, highlighting a mere 23% of American female CEOs as of 2011. Therefore, while women have progressed in their journey to positions of power, research findings suggest that the number of women in leadership roles remains significantly underrepresented.

According to a 2021 report published by McKinsey and Company and leanin.org, the global pandemic has exacerbated the uneven playing field between men and women,

particularly for those in senior management roles (Burns et al., 2021). As ‘pandemic time’ passed, female executives began describing significantly higher levels of stress and burnout, with the gap between women and men almost doubling over the prior year (Burns et al., 2021). For example, during the first few months of the pandemic, one in four women shared that they might leave the workforce. However, by the end of 2021, one in three women said they had considered leaving the workforce or down shifting their career (Burns et al., 2021).

The National Bureau of Economic Research found that a major difference between prior economic downturns and COVID-driven disruptions has been the difficulty for working mothers to work remotely while juggling childcare obligations (Alon, Doepke, Olmstead-Rumsey, & Tertilt, 2020). Amidst school closures and the absence of daycare options, millions of working women have been left with few choices other than to quit their jobs. Moreover, pandemic-induced job loss has widened the wage gap between men and women by as much as 5 percent and perpetuated the narrative that when parenting and household responsibilities impact the ability to work, women are the first to make sacrifices (Alon et al., 2020).

Multiple Sector Inclusion

Carr et al. (2015) closely examined women’s advancement in educational and medicinal research. The research found that women expressed an increased difficulty in attaining senior level positions and believed this to deter recruiting women. It is apparent that educational and medicinal research represents only a fraction of the sectors that have demonstrated an underrepresentation of female leaders. According to Diehl and Dzubinksi (2016),

> Organizations have been making efforts to incorporate more women into leadership for decades. From the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to flextime and family leave policies, to recent conversations about mentoring and sponsoring women, there have been a variety of attempts to assist women into the professional workforce and, once in, help them move into leadership. (p. 182).

It can be concluded that the efforts to shift the cultural paradigm of male dominance have continued to be an uphill battle across multiple sectors. Kalaitzi, Czabanowska, Fowler-Davis, and Brand (2017) have maintained that women remain significantly underrepresented in sectors such as academia, healthcare, and business. This same research takes it a step further by highlighting a mere 15.7% representation of female board members in some of the largest companies in the U.S.A.

The challenges that women have faced in their leadership quest extend far beyond the sectors of education, medicine, academia, and healthcare. For example, Betzer-Tayar, Zach, Galily, and Henry's (2015) research points out the underrepresentation of women in sports organizations. Their research further contends that sports organizations are male dominated based on masculine and feminine discourses. In other words, characteristics such as strength, determination, competition, and aggression are often associated with masculinity, which are socially believed to be synonymous with leadership traits (Betzer-Tayar et al., 2015). Whereas characteristics such as negotiation abilities, and cooperative work methods are associated with feminine characteristics, thus having no significance to the competitive nature of sports and having no place in the advancement of such organizations (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003).

In the same way, there is a disproportionate number of male and female pastors. Rios, Rixon, & Faseruk (2013) have asserted that a variety of Christian church organizations have made no progress in ordaining women ministers. These factors contribute to the notion that there are still widespread gender barriers in the Christian church that prohibit women from advancing to Pastoral positions. Parker-McCullough's (2020) research supports this concept by suggesting that women in the Christian church are often positioned in subordinate roles, while men are largely positioned in leadership roles. As a result, women continue to face systemic barriers in obtaining leadership positions, even in the Evangelical Christian church. Considering the underrepresentation of women across multiple sectors, one can conclude that women find difficulty attaining authoritative positions, primarily in organizations that honor societal hierarchal statuses that correlate masculinity with leadership traits (Watkins & Smith, 2014).

Historical Background of Women in Leadership Roles

Post-World War II

World War II commemorated a critical time for women transitioning from homemaker roles to members of the workforce. During that time, professional vacancies became available after a large portion of men were sent to engage in the War (Crews, 2020). The needs of the war created increased domestic adversities and responsibilities in response to the intensified labor demands for men and women, thus causing Americans to reconsider their ideas of gender roles ("Gender on the Home," n.d.). Ultimately, maintaining a healthy economy and residential living took precedence, and women were encouraged to fill work positions. Accordingly, between the year 1940 and 1945, the U.S. labor market experienced a 27 to 37 percent increase in female workers ("Rosie the

Riveter," 2019). Many of the positions were in Aviation ("Rosie the Riveter," 2019), while Crews (2020) also confirmed factory and shipyard positions. The factors of World War II contributed to one of the most influential recruiting historical campaigns entitled Rosie the Riveter Campaign, drawing greater than 310,000 women to work in the USA ("Rosie the Riveter," 2019).

Subsequently, the positions that men once dominated, were now being successfully performed by women. While the positions were intended to be temporary, women found freedom and power in working and earning wages. However, such freedoms and power were not eagerly accepted by everyone. According to Santana (2016), "one article in the navy shipyard newsletter counseled women to 'be feminine and ladylike even though [they were] filling a man's shoes'" (n.p.). Despite this social norm of male dominance, multiple wartime ads were placed to continue to recruit women to fill positions in the workforce to meet the demands of the war. Therefore, the World War era marks a key turning point in women's evolution to independence and moving toward positions of power. Crews (2020) expands on the female evolution to independence by noting that post world war, women continued to desire to work in more leading roles, and different avenues to provide value outside of the household, while many women returned to their homemaker roles without question.

21ST Century

Since the inception of the feminist movement, there has been an increase in women holding positions of power (Ruderman, 2006). Despite this increase, women are still disproportionately represented compared to male leaders. As explained by O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008), the exponential growth of women in leadership roles over

prior decades is no comparison to the fundamental male-dominance represented across organizational spectrums. The same researchers theorized that the disparity between male and female leaders stems from stereotypical traits of masculinity associated with effective leadership abilities (O'Neil et al., 2008). Thus, the relationship between masculinity and leadership that found its way into the 21st century is still impacting women today based on the systemic societal norm to equate men with leadership. Diekman and Goolfriend (2006) further examine this concept by stating the following:

> The perpetuation of gender role beliefs is also continued because behaviors that are incongruous with traditional gender roles are devalued… The traditional female role is perceived to be inconsistent with the demands of leadership roles, women are less likely than men to be positively regarded when they display leadership behaviors. (p. 371)

Kessler's (2014) research declares that female leaders of the 21st century are faced with the challenge of having their performance examined based on masculine principles. Essentially, masculine principles are held in high regard across organizational spectrums, thus indicating that while women have evolved in leadership roles during the 21st century, they still fall under the shadow of the stereotype that equates leadership with masculinity. As it relates to the stereotypes equating leadership with masculinity, a study by Schwanke (2013) found no research confirming a difference between male and female leadership abilities; however, it did find persistence in cultural gender bias across organizations that associate masculinity with leadership. The evidence suggests systemic and stereotypical gender biases that constantly question the female's ability to lead effectively.

The persistence in gender bias across global organizations communicates the normalcy of male dominance, thus explaining the historical push to prove leadership style equality between males and females. Ironically, Berry and Franks' (2010) research suggested a difference between the two leadership styles suggesting that women are more collaborative and responsive, while men tend to prefer top-down leadership styles, which symbolize dominance. A study by Jacobs (2018) reported that both male and female participants endorsed leadership qualities such as sensitivity, trustworthiness, and patience, which are considered feminine qualities. However, qualities of competitiveness, confidence, and decisiveness, which are apparent to masculine traits overruled them all, thus bringing full circle the perception that equates masculinity with effective leadership. In short, the issue still stands; the differences between male and female leadership styles are still in question as female leaders continue to be vastly underrepresented in the 21st century. "According to the Institute for Women's Leadership, globally women hold just 24% of senior leadership positions. Women are only 4% of the S&P top 500 companies" (Coomaraswamy, 2021, n.p.). Therefore, while today's climate has many impressive female leaders, there is still a disparity in the representation of female leaders in the executive suite.

Role Congruity

Ferguson's (2018) theory suggests that the perception of female leaders plays a significant role in the challenges they experience when rising to positions of power based on the belief that men are more effective in governing behaviors. In other words, internal beliefs about women's ability to lead in the face of adversity aggressively and intellectually have been historically questioned by male leaders based on the feminine

caretaking attributes possessed by women. Hoyt and Burnette (2013) explained that the role congruity perspective conceptualizes the emergence of stereotypical beliefs regarding specific groups that are essentially incongruent with gender related societal norms. Further, their research suggested that the partiality experienced by women stems from the emergence of stereotypical beliefs of female gender roles, related stereotypes, and the overall perception of leadership characteristics; hence, contributing to the stereotypical notion of associating women with caretaking and men with taking charge (Dodge, Gilroy, & Fenzel, 1995). It is apparent that a large portion of the scarcity of women in leadership roles is attributed to the formulaic characteristics and beliefs ascribed to male and female roles. "For example, men tend to be associated with agentic characteristics, which captures achievement-oriented tendencies…whereas women capture concern with the welfare of others" (Gupta, Han, Mortal, Silveri, & Turban, 2018). These factors contribute to the idea that women are kind and caring, while men are confident and aggressive, indicative of the latter to be associated with effective leadership traits.

In 2002, Eagly and Karau (2002) explored the prejudices and discriminatory factors associated with role congruity. The researchers found that perceived communal female attributes are associated with inherent traits such as nurturing, affection, kindness, and sensitivity. Men are associated with agentic traits such as assertiveness, ambition, forceful, independent, and dominant, all of which are associated with leadership capabilities. The different perceptions of female and male characteristics have long played an intricate role in the discrimination and prejudices experienced by women in their quest for leadership positions. Hence, lending credence to the historical and

conventional argument that questions gender and styles of leadership. In other words, is there a difference in leadership attributes between men and women? Bolman and Deal (2013) have taken this notion a step further by arguing that “modern organizations need the leadership style that women are more likely to bring, including concern for people, nurturance, and willingness to share information” (p. 352). Then again, Ferguson (2018) challenges this notion by suggesting that the perception of female leadership styles communicate women's inability to be action-driven, problem-solving, and influential, thus indicating that women are limited to be caretakers, while men are believed to take charge. Hence, the on-ongoing argument surrounding role congruity continues to systemically marginalize women based on stereotypical societal gender roles and expectations.

Historical Overview of African American Women in Leadership Roles

Radical Movements

While “ain’t I a woman?” was posed as a question, it was essentially a bold declaration by Sojourner Truth in 1851 to counter the conceptualization of both sexism and racism (King, 1988). While the statement was made to revolutionize change for women’s right to vote to support the women’s suffrage movement, it was also birthed from years of dismissal of the duality of racism and sexism experienced by Black women. Yellin (1973) reported that the 1915 work of W.E.B. DuBois further illustrated the need for an alliance between women and the oppressed experiences of the Black community. This illustration was an acknowledgment that women were in an independent struggle with sexism that was parallel to the struggles of racism and injustices experienced by Black people (Yellen, 1973). This assertion served as a direct

reflection of the invisibility of the double jeopardy faced by Black women. For that reason, many African American women rallied around the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Clearly, Black women were still challenged with the persistence of racism alongside their womanhood.

In a more recent study, Lange (2015) notes that societal progression within the NAWSA did not hinder the arms of racism as Black women were still forced to segregate in marching events and other women's rights conventions. Harley (2019) furthered this thought by noting the internal conflicts between white and black suffragists based on the continued discrimination against Black women. The author stated that as "the anti-Black rhetoric and actions of the NWSA leaders Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton persisted, so did African American women's courageous battles for both gender and racial equality" (Harley, 2019, n.p.). For example, during the same era Mary Ann Cary took the initiative to address white female suffrage leaders, beseeching them to include the names of 94 Black women on their Declaration of the Rights of the Women of America that would be issued on the 100th anniversary of U.S. Independence (Harley, 2019). Part of the verbiage read as follows: "We ask justice, we ask equality, we ask that all the civil and political rights that belong to citizens of the United States, be guaranteed to us and our daughters forever" (Harley, 2019, n.p.). While unsuccessful in the request, such factors contributed to the development of Black radical movements to move society in a direction of holistic fairness, making Black radical movements the foundational source of civil rights activism. For example, the Colored Women's Franchise Association was developed by Cary and linked suffrage to labor and educational rights (Harley, 2019).

Through the progression of the 20th and 21st centuries, Black women were often regarded as the catalyst for Black radical movements. Traditionally, radical movements are representative of the activism in reforming the American Society toward justice and change. Greene II (2018) asserted that "to understand [Black Lives Matter] BLM as it exists today, we need to realize that African American women have long been at the forefront of radical activism, organizing, and theorizing" (n.p.). Accordingly, the progression of African American women toward leadership positions has increased in the workplace and their communities; however, researchers have confirmed an ongoing uphill battle against gender and race discrimination. McDowell and Cunningham (2009) argue that there is a continued and deliberate effort of Black feminists to empower African American women to fight against constraining oppressions such as the intersecting of race, class, and gender.

Civil War Contributions

The American Civil War lasted between the years of 1861-1865 to essentially regulate the direction of the Nation (McPherson, 2008). With more than 625,000 casualties, the war was based on the following fundamentals: Whether the nation would be an undividable independent national government or a dissoluble union of sovereign states, and to make the determination of whether the nation would grant the equal right to liberty for all men, or continue the organization of slaveholding (McPherson, 2008). In other words, the rigid differences between slave states and free states caused national unrest over the authority of the US government to exclude slavery in unincorporated territories. Many African American women demonstrated leadership during the Civil War era, making it a critical moment to acknowledge Black female leadership, strengths,

and abilities. According to Lange (2015), during the Civil War African American women played a crucial role, specifically the building of networks established by Harriet Tubman, the primary leader in an organized process to assist slaves in escaping to freedom, which also resulted in her becoming a Union Army spy for the war. Furthermore, prominent figures like Sojourner Truth advocated not only for the freedom of the enslaved, but also focused on women's rights. While the Civil War caused a delay in the Women's Rights Movement, the efforts of women like Tubman and Truth created greater pathways for post-Civil War women's rights (Lange, 2015).

Ribianszky (2013) attributed the inherent silences within US historical records to the challenges experienced by historians in their quest to recreate the lived experiences of African American women. While the 1970s and 80s commenced the visibility of Black women's history, scholars found themselves thoroughly re-analyzing their sources to maximize the understanding and meaning of the lives of African American women, specifically with relation to the duality of racism and sexism (Ribianszky, 2013). For that reason, it is imperative to understand the facts surrounding the Black female contribution during the Civil War to provide credence to the many Black female leaders who were instrumental in leading the nation toward social justice. In a more recent study, De Vera (2021) reaffirmed the inherent silences within US historical records by stating:

> Scholars have often studied nineteenth-century Black activists and organizers in relation to white abolitionist. The contributions of *The Colored Convention* are acutely aware of this and have therefore written essays that disrupt popular understandings of the era's anti-slavery and civil rights movements. They put

> forth several questions [including]: How do we interrogate the glaring absence of Black women activists in past and recent scholarship? (p. 1)

The scholarly invisibility of the labor and significance put forth by Black women, specifically during the Civil War era has been overshadowed by the efforts of white abolitionists. The effect is the devaluing of the contributions made by African American women that helped shape the direction of the equality of the United States. Regarding the scarcity of scholastic knowledge on the female Black Civil War contributions; scholars now aggressively challenge the common assumption that Black activism derived from the efforts of White anti-slavery activists and argue that White abolitionists followed the organizational leadership of Black crusaders (De Vera, 2021).

The Glass Ceiling

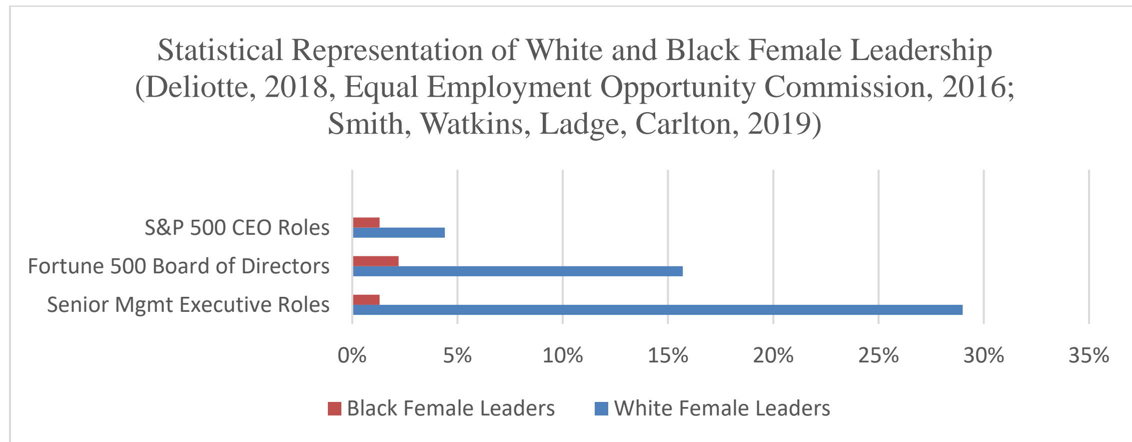
The oppressive discrimination experienced by African American females during their quest to leadership positions has long been attributed to the duality of racism and sexism. In agreement with the concept of intersectional discrimination, Davis and Maldonado (2015) posited that several factors of marginalization are attributed to the intersecting dual identities of female African Americans, specifically race and gender. As a result, systemic and invisible barriers are in place, making breakthrough and advancement seemingly impossible, also referred to as the glass ceiling. The glass ceiling is described as "an invisible barrier to advancement based on attitudinal or organizational biases" (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000, p. 51). Ironically, the idea that the glass provides visibility to possible opportunities yet perpetuates invisible growth stunting barriers to advancement presents a psychological barrier. Wilson (1998) circulated four contributing barriers responsible for the disparity and invisibility facing

Black women including: the "wage gap, institutional kinship, the 'ole boy' system, and the role played by prejudice" (p. 20). Women of color found the wage gap and prejudice distinctively common amongst themselves (Women's Bureau, 2012). Black women have long contended with the associated biases stemming from the intersection of race and gender and must continue in that struggle if they wish to advance—dissimilar to that of white women (Connley, 2020).

To further analyze the contrast between Black and White women, the following statement provides an uncomfortable statistical reality in stating, "while being roughly 38% of the U.S. population, White women hold 29% of senior management and executive roles, 15.7% of Fortune 500 boards of directors, and 4.4% of S&P 500 CEO Roles (Deloitte, 2018, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016; Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019). This contrasts with the representation of Black women at 1.3% in senior and executive positions in S&P 500 firms, and the 2.2% represented in Fortune 500 boards of directors (Catalyst, 2017; Deloitte, 2018; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016) See Figure 1. The statistical evidence suggests that while White women are undoubtedly underrepresented, their corporate presence far exceeds Black women. To add further credence to the ongoing race and gender disparity, Catalyst (2021) reported a slight increase in Black female leaders at 4.1% in the year 2020, compared to White female leaders at 32.8%. This staggering gap between Black and White female leaders tell a story of the systemic and structural barriers experienced by Black women to date. The effect is that Black women perpetually experience omission, isolation, challenges in communication, disdain, discredit, and an overall lack of endorsement or gratitude (Mainah & Pekins, 2015).

Subsequently, Afza and Newaz (2008) contended the glass ceiling as a foundation for the lack of professional progression experienced by female minorities as they journey to executive roles.

Figure 1



Concrete ceiling. Conversely, some theorists do not believe that the term glass ceiling holds enough weight to describe the professional experiences of Black women. For example, Khosroshahi (2021) interviewed Aspen Institute's Jasmine Babers, who contended the term concrete ceiling is the more suitable to women of color, implying that the glass ceiling provides visibility to opportunities, while the concrete ceiling prevents Black women's ability to see the possibilities. Moreover, Babers (2016) argues that the glass ceiling, while arduous is breakable; however, the concrete ceiling provides no vision, and is therefore impenetrable. The concrete ceiling phenomenon practically separates Black women from being in the glass ceiling box with their white counterparts based on the intersectionality of race and gender. A more recent study, "'Women in the Workplace 2019"' noted that while 65% of entry-level workers are white employees, they comprised 86% of C-Suite executives. By contrast, employees of color comprised 34% of entry-level employees, but 14% of C-Suite executives" (Bachman, 2020, n.p.).

Therefore, it can be concluded that is strongly possible that African American women fall in an even smaller percentage outside of the women of the overall women of color population, which could include women from other marginalized backgrounds. Furthermore, deeply embedded systemic biases of gender and race are socially constructed expectations and perceptions that carry on the maintenance of the severe underrepresentation of Black women in high level roles (Phipps, 2020).

Glass cliff. Once glass ceilings are broken, and women and women of color advance to executive leadership roles, they are often greeted with the phenomenon of the glass cliff. The term glass cliff was first coined by Michelle Ryan and S. Alexander Haslam in 2005 to describe the duplicitous organizational situations that can inherently lead to failure (Slater, 2020). According to McGee (2017), Ryan and Haslam theorized a trend that depicts the placements of female leaders is common in organizations that are in detrimental crisis and on a downward slope. This extension of the glass ceiling presents an ideal situation that places women, and in this case, specifically Black women in unstable environments to encourage failure (McGee, 2017).

After the inception of the concept of the glass cliff, a variety of researchers sought to examine the claims presented by Ryan and Haslam's 2005 research. For example, Cook and Glass (2014a) performed an analysis of data between 1996 and 2010. The data showed that Fortune 500 companies that were organizationally challenged appointed more females to leadership roles than their male counterparts. Likewise, after examining 3691 executives, of which 262 were females in 444 ranked Fortune 500 U.S. corporations, Brady, Isaacs, Reeves, Burroway, and Reynolds (2011) reported that

companies experiencing recent scandals were more likely to appoint female executive leadership.

Then again, not all researchers agree with the glass cliff phenomenon. For instance, an analysis performed by Acar (2015) found that female leaders in the information technology industry provided no supporting evidence to the glass cliff phenomena. Therefore, it can be suggested "that the glass cliff is a nuanced and context-dependent phenomenon" (Ryan et al., 2016, p. 449). In other words, to grasp a holistic understanding of the glass cliff phenom, and pinpoint underlining progressions, researchers should couple prior evidence with social theories (Ryan et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that researchers like Contessa (2021) who coupled evidence with social theories, discovered that over the course of 15 years women - and particularly women of color - were appointed to struggling corporations. As such, the glass cliff is relative to theories, social constructs, and evidence.

African American Women in Higher Education

Ballenger (2010) reported a 10% increase in female college presidents between the years of 1986 and 2006, which is still demonstrative of the gender disparity in the advancement of women to chief executive positions in higher education institutions. Equally important, the struggle with advancement to higher education leadership positions continues to be an arduous battle, specifically for African American women. Despite the academic achievements and skill development of Black women, their level of advancement to leadership roles is significantly lower than that of White females with similar skill sets and falls even further behind their male counterparts (Auster & Prasad, 2016). According to Espinosa et al. (2019), a 2017 American Council on Education

(ACE) study reported that 30% of college presidents were female, 9% of which were Black women. These percentages paint a picture of the breadth and depth of the disparity, not only of women in higher education executive leadership, but an even greater disparity amongst Black women. Harley (2008) further noted that the disparity in the percentage of tenured African American women has remained stagnate over the course of 30 years.

The double jeopardy of being both female and Black has afflicted Black women in higher education since the1800s through the civil rights movement. Davis and Brown (2017) examined both historical and contemporary perspectives, asserting that "in the fall of 2013, of the post-secondary degree-granting institutions, only 6% of faculty were Black… Black women represented would be far less than 6% of all faculty working in 2013" (p. 1). This evidence suggests a continual underrepresentation of African American women in higher education and suggests deeper systemic values and beliefs toward marginalized groups. Hyppolite (2019) corroborated this evidence by recounting the following statement made by a college president: "some people still hold fixed ideas about leaders and how they should look and sound" (p. 2). As a result of systemic beliefs and biases, women of color are constantly challenged as they quest to executive leadership roles. According to Artis (2018), a former Benedict College President, "women often have to prove themselves in multiple ways before the scrutiny subsides" (n.p.). The former Benedict president further asserts that the perception of inabilities and inefficiencies are magnified for Black women and used as examples to disapprove the effectiveness of their leadership abilities (Artis, 2018).

African American Women's Contribution to Higher Education

Despite their experiences of disparity in their quest to attain executive leadership positions in higher education, African American women have been influential in education facilitation within the Black community since the American period of enslavement (Sule, 2009). Their educational contributions extend beyond the traditional platform of teaching. Not only have Black women served as teachers, but they were also school organizers and activists for Black education (Giddings, 1984; Hine, 1994; Perkins, 1990). During the post-Civil Rights era, it was common for female Black educators to use their teaching positions to advocate for social justice and change (Sule, 2009). Subsequently, their advocacy for social equity made their leadership visible in education (Hine, Brown, Patterson, & Williams, 1990; Hine & Thompson, 1998). In essence, they used their educational positions as a gateway not only to contribute to the academic advancement of Black students, but they journeyed to also move the national needle toward social change.

Northouse (2016) described this type of leadership as emergence. Emergent leaders are described as non-positional individuals who gain support from a group over the course of time based on behaviors, the acceptance of their behaviors, as well as their identity in relation to a specific group (Northouse, 2016). As such, it can be seen that female African American educators, became emergent leaders, and contributed to the evolution of higher education based on their identities and ability influence.

Sule (2009) declared that it is not unusual for Black women to make service their focus. Evans (2007) further implored that conventional female Black educators have historically "assumed that education should be fundamentally intertwined with moral

responsibility and social justice" (p. 6). Otherwise, higher education institutions today would remain stagnate with deliberate discrimination practices that hinder the advancement of those from marginalized groups. The relationship between education and Black women is deeply rooted in their experiences with oppression and historical knowledge of the inequities of those before them. Hence, placing them in an advantageous position to identify oppressive behavior may encourage them to challenge discriminatory academic institutional practices (Collins, 2000; Sule, 2009). The convergence of Black women and education is essentially their opportunity to contribute to educational change, "whether through research, teaching, mentoring, or volunteering—the underlying theme is that their work enacted to advance intercultural competence, empowerment, and social equity" (Sule, 2009, p. 113).

Relevance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)

Recent years illustrate the intentional attempts at PWIs to drive discussions surrounding diversity; however, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have long sought racial and social justice pre-and post-Civil War. Stefon (2019) has furthered this notion by indicating that the initial incorporation of HBCUs prior to the start of the Civil War was in response to racism and social injustices against Black youth seeking higher education. HBCU institutions found it their social obligation to adopt a culture that embraces social justice, inclusion, and equity. Additionally, African American women have long lived this social responsibility; however, their contributions and leadership to educational movements, and for providing resources for Black students to thrive in adverse circumstances have gone unrecognized (Jean-Marie, 2006).

Ironically, while African American females encompass 62 to 75 percent of the HBCU student population, a mere 25% of the one hundred HBCUs have female presidents, a 5% reduction from 2016 ("Women HBCU Presidents," 2019). This evidence represents the underrepresentation of female leadership across all educational spectrums based on gender. In other words, while the duality of race plus gender may not have a great impact in HBCU systems, the gender factor still produces a challenge for women as they pursue leadership roles. McDowell and Carter-Francique (2017) discussed how African American women, even in the HBCU system, face stereotypical work-related fences, based on traditional theories and beliefs of role congruity. As explained by Benjamin (1997), traditionally sexism in HBCU's often committed Black women to activities perceived as feminine such as home economics and classroom teaching positions, and most other areas directly associated with student interactions. Furthermore, the same author declares that Black women continue to remain invisible despite their increased presence in the academy (Benjamin, 1997). Foundational to this are the elements of role congruity that assign stereotypical beliefs of the gender roles between women and men, specifically in the areas of leadership. Davis and Maldonado (2015) have expressed that the academy has met African American women with oppositional isolation from the foundational leadership in higher education institutions. Such factors contribute to the gaps in women's leadership at most higher education institutions, including HBCUs.

Experiences with Predominantly White Institutions

Stroud (2009) asserts that the leadership of African American women is significant to the overall population of African American women as they journey through the

professional advancement in PWIs. The researcher further contends that the universal concept of white male supremacy is not solely specific to the United States; however, it is the foundational structure that which the nation was created and influences both conventional and unconventional public and private relationships (Stroud, 2009). In other words, the socially and politically structured discrimination specifically experienced by Black women continues to be the narrative in educational institutions (hooks, 1995). During the fall of 2005, The National Center for Educational Statistics reported that African American women represented less than ten percent of the 196,324 higher education executives during that timeframe (Stroud, 2009). These statistics are rooted in the socially constructed views of women, women of color, and the assumptions of their abilities. Complimentary to this, the earlier research of Guillory (2001) and Wolfman (1997) contended that the challenges of Black women are greater than their Black male, White male, and White female counterparts, theorizing that PWIs systemically promote and up-hold white male dominance. In a more recent study, Truehill (2021) confirmed that female Black scholars have faced promotional and tenure challenges as they are met with an immense amount of competition with White women, White men, and Black men at PWI's.

Barriers Impacting African American Women in Higher Education

Ethnic Stereotypes

Guillory's (2001) research reported that female African American officials have an increased subjectivity to marginalization, organizational racism, and desensitized cultural awareness. The intersection of gender and race is often regarded as the primary sources of several forms of discrimination for Black women (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw,

1989). Research indicates a consistent frequency of depictions that characterize Black women as immensely promiscuous, aggressively vulgar in speech, and having an emotional grit and toughness─ often referred to as the Strong Black Woman (Harris-Perry, 2013; Lewis & Neville, 2015; Parks, 2010). Consequently, the prevalence of such stereotypes can cause African American women to approve or internalize these stereotypical depictions, thus becoming a barrier. While such depictions may appear to be extreme and unrelated to higher education, research tells a different story. Lais (2018) described the perception of Black women in higher education leadership roles as "aggressive, strong-willed, difficult to work with, or too pushy" (p. 1). Therefore, not only do stereotypes create internalized endorsement for Black women, but they have also been systemically accepted, causing a hindrance in professional advancement.

Structural Barriers

According to Nidiffer (2000), "structural barriers, and organizational culture can thwart women presidents with overt criticism, harassment, and subtle forms of discomfort" (p. 121). In a 2002 research, Jackson and Harris (2007) found that African American female college presidents perceived the top structural barriers they experienced included preconceptions and stereotyping of females, ethnicity, and gender discrimination. Furthermore, the research found that during their quest to the college presidency, Black women reported a lack of access to executive management offices in conjunction with occupational goals, mentorship, and as well as not holding a doctoral degree (Jackson & Harris, 2007). While perceptively subtle, such acts are structurally embedded in the thinking and processes within higher education and works as active barriers for Black women seeking to advance to the executive suite. Linden (2012)

furthered this thought by indicating that women of color would find greater success if institutions would analyze and revise systems of promotional development processes, and create systems that encourage proportionate professional advancement, structures of internal recruitment, arbitration, and reporting policies. Considering this, one can conclude that the first step in creating equitable opportunities for Black women within higher education leadership is challenging structural barriers by addressing institutional policies and procedures.

Theoretical Considerations

Black Feminist Theory

Black feminism is described as "the belief that women are full human beings capable of participation and leadership in the full range of human activities— intellectual, political, social, sexual, spiritual, [and] economic (Collins, 1996, p. 12). First coined by Hill-Collins (1989, 1998, 2000), Black feminism concentrates on the specific experiences and narratives of Black women, thus decentering white male-dominance. More importantly, the narratives of Black women provide a self-defined viewpoint based on their personal experiences and the experiences of others who identify in the same group, adding validity to their perspectives. To elaborate, Amoah (2013) posited that the narratives of Black women are formulaic in shaping and informing their views through a host of personal experiences and the historical experiences and testimonies of other Black women. The same researcher further breaks down the narrative concept by stating that "Black Feminist Theory is not simply a method for viewing, constructing, or even deconstructing social reality. Rather, it is a way of life and living in general" (Amoah,

2013, p. 97). In other words, the living experience is a foundational component to the narrative and storytelling of the duality of race and gender for Black women.

Ironically, while Amoah (2013) posited that Black Feminist Theory doesn't merely set out to deconstruct social reality, Mitchell (2021) hypothesized that Black feminism embraces equality, while also encouraging the dismantling or deconstruction of systemic oppression. As explained by Hill-Collins (2000), the historical agenda of the feminist movement was unsuccessful in embracing the full inclusion of the experiences of Black women, which informed their decision to create and enhance Black feminism. Foundational to this was the deeply rooted racism found in the feminist movement, thus making the circumstances affecting middle-class White women their core focus, resulting in Black women forming their own movement to highlight their experiences (Mitchell, 2021). Accordingly, it has been theorized that Black feminism is driven by "reclaiming Black women's ideas and discovering, reinterpreting, and, in many cases, analyzing for the first time the works of individual U.S. Black women thinkers" (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 407). Considering these ideas, the Black Feminist Theory does not only set out to tell a story, but through those narratives challenges policies, increases knowledge, and draws recognition to the intellectual mind frame of Black women.

Critical Race Theory

The emergence of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) stems from a legal analysis framework established in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Kimberle Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and other scholars (Sawchuk, 2021). The framework analyzed the discrimination in policies and legal systems, which deemed racism a systemically rooted social construct, as opposed to mere individualized prejudices and biases

(Sawchuk, 2021). To put it another way, CRT provided a broader spectrum that extended beyond the dominant group's personal views and values, by revealing the presence of deeply rooted, systemic and socially constructed oppression that has been accepted as the norm in American culture. To illustrate, University of Hawaii's law professor Mari Matsuda, who also assisted in the early development of CRT, proclaimed that "the problem is not bad people… The problem is a system that reproduces bad outcomes. It is both humane and inclusive to say, 'we have done things that have hurt us all, and we need to find a way out'" (Fortin, 2021, n.p.). This illustration directly challenges the concept that racism is specific to a personal characteristic, but rather a reproduction of oppressive structural policies and practices.

As it relates to educational research, CRT has been a meaningful framework in analyzing individual experiences (Mitchell, 2021). For that reason, CRT acknowledges systems and acts of several forms of oppression such as sexism and racism, thus making it significant to understand the experiences of Black women (Mitchell, 2021). Equally important, it highlights the experiences of Black women in higher education and adds authenticity to the perspective of African American women. In other words, the inclusion of diverse voices counters the marginalization and silencing of different groups and slows down the ideology of privilege (Alston, 2012). Thus, it can be concluded that the Black female perspective can uncover the systemic behaviors of oppression in higher education and inform policy changes.

Intersectional Theory

Historically, navigating racism and sexism has been a significant burden for Black women in America (Greene II, 2018, n.p.). The intersectional cross between race and

gender is often referenced as intersectionality. The term intersectionality was first coined by Kimberle Crenshaw to describe the multi-faceted structures of discrimination experienced by Black women (Moorosi, Fuller, & Reilly, 2018). Theoretically, the analysis of intersectionality examines the gaps discovered by both anti-racist and feminists on the struggles encountered by women of color (Crenshaw, 1991). The examining of each entity on a stand-alone basis does not provide a holistic view of the experience of the Black woman. In other words, an assessment of feminism does not address the racial factor, and the assessment of race does not address the feminist factor, thus proving a partial analysis of the foundational sources of discrimination, specifically for Black women. Collins (2000) justified this notion by outlining that White feminist were negligent in acknowledging the encounters of African American women. The author further contends the need for Black feminist thought, which proclaims that differences should be exposed in a manner that pinpoints the interwoven inequalities of gender, race, and class (Collins, 2000).

The historical and harsh reality of the intersection of sex and race dates to the 1970's, when Black women filed a legal suit against General Motors based on race and gender related segregation (Crenshaw, 2015). To summarize, Crenshaw (2015) wrote:

> According to the plaintiff's experiences, women were welcome to apply for some jobs, while only men were suitable for others. This was of course a problem in it of itself, but for Black women the problem was compounded. You see, the Black jobs were men's jobs, and the women's jobs were only for Whites. Thus, while a Black applicant might get hired to work on the floor of the factory if he were male; if she were a Black female she would not be considered. (n.p.)

Furthermore, the case was dismissed because the courts prohibited the combination of gender and race in a single claim (Crenshaw, 2015). Equally important, the dismissal of the case demonstrated the invisibility of the significance of duality of oppression experienced by Black women.

Intersectionality has gained traction over the last decade as it relates to racism and sexism and has offered a look into the effects of social class and social identities on the lives of Black women (McCall, 2005). The significance of social identity is rooted in the recognition of the coexistence of privilege and oppression in relation to social class groups (Smooth, 2010). To elaborate, despite the privileges found in the progression of female leadership, Black women are still disregarded on the foundations of racism and sexism, both of which formulate social class. Hence, the conversation of the intersectionality of race and gender not only helps society recognize the duality of oppression experienced by Black women, but it also brings attention to the systemic apathy of this phenomenon. Crenshaw (2015) furthered this thought by indicating that historical anti-racist and feminist activists neglected to acknowledge the two-fold oppression of gender and race. Thus, the lack of acknowledgment has made it difficult to understand the various avenues of discrimination, and their impact on the advancement of Black women.

Conceptual Framework Variable: Self Sabotaging Behaviors and the Corresponding Nine Domains of Personal Power

There is a systematic cultural assumption that masculinity is required in leadership roles to ensure organizational success (Thomas, 2020). As a result, the cultural norm of male dominance within leadership can be an internal barrier for women

on their path to leadership roles. Moreover, Brown et al. (2012) suggested that women tend to self-handicap themselves in response to the existence of systematic obstacles. On the surface, barriers appear to be external; however, Crews (2020) has asserted that "barriers can be interrelated with many self-sabotaging behaviors manifesting as a result of internalizing structural barriers and societal gender bias" (p. 39). To add perspective, scholars have identified nine self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by women: thinking too small, fear and worrying, misunderstanding one's self, dishonesty, holding back, not taking time for self-reflection, isolating, disempowering other women, and infusing sex/gender confusion (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). The conceptual framework adapted from *In her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Lerner, 2012) and *The Sexx Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder & Briles, 2003) is used to describe the self-sabotaging behaviors engaged in by female leaders along with the associated domains of personal power to overcome them.

Table 1 - *Conceptual Framework*

Self-Sabotaging Behaviors	Nine Domains of Personal Power
Thinking too small	Recognizing women's unique destiny
Fear and worry	Constructive preparation
Misunderstanding one's self	Owning all of one's self
Dishonesty	Honest self-expression
Holding back	Acting with confidence
Not taking time for reflection	Cultivating self-intimacy
Isolating	Building a Power web
Disempowering other women	Inspiring other women
Infusing sex/gender role confusion in the Workplace	Embracing one's sexuality

Note. Adapted from In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self, by H. Lerner, 2012 (New York, NY: Atria Paperback); and The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives, by M. Ryder and J. Briles, 2003 (Fair Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press).

Thinking Too Small

Fogarty (2009) noted a steady presence of male dominance in leadership across most organizational sectors. As a result, women tend to think small and experience low self-esteem and not only doubt their abilities, but rather doubt the societal acceptance of their abilities. Research contends that women suffer from low self-esteem more than their male counterparts, not on the mere basis of being female, rather the gender-based treatment of women (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999; Rosenberg, 1979). The traditional interpretation of societal roles is that men are associated with influence, power, and competence, while women are associated with incompetence, low status, and absence of authority, all of which impacts levels of self-esteem (Steward & McDermott, 2004).

Equally important, while African American women have demonstrated educational progression to reach leadership roles, a significant 'opportunity disparity' still exists for them (Loubert, 2012). This is a direct result of deeply rooted systemic beliefs and prejudices. For that reason, McDowell and Carter-Francique (2017) have revealed an increased literary emphasis on the impacts of marginalized identities on the Black female experience. Hence, the factors of male dominance, intersectionality, and lack of leadership opportunities for Black women and women, in general, can influence self-esteem levels, causing women to second guess themselves, discredit their abilities, and think too small. Thinking too small is often accompanied by self-defeating verbal and body language. Pianta (2020) argues that women discredit themselves by drawing in their limbs, and tightening their bodies to minimize an authoritative appearance, while also making self-reducing statements such as "I'm just," "this isn't important but", or

being overly apologetic. This kind of language sets a sure tone of lack of confidence and assertiveness, which are leadership traits that organizations find valuable.

Lerner (2012), Munoz, Pankake, Ramalho, Mills, & Simmonson (2014), and Ryder and Briles (2003) asserted that women tend to think small regarding their abilities based on societal sex-role misconceptions— misconceptions that have been internalized. Considering such factors, small thinking leads to low self-esteem, which in turn works as a self-sabotaging barrier. Huysse-Gaytandjieva, Groot, Pavlova, and Joiling (2015) confirmed that "people with low self-esteem have low expectations of success, and as a result, they fail to make the best use of the capacities they have" (p. 329). Ryder and Briles (2003) extended this thought by positing that the absence of confidence and self-esteem prevents the will for one to stretch themselves towards the attainment of new knowledge and taking on new challenges. As it relates to women, self-esteem is a vital figure to their advancement. Pianta (2020) corroborated this assertion by arguing that a woman's self-esteem is foundational to her professional ambitions and occupational progression. One may interpret that 'thinking too small' is a self-inflicted debilitating mind-set that impedes the motivation and belief in oneself to venture into uncharted territories and rise to challenging occasions.

Recognizing women's unique destiny. Henry and Glenn (2009) reported that Black women in executive level higher education positions are severely underrepresented and often unsupported. As a result, self-doubt creeps in, which can cause Black women to engage in self-sabotaging behaviors such as thinking too small and doubting their abilities. To counter thinking too small, Black women must take responsibility for recognizing their unique destiny by tapping into their personal power to live out their

greatest potential. Lerner (2012) defined personal power as "being able to act from a position of strength rather than react out of fear and limitation" (p. xv). To accomplish this, Lerner (2012) has suggested that women assess their ability to make an impact. The mere assessment of one's ability to make an impact increases confidence levels and provides a broader vision of possibilities and self-awareness. Confidence is an essential component to one's ability to learn, grow, present themselves professionally, and respond effectively to difficult situations (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Furthermore, Lerner (2012) identified three personal power tools critical to the process: self-inquiry, spiritual power muscles, and intuition. Self-inquiry is accomplished by meditating and journaling to find internal answers regarding one's functionality. Spiritual power muscles provide a deeper self-awareness insight by first maintaining full engagement with friends, support systems, and mentors (Lerner, 2012). Additionally, this personal power tool taps into one's creative and innovative nature by showing courage to step outside of comfort zones to determine how they impact the world around them. Equally important, the use of intuition will allow Black women to trust their inner knowledge and not allow outside stereotypical influences to guide them.

Fear and Worrying

Fear and worry stem from a host of emotions related to anger, stress, and most of all, fear. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) confirmed that fear and worry stem from various levels of heightened emotional anger. Black women, particularly in their quest to the higher education leadership roles face a vast number of impeding barriers, which are key contributors to their fear and worry, thus leading to increased anxiety levels. Neal-Barnett (2018) attested that in professional and collegiate settings, Black women are

often considered “the only one” or “the first one” and believe they are under close and continuous examination. Based on this belief, they have been taught to be two times better than their counterparts and go above and beyond to be the best representation of an underrepresented group of people, thus adding additional pressure, worry, and social anxiety (Neal-Barnett, 2018).

Another component of fear and worry is the fear of failure. Ryder and Briles (2003) described failure as an event-based judgment, both personally and the experiences of others. For Black women in higher education executive positions, the fear of failure becomes an incapacitating behavior of self-sabotage that limits growth, perspective, and the ability to lead change initiatives. Conceptually, this notion is supported by Harris (2016) who stated that “for Black women, it often feels as if [they] are perpetually waiting for the proverbial ball to drop. If [they] get a promotion [they] constantly worry about proving [themselves] worthy of keeping the job” (n.p.). Subsequently, fear is often accompanied by a decrease in social status, self-esteem, and possibly money; hence the expectation of failure will almost always produce failure (Ryder & Briles, 2003). These factors contribute to the self-sabotaging barrier that produces failure, which in turn impedes women’s growth, limits advancement opportunities, and produces a continuous cycle of fear.

Constructive preparation. Constructive preparation is an important process to overcome fear and worry. Furthermore, it means to accept, embrace, and gain an understanding of fear (Pianta, 2020). Understanding and embracing the foundational causes of fear helps one regain control over their emotions and assess the origin of these emotions. To accomplish this, Lerner (2012) has proposed that women conduct a self-

assessment on their outlook regarding change. The following assessment questions seek to expose foundations of fear and help determine if women are more resistant to or embracing of fear and change: a) "Bring to mind a time when you skillfully dealt with change. Consider the details. b) What do you credit for not having resisted the change? c) What do you fear most about change? d) What do you appreciate most about change?" (Lerner, 2012, p. 32). Additionally, questions that seek to examine events that cause mixed emotions or discomfort are intricate to the self-assessment process and will help to determine if women are resistant or accepting of change (Lerner, 2012). As a result, women, specifically Black leaders in higher education can better navigate and embrace fear by understanding its origin through the constructive preparation of understanding through assessment. Thus, making fear an ally and fostering the ability to remain current in the face of adversity (Lerner, 2012).

Misunderstanding One's Self

Thomas (2020) posited that misunderstanding one's self speaks to a woman's inability to accept both her strengths and weaknesses. Lerner (2012) further contends that women who are selective in the acceptance of their strengths and weaknesses exert an immense amount of energy covering parts of themselves when they should take pride in the developmental areas of their lives. The prevalence of this self-inflicted barrier within female African American leaders in higher education can be caused by external factors. "Research indicates that Black women deal with such issues as invisibility, exclusion, tokenism, poor mentoring and academic support, physical burn-out, and lack of respect" (Wilder, Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013, p. 30). Hence, it can be resolved that because of the existing barriers, Black female leaders may find it difficult to fully

own their accomplishments, accept compliments and feedback, and embrace strengths and weaknesses amidst gender and race intersectional factors, thus losing sight of their true selves.

As explained by Crews (2020) strengths and positive attributes are often found in compliments and feedback. However, women who misunderstand themselves tend to shy away from compliments and choose to focus on criticism (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Ironically, it is typically difficult to completely ignore compliments and acknowledgment. However, when praise is downplayed, it presents false authenticity, which creates a trust barrier that hinders effective leadership. One of the key components of authentic leadership is the intrapersonal viewpoint that narrows in on a leader's self-regulation and self-concept (Northouse, 2016) In essence, the dismissal of credit for accomplishments and achievements communicates a lack of authenticity, and artificial modesty to others (Crew, 2020; Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018; Lerner, 2012). Furthermore, Northouse (2016) identified authentic leadership as "worthwhile, offering hope to people who long for true leadership" (p. 220). Likewise, as colleges and universities seek to embrace diversity, female African American leaders must be careful to gain an understanding of themselves to counter this self-sabotaging behavior. Otherwise, misunderstanding one's self will lead to a self-imposed barrier that impedes their advancement and diminishes development opportunities within higher education.

Owning all of one's self. To overcome misunderstanding one's self, women must embrace themselves from a holistic perspective. Accordingly, Lerner (2012) has identified 'owning one's self' as a woman's ability to acknowledge and own both her strengths and opportunities for growth. In acknowledging both strengths and

weaknesses, women increase their competency levels, exude power, and maintain control in significant settings (Montgomery, 2019). Furthermore, owning one's self assists women in attaining clarity and liberating themselves from feeling restricted, both of which are key contributors to transformational leadership (Humphreys & Einstein, 2003; Lerner, 2012). Another essential point is that women who learn to appreciate their set-backs gain power through valuable experiences, in turn extending grace to themselves as they use valuable lessons to inform new behaviors (Lerner, 2012).

Owning one's self undoubtedly plays a significant role in the advancement of female African American higher education leaders. To advance it is imperative that Black women boldly promote their achievements and declare their abilities, which is part of embracing their strengths. Helgesen and Goldsmith (2018) declare that highlighting achievements is as important as having the capacity to fulfill the tasks listed in the position requirements. To do so, women must view self-promotion not as an element of conceit, but rather as an attribute of personal achievement (Madell, 2019; Olson, 2019; Racioppi, 2019). Pianta (2020) has reaffirmed this notion by indicating that women will be empowered by shifting their thinking, thus making their goals of promotions or pay increases a reality. Research has determined that one of the most efficient ways to self-promote is the use of an elevator speech, which serves to clearly communicate one's purpose, professional goals, as well their qualification rationale (Cohen, 2009; Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018; Pianta, 2020; Wilson, 2014). Thus, as female Black leaders in higher education promote their assets, they make their value more visible, not only to institutional leaders, but also the student population.

Dishonesty

The self-sabotaging behavior of dishonesty stems from women's desire to satisfy others (Hauser, 2018). As a result, women jeopardize their authenticity, which impairs professional and personal development (Crews, 2020). One of the ways that women demonstrate dishonesty is by saying one thing but internally thinking another. Goudreau (2012) posited that "women [who] too often say 'yes' when they mean 'no,' hide their achievements behind a veil of false modesty or fail to express their thoughts and feelings honestly (n.p.). Hence, practicing false modesty and refraining from honest expression impedes professional progression and authenticity, which ultimately becomes an issue of trust—a self-sabotaging threat to effective leadership. Harvey and Drolet (2005) published that "if you avoid extending trust for fear of violation, you will then be a double victim—they will have achieved their purpose and you will have gained nothing at all. Your fear of giving trust will make you a less trusted person" (p. 23). The connection is that dishonesty inherently perpetuates lack of trust, which is a key component to effective leadership and buy-in.

Pianta (2020) explained that the need for women to please others presents a distraction from their aspirations, which often thus causes the talents of women to go unnoticed. In turn, this can leave them in a pigeonholed position. For female African American leaders in higher education, this desire to be a pleaser may cause them to take on unreasonable amounts of work, adding an additional barrier to the existing gender and race barriers that hinder their professional advancement. To extend this thought, Manke (2019) posited that many Black women take on the persona of the strong Black woman. This superwoman stereotype leads to self-sacrifices, an unrealistic presentation of

strength, and no emotional coping with intersectional discrimination (Manke, 2019). Complimentary to this, Lerner (2012) found that because women are natural nurturers, they tend to take on unreasonable amounts of responsibility and agree to take on tasks that are either difficult to manage or beyond their reach. Therefore, women who are dishonest, lose touch with their authentic selves, and spread themselves too thin inadvertently impair their efficiency and progression.

Honest self-expression. To overcome the self-sabotaging behavior of dishonesty, Black women must truthfully express themselves as they aspire to become higher education executive leaders. Lerner (2012) identified two forms of genuine expression. The first is internal thoughts and communication with others. The second is the authenticity, or lack thereof, of the delivery of such thoughts. Honest self-expression requires the courage to remain true to one's self even in the face of adversity (Chen, 2017). However, some women perceive that genuinely expressing themselves may cause others to view them as arrogant. As such, Ryder and Briles (2006) have suggested that women learn to strategically self-promote by asserting their points with subtlety and tact. In other words, instead of shying away from genuine expression, women must still express themselves authentically with confidence and skill. According to Chin (2011) and Dewalt (2018), honest self-expression is foundational to a woman's core. It fosters authentic leadership, speaks to the value that she adds to an organization, as well as reassures her ethical standings. Such characteristics are demonstrative of effective leadership.

According to Ackerman-Anderson and Anderson (2012) and Thomas (2020), women in leadership that exercise honest self-expression open themselves up to the world

to view their true selves unapologetically. Although this sounds easy, Lerner (2012) contends that honest self-expression requires a high degree of courage, especially when interacting with individuals who wish to impose their will on the actions and thinking of female leaders. Therefore, female leaders must intentionally voice their needs and desires through genuine self-expression (Avila, 2018; Lerner, 2012; Thomas, 2020). Moreover, women must understand that honest expression also requires vulnerability. Pianta (2020) has furthered this notion by indicating that women must resist the urge to be dishonest and open themselves for vulnerability by acknowledging their true feelings and providing opportunities for others to relate and empathize.

Holding Back

The self-sabotaging behavior of holding back is derived from a lack of self-confidence, negative self-talk, and has been found to be a debilitating behavior for female leaders, specifically African American women in higher education leadership roles. Crites, Dickson, and Lorenz (2015) declared that the underrepresentation of Black women in executive level roles has caused a decrease in self-worth, self-esteem, and self-efficiency. As a result, Black female voices in higher learning institutions have been silenced and marginalized (Candia-Bailey, 2016; Jones, 2014). These disappointments are often the undercurrent for holding back. Pianta (2020) confirmed this idea by stating, "when pursuing leadership roles, women are often faced with disappointments as they hit the glass ceiling. Women lack the tenacity to persevere when faced with these obstacles" (p. 55). In conjunction with cultural norms, women become discouraged from competing with their male and female counterparts, resulting in self-doubt and hesitation to apply for

c-suite positions, all of which hinder their advancement (Briles, 2006; Grimston, 2011; Thomas, 2020).

The fear of being perceived as incompetent is one of the foundational factors in holding back. According to Thomas (2020) a woman's confidence can be demolished when listening to her critical internal voice, which causes women to refrain from voicing their opinions, speaking up in meetings, and fear the possible rejection of their contributions. Moreover, women frequently underrepresented in significant meetings are more likely to experience unhappiness when their contributions are dismissed and devalued (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018; Thomas, 2020). As a result of blatant dismissal, women lose confidence in their abilities, and hesitate to openly express themselves or challenge current processes. For that reason, women appear to be indirect, inexperienced, unable to articulate, and unqualified, all of which causes workplace incoherence and prevents women's advancement (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020).

Acting with confidence. To overcome the self-sabotaging behavior of holding back, women must confidently present and express themselves with executive presence. Executive presence is described as the ability to enter a room with a presence of sophistication, high visibility, and the ability to quickly connect (Ryder & Briles, 2003). These characteristics of executive presence are instrumental in how women are viewed, and ultimately how they will lead. Ryder and Briles (2003) pointed out that "when women with presence speak, others listen. Confident women inspire at all levels—from the CEO to the receptionist. They speak with conviction, never equivocating" (p. 96). In other words, women with confidence speak with surety, inspire others, and command the

attention from the top of the hierarchy to those at the entry level, thus significantly impacting how they are viewed and their advancement.

Eurich (2019) noted that one of the root causes of holding back is that women tend to underestimate others' perceptions of them. Then again, many researchers contend that self-perception is the primary suspect. Pianta (2020) advised that confidence stems from a woman's understanding of her critical views concerning herself, and her capacity to not-be overly consumed with such thoughts. This idea speaks directly to the mindset of women and their tendency to ponder past mistakes, which can overtake their mind, causing self-doubt and lack of confidence. As such, Blanchard (2009), Lerner (2012), Pianta (2020), and Sandberg (2013) have suggested that women reflect on their achievements with appreciation, and let go of doubtful and critical mindsets, which will ultimately serve as a reminder that they are sufficient. Another essential point is the need for mentorship to build confidence levels. Lerner (2012) urges women to seek a confidence mentor to serve as an empowering support system to encourage the actions needed to achieve goals that women tend to believe are beyond their grasp. Mentorship is crucial for Black women in their quest for higher education leadership positions. For example, a study found that Black women are scarcely encouraged to pursue leadership roles, while their male counterparts are provided the professional preparation to pursue such roles (Growe & Montgomery, 1999). Additionally, the study found that Black women who sought executive level positions in higher education required support system access, especially effective mentorship (Growe & Montgomery, 1999).

Not Taking Time for Reflection

Self-sabotage occurs when women lack the emotional intelligence of self-reflection. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) asserted that self-reflection is a vital piece to emotional intelligence, which happens to impact 58% of job performance. Hence, without it, leaders run the risk of decreased job performance, while also losing sight of their true selves, which are detrimental to advancement. According to Lerner (2012) the frequent female culture of false personification fosters a disengagement of self-acceptance, self-knowledge, authenticity, and creates blinders to the need for transformational development. Furthermore, it is imperative to understand and reflect on both strengths and opportunities for growth as it fosters relationship building as well as effective leadership (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Thomas, 2020).

Other essential repercussions of refusing to take the time to self-reflect are that women do not give themselves the opportunities to take vacations, grieve losses, release grudges, or accept areas for growth (Brown, 2018; Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018; Lerner, 2012; Pianta, 2020). For female African American leaders, Njoku and Evans (2022) warned that the anxieties of work-life balance, and the impacts of the current pandemic and social unrest on their families, employees, and student success are stressful and debilitating. In the same way, such stressors are facilitated by intersectional gender and race discrimination (Njoku & Evans, 2022). As a result, women aim to constantly prove and affirm their abilities to work hard, and master their positions especially in male dominated industries, as opposed to taking some time to enjoy living (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Consequently, women are overworked, burned out, and take very little time to re-energize, negatively impacting them personally and professionally. Arylo (2012)

confirmed that when women refuse to practice self-care or self-reflection, they deplete themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Cultivating self-intimacy. To overcome the lack of self-reflection, women must be intentional to learn about themselves and develop self-awareness. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) state:

> Awareness of yourself is not only knowing that you are a morning person instead of a night owl. It's deeper than that. Getting to know yourself inside and out is a continuous journey of peeling back the layers of the onion and becoming more and more comfortable with what is in the middle—the true essence of you. (p. 61)

Thus, in cultivating self-intimacy women take the time to learn themselves on a deeper level (Crews, 2020). Moreover, Bradberry and Greaves (2009) have suggested seeking feedback as a strategy to learn one's authentic self. They have affirmed that opening up to the feedback of friends, mentors, family, and supervisors will provide a holistic picture of oneself and the impact of their actions on others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Furthermore, Lerner (2012) and Crews (2020) have recommended that women cultivate self-intimacy by carving out time specifically for reflection, participating in activities that cater to reflection, while also accepting their emotional state, and refraining from self-judgement. When women choose not to engage in self-reflection, they risk losing their ability for growth, thus limiting their power (Crews, 2020). Hence, cultivating self-intimacy creates a balance, and provides women the power to reach their destiny.

Isolating

The self-sabotaging behavior of isolation arises when women abandon the opportunity to engage and network with co-workers, friends, groups, and other

acquaintances that can be instrumental in their development (Lerner, 2012). In the same way, women tend to find it difficult reaching out for assistance because they perceive that those individuals are more preeminent and evolved than themselves (Lerner, 2012; Thomas, 2020). Therefore, women who isolate themselves find it incredibly difficult to advance. Why? Because attitudes of inferiority cause women to separate themselves from the very people who may have the power and desire to contribute to their professional advancement, thus stalling their professional climb, leaving them in a reduced professional state (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

In addition to the existing barriers experienced by Black women, isolation is equally detrimental. Combs (2003) has argued that multilayered stereotypes contribute to the difficulty African American women face in developing influential networks. The argument is that Black women perceive that they cannot benefit from the shared gender status of white women, and they cannot benefit from the shared racial status of Black men (Combs, 2003). Additionally, there is a lack of professional support and development for Black female professionals, both experienced and at the entry level (Grant, 2012; Harvard, 1986; Mitchell, 2021). Therefore, it can be argued that Black women may feel justified in isolating themselves based on structural and systemic barriers. As such, Pianta (2020) and Schwanke (2013) factored in structural barriers by indicating that the existence of "old boy" networks creates blurred lines for advancement, while existing organizational networks are often standardized and deeply rooted. Furthermore, Pianta (2020) highlighted a greater frequency of unawareness among women regarding the power of networks, or the existence of male dominated good old boy' networks. Hence, the absence of network connections has caused a substantial

percentage of isolation among women who desire leadership positions (Kaufman and Grace, 2011). More importantly, women self-sabotage by isolating themselves from supporting groups and networks, which hinders their ability to receive feedback, navigate the difficulties of male-dominated organizational structures, and embrace their possibilities (Crews, 2020).

Building a power web. To overcome the self-sabotaging behavior of isolation, Lerner (2012) has suggested building a power web of listeners, connectors, and motivators. Listeners function as sounding boards and advisors, and provide constructive feedback (Lerner, 2012). Connectors are vital to a woman's networking processes, while motivators are people who encourage risk taking and new endeavors (Lerner, 2012). Additionally, connectors drive the networking process by allowing women to identify and connect with sponsors, role models, and mentors to expand professional opportunities (Ham, 2019). In the same way, the use of personal networks perpetuates empowerment to advance, increased knowledge of employment opportunities, and discovery of self-talents and capabilities (Pianta, 2020). Accordingly, Eagly and Carli (2003) certified that social capital out-weighs high performance as it relates to promotion to leadership positions.

Davis, Reynolds, and Jones (2011) asserted that "Black women may need to seek professional support from sources outside their institutions of higher education in an effort to activate social capital necessary for success as an academic" (p. 32). Nonetheless, the need for a power web is imperative to their professional advancement. Wagoner (2017) cosigns by indicating that women with a communal support system are less likely to experience loneliness and isolate themselves, and they feel a sense of

harmony. As explained by Ryder and Briles (2003) prior to planning, effective female leaders have the capacity to seek the perspectives of friends, colleagues, and other members within their power web. By building a power web, women counter the behavior of isolation, and position themselves for opportunities for advancement. Supporting this notion Pianta (2020) declared that professional advancement is not possible while women are in an isolated state, but rather advancement is possible when in the shared exchange of relationships. Equally important, mentorship and collaborations are beneficial to women's professionalism (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). The value of a supportive network opportunity is undeniable, and women have become more interested in extending and receiving mentorship from each other (Brock, 2008).

Disempowering Other Women

Disempowering other women refers to women who competitively undermine other women based on cultural, societal, and psychological factors (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Brock (2008) and Thomas (2020) acknowledged that while the relationship between women can be beneficial, it can also be the source of discord, noting the sabotage of women who disempower other women leads to a dismantling of the power web needed for their advancement. Thus, disempowering other women has a self-sabotaging impact on female career progression, and fosters workplace doubt and frustration among their counterparts (Harvey, 2018; Ryder & Briles, 2003). By comparison, Black women are not exempt. Sharee (2017) reported that Black women, more than their white female counterparts desire executive suite positions; however, the reality that such positions appear out of their reach seemingly increases competition rather than forms allies.

Because of the underrepresentation of Black female leaders in executive roles, they may find themselves sabotaging the opportunities for other women, as well as themselves.

Additionally, there are several key contributing triggers to create an organizational culture of women disempowering women including jealousy, single position competition, and self-perceived inadequacy (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Aside from organizational culture, Heim and Murphy (2001) have argued that women seek balance amongst themselves. For example, unbalanced scales between female friends in status changes such as marriage, bearing a child, promotion, weight loss, popularity, educational progression, and other status changes may cause the relationship to deteriorate (Heim & Murphy, 2001). On the other hand, if women resist the feeling of inferiority and embrace the success of their peers, they may be able to salvage the friendship (Brock, 2008). Such factors create a false sense of support among women that paints the picture of support and care; however, should another woman professionally surpass them, the same female fictional supporter will work to bring them down in their efforts to reach the top (Harvey, 2018; Thomas, 2020). Therefore, while women may believe, and even find success in sabotaging their sisters, they also hinder their own power web abilities. As such, Harvey (2018) confirmed that the self-sabotage in women disempowering women impairs their networks and taints their reputations.

While both men and women are guilty of sabotaging others, women have a higher tendency to sabotage and oppress their female peers (Allen & Flood, 2018, Harvey, 2018; Thomas, 2020). This kind of aggression and oppression is described as the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' and is defined as "a woman who has a dominant or controlling position in a particular group or sphere… [and] treats colleagues in a demoralizing, undermining, or

bullying manner" (Harvey, 2008, p.1). Pianta (2020) has taken this a step further by positing that Queen Bees are typically women that have worked diligently to advance, and often flex their power by spreading rumors and speaking negatively about women in their absence. While Queen Bees typically advance to positions of authority, it is often discovered that they did so at the expense of relational disadvantages, and without supporting their leaders (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016; Thomas, 2020). As a result, they create a negative image of themselves and cause subordinates to try and level the playing field by sabotaging their expertise with verbal attacks, negative body language, and consistently challenging their power (Allen & Flood, 2018; Thomas, 2020).

Inspiring other women. To overcome the self-sabotaging behavior of disempowering women, Lerner (2012) stressed the importance of giving back, for all women have within them the power to inspire others. The outcome of inspiring women is essential to the advancement of female leaders and is equally uplifting for the mentor. Brock (2008) emphasized that the mentorship and support of other women is crucial to developing female leaders, noting reliance on one another is a necessity. Additionally, women practice effective leadership using mentorship and collaboration to inspire other women with an understanding that their inspiration influences their personal and professional advancement (Brock, 2008; Montgomery, 2019).

Equally important, African American women in higher education leadership roles benefit all parties when they choose to inspire and mentor other Black women. Schlossberg (1989) and Collins (2000) posited that the support systems for African American women are critical to creating an inclusive environment, especially at PWIs.

The advancement of female African American leaders in higher education creates opportunities for mentorship and coaching, thus providing support systems for women and members from other marginalized groups (Johnson & Thomas, 2012). Therefore, it can be inferred that as Black women ascend to higher education leadership roles, they can use their expertise and power to inspire and support other Black women. Such inspiration and mentorship are critical to the advancement of both the mentor and the mentee, and to the overall institutional culture, thus influencing a greater purpose. After examining the underrepresentation of female Black leaders in higher education, Black women in leadership do not have the time or space to sabotage other women. According to Thomas (2020), "women who understand their power are not intimidated by, or jealous of, the success of other women" (p. 48). Hence, Black women leaders generally refrain from oppressive behaviors such as bullying, gossiping, social separation, and replace these factors with being more pleasant, resourceful, and positive collaboration (Cure, 2009; Lerner, 2012; Thomas, 2020).

Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace

The self-sabotaging behavior of sex/gender roles confusion negatively impacts the overall organizational culture. As such, it is important for women to develop self-awareness of their sexuality to prevent adverse effects on both a professional and personal level (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas; 2020). Infusing sex or gender roles in professional settings consist of diminishing normal feminine attributes, excessive exhibition of girlie gestures like speech intonation, workplace-flirting, hair coiling, or exhibiting male attributes (Dickerson & Taylor, 2000; Griggs, 2014; Kawaguchi, 2014; Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Ward, 2018). Women often

experience an imbalance in the workplace while trying to maintain femininity and exhibit masculine qualities for professional acceptance. Ryder and Briles (2003) speak to this notion by stating that "some females, especially in the workplace, imitate the traditional style of the traditional role model; they begin to dress and act more like men... they manage to become manlier than men" (p. 126). The evidence highlights the double bind experienced by female professionals; on the one hand she is trying to maintain femininity; on the other side, she is overly masculine, all of which is an attempt to gain leverage and acceptance. In reality, these mixed behaviors breed confusion. Moreover, this double dilemma is foundational to the internal conflict of whether women should chance retaliation by exhibiting agentic behaviors or run the risk of scrutiny for not demonstrating stereotypical gender behaviors (Brescoll, 2016; Crews, 2020; Williams & Multhaup, 2018).

It is important to understand the role stereotypes play in infusing sex/gender confusion, specifically for African American women. One of the stereotypes that Black women face is being overly sexual to the point of promiscuity. Foundational to this, Collins (2000) highlights the "Jezebel" stereotypical depiction of Black women—characterizing them as manipulative, seductive, and hypersexual beings. If Black women act too feminine or dress too provocatively, their male counterparts may find validation in the Jezebel stereotype, thus hindering their opportunities for advancement. Ryder and Briles (2003) expanded this thought by indicating that such behaviors cause gender dissonance, where men become frustrated and distance themselves for fear of sexual harassment allegations and manipulation. Equally important, the stereotypes of role congruity may pressure women to either embrace or resist stereotypical gender roles in

their quest to leadership positions, thus distancing them from their authentic selves, which places them at a disadvantage (Derks et al., 2016; Harris, 2018; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Thomas; 2020).

Embracing one's sexuality. To overcome the self-sabotaging behavior of infusing sex/gender confusion, Lerner (2012) endorses embracing one's sexuality. Inherently, the term sexuality causes people to shy away, and avoid discussing the topic. However, the benefit for women who embrace their sexuality provides them with an understanding of how to pilot their professional behaviors and recognize extremes such as extreme sexiness or extreme masculine behaviors (De Vries, 2015; Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). In recognizing extreme behaviors, women can intentionally control these elements with balance and surety. Caro (2019) has compared the balance between femininity and masculinity with "connecting the heart with the mind…[creating] an effective path to cultivating powerful, grounded, and authentic leaders" (n.p.). Thomas (2020) furthered this notion by pointing out that women who embrace their sexuality learn to balance both communal and agentic attributes and develop an exclusive style of leadership.

Ryder and Briles (2003) have offered several practices that women can use to embrace their sexuality including professional attire—noting to resist the urge to wear extreme jewelry, effective and direct communication, intelligence, and exhibiting confidence. Additionally, Pianta (2020) advised women aspiring to executive leadership positions to become aware of gender dissonance in professional environments. Awareness is a quality that women should possess—it provides insight, understanding, and helps navigate signs of infusing sex/gender confusion. For example, Ryder and

Briles (2003) posited that women can identify, monitor, and better control the behavior that fosters gender discord, if they understand gender dissonance. Moreover, intentionality, self-reflection, and balance are also beneficial practices (Caro, 2019). These factors contribute to the reduction of extreme behaviors that are often frowned upon, and instead highlight and validate a woman's professional attributes. In turn, this creates pathways for advancement.

Summary

While "the origins of the multi-cultural education movement can be traced to the landmark Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court Decision in 1954" (Elicker & Thompson, 2009, p. 63), students and staff are still striving to create diverse educational institutions. To achieve this advantage diversity must be embraced in the roles of executive leadership. Yet this has remained a challenge for the advancement of African American women in higher education leadership positions. The intersectionality of race and gender has created significant barriers for Black women to access higher education leadership positions (Burton, Cyr, & Weiner, 2020; Cognard-Black, 2004; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Cumings Mansfield, 2016; Tillman, 2004). Consequently, Espinosa et al. (2019) reported that the 2017 American Council on Education (ACE) study said that 30% of college presidents were female, 9% of which were Black women. This evidence illustrates the external barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of Black executive leaders in higher education.

Equally important, Crews (2020) declared that "substantial structural barriers impact women, [however] these barriers are not the only ones that impede advancement. Women can inadvertently limit themselves through nine [research documented] self-

sabotaging behaviors" (p. 8). As a result, systemic and structural barriers can lead to the following self-sabotaging behaviors: thinking too small, fear and worrying, misunderstanding one's self, dishonesty, holding back, not taking time for reflection, isolating, disempowering other women, and infusing sex/gender confusion (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). However, African American women can use their personal power to advance, advocate for institutional change, and influence social justice. Accordingly, the following are the nine domains of personal power that Black women can use to reclaim their power: recognizing their unique destiny, constructive preparation, owning all of one's self, honest self-expression, acting with confidence, cultivating self-intimacy, building a power web, inspiring other women, and embracing one's sexuality (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). A synthesis matrix for this literature review was developed to connect the themes related to the literature referenced in this study (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III of this study includes the purpose of the study, research questions, population, and sample. Also included in this chapter is the instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and validity and reliability measures to strengthen the study. Moreover, Chapter III presents the research design and methodology selected for this study. Roberts (2010) has asserted that the methodology description of procedures and design must be succinct, concise, and adequately interpreted for the potential replication of study. For this study, the researcher used an explanatory mixed methods design to sequentially collect quantitative data followed by the collection of qualitative data. Mixed methods refer to research that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods in different instances of the research process or can be used in all stages of the research process based on the needs of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Lerner (2012) has outlined nine self-sabotaging categorical behaviors and the distinct accompanying self-sabotaging behaviors for each category. The explanatory mixed methods design was selected to pinpoint the most predominant self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives through the sequential administration of a quantitative survey instrument, followed by interviews to collect qualitative descriptive data. The quantitative Likert scale provided an exceptional assessment of the participant opinions and beliefs, while the interview questions provided the lived experiences of female African American higher education chief executive’s progression to leadership positions, and their use of personal power to dismantle self-sabotaging behaviors.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Research Questions

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?
3. What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Research Design

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s)" (p.102). The research design is guided by the research questions and research purpose, all of which are used to determine data collection methods, specific procedures, interpretation methods, sample, and analysis (Creswell, 2012). Thus, the purpose of the study determines the research methods. Additionally, Patten (2014) has

advised that mixed methods will produce qualitative descriptive data and make quantitative predictions through the research hypothesis for a well-rounded study.

Mixed methods research designs produces statistical and numerical data and gives meaning to participant stories and experiences (Patten, 2014). Combining both methods leads to a more comprehensive investigation of the research question, which makes this design a necessity for the study. For the needs of this study, the researcher used an explanatory mixed methods research design to comprehensively investigate the research problem through the sequential gathering of quantitative data, followed by the collection of qualitative data to expand on quantitative outcomes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The research design for this explanatory mixed methods study encompassed a sequential data collection method using a quantitative research instrument, followed by a qualitative instrument to gather data. According to Roberts (2010) quantitative methods "summarize large amounts of data and reach generalizations based on statistical projections [and] qualitative research tells a story from the viewpoint of the participants that provides rich descriptive detail" (p.145). In other words, the instrument used for collecting quantitative data assists with expounding the what, and the qualitative data collection instrument potentially expounds the why, thus adding breadth and depth to the data explanation (Roberts, 2010).

Based on the aforementioned process of the quantitative, then qualitative sequential explanatory mixed methods design (see Figure 2), this researcher first used electronic surveys to collect quantitative data. The electronic surveys were used to pinpoint the predominant self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives. In accordance with the quantitative

sequence, then qualitative sequence, each participant was scheduled for a follow up qualitative interview. The researcher then analyzed the participant responses to interview questions to ascertain the most pertinent traits of self-sabotage. The identified trends were used to formulate intricate patterns associated with the participant's self-sabotaging behaviors. Additionally, the interview questions uncovered participant's strategic use of personal power to overcome associated self-sabotaging behaviors.

Based on the collection of survey and interview data, the researcher was able to triangulate data using the identified trends, categories, and patterns uncovered throughout the quantitative survey and qualitative interview methods. According to Patten (2014), collecting research data using multiple sources is referred to as data triangulation. The triangulation of data adds validity to the themes coded in the data. Therefore, the trends, categories, and themes identified in this study assisted the researcher in formulating thematic codes and frequency counts of each occurring theme throughout the data collection process. The sequence of explanatory mixed methods design is outlined in Figure 2.

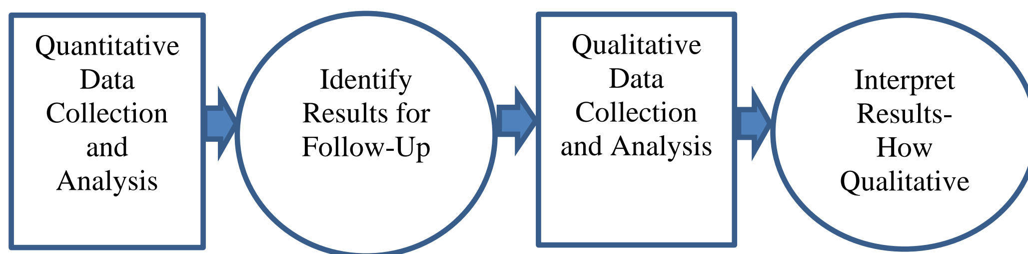


Figure 2. Explanatory sequential mixed methods design. From *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches,* 2018, by J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, p. 218 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).

Quantitative Research Design

It is appropriate to use quantitative research methods when trying to quantify, or statistically measure the correlation, comparative, or differences between independent,

and dependent variables. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2014), the dependent variable is measured by the consequences or results caused by the independent variable. The researcher's inclusion of quantitative research methods as part of the mixed methods sequential design helped determine the impact of self-sabotage on the advancement of female African American higher education chief executives. Furthermore, "a distinctive feature of quantitative research is that researchers gather data in such a way that the data are easy to quantify, allowing for statistical analysis" (Patten, 2014, p. 9). Thus, resulting in the presentation of quantifiable statistical and numerical data.

By nature, structured surveys are predominantly numerical, which is a primary element of a quantitative research design (Roberts, 2010). Accordingly, for this study, the researcher used the quantitative design to electronically administer a survey to 8 participants to acquaint them with the purpose of this research, followed by the collection of numerical data referring to the most predominant self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives. In accordance with the sequential explanatory mixed methods design process, the researcher then proceeded with the collection of data using qualitative research methods to gain deeper insight into the quantitative data.

Qualitative Research Design

Patten and Newhart (2018) confirmed qualitative research as an exploratory study method that attempts to examine and gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of one's experience. Roberts (2010) supported this notion by advising that the qualitative research method is rooted in phenomenological perspectives. This perspective is

described as a theoretical and philosophical positioning to find and highlight the meaning of the lived experiences of people through their own exclusive perspectives. Essentially, the results in qualitative research are representative of themes, trends, and discussions that are not based on statistical analysis, but rather on the words communicated by participants (Patten, 2014).

After analyzing the needs of this study, this researcher used the phenomenology research method for qualitative data collection. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), "the aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a description of its 'essence,' allowing for reflection and analysis" (p. 32). The phenomenological method aligns with the purpose of this research: 1) to identify and describe the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives; 2) to discover the impact of these behaviors on their career advancement, and 3) to identify their strategic methods used to dismantle self-sabotaging behaviors. Patton (2002) has asserted that "a phenomenological study…focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (p. 107). Based on this assertion, the researcher's use of phenomenological data aligned with the purpose and needs of the study to describe the essence of such lived experiences, which in turn produced valid and reliable data.

Method Rationale

The topic of self-sabotaging behaviors in relation to women in leadership was derived from discussions and considerations of a group of researchers, thus resulting in the formation of the original thematic study. The common interest was shared between four UMASS Global doctoral students and two faculty researchers on the self-sabotaging

behaviors of women during their progression to leadership positions and their methods to overcoming these behaviors. The two faculty researchers presented the study to a group of UMASS Global doctoral students, seven of which took interest in the study and formed a thematic team of peer researchers to conduct a replication study the following year. The purpose of the thematic study was to identify the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by women in leadership positions, and to classify the impacts of these behaviors on their career advancement. Furthermore, the researchers wanted to explore the methods used by these women to overcome the identified self-sabotaging behaviors. The use of an explanatory mixed methods design was used to focus on nine areas of self-sabotage and the nine corresponding personal power domains that female leaders used to overcome each category of self-sabotage. Subsequently, the seven thematic researchers selected, surveyed, and interviewed women in leadership positions from diverse sample populations, including one thematic member who used a gay male sample population to research.

The thematic team of seven researchers created consistency by collaboratively creating and agreeing on the purpose of the study, research questions, procedures, and quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Using the same explanatory mixed methods research design, each researcher on the thematic team individually chose a sample population to examine for the study. The breadth and depth of the study was increased through the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

Throughout the study, this researcher referred to the other members in the thematic group as peer researchers. For this study, the seven peer researchers and their associated study population included the following: Davina Bailey, higher education

deans; Tatiana Larreynaga, Latina millennials; John McCarthy, gay males in k-12 administration; Kristen Miller, elementary principals; Ashley Sandor, secondary principals; Heather Vennes, charter school administrators; and this researcher studied female African American higher education chief executives.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) have described a population as "a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to a specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (p. 143). In other words, a population is a group of individuals or objects studied by a researcher to make generalizations on an overall population or group of people based on data retrieved from research. Based on this description, the population for this study consisted of African American women holding president-level positions in higher education institutions throughout the United States of America (U.S.A.). According to Perry (2020), individuals holding president level positions at colleges and universities govern all administrative procedures and campus-wide processes including student services, admissions, athletics, as well as structural, political, and social power.

As of the 2017-2018 academic year, there were 4,298 degree-granting higher education institutions in the U.S., of which 1,626 were public, 1,687 were non-profit private colleges, and 985 were for-profit institutions (Moody, 2019). According to Espinosa et al. (2019), a 2017 American Council on Education (ACE) study reported that 9% of female Black higher education presidents were among the overall 30% of women in similar roles. Based on this assertion, the following calculation of 4,298 colleges and universities x 30% of female presidents = 1289.4 x 9% of female Black presidents

contributes to an estimation of 116 female African American higher education presidents. Hence, the overall population for this study was an estimated 116 African American female higher education presidents in the United States.

Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is a "list of elements from which the sample is actually selected…[and] places some limitations" on the generalizations that can be made to the population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam (2013), "generali[z]ations can be made 'only' to the actual population defined by the sampling frame" (p. 330). Hence, this researcher selected samples from a larger population for this study.

Limiting the geographic location to a specific state or region of the United States (U.S.) was not sufficient enough to produce a sustainable sample size to make generalizations to an overall population. Therefore, for the sampling frame of this study, the researcher used female African American higher education chief executives in positions at private, not-for-profit 4-year universities throughout the entire United States.

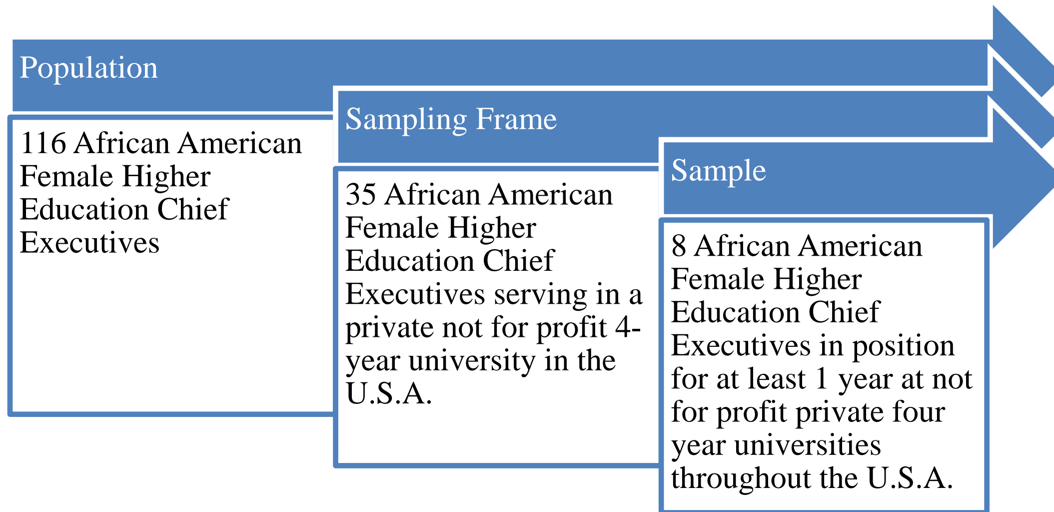
Moody (2019) reported that as of the 2017-2018 academic year, there were 1687 private not for profit colleges and universities throughout United States. The American Council on Education (ACE) presented a 2017 report indicating 41% of female college presidents at private not for profit universities, of which, 5% were women of color. Based on this data, the researcher estimated a sample frame of 35 female African American higher education chief executives holding the following positions in higher education throughout the United States: President, Vice President, Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Provost, and Vice Provost.

Sample

According to Patten (2014), selecting a sample of the overall population is more efficient than studying every member of a population and provides researchers the opportunity to make inferences about the overall population. A sample is identified as a "group of subjects or participants from whom data are collected" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 143). As such, the sampling methods used for this research were convenience sampling and purposeful sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) assert that convenience sampling is widely used in qualitative and quantitative studies because of the accessibility; however, researchers must proceed with caution as this method may be difficult to generalize. The same two authors suggest non-probability purposeful sampling to gain the most useful information on a specific topic.

Of the estimated 35 female African American higher education chief executives, the sample selected to participate in this study included 8 participants (See Figure 3). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) have indicated that the sample frame refers to specific characteristics of the selected research sample. Based on this assertion, the researcher required the sample population meet the following criteria: 1) must identify as African American or Black; 2) must be female, 3) must currently hold the position of president, vice president, chancellor, vice chancellor, or provost, vice provost; 4) must be in position at least one year; and 5) must hold a position at a private not for profit 4-year university in the United States.

Figure 3: Criteria process for sample population.



Sample Selection Process

Using the information retrieved from the ACE (2021), the researcher used a funneling process to identify the sample participants for this study. The funneling process included the following: 1) a review of the overall number of colleges and universities throughout the United States; 2) a review of the percentage of females in higher education president or chief executive level roles; 3) an examination of the percentage of African American females in higher education president or chief executive roles. Furthermore, the researcher identified the number of colleges and universities in the not-for-profit private sector, and calculated the percentage of female presidents, followed by a calculation of female African American presidents to further narrow the sampling frame. Finally, to select the sample to participate in the 51-question quantitative questionnaire, the criteria included African American women who currently hold or have held chief executive positions for at least one year at private not-for-profit four-year universities throughout the United States.

Of the estimated 35 female African American higher education chief executives identified in the sampling frame, 8 sample participants were selected to participate in the study. The 8 sample participants took part in both the quantitative and qualitative data collection processes in alignment with the sequential mixed methods design of the study. Hence, the female African American higher education chief executives who agreed to participate in this study as described in this chapter under data collection, received an email restating the purpose of the study, followed by the link to complete the 51-question quantitative survey tool. Following the completion of the survey questionnaire, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews to gather qualitative data.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used in this study was the explanatory mixed methods, which included the collection of quantitative data followed by qualitative data collection. The sequential explanatory mixed methods approach is used when quantitative data is collected first, followed by the collection of qualitative data. The collection of qualitative data is used to clarify and further interpret the results of the quantitative data (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). For this study, the researcher electroncially administered a Likert scale survey to research participants with questions regarding their behaviors of self-sabotage. Individual follow up interviews were then scheduled with participants to expand and describe their lived experiences with self-sabotaging behaviors, to share the impact of these behaviors on their career advancement, and to identify any strategies used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Quantitative Instrumentation

Patten (2013) asserts that quantitative instruments are used to "produce data that can be easily reduced to numbers, such as structured questionnaires or interview schedules with objective formats, such as multiple-choice questions" (p. 19). For this study, the researcher utilized a quantitative instrument that was formulated by four researchers in a previous thematic study guided by the nine domains of personal power conceptual framework, adapted from Ryder and Briles (2003) and Lerner (2012). The four peer researchers worked together to ensure the alignment between the quantitative instrument, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. To confirm that the quantitative instrument was directly aligned with the purpose of study and answered the research questions, an alignment table was generated (see Appendix B). Considering the alignment table, the researcher used Survey Monkey to administer a survey to 8 sample participants from the sampling frame to determine the perceptions of identified self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and its impact on their career advancement.

The researcher used a close-ended electronic 51-question Likert scale survey ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* for the collection of quantitative data (see Appendix C). The top five self-sabotaging behaviors identified in the survey were used during the qualitative phase of research. These top five behaviors from all 8 participants were coded into categories or themes to give meaning and relevance to the top five identified self-sabotaging behaviors. This data was then organized into patterns to show the relationships among categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According

to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), through extensive questionnaires, Likert scales provide exceptional and accurate assessments of opinions and beliefs.

Adams and Lawrence (2019) have posited that the responses to close-ended surveys offer participants the ability to yield measurable quantitative data through Likert scales and other multiple choice survey options. Consequently, the Likert scale in this study was used to quantify the respondent's agreement level in relation to their self-sabotaging behaviors. This element aligns with Adams and Lawrence's (2019) assertion that rating scales such as the Likert allow participants to report their experiences and the associated agreement levels or levels of intensity. For this reason, using the Likert scale approach allows each specific survey to produce data that is both quantifiable and forthrightly analyzed.

Qualitative Instrumentation

Qualitative instrumentation produces data through wording, and is not simply numerically quantifiable (Patten, 2013). The predominant instruments that qualitative researchers use to gather data include observations and interviews, which are often open to researcher interpretations. Hence qualitative researchers often disclose relevant personal background information to combat any potential bias (Patten, 2014). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Patton (2015) further expand by emphasizing the use of questionnaires, artifacts, semi-structured and structured interview questions as primary qualitative instruments. Such instruments produce words to describe fundamental opinions and motivations. Moreover, the design of qualitative instruments allows for an in-depth exploration of a topic with a moderate number of respondents (Daniels & Minot, 2019).

Following in the sequential order of data collection, the researcher ensured alignment with the purpose of the study and the research questions by using detailed structured interview questions for qualitative data collection (see Appendix D). The thematic team of peer researchers worked together to ensure the alignment between the qualitative instrument, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. To confirm that the qualitative instrument was directly aligned with the purpose of study and answered the research questions, an alignment table was generated (see Appendix E).

According to Patten (2014), "most published qualitative research is collected through semi-structured interviews in which there is a core list of questions from which the interviewers may deviate as needed to obtain in-depth information" (p. 9). Accordingly, this researcher used detailed semi-structured questions to conduct interviews with the 8 sample participants selected from the target population. The semi-structured interview qualitative data collection approach was part of the sequential mixed methods design in which the researcher first administered electronic surveys for the collection of quantitative data, followed by the collection of qualitative data using semi-structured interview questions. This qualitative instrument allowed each participant to verbally describe their lived experiences related to self-sabotaging behaviors during their progression to obtaining leadership positions. Furthermore, the interview questions solicited participants to describe the impact of self-sabotaging behaviors on their career development, and the strategies used to overcome or dismantle self-sabotage.

Researcher as an Instrument of the Study

Qualitative researchers are fully emerged with participants and are at the heart of interviews, observations, and ultimately interpretations. According to Peterson (2019),

"because they themselves are a research instrument…qualitative researchers need to be transparent about their connection to the phenomenon" (p. 149). This serves as a safeguard to ensure that the researcher understands their direct connection to the subject and is clear on researcher biases. Once researchers are aware of their biases, they can take steps to ensure that their data gathering methods are not manipulated by personal perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). That being the case, researchers create valid and credible research.

This researcher has ten years of experience working in higher education, two of which were spent in leadership positions. As an instrument for this study, this researcher was exclusively responsible for carrying out all of the qualitative fieldwork through the conducting of semi-structured interviews with the selected participants. As a participant-observer, the interviews provide the researcher with in-depth information to use their own perspective to interpret patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) expanded upon this idea stating that "researchers 'use their sensory organs to grasp the study objects, mirroring them in their consciousness, where they then are converted into phenomenological representations to be interpreted" (p. 167). Therefore, to ensure measurement alignment, the data collection and interpretation should be analyzed by two observers or measured twice as Patton (2015) suggests. Accordingly, the researcher collaborated with the members in the thematic to obtain two independent observations and data analysis to ensure alignment to the study. Additionally, the researcher transcribed the patterns and themes revealed during the interview process and provided the transcriptions to every participant to protect against possible researcher

biases and misconceptions, and to confirm that findings accurately described their experiences.

Validity and Reliability

Patten (2014) has declared that "researchers say that a measure is valid to the extent that it measures what it is designed to measure and accurately performs the function(s) it is purported to perform" (p. 71). Salkind (2017) furthered this declaration by asserting that validity delineates the level to which an instrument or tool measures its intended assessment. In other words, the validity of an instrument lies only in its ability to accurately measure that which it was established to measure, based on the purpose of the study and research questions (Patten, 2013). Essentially, both validity and reliability ensure that data collection instruments drives alignment, consistency, and accuracy.

Accordingly, in 2020 the previous four thematic researchers developed the electronic survey and interview instruments to ensure alignment with the research questions and conducted field testing of both quantitative and qualitative instruments to create validity to ensure conceptual framework alignment. Furthermore, to solicit feedback for improvement, the previous researchers sought the counsel of an external expert panel. The secondary group of thematic researchers analyzed, field-tested, and revised the quantitative and qualitative instruments to ensure alignment with research questions and the purpose of the study. Creswell (2014) has asserted that "if themes are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study" (p. 201). Therefore, prior to drawing conclusions, the researcher used data triangulation from interview and survey data to confirm finding consistency.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the level to which an instrument consistently measures something (Salkind, 2017). Roberts (2010) illustrated this notion by stating that "reliability is a degree to which [an] instrument consistency measures something from one time to another" (p. 151). In other words, an instrument's reliability is directly related to its production of consistent results at different points in time, derived from multiple participants. For this study, the peer researchers from the 2020 study counseled with a panel of experts to ensure instrument reliability in producing consistent results when administering surveys and conducting interviews with multiple participants at different points in time. Moreover, the peer researchers completed instrument enhancements based on the feedback received from the expert panel, and field testing.

Expert Panel

The inclusion of an expert panel serves to increase validity and reliability to research data (Usry, Partington, and Partington, 2018). Prior to selecting sample population participants, this researcher confirmed that the quantitative survey and qualitative interview questions were first processed through an expert panel by the previous four thematic peer researchers to ensure survey and interview alignment. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were reviewed by three doctoral level professors of UMASS Global, who provided the peer researchers from the previous year of 2020 with quantitative and qualitative instrument feedback. Based on the expert panel feedback, the researchers made instrument enhancements to ensure that survey and interview questions were properly aligned with the purpose of the study, the

conceptual framework of the study, and the certainty that research questions were answered using both instruments.

Quantitative Field Testing

To improve the format, functionality, clarity, and accessibility of the quantitative instrument, it is imperative to field test the electronic survey. Prior to administering survey questionnaires to participants, a pilot test of the instructions as well as the survey is a vital step (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interviewers must notate any instance that reflects lack of understanding demonstrated by the respondent. Additionally, pilot tests inform interviewers of the anticipated timeframe for each interview, which provides insight on the data summary process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

To confirm alignment with the purpose of the study, research questions, and ensure reliability and validity, the peer researchers of the thematic study completed the electronic survey field testing. Every peer researcher conducted pilot testing by selecting an individual that was comparable to their sample. After completing the field tests, each researcher received feedback from the participants using the Survey Field Test Participant Feedback Tool (see Appendix F). Peer researchers used the feedback to make changes to the instrument's language to increase question clarity, which was vital to ensuring that actual participants had a full understanding of the survey questions. In addition to survey question clarity, the peer researchers made instrument revisions so that the survey questions achieved the purpose of the study and answered the research questions.

Qualitative Field Testing

Similar to the quantitative field testing, the peer researchers conducted qualitative field testing to confirm alignment with the purpose of the study, research questions, and to ensure reliability and validity. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), "techniques to ensure good qualitative questions include interview script critiques by experienced interviewers, interview guide field testing, and revision of initial questions for final phraseology" (p. 383). Based on this assertion, the thematic team of peer researchers' field tested the qualitative interview instrument questions under the observation of an expert interviewer. The presence of the expert interviewer was to govern the manner in which the researcher asked the interview questions, specifically to ensure that questions were not guiding the answers of respondents in one direction or another. Every peer researcher conducted pilot testing by selecting an individual that was comparable to their sample.

Using the Field Test Interviewee Feedback Tool (see Appendix G), this researcher received detailed feedback from field test participants on the qualitative instrument questions and interview procedures. Additionally, using the Interview Observer Feedback Tool (see Appendix H), this researcher received feedback from the expert observer on methods to enhance both the researcher's and the participant's qualitative interview procedures. Based on the expert observer and participant feedback, the qualitative instrument and interview procedures were revised and refined for better alignment with the purpose of the study and research questions. In addition to instrument and procedure refinement, qualitative field testing was instrumental in checking for researcher bias, assessing the timing of interviews, evaluating the interview

questions, as well as providing insight on the potential efforts of data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Thus, adding a degree of comfort for the researcher while engaging in interviews, and creating a comfortable environment for respondents to answer qualitative questions thoroughly and honestly.

Data Collection

The research design for this study was a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach, a method that used a quantitative research instrument, followed by a qualitative instrument to gather data. Based on the design of this research, there were two instruments used during the data collection process. The first was the collection of data using a quantitative survey instrument created by a thematic team of peer researchers. The second was the collection of data using a qualitative instrument in the form of interview questions, which were also created by the thematic team of peer researchers.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the data collection process, this researcher completed the collaborative institutional training initiative (CITI) program course in Human Subjects Research Social- Behavioral- Educational- Researchers Basic (see Appendix I). Additionally, the UMASS Global Institutional Review Board's application approval was received prior to any data collection (see Appendix J). According to Edmonds and Kennedy (2017), mixed methods research "includes the collection and analyses of quantitative (closed-ended and numerical) and qualitative (open-ended and textual) data (i.e., a quantitative and qualitative research question must be posed, individually analyzed and interpreted, and followed up with an overall interpretation)" (p.178). Therefore, ethical considerations are an imperative step in the data collection process. To safeguard legal

and ethical considerations, The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is in place to govern the data collection process throughout the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Upon IRB approval for data collection, the researcher invited potential participants to partake in the research. Using convenience and purposeful sampling, potential participants were initially emailed, which included an introduction of the researcher, an explanation of the study, and the solicitation of their interest and participation. Furthermore, each participant that agreed to partake in the study received a consent form to sign and return, in addition to UMASS Global participants' bill of rights. Lastly, the researcher ensured anonymous quantitative data collection, and assured the measures taken to ensure qualitative data confidentiality using password protected computer files to be destroyed three years following the study publication.

Quantitative Data Collection

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), "quantitative measurement uses some type of instrument or device to obtain numerical indices that correspond to the characteristics of the subject" (p. 173). Under the guidance of several UMASS Global faculty members, the collection of quantitative data was administered through the revised electronic survey designed by the team of thematic peer researchers. Using the Survey Monkey tool, 8 female African American higher education chief executives who agreed to participate in this study received the survey. The survey instrument was used to solicit female African American higher education chief executives to identify the predominant self-sabotaging behaviors experienced during their progression to leadership positions. Additionally, survey data information was safeguarded through a password protected account.

For this study, the researcher performed an internet search of the executive cabinets of private not-for-profit four-year universities to identify which institutions had female African American president level executives. Subsequently, the researcher examined the public directories of the institutions found in the internet search to obtain the email addresses and telephone numbers of potential participants. The researcher used the email addresses to initiate contact with several female African American higher education chief executives to educate them on the study, and to solicit contact information of their potential colleagues who may have found interest in the study. The women who were interested in participating in the study responded to the emails indicating their interest. After receiving the responses of those willing to participate in the study, the researcher was careful to verify that each participant adhered to the criteria to participate in the study prior to sharing the exact purpose of the study. Subsequently, the researcher provided each participant with an in-depth explanation of the quantitative data collection piece, in addition to informing them of the next steps in the process. The next steps included an email sent to all participants formally inviting them to participate in the study (see Appendix K), a detailed narrative of the study, and access to the electronic survey for data collection. Participants were given a three-week window for completion.

Qualitative Data Collection

Following the completion of quantitative data collection, the researcher then directed her focus to the collection of qualitative data. The qualitative data instrument consisted of interview questions created by the thematic group of peer researchers. To ensure rich data collection, the scripted interview questions were manufactured to be

open-ended and semi-structured to allow for detailed collection of data. The structure of the interview questions was designed to create opportunities for follow up questions to gain further insight on the responses provided by participants, which were a constant for all participants. As a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic, all 8 participants were scheduled for face-to-face Zoom interviews to maintain safety, scheduled at the discretion of the participants to ensure comfortability in answering questions candidly and honestly.

Each participant received, signed, and returned a consent form prior to engaging in the interview process (see Appendix L). The researcher requested the permission of each participant to record the scheduled interviews, which were 60 to 90 minutes in length. Before, conducting the actual interview, the researcher was intentional in building a rapport with each participant using small talk as a trust building tool. Using a professional and friendly demeanor, the researcher then explained the study's purpose and began the interview process. During the interview process, the researcher took hand-written notes to record body language and other enlightening observations that would enhance the collection of rich data. The Zoom software was equipped with audio-to-text transcriptions, which was used to certify accuracy. Following the interviews, each participant received a copy of the interview transcription to confirm accuracy. Once participants confirmed accuracy, the transcriptions were uploaded to QDA Miner Lite to code for themes and patterns. Lastly, each participant was given the opportunity to ask any questions or to clarify any of their responses to the interview questions.

Protecting Participants

Part of the researcher's responsibility is to ensure the ethical protection of the welfare and rights of study participants (McMillan and Schumacher. 2014). Creswell and Poth (2018) have indicated that during the process of collecting data, the researcher must be careful to protect the privacy, truth-telling, and confidentiality of the participating subjects. Subsequently, before conducting any interviews, the researcher informed each participant that at any time during the study, they have the right to withdraw their participation (Roberts, 2010). To add additional safeguards, the researcher reviewed the consent form with each participant and responded to any questions or concerns prior to having them sign the consent form. The researcher also provided each participant with a copy of the Research Participants Bill of Rights (see Appendix M) and reviewed the document together. These protective measures aligned with the Roberts (2010) declaration that before participants take part in a study, they must be thoroughly informed of the risks and procedures associated with the research. To ensure participant confidentiality, additional safeguards were implemented, including: Identity protection through the masking of participant names; maintaining transcripts, audio, and interview notes in a secured file; and certifying that the researcher was the sole person with survey accessibility through a password-protected file.

Data Analysis

Mixed methods refer to research that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods in different instances of the research process, or it can be used in all stages of the research process based on the needs of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) have asserted by indicating that in mixed methods

research, the technique of using the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze a phenomenon provides a more well-rounded understanding of the research. Thus, the collection of raw data is transformed into findings (Patton, 2015). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) declared that "when analyzing quantitative and qualitative data within a mixed methods framework, researchers undergo at least some of the following seven stages: (a) data reduction, (b) data display, (c) data transformation, (d) data correlation, (e) data consolidation, (f) data comparison, and (g) data integration" (p. 490).

Hence, for the needs of this study, one of the stages used was the data reduction. The quantitative instrument was used to reduce the measurement of the qualitative data, which in turn to more accurately pinpoint specific self-sabotaging behaviors revealed by participants that warranted further exploration. According to Patton (2015), data analysis "involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting the trivial from the significant, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (p. 521). The following section describes the use of quantitative data collection, followed by the collection of qualitative data. The mixed-method design creates a triangulation of data to enhance the credibility of the study.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher used the Survey Monkey electronic tool to collect and analyze the quantitative data provided by the twelve selected participants. The use of Survey Monkey provided the researcher the opportunity to promptly analyze the data as the participants submitted their responses. The quantitative Likert Scale survey instrument solicited respondents to answer research question 1: "What self-sabotaging behaviors

have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?". Through the gathering of descriptive statistics, the researcher was able to "organize and describe the characteristics of [the] collection of data… Sometimes called a data set" (Salkind, 2017, p. 9). Subsequently, the researcher was able to describe the most predominant self-sabotaging categorical behaviors through measuring the central tendency using the mode statistical analysis.

Qualitative Data Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) affirmed that qualitative analysis is the "systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanation of a single phenomenon of interest" (p. 367). Based on this affirmation, the researcher identified key patterns and themes by meticulously reviewing each interview transcript and its alignment with the research questions. An illustration of the qualitative analysis process is demonstrated in Figure 4.

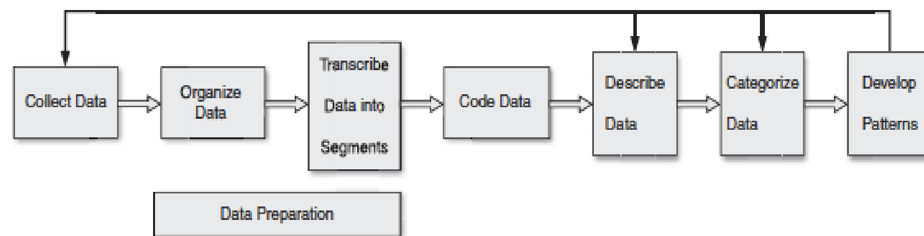


Figure 4. Steps in Analyzing Qualitative Data – Source: McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2014). *Research in education : evidence-based inquiry* (Pearson New International 7th Edition ed.). Harlow, Essex: Pearson. Copyright 2014 by Pearson Education Limited.

Following the review of each interview transcript, the researcher used the QDA Miner Lite software to code themes and patterns, including data sources and frequency counts.

Coding is the process of organizing, and assigning words or phrases to describe the meaning, and therefore create emergent themes based on data collection. Essentially, coding helps answer the research question. To this end, the researcher transcribed all 8

interviews and placed those transcriptions into the QDA Miner Lite coding software to code the data for frequency and patterns on the topics described by the participants. QDA Miner Lite is a qualitative data analysis and coding software developed by Provalis Research and is a sound choice for researchers to search and organize transcribed information (Provalis Research, 2020). The use of this coding process enabled the researcher to help produce emergent descriptive themes to answer the research questions in alignment with the purpose of the study.

Intercoder Reliability

Salkind (2017) has asserted that consistency is a direct reflection of instrument reliability. The caveat with qualitative research is the increase in skepticism associated with experimenter bias. This statement is supported by Patton (2015) who found that an examiner's internal intrinsic biases can potentially influence the examiner's ability to maintain objectivity during interview and observation interpretations. The use of intercoder reliability serves as a remedy to ensure that interpretations are not misguided with biases. According to Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Campanella Bracken (2004), "intercoder reliability is the widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion" (p. 2).

To ensure intercoder reliability, two members of the thematic group of peer researchers collaborated to compare themes, patterns, and codes to increase the study's credibility, and ensure alignment with research questions as well as the purpose of the study. The researcher analyzed 10% of the codes from the qualitative port of this study's descriptive themes to ensure an 80% or greater reliability was met (Patton, 2015). After

the data was coded, the researcher wrote a narrative analysis which identified common themes that emerged in each research question to display a story of the participants.

Limitations

Study limitations may limit the researcher's ability to generalize for the entire population. Roberts (2010) has pointed out that "all studies have some limitations, so it's important that [the researcher] state them openly and honestly" (p. 162). While most study limitations fall outside the control of the researcher, there are specific factors that may impact the ability to generalize (Roberts, 2010). For this study, the limitations included the geography, sample size, researcher bias, and time constraints.

Geography

During the data collection process there were two geographic location limitations to consider. First, were the required regulations on physical distancing throughout the United States to reduce the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. The second geographic limitation was the vast locational range of the study, which encompassed the entire country. According to Roberts (2010), the limitation of physical distance is vital because it can influence the evaluation of the sample participation’s influence on the findings of the study. Thus, geographic limitations may yield findings that are not generalizable to the overall female African American higher education chief executive population. To counter the geographic study limitations, the study participants were delimited to female African American higher education chief executives who worked for private not-for-profit four-year universities using purposeful and convenience sampling. Additionally, the researcher used electronic data collection methods that allowed virtual face-to-face interviews.

Sample Size

The selected sample size for this study included eight participants, therefore creating sample size limitations. Given the vast size of the United States, the results collected from a sample size of 8 female African American higher education chief executives may not be generalizable for the entire American population represented in the sample. Furthermore, the lived experiences of Black women in higher education chief executive positions at public universities, community colleges, and vocational institutions may be different from those selected to participate in the study.

Researcher Bias

It is common for researchers to choose topics that they find most interesting. As such, the researcher for this study identifies herself as a female African American woman, who is in pursuit of an executive level role in higher education. The researcher first acknowledged the connection and the existing biases and used that awareness to ensure that the research was trustworthy and not distorted by internal beliefs. To raise awareness, the researcher deeply examined her beliefs and experiences through journaling and engaging in honest peer conversations surrounding the subject and accepted that such biases exist. In accepting the existence of biases, the researcher ensured that interview questions were neutral, and posed no leading or misguiding threats to validity. Consequently, the approach of neutrality ensured "the investigator's commitment…to understand the world as it unfolds, be true to complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge" (Patten, 2002, p. 51).

Time Controls

Roberts (2010) found that "in education there are several windows of opportunity when people are available. September, Christmas, and June are not the best times given the typical school calendar of events" (p. 158), which can vary based on year-round schedules and personal schedules. Based on the demanding schedules of higher education chief executives, compounded by a global pandemic, time constraints created a critical limitation of this study. Thus, the researcher catered to the selected participant's schedule availability, specifically for the interview portion of data collection. Each participant interview session was scheduled for approximately one hour, creating a major time limitation. To counter the time limitation, the researcher allotted participants at least two weeks to schedule virtual interview sessions based on their schedules and availability. The follow up interview sessions were scheduled directly after receiving all the eight participants completed electronic survey.

Summary

A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was used to conduct the research for this study, which first collected quantitative data followed by the collection of qualitative data. This research was conducted by a thematic team of seven through the lens of various sample populations. The details of Chapter III included a description of the explanatory mixed methods research design. Prior to the research design description, the researcher stated the purpose of the study and the associated research questions. The quantitative and qualitative research design methods, and the method rationale of the study were thoroughly discussed under the research design section of this chapter. The target population and sample participation criteria were detailed under the population

section of this chapter. Additionally, the quantitative and qualitative research instruments, and the researcher as an instrument for the study was described under the instrumentation section of this chapter. Following the instrumentation section, the researcher described the expert panel, and quantitative and qualitative field testing to further explain the validity and reliability of the study. Ethical considerations, quantitative, and qualitative data collection procedures were discussed under the data collection section of this chapter, including a discussion of participant protection. Following data collection, the researcher explained the quantitative and qualitative data analysis for this study, including a description of intercoder reliability. Lastly, Chapter III concluded with a description of the perceived limitations of the study. A description and analysis of the findings will be provided in Chapter IV, followed by findings, conclusions, and recommendations in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This mixed methods study identified and described the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives throughout their career development and explored the impact these behaviors had on their career development. Additionally, this study identified strategies female African American higher education chief executives used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. The framework used for this research was adapted from Lerner's (2012) book, accompanied with the work of Ryder and Briles (2003) to categorize female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching power domains. Chapter IV provides an overview of the purpose of the study, the research questions, research methods, data collection process used in this study, population, and sample. Chapter IV concludes with a presentation of the data utilizing the research questions and a summary of the findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Research Questions

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?

2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?
3. What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

An explanatory sequential mixed methods study design was used to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. Additionally, the explanatory sequential mixed-method study design identified strategies used by the female African American higher education chief executives to counteract the self-sabotaging behaviors. The first phase of this mixed methods study included collecting quantitative data through an online survey instrument completed by eight female African American higher education chief executives throughout the United States. The purpose of the survey was to identify which self-sabotaging behaviors the female African American higher education chief executives had experienced and determined whether they had an impact. During the quantitative phase of this study, the survey was designed to determine female African American higher education chief executives' most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact they have on their career development, and help familiarize the participants with the purpose of the study.

The second phase of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study included semi structured one-on-one interviews with the eight female African American higher

education chief executives to allow each participant to expand their depth of response as reported in the online survey. A phenomenological approach was used to give participants an opportunity to expand on their lived experiences related to self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact of the behaviors on their career development, and strategies they used to overcome them. The interviews were conducted throughout February 2022 and March 2022 using the Zoom Communication software. Prior to data collection participants were provided the UMASS Global Bill of Rights, Informed Consent, and interview questions. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using the Otterai online transcription software. Additionally, each transcript was coded using the qualitative data analysis software QDA Miner Lite. Themes were identified based on the conceptual framework and any emerging themes.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) have described a population as "a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to a specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research" (p. 143). Based on this description, the population for this study consisted of African American women holding president-level positions in higher education institutions throughout the United States. According to Espinosa et al. (2019), a 2017 American Council on Education (ACE) study reported that 9% of female Black higher education presidents were among the overall 30% of women in similar roles. Based on this assertion, the following calculation of 4,298 colleges and universities x 30% of female presidents = 1289.4 x 9% of Black female presidents contributes to an estimation of 116 female African American higher education presidents. Hence, the overall population for this study was an

estimated 116 African American female higher education presidents in the United States. Those designated to participate in the study were from the following city, states, and districts: Pomona, California; Denver, Colorado; Washington, D.C.; Providence, Rhode Island; Nashville, Tennessee; Houston, Texas; and Hampton, Virginia.

Sample

According to Patton (2014), selecting a sample of the overall population is more efficient than studying every member of a population and provides researchers the opportunity to make inferences about the overall population. A sample is identified as a "group of subjects or participants from whom data are collected" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 143). As such, the sampling methods used for this research were convenience sampling and purposeful sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) assert that convenience sampling is widely used in qualitative and quantitative studies because of the accessibility; however, researchers must proceed with caution as this method may be difficult to generalize. The same two authors suggest non-probability purposeful sampling to gain the most useful information on a specific topic.

Of the estimated 35 female African American higher education chief executives, the sample selected to participate in this study included eight participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) have indicated that the sample frame refers to specific characteristics of the selected research sample. Based on this assertion, the researcher required the sample population meet the following criteria: 1) Must identify as African American or Black; 2) must be female, 3) must currently hold the position of president, vice president, chancellor, vice chancellor, provost, or vice provost; 4) must be in position at least one

year; and 5) must hold a position at a private not for profit 4-year university in the United States.

Demographic Data

To ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the eight study participants, each participant was identified using the alphabetical letters ranging from A-G, with the exception of one participant who requested the use of the name Eva, a code name used to honor a special loved one, all of which are outlined in Table 2. The sample included one female vice president from Pomona, CA, one from Nashville, TN, one from Hampton, VA, one from Providence, RI, one from Houston, TX, one from Denver, CO, and two from Washington, D.C. Two interviews occurred in February 2022, and six occurred in March 2022.

Table 2 - *Participant's Demographic Information*

Study Participant	Years in Higher Education	Month and year of interview
Eva	30 years	February 2022
A	30 years	February 2022
B	41 years	March 2022
C	13 years	March 2022
D	11 years	March 2022
E	22 years	March 2022
F	24 years	March 2022
G	23 years	March 2022

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This sequential mixed methods research design of this study used an electronic survey to first collect quantitative data, followed by the use of interviews for qualitative data collection. The following section provides the data analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The electronic survey was created utilizing the Survey Monkey online survey software. The researcher used descriptive statistics to organize, summarize, and combine the number of findings from the survey. Specifically, the survey results were collected and analyzed to gain descriptive data such as the mode of the self-sabotaging behaviors. The mode is used to measure the central tendency. The researcher assessed the mode to determine the most frequently occurring self-sabotaging behaviors. The electronic survey comprised of 51 close ended survey questions based on predetermined response scales, utilizing a 6-point Likert scale, which included the following numerical assignment: *strongly agree* (1), *agree* (2), *agree somewhat* (3), *disagree somewhat* (4), *disagree* (5), *strongly disagree* (6). Participants completed the survey first, which was then followed by the interview.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative interview phase provided participants the opportunity to expand the depth of their responses as reported in the online survey. Additionally, the interviews allowed participants to expand on self-sabotaging behaviors experienced, and strategies they used to overcome them. The researcher used an interview protocol based on the nine domains of women's personal power framework (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). The interview questions were structured and semi structured. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted using Zoom Communications, an online video conference software. Each interview was recorded and transcribed utilizing the transcription software Otterai, after which the transcript was coded using the qualitative data analysis software QDA Miner Lite. To answer the research questions,

the researcher coded emergent themes from the data based on the self-sabotaging behaviors and women's power domain strategies outlined in the conceptual framework; emergent themes were also coded based on the impact of self-sabotaging behaviors as identified by the study participants.

Interrater Reliability

The interrater reliability process was used to assess for reliability in this study (Lombard et al., 2004). Patton (2015) asserted that interrater reliability measures the degree of estimated reliability between one or more coders by each individually analyzing and assessing the data to check for consistency. Following the transcription of interviews, the researcher joined with a peer researcher to individually code at least 10% of the data to identify common patterns and themes to determine intercoder reliability. Once completed, a clear link was made between the data, codes, and themes that emerged from the data to verify at least an 80% agreement rate (Patton, 2015).

Research Question 1: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

Research question 1 asked the following: *"What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?"* The survey and interview data retrieved were used to determine which women experienced self-sabotaging behaviors associated with the nine major and subcategories of self-sabotage. The following presents the findings from the collection of survey and interview data.

Quantitative Data

The number of self-sabotaging behaviors referenced in Table 3 represents the behaviors participants rated either *strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat* in the

survey. In addition, Table 3 includes the number and percentage of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behaviors. The top self-sabotaging behavior category referenced in the survey was *dishonesty*. *Dishonesty* was cited 34 times by 100% of participants. Additionally, 100% of the participants experienced *not taking time for reflection*, *fear and worrying*, and *thinking too small.* However, *holding back* was cited 30 times by 87.5% of the participants, thus placing it in the top 3 self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by participants. Table 3 presents the findings (reproduced here for convenience).

Table 3 - *Self-Sabotaging Behavior Categories Experienced by Participants as Reported in the Survey*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior Category	References	n	% Of Participants
Dishonesty	34	8	100%
Not taking time for reflection	31	8	100%
Fear and worrying	24	8	100%
Thinking too small	21	8	100%
Holding back	30	7	87.5%
Isolating	18	7	87.5%
Misunderstanding one’s self	15	7	87.5%
Disempowering other women	8	5	62.5%
Infusing sex/gender role confusion	3	3	37.5%

Note. *N* represents the number of participants who rated either *strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat.*

Table 4 highlights the most rated self-sabotaging behaviors subcategories and their overarching major categories experienced by participants as reported in the survey. The table includes the number and percentage of participants who rated either *strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat*. The top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory was *I have taken on too much at work when I didn’t want to*, falling under the self-sabotaging category of *dishonesty*. It was referenced 8 times by 100% of the participants. Table 4 presents the findings (reproduced here for convenience).

Table 4 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Experienced Most by Participants as Reported in the Survey*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior Subcategory	Self-Sabotaging Behavior Category	n	% Of Participants
I have taken on too much at work when I didn't want to	Dishonesty	8	100%
I was not open to new experiences	Thinking too small	7	87.5%
I often made perfection the standard in my life	Thinking too small	7	87.5%
I mulled over my mistakes	Fear and worrying	7	87.5%
I said "yes" to things when I actually wanted to say 'no"	Dishonesty	7	87.5%
I did not reach out for help when I needed it	Holding back	7	87.5%
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career	Fear and worrying	6	75%
I have hesitated to talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting my ego	Dishonesty	6	75%
I made inflections rather than make bold statements a	Holding back	6	75%
I have not taken vacations when I could	Not taking time for reflection	6	75%
I have hated to 'be wrong'	Not taking time for reflection	6	75%
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career	Isolating	6	75%
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone	Thinking too small	5	62.5%
I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation	Fear and worrying	5	62.5%
I feared looking stupid	Fear and worrying	5	62.5%
I could not accept compliments or praise	Misunderstanding one's self	5	62.5%
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up	Dishonesty	5	62.5%
I have apologized unnecessarily	Holding back	5	62.5%
I have talked down to myself	Holding back	5	62.5%
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry	Not taking time for reflection	5	62.5%
I have not allowed myself to experience "down time	Not taking time for reflection	5	62.5%
I have talked behind a woman's back	Disempowering other women	5	62.5%

Note. N represents the number of participants who rated either strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat.

Table 5 represents the least rated self-sabotaging behaviors subcategories and their overarching major categories experienced by participants as reported in the survey. The table includes the number and percentage of participants who rated either *strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat*. The following six self-sabotaging behaviors subcategories did not receive any ratings of agree: *I have felt too busy to help other women, I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it,' I have held women to a higher standard at work than men, I have dressed sexy at work, I have squashed my natural feminine qualities, and I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk.* Table 5 presents a summary of the findings.

Table 5 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Least Experienced by Participants as Reported in the Survey*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior Subcategory	Self-Sabotaging Behavior Category	n	% Of Participants
I have felt too busy to help other women	Disempowering other women	0	0%
I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'	Disempowering other women	0	0%
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men	Disempowering other women	0	0%
I have dressed sexy at work	Infusing Sex/Gender role confusion	0	0%
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities	Infusing Sex/Gender role confusion	0	0%
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk	Infusing Sex/Gender role confusion	0	0%
I was not open to new experiences	Thinking too small	1	12%
I thought why I should help other women since I did it the hard way	Disempowering other women	1	12%
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men	Infusing Sex/Gender role confusion	1	12%

Note. N represents the number of participants who rated either strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat

Qualitative Data

The number of self-sabotaging behaviors referenced in Table 6 represents the behaviors participants rated either *strongly agree, agree, or agree somewhat* as reported in the interviews. In addition, Table 6 includes the number and percentage of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behaviors. The top self-sabotaging behavior category referenced in the interviews was *fear and worrying*. It was referenced 67 times by 100% of participants. Additionally, *Isolating* was also referenced by 100% of the participants with 43 references. The *not taking time for reflection* self-sabotaging behavior category was referenced 40 times by 87.5% of participants. Table 6 presents the findings (reproduced here for convenience).

Table 6 - *Self-Sabotaging Behavior Categories Experienced by Participants as Reported in the Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior Category	References	n	% Of Participants
Fear and worrying	67	8	100%
Thinking too small	43	7	87.5%
Not taking time for reflection	40	7	87.5%
Misunderstanding one's self	38	7	87.5%
Isolating	36	8	100%
Holding back	29	7	87.5%
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	23	6	75%
Dishonesty	22	7	87.5%
Disempowering other women	6	2	25%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Table 7 presents a comparison between survey and interviews to triangulate the data ranking in the order of most cited to the least cited self-sabotaging behaviors. Priority ranking was given if most participants selected the behavior. The self-sabotaging behavior category of *fear and worrying* was ranked as number 1 in the interviews, while the self-sabotaging behavior category of *dishonesty* ranked as number 1 in the survey.

The *not taking time for reflection* self-sabotaging behavior category fell within the top three rankings in both the survey and interviews. In the survey, *not taking time for reflection* was ranked in 2nd place while in the interview it was ranked in 3rd place. The lowest ranked self-sabotaging behavior category in both the survey and interviews was *disempowering other women.*

Table 7 - *Comparison of Ranking of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors Between Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior Category	Interview Ranking	Survey Ranking
Fear and worrying	1	4
Thinking too small	2	5
Not taking time for reflection	3	2
Misunderstanding one's self	4	7
Isolating	5	6
Holding back	6	3
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	7	9
Dishonesty	8	1
Disempowering other women	9	8

Note. Ranking 1-9 is based on the self-sabotaging behaviors cited by participants. 1 represents the top ranked and 9 represents the least ranked self-sabotaging behavior.

Fear and worrying. *Fear and worrying* was the top self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 67 times by 100% of the participants. Table 8 provides an overview of the subcategories, as organized from the most referenced to the least referenced within the *fear and worrying* self-sabotaging behavior category.

Table 8 - *Fear and Worrying Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Fear and worrying	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career	21	6	75%

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Fear and worrying	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I felt like an imposter on the job	14	6	75%
I feared looking stupid	13	7	87.5%
I felt out of control in unfamiliar situations	11	5	62.5%
I mulled over my mistakes	8	2	25%
I resisted change	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Eva shared how the fear of failure, non-acceptance, and being African American caused her to experience anxiety and self-doubt:

> What I felt was the fear of failure, the fear of not being accepted, even as we were just talking about applying for a job. It does hold you back. It requires you to shrink in the situation… You know, when I was the dean at XXX College, again, the first African American, yes, it was a women's college so being a woman wasn't a big thing, but I was African American. I was young and the anxiety of what is this body of people who I saw as well knowledgeable? What are they going to think of what I have to say? And people even who meant well, were just, are you ready? Have you really you prepared? When somebody says to you, are you ready? You immediately decided you are. So, you know I would think about those kinds of first right. The first time I walked into that next level of meeting and in that situation, what was interesting was I was the student rep to the Board of Trustees when I was a student in college. So, didn't my student leadership

> prepare me to be the dean and go before the board if as a student I was going before the board? But nonetheless this fear and worry of will I be successful? Am I clear? Will they understand what I'm trying to say? Will they support what I'm trying to say? And I think that just gets in the way over and over again, I worry that we will, you know, not be successful in a particular circumstance.

Participant E described how fear caused her to be timid and lean towards invisibility:

> As far as fear is concerned, fear is something that I had to allow God to help me and teach me how to overcome. There's so many times in my Bible in Joshua Chapter One is kind of tattered and torn and written in and dates. Fear not and be anxious for nothing but a lot of things in prayer and supplication, let your requests be made. No, because my fear was in the level of timidity wanting to shrink back, not wanting to say what I was thinking, I'm just trying to blend into the background. Yeah. So that's definitely a self-sabotaging behavior that I had to overcome.

Table 9 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *fear and worrying*. *Fear and worrying* was identified by 8 participants in the survey and 8 participants in the interview. *I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory for both the survey and interview in the *fear and worrying category*. It was identified by 6 participants in the survey and 6 participants in the interview. *I felt like an imposter* was the second most identified subcategory. It was identified by 5 participants in the survey and 6 participants in the interview. Table 9 presents the summary of the data.

Table 9 - *Fear and Worrying Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Fear and worrying	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career	6	6	75%	21	6	75%
I felt like an imposter on the job	5	5	62.5%	14	6	75%
I feared looking stupid	5	5	62.5%	13	7	87.5%
I felt out of control in unfamiliar situations	5	5	62.5%	11	5	62.5%
I mulled over my mistakes	6	6	75%	8	2	25%
I resisted change	2	2	25%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant G described her thought process and anxiety when entering a new space and trying to lead and develop relationships:

> Again, it's the external facing I'm always like, no one would know, I come across as very competent leader. And the thing that's weird is I know what I bring, like, there's not a question about whether I can it's, it's not really, it's more like, it's hard to explain, but it's more like, will they see what I can bring? Will I be able to make it happen? …And there's this moment where I'm new and I'm trying to establish those relationships, understand the culture of a place, and develop my team. I'm anxious because I'm like is the magic going to happen here?

She further added how the intersection of race a gender played a role in the anxiety surrounding acceptance:

> To put the period on the end of this sentence. I realized during that zone of time, when I'm trying to prove myself, I'm not sure if I've proved myself yet. I know

> what I bring, but I'm worried, I'm worried I'm going to be misunderstood or dismissed… because of being a black woman. I don't have the confidence. Where I lack confidence is…in other people. [Are] they going to receive what I have to say, my legal advice? I tell vice presidents and presidents and board chairs what to do, that's literally my job. And if I can't give them confidence in what I'm saying to them, then I'm toast. And there's that anxiety that you know, if I were a white man, they'd be taking this differently.

Participant C declared:

> I'll tell you, this whole thing about fear it never really left me during the early part of my career because I was always conscious of the fact that what I have I can lose in any moment. Yeah, there's always something that you know was in the back of my head. I'm not saying that because I'm a Christian, so I do have faith. But I'm telling you the fear sometimes just overtook me. Yeah. And I think that affected of course, it did affect how I approach my work. I was so focused on just doing a good job. I wasn't thinking about myself, how to take care of myself and how to advocate for myself. Cause I just wanted to hold on to this job.

Thinking too small. *Thinking too small* was the second highest ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 43 times by 87.5% percent of participants. Table 10 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *thinking too small* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 10 - *Thinking Too Small Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Thinking too small	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I feared being rejected	10	5	62.5%
I often made perfection the standard in my life	9	5	62.5%
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone	9	4	50%
I was not open to new experiences	8	4	50%
I blamed others for why things aren't going well	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant F described how thinking too small caused her to believe that her applications to certain positions would be rejected:

> Every role I ever applied for, even to the role of coming here, I thought I wasn't qualified for and would be lucky if they looked at me. And even this role, which I applied to race as Associate VP, I thought I'm not qualified, and I shouldn't, you know, embarrass myself by putting myself out there. And now, not only did I of course get that role, but when my boss left, I was promoted into being VP without a national search.

Participant C described her experience with complacency and apprehension to seek new opportunities early in her career:

> So, …I gave you that beautiful story about how I started my job with… an office… I was just happy to have a job. Because I said, okay, I just went to school. The job that I had before that was in the communications department, but it was a coordinator role, you know, so I was excited about just being able to do

PR. I didn't think about… the next step for me. What would be the next job? It just didn't enter my mind. I just got up every day. I did my best at my job. And I'll tell you, the only reason why I left that job was not because… I got promoted, something else… I had a baby, and I couldn't leave that child.

Table 11 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *thinking too small*. *Thinking too small* was identified by 8 participants in the survey and 7 participants in the interview. *I feared being rejected* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory for both the survey and interview in the *thinking too small category*. It was identified by 7 participants in the survey and 5 participants in the interview. *I often made perfection the standard in my life* was the second most identified subcategory. It was identified by 7 participants in the survey and 5 participants in the interview. Table 11 presents the summary of the data.

Table 11 - *Thinking too small Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Thinking too small	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I feared being rejected	7	7	87.5%	10	5	62.5%
I often made perfection the standard in my life	7	7	87.5%	9	5	62.5%
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone	5	5	62.5%	9	4	50%
I was not open to new experiences	1	1	12.5%	8	4	50%
I blamed others for why things aren't going well	1	1	12.5%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant A reflected on perfectionism and wanting to be the best in any position perhaps causing others to view her as thinking too small:

> I think what comes to mind about thinking small is whatever position I was in, I always came with a philosophy that you need to be the best at that industry, do the best work you can in that role. So whether I was, I say, my career at the front desk of an office and responding to inquiries and questions and issues that came in as a frontline person and I found ways to find purpose, meaning in that area of work, and I think as a result of that, it was perhaps people that received it maybe it's not being ambitious enough… For me that wasn't how I necessarily saw it, but I came to the realization given this culture, and the way organizations function, yeah, I can feel people may be thinking, may interpret that has perhaps pulled me back. And when people would say to me, what would you think about this other role, or what do you think about this next promotion opportunity? My answer often would be, "I'm really enjoying what I'm doing." I feel like there's still an opportunity for me to learn and grow. And I think as a Black woman, in saying that, you don't have to be forced with [following] their good intentions.

Eva elaborated on an interaction between herself and a college professor, and how thinking small caused her to second guess her actions as far back as college attendance, which transferred professionally:

> I just thought that I could take a couple of classes and see how I do. And then maybe I would apply, and she's like, where did you go to college? She was baffled. She said to me, you need to go to the admissions office now and complete an application… I was like, oh, what do you mean? So to me, when I

looked at your survey, that's the thinking small. So… even though I graduated from a top college, even though I had gone off to work, had gotten one job, had been recruited to a second job, I still saw myself as not quite [enough]. So, when I should have applied to the master's program… I was taking a class, and it took a professor, and she was actually chairing the department to be like, what nonsense is this? Yeah, and I think that repeats itself… in other ways throughout a career… Should I apply for this job, am I really the right person? You know, it's the thinking small.

Participant D touched on how the fear of rejection caused her to remain silent and its connection it had to her gender:

> So, I think every step of the way, just being a female, I kind of doubt everything. Right now, I'm the only female on the cabinet and basically the highest-ranking female at the university and so I kind of doubt all of my decisions. And so, my husband is like my sounding board. Do you think… do you think that's right, you know, so that is always in the back of my mind. And sometimes I will be in a meeting and I'm very quiet in meetings. I'm very observant. I'll speak up when I need to. But sometimes I know may need to say something, but don't say it because I'm like, Okay, I'm only female in here. I don't know how that would be perceived.

Not taking time for reflection. *Not taking time for reflection* was the third ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 40 times by 87.5% percent of participants. Table 12 provides an

overview of the subcategories within the *not taking time for reflection* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 12 - *Not Taking Time for Reflection Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Not taking time for reflection	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I have not allowed myself to experience downtime	18	7	87.5%
I have not taken vacations when I could	7	4	50%
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry	6	4	50%
I have hated to be wrong	4	2	25%
I have not accepted parts of myself that need improvements	3	3	37.5%
I have held a grudge with someone	3	2	25%
I have kept busy to avoid being alone	1	1	12.5%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant G contended how *not taking time for reflection* begins to manifest even during college attendance after experiencing a loss, and how that behavior manifested into professionalism:

> I was a sophomore in college, and I remember, like, just autopilot. I've got too much time, like every 30 seconds, 30 minutes, one-hour, whatever increment of time I had to fill it, because the more I filled it, the more I didn't have to think about… how sad I was, and that was so detrimental in so many ways. And so… I catch myself doing that, constant[ly] [trying] to prove myself… And I felt that if I wasn't busy sunup to sundown, I was lazy. I wasn't you know, hustling and that wasn't good.

Participant A reflected on her experience with not having enough downtime for reflection:

> I think now that I'm in my mid-50s, I just have a different outlook on life than I did when I was in my 20s or 30s or even 40s. And with you know, there was a sense of urgency, right? Everything's been more urgent, you know, time was of essence and all of that. As a result of it, I don't think that I took the time to be as reflective as I needed. Part of that was just the sheer nature of the volume, the speed of work and the tempo and everything else that just kind of took its toll, I think. Yeah. And I found reflection time to be a luxury that I didn't have. I would say that came up a lot.

The participants also shared how at times they still struggle in the areas of having downtime and taking time off. Participant C asserted that "it hasn't been until probably the last five years that I've been able to do that." Participant B further analyzed how *not taking time for reflection* has impacted her health:

> Let me just tell you, yesterday, I took a "me" day. If I didn't do that, I would have absolutely just… I don't take time. I have meetings, meetings straight through at lunch through everything. I don't take days off. I don't vacation. I come into the office early. I don't leave sometimes until eight or nine o'clock at night. And, and I can tell you it's had an impact on my health. You know, I was young and healthy about five years ago, and I kid you not my health changed. Not eating right. Hypertension. You know, my mother was 90 she just passed last year. No diabetes. I developed diabetes. And I know it's my eating. It's not taking care, it's all of that. And it's also not enough self-care.

Table 13 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *not taking time for self-reflection*. *Not taking time for self-reflection* was identified by 8 participants in the survey and 7 participants in the interview. *I have not allowed myself to experience down time* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory in the interviews and was identified by 7 participants. While *I have not taken vacations when I could* was the top self-sabotaging subcategory behavior identified in the survey and was identified by 6 survey participants. Table 13 presents the summary of the data.

Table 13 - *Not Taking Time for Reflection Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Not taking time for reflection	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I have not allowed myself to experience downtime	5	5	62.5%	18	7	87.5%
I have not taken vacations when I could	6	6	75%	7	4	50%
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry	5	5	62.5%	6	4	50%
I have hated to be wrong	6	6	50%	4	2	25%
I have not accepted parts of myself that need improvements	4	4	50%	3	3	37.5%
I have held a grudge with someone	3	3	37.5%	3	2	25%
I have kept busy to avoid being alone	1	1	12.5%	1	1	12.5%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant G further expanded on the increased levels of anxiety resulting from not taking time for reflection, specifically related to a tragic experience and how that has translated to the way she leads her team:

> Yeah, that definitely ties into things I said earlier about not reflecting on how my childhood impacted me today. Like I never made that connection in the same way. I mean, I did on a superficial level. In terms of…you know, my mother was a victim of homicide. So, like…I don't have a parent in the traditional sense. Think about how that affects me now. And you know, all those things, but I really didn't think about the deeper level in terms of like, my physical manifestation of anxiety. You know, like these panic attacks right in the shower, maybe linked to other things. Like you need to think about that. And then once I did, it was like, okay, I've been on a much better path since then. So that certainly, but it's funny though because I am generally speaking, pretty introspective. You can probably pick up on that. I'm always thinking about what I do with my contribution to this problem. You know, what's going on with me that's making me short tempered right now. Whatever, but you know, and even with my team now, like I try really hard not to micromanage. I try not to be controlling, but I pick up on ways that I might come across that way.

Participant F described that while she understood the importance of reflection and its significance to processing situations, she has still struggled with it:

> I learned early on how important this is. I still don't do it well, but… there are ways and even if they're little, small ways during the day, much less you know, larger times in the year that I do take time for reflection. And every time I would

say… I have no qualms about how important this is, and I do it. Can I be more effective at how that reflection informs you know what I do? Yes, but there are absolutely frequent times where I'm saying where I recognize that. That I may feel like I'm not doing anything, or you know, like you're spinning just go do something.

Misunderstanding one's self. *Misunderstanding one's self* was the fourth ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 38 times by 87.5% percent of participants. Table 14 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *misunderstanding one's self* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 14 - *Misunderstanding One's Self: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Misunderstanding one's self	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I could not personally acknowledge my own accomplishments	10	6	75%
I have focused on a person criticizing me	9	5	62.5%
I could not accept compliments or praise	4	2	25%
I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant E made a correlational between fear and misunderstanding one's self resulting from lack of acceptance:

Misunderstanding oneself? I think that is a little bit similar to what I just said. Although those two categories really with fear and misunderstanding oneself just

comes or came from me from not knowing who I was, and not knowing what my purpose was. And so, you may be a little more timid because you're unsure of who you are…Sometimes personal decisions in life will make you question your ability or someone doesn't accept you and you extend something to them, whether it be love or just up to them, and they reject you. So that and how that can cause if you allow it to, that can cause you to doubt who you are.

Participant C expressed how she always sees herself in a support role rather than in a role of leadership:

> Yeah, so you know, initially, as I mentioned, you know, I wasn't thinking about a career, I was thinking of a path. I didn't know how to navigate them. If it wasn't for my husband, you know, constantly telling me you know, you could do more, you could do more. You know, I probably would just kind of wait to see what happened… So, I think that I misunderstood myself in a very fundamental way. And that is, I didn't, I wasn't able to see myself as a leader. I saw myself as someone who just support it. No, I'm a firstborn. I like to be first; I like to win. Even though I had those tendencies, I didn't translate that to work.

Table 15 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *misunderstanding one's self*. *Misunderstanding one's self* was identified by 7 participants in the survey and 7 participants in the interview. *I could not personally acknowledge my own accomplishments* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory in the interviews and was identified by 6 participants. While *I could not accept compliments or praise* was the

top self-sabotaging subcategory behavior identified in the survey and was identified by 5 survey participants. Table 15 presents the summary of the data.

Table 15 - *Misunderstanding one's self: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Misunderstanding one's self	**Behaviors reported in surveys**			**Behaviors reported in interviews**		
	References	**n**	**%**	**References**	**n**	**%**
I could not personally acknowledge my own accomplishments	4	4	50%	10	6	75%
I have focused on a person criticizing me	4	4	50%	9	5	62.5%
I could not accept compliments or praise	5	5	62.5%	4	2	25%
I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve	2	2	25%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant B shared a brief story of how she misunderstood her abilities when she was asked by the provost to bring faculty back to XXX University after they had scattered around the country following Hurricane Katrina:

> There was a group of faculty in XXX and the [interim president] asked me to go down, represent the institution and kind of, you know, work with that President at that institution and, you know, develop this whole initiative to bring them back. And I was petrified because I didn't think that I was at a high enough level. I didn't think that they would really listen to me that they probably want the provost and not me, or the Associate Provost who's fabulous and elegant. So surely, if I showed up, they wouldn't want me.

Participant A shared her thought process in misunderstanding how her previous expertise and accomplishments could be transferable and useful in higher education:

> The part that I've misunderstood I think about myself was that I had not too much understanding of what I had learned in the business world and organizational development and sociology to understand its full application to student affairs. I kept saying to myself, well, you know what, I don't have a first background as a traditional background, and therefore I'm not sure how much of my background really is there to help me be successful in this role. And by being successful, it's not only about me, but really make sure that this portfolio of responsibilities that I've been given really achieves the outcome. I misunderstood that for the work that I was taught to do, particularly in a leadership role. Having this background in business was incredibly important because I had to be working with the Chief Financial Officer, who only understood, his language.

Isolating. *Isolating* was the fifth ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 36 times by 100% percent of participants. Table 16 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *isolating* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 16 - *Isolating Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Isolating	**Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews**		
	References	**n**	**% Of Participants**
I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn't already know	7	4	50%
I feel guilty for taking up too much of people's time	5	4	50%

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Isolating	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	**n**	**% Of Participants**
I have relied exclusively on female mentors	3	3	37.5%
I relied only on networking upstream	2	1	12.5%
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant A described self-preservation as a foundational piece to her isolating behaviors. She shared that her apprehension to reach out stemmed from a lack of trust:

> I attribute the isolating behavior to distrust. Distrust of organizations. Sometimes distrust of people. You come to understand that we're in a period of time that they're not necessarily, not your advocate, but that they have the potential to sabotage. So, I would say a means of protection and self-preservation. And so, I've had to do that a few times in my career. I would say it was disappointing situations when you learn more about those around you than you did before. But the other thing I've learned also is that the more you climb the ladder, the more lonely it is.

Participant D described her natural desire to isolate by intentionally shutting off opportunities for engagement with others within the department:

> I've had to work on this, because… and that's probably something that I can go back to that other question on is being moody. Many times, where you just don't want to be bothered. So, you'll just withdraw and isolate coming in, closing the door, and just being by yourself. Sometimes that's good, but not all the time. Especially in student affairs, because you've got to be that student centered in

> person, if you go into that funk, where no one is able to get you or reach you, and it can cause some issues.

Eva spoke of the effects of isolating. While her initial response was that isolating was not a normal behavioral pattern for her, she revealed isolating factors that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated anxiety and physical impact:

> …I think even recently, in COVID, someone who has never thought about a career working from home all of a sudden, I found myself working from home for 18 months. Shut down. And just trying to make sense out of it in the first few weeks, months were so anxiety filled for me, because I was just like, there's no manual, right. There's a pandemic, you're gonna do this. So, I was losing weight and was just stressed. I was working crazy hours because now my students were all over the world.

Table 17 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *isolating*. *Isolating* was identified by 7 participants in the survey and 8 participants in the interview. *I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn't already know* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory in the interviews and was identified by 4 participants. While *I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career* was the top self-sabotaging subcategory behavior identified in the survey and was identified by 6 survey participants. Table 17 presents the summary of the data.

Table 17 - *Isolating Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Isolating	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn't already know	4	4	50%	7	4	50%
I feel guilty for taking up too much of people's time	4	4	50%	5	4	50%
I have relied exclusively on female mentors	3	3	37.5%	3	3	37.5%
I relied only on networking upstream	2	1	12.5%	2	1	12.5%
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career	6	6	75%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant E shared her hesitance to engage for various reasons, including the guilt of taking up too much of someone's time:

> I told you that I like to be in the background, and I want to just blend into the wall. I had an office in a few offices, and this was all with different positions. Same time, you know, had an office in the administration building and offices with the graduate department is I'm like, I can't keep running from office to office. And so, I shared with the president and said I like to be stealth. I don't want to be in the administration building. And of course, he looks to me like this is a strange creature here. Everybody wants to be in administration, but you know, because [in] some institutions that means you've risen to the top. I said I can get more done if I am somewhere else… There are other isolating behaviors. Sitting in the back of the room. Not mingling, when you have an opportunity to mingle with

> people just to be friendly, you know, to just mingle, get to know people on a personal level. Those are definitely self-sabotaging behaviors that I can still exhibit today… So, I'm working on socializing more and being present, and not just talking to one or two people. Because I can do that. You know, you see some people like oh, Lord, she's got me. I've got to get away. But I'm working on that. That is an area that I have an opportunity for tremendous [growth].

Ironically, Participant C asserted that her isolating was not necessarily self-perpetuating, but a result of intersectional discrimination:

> When I was working in corporate, I worked in the communications and marketing department. I was the only Black female in that department. I hired an intern who was a Black female and facilitated her getting hired, so they're now two in the whole company. I told you there were 45,000 employees. So even at my level as director, I could count on both hands [of those who] were black. There were two other Black females in the entire company. Oh, you're talking about isolation? It was isolation [not] because I was isolated, because I was in an isolating environment, and I just didn't feel the comfort that all of my white counterparts did you know.

Holding back. *Holding back* was the sixth ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 29 times by 87.5% percent of participants. Table 18 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *thinking too small* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 18 - *Holding Back Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Holding Back	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I preferred not to speak up in meetings or group discussions	12	5	62.5%
I have apologized unnecessarily	6	3	37.5%
I have talked down to myself	5	5	62.5%
I have avoided criticism	2	2	25%
I did not reach out for help when I needed it	2	2	25%
I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings	1	1	12.5%
I made reflections rather than bold statements	0	0	%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant A explicated that her experience with the behavior of holding back is associated with the intersectionality of gender and race:

> I think this happens often to women, and I think it happens to Women of Color probably in some larger sense. The holding back has to do with that we are afraid to let our light shine fully. We will understate our own value… We can be in rooms where we know we have so much more knowledge than those who may be beside us. And we sometimes will fall into the trap of… you know what? I don't want them to think that I'm tooting my own horn. I don't want them to think that I'm that aggressive black woman. Oh, I don't want them to think I’m too much voice. In some cases, we'll hold back at the expense of not letting our light shine. Because we know that in getting to that table, we had to work five or 10 times harder to get there.

Participant D described how holding back has been and continues to be a struggle for her today. She expounded on her tendency to remain silent:

> Holding back again, takes me to not speaking up. And that's one of my major self-sabotaging behaviors, not speaking up… Sometimes I know I should, and I still will hold back. And also, not thinking that I'll have the right answer. And then hearing somebody else say, it's like, whoa, that's right, we should do that. Oh, why didn't I say that? I'll be honest, it's still tough. I haven't mastered that. I'm still working on that.

Table 19 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *holding back*. *Holding back* was identified by 7 participants in the survey and 7 participants in the interview. *I preferred not to speak up in meetings or group discussions* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory in the interviews and was identified by 5 participants. While *I did not reach out for help when I need it* was the top self-sabotaging behavior identified in the survey and was identified by 7 survey participants. Table 19 presents the summary of the data.

Table 19 - *Holding Back Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Holding back	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I preferred not to speak up in meetings or group discussions	3	3	37.5%	12	5	62.5%
I have apologized unnecessarily	5	5	62.5%	6	3	37.5%
I have talked down to myself	5	5	62.5%	5	5	62.5%

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Holding back	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	**n**	**%**	**References**	**n**	**%**
I have avoided criticism	4	4	50%	2	2	25%
I did not reach out for help when I needed it	7	7	87.5%	2	2	25%
I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings	3	3	37.5%	1	1	12.5%
I made reflections rather than bold statements	6	6	75%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant F expanded that her behaviors of *holding back* was related to environmental factors, self-doubt, and again sex and gender intersectional factors:

> I have kicked myself for not taking the lead on some things here as VP more strongly. And I recognize it took me a lot longer than I think most people to recognize what my agency was. I think some of that is because I was only the VP for nine months and the pandemic happened. And so just some of like, how I was doing my job was weird anyway, and didn't know about it. But absolutely, some of that is I didn't know my power. And my role, you know, was waiting still for somebody to empower me or tell me it was okay to make the change or to make a determination… Do I really have the agency to do that? And I think it's that ingrained behavior…from having various environments where you weren't supported when you did do that. Sadly, some of those environments weren't supported. But when you did do that, because you are a Black woman, knowing now that I'm still doing this and as a black woman at a PWI (Predominantly White Institution) you know, where there is a, you know, where I would question

> sometimes a tolerance for changes and assertions from someone who looks like me.

Eva elaborated on the effect of negative self-talk that transferred from college attendance to her professional career:

> I feel like these things are all intertwined. I think the holding back again is what didn't you apply for? What didn't you volunteer for? Where would that have taken you? And I'll use this as an example. I have an EdD as opposed to a PhD. And when I was in my master's program, there were any number of people in the program who when we were getting close to finishing, were applying to go directly into the Ph.D. program at XXX College, and I wasn't willing to talk to anybody about it because I was doing the exact same thing that I did about the master's program. Even though I did well in the master's program... I still felt like I can't just apply to the doctor program and just do that… when I look back, I feel like I held back and repeated behavior even though I had seen success 10 minutes prior. So that to me is really the self-sabotage because the facts on the ground kept going.

Infusing sex/gender role confusion. *Infusing sex/gender role confusion* was the seventh ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 23 times by 75% percent of participants. Table 20 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *infusing sex/gender role confusion* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 20 - *Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Infusing Sex/Gender role confusion	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality	7	5	62.5%
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities	6	4	50%
I have dressed sexy at work	1	1	12.5%
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk	0	0	0%
I have flirted at work	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant D explained how she intentionally wore dark colored clothing to dim her natural feminine self to be recognized in a professional manner:

> Now, I will say that I used to wear a lot of black, a lot of grays trying to make sure that I didn't come off as being too much, you know. You know, sometimes with the colorism thing people are like, well, she's just getting promoted cause she's light skinned. And so, I would try to dim the light and on dark colors and that type of thing.

Eva had a different outlook on the race factor and its impact on the outcomes of flirting and being overly sexy. Additionally, she spoke to her experience exhibiting masculine traits in relation to the "strong Black woman" stereotype:

> So, the sexiness to me works for white women. I don't know that [it works] for black women. I think that white women can be flirty in meetings can be girly in meetings. Had a previous boss who I was just amazed because in meetings with

women or with our own team, even men on that team, she was very clear, very composed very in control. But when I saw her interact with male trustees, on one occasion, especially we had a panel presentation and so there was an outside presenter, I [was] amazed by the little girl flirty kind of behavior she could move into… For me? I would say most women of color, I just, I just haven't seen that work well. I've never seen anybody; any black woman, sleep their way to the top.

Eva further contended:

> The gender confusion is a different piece because I think…most of us have seen leadership roles in a workplace you know, in a masculine form. And I think that the strength of the Black woman, the strong Black women, which then can be the masculine or… they'll say we're aggressive… that we fit that characteristic. And I guess where I see it in my own personality and my own work position, I am very protective of my team.

Table 21 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion*. *Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion* was identified by 3 participants in the survey and 6 participants in the interview. *I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory for both the survey and interview in the *infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion category*. It was identified by 2 participants in the survey and 5 participants in the interview. *I have squashed my natural feminine qualities* was the second most identified subcategory. It was identified by no participants in the survey and 4 participants in the interview. Table 21 presents the summary of the data.

Table 21 - *Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Infusing Sex/Gender role confusion	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality	2	2	25%	7	5	62.5%
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities	0	0	0%	6	4	50%
I have dressed sexy at work	0	0	0%	1	1	12.5%
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
I have flirted at work	1	1	12.5%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant E expressed how she *quashed her natural feminine qualities*:

> Sometimes, I felt like I had to lower my voice or put bass in my voice. I had to sit up on the edge of my chair. I had to change my body posture. I had to; you know I'm wearing a turtleneck because I love turtlenecks. But sometimes, you know I feel like you know don't wear a blouse that your cleavage is going show or you know, and…my hair was long I cut my hair really short one time, because XXX said that it's just so distracting when women move their hair when they're talking to in a business meeting. I was like ok; I'm going to cut this off. So just some of those things and I sometimes have watched myself do that.

Participant B expressed her preference to work with men based on her understanding of their behaviors:

> I grew up with seven brothers. I tend to prefer to work with men and I know that because I really do understand in a lot of ways how men process, and how men

work. Oh my god, I learned so much growing up with these guys. And for me, you know, I've had great relationships with women that I've worked with, but… I'm not a touchy feely kind of person, I got to take into consideration all the things that they may be going through, and I'm like this, let's just stay focused, right. And that's a residual of growing up with men because men you know, you know, I always say men aren't supposed to be understood. They're just supposed to be loved. But really, they're really simple. You know, you just deal with them straight on. You know, you know, Straight No Chaser. And so, it's coming to play out of a preference. I have an all-female staff right now I'm searching for an Associate VP. In my mind, I told myself, I'm hiring a brother.

Dishonesty. *Dishonesty* was the eighth ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 22 times by 87.5% percent of participants. Table 22 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *dishonesty* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 22 - *Dishonesty Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Dishonesty	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I have taken on too much at work when I didn't want to	9	5	62.5%
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up	5	2	25%
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation	4	3	37.5%
I have hesitated to talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting my ego	3	3	37.5%
I said 'yes' to things when I actually wanted to say 'no'	1	1	12.5%

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Dishonesty	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior.

Participant G described how dishonesty came up for her in trying to prove herself and taking on too much work:

> That's really interesting. Back to this need to prove yourself you just need to always want to be like I can have this, I'll take this on. I think that especially earlier in your career (in my career anyway) and a lot of people I know they have the same problem… I remember that resonated with me when I read it. And I was thinking, you know, it's awesome. Now as you get later into your career, and… in your position and you know, again, they've drank the XXX Kool Aid, they know what I can do and now I can be like, No. I don't have to be like a team player in the same way, because I can I can articulate my limit, but definitely that has been an issue over the years where oh my gosh, like when you're an attorney for a university, let them know about every possible area of law. That is not common at all. Most people have to know about one area of employment lawyers, criminal attorneys, whatever. I literally have to know a little bit about everything from aviation to zoning. So…I don't know if this dishonesty, but it's just like survival

Participant C recounted an experience wherein she witnessed first-hand one of her female superiors engaging in dishonesty and her patriarchal mindset for justification:

> Tricky one because I had a really interesting supervisor during this time. And I'm thinking about the time that I was at this one company, you know, for 13 years.

> We would have conversations [and] she would know that she's not telling truth. I would know that she's not telling the truth… So, it was weird for me because I could tell when we were in meetings with other people, and she was just not being honest… She was a white woman. She came up in a man's world and she broke some, you know, barriers herself, however, she was holding on to the patriarchy because she felt like men was still supposed to be the breadwinner, because in her career, she saw men being promoted because they had families to take care of.

Table 23 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *dishonesty*. *Dishonesty* was identified by 8 participants in the survey and 7 participants in the interview. *I have taken on too much at work when I didn't want to* was the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory for both the survey and interview in the *dishonesty category*. It was identified by 8 participants in the survey and 5 participants in the interview. *I have hesitated to talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting my ego* was the second most identified subcategory. It was identified by 6 participants in the survey and 3 participants in the interview. Table 23 presents the summary of the data.

Table 23 - *Dishonesty Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Dishonesty	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I have taken on too much at work when I didn't want to	8	8	100%	9	5	62.5%
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up	5	5	62.5%	5	2	25%
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation	4	4	50%	4	3	37.5%

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Dishonesty	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	**n**	**%**	**References**	**n**	**%**
I have hesitated to talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting my ego	6	6	75%	3	3	37.5%
I said 'yes' to things when I actually wanted to say 'no'	7	7	87.5%	1	1	12.5%
I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral	4	4	50%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant A described how she experienced dishonesty by taking on too much:

> I think maybe one that comes to mind is taking on too much. It's always because you feel like you have the capacity. And in the process, you become resentful because you realize that you're doing other people's work. That's probably the one that comes to mind because you have committed, given a go all the way. But you've been feeling there's something that is not right about that. Danger that comes with that is becoming resentful and bitter.

Participant D shared her experience remaining silent and agreeing with processes that she internally believed could be handled differently:

> You know I'm a rule follower. For me in this situation, I would say, being on the cabinet, sometimes there's decisions that I don't agree with. And so, for me if, for instance, if there's like some type of issue in the residence hall that is you know, HBCUs sometimes we have issues with mold and that type of thing. And so having to craft a message to students, that says, not that we acknowledge that it's there, but having to craft a message, you know, based off of what the cabinet says, and agree with them, and I really don't agree, and I really just want to tell the

> students, hey, it's there. But we were beating around the bush… And sometimes you know, you have to go along with the team. And so, for me, that would be something that I feel could impact the next level or moving to the next level, just because I like to be upfront, but I also understand that you can't put everything out there because it can be a lawsuit or something like that. But that's one of those things that I've really struggled with.

Participant F describes her encounter with dishonesty as it relates to transparency and its connection to misunderstanding one's self:

> Dishonesty, I am inherently an honest person. Like who wouldn't say that? …As a self-sabotaging behavior, I think where it actually shows up is it kind of goes back to misunderstanding yourself and thinking… what agency you have in any particular place? I think it's hard as a leader you know, you think like you can be fully transparent all the time. And you cannot. You can't be transparent all the time… I've felt the silence and I've learned that as a leader. You know, not that every piece of information isn't for everyone and every time.

Disempowering other women. *Disempowering other women* was the eighth and lowest ranked self-sabotaging behavior category identified by participants during interviews. It was referenced 6 times by 25% percent of participants. Table 24 provides an overview of the subcategories within the *disempowering other women* category, as organized by the most referenced to least referenced.

Table 24 - *Disempowering Other Women Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Interview*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Disempowering other women	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'	3	1	12.5%
I have talked behind a woman's back	1	1	12.5%
I thought why should I help other women since I did it the hard way	0	0	0%
I have felt too busy to help other women	0	0	0%
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior

Participant D shared her early career experiences:

> I can remember maybe one time early on where I thought that someone was competition, so I'd say, you know if she'd ask for advice, I'd say, I don't think it's a good idea, you don't need to do that. But, you know, just after growing basically, honestly, when I started, I was in my 20s, so you don't know everything, right? My grandma got in my head one time and was like, you need to be teachable. Don't do that. Always hear her voice. So now I definitely try not to do that and empower other women. But early on in the career in the beginning, thinking that someone would be competition.

Table 25 is a comparison table created to triangulate data from the survey and interviews related to the self-sabotaging behavior category of *disempowering other women*. *Disempowering other women* was identified by 5 participants in the survey and 2 participants in the interview. *I have felt jealous of other women who have made it* was

the top self-sabotaging behavior subcategory in the interviews and was identified by 1 participant. While *I have talked behind a woman's back* was the top self-sabotaging behavior identified in the survey and was identified by 5 survey participants. Table 25 presents the summary of the data.

Table 25 - *Disempowering Other Women Self-Sabotaging Behaviors as Reported in Survey and Interviews*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior: Disempowering other women	Behaviors reported in surveys			Behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	%	References	n	%
I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'	0	0	0%	3	1	12.5%
I have talked behind a woman's back	5	5	62.5%	1	1	12.5%
I thought why should I help other women since I did it the hard way	1	1	12.5%	0	0	0%
I have felt too busy to help other women	0	0	0%	0	0	0%%
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men	0	0	0%	0	0	0%

Note. N represents the number of participants who experienced the self-sabotaging behavior and % represents the percentage of participants

Participant A explained how she experienced *disempowering other women* in response to being disempowered by other women:

> This was a harder one for me. And the one thing that came to mind for me in the case of disempowering other women, in this case it was not a woman of color, but it was disempowering a boss actually… my white woman boss. [She] had a very clear strong affinity for the white males who were in the organization who were my peers. And she always felt a real need to always want to somewhat put me in

my place. Because she felt threatened of the network of relationships that I had, and credibility that I had within the organization. And I felt like I needed to fight back. And part of fighting back was to really disempower her. And for her to understand that her power had little impact on me.

Research Question 2: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

The second research question asked, "What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?" Specifically, the survey assessed whether the self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives, while the interviews assessed the type of impact self-sabotaging behaviors had on their career development efforts. Moreover, the interviews sought to determine which self-sabotaging behaviors had the most impact on females attempting to promote within their careers. The following is a presentation of the findings from the surveys and interviews.

Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation

The survey results were analyzed to determine the mode for frequency for each rating. To understand the overall impact, all of the following ratings were categorized as agree: strongly agree, agree, agree somewhat, and the following ratings were categorized as disagree: disagree somewhat, disagree, strongly disagree agree. As highlighted in Figure 5 (reproduced here for convenience), 37% of female African American higher education chief executives agreed that some of the self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on their career development, while 63% disagreed.

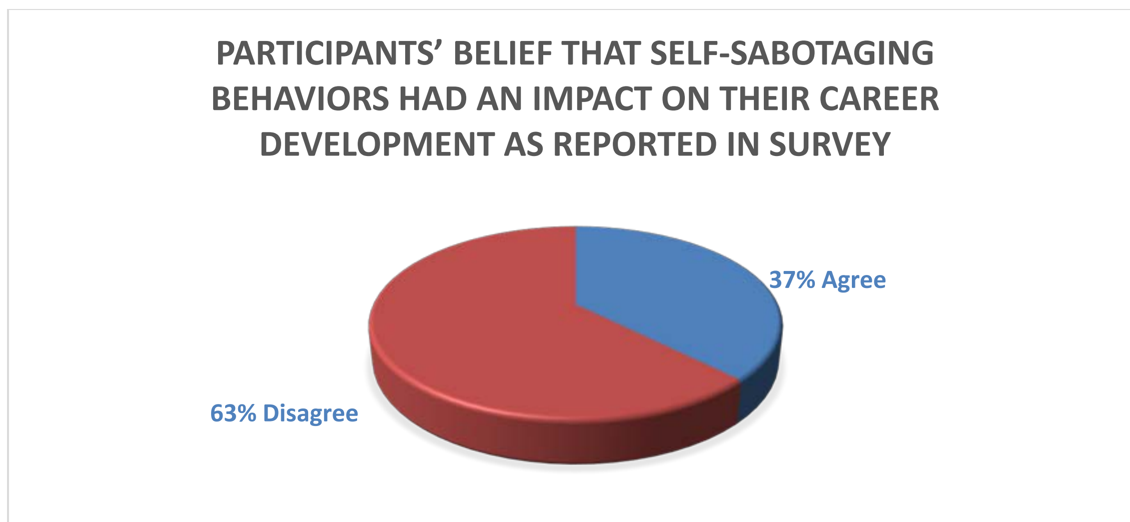


Figure 5. *Participants' belief that behaviors had an impact on their career development.*

Qualitative Data Analysis and Presentation

Question 11 on the interview protocol reviewed the top five self-sabotaging behaviors that the survey respondents identified as exhibiting throughout their careers. Of the five behaviors, participants were asked to identify which two behaviors they believed had the most impact on females attempting to promote within their careers. As shown in Table 26, the top self-sabotaging behavior selected by 75% of the female African American higher education chief executives was *thinking too small*. *Fear and worrying* was identified as the second top self-sabotaging behavior identified by 62.5% of the participants. Table 26 represents the data from the interviews.

Table 26 - *Participants Top Self-Sabotaging Behaviors They Believe Have the Most Impact on Women Promoting*

Self-Sabotaging Behavior Category	n	% Of participants
Thinking too small	6	75%
Fear and worrying	5	62.5%
Not taking time for reflection	4	50%
Holding back	1	12.5%

Note. N represents the number of participants who selected the self-sabotaging behaviors

In addition to identifying the top two self-sabotaging behaviors participants viewed as having an impact on females attempting to promote within their careers, part of the interview sought to determine the kind of impact that self-sabotaging behaviors have on career development efforts.

Strong black woman: physical and mental burnout. The participants reported how the ideology of being a strong Black woman causes Black women to take on too much. Taking on too much leaves little time for reflection, impedes mental and physical health, and career advancement. Eva elaborated:

> I come from a long line of strong Black women who held it down, held it together, you know, made something out of nothing. But in this day and age, I have to recognize that I have different tools and resources and to tap into those tools and resources. I have to use therapy when I need therapy… As I said, I'm a person of faith. And so that's not saying that I don't, you know, I no longer believe in church and prayer and all of those things, but I have resources at my fingertips, and I need to use those resources and I cannot allow myself to be worn out. You know, like you know, because I'm trying to prove that I am strong.

Participant B shared how taking on too much and embracing the "strong Black woman" personification caused her health to decline, thus prompting her to start practicing self-care:

> I can tell you it's had an impact on my health. You know, I was young and healthy about five years ago, and I kid you not my health changed. Not eating right. Hypertension. You know, my mother was 90 she just passed last year. No diabetes. I developed diabetes. And I know it's my eating. It's not taking care,

> it's all of that. And it's also not enough self-care. So, I now, am getting to the point where I know that I've got to do that… But self-care is something that we don't do. You know, Black women, we've always taken care of others before we take care of ourselves. So, we have to be intentional about that. So, I am getting back on an exercise regimen.

Participant G described taking on too much in a brief story around the holidays when several attorneys were on vacation:

> The university gave us an extra week… they give us an extra week [off] around the holidays. It was amazing… It was really great, and the idea was that it'd be good for everyone's mental health. The problem is it was good in everybody's health, but mine. Because the attorney, I wanted to make sure they were good. You know, go spend your time I'll cover for you while you're gone. So, I didn't really get my time. So, I'm trying to cover for everybody else and fill in the gaps. I'm already short staffed, and then I got COVID, and I was one of those OMICRON cases.

Participant D shared how the notion of the 'strong Black woman' in and of itself is a set-back that perpetuates fear and worrying when entering professional spaces:

> I think that women are already perceived a certain way, especially black women. We have a wrap of she's gonna come in here and do too much, or put the hammer down, rolling necks, doing all this type, an angry type of person. And so, recognizing those fears and being confident in yourself. I think it's very important in order to go to the next level, being able to speak up when you need to speak up.

Participant B also shared how the perception of the strong Black woman fosters the self-sabotaging behavior of holding back. She recounted a story:

> So, there was an article in the Chronicle many years ago about the angry Black woman in higher education. And I know that we tend to be, our presence is strong in a room. We tend to say and do things and so I've held back in saying things in meetings, not giving my perspective. And recently, I'll share this, here at XXX. This happened just this weekend. And that Monday at the Cabinet meeting. I got an email from another sister, whose executive vice president here who said to me, you know your predecessor used to weigh in a lot about communications that were going on. I noticed that you don't weigh in.

Lack of awareness of the impact of self-sabotage. Participants shared how acknowledging the existence of self-sabotaging behaviors is the first step toward counteracting them. Eva noted that "life is hard enough. We got enough coming at us from the outside to where we need to try to get over shooting ourselves in the foot." While Participant D shared:

> I think it's very important in order to go to the next level, being able to speak up when you need to speak up. If you look at a lot of the women who are in those highest leadership roles, they're not afraid. They're not afraid to say what they need to say, show up when they need to show up, and just be who they are. So, I think it's very important for us to overcome those fears.

Participant G explained that without self-reflection we become unaware, and women cannot truly be aware of the desires, strengths, and weakness:

> I think it's really critical just for happiness in life because not everybody is built for different kinds of leadership. You know? My best friend is a physician assistant, and she tried her hand at being an administrator at a clinic and she hated it. And working directly with patients is what she enjoyed the most and dealing with, you know, the paperwork, and supervising people in their work is not something that gives her joy. So, I don't assume. I used to insist that like once you're in this role can you aspire to the next thing like I think it's like programmed in a lot of us. And I realized and that's why this presidency question is still looming because I'm like, but is that really going to make you happy? And then you have to self-reflect in order to know truly, what fulfills you, where your strengths are, what your impediments are, so you can address them or not, and just figure out what your right path is. And I think too many of us have very programmed notions about what it means to be successful.

Participant E elaborated on the connection between awareness and creating a power circle:

> Just taking time; taking time to read, taking time to read articles, taking time to read leadership books, taking time to really evaluate who people are and what their strengths are. I'm pretty good at kind of seeing it, but if you're in a new environment, you know, just watching your surroundings. And one thing is not judging. I'm working very hard on not judging, because love and judgment can't coexist. When you take [the] Myers Briggs… I'm a feeling, touching but I'm also a judging and I don't hold it against you but I'm always looking at you a little side eyed. That could keep me from actually linking arm to arm with somebody who

we can really achieve everything that we need to achieve for the institution or the division.

Research Question 3: Strategies to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

The third research question asked, "What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?" The interviews sought to identify the different strategies used by participants to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors. The following is a presentation of the strategies in order of how often the strategies were utilized by participants, followed by a presentation of the self-sabotaging behaviors that can be overcome by each strategy.

Qualitative Data Analysis and Presentation

Table 27 presents the data for effective power domain strategies for all self-sabotaging behaviors. For each self-sabotaging category, participants were asked to identify strategies used to counteract any of the self-sabotaging behaviors specific to that category.

All participants shared examples of the following power domain strategies used to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors: *building a power web* (referenced 58 times); *honest self-expression* (referenced 44 times); *cultivating self-intimacy* (referenced 42 times); *constructive preparation* (referenced 35 times); *recognizing women's unique destiny* (referenced 28 times); *acting with confidence* (referenced 25 times); and *embracing one's sexuality* (referenced 22 times). *Inspiring other women* was referenced 38 times by 87.5% of the participants. Table 27 provides a summary of the strategies to overcome

self-sabotaging behaviors, with the top three power domains found to be: 1) *building a power web*, 2) *honest self-expression;* and 3) *cultivating self-intimacy.*

Table 27 - *Effective Power Domain Strategies for All Self-Sabotaging Behaviors*

Power domain strategy	References	n	% Of Participants
Building a power web	58	8	100%
Honest self-expression	44	8	100%
Cultivating self-intimacy	42	8	100%
Inspiring other women	38	7	87.5%
Constructive preparation	35	8	100%
Recognizing women's unique destiny	28	8	100%
Acting with confidence	25	8	100%
Embracing one's sexuality	22	8	100%
Owing all of one's self	22	6	75%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy.

Building a power web. Table 28 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *building a power web*. *Building a power web* refers to establishing a network of personal and professional advisors for support. It was the number one strategy used by participants referenced 58 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *isolating*. The participants identified how *building a power* web also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Thinking too small, fear and worrying, misunderstanding one's self, and disempowering other women.*

Table 28 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Building a Power Web*

Power Domain Strategy: Building a power web	**Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews**		
Self-sabotaging behavior category	**References**	**n**	**% Of Participants**
Isolating	25	8	100%
Thinking too small	7	5	62.5%

Power Domain Strategy: Building a power web Self-sabotaging behavior category	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Fear and worrying	2	1	12.5%
Misunderstanding one's self	1	1	12.5%
Disempowering other women	1	1	12.5%
General	22	0	0%
Total	58	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant C described how she joined forces to create mentorship programs to refrain from being isolated:

> …Because I knew that I was not going to be able to have the kind of support at the colleague or above level, I focused down low and I started to focus on young people and students. So, I made sure that I was part of the formalized mentor program with university because I want it to be visible. I want people to know that if you look like me or you think you need to hear from somebody like me, I'm here for you. I thought of making myself available to people that were early in their career. Most of them were female. There weren't a lot of African Americans in the organization that I worked at. But I took that same idea to the university. And I was a part of three mentor programs. One was first generation one was just for women. One was communication focus. And so, what ended up happening was young, African American females were gravitating to me. And that's how I dealt with the isolation.

Participant E explained how she builds a power web to overcome *thinking too small:*

> …To definitely read The Chronicle of Higher Education. Definitely make contacts with persons at other institution who you aspire to be like, coaches,

> mentors, someone you know, that would encourage you or expose you to something or introduce you to other people. That's definitely a non-self-sabotaging strategy.

Eva elaborated on the significance of mentorship, friendship, and trusted advisors with similar backgrounds:

> I'm grateful as I mentioned earlier to have good mentors along the way, and women in similar positions that I could reach out to, and they can reach out to me… I'm grateful that from very early in my career, I've always been involved with associations within the profession. Friends, mentors, who were women of color who were in the same field because not only I can reach out to them, but they're also reaching out to me, it opens the door for not being isolated because even I was sort of wanting to not talk about whatever was happening in my life. One of them talking about what was happening in theirs, and it was like, oh, yeah, and it's just like this, you know?

Participant G shared:

> I'm surrounded by black woman leaders. And I know it's hard to just see as *thinking too small* because I see them doing big things... I'm in a privileged space because, you know, my future president intensive, I got black women in my cohort that I can talk to that's really cool.

Participant B shared how the use of mentorship and advising circles helped diminish the feeling of being an imposter, and helped her navigate her career early on, and encouraged her to do the same for others:

> There were people that I trusted that I shared my insecurities. I did counseling. And that was really important for me. Because there was this dissonance between what I was working for and how people perceive me as someone who was successful, and if they just scratched the surface, I was afraid they were going to find out that I really wasn't as good as they perceived. That had a lot to do with that self-talk. And we will do that to each other to ourselves. So those strategies were the journaling, talking to others, reading a great deal, and observing, and then finding mentors along the way, and I will tell you, I just did a presentation last week for 3rd year medical students, and they were surprised to see who my mentors were. I had two Black women and two white men. They were the most transformative because mentors, I've learned early on that I moved from being a mentee, to being a protege because they use their access to provide me access earlier in my career.

Honest self-expression. Table 29 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *honest self-expression*. *Honest self-expression* refers to accepting strength and weaknesses. It was the second strategy referenced 44 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *dishonesty*. The participants identified how *honest self-expression* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Infusing sex/gender role confusion, holding back, misunderstanding one's self, and disempowering other women.*

Table 29 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Honest Self-Expression*

Power Domain Strategy: Honest self-expression Self-sabotaging behavior category	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Dishonesty	25	8	100%
Infusing sex/gender confusion	6	4	50%
Holding back	4	3	37.5%
Misunderstanding one's self	3	3	37.5%
Disempowering other women	3	1	12.5%
General	3	0	0%
Total	44	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant E shared how honest self-expression counteracts *fear and worrying* and *holding back*:

> It's just the being daring and bold enough. To say what you know you should say. Sometimes you can feel it in your throat, you know. Say this and not worrying about it. And that goes back to the worrying, and I told you I didn't worry, but not worrying about their faces. Don't worry about what other people think. Don't worry about what they're going to say after… But I always told everyone that I had the pleasure of working with in any capacity, I am at the table. And I'm supposed to represent those persons who can't be at the table. So, it's my responsibility to speak up.

Participant G shared the significance of self-acceptance and having an internal *honest self-expression* with misunderstanding one's self and one's purpose:

> And I think too many of us have very programmed notions about what it means to be successful. And we have to get, you know, a certain kind of life partner and

> we have to get a certain kind of degree, and we got to get, you know… and we are more I think, victimized by that grind mentality

Participant C shared:

> What I've tried to do was be upfront with her about my perception? Because it was clear to me that the fact didn't really matter, right. Oh, it was that kind of environment I guess that led me to start having more of a voice. Because it was important for me to have my own sense of integrity and values, regardless of what is going on around.

Participant B shared a story of how honest self-expression helped her uphold the values of her strengths:

> I can give you a story that really made me resign from a position. So, a new president comes into XXX University. Hurricane Katrina happened; we've relocated temporarily to XXX. CNN was doing a lot of interviews with that president, and I'm at a meeting with parents and students from XXX, and the president. I'm sitting with students and the parents in the audience, and she begins talking. And as she's talking…tears started rolling down my eyes. The young man sitting next to me said XXX why are you crying? And I just said, "no, I'm just so emotional to see everybody," but actually, I knew she had just lied to the students. And the thing with me is my integrity is everything. My problem is, I'm never going to lie… And so that very next day, I asked to meet with her, and I tendered my resignation. That was my line in the sand… Being ethical in leadership, for me, I can't work with or for anyone who's unethical. So, has that hurt my career? Yeah. Because I am a straight shooter.

Cultivating self-intimacy. Table 30 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy *cultivating self-intimacy*. *Cultivating self-intimacy* refers to getting to know one's self more deeply. It was the third strategy referenced 42 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *not taking time for reflection*. The participants identified how *cultivating self-intimacy* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Infusing sex/gender role confusion, misunderstanding one's self, holding back, isolating, and disempowering other women.*

Table 30 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Cultivating Self-Intimacy*

Power Domain Strategy: Cultivating self-intimacy Self-sabotaging behavior category	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Not taking time for reflection	23	7	87.5%
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	2	2	25%
Misunderstanding one's self	1	1	12.5%
Holding back	1	1	12.5%
Isolating	1	1	12.5%
Disempowering other women	1	1	12.5%
General	13	0	0%
Total	42	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant G shared how maximizing opportunities to take vacations and recognizing the need to do so:

> Oh, definitely. I'm a big travel junkie. So, I recognize now how critical it is to unplug and to not over schedule yourself… So, I don't like I don't like to lose opportunities. And I'm like definitely planning family vacations early on. I mean, my poor family is so tired. All the Smithsonian's and then we got to do

> this. We got to do that. And because we're only gonna be here three days and we gotta maximize and stuff. But now I know. You can do a few things and get downtime. A big component is recognizing the need for downtime.

Participant B explained the intentionality required for self-care, specifically for Black women who are expected to take care of everyone else:

> But self-care is something that we don't do. You know, Black women, we've always taken care of others before we take care of ourselves. So, we have to be intentional about that. So, I am getting back on an exercise regimen. You know it for me it's not about losing weight, but I want to it's really about being healthy because I want I you know, if I can do 90, I'll be glad.

Eva shared how *cultivating self-intimacy* helped her to reflect on and navigate the self-sabotaging behavior of *holding back*:

> I think at this point, it's really about the reflection to be honest about what I want to dig deep into. Why do you want it you know, do you want it for yourself or is it just something again, that you know, will expect from you so you're trying to do or is it something you'll enjoy? Because we can go after a certain title as the next level up, [but it] doesn't really [reflect] the work that we enjoy. You can get the promotion, but you might not get the satisfaction.

Participant E shared how cultivating self-intimacy helped her reflect and navigate her desire to promote people and be a transformational leader:

> And as you self-reflect, I think it…puts you in a better position to help others become everything that they're supposed to be… And then looking at yourself, why is that important to me, as a person, why is it important that and I call it the

right people on the bus in the right seats going in the right direction. Why is it so important to me? It is important to me [because] it's just part of who I am and what I do. But self-reflection also gives you opportunities to publish and to speak because now you become an expert in not just a field, but an expert in leadership… you've sat down and thought about this, and you've written op eds and editorials, you've written papers but without self-reflection for me, that's not going to happen.

Inspiring other women. Table 31 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *inspiring other women*. *Inspiring other women* refers to the ability to inspire and empower other females. It was the fourth strategy referenced 38 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *disempowering other women*. The participants identified how *inspiring other women* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Isolating, infusing sex/gender role confusion, and thinking too small.*

Table 31 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Inspiring Other Women*

Power Domain Strategy: Inspiring other women Self-sabotaging behavior category	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Disempowering other women	21	8	100%
Isolating	5	1	12.5%
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	4	2	25%
Thinking too small	1	1	12.5%
General	7	0	0%
Total	38	7	87.5%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant F shared a story of how her experiences being disempowered by other Black women caused her to empower other women:

> My first and formative experiences as a professional…are of other women and particularly Black women, disempowering me. And those were so poignant that I made a pact to myself that I was never going to be that woman. So, if I'm ever reached out to, I think you're an example. I endeavor to be responsive. I endeavor to provide whatever assistance I can. And I try to be and be seen as accessible. I would like to think that I have never been a 'disempowerer.' I'm sure…they're things and they're mostly errors of omission, not omissions that I've done, but I would certainly like to think that I have not [disempowered other women]… I truly experienced women and particularly Black women who had the mindset that I had no one to help me so why should I help you? …When I first got to XXX, there were I think six Black women in roles of… director level… or higher in the place that I worked, and I would say three of them were helpful and three of them were very neutral, to maybe sometimes helpful. And three of them were… not empowering at all, two were actively disempowering. And I said I would never, ever be like any of those [women]… I would always put me on the scale of positive and supportive.

Participant C contended:

> One of the things that sort of defines my leadership style is that is it's visionary, but it's also participatory. So, my idea is that everybody that's on the team matters. So, I'm always gonna be looking to empower enable you to have a voice. I tell people all the time. So, when you start at a new company, you can sit

back a little bit and try to get to know things I said, but don't be in a meeting ever and not show up. And what that means is you make a comment based on what somebody else said; you ask the question; don't ever not show up in a meeting. And to me that's empowering because that's giving you a voice and letting other people know that you are there.

Participant G described her course of action in the event someone feels that she's been disempowering:

> Because I always feel like people come to me, there's times when I come across as like, short with somebody whatever it is, because it has nothing to do with you. It's about something else… I have a stack of Starbucks cards to Starbucks next door; $5 Starbucks cards. So, it doesn't happen often but in those moments, like I can't really deal with this right now. Can you just handle that? I have like a little card. I'm like, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm like it's not you it's me. I'm a jerk. Have some coffee.

Participant B described how empowering other women has become part of her personality:

> I'm in [the] school of Mary McLeod Bethune, lift as you climb. And, and so I provide opportunities, I see things, I make sure other people have access to it. And in fact, you know, my husband says you work late, then you come home and you're on the phone, mentoring people, I ask people on LinkedIn to reach out to me, I've never met them face to face. I'm providing them with guidance. And this is even before I got to XXX and now that I'm at XXX people reach out. …If [a] sister asked me or a brother… ask me for help. I'm gonna help.

Constructive preparation. Table 32 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *constructive preparation*. *Constructive preparation* refers to embracing, understanding, and accepting fear. It was the fifth strategy referenced 35 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *fear and worrying*. The participants identified how *constructive preparation* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Dishonesty, not taking time for reflection, holding back, thinking too small, and disempowering other women.*

Table 32 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Constructive Preparation*

Power Domain Strategy: Constructive preparation Self-sabotaging behavior category	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Fear and worrying	18	7	87.5%
Dishonesty	3	2	25%
Not taking time for reflection	3	1	12.5%
Holding back	2	1	12.5%
Thinking too small	1	1	12.5%
Disempowering other women	1	1	12.5%
General	7	0	0%
Total	35	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant F expanded on her strategy of embracing fear with the concept of "do it afraid" in which she also teaches her team:

> But one thing that I adopted as a strategy for myself, and I use it all the time with my staff is I have a motto called do it afraid, and I say it a lot to them. I say it to myself. The acknowledgement…that you can't have courage without fear was also extremely transformational. And so, I have a lot of fear and worry. I have

> learned to do things afraid. I have learned to give place to them and to avoid the folly of trying to not have them, and to do things despite them. And also, to, for lack of a better word that doesn't sound a little kind of trite but lean into where's the fear and worry coming from? I think you have to also be able to separate out the real risks of the situation, the real potential pitfalls. You know, there's something in your fear, you're being alerted for a reason.

Participant D explained how she has overcome fear and worrying by embracing it and addressing it:

> Sometimes when I get up to speak before I even give my message, I'll say, you may hear a southern twang. I may break a verb or an adverb, but I'm a smart girl and I know what I'm talking about. So, again, that's one that I use. Then taking deep breaths… I kind of gauge the crowd [because] sometimes, the crowd that you're speaking to may not receive that message right at the beginning. So deep breaths, sometimes I meditate, listen to certain music prior to going into a certain space. Especially if I'm going into a space that's predominantly white. I meditate or listen to common music, or use breathing techniques, or the mindfulness app. It has brought me a long way.

Eva shared a spiritual connection to recognizing and overcoming fear and worrying:

> For me, it's going back to my faith and the scripture tells me that I have not been given the spirit of fear but of power and strength and a strong mind. Grabbing a hold to what it means to have a strong mind. For me, means clarity. Do I know what I am about to do? Do I know what I'm about to say? Do I know why I'm

> about to say or do and not allowing, you know, the tape that we have in our heads to play when I have clarity about what I'm going to do.

Participant G shared how *constructive preparation* has countered anxiety due to *fear and worrying:*

> I say this to my boss all the time. I say if we're not sure about the choice we have to make in front of us, then we don't have enough information. So that's always what I say whenever I'm in like a quandary… Number one, it buys me time. And number two…it addresses this…crazy anxious[ness]. I'm an anxious person, people usually can't tell but I'm incredibly anxious. But it helps like the process, the anxiety because more information makes you feel more comfortable. So, I think that's the strategy.

Recognizing women's unique destiny. Table 33 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *recognizing women's unique destiny*. *Recognizing women's unique destiny* refers to the capacity to have significant impact, living up to one's potential. It was the sixth strategy referenced 28 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *thinking too small*. The participants identified how *recognizing women's unique destiny* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Not taking time for reflection and dishonesty.*

Table 33 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny*

Power Domain Strategy: Recognizing women's unique destiny Self-sabotaging behavior	**Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews**		
	References	**n**	**% Of Participants**
Thinking too small	15	8	100%
Not taking time for reflection	1	1	12.5%
Dishonesty	1	1	12.5%
General	11	0	0%
Total	28	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant F shared a compelling story of significance that helped her counter small thinking:

> But the seminal moment of that was the inflection point of which I do refer to when I have this self-sabotaging behavior, this would have happened, now I would say it would have been 12 years ago when I was about to leave a role at XXX to go to become an assistant dean at XXX... I was looking for a role as a chief development officer in you know, a school or college within a university. And I had a supervisor say to me, you will always be a great number two, and this was a white female who said this to me. And that was a wakeup call because it showed me how she saw me. And it showed me how maybe the institution saw me, and I didn't want to be part of the institution anymore. But I also, I realized it took that statement for me to realize that I didn't see myself like that. And so even though I still have self-sabotaging moments of not thinking I'm enough, I come back to that moment and think about something inside of me believes that I

> am right, and other institutions since then, many institutions have thought I was the right .

Participant A expanded on her strategies to counteract small thinking by being impactful and diligent:

> I think what comes to mind about thinking small is whatever position I was in, I always came with a philosophy that you need to be the best at that industry, do the best work you can in that role. So, whether I was…at the front desk of an office and responding to inquiries, questions, and issues that came in as a frontline person, I found ways to find purpose, meaning in that area of work. I think one way that without even me being intentionally aware that it was actually a strategy, was that in every role that I took on, I always did more than what that rule requires. So as a result, people could see that I was always wanting to fish that portfolio of responsibility in a way that then allowed them to see more than one was there. That I wouldn't limit it.

Eva expanded on how living up to her potential didn't necessarily mean meeting the full requirement, but rather countering small thinking by taking the first step and trying:

> So, one of the things I had heard, it said, and I believe it's based on a study that, you know, men apply for jobs where they fulfill one or two or three of the requirements, while women believe they have to fulfill all of the requirements. And once I heard that, that really stuck in my head, in the sense that I do think that's what most women and certainly I do, it's like you look at whether it's a job or whatever kind of opportunity, you think you have to check every single bar and step to the table to still not say I'm the perfect person, but just Oh, would you

consider me? So that is something that I kind of use as a measure when I'm looking at an opportunity.

Participant G shared that to counter *thinking too small* "the strategy is to not shut it down. To stay open; to stay open to opportunities."

Acting with confidence. Table 34 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *acting with confidence*. *Acting with confidence* refers to approaching obstacles with confidence; having the courage to step forward. It was the seventh strategy referenced 25 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *holding back*. The participants identified how *acting with confidence* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Thinking too small, disempowering other women, dishonesty, and infusing sex/gender role confusion.*

Table 34 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Acting with Confidence*

Power Domain Strategy: Acting with confidence Self-sabotaging behavior	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Holding back	15	7	87.5%
Thinking too small	3	2	25%
Disempowering other women	3	1	12.5%
Dishonesty	1	1	12.5%
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	1	1	12.5%
General	2	0	0%
Total	25	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant A described her strategy to have the courage to step forward and speak up for others:

> I tell myself that I have a responsibility to myself; I have a responsibility to the institution, and the institution in this case. To the student who I made the decision to be an educator of, and that also have a responsibility to speak up for those that do not have the opportunity to do so.

Eva shared her experience with acting with confidence despite doubt when applying for opportunities:

> …Remember, men would apply for this. Why are you putting yourself back and you're simply applying? It's not like just showing up and being like you're applying to the pool and a whole bunch of other things. So really once I heard that statement. And you know, just began to look at, yes, I feel like I have to check every box before I move forward. And there are others who are checking one or two boxes and stepping up.

Participant E shared a story that demonstrated how she has acted with confidence at a recent meeting:

> So, I was the only female…and I was probably the youngest. When the person who was organizing [the meeting] said… "What order would you like to go in?" And he named one of the gentlemen who was a panelist from another XXX, he said what order would you like to go in [and the panelist] said to ask [me] first because [I was] a lady. And I said I want[ed] to go first. And I can tell the gentleman who was coordinating (who's in policy at XXX) was surprised… And then… he named the other gentleman, [who said] "usually I like to go second, because then I can build off of what the first person said." I said, okay, I'd like to go first. So, I went on, and I answered… We're not coming to the table, and I

didn’t say this to them. We're not coming to the table limping. We're not coming to the table meeting big brother to pull us up by our bootstraps. We have something that you need. And then I listed three or four of those things that they need.

Participant B shared about taking bolder steps:

> I went through a leadership program, a yearlong one. [Eventually] I began to say “you're pretty damn good…” And so, I started taking bolder steps, but I've had to get out of my head. I still had to have mentors or situational mentors, Black women that I respected. Some of them were either in higher education but some of them were famous in you know, the TV or music world, that are friends that helped me as well to see my possibility. I think over the years, I've learned to be unapologetic about that.

Embracing all of one’s sexuality. Table 35 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *embracing all one’s sexuality*. *Embracing all one’s sexuality* refers to the awareness of gender roles and sex role stereotypes. It was the eighth strategy referenced 22 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *infusing sex/gender role confusion*. The participants identified how *embracing one’s sexuality* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Misunderstanding one’s self, and dishonesty.*

Table 35 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Embracing One's sexuality*

Power Domain Strategy: Embracing one's sexuality Self-sabotaging behavior	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	**n**	**% Of Participants**
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	9	3	37.5%
Misunderstanding one's self	2	1	12.5%
Dishonesty	1	1	12.5%
General	10	0	0%
Total	22	8	100%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant E shared an example of the importance of embracing her sexuality and using those that have come before as examples:

> Maxine Waters, you know Michelle Obama. You think about some of the women that struggled and open doors for us. So, we absolutely have to help each other. Empower each other. Learn who we are. Be comfortable in our own skin and our own gender. So that we can, in higher education, make opportunities for others, level the playing field and get the resources that are needed. So that we can solve some of the world's problems, whether it be social justice, health disparities, educational inequities, whenever it is.

Participant G described her use of gender role awareness to overcome gender confusion:

> Where I do feel like I can be disadvantaged in a way that's distinctive to me and not to a man is in terms of my intellect in terms of my knowledge about the law, and the answers I give… I'm very sensitive to that. So, there will be times when I will think about my delivery in a way that a man doesn't have too. To make sure that it's clear that I'm not saying oh, I think blah blah blah, no, it's this. When I write an email before I send it, I go back and check for those little things that

> women do sometimes… So many times, I would start an email with sorry. You know, like ‘sorry, I didn’t get back to you sooner.” Now I’m like no, I ain’t apologizing to you for nothing. They’ll get a response when they get a response. I always ask, would a man write it this way? And I have helped many, many women in leadership with this kind of stuff.

Participant A shared her thought process and gender awareness experience with the intersectionality of gender and race:

> I think as a woman and as a Black woman, I haven’t felt that I could take on a persona of a man [be]cause being man- like within an organization, would be what man? Nor do I ever aspire to be that. And you're looking at it from a male perspective. Then the only other perspective you could take is that of a woman but a white woman? And I'm like, I'm not that either, nor do I want to be that. In my way to be honest with you the way I had always perceived the white women that I had worked with in this role. Always came across mean to me. You know, at least the ones that I've encountered in this role. The others were, like I said, my boss was wanting to sort of put me [in] my place. But yet when she was in positions where she was with her boss, she was generally very meek, and I never thought that either of those would get me anywhere.

Participant C shared how her upbringing played a role in her professional attire and desire to maintain femininity:

> I always tried and this is back to my upbringing. I was always modest in the way I dressed. You know we covered up when we were growing up. Skirts were longer and you know, I wasn't allowed to wear tube tops. And, you know, shorts

couldn't be too short. So, I think I just kind of took that into my career, but I never really thought about it. It was just kind of the way it was. But…I like my clothes to fit. So, I think that…what I've done is just more conscious of the fact that I like to look and feel feminine. And so, whatever I put on now, I'm always gonna have accessories or something, you know, I'm not gonna downplay myself.

Owning all of one's self. Table 36 presents a summary of the data from interviews related to the power domain strategy of *owing all of one's self*. *Owning all of one's self* refers to owning and appreciating accomplishments and limitations. It was the ninth strategy referenced 22 times to counteract the self-sabotaging behavior category of *misunderstanding one's self*. The participants identified how *owning all of one's self* also helped counteract the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Infusing sex/gender role confusion, thinking too small, and dishonesty.*

Table 36 - *Self-Sabotaging Behaviors That Can Be Overcome Through Owing all of One's Self*

Power Domain Strategy: Owning all of one's self Self-sabotaging behavior	Number of participants of behaviors reported in interviews		
	References	n	% Of Participants
Misunderstanding one's self	13	8	100%
Infusing Sex/Gender confusion	6	3	37.5%
Thinking too small	1	3	37.5%
Dishonesty	1	1	12.5%
General	2	0	0%
Total	22	6	75%

Note. N represents the number of participants who referenced the power domain strategy to overcome the self-sabotaging behaviors listed in column 1

Participant B shared how she countered misunderstanding her abilities and shifted her thinking:

> My self-talk told me, you're not the one to go. You're not the one to do this. Yet, at every juncture, I got a different message that said yes, you are. Yes, you are. So, this is what I had to start learning. I begin shifting my thinking and changing the narrative in my head, because everybody surely can't be right, and I'm wrong, about myself. So, I begin just a little bit more believing in myself. And so, I started thinking about next steps. You know, what's next for me? What would I do? I knew that I wasn't going to stay at XXX, a long time. And then the former president of XXX became the CEO of XXX. And he brought me to XXX with him.

Participant F expanded on her process of owning accomplishments and limitations:

> Actually, going through the process of applying for a job and refreshing your resume really brings that. That's probably the best way to shine your own mirror. Because when you start writing down all that you've done or writing down all that you've done in the role that you're in, you know… you hadn't refreshed your resume since…you essentially got that role. You're confronted with the stark reality…of course, everyone who was crafting a resume is thinking about presenting everything in the best light, but that doesn't mean that you are disingenuous… You know, you're not lying or embellishing but that forces you to come face to face with your successes and your shortcomings, even your failures, and then puts each of those in perspective and challenges you to think about. Like well, what were the reasons? How much of the reasons for that were within or without of your control? What have you learned; you know to even to

> have the knowledge for yourself? Yeah, I screwed that up. But now, I would absolutely not do that the same way.

Participant A described how she is embracing her accomplishments, owning up to any limitations, and using them in a new environment:

> I knew that there's an unstated you know, way that people think of, well you're coming from student affairs, you're coming from a background, you're coming from this or that background etc. The way that I really counteracted that was to really engage people in conversation. To own that, and name it, and then in naming it, it helps people understand how yet those were not areas that were readily part of my knowledge base. But it was not that I didn't have the ability to learn that part of the work. What I was bringing to the table was quite different in that it would actually serve as an asset to the organization.

Participant E provided insight on embracing accomplishments:

> Be comfortable again, we're back at the same premise. Be comfortable in who you are, who you are, what you are, what you've accomplished, and know that you're supposed to be there. You belong at the table. You are a leader. You are making a difference to use your term; you are transforming lives.

Key Findings

Based on the data collection and analysis of the survey and interview transcripts, key findings were related to the self-sabotaging behaviors female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers, the impact of these behaviors on their career development, and the strategies they used to overcome them. The quantitative data gave preliminary insights into the types of self-

sabotaging behaviors the participants experienced along with the impact on their career development. The findings from the qualitative data provided an in-depth understanding of the self-sabotaging behaviors the participants experienced the impact, and the different strategies used to counteract the self-sabotaging behaviors. Based on the research, the following key findings were discovered.

Summary of Findings: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

1. The top self-sabotaging behavior referenced in interviews was *fear and worrying*. *Fear and worrying* was referenced 67 times by 100% of participants. In the survey it ranked third place and was identified by 100% of participants.
2. Within the *fear and worrying* category, the subcategory of *I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career* was referenced in most interviews, 21 times, by 75% of participants. In the survey, it was identified by 75% of participants.
3. The second most referenced self-sabotaging behavior referenced in interviews was *thinking too small*. *Thinking too small* was referenced 43 times by 87.5% of participants. In the survey, it ranked fifth place and was identified by 100% of participants.
4. The third most referenced self-sabotaging behavior referenced in interviews was *not taking time for reflection*. *Not taking time for reflection* was referenced 40 times by 87.5% of participants. In the survey, it ranked second and was identified by 100% of participants.
5. The lowest ranked self-sabotaging behaviors in both the survey and interview were *infusing sex/gender role confusion* and *disempowering other women*.

Summary of Unexpected Findings: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

6. Dishonesty was ranked number one in the survey. It was referenced 34 times by 100% of the participants; however, in the interviews it was ranked in eighth place with 22 references by 87.5% of participants.
7. Participants were more likely to identify self-sabotaging behaviors in the survey than in the interviews. In the survey four self-sabotaging behavior categories were identified by 100% of the participants, while in the interviews two self-sabotaging behavior categories were identified by 100% of the participants.
8. In the survey *infusing sex/gender role confusion* was referenced 3 times by 37.5% of the participants, while in the interviews *infusing sex/gender role confusion* was referenced 23 times by 75% of the participants.
9. In the survey, 62.5% of participants identified the self-sabotaging behavior of *disempowering other women*, while only 25% referenced *disempowering other women* in the interviews.
10. In the *fear and worrying* subcategory *"I mulled over my mistakes"* was referenced by 25% of the participants in the interviews, but in the survey, it was referenced by 75% of the participants.

Summary of Findings: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

11. In the survey, 37% of the participants agreed that self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on their career development. In the interviews 100% of participants provided examples of self-sabotaging behaviors they believe had an impact on their career development efforts.
12. In the interviews 62.5% of participants reported the self-sabotaging behavior

category of *not taking time for reflection* caused anxiety and a decline in physical health.

13. The top self-sabotaging behavior that participants believed had the most impact on women promoting within their careers was *thinking too small*. *Thinking too small* was identified by 75% of participants during the interviews.
14. The second most identified self-sabotaging behavior participants believed had the most impact on women promoting within their careers was *fear and worrying*. *Fear and worrying* was identified by 62.5% of participants during the interviews.

Summary of Unexpected Findings: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

15. One hundred percent of participants identified the intersectionality of gender and race as intricate in the development of self-sabotaging behaviors among African American women during their career path.
16. Participants were more likely to agree that self-sabotaging behaviors had an impact on their career development efforts in the interviews than in the survey.

Summary of Findings: Strategies Used to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

17. The top strategy referenced in interviews was *building a power web*. It was referenced 58 times by 100% of the participants.
18. The second most referenced strategy in interviews was *honest self-expression*. It was referenced 44 times by 100% of the participants.
19. The third most referenced strategy in interviews was *cultivating self-intimacy*. It was referenced 42 times by 100% of the participants.

20. The following strategies were also referenced by 100% of the participants: *constructive preparation*, *recognizing women's unique destiny*, *acting with confidence*, and *embracing one's sexuality*.

Summary of Unexpected Findings: Strategies Used to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

21. *Cultivating self-intimacy* and constructive *preparation* was an effective strategy to overcome 67% of the self-sabotaging behaviors.
22. All the strategies were effective in overcoming three or more self-sabotaging behaviors
23. One hundred percent of the participants listed awareness and acknowledgement to counteract self- sabotaging behaviors.
24. Religion or spirituality was referenced as a strategy to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors by 62.5% of the participants.

Summary

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by eight female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. Data collection included the use of an electronic survey for quantitative data collection, followed by interviews for qualitative data collection. This chapter provided a summary presentation of the data related to the self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact they had, and the strategies used by female African American higher education chief

executives to overcome them. Twenty-four key findings and unexpected findings were identified. Chapter V provides an overview of the major findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This mixed methods study identified and described the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives throughout their career development and explored the impact these behaviors had on their career development. Additionally, this study identified strategies female African American higher education chief executives used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. Chapter V provides an overview of the study, the purpose, research questions, key and unexpected conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Research Questions

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?

3. What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

Methodology

This explanatory sequential mixed-method study consisted of two phases in which the first phase included collecting quantitative data through an online survey instrument completed by eight female African American higher education chief executives throughout the United States. The second phase of this sequential explanatory mixed methods study included semi structured one-on-one interviews with the eight female African American higher education chief executives to allow each participant to expand their depth of response about the self-sabotaging behaviors that have impacted their career development, and strategies used to overcome these behaviors. The interviews were conducted throughout February 2022 and March 2022 using the Zoom Communication software and were audio recorded and transcribed using the Otterai online transcription software. Additionally, each transcript was coded using the qualitative data analysis software QDA Miner Lite.

Population

According to Espinosa et al. (2019), a 2017 American Council on Education (ACE) study reported that 9% of female Black higher education presidents were among the overall 30% of women in similar roles. Based on this assertion, the following calculation of 4,298 colleges and universities x 30% of female presidents = 1289.4 x 9% of female Black presidents leads to an estimated116 female African American higher education presidents. Hence, the overall population for this study was an estimated 116

African American female higher education presidents in the United States. Those designated to participate in the study were from the following city, states, and districts: Pomona, California; Denver, Colorado; Washington, D.C.; Providence, Rhode Island; Nashville, Tennessee; Houston, Texas; and Hampton, Virginia.

Sample

The sampling methods used for this research were convenience sampling and purposeful sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) have asserted that convenience sampling is widely used in qualitative and quantitative studies because of the accessibility; however, researchers must proceed with caution as this method may be difficult to generalize. The same two authors suggest non-probability purposeful sampling to gain the most useful information on a specific topic.

Of the estimated 35 female African American higher education chief executives, the sample selected to participate in this study included 8 participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) have indicated that the sample frame refers to specific characteristics of the selected research sample. Based on this assertion, the researcher required the sample population to meet the following criteria: 1) Must identify as African American or Black; 2) must be female, 3) must currently hold the position of president, vice president, chancellor, vice chancellor, provost, or vice provost; 4) must be in position at least one year; and 5) must hold a position at a private not for profit 4-year university in the United States.

Summary of Major Findings

Major Findings: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

Research Question One asked, "*What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?*" In this explanatory sequential mixed-method study, participants shared examples of self-sabotaging behaviors they experienced throughout their career development, which answered Research Question One. The major findings are drawn directly from participants' responses.

1. The top self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by participants as reported in interviews include *fear and worrying*, *thinking too small*, and *not taking time for reflection.*
2. The top self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by participants as reported in the survey include *dishonesty*, *not taking time for reflection*, *fear and worrying*, *thinking too small*.

Unexpected Findings: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

3. Participants were more likely to identify certain self-sabotaging behaviors in the survey rather than in interviews.
4. Participants were more likely to identify the self-sabotaging behavior categories of *dishonesty* and *disempowering other women* in the survey rather than in interviews.

Major Findings: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

Research Question Two asked, *"What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief*

executives?" In this explanatory sequential mixed-method study, participants shared examples of how self-sabotaging behaviors impacted their career development, which answered Research Question Two. The major findings are drawn directly from participants' responses.

5. Participants believed that self-sabotaging behaviors caused adverse mental and physical health conditions that impacted their career development.
6. Participants believed that the top self-sabotaging behaviors that had the most impact on their career development were *thinking too small* and *fear and worrying*.

Unexpected Findings: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

7. One hundred percent of participants believed that the intersectionality of gender and race contributed to the development of self-sabotaging behaviors and had an impact on their career development.
8. Participants were more likely to agree that self-sabotaging behaviors impacted their career development in the interviews rather than in the survey.

Major Findings: Strategies Used to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

Research Question Three asked, *"What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?*" In this explanatory sequential mixed-method study, participants shared strategies to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors, which answered Research Question Three. The major findings are drawn directly from participants' responses.

9. All participants identified using the following strategies to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors: *Building a power web*, *honest self-expression*, *cultivating self-intimacy*, *constructive preparation*, *recognizing women's unique destiny*, *acting with confidence*, and *embracing one's sexuality*.
10. The top strategies identified by participants to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors included *building a power web*, *honest self-expression*, and *cultivating self-intimacy*.

Major Unexpected Findings: Strategies Used to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

11. Cultivating *self-intimacy* and *constructive preparation* were effective in overcoming 67 percent of the self-sabotaging behaviors.
12. Seventy-five percent of participants listed religious and spiritual grounding as a strategy to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.
13. The theme of awareness and acknowledgment of the existence of self-inflicted barriers emerged with all participants as a strategy to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study and supporting literature, conclusions were formed regarding self-sabotaging behaviors, their impact, and strategies used to overcome them.

Conclusion 1: The intersectionality of gender and race influences the views, self-perception, and self-sabotaging behaviors of African American women.

According to Mayberry (2018), the intersection of race and gender has and continues to present a challenge for African American women advancing to leadership positions. Equally important, Auster and Prasad (2016) magnified the struggles Black women face in advancing in higher education leadership positions. Accordingly, all participants in this research described how the characteristics of intersectionality lead to their engagement in self-sabotaging behaviors. In the self-sabotaging category of holding back, participants shared examples of how they underestimated their value and were afraid to voice their opinions for fear of fitting the stereotype of an aggressive or angry Black woman. Lais (2016) described how Black women in higher education are perceived as too pushy and aggressive. Participants in this research provided examples of how those perceptions influenced their self-sabotaging behaviors, specifically in the areas of fear and worrying and holding back by not speaking up in meetings and fearing that others would perceive them negatively based on the duality of their gender and race. As such, the intersectionality of gender and race has influence on the views, self-perception, and self-sabotaging behaviors of African American women.

Conclusion 2: As a protective mechanism, African American female leaders are inclined to engage in self-sabotaging behaviors in response to the structural and systemic duality of sexism and racism.

All participants experienced the following self-sabotaging behavior categories: *Fear and worrying*, *thinking too small*, *not taking time for reflection*, *isolating*, and *dishonesty*. Research presents findings that confirm the tendency for women to internalize societal messages of male dominance, thus causing them to subconsciously self-handicap by engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors while working to advance to

leadership roles (Brown, et al., 2012; Crews, 2020; Kiner, 2020). For Black women, the societal message exceeds male dominance, but also includes race. Research contends that there is consistent oppositional isolation of Black women, specifically in higher education (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Therefore, despite the executive level positions they hold today, African American women are prone to self-debilitate during career development by remaining silent, separating themselves, lacking preparation fearing that the world will view them as less, stupid, angry, bitter, and hostile -all of which leads to self-sabotage.

Conclusion 3: African American female leaders need to engage in active and reflective dialogue with others as a way to surface their self-sabotaging behaviors and recognize how those behaviors impact their career trajectories.

Often, women are not aware of how they engage in self-sabotaging behaviors. Hence, they are not able to recognize self-inflicted barriers. Without recognition and awareness, African American female leaders cannot develop strategies to overcome them. Bradberry and Greaves (2009) assert that developing self-awareness is an essential step to knowing one's true self. Part of developing self-awareness is by engaging in honest conversations. According to Lerner (2012), one of the most genuine forms of expression is communication with others coupled with the authenticity of such thoughts. Participants in this study demonstrated this notion of self-awareness during the conversation portion of the data collection process. As interviews progressed and the lines of communication opened, participants began to recognize and take ownership of their self-sabotaging behaviors. In turn, this prompted them to gradually and genuinely admit, reflect upon, and expand on the impacts of these behaviors, thus adding credence

to the sequence of conducting interviews following the completion of surveys. Engaging in verbal conversations encourages female African American leaders to recognize their self-sabotaging behaviors and articulate their strategies to overcome them.

Conclusion 4: African American women should be intentional in developing effective strategies to counter self-sabotaging behaviors for successful career advancement.

Developing effective strategies to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors is essential to the career advancement of female African American leaders. Strategies such as seeking mentorship, speaking with confidence, and becoming self-aware have proven to be effective in helping Black women promote to leadership positions. In addition to the barriers created by self-sabotaging behaviors, Beckwith, Carter, and Peters (2016) assert that organizational biases create systemic and structural barriers for Black women. To counteract these barriers, Lerner (2012) has emphasized that remaining true to themselves, expressing their opinions, and connecting with listeners and motivators will effectively help them overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. Participants who noted the use of such strategies were successful in their career advancement endeavors. The implementation of effective strategies to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors will help Black women break barriers and shatter glass and concrete ceilings. Hence, to successfully experience career advancement, African American women should be intentional in developing effective strategies to counter self-sabotaging behaviors.

Conclusion 5: To develop and maintain mental and physical wellness, African American female leaders should create opportunities for downtime, self-care, and reflection.

For female African American leaders, anxieties are high when balancing work and life, while at the same time facing intersectional gender and race disparities in the workplace (Njoku & Evans, 2022). Additionally, Ryder and Briles (2003) point out that women's continued aim at proving themselves as hard workers, specifically in male dominated organizations reduces the opportunities for enjoyment of life.

Participants identified significant mental and physical health declines resulting from self-sabotaging behaviors such as *not taking time for reflection* and *fear and worrying*. Many noted that it was not until recently they began taking vacations, spending time with family, and creating the opportunities for downtime and self-care. Without self-care, women overwork themselves and experience burnout, which is professionally, mentally, and physically detrimental. To develop and maintain mental and physical wellness, female African American leaders should create opportunities for downtime, self-care, and reflection.

Conclusion 6: Embracing mentorship and maintaining a professional and personal network is essential to the career advancement of African American women.

The research of Jackson and Harris (2007) found that during their quest to become college presidents, Black women lacked access to leadership offices and had limited access to mentorship. The absence of mentorship, and professional and personal circles lead to the self-sabotaging behavior of *isolating*. Isolation breeds a lack of confidence, which prompts other self-sabotaging behaviors such as *holding back*, *dishonesty,* and *thinking too small*, all of which impede career advancement as reported by participants in this study. To counteract *isolating* and *holding back,* participants identified *building a power web* as the primary strategy for overcoming these self-

sabotaging behaviors. In conjunction with participants, Lerner (2012) encourages women to seek mentorship to create empowerment circles to gain positive self-perceptions, leading to increased confidence levels. Subsequently, embracing mentorship and maintaining a professional and personal network is essential to the career advancement of African American women.

Conclusion 7: For African American female leaders, strategies to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors are not on stand-alone islands, but rather are useful across multiple self-sabotaging behaviors.

Lerner (2012), Munoz et al. (2014), and Ryder and Briles (2003) declared that societal sex-role misconceptions lead to the self-sabotaging category of *thinking too small*. Henry and Glenn (2009) reported that female African American higher education executives are often unsupported. While these are a mere fraction of the kinds of internal and external barriers that challenge female advancement, they influence the actions of self-sabotaging behaviors, which are detrimental to career development.

On the bright side, participants shared multiple strategies to overcome several self-sabotaging behaviors. For example, *cultivating self-intimacy* and *constructive preparation* were noted by most participants as effective strategies to overcome a high percentage of self-sabotaging behaviors. These data elements tell a story that developing one strategy can help women overcome several external and internal barriers to help women advance in their careers. Hence, it is worthwhile for African American women to develop at least one strategy as it can be useful to counteract multiple self-sabotaging behavior categories.

Implications for Action

Based on the results of the study and a thorough review of the literature, the following implications for action are recommended.

1. The research findings must be shared with higher education institutional leaders including stakeholders, mentors, instructors, coaches, department chairs, and sponsors to help them identify the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by women in an effort to help women overcome these behaviors.
2. Professional organizations such as The American Association of Colleges and Universities, The American Association of University Women, and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities must host conferences, workshops, and open discussion sessions to assist women in recognizing their self-sabotaging behaviors and educate them on the strategies needed to overcome them.
3. The research findings must be shared with The American Council on Education to create statistical visibility to raise the consciousness of female self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies to overcome them throughout higher education. Doing so will allow other researchers to use statistical data to further push for gender equity and raise awareness in higher education.
4. Research findings must be shared with the Chief Diversity Officers of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Predominantly White Universities to incorporate into their leadership training programs. Doing so will help higher education leaders recognize and counteract self-sabotaging behaviors in themselves and their team members, which in turn will help create an institutional

culture that supports the advancement of women.

5. Higher education institutions and state and national professional organizations must create mentorship programs centered around preparing and supporting women aspiring to obtain leadership positions.
6. Professional organizations and universities must use findings to raise awareness of the impact of the intersectionality of race and gender on the advancement of African American women and challenge current policies and succession plans to ensure equity and inclusion.
7. Institutions of higher learning must include retired female African American college presidents to participate on search committees to ensure the presence of African American women when institutions are seeking to appoint presidents and cabinet members. Doing so will also assist in counteracting intersectional biases.
8. This research must be shared with inner-city community leaders, specifically in urban Black communities to create mentorship to female youth, and youth leadership training programs that incorporate awareness on how to recognize self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies to overcome them at an early age.
9. Higher education institutions must coordinate with their Human Resources department to create mandatory time off such as additional paid floating holidays to promote downtime and self-care for women.
10. Professional organizations and universities must use findings to understand the mental and physical impact of self-sabotaging behaviors amongst their female leaders. In addition, they must incorporate paid mental health programs within the organization to promote mental wellness and help reduce anxiety levels.

11. African American women seeking to advance to higher education leadership positions must seek mentorship and build strong professional and personal support networks to create balance and continued advancement.
12. Higher Education leaders must use the findings from this research to raise awareness of the impact of self-sabotaging behaviors and educate female African American leaders on how to overcome them by engaging in cultivating self-intimacy and constructive preparation.
13. K-12 leaders must use findings to develop training and mentorship programs for female youth that incorporate awareness on how to recognize self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies to overcome them.
14. This researcher must present findings from this research in books, journal articles, magazines, and conference presentations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The study must be replicated with female African American higher education chief executives at public universities. Doing so will add to this research by exploring the self-sabotaging experiences of African American women in the overall higher education system, as well use comparative data between public and private to form conclusions.
2. This study must be replicated with women from unlimited cultural backgrounds in both public and private universities to broaden the understanding of self-sabotaging behaviors and their impacts of the overall

female population striving to become higher education executives.

3. This study must be replicated for women of all cultures in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). It would be interesting to see their experiences with self-sabotaging behaviors and the strategies to overcome them. Some participants indicated a disparity of women in college athletic leadership and questioned if a connection exists between that disparity and self-sabotaging behaviors.
4. This study must be replicated in religious organizations to expand on how self-sabotaging behaviors impact women who aspire to be religious leaders.
5. This study must be replicated in a case study. A replication of this study using a qualitative case study research method will add depth to the experiences of female African American higher education chief executives.
6. This thematic dissertation must be replicated in a meta-analysis study to explore the self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies used to counteract them across multiple populations.

A Comparative Look at the Original Studies

This study is replication of three earlier studies completed in 2020 by Jamie Crews, Rebecca Pianta, and Tiffáni Thomas. These studies explored the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by women in county government leadership, the K-12 superintendency, and county judicial leadership. Table 37 presents the top self-sabotaging behavior categories found in the original studies.

Table 37 - *Top self-Sabotaging Behaviors from Comparative Studies*

Crews (2020)	Pianta (2020)	Thomas (2020)
Holding back	Holding back	Holding back
Thinking too small	Thinking too small	Thinking too small
Fear and worrying	Fear and worrying	Misunderstanding oneself
		Infusing sex/gender role confusion in the workplace

The findings presented in these studies reported that women in leadership experience self-sabotaging behaviors across multiple sectors during their career advancement. *Holding back* and *thinking too small* were synonymous across all three research findings. Additionally, all three studies presented findings on the use of the nine personal power domain strategies to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors as described in Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003). All three research studies provided similar recommendations, including replicating the original study with different female demographics and focusing on mentorship and networking opportunities for women aspiring leadership positions.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Upon entering into this doctoral program, I was a financial aid administrator seeking to elevate to the director level of the financial aid department. However, after a year of developing and engaging in the process of being a transformational leader throughout the program, I found myself wanting to impact more than the financial aid department. I found myself wanting to impact student outcomes, staff development, and the overall organizational direction. Leading the transformational change project helped

me realize the kind of leader I aspire to be and am becoming in this program. For that I am grateful.

What interested me about women and self-sabotage is that I saw myself in all self-sabotaging categories with the exception of *disempowering other women*. After reading the nine domains of personal power, I wanted to gain more knowledge on the strategies to use to overcome them. Since starting this research, I have become more vocal, confident, and self-aware. I have begun to build a power web of mentors, and professional and personal advisors. This research has encouraged me to join two advisory boards at UMASS Global around the subject of equity and inclusion, one of which is for gender equity. Additionally, I have spoken at conferences in other states, and turned down a position that I believed would sell me short. This research has changed the trajectory of my life! I am excited to see where my research takes me. More importantly, I am excited to see how my research impacts organizational policies and women aspiring to advance to leadership positions.

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Appendix A

Synthesis Matrix

References	SSB & Strategies: Thinking Too Small	SSB & Strategies: Fear and Worry	SSB & Strategies: Misunderstanding Oneself	SSB & Strategies: Dishonesty	SSB & Strategies: Holding Back	SSB & Strategies: Lack of Self-Reflection	SSB & Strategies: Isolation	SSB & Strategies: Disempowering Other Women	SSB & Strategies: Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	Historical Perspective Women in Leadership	Historical Perspective of AA Women in Leadership Roles	AA Women in Higher Education	Barriers Impacting AA Women in Higher Education	Theoretical Considerations: Black Feminist, Critical Race, and Intersectional	Conceptual Framework

Acar, F. (2015)									X	X					
Allen, T. G., & Flood, C. T. (2018)									X	X					
Alon, T., Doepke, M., Olmstead-Rumsey, J., & Tertilt, M. (2020)								X	X	X					
Alston, J. A. (2012)											X	X			
American Council on Education. (2021)								X		X	X				
Amoah, J. (2013)										X	X	X			
Appelbaum, S.H., Audet, L., & Miller, J.C. (2003)								X							
Artis, R. (2018, November 25)												X	X		
Arylo, C. (2012)			X					X							
Ausmer, N.M. (2009)									X						
Avila, P. (2018).								X							
Babers, J. (2016, June 18).										X			X		

Bachman, E. (2020, April 9).											X	X		X	
Bellenger, J. (2010).										X			X		
Benjamin, L. (1997).									X	X					
Berry, P., & Franks, T. J. (2010).	X										X		X		X
Best, D.L., & Luvender, K.L. (2015).									X	X				X	
Betzer-Tayar, M., Zach, S., Galily, Y., & Henry, I. (2015).										X	X				
Bjerede, J. (2017, November 9).			X						X	X					
Blakesley, B. M. (2016).												X	X	X	X
Blanchard, S. U. (2009).															
Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T.E. (2013).										X					
Bradberry, T., & Greaves, J. (2009).		X			X										X
Breeden, R.L. (2021, October 26).	X	X									X	X		X	

Brescoll, V. L. (2016).									X	X			X	
Briles, J. (2006).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Brock, B.L. (2008).										X				
Brown, B. V. (2018).		X		X		X								X
Brown, C.M., Park, S.W., & Folger, S.F. (2012).					X				X		X			X
Burns, T., Huang, J., Krivkovich, A., Yee, L., Rambachan, I., & Trkulja, T. (2021).	X	X							X					X
Burgess, T. (2021).									X		X	X	X	X
Candia-Bailey, A. (2016).											X	X	X		
Caro, C. (2019, April 15).			X						X		X				
Carr, P.L., Gunn, C.M., Kaplan, S.A.., Raj, A., & Freund, K.M. (2015).									X	X					X
Catalyst. (2021).										X	X				

Chin, J.L. (2011).					**X**					**X**	**X**				**X**
Chen, V. (2017).				**X**						**X**	**X**				**X**
Christo-Baker, A.E., Roberts, C., & Rogalin, C.L. (2012).												**X**	**X**		
"Civil War" (2009).										**X**	**X**				
Clayton, T.B. (2021, January 13).											**X**				
Cognard-Black, A. J. (2004).										**X**	**X**				
Cohen, E. (2009).	**X**														
Collins, P. H. (2000).														**X**	
Contessa, C. (2021, May 4).									**X**						
Cook, A., & Glass, C. (2014a).							**X**				**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Cooke, N.A., & Jacobs, J.A. (2018).	**X**		**X**	**X**								**X**	**X**	**X**	
Coomaraswamy, R. (2021, March 2).										**X**					**X**
Crenshaw, K. (1989).											**X**			**X**	

Crenshaw, K. (1991).											X	X		X	
Crews, J.R. (2020).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Crites, S. N., Dickson, K. E., & Lorenz, A. (2015).					X					X		X			X
Davis, D. R., & Maldonado, C. (2015).											X	X	X	X	
Davis, S., & Brown, K. (2017).											X	X		X	
Deloitte. (2018).									X	X					X
Derks, B., Van Laar, C., & Ellemers, N. (2016).						X			X						
De Vries, M. F. R. K. (2015)..									X		X		X		
Dewalt, S. L. (2018).										X	X	X			
Dickerson, A., & Taylor, M. A. (2000).											X				X
Diehl, A.B., & Dzubinski, L.M. (2016).									X		X				X
Diekman, A.B., & Goodfriend, W. (2006).									X					X	

Dodge, K. A., Gilroy, F. D., & Fenzel, L. M. (1995).									X				X		
Eagly, A. H., Carli, L.L. (2003).	X										X	X	X		
Eagly, A.H., & Karau, S.J. (2002).	X										X	X	X		
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (2016).										X	X	X			X
Espinosa, L. L., Turk, J. M., Taylor, M., & Chessman, H. 2019..									X		X	X			X
Eurich, T. (2019, May 31).								X	X	X					
Evans, S. Y. (2007).											X	X	X	X	
Fairclough, A. (2000). "												X	X	X	
Ferguson, T.W. (2018).										X					
Fortin, J. (2021, November 8).											X				
Gardiner, M. E., Enomoto, E., &							X	X							X
Grogan, M. (2000).															
Gasman, M., Abiola, U., & Travers, C. (2015).										X	X				
"Gender on The Home Front" (n.d.).									X	X	X				X
Giddings, P. (1984).											X	X		X	
Goudreau, J. (2012 February 4).											X				
"Governance QualityScore:											X				
Grant, C. M. (2012).											X				

Greene II, R. (2018, June 18).	X		X				X				X	X			
Griggs, S. E. (2014).						X		X					X		X
Guillory, R. M. (2001).									X		X				
Gupta, V.K., Han, S., Mortal, S.C., Silveri, S., & Turban, D.B. (2018).		X							X						
Ham, N. (2019).							X				X				
Harris, A. (2016, June 28).											X				
Harley, D.A. (2008).				X							X	X	X	X	
Harley, S. (2019).											X	X	X	X	
Harris-Perry, M. V. (2013).	X										X	X	X	X	
Harvard, P. A. (1986).											X	X	X	X	
Helgesen, S., & Goldsmith, M. (2018).					X			X	X						
Hill-Collins, P. (1989).									X		X	X	X	X	
Hine, D. C. (1994).									X		X	X			
Hine, D. C., Brown, E. B., Patterson, T., & Williams, L. (Eds.). (1990).										X	X	X	X		
hooks, b. (1995). Killing rage: Ending racism. New York: Henry Holt and Company.									X		X	X	X		
Hoyt, C.L., & Burnette, J.L. (2013).									X				X		X

Hoyt, C. L., & Murphy, S. E. (2016).								**X**							
Howard-Hamilton, M.F. (2003).					**X**										
Huang, J., Diehl, M.R., & Paterlini, S. (2020). T														**X**	
Humphreys, J. H., & Einstein, W. O. (2003).											**X**				
Huysse-Gaytandjieva, A., Groot, W., Pavlova, M., & Joling, C. (2015).	**X**														
Jacobs, T. (2018, October 16).		**X**													
Jean-Marie, G. (2006).											**X**				
Jones, C. (2006).											**X**				**X**
Jones, S. (2014).													**X**	**X**	
Kalaitzi, S., Czabanowski, K., Fowler-Davis, S., & Brand, H. (2017).									**X**	**X**					

Kaufman, E. K., & Grace, P. E. (2011).									X	X			X		X
Kawaguchi, C. (2014).															
Kessler, M. (2014).									X	X					
Khosroshashi, H. (2021, May 10).											X		X		
Kling, K.C., Hyde, J.S., Showers, C.J., & Bushell, B.N. (1999).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X			
Lais, B. (2018, February 8).							X						X	X	X
Lange, A. (2015).								X							
Lange, A. (2015).								X	X						
Law, T. (2020, January 16).										X					
Lerner, H. (2012).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							X
Lewis, J. A., & Neville, H. A. (2015).									X			X	X	X	
Linden, P. (2012).	X	X	X	X	X						X				
Lomotey, K. (2010). Predominantly											X		X		X

Longman, K.A., & Anderson, P.A. (2016).	X	X	X					X	X						X
Madell, R. (2019, November 27).			X	X					X						X
Mainah, F., & Perkins, V. (2015).											X				
Manke, K. (2019, December 5).									X		X			X	
McDowell, J., & Carter-Francique, A. (2017).											X	X	X	X	
McDowell, J., & Cunningham, G.B. (2009).											X	X	X	X	X
McGee, M.K. (2017).											X			X	
McPherson, J. (2008, November 20). A										X	X				
Meyers, L.N. (2002).											X		X	X	
Meyerson, D.E. & Fletcher, J. (2000).				X		X				X		X			

Miles, R., Hu, R., & Dotson, K. (2013).	**X**										**X**	**X**		
Miles, S. (2012).														
Mitchell, N.A.D. (2021).											**X**	**X**		**X**
Montgomery, M. L. (2019).	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**					**X**					**X**
Moody, J. (2019, February 15).									**X**	**X**	**X**			
Moody, J. (2018, July 5).											**X**	**X**		
Moorosi, P., Fuller., K., & Reilly, E. (2018).											**X**	**X**	**X**	
Muñoz, A. J., Pankake, A., Ramalho, E. M., Mills, S., & Simonsson, M. (2014).	**X**		**X**					**X**	**X**					**X**
Nidiffer, J. (2000).								**X**						**X**
Nixon, M.L. (2017).					**X**					**X**	**X**			
Olson, K. (2019).	**X**	**X**							**X**		**X**			**X**
O'Neil, D.A., Hopkins, M.H., & Bilimoria, D. (2008).								**X**	**X**					

O'Neill, R.M., & Blake-Beard, S.D. (2002)..									**X**	**X**					
O'Roarke, J.J. (2017).											**X**				
Paige, D. (2018, May 31).									**X**						
Parker-McCullough, B.A.					**X**										
Parks, S. (2010).					**X**				**X**				**X**		**X**
Perry, A. (2020, February 19).												**X**		**X**	**X**
Perkins, L. M. (1990).									**X**			**X**		**X**	**X**
Pianta, R. (2020).	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**				**X**			
Quander, M., & Froneberger, L. (2019, May 30).			**X**	**X**									**X**		**X**
Racioppi, R. (2019).									**X**						
Rampton, M. (2015).									**X**		**X**	**X**	**X**		
Ribianszky, N. (2013).	**X**														
Rios, J., Rixon, D., & Faseruk, A. (2013).			**X**						**X**						**X**
Rosenberg, Morris. (1979).	**X**			**X**					**X**		**X**				**X**

Ruderman, E.G. (2006).	X	X	X						X						X
Ryan, M. K., Haslam, S. A., Morgenroth, T., Rink, F., Stoker, J., & Peters, K. (2016).									X		X		X		X
Ryder, M., & Briles, J. (2003).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Sandberg, S. (2013).					X					X	X				X
Sawchuk, S. (2022, January 19).												X	X	X	X
Schlossberg, N. K. (1989).	X												X		
Schwanke, D.A. (2013).														X	
Shaw, S., & Hoeber, L. (2003).										X					X
Slater, K. (2020, August 28).												X	X	X	X
Smith, T.M., Wessell, M.T., & Polack, G. (2017).										X	X				
Smooth, W. (2010).													X	X	
Stefon, M. (2019, October 1).											X	X	X		X

Steward, A.J., & McDermott, C. (2004)			X					X							X
Stroud, S.S. (2009).												X	X		X
Sule, V.T. (2009).										X		X	X		
Tevis, T., Hernandez, M., & Bryant, R. (2020).	X	X										X	X		
Thomas, T. (2020).	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X
Truehill, M.T. (2021).											X	X	X		
"Voting Rights for Women" (n.d.).									X				X		
Walkington, L. (2017).												X	X		
Watkins, M.B., & Smith, A.N. (2014).						X			X						
Wilson, R. (1998).											X	X		X	
Wolfman, B. R. (1997).											X	X		X	
Women's Bureau. (2012).	X								X	X					
"Women in Management: Quick Take" (2020).			X						X						
"Women HBCU Presidents Forge a New Path" (2019).									X			X	X	X	
Wyatt-Nichol, H., Antwi-Boasiako, K.B.,									X			X			
Yellen, J.F. (1973).									X				X	X	

Appendix B

Quantitative Alignment Table

Research Question	**Question 1**	**Question 2**	**Question 3**	**Question 4**	**Question 5**	**Question 6**	**Question 7**	**Question 8**	**Question 9**	**Question 10**
What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	
What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?										**X**

Appendix C

Quantitative Electronic Survey Script and Instrument

WOMEN'S POWER AND SELF-SABOTAGING BEHAVIOR SURVEY
Included in the Electronic Survey: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by La Toya Davis, a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts Global. The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are welcome to choose not to participate. If you do decide you participate, you may withdraw at any time.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. Survey questions will pertain to your perceptions of identified self-sabotaging behaviors you may have experienced throughout your career and the impact they may have had on your career development.

Please review the following information:
I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowable by law. If the study design of the use of data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentially by keeping the identity codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the principal researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments or concerns about the study or informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University at 16355 Laguna Canyon Rd. Irvine, C 92618 (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact La Toya Davis at ldavis11@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (323) 490-8350; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Chair at ryder@mail.umassglobal.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.
Clicking on the "agree" button indicates that you have read this informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate. If you don't wish to participate, you may decline by clicking the 'disagree" button.

Agree: I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and "Bill of Rights." I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in the study.
Disagree: I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey.

INTRODUCTION

"We have the power inside to be great," says women's advocate Helene Lerner, "but oftentimes it's covered by false beliefs about ourselves." Lerner's book, *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (2012) maintains that women need to embrace their inherent power. "The world needs more women leaders," Lerner says. "That means we [women] need to step out in ways we haven't been." To achieve true power, Lerner says women must first recognize and overcome its barriers. She describes nine common self-sabotaging categories that hold women back. A framework was adapted from Lerner's thesis coupled with the work of Ryder and Briles from *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (2003) to group female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching domains.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on women's personal power and self-sabotaging behavior. This study is focused on the following nine domains of Women's Personal Power and nine corresponding categories of Sabotaging Behavior.

1. **Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny: THINKING TOO SMALL**
2. **Constructive Preparation: FEAR AND WORRYING**
3. **Owning all of One's Self: MISUNDERSTANDING ONE'S SELF**
4. **Honest Self-Expression: DISHONESTY**
5. **Acting with Confidence: HOLDING BACK**
6. **Cultivating Self-Intimacy: LACK OF SELF REFLECTION**
7. **Building a Power Web: ISOLATING**
8. **Inspiring Other Women: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**
9. **Embracing One's Sexuality: INFUSING SEX ROLE CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

It's best not to 'overthink' the statements and respond with your first perceptual thought. It is anticipated you can complete this survey in 10-15 minutes. After you complete and submit the survey the researcher will contact you to schedule an interview to explore your thoughts on these behaviors and how they may have an impact on women's ability to move forward in her career.

Directions: The following survey represents 9 categories of self-sabotaging behaviors. For each category there is a list of behaviors associated with each category. Using the six-point scale for each behavior, please indicate how you have personally exhibited each behavior throughout your adult life as you progressed along in your career.

1= Strongly Agree
2= Agree
3= Slightly Agree
4= Slightly Disagree
5= Disagree
6= Strongly Disagree

1. **POWER DOMAIN:** Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny (Capacity to have a significant impact; living up to one's potential)
   SABOTAGING CATEGORY: THINKING TOO SMALL

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I blamed others for why things aren't going well						
I feared being rejected						
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone						
I was not open to new experiences						
I often made perfection the standard in my life						

2. **POWER DOMAIN:** Constructive Preparation (Embraces, understands and accepts fear)
   SABOTAGING CATEGORY: FEAR AND WORRYING

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career						
I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation						
I resisted change						
I feared looking stupid						
I felt like an imposter on the job						
I mulled over my mistakes						

3. **POWER DOMAIN**: Owning all of One's Self (Owns and appreciates accomplishments and limitations)
   SABOTAGING CATEGORY: MISUNDERSTANDING ONE'S SELF

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I could not accept compliments or praise						
I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve						
I have focused on a person criticizing me						
I could not personally acknowledge my own accomplishments						

4. POWER DOMAIN: Honest Self Expression (Accepting strengths and weaknesses)
SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISHONESTY

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I said "yes" to things when I actually wanted to say 'no"						
I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral						
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up						
I have taken on too much at work when I didn't want to						
I have hesitated to talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting my ego						
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation						

5. POWER DOMAIN: Acting with Confidence: Approaching obstacles with confidence; having the courage to step forward
SABOTAGING CATEGORY: HOLDING BACK

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I did not reach out for help when I needed it						
I have avoided criticism						
I made inflections rather than make bold statements a						
I have apologized unnecessarily						
I have talked down to myself						
I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings						
I preferred not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion						

6. **POWER DOMAIN**: Cultivating Self Intimacy (Getting to know oneself more deeply)
SABOTAGING CATEGORY: NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have kept busy to avoid being alone						
I have not accepted parts of myself that need improvement						
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry						
I have not taken vacations when I could						
I have not allowed myself to experience “down time						
I have hated to ‘be wrong’						
I have held a grudge with someone						

7. **POWER DOMAIN:** Building a Power Web (Building a network of personal and professional advisors for support)
SABOTAGING CATEGORY: ISOLATING

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn’t already know						
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career						
I felt guilty for taking up too much of people’s time						
I have relied exclusively on female mentors						
I relied only on networking upstream						

8. POWER DOMAIN: Inspiring Other Women (Ability to inspire and empower other females)
SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have felt too busy to help other women						
I thought why I should help other women since I did it the hard way						
I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'						
I have talked behind a woman's back						
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men						

9. POWER DOMAIN: Embracing One's Sexuality (Awareness of gender roles and sex role stereotypes)
SABOTAGING CATEGORY: INFUSING SEX/GENDER ROLE CONFUSION IN WORKPLACE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have dressed sexy at work						
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities						
I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality						
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk						
I have flirted at work						

10: Impact on Self-Sabotaging Behaviors on Women's Career

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe some of the behaviors listed in this survey have had an impact on my career development (lack of promotions, moving ahead in career in a timely manner, lack of access to top positions etc.).						

Appendix D

Qualitative Interview Script and Interview Questions

Women's Power and Self-Sabotaging Behavior Interview Protocol

Interviewer's Copy

Participant: ________________________________
Date: _____________________________________
Organization: ___________________________________

INTERVIEWER SAYS:

My name is La Toya Davis, and I am a higher education Financial Aid Administrator. I am a doctoral candidate at UMASS Global in the area of Organizational Leadership. I would like to thank you for participating in the Women and Self Sabotaging Behavior survey and volunteering to be interviewed to expand the depth of response.

I will be conducting interviews with a number of female African American higher education chief executives, such as yourself to hopefully provide a clear picture of self-sabotaging behaviors that can impact women's career development efforts. In addition, I would like to explore any strategies you have used to overcome any identified self-sabotaging behaviors you experienced throughout your career. The questions I will be asking are the same for each female senior leader participating in the study. The reason for this is to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating female African American higher education chief executives will be conducted in the same manner.

INFORMED CONSENT (required for Dissertation Research)

Please let me remind you that your participation is completely voluntary and will greatly strengthen the study. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or would like to end the interview or not respond to a question, please let me know. Your information will be kept confidential, and your name will be changed to protect your identity. After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

I have provided a copy of the questions and list of self-sabotaging behaviors for the nine categories of sabotaging behavior defined in my research that I will ask for your reference; however, I may have follow-up questions if clarity is needed. The duration of this interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Do you have any questions about the interview process

PROTOCOL QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your career journey that brought you to the role you currently serve in today?

2. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **THINKING TOO SMALL**
a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

3. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **FEAR AND WORRYING**
a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

4. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **MISUNDERSTANDING ONE'S SELF**
a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

5. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISHONESTY**
a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

6. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **HOLDING BACK**

- **a.** Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
- **b.** Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

7. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION**
    a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
    b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
8. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **ISOLATING**
    . Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
    a. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

9. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**
    a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
    b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

10. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **INFUSING SEX/GENDER CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?

b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any of these self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

11. The top five sabotaging behaviors that the survey respondents identified as exhibiting throughout their careers were (1) (2) (3), (4) and (5). Of these five behaviors which two do you feel have the most impact on females attempting to promote within their careers?

12. Can you speak to your perception of how critical it is for women to overcome these behaviors as they relate to career development and promotions?

13. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding women and self-sabotaging behaviors?

"Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings."

Appendix E

Qualitative Instrument Alignment Table

Research Question	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10	Question 11	Question 12	Question 13
What self-sabotaging behaviors have female African American higher education chief executives experienced throughout their leadership careers?		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female African American higher education chief executives?		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
What strategies did female African American higher education chief executives use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	

Appendix F

Survey Field Participation Feedback Tool

As a doctoral student at University of Massachusetts Global, I appreciate your feedback to help develop the most effective survey instrument possible.

Please respond to the following questions after completing the survey. Your answers will assist in refining survey items and making edits to improve the survey prior to administering it to potential study participants.

A hard copy version of the survey has been provided to refresh your memory of the instrument, if needed. Thank you very much for your assistance. Your participation is greatly appreciated!

1. How many minutes did it take you to complete the survey, from the moment you opened it on the computer until the time you completed it?

2. Did the section that asked you to read the consent information and click the agree box before the survey opened concern you at all? If so, would you briefly state your concern

3. The first paragraph of the introduction included the purpose of the research study. Did this provide enough clarity as to the purpose of the study?

4. Was the introduction brief and clear enough to inform you about the research? If not, what would you recommend that would make it better?

5. Were the directions to Part 1 clear, and did you understood what to do? If not, would you briefly state the problem.

6. Were the brief descriptions of the 6 choices clear, and did they provide sufficient differences for you to make a selection? If not, briefly describe the problem.

7. As you progressed through the 10 items in which you gave a rating of 1 through 6, did any items cause you say, *"What does this mean?"* Which item(s) were they? Please use the paper copy and mark those that troubled you. Or if not, please check here:_______

Appendix G

Field Test Interviewee Feedback Tool

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe your experiences with self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact, and strategies used to overcome the barriers?

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

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

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

5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview?

Appendix H

Interview Observer Feedback Tool

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?

2. Were the questions clear or were there places when the interviewee was unclear?

3. Where there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing?

4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regard to the preceding descriptors?

5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regard to the preceding descriptors?

6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?

7. Are there parts of the interview that seemed to be awkward and why do you think that was the case?

8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would it be and how would you change it?

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

Appendix I

CITI Course

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 25-May-2020
Expiration Date N/A
Record ID 36753348

This is to certify that:

La Toya Davis

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

Human Subjects Research (Curriculum Group)
Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Brandman University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?we0f263da-d427-4f73-8348-056fa3aa9635-36753348

Appendix J

IRB Application Approval

IRB Application Approved: La Toya T. Davis Inbox ×

Institutional Review Board <my@umassglobal.edu> Feb 4, 2022, 10:58 AM
to me, ddevore, ryder, irb

Dear La Toya T. Davis,

Congratulations! Your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the UMass Global Institutional Review Board. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If you need to modify your IRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at IRB.umassglobal.edu

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank You,

IRB
Academic Affairs
UMass Global
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
irb@umassglobal.edu
www.umassglobal.edu

Appendix K

Email to Research Study Participants

Dear Potential Participant:

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by La Toya Davis, a doctoral candidate at UMASS Global. The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are welcome to choose not to participate. If you do decide you participate, you may withdraw at any time.

The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. Survey questions will pertain to your perceptions of identified self-sabotaging behaviors that you may have experienced throughout your career and the impact they may have had on your career development.

Please review the following information:

I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowable by law. If the study design of the use of data is to be changed, I will be so informed, and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect me confidentially by keeping the identity codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the principal researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, University of Massachusetts Global at 16355 Laguna Canyon Rd. Irvine, C 92618 (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact La Toya Davis at ldavis11@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (323) 490-8350; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Chair at ryder@umassglobal.edu.

Sincerely,

La Toya Davis

Doctoral Candidate

Appendix L

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION ABOUT: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors of female African American higher education chief executives and strategies used to overcome them

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: La Toya Davis, Doctoral Candidate

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE ELECTRONIC SURVEY:

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in an explanatory mixed method research study by La Toya Davis, a doctoral student from the School of Education at University of Massachusetts Global. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Prior to deciding on whether to participate, carefully read the information below and ask questions about anything that you may not understand. The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female African American higher education chief executives and to explore the impact these behaviors had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify the strategies employed by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. This study will explore how self-sabotaging behaviors affect the professional growth of female African American higher education chief executives. The data collected from surveying and interviewing female African American higher education leaders is envisioned to increase the field of understanding of the impact of self-sabotage on the careers of female African American women in higher education leadership. Findings gathered from the research are anticipated to be used to describe self-sabotaging

behaviors and identify strategies used by female African American higher education chief executives to overcome self-sabotage.

By participating in this study, I agree to participate in an electronic survey using Google Forms. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. In addition, I agree to participate in an individual interview as a follow-up to the electronic survey. The interview will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will be conducted by La Toya Davis via Zoom or telephone. Completion of the electronic survey and individual interviews will take place February 2022-March 2022.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher and on a password protected device.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted, and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study, all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study is that my input may help add to the research regarding self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies used by gay men to overcome self-sabotage. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will

provide new insights about the gay men in educational leadership, self-sabotage, and strategies used to overcome self-sabotage. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If I have any questions or concerns about the research, I am encouraged to contact La Toya Davis at ldavis11@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (323) 490-8350; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Chair, at ryder@umassglobal.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide not to participate in the study, and I can withdraw my participation at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. I also understand that the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed, and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, University of Massachusetts Global, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.
Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that you have read this informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate. If you don't wish to participate, you may decline by clicking "Disagree."

- **AGREE: I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.**

- **DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this study.**

Appendix M

Bill of Rights

UMASS GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

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

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

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