

**EXAMINING THE WORLD OF SUBCULTURAL EXISTENCE: A
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES AND VALUES**

A Dissertation

by

CHANDRA D. STEPHENS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2005

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

© 2005

CHANDRA D.STEPHENS

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**EXAMINING THE WORLD OF SUBCULTURAL EXISTENCE: A
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES AND VALUES**

A Dissertation

by

CHANDRA D. STEPHENS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved by:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Chair of Committee, | Kenneth E. Paprock |
| Committee Members, | Walter F. Stenning |
| | LaVerne Young-Hawkins |
| | Toby Egan |
| Head of Department, | Jim Scheurich |

December 2005

Major Subject: Educational Human Resource Development

ABSTRACT

Examining the World of Subcultural Existence: A Descriptive Analysis of African American Management Experiences and Values. (December 2005)

Chandra D. Stephens, B.F.A., University of Georgia;

M.S., University of Houston, Clear Lake

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Kenneth E. Paprock

As today's global businesses acknowledge the criticality of being competitive in international markets, this new awakening also compels these businesses to not just understand the diverse cultures across which they manage and operate, but to also recognize the impact of their own cultural grounding within their business contexts. However, there is comparatively less attention given to the subcultural aspects of business culture. Acknowledging a gap in research examining attitudes of subcultures in a single nation to particular management approaches, Peppas conducted a comparative study in 2002 between the subcultures of African Americans and Euro Americans regarding 18 values statements framed around the managerial functions. This study builds upon that quantitative research addressing specifically the management values of the African American subculture. However, while this study is similarly framed around some values examined in Peppas' research, the purpose of this study was to explore the African American subcultural experiences in practice through qualitative inquiry, presenting the informants' emic views to understand uniqueness or commonalities of their management values (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors).

The methodology utilized a purposive sample of 10 African American managers across technology, financial services, oil and gas, healthcare, and banking industries. This basic qualitative, exploratory study employed semi-structured interviews framed around some of the management values examined in the Peppas study in 2002.

The data specifically revealed insight regarding aspects of management values of planning, evaluating, innovating; organizing and controlling; recruiting, selecting, rewarding; leadership; communication; and relationships between work and social life. The findings in this study mainly corroborate the findings of related values in the Peppas study of 2002. However, interpretation of the informants' behavioral experiences sometimes contrasted to their expressed beliefs. Emergent themes reveal a consistency in the belief of these African American managers that they are observed more closely than other non-minority managers and that they are challenged and tested by others particularly because *they* must prove their worthiness. Also, entrenched educational values proved common across all informants' experiences.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the Creator, my Lord God All Mighty who provided the path and brought me through this journey. I had no idea of your awesomeness and I am still learning.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Rema McElhaney, who has been my role model from the very beginning – hardworking, committed, dependable, compassionate, and loving. My cheerleader and my rock, I cannot ever do enough in my life to repay you, but I acknowledge you for all that is good in me. Thank you, Mother.

Additionally, I dedicate this dissertation to my brother and sister-in-law, Robert and Vickie Stephens. No acknowledgement in the world is as special as the admiration and confidence of family. Thank you for yours, for never doubting my capabilities, and in fact, expecting that I would indeed succeed.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my loving aunts: Dorothy Nichols, who helped to lay the spiritual foundation that has been so critical in my life; Goldie McGuire, who always thinks of me and expresses her love for me, no matter how far the distance; Loretta Barnes, who has proven to me that it is never too late for family to be family; and Mildred Collins, my angel of an aunt who always had kind words of love and encouragement – I miss you. Also, to my grandparents – Genie Collins for her loving and gentle nurturing in my formative years and Napoleon McElhaney and Lula Williams, the loving and caring “safety nets” who were always there for Mom and us kids. I’ll never forget the kindness and significance of each of you in my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey could not have been made without the giving and unselfish guidance of my committee members: Dr. Kenneth Paprock, Dr. Walter Stenning, Dr. Toby Egan, and Dr. La Verne Young-Hawkins. You have encouraged me, given of your time, and even opened your homes to me. Your commitment and dedication to developing other scholars is unwavering and commendable. I am truly blessed to have had each of you in my life. Also, Dr. Carolyn Clark, I thank you for exposing me to the significance of qualitative inquiry, the appreciation of its richness, and helping me to understand the worthiness of the full comprehensive human experience.

A special thanks to my leaders and mentors who have also been instrumental in the success of this scholarly quest: Jeff Gill, who first provided the avenue for me to pursue this dream and has cheered me all the way; Weldon Mire who has always encouraged me to “finish it” and provided the opportunity for me to do so, demonstrating a committed belief in lifelong learning and development to its fullest; Dr. Sandra Quesada, my lifelong mentor, role model, and friend who has been there for me throughout the years since I was just “the kid”; and my other friends and mentors who also have believed in me throughout my career: Dr. Liz Thach and Dr. William Clover; Joanne Kincer and Michele Mastrean, my gratitude to you both for supporting this effort and exhibiting a commitment to continued growth and development of people.

A huge thanks to my traveling cohorts, Bert Jennings and Johnny O’Connor. We kept each other inspired during those long drives through the pastures and country

sides, day and night to “do this.” As I cross the finish line, I reach my hand out to pull you along. Let’s do this!

Also, a special thanks to the rest of my family and friends who have had to endure my pains with me but still encouraged me to “stay the course” and my colleagues who helped to identify key resources and participants for this study, you are fantastic! Thank you. To my team at the office, thank you for holding down the fort. I’m so proud of you all. My friends and colleagues who helped to sustain me these last few years as I struggled to balance life, career, and school, Jody Patterson and Carla Jacinto-Loe, you have truly been blessings in my life.

An extra special thanks to Dr. Veronica Parker, who has been a dear friend and awesome resource. Your support, encouragement, and guidance have been invaluable. Surely God placed you in my life to help me through this experience. My cohort, Dr. Kim Garner, the first of our little family to finish, who always found time to reach back and pull me along. Thank you, my friend. Also, Judy Martin and Jennifer Krall, you are not here to see me complete this part of my journey, but your support and encouragement will always be felt. I miss you both. Marilyn Oliva, thank you for your service excellence in documentation and editorial support.

Final thanks to those wonderful managers and executives in this study who gave of their time unselfishly, a million thank you’s. I have made a sincere effort to make your voices truly heard.

As a message to the next generation of my family: never take for granted the inherent talents and culture that enrich your lives, the opportunities made possible by your ancestors, your innate intelligence, and spiritual discernment endowed by God. Dare to acquire knowledge to the fullest extent that your mind can obtain. Let education be your sustenance and your armor. Robert Stephens, Jr., Victor Stephens, Matthew Moses, Michelle Faal, and Erica Davis, I pass the torch to you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| ABSTRACT | iii |
| DEDICATION | v |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | vi |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | ix |
| LIST OF TABLES | xi |
| LIST OF FIGURES..... | xii |
| CHAPTER | |
| I INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Background | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem | 4 |
| Purpose of the Study | 8 |
| Research Questions | 8 |
| Operational Definitions | 9 |
| Methodology | 10 |
| Significance of the Study | 12 |
| Organization of the Study | 13 |
| Summary of the Study..... | 13 |
| II REVIEW OF LITERATURE | 15 |
| Cultural Relevance of Management Values | 15 |
| Critiques of National Culture Framework..... | 16 |
| Deficiency of Subcultural Research in Organizational Studies | 17 |
| Examining Management Values from the Subcultural Perspective | 21 |
| Paradigms of Existing Studies..... | 25 |
| Current Examinations of Cultural Values in Business Context | 28 |
| Summary of Review of Literature..... | 34 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

| CHAPTER | Page |
|---------|--|
| III | METHODOLOGY 35 |
| | Assumptions 36 |
| | Limitations 36 |
| | Sample 37 |
| | Instrument 37 |
| | Data Collection 39 |
| | Data Analysis 42 |
| | Summary of Methodology 44 |
| IV | FINDINGS 45 |
| | Introduction 45 |
| | Design of the Findings 46 |
| | Researcher's Stance 46 |
| | Informants' Profiles 49 |
| | Data Analysis 64 |
| | Emergent Themes 128 |
| | Summary of Findings 140 |
| V | SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 141 |
| | Summary 141 |
| | Purpose 141 |
| | Sample 142 |
| | Analysis of the Data 142 |
| | Results of the Study 142 |
| | Conclusions 146 |
| | Contribution to Literature 148 |
| | Recommendations for Future Studies 149 |
| | REFERENCES 151 |
| | APPENDIX A 157 |
| | APPENDIX B 164 |
| | APPENDIX C 166 |
| | APPENDIX D 169 |
| | VITA 173 |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE | | Page |
|-------|---|------|
| 1 | Demographics of Sample Group | 50 |
| 2 | African American Management Value Preferences Found in the Peppas Study and Relevant to This Study | 121 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURE | | Page |
|--------|--|------|
| 1 | Scope and Foundation of Values Studies Upon Which This Study Was Built | 7 |
| 2 | Values Filter of African American Managers | 147 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

In recent years, major businesses around the world have been awakening to the reality that in order to be and remain competitive, these businesses can no longer rely on their performance in the domestic markets of their home countries. Stiffer competition in the home country by foreign competitors is compelling many businesses to expand their presence into international markets (Rodrigues, 1998). This new reality brings with it the necessity for these businesses to “understand how enterprises are managed across diverse cultures; they must be aware that because of cultural differences, the managerial style that works in one society often does not work well in others” (p. 29). In such instances of examining cultural differences, much consideration has been given to national culture, the highest level in which culture can be presented (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). For example, Hofstede’s research concentrates on the impact of national culture upon values (Hofstede, 1997) within a business context. Consequently, his research has also led to more in-depth studies that focused specifically on the impact of national culture upon management values (Laurent, 1983). Laurent’s (1983) research reveals significant differences in management values among certain national cultures of which he asserts, “national culture seems to act as a strong determinant of managerial ideology” (p. 77).

The style for this dissertation follows that of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

As earlier research has extensively examined national cultural differences, comparatively less attention has been given to other subcultural (Nkomo, 1992; Peppas, 2001) aspects of existence within the business context. Subculture is perhaps characterized by Hofstede's (1997) explanation that culture may be subdivided into layers to which everyone belongs: "national level, regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or linguistic affiliation level, gender level, generation level, social class level, and organizational or corporate level" (p. 10). Other researchers also acknowledge that there is a void of research that focuses on subcultural aspects of business and organizations (Nkomo, 1992). For instance, Nkomo (1992) views a lack of research at the subcultural level of race as an exclusion of race in theory development and methodological orientation. Additionally, Nkomo (1992) submits that when race has been addressed in the study of organizations, it is "incomplete and inadequate" (p. 489).

As perspectives of dominant groups are reflected in organizational research, conversely Peppas (2001) sees subcultural identity as a growing dimension within the United States (U.S.) society as a whole. Commenting on the way in which young people identify themselves in the U.S., Peppas states "while Americans share much in common, this subcultural identification suggests that these individuals also share value sets specific to their subcultures" (p. 59).

As previously mentioned, Rodrigues (1998) expresses the criticality that businesses today must "understand how enterprises are managed across diverse cultures" (p. 29). While Laurent's (1983) research reveals that national culture seems to

strongly influence managerial ideology, what impact do other subcultures have upon managerial ideology? Gaining an in-depth understanding of subcultural management values across cultures may prove limited, as Peppas (2002) states: “there is little empirical data on the attitudes of specific subcultures in the U.S. toward management values” (p. 45). Additionally, Peppas (2001) suggests that while some subcultural research data regarding values do exist, information of cultural values pertaining to the African American subculture is *particularly* lacking.

Recognizing that much of existing research concentrates on management values from international and cross-national perspectives, and furthermore that there is little evidence associating the attitudes of subcultures in a single nation to particular management approaches, Peppas’ research is a comparative study between the subcultures of African Americans and Euro Americans regarding 18 values statements framed around the managerial functions of “planning, staffing, leading, organizing, and controlling” (p. 46). Peppas (2002) captured data that measure cross-cultural management values using an instrument designed by Renick and Rhinesmith. The purpose of Peppas’ study was to “determine if African- and Euro Americans have significantly different attitudes with regard to management values” (p. 45).

The results of Peppas’ Management Values Assessment (Peppas, 2002) reveals similar leanings of both African Americans and Euro Americans toward various management values. For example, within the category of *Planning, Evaluation, and Innovation*, both groups lean toward the value of considering future benefit over past tradition, while both groups also value wisdom over energy showing more favor

toward older personnel because they perceive them to be more knowledgeable. Likewise, in the category of *Recruiting, Selecting, and Rewarding*, both groups show a higher favorability toward achievement rather than affiliation or ascription, exhibiting stronger value placed upon accomplishment versus personal association (family or social). Just as interesting, the strongest values in the category of *Communication* selected by both groups are two-way and direct communications versus one-way and indirect communications. These values express the belief that within an organization, communication should flow both ways (between management and subordinates), also that individuals should own and present their own views. As these analyses represent only a portion of the assessment results, Peppas (2002) concludes that there are no significant differences between the two groups (African Americans and Euro Americans) in how they relate to the 18 management values. In fact, more similarities are found instead.

Statement of the Problem

Peppas (2002) attempts to examine management values of both African American and Euro American subcultures by conducting the study using a positivistic framework yielding no significant difference in the management values between the two subcultures. Moreover, many of existing cross-cultural studies regarding values are conducted within the positivistic paradigm (Abraham, 1998; Grahn, Swenson, & O'Leary, 2001; Hofstede, 2001; Mellahi, 2001; Nicholson & Stepina, 1998; Peppas, 2002).

Conversely, other researchers challenge the notion that the positivistic paradigm can adequately examine the constructs of culture and values (Hofstede, 2001; McGuire, O'Donnell, Garavan, Saha, & Murphy, 2002). Furthermore, some researchers also argue that the instruments themselves used to conduct these quantitative studies are possibly biased by dominant cultural value (Hofstede, 1997; Nkomo, 1992) yielding inaccurate results. Hofstede (1984) demonstrates this concept by defining values in two dimensions – the desired and desirable. He warns that values of the desired and desirable are not the same, cautioning researchers against “positivistic fallacy” in determining values (Hofstede, 1984). Hofstede (1984) explains that what one *desires* may sometimes be reflected in their deeds, while what one deems *desirable* may be reflected in how they may respond verbally to questionnaires, interviews. etc. While Hofstede (1984) identifies the desired as a closer resemblance to one's values, deeds and behavior may sometimes reflect what one deems desirable. Bravette (1996) illustrates this point in “Reflections on a Black Woman's Management Learning,” describing how her deeds or behavior may not have reflected her true value, but rather what she deemed desirable/necessary:

The recognition of dubious personal and professional survival strategies naively taken on in order to gain acceptance into the “culture of power” came back to taunt me. I was later to recognize some of these as being: personal identification with what were the “valued” attributes of the dominant culture into which I had become acculturated. (p. 5)

Additionally, in accordance to theories that culture influences practice and research, McGuire et al. (2002) argue that “culture influences may affect not only a

professional's implicit concept of what constitutes effective practice, but may also affect a researcher's explicit theories" (p. 25).

Further challenges to understanding values in positivistic terms are expressed by Grubbs (2000) who questions the ability of positivism to produce fact from such intangible constructs such as value while disregarding its obligation to produce meaning. "Alongside phenomenological [*sic*] researchers, critical theorists also reject the dominance of positivism as a research paradigm in the area of culture" (McGuire et al., 2002, p. 27). Furthermore, Hofstede (2001) sheds light on the limitations of instruments designed to measure human values: "inspection of a number of instruments designed to measure human values make it clear that the universe of all human values is not defined, and that each author has made his or her own subjective selection from this unknown universe, with little consensus among authors" (p. 7). Instead, Hofstede (2001) offers that instruments such as questionnaires may be used to "measure constructs such as beliefs, attitudes, and personality to *infer* values" (p. 7).

If, indeed, the positivistic paradigm itself influences instrument design as well as how informants respond to inquiry of the instrument, how informative are quantitative studies conducted at the subcultural level? Collectively, the previously mentioned views uphold the presumption that there is a void of qualitative studies conducted in the subcultural arena of management values. While Peppas' (2002) study measures management values within the African American subculture, would participant responses reflect similarly or differently when subcultural management

values are expressed through in-depth discussion and emic perspectives versus the use of more definitive, decisive instruments and metrics?

The model below (Figure 1) illustrates the premise upon which this study is built. It is a modification of a prior model introduced by Paprock (1983) demonstrating how research evolves and progresses around related problem areas. As Hofstede (1984) laid theoretical foundations for examining cultural values at the cross-national level, other researchers spring-boarded from Hofstede's studies to examine management values, but still at a cross-national level (Laurent, 1983). However, Peppas (2002) dares to examine management values to the depths of the subcultural (African American and Euro American) level, yet contained intra-nationally. If we were to examine practical experiences of the African American management subculture, what might we learn about management values of the African American subculture through qualitative inquiry versus the quantitative approach taken by Peppas?

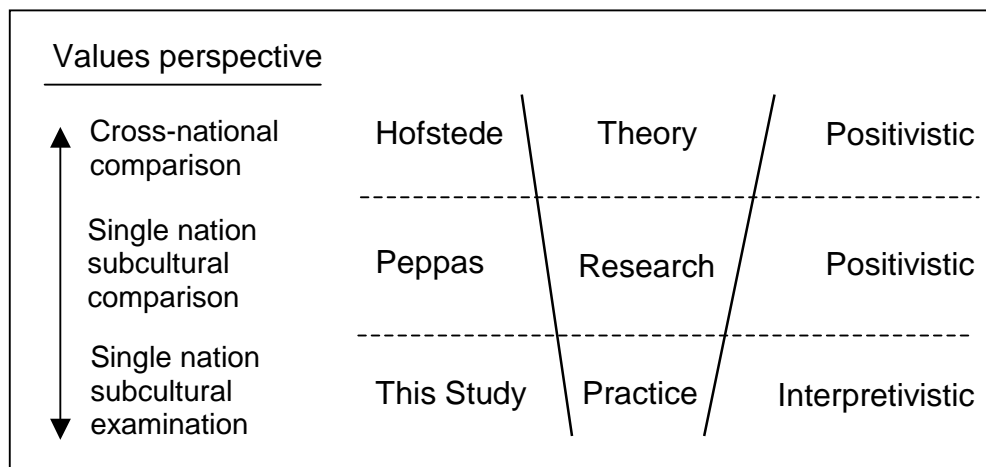


Figure 1. Scope and Foundation of Values Studies Upon Which This Study Was Built.

Purpose of the Study

This study builds upon existing quantitative research (Peppas, 2002) regarding management values of the African American subculture. However, while this study is similarly framed around some management values examined in Peppas' (2002) research, the purpose of this study was to: (a) explore the African American subcultural experiences in practice through qualitative inquiry, (b) describe the experiences of African American managers through their emic views in order to elucidate management experiences from their subcultural perspectives, and (c) examine the management experiences of the African American subculture in an effort to understand uniqueness or commonalities of their management values (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors) and how these values are expressed through practice.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How are values expressed through these African American managers?
2. What management approaches do these African Americans managers say they use?
3. How does subcultural identification affect management approaches of these African American managers, particularly across cultures?
4. How do the management values of the African American managers impact their work experiences within their organizations?
5. How closely aligned are the African American responses in the Peppas study to the experiences reflected by the sample group in this study?

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study:

African American refers to “United States residents and citizens who have an African biological and cultural heritage and identity. This term is used synonymously and interchangeably with Black and Black American” (Banks & Banks, 1997, p. 433). For the sake of this study, the term African American also entails being born, raised, and educated in the United States.

Cross-Cultural refers to perspectives “across diverse cultures” (Rodrigues, 1998, p. 29).

Culture refers to shared values, beliefs, practices, attitudes, and characteristics of a human group that influence the group’s response to its surrounding environments (Hofstede, 2001).

Ethnicity refers to “our cultural and historical heritage” (Banks & Banks, 1997, p. 175).

Management Values refer to those values relating to management functions such as planning/evaluation, organizing/controlling, recruiting/selecting/rewarding, leadership, communication, interpersonal relations, relationships between work and social life, problem solving, decision-making, negotiating, and managing conflict (Peppas, 2002, p. 46).

Multicultural refers to the “gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society” (Banks & Banks, 1997, p. 435).

Subculture refers to “subgroupings of people possessing characteristic traits that set them apart and distinguish them from the others. These subcultures may be

described in group classification by age, class, gender, race, or some other entity that distinguishes this micro- from the macroculture” (Harris & Moran, 1999, p. 12). For the purpose of this study, the main subculture of focus was African American (reflecting Black race).

Values refer to that which is of preference. More precisely, Hofstede (1984) defines values as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (p. 18). For the purpose of this study, I distinguished values in two dimensions: *desired* – what one actually desires and *desirable* – what one thinks should be desired (Hofstede, 1984).

Methodology

Many of the previous cultural studies have expressed their findings in quantitative measures and some researchers are concerned that meaning is lost in those findings (McGuire et al., 2002). The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of subcultural management experiences through qualitative inquiry, yielding rich descriptive data and meaningful findings. This methodology takes into account “that human action and experience are context dependent and can only be understood within their context” (Mishler, 1979, p. 13). Therefore, this basic qualitative, exploratory study employed semi-structured face-to-face one-hour interviews as the major method of collecting data. Semi-structured interviews conducted utilized an interview guide structured around an existing framework of management values assessment tool utilized by Peppas (2002) and originated by Renwick and Rhinesmith. Some of the

open-ended exploratory questions in this interview guide were framed around the following values (Peppas, 2002):

- Planning/Evaluation
- Organizing/Controlling
- Recruiting/Selecting/Rewarding
- Leadership
- Communication
- Interpersonal Relations
- Relationships Between Work and Social Life
- Problem Solving
- Decision-Making
- Negotiating
- Managing Conflict

Sample

In this purposive sample, a total of 10 managers were selected: 5 African American males and 5 African American females from mid to large corporations (3,000 employees or more) representing various industries including software technology, financial services, oil and gas, healthcare, and banking industries. An even number of males and females was selected to eliminate gender bias. These managers each had five years or more experience managing diverse multi-cultural teams, groups, or organizations.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study contribute to closing a void existing in the examination of organizations that traditionally tend to explain organizational theories through predominantly Eurocentric perspectives (Nkomo, 1992). By exploring the subcultural existence and management values of African American managers through their personal narratives, we are allowed a glimpse of how these males and females leverage various approaches to management and strategies for their successful co-existence and practices. In particular, findings from this study provide insight to the knowledge area of organization development, bringing to light some implications of the African American subcultural membership upon the management experience. Consequently, a call to re-examine management theory through various subcultural lenses has surfaced challenging the assumption that management theory is universal.

Nkomo (1992) states:

Researchers who ignore the influence of race in understanding organizations may reflect a veiled hope that, indeed, management theories and constructs are universal. Once there is acceptance of the idea that the major theories and concepts of the field of management do not address all groups, the holding of and search for universal theories is undermined. (p. 490)

New insight from this study may also be useful in studies of how management values are manifested in other subcultures, possibly contributing to the shaping of new management theory.

Organization of the Study

This chapter (I) provides an overview of the study including the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, key research questions, the methodology and significance of the study. Chapter II provides a review of related literature that examines subcultural values relevant to business, but also reveals a deficiency of research focused on subcultural management values in those prior studies. Also in this chapter, prior research approaches and paradigms are discussed and critiqued. Chapter III specifies the sample group, methodology, instruments, and procedures leveraged in the study and how the data were analyzed to draw meaning from the findings. Chapter IV presents the data findings and emerging themes that arose from those findings are analyzed. Chapter V summarizes and concludes the study with recommendations for future studies. Appendices of relevant tools and documents as well as references follow Chapter V.

Summary of the Study

In summary, today's global businesses must understand how to manage across diverse culture. With this, it is imperative that these businesses are aware of differences of managerial styles across societies (Rodrigues, 1998). A pioneering study that examined national culture and values (Hofstede, 1997) has served as foundational research upon which other studies have evolved examining subcultural management values (Peppas, 2002). Although many of the previous related studies have been conducted within the positivistic paradigm (Abraham, 1998; Grahn et al. 2001; Hofstede, 2001; Mellahi, 2001; Nicholson & Stepina, 1998; Peppas, 2002), other

researchers challenge that the interpretivistic paradigm is better suited for the study of culture and values (McGuire et al. 2002). Likewise, this study examines subcultural management values within the constructs of the interpretivistic paradigm.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cultural Relevance of Management Values

As today's global businesses acknowledge the criticality of being competitive in international markets, this new awakening also compels these businesses to not just understand the diverse cultures across which they manage and operate (Rodrigues, 1998), but to also recognize the impact of their own cultural grounding within their business context. The new reality brings with it the necessity for these businesses to "understand how enterprises are managed across diverse cultures, the managerial style that works in one society often does not work well in others" (p. 29). In such instances of examining business culture, attention has been given to national culture, the highest level in which culture can be presented (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Focus on culture at the national level is often accredited to Hofstede, considered by many to be the leading researcher of business culture, for conducting a classic body of research later published as *Culture's Consequences* (Hofstede, 1984). In analyzing values data from the research survey, Hofstede inadvertently uncovered what he believed to be the "dimensions of national culture" (Hofstede, 1997).

Hofstede (1997) determined that varying countries had common problems but distinct ways to resolve them; these problem areas he termed as dimensions of culture, "an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (p. 14). Specifically, Hofstede distinguished national cultural differences by how they coped with the four common problem areas as power distance (addressing human inequality),

collectivism versus individualism (individual and primary group relations), femininity versus masculinity (emotional roles of male and female), and uncertainty avoidance (dealing with the unknown) (Hofstede, 2001).

Hofstede's research has led to more in-depth studies that focused specifically on the impact of national culture upon "management values" (Laurent, 1983). Consequently, Laurent's (1983) research revealed significant differences in management values among certain national cultures of which he asserts, "national culture seems to act as a strong determinant of managerial ideology" (p. 77).

Critiques of National Culture Framework

Although Hofstede's findings and framework for examining national culture have been widely referenced in consequential studies (Peterson & Smith, 1997; Van De Vliert & Van Yperen, 1996), Hofstede's determinants of national culture have also come under increasing scrutiny and critique as flaws of his research methodology have been revealed (McSweeney, 2002a).

Hofstede initially determined his findings primarily from a major set of data derived from an exclusive population of IBM employees. The select IBM sample alone was enough for others to take notice, particularly when the findings were used to make generalization on a national scale. This issue has been recognized from two perspectives: (a) the atypical makeup of the sample relative to country populations and (b) the disparate and miniscule sample sizes across many of the countries surveyed in the two phases of the study (Korman, 1985; McSweeney, 2002a).

Although Hofstede (1984, 1997, 2001) contends that his study has yielded a framework for measuring national culture, some challenge the premises upon which Hofstede determined dimensions of national culture, those premises being the existence of national uniformity, the condition of homogeneity of the population, and that culture can be measured within a positivistic or functionalistic paradigm.

McSweeney (2002a) challenges that for Hofstede to even begin to generalize from the narrowly defined study sample previously described, Hofstede must presume that there is national uniformity: “Only by presupposing national uniformity (of culture or whatever else) may a general conclusion be based on local sites of analysis” (p. 99). If this presupposition is true, then what of countries that have been merged into other countries such as Hong Kong and China, also nation states such as Moslem Sikhs and Hindus of India (Korman, 1985; McSweeney, 2002a)? Additionally, Yoo and Donthu (2002) call attention to fact that the study pooled most Arabic and African countries in three regions instead of analyzing them individually.

Deficiency of Subcultural Research in Organizational Studies

As critics call attention to the inadequacies of examining business culture at the national level, what might businesses inadvertently be ignoring in their attempt to “understand how enterprises are managed across diverse cultures” (Rodrigues, 1998)? In contrast to the focus of national culture addressed in the Hofstede research, Peppas (2002) asserts that business, among other entities, has shifted its focus “to managing diversity, specifically intra-national diversity, to help their organizations compete domestically and internationally” (p. 45). This implies that business is also examined at

subcultural levels within a given country. As earlier research has extensively examined national cultural differences, comparatively less attention has been given to other subcultural (Nkomo, 1992; Peppas, 2001) aspects of existence within the business context. Subculture is perhaps characterized by Hofstede's (1997) explanation that culture may be subdivided into layers to which everyone belongs: "national level, regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or linguistic affiliation level, gender level, generation level, social class level, and organizational or corporate level" (p. 10).

Other researchers also acknowledge a void of studies focused upon subcultures within business and organizations (Nkomo, 1992). For instance, Nkomo (1992) views a lack of research at the subcultural level of race as an exclusion of race in theory development and methodological orientation. Additionally, Nkomo (1992) submits that when race has been addressed in the study of organizations, it is "incomplete and inadequate" (p. 489). Nkomo (1992) states: "it demonstrates how our approaches to the study of race reflect particular historical and social meaning of race, specifically a racial ideology embedded in an Eurocentric view of the world" (p. 489).

Nkomo (1992) provides a rationale for the limited study of the subculture of race in organizations, "the silencing of the importance of race in organizations is mostly subterfuge because of the overwhelming role of race and ethnicity in every aspect of society" (p. 488). Organizational research has consequently diluted racial distinction into the prevailing essence of dominant group or mainstream society. Nkomo (1992) states, "not only are dominant group members the defining group, but they are taken to the highest category...Other racial and ethnic groups are relegated to

subcategories; their experiences are seen as outside of the mainstream of developing knowledge of organizations” (p. 489). McSweeney (2002a) illustrates this very thought by pointing to the absurdity of Hofstede’s study that references the IBM population as representative of the national population while the attributes of the IBM sample group were selectively recruited from the middleclass, white-shirted young men, internationally trained and technologically advanced.

As perspectives of dominant groups are reflected in organizational research, conversely Peppas (2001) sees subcultural identity as a growing dimension within U.S. society as a whole. Commenting on the way in which young people identify themselves in the U.S., Peppas states: “while Americans share much in common, this subcultural identification suggests that these individuals also share value sets specific to their subcultures” (p. 59). Moreover, subcultures are preserved and lauded in U.S. society through principles that advocate diversity: “the U.S. is today viewed as a multicultural society where cultural diversity is not only accepted but also celebrated and where distinct subcultures exist and function within the value system of society as a whole” (Peppas, 2001, p. 59).

Furthermore, Cox and Nkomo (1990) explain how the subculture of ethnicity defines identity within organizational research, “an ethnic group is one that shares a common cultural tradition and sense of identity” (p. 429). Cox and Nkomo (1990) proceed to acknowledge that organizational research journals have traditionally associated identity with a physical (racial) reference. This is problematic to organizations as Brickson (2000) states: “Observable forms of diversity, particularly

race and gender, are especially prone to negative outcomes since they often elicit stereotypes, prejudice, and negative affect” (p. 82). While diversity has long been a focus area of practice and research, the focus area of identity theory has yet to be fully developed. Brickson asserts: “What we lack is a strong theoretical framework – in particular one that elucidates identification processes in organizations” (p. 82).

Brickson (2000) proceeds to explain: “Although many approaches to understanding the impact of diversity on organizational life have emerged, theorists generally agree that identification processes play a central role in the dynamics that unfold in diverse organizations” (p. 82).

Additionally, in concern for overlooking key dimensions of subculturally relevant knowledge, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) warn of the critical importance of cultural relativity to research effectiveness:

Indeed, the theory of cultural relativity has at times threatened to override all conceptions of universals and has thus become, when taken too literally, almost as restrictive as to an understanding of human behavior as the naïve forms of evolutionism or economic determinism. But in spite of the necessary reservations about some of the extreme statements on cultural relativity, no one who concerns himself with the study of either individuals or societies can deny its tremendous significance. (p. 1)

Further theories imply that values may be examined at a more intimate level (subcultural) than at a broader societal level. For instance, Hofstede (1984) argues that while the study of culture enables us to compare societies, he identifies *values* as also a way to compare individuals. This point suggests the ability to apply values as a comparison metric far below national and cross-national levels – perhaps applied to the subcultural level. Yet, Hofstede (1984) defines values as “a broad tendency to prefer

certain states of affairs over others” (p. 18). The term “broad” in this instance reflects that values are defined in generalities, likely mirroring that of dominant group characteristics. However, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), reinforcing the importance of cultural relativity, explain how classifying values orientation (rank-ordered principles) may accommodate both broad commonalities and stratification of differences. This is illustrated through these three assumptions:

1. There is a limited number of common human problems for which all peoples at all times must find some solutions.
2. While there is variability in solutions of all the problems, it is neither limitless nor random but is definitely variable within a range of possible solutions.
3. All alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times but are differentially preferred. (p. 10)

Examining Management Values From the Subcultural Perspective

While Laurent’s (1983) research reveals that national culture seems to strongly influence managerial ideology, what impact do other subcultures have upon managerial ideology? Gaining an in-depth understanding of subcultural management values across cultures may prove limited, as Peppas (2002) states: “there is little empirical data on the attitudes of specific subcultures in the U.S. toward management values” (p. 45). Additionally, Peppas (2001) suggests that while some subcultural research data regarding values do exist, information of cultural values pertaining to the African American subculture is *particularly* lacking.

There are two possible explanations for the scarcity of subcultural (African American) data in organizational research: (a) a growing trend toward less research

addressing race in organization over recent years (Cox & Nkomo, 1990) and (b) as recently as the period between 1977-1982, African Americans had just begun to make significant strides in gaining managerial roles (Jones, 1986).

Of existing subcultural research, much of it focuses on “job-related values” (time, satisfaction, intrinsic and extrinsic reward) and not specifically “management values.” For instance, Hill, Block, and Buggie (2000) examined the value of time in the workplace and determined that “culture may differentially influence beliefs about physical time and personal time” (p. 443). Relative to that determination, Gavin and Ewen (1974) suggest that time may also be linked to job satisfaction, “Correlations between satisfaction with job and company and punctuality were significantly higher for Blacks than Whites, suggesting that Blacks are more likely to use tardiness as a method of expressing job dissatisfaction” (p. 463).

Regarding reward, Martin and Tuch (1993) explain proclivity of Blacks toward extrinsic values, “regardless of sociodemographic attributes and independent of the influences of family background, objective class, and incumbency, Blacks continue to be about twice as likely as Whites to value extrinsically rewarding employment, and half as likely to value non-material intrinsic attributes of jobs” (p. 898). Shapiro (1977) also finds that Blacks are more inclined to hold extrinsic values regarding job reward than Whites: “even after education, occupation, and income are controlled” (p. 27). More importantly, these and other studies that compare Black and White satisfaction levels (Jones, James, Bruni, & Sells, 1977) warn that behind the comparisons data, may be underlying factors relevant to the subculture possibly impacting the data such as

availability of employment, career options, discriminatory practices, etc. Conversely, Brenner and Tomkiewicz (1982) find that differences between Black and White intrinsic and extrinsic values collectively are not as notable or pronounced as are other job-related values.

Recognizing that much of existing research concentrates on management values from international and cross-national perspectives and, furthermore, that there is little evidence associating the attitudes of subcultures in a single nation to particular management approaches, Peppas (2002) conducted a comparative study between the subcultures of African Americans and Euro Americans regarding 18 values statements framed around the managerial functions of “planning, staffing, leading, organizing, and controlling” (p. 46). The following are the demographics of the Peppas (2002) study:

There were 50 males and 60 females in this study....Of the 50 males, 15 were African-American and 35 were Euro-American. Of the 60 females, 29 were African-American and 31 were Euro-American. This yielded a total of 44 African-American respondents and 66 Euro-American respondents. Ages ranged from 22-51 with males ranging in age from 24-51 and females from 22-48....Of the total sample, approximately 67% were between the ages of 25 and 32. Of the males, African-Americans ranged from 25 to 48 and Euro-Americans from 24 to 51. Of the females, African-Americans ranged from 24 to 48 and Euro-Americans from 22 to 48. (p. 51)

The data were captured using an instrument designed by Renick and Rhinesmith that measures cross-cultural management values (Peppas, 2002). The purpose of Peppas’ study was to “determine if African and Euro Americans have significantly different attitudes with regard to management values” (p. 45). ANOVA was used to test for these differences measuring “attitudes toward specific approaches to managing” (p. 51).

The results of Peppas' (2002) management values assessment reveal similar leanings of both African Americans and Euro Americans toward various values. For example, within the category of *Planning, Evaluation, Innovation*, both groups believed in planning and evaluating in concrete and quantifiable terms. Also, in the category of *Organizing, Controlling*, both groups indicate individual growth within an organization as critical to job satisfaction. They also believe in the decentralization of authority and responsibility. Likewise, in the category of *Recruiting, Selecting, Rewarding*, both groups show a higher favorability toward achievement rather than affiliation or ascription exhibiting stronger value placed upon accomplishment versus personal associations (family or social).

Additionally, in the category of *Leadership*, both groups believe that people are self-directed in achieving goals and do not necessarily need the threat of punishment in order to reach objectives. Just as interesting, the strongest values selected by both groups are two-way and direct communications versus one-way and indirect communications in the category of *Communications*. These values express the belief that within an organization, communication should flow both ways (between management and subordinates), also that individuals should own and present his/her own views.

Moreover, in the category of *Relationships Between Work and Social Life*, both groups see the necessity to separate work and social life as a measure to guard against conflicts of interests. As these analyses represent only a portion of the assessment results, Peppas (2002) concludes that there are no significant differences between the

two groups (African Americans and Euro Americans) in how they relate to the 18 management values. In fact, more similarities are found instead.

Paradigms of Existing Studies

Peppas (2002) attempts to examine management values of both African American and Euro American subcultures by conducting the study using a positivistic framework yielding no significant difference in the values between the two subcultures. Moreover, many of existing cross-cultural studies regarding values are also conducted within the positivistic paradigm (Abraham, 1998; Grahn et al., 2001; Hofstede, 2001; Mellahi, 2001; Nicholson & Stepina, 1998; Peppas, 2002).

Conversely, other researchers challenge the notion that the positivistic paradigm can adequately examine the constructs of culture and values (Hofstede, 2001; McGuire et al., 2002). Furthermore, some researchers also argue that the instruments themselves used to conduct these quantitative studies are possibly biased by dominant cultural value (Hofstede, 1997; Nkomo, 1992) yielding inaccurate results. Likewise, Hofstede (1984) warns that bias or ethnocentrism, “exaggerated tendency to think the characteristics of one’s own group or race superior to those of other groups or races” (p. 25), already exists in the development of instruments designed to collect research data. Hofstede (1984) describes how ethnocentrism may be exemplified simply by administering a questionnaire, designed for a U.S. test population, to participants in other countries. Moreover, Hofstede (1984) demonstrates this concept by defining values in two dimensions – the desired and desirable. He warns that values of the desired and desirable are not the same, cautioning researchers against “positivistic

fallacy” in determining values (Hofstede, 1984). Hofstede (1984) explains that what one *desires* may sometimes be reflected in their deeds, while what one deems *desirable* may be reflected in how they may respond verbally to questionnaires, interviews, etc. Hofstede (1984) explains that while the desired closer resembles one’s values, deeds and behavior may also sometimes reflect what one deems desirable. Bravette (1996) illustrates this point in “Reflections on a Black Woman’s Management Learning,” describing how her deeds or behavior may not reflect her true value, but rather what she deemed desirable/necessary:

The recognition of dubious personal and professional survival strategies naively taken on in order to gain acceptance into the “culture of power” came back to taunt me. I was later to recognize some of these as being: personal identification with what were the “valued” attributes of the dominant culture into which I had become acculturated. (p. 5)

Additionally, in accordance with theories that culture influences practice and research, McGuire et al. (2002) argue that “culture influences may affect not only a professional’s implicit concept of what constitutes effective practice, but may also affect a researcher’s explicit theories” (p. 25).

Positivistic constructs also prompt critiques of whether Hofstede’s framework has been developed within the wrong paradigm. “Reducing culture to numbers has its perils. Mathematics is a language. Each culture also has a language. They do not necessarily correspond” (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1997, p. 151). Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1997) contend:

Hofstede’s paradigm is still in the thrall of Newtonian science and celestial mechanics. He [Hofstede] is searching for the least number of dimensions or factors that will account for the most observed differences. It is this one-

dimensional thinking in which his factor somehow ‘causes’ or ‘underlies’ our cultural categories and concepts, which we do not accept. (p. 158)

Moreover, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1997) express that the statistics used so dominantly in Hofstede’s culture study are not useful in the predominant fashion in which they have been leveraged, “We do not think these [statistics] are so useful to culture, although it is useful to see how cultural elements cluster” (p. 152). Others would insist that what Hofstede found through logic and statistical data analysis is questionable as empirical findings (Korman, 1985; McSweeney, 2000a, 2000b; Portwood, 1982; Silvers, 1986).

Although Hofstede (2001) acknowledges the intangibility of culture, “CULTURE DOESN’T EXIST. In the same way values don’t exist, dimensions don’t exist. They are constructs, which have to prove their usefulness by their ability to explain and predict behavior” (p. 1359), still he claims validation of country differences based upon his research data. Again, other researchers argue that validation of complex and intangible constructs such as culture is an inappropriate metric of evaluation and that plausibility and credibility are more appropriate (Williamson, 2002). This implies that the interpretivistic paradigm is better suited for the study of culture and values.

Further challenges to understanding values in positivistic terms are expressed by Grubbs (2000) who questions the ability of positivism to produce fact from such intangible constructs such as value while disregarding its obligation to produce meaning. “Alongside phenomenological [*sic*] researchers, critical theorists also reject the dominance of positivism as a research paradigm in the area of culture” (McGuire et

al., 2002, p. 27). Even Hofstede (2001) sheds light on the limitations of instruments designed to measure human values:

Inspection of a number of instruments designed to measure human values make it clear that the universe of all human values is not defined, and that each author has made his or her own subjective selection from this unknown universe, with little consensus among authors. (p. 7)

Instead, Hofstede (2001) offers that instruments such as questionnaires may be used to “measure constructs such as beliefs, attitudes, and personality to *infer* values” (p. 7).

If indeed the positivistic paradigm itself influences instrument design as well as how informants respond to inquiry of the instrument, how informative are quantitative studies conducted at the subcultural level? Collectively, the previously mentioned views uphold the presumption that there is a void of qualitative studies conducted in the subcultural arena of management values. While Peppas’ (2002) study measures management values within the African American subculture, would participant responses reflect similarly or differently when those subcultural values are expressed through in-depth discussion and emic perspectives versus the use of more definitive, decisive instruments and metrics? What might we learn about management values of the African American subculture through qualitative inquiry?

Current Examinations of Cultural Values in Business Context

As mentioned earlier, businesses can no longer rely on their performance in the domestic markets of their home countries. Stiffer competition in the home country by foreign competitors is compelling many businesses to expand their presence into international markets (Rodrigues, 1998). This new reality brings with it the necessity for these businesses to “understand how enterprises are managed across diverse

cultures; they must be aware that because of cultural differences, the managerial style that works in one society often does not work well in others” (p. 29). Inherent to these conditions is the criticality of recognizing that people may be “valued” differently in different cultural settings. Jackson (2002) defines this as the “locus of human value” (p. 457). He further explains how this is of particular importance for Western-oriented (home-based) businesses, “There is a growing interest in the relationship between indigenous and Western cultures in the practice and development of management and organization internationally” (Jackson, 2002, p. 458). Jackson (2002) illustrates the problem with Western businesses imposing their management values upon their internationally based branches:

There is a problem if companies operating abroad are unable to break out of this paradigm. The problem arises when managers educated in the Western tradition try to implement Western human resource practices in cultures that have a different locus of human value. That is, the value placed on people in different cultures may be different to that in the home country. (p. 458)

Jackson (2002) contrasts the differences in locus of human value of Western and non-Western organizations in two dimensions: (a) instrumental and (b) humanistic. He defines instrumentalism of Western culture as “seeing people as a means to an end” and aligned to individualism, while conversely defining humanism of non-Western culture as “seeing people as an end in themselves” (Jackson, 2002, p. 457) and aligned to collectivism.

For global businesses, the consequences of imposing instrumentalist values in a humanistic setting may become evident by unanticipated performance delivery of various parts of their global organizations, “Incompatibilities are likely to be revealed

through a lack of motivation and alienation of employees leading to low productivity and labor strife” (Jackson, 2002, p. 458). Furthermore, he warns, “Blindly introducing Western HRM practices that reflect an instrumental view of people may not only be ineffective; this may also be an affront to the humanity of people outside a Western tradition” (Jackson, 2002, p. 471).

Jackson (2002) also clarifies that while countries that are newly emerging as industrial nations, such as Korea, are adopting Westernized management systems, those practices and values only penetrate the management level of the organization, not necessarily the worker level:

It is the management systems that are borrowed and adapted. The cultural orientations of those being managed may not substantially change. Hence, it is the managers from emerging and transitional economies who are trained and influenced by Western traditions, rather than workers who staff the enterprises. (p. 471)

Thus, in order for Western-based global organizations to succeed, Jackson (2002) sees a critical need for a shift in business approaches to managing abroad: “As a result, companies operating overseas must re-assess their HRM policies and practices and modify or change their practices accordingly; better still to try to break out of the cultural assumptions implicit within Western HRM” (p. 459).

While Jackson (2002) discusses values differences within global businesses, Thornbury (2003) conversely cites common values as a crucial thread to organizational alignment and compelling culture:

Values are key in providing cohesion. If people are confident that their colleagues across the globe, or in other divisions or departments, are operating on the same basic principles as themselves, it makes for a much more harmonious and effective working relationship. (p. 69)

Thornbury (2003) also acknowledges that people apply more intrinsic values in determining their preference of employment:

The difficulty in attracting and retaining talented staff is also a business issue which drives many organizations to look at culture: it has long been recognized that generations of employees seek not only adequate rewards, but also meaning and inspiration in their work. Where businesses differentiate themselves to the outside world through their brands, they differentiate themselves to current and prospective employees through their values. To attract and motivate talented people, a strong culture is vital. (p. 69)

This has implications for a transformation of how people are managed in the workplace, “as organizations grow and diversify, and centralized control is no longer effective as a means of management, values are key in creating alignment and empowering people throughout the organization” (Thornbury, 2003, p. 69). Similarly, Adeyemi-Bello (2003) finds a correlation between the value of control and performance. He employs the phrase “locus of control” to define how control is leveraged within the organization:

Locus of control is the extent to which individuals attribute the events in their lives to actions or forces beyond their control. When they believe that they have very little control over what happens to them, they are considered to have external locus of control. On the other hand, individuals with internal locus of control believe that they are responsible for what happens to them. (Adeyemi-Bello, 2003, p. 287)

He determines that internal locus of control, in part, brings forth higher organizational performance (Adeyemi-Bello, 2003).

While Thornbury (2003) recognizes that values statements are commonly used to espouse company values, he expresses that these statements are sometimes disingenuous in their existence when they fall short of actually being practiced, “There is a tendency to develop values statements which are politically correct and all-

embracing, in preference to identifying and stating the true beliefs and aspirations of the organization” (p. 70). In regards to integrating desired values in the workplace, the implications for management are made clear: “To deal successfully with the challenge of culture change, a leader should have integrity: in other words, he or she should be honest and prepared to put their words into action” (Thornbury, 2003, p. 78). This also implies that leaders choose companies whose values align with their own and be prepared to “practice what they preach” as Thornbury (2003) states: “Unless leaders ensure that the values are instilled in the organization and uphold them in their own behavior, any intent to strengthen or improve the culture is doomed” (p. 77).

Indeed as organizations are realizing that values must be demonstrative rather than merely rhetorical, Dolan and Garcia (2002) propose leadership tools that leverage values also derive employee commitment. They state that the three purposes of such a tool, referred to as MBV (management by values), are: “to simplify, to guide, and to secure commitment” (Dolan & Garcia, 2002, p. 103). Dolan and Garcia (2002) explain the compelling reason for the emergence of MBV:

Commensurate with the increasing need to absorb an ever-greater degree of complexity and uncertainty in business organizations, the traditional approach of MBI [management by instruction] at the beginning of the twentieth century gave way to MBO [management by objectives] from the 1960s up to the present time; now a new approach is beginning to take shape that may be termed MBV. (p. 103)

Dolan and Garcia (2002) express that unlike MBI, MBV transforms leaders from the traditional controlling role to a role that empowers professionalism through facilitation. This is consistent with the theory of internal locus of control espoused by Adeyemi-Bello (2003).

The studies mentioned above examine the criticality of understanding distinct values existing across global business organizations as well as the potential power of common values threaded throughout organizations. These are relatively simplified perspectives from which to examine values compared to multidimensional facets of examining values through the ethnic subcultural lens. Friday, Moss, and Friday (2004) echo this very premise by explaining the inconsistencies of study results examining job satisfaction across ethnic groups possibly being attributed to broad metrics for measuring job satisfaction globally that do not accommodate the multifaceted dimensions of ethnicity. Friday et al. (2004) discuss the tendency for these studies to examine ethnicity racioethnically, which has traditionally been defined by what is physically observable. However, Friday et al. explain that this approach ignores a very important dimension of racioethnicity – its sociocultural dimension, the non-observable. This dimension exemplifies the complex nature of measuring values of a single ethnic group solely based upon physical racial affiliation, as Friday et al. state, “the possibility that an individual may identify with cultures other than the physioethnic group to which he/she belongs, without ‘losing’ identity with that original group” (p. 154). Consequently, flexibility of cultural identity seems to have direct implications upon job satisfaction as found by Friday et al. (2004):

When members of the majority-in-context (Hispanics in this case) are more flexible and tolerant of other cultures because they identify with other cultures to some degree, they are less likely to develop problems with coworkers of those other cultures. More importantly, these results demonstrate that flexibility, in the form of multicultural identification, results in smoother and more satisfying relationships with coworkers for the majority, whether it be the mainstream majority (such as Whites in the USA) or the majority-in-context (Hispanics in the present work setting). (p. 164)

Portions of the review of literature regarding African American management experiences are purposefully deferred until after the completion of the data-gathering process. This is done for two reasons: (a) to prevent unconscious tainting of the interview questioning and (b) to objectively compare findings of this study to the findings in those related literature. Citations of the deferred readings are found in Chapter V.

Summary of Review of Literature

The body of research discussed in this literature review represents a comprehensive coverage of cultural/cross-cultural values topics. The review begins with a broad scope of examining national cultural values, then proceeds to narrow the focus to a subcultural values perspective only to unearth the issue that there is a notable void of research attention given to subcultural existence within the business organization. The literature examines some existing but limited studies probing subcultural *values* and management values. This has led to the discovery that *management values*, as applied to the subculture of race, have been barely tapped and is indeed an area in need of closer examination. The literature also recognizes that much of the existing studies have been conducted within the *positivistic paradigm*, which also creates a demand for interpretation and understanding experiences in conjunction with the statistical explanations. Thus, based on the literature reviewed, qualitative research regarding subcultural management experiences and values is conducted.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Many of the previous cultural studies express their findings in quantitative measures, and some researchers are concerned that meaning is lost in those findings (McGuire et al., 2002). The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of subcultural management experiences through qualitative inquiry, yielding rich descriptive data and meaningful findings. This methodology took into account “that human action and experience are context dependent and can only be understood within their context” (Mishler, 1979). Therefore, this basic qualitative study examined the management values of African American managers based upon their experiences in profit-making companies in the U.S.

It should be noted that portions of the review of literature regarding African American management experiences were purposefully deferred until after the data-gathering process was completed. This was done for two reasons: (a) to prevent unconscious tainting of the interview questioning and (b) to objectively compare findings of this study to the findings in those related literature. Citations of the deferred readings are found in Chapter V.

The methodology employed semi-structured face-to-face one-hour interviews as the major method of collecting data. Semi-structured interview was selected as a data collection method as some of the questions in the interview guide (Appendix A) were structured around an existing framework of management values assessment (Peppas, 2002). However, the researcher was not constrained by the wording or

sequence of the open-ended questions (Merriam, 2001), thereby averting the potential to diminish the exploratory aspect of the study. In combination, probing follow-up questions were used to allow for the worldview of the informant to emerge (Merriam, 2001). Responses to the probes prompted new and additional ideas and questions that were applied to follow-on interviews. As a result of this iterative approach, the interview guide evolved throughout the study.

Assumptions

The following are assumptions of this study:

1. Informants were honest and truthful in the sharing of experiences and feelings during the interviews.
2. Reality and truth were subject to the informants' perceptions.
3. Data collected were accurately interpreted and reflected the intent of the informants.
4. The management values framework in the Peppas (2002) study was a valid framework.

Limitations

The following are limitations of this study:

1. The researcher was a member of the subculture being studied.
2. Data collected in the study were limited to the current and past experiences of the sample group of this study.
3. The sample was taken from the same geographical region of the U.S.

Sample

In this purposive sample, a total of 10 managers were selected: 5 African American males, 5 African American females from mid to large corporations (3,000 employees or more) representing software technology, financial services, oil and gas, healthcare, and banking industries in a major city in the southwestern United States, home to 18 Fortune 500 companies. An even number of males and females was selected to eliminate gender bias. These managers each had at least five years' experience managing diverse multi-cultural teams, groups, or organizations.

Instrument

The interview guide contained open-ended exploratory questions, some of which were framed around these management values reflected in the Peppas (2002) study:

- Planning/Evaluation
- Organizing/Controlling
- Recruiting/Selecting/Rewarding
- Leadership
- Communication
- Interpersonal Relations
- Relationships Between Work and Social Life
- Problem Solving
- Decision-Making

- Managing Conflict

Peer Review

A peer review by an expert panel of four HRD professionals (Black and White, male and female) was conducted to determine content validity and clarity of the interview guide. Based upon feedback and input from the reviewers regarding clarity and relevance, some questions were revised or eliminated.

Test Pilot

Further testing of the interview guide was conducted through two test pilot interviews with testers (1 male, 1 female) satisfying the same sample criteria of the study. Three components of the interview were tested within the pilots: (a) the introduction script (Appendix B), (b) the consent form (Appendix C), and (c) the interview guide.

Introduction Script

The introduction script contained verbiage and introductory language providing an overview of the interview session. Informants were asked to provide feedback regarding comfort and clarity of the language. As a result, some language and key statements were revised.

Consent Form

Informants also asked for further explanation of some statements contained in the consent form. This enlightened the researcher of responses that may require additional research and preparation.

Interview Guide

More in-depth examination of the interview guide was conducted allowing the testers to respond to the questions as well as provide feedback regarding the complexity of the questions. They were also asked to make suggestions of how to re-state the questions. Notes were made of the questions requiring revision (simplification) or even elimination. This process was conducted on the first tester followed by further re-writes. The rewrites were then validated by the second tester. Including time for responses, discussion, and clarification of questions, each test pilot session lasted approximately two hours. Estimated response times were considered as the guide was being edited and refined to effectively accommodate the intended one-hour duration of the forthcoming interviews.

Data Collection

Requests were sent to selected corporate leaders in several corporations to identify managers meeting the sample criteria and willingness to participate. Communications were initiated with the identified managers to arrange interview appointments and also offsite (away from the workplace) meeting locations. The researcher elected to conduct the interviews offsite in order for the informants to feel unrestricted in sharing their thoughts and experiences. Given that these locations should have as minimum distracting activities as possible, the researcher first offered the informant to select the place of meeting. This was done for two reasons: (a) to enable the informant to be as comfortable as possible and (b) to gain an impression of the context in which the informant feels comfortable. If the informant had no

preference, the researcher scouted convenient locations that seemed to provide an adequate environment to conduct the study. Follow-up/confirmation of the interview appointments was sent to the informants prior to the scheduled date and time.

The most common public locations of comfort convenient to the informants' workplaces were eating facilities. So, most of the interviews were conducted in small restaurants during non-peak hours for minimally distracting sounds and visible motion. The most isolated areas of the facilities were chosen for the discussions and only once was there a necessity to actually move to another facility for less noise. Since these informants were all in upper-management levels, most had no problem meeting during work hours.

Prior to the start of each interview conducted in the eating facilities, the researcher allowed time for the informant to eat and get comfortable holding dialog. This time was also utilized for once again explaining the study and interview process and also providing any necessary clarity before signing the consent form.

As stated earlier, the informants were identified by corporate leaders across various industries. Therefore, the researcher had no prior relationship with any of the informants. Thus, a level of trust had to be established between the informant and the researcher. Consequently, each informant was treated with the utmost respect and acknowledged for the contribution of their valuable time. Additionally, he/she was assured that he/she did not have to answer any questions that felt uncomfortable. Also, he/she was informed that their identity would be kept confidential mainly by:

1. Being addressed as informant #1, #2, #3, etc., during the taping of the interview.
2. Being addressed by a pseudonym throughout the research document.
3. Securing his/her signed consent form in a protected place under lock and key.

The researcher attempted to build further trust by ensuring that there were no hidden agendas to exploit companies or businesses in which they worked. Therefore, informants were asked not to use the names of any of the businesses or people referenced within the content of the interview. It was stated that the interview was about his/her management experiences, not about the companies for which he/she worked. Furthermore, the researcher would remove from the research document any identifiable references that may have been inadvertently used during the interviews.

The interviews, lasting between 60 to 90 minutes, were recorded (audio) and later transcribed. Handwritten field notes were taken as backup and supplemental data, capturing additional notes from the researcher's observations. The field notes held descriptive data, recording observations such as the informant's reactions, verbal and non-verbal behavior, etc. (Merriam, 2001). Because the researcher possesses the same characteristics of the sample criteria (senior manager in corporate America), she had to be conscious of her own personal stance relevant to the research and attempted to build measures to guard against her own biases. Peshkin (1988) acknowledges that while subjectivity will not be eliminated, it may be managed:

The point is this: By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are

intertwined. I do not thereby exercise my subjectivity. I do, rather, enable myself to manage it – to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome – as I progress through collecting, analyzing, and writing up my data. (p. 20)

Therefore, the researcher also used the field notes to capture her own reactions in order to be aware of her own subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). This is particularly important so that the researcher presents the voices of the informants as clearly as possible. Peshkin (1988) states, “Untamed subjectivity mutes the emic voice” (p. 21). In order for the readers of this study to be aware of the lenses through which this research was conducted, the researcher has included in the findings key personal stances of which she became conscious as a result of her own reactions during portions of the interviews. Peshkin (1988) recognizes these points of reaction, “When I felt that my feelings were aroused, and, thus, that my subjectivity had been evoked” (p. 18).

Data Analysis

Researcher reviewed transcript data of each of the interviews that had been transcribed earlier by a professional service provider. The transcripts were reviewed for clarity by listening to the audiotapes and correcting or modifying transcript data based upon the researcher’s recollection and interpretation of the dialog. Informants were contacted by phone or email to clarify areas of vagueness or to provide missing data in their respective transcripts.

The researcher analyzed data derived from the study by employing the methodology of constant comparative described in the following steps:

- Familiarized self with content of the data by reading transcripts and also listening and comparing relevant audio content.

- Highlighted and identified significant statements or events that seemed “interesting, potentially relevant, or important to [the] study” (Merriam, 2001, p. 181) in the first set of data for informant #1.
- Coded and grouped the significant statements into categories and relevant subcategories determined to ultimately answer the research questions (Merriam, 2001). Coffey and Atkinson (1996) explain the importance of coding as “enabling us rigorously to review what our data is saying” (p. 26).
- Coded the second set of data for informant #2 by applying the same technique as #1. Then, compared the codings of both sets of data to determine emerging themes, “regularities or pattern” (Merriam, 2001, p. 181) in order to build a preliminary set of master codes for categorizing ensuing sets of data refining the framework throughout.
- Revisited the original purpose of the study, then graphically diagrammed the data emerging themes to validate their alignment to the research questions. This required constantly refocusing from detail to the big picture described by Lofland and Lofland (1995) as the drawback technique:

...keep drawing back in order to think about the total picture. Descend into detail, to be sure, but balance that descent with self-conscious efforts to perceive a general design, overall structure, or, as phrased above, a propositional answer to a question about a topic. (p. 203)

The significance of constructing a diagram is evident as explained by Lofland and Lofland (1995) “a succinct visual presentation of the relationships among parts of something” (p. 197).

- Constantly compared data to establish corroboration/contradiction and to recognize linkages, relationships, and patterns that would ultimately help to formulate meaning (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) and answer research questions.
- Once meaning was formulated, conducted member checks (Merriam, 2001) with the informants for review of plausibility, serving as further filtering of the researcher's subjectivity.
- Researcher's interpretation ability was tested by administering an interrater reliability activity to peers yielding an .85 reliability.

Summary of Methodology

In summary, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of subcultural management experiences through qualitative inquiry, yielding rich descriptive data and meaningful findings. This basic qualitative, exploratory study employed semi-structured face-to-face interviews as the major method of collecting data from a purposive sample group of a total of 10 managers (5 African American males and 5 African American females). These managers hold positions in mid to large U.S.-based corporations (3,000 employees or more) representing software technology, financial services, oil and gas, healthcare, and banking industries. Constant comparative was the major method of data analysis applied in this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to build upon existing quantitative research (Peppas, 2002) regarding management values of the African American subculture, thereby contributing to the knowledge of subcultural existence in the workplace. The goal of the research was to: (a) explore the African American subcultural experiences in practice through qualitative inquiry, (b) describe the experiences of African American managers through their emic views in order to elucidate management experiences from their subcultural perspectives, and (c) examine the management experiences of the African American subculture in an effort to understand uniqueness or commonalities of their management values (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors) and how these values are expressed through practice.

Review of relevant and related literature reveals a gap in the examination of subcultural management values and has led to the development and refinement of the following research questions:

- How are values expressed through these African American managers?
- What management approaches do these African Americans managers say they use?
- How does subcultural identification affect management approaches of these African American managers, particularly across cultures?

- How do the management values of the African American managers impact their work experiences within their organizations?
- How closely aligned are the African American responses in the Peppas study to the experiences reflected by the sample group in this study?

Design of the Findings

The study's findings are organized in this chapter by the following sections: (a) researcher's stance – shedding light upon the researcher's consciousness of self and effort to manage subjectivity; (b) informants' profiles – providing the contextual setting of their interviews, backgrounds of informants including inspirational influences in their lives, and educational and professional paths of their journeys; (c) data analysis – presenting key and related elements appearing to be common across the informants' experiences that lend insight to the study's questions; (d) emergent themes – revealing unanticipated findings not addressed in the study questions; and (e) summary of findings – briefly recapping the findings of the research.

Researcher's Stance

This section sheds light upon my own stance in order that readers of this study may have awareness of the lens through which the research was conducted. Because I possess the same attributes of the sample group (senior African American manager in corporate America), I must be conscious of my own personal stance relevant to the research and attempt to build measures to guard against my own biases. Peshkin (1988) acknowledges that while subjectivity will not be eliminated, it may be managed:

The point is this: By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are

intertwined. I do not thereby exercise my subjectivity. I do, rather, enable myself to manage it – to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome – as I progress through collecting, analyzing, and writing up my data. (p. 20)

Therefore, I also used the field notes to capture my own reactions in order to be aware of my own subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). This was particularly important so that the voices of the informants were presented as clearly as possible. Peshkin (1988) states: “Untamed subjectivity mutes the emic voice” (p. 21). So, this section highlights some of the researcher’s consciousness, reactions, and key personal stances captured in the field notes during portions of the interviews. Peskin (1988) recognizes these points of reaction: “when I felt that my feelings were aroused, and, thus, that my subjectivity had been evoked” (p. 18).

Peskin (1988) refers to the examination of one’s own subjectivity as “subjectivity I’s uncovered” (p. 18). The following perspectives capture the essence of the researcher’s subjectivity during the development of the study: (a) ethnic identity, (b) struggle to remain neutral yet empathetic, and (c) distancing self from subjective judgment.

Although I did not know any of the informants prior to conducting the interviews, I would be remiss not to acknowledge that I share the same *ethnic identity* as the research informants. Inherent to this fact is the recognition that my own ethnic identity could possibly have two key impacts to the study: (a) informants may be more open in choice of dialog and they may be more forthcoming in sharing their experiences and (b) inability to control my reactions based upon her own personal experiences could possibly and unintentionally influence informants’ responses. For

instance, one interview location chosen by an informant was a soul food restaurant. I found delight in the choice of locations because I felt comfortable in the environment and assumed that the informant would also, since the informant actually selected the site. The restaurant was an environment of “our people” eating “our food” and watching “our TV.” For sure this would be a location where neither I nor informant could possibly feel inhibited from holding candidly open dialog. I saw the opportunity to take in the “full Black experience.” However, at this moment, I realized that no matter how comfortable I was in this setting, I had to maintain a consciousness that ensured the informant that she could “go wherever the dialog would take her” and that the experiences shared would be treated sensitively and respectfully. Although comfort and rapport with the informant was built in a relaxed and casual setting, they had to be secured through the trustworthiness of my professionalism.

As previously mentioned, I share both ethnic identity as well as professional attributes of the study’s sample group. In many instances, I could strongly relate to experiences shared by the informants particularly around their development and induction into leadership roles. However, there was a constant *struggle to remain neutral yet empathetic* while processing the experiences of the informants. During interviews, I attempted to resist commentary and other forms of affirmation that extended beyond the role of a participative listener. While I tried to establish a rapport and sense of trust with the informants, I was guarded against being too “relaxed” and affirming the subjective experiences offered by the informants. For instance, one informant’s style of discussion often ended in a rhetorical “Am I right?” One may

surmise that this question was often posed because of the assumed sharing of like experiences. However, I reframed from affirming either way. Yet, the natural urge was there for me to respond in some definitive way.

The effort was made to *distance self from subjective judgment*. For example, while I could relate to the experiences of being a minority in a majority work setting, I consciously guarded against determining what were significant or pervasive experiences based upon my own encounters but rather relied upon those elements that revealed themselves repeatedly indicative of patterns shared by the informants.

Throughout the study, subjectivity was monitored in an effort to filter the my own “untamed subjectivity” (Peshkin, 1988). Realizing that it is impossible to eliminate subjectivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Peshkin, 1988) from the human investigative instrument, an effort to manage this subjectivity was made in order that the informants’ voices are truly heard.

Informants’ Profiles

This purposive sample group represented a total of 10 managers; 5 African Americans males and 5 African Americans females from mid to large corporations (3,000 employees or more) representing software technology, financial services, oil and gas, healthcare, and banking industries in a major city in the Southwestern U.S. home to 18 Fortune 500 companies. An even number of males and females was selected to eliminate gender bias. These managers each had at least five years’ experience managing diverse multi-cultural teams, groups, or organizations. Table 1 contains the demographic attributes of the study’s sample group.

Table 1. Demographics of Sample Group

| Pseudonym | Gender | Age | Education | Industry | Company Size | Group Size | Time in Management | Job Title |
|-------------------|--------|-----|----------------|---------------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Darren Washington | Male | 49 | Bachelor's | Financial Services | 92,000 | 200 | 12 years | VP Operations |
| Michael Rollins | Male | 53 | Bachelor's | Software Technology | 6,000 | 15 | 8 years | Sr. Technology Services Mgr. |
| Charles Mathis | Male | 55 | MBA | Oil & Gas | 84,000 | 1,000 | 20 years | Site Manager |
| Kayla Mitchell | Female | 38 | MBA | Financial Services | 92,000 | 12 | 8 years | HR Director |
| Tracey Collins | Female | 44 | Bachelor's | Software Technology | 6,000 | 18 | 6 years | Manager, Sales Oper. Spec. |
| Ray Williams | Male | 49 | Bachelor's | Oil & Gas | 36,000 | 34 | 14 years | Completions Manager |
| Valerie Dawson | Female | 40 | Bachelor's | Software Technology | 6,000 | 16 | 5 years | Manager |
| Leyla Nichols | Female | 38 | 3 yrs. college | Healthcare | 60,000 | 29 | 5 years | Manager |
| Rhonda Jackson | Female | 38 | MBA | Oil & Gas | 36,000 | 77 | 5 years | Operations Engin Sprv. |
| Darnell Jenkins | Male | 53 | Master's | Banking | 3,000 | 75 | 24 years | Sr. Deputy Controller |

The informants' ages range from 38 to 55 years of age. These informants collectively hold five bachelors' degrees, four masters' degrees, and one informant has completed three years of college. The informants work for companies ranging in size from 3,000 to 92,000 employees. These informants manage organizations ranging in size from 12 to 1,000 workers. The amount of time these informants have spent in management ranges from 5 to 24 years.

The following profiles provide insight to each of the 10 informants of this study. These profiles highlight the contextual setting of each interview, the informants'

life backgrounds, influences and inspirations, and the career paths that led them into management roles.

Darren Washington

I met Darren Washington in his spacious executive corner office. Tall, clean-cut, and wearing a business suit, Darren greeted me warmly and spoke as if we were already friends. Since I had determined that the interviews must take place on neutral grounds, Darren suggested that we take a walk over the company's campus to the cool spacious lobby of a nearby upscale hotel that had comfortable seating for conversation.

Darren was born 49 years ago and raised in Northern Indiana to a mother who worked in healthcare and a father who was a police officer. His parents were divorced during his late teens but instilled in Darren a strong work ethic very early in life. So, Darren chose to work his way through high school and college. While both parents inspired Darren to go to college, it was another relative, a cousin, whom he admired, that convinced Darren of the advantages of an advanced education. The first one in his family to go to college, Darren completed his bachelor's degree in finance and marketing.

During college, Darren's strong work ethic paid off when he was discovered by a customer he served while working at a restaurant. The customer was later revealed to be CEO of a company. He was impressed by Darren's work ethic and saw potential for Darren to excel professionally. The CEO enabled Darren to obtain his first interview in the banking industry. Thus began Darren's journey ultimately leading him to the financial services industry where he held various roles, such as commercial credit

analyst, investment analyst, senior investment analyst, until the key turning point of his career where he transitioned from being an individual contributor to managing over 300 people. Now, having served in a managerial capacity for over 12 years, Darren holds the executive position of Vice President of Operations for one of the top financial services organizations in the United States.

Michael Rollins

Michael Rollins had the day off from work. So, he and I agreed to meet at a place of convenience, after peak hours at a local fast food restaurant. Michael, above medium height and dressed in sport casual clothing, arrived at the restaurant the same time as I when we spotted each other in the parking lot and admired the other's sports cars. In a corner booth of the restaurant, Michael began to share with me that he was born and raised in West Palm Beach, Florida, 53 years ago to parents who were both educators (Dad – a principal, and Mom – a 5th teacher). Three of his five siblings also work in the school system. So, Michael naturally had strong educational inspiration from his family, particularly his father. While growing up, there were also others who Michael admired and who he later realized had influenced his life such as his uncle, a clergyman who was bilingual (which was rare at that time). His uncle taught Michael the importance of “getting along with people,” an important attribute that would later prove critical to Michael as a leader.

While completing his Bachelor of Computer Science, one of Michael's instructors, who had formerly worked in the computer industry, saw potential in Michael and referred him to someone “in the business.” Michael successfully

interviewed and began his career in one of the most successful computer companies in the world. Consequentially, he held roles in program support and technical sales at the computer company but later realized something: “I decided that, well, I enjoyed coaching and seeing people develop and move on; so I requested a job in management.” Michael secured this management position by completing a management training program at a local university. He has been in a management role for eight years and currently holds the position of Senior Technology Services manager in a well known software company where he manages 15 technical salespeople.

Charles Mathis

I traveled to a small city to meet Charles Mathis in a town known for the pervasive presence of oil refineries. Charles chose our meeting place, which was one of his favorite restaurants, however limited the choices were. We met at the restaurant only to find it full and decided to go to a different restaurant, which apparently Charles frequented as well. As we entered the building, Charles, this medium height gentleman wearing a comfortable business casual golf shirt appropriate for most businesses on a Friday, proceeded to explain that this restaurant was a favorite gathering place for some of the employees after work. The staff at this Mexican restaurant all greeted Charles warmly, and they exchanged friendly and jovial banter as we made our way to a corner table.

Charles was born in St. Louis, Missouri, 55 years ago and raised with his sister surrounded by the strong adult guidance of their parents and maternal grandparents. From both generations of parents, Charles received his foundational values for which

he credits accordingly: “From my grandfather, I learned to do what was right, regardless of the consequences. From my grandmother, I learned to have compassion. And from my mother, I learned to be tough.” Although neither his parents nor his grandparents went to college, Charles attributes his educational values and aspirations to the expectations they set: “My parents, my grandparents all said, you know, ‘You’re going to go to college, and you’re going to be successful.’” However, it was his grandparents who demonstrated the values they placed upon education. His grandmother served on the local school board, while both his grandmother and grandfather were instrumental in getting an elementary school built in their community. Inspired by the importance his family placed upon education, Charles proceeded to achieve a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering and a master’s in business. He has only spent 6 years in technical roles as an individual contributor in the petrochemical industry. The remaining 20 years of his career have been spent in supervisory and managerial roles where he now holds the position of site manager of a facility of 1,000 people in one of the world’s top oil and gas corporations.

Kayla Mitchell

Kayla Mitchell and I agreed to meet at a sandwich shop near her office after lunch rush hours. As I stood in the shop trying to determine which of the customers could possibly be her, this petite lady dressed in cool summer silks and linen spotted me as she came through the door and greeted me with a warm and friendly smile. We took a corner table next to the window of the shop.

Kayla, presently 38 years of age, grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is the youngest of 6 children with 18 years between herself and the oldest child. Although her father holds a master's degree and retired as an educational administrator after 45 years in the education system, it was her mother, a homemaker, who "pushed" her educationally. Kayla explained that one of her sisters is actually working on her Ph.D. and Kayla herself holds an MBA. Early in her life, Kayla recalls looking up to her oldest sibling who was already in college: "education was always a value and a foundation of ours. We definitely strive to have high academic standards."

Kayla started out on a finance career path, but quickly discovered that she had more of a passion for interacting with employees, training others. She even left the first company she worked for in order to pursue a new career path in HR. Within her present company, Kayla first held a consulting role engaging the HR organization, then transitioned into management leading a compensations and benefits team. She later managed an employee service center and ultimately became HR Director, with 12 direct reports. Collectively, Kayla has held management positions for eight years in a prominent financial services corporation.

Tracey Collins

Tracey Collins and I agreed to meet at a small café close to her office after lunch rush hours. I saw this medium height lady, dressed coolly to combat the 90 plus degree weather, come toward me with such a bright and warm smile, I almost felt that she wanted the interview more than I did. I was delighted to later discover that she was just a kind-spirited person who received joy from simply being able to help others.

As we took a table in the back corner of the café next to the window, Tracey began to share with me what was, of all the interviews conducted, the most unique source of academic inspiration. Now age 44, Tracey grew up in Houston, Texas, in what she described as “a poorer part of town” in a family of seven children raised by a single mother. Tracey cites the way that she grew up as being inspirational to her determination to achieve better than she’d witnessed as a child: “it was tough, but I learned a lot from my experiences of growing up the way I did. I knew it was not the way I wanted to live when I grew up.” Education was not a common topic in her household growing up, but it was her high school sweetheart, who later became her husband, who inspired Tracey and convinced her that she could complete her college education without abandoning the family who needed her at home. Tracey went on to complete a bachelor’s in accounting.

Tracey began her career in various accounting roles in an expense department and sales support, then finally reaching supervisory level. Over a period of time, Tracey found herself a casualty of layoff and took some time away from the workplace in order to find her passion. She found that passion working in the school system, but discovered that it did not pay well enough for her to stay. Tracey then worked in other venues, such as a call center and even a large school district, but found their cultures unsuitable. Finally, Tracey arrived at her present company where she led a recruitment effort to build the organization that she now manages. Tracey currently holds the position of Manager, Sales Operations Specialist, managing 18 people in a well-known software technology firm.

Ray Williams

I waited for the arrival of Ray Williams in a salad bar restaurant mid-afternoon. The restaurant was almost deserted, except for the cashier tending the register and a sole waitress refilling items in the bar, when I noticed a tall and rather imposing figure of a man walk into the restaurant. He immediately spotted me and began smiling and talking to me almost as soon as he began walking toward me. A very jovial and light-hearted individual, Ray had a spirit that seemed to embrace you and make you feel safe.

We sat in one of the many empty booths toward the back of the restaurant where Ray described his background. Born to parents who were sharecroppers 49 years ago, Ray grew up in South Louisiana in a family of 9 children. Although his father was never educated and his mother only completed 6th grade, they stressed the value of education to their children. This is reflected in the fact that all of the children graduated from high school and proceeded to become professionals and entrepreneurs, many achieving various levels of advanced education at bachelors' and masters' levels. What Ray remembers clearly about his parents' standards for education was that they set specific boundaries: "they thought it was important that we got an education; they would not accept failure. What they accepted was your best efforts. And for them, it was nothing lower than a B!" Ray cites great figures in Black history, such as Martin King, Malcolm X, Frederick Douglass, Gary Morgan, Ida B. Wells, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman, for being inspirational to him along with his family, "because I read about history, and of course I had my parents...I was very fortunate to have a whole

bunch of positive things around me. Essentially, I was set up for success.” Aspiring to become an engineer as his brother had done before him, Ray completed a bachelor’s degree in petroleum engineering.

Ray entered the engineering profession first through two service companies before proceeding on to the oil and gas industry, holding positions such as senior engineer, lead engineer, engineer and supervisor, production engineer supervisor, engineering director, and operations manager. Finally, Ray holds the position of Completions Manager leading and managing 34 employees in a major oil and gas corporation.

Valerie Dawson

Valerie Dawson agreed to an interview with me and selected the meeting place for our encounter. I arrived first at the soul food restaurant that she had selected and took a seat at a corner table, the farthest distance from a giant screen TV that was playing. Having given her a description of my seating location over the cell phone earlier, Valerie walked through the entrance and came directly to the table where I sat. Although she was out of the office for the day, Valerie was smartly and fashionably dressed with freshly coiffed hair and exquisite jewelry that she wore sparingly. After a warm and friendly greeting, she proceeded to the front of the restaurant to order her food. Obviously a frequent customer, Valerie and some of the restaurant staff members exchanged jokes and laughter during the transaction. She returned to the table where we began to talk.

Valerie was born and raised in Houston, Texas, 40 years ago, where she is one of four children. Both of her parents are college graduates and as a family tradition, all four children attended and graduated from the same university, comprised historically of a Black student body. Valerie credits her parents for inspiring her educationally: “education was not an option. And because they were both educated themselves...it was their influence for me to pursue greatness.” Although many had tried to discourage Valerie from attending a predominantly Black college institution, she held steadfast to her family’s traditions and values: “Don’t limit myself. Don’t feel like I have to go to a White university just to get a good job.” In fact, a recruiter for a large company once told Valerie: “we don’t go to top White universities looking for top Black students. We come to top Black universities looking for top Black students.” Valerie became a witness to that fact as she took advantage of numerous internships and co-ops, during her years in college, which gave her foundational preparation for the professional endeavors approaching.

From a strong educational springboard, Valerie propelled first into a government agency role requiring top secret clearance, she then worked for one of the larger telecommunications organizations. Afterwards, she entered the aerospace industry working for NASA in a programming analyst capacity. Still in search of the right fit, Valerie briefly taught high school computer science and eventually went to work in the oil and gas industry. Finally, Valerie arrived at her present company where her potential has been recognized. She has led as many as 16 people as a manager at a highly recognized software technology company.

Leyla Nichols

I took a trip downtown to meet Leyla Nichols at a trendy fashionably happening bar and grille that she had selected for our meeting. As I greeted Leyla, I was surprised at how young she was. This young lady was donning a sporty jean ensemble with fashionable accessories that one would expect to see on today's young pacesetters who carry the confidence of becoming tomorrow's leaders. Leyla was very accommodating and had an endearing way about her. When we realized that the restaurant was too noisy, Leyla took charge and coordinated with the staff for us to take a table on the patio eating section of the restaurant where we would have privacy. It was obvious that she had already established a personal rapport with the staff and they were more than happy to help.

Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, 38 years ago, Leyla is an only child. Her mother is deceased and she cares for her father whom she sees weekly. Leyla attended college until her junior year when she dropped out to go to work. She has continually made progress in the professional arena, but has felt insecure with the fact that she does not hold a degree as her colleagues do. In compensation for not having a degree, Leyla has proactively sought and gained as much professional development as she could absorb. Still, the stigma of being degreeless has inspired her to go back to school and fill that void. Additionally, two people are key inspirational to her resolve to complete her degree. Leyla attributes her determination to her mother: "she had a strong sense of doing anything she set her mind to do. She would follow through with it." Educationally, she admires her aunt who holds a doctorate degree: "she's very high in

the education field...just me seeing how she interacts with others, and how education – it just gives you a different air about yourself.”

Leyla still progressed professionally holding various positions in the healthcare industry including business analyst and a preparatory role for management leading teams of as many as 10 people at a time. In her most recent management role, Leyla managed a top-performing group of as many as 29 people in a branch of a prestigious healthcare company.

Rhonda Jackson

I met Rhonda Jackson at her home on a weekend, which was the most convenient place and time given her hectic schedule. I drove up to her upscale two-story home where she greeted me at the door comfortably dressed in a t-shirt and Nike sweats. With a friendly smile, Rhonda welcomed me into her home and escorted me upstairs to her home office as I noticed her small son peering through the bars of the balcony rails. She offered me something to drink and wanted assurance that I was comfortable in my chair. We settled into her office, fully furnished with cherry wood desk, bookshelves, credenza, and file cabinet, and also equipped with two computers. The office was accessorized with things I imagine are special to Rhonda, such as the brass dome clock and small oil rig replica carefully positioned on her shelves. I sat in the chair in front of her desk as she sat behind the desk. The seating was not intended to be formal, but it just happened to be the most comfortable arrangement given the limited space in the office.

Rhonda was born and raised in Houston, Texas, 38 years ago, the oldest of four children. Her father completed a full career at the post office and her mother, who had also worked for the post office, taught school as well. Although both parents attended college, her father did not complete his undergraduate degree, while Rhonda's mother completed both bachelor's and master's degrees. Rhonda acknowledges her mother for passing on to Rhonda her foundational values and emphasizing the criticality of education:

She kept going with four small children after a divorce. As well, she had her education to fall back on, which was something that was reinforced to myself and my siblings, as you can imagine, as something that's very important to make sure that you have something to fall back on should, you know, your initial plans not go through as planned.

These values extended beyond education and served to shape the very essence of how Rhonda lives her life. Educationally as well as personally, Rhonda's mother influenced her: "Aspirations for being married and then having kids and leading a life that, you know, adheres to traditional values." Rhonda went to college on a full scholarship and completed an engineering bachelor's degree and ultimately completed an MBA. She took advantage of every opportunity to participate in internships every summer preparing her for her professional career.

At the completion of her undergraduate program, Rhonda received 15 job offers across various industries. She chose to enter the oil and gas industry through the company she works for presently. Rhonda started her journey in a management development program, participated on the leadership team of her department as the only non-executive member, and began to take on other challenging roles that

propelled her forward such as operations engineering supervisor, executive assistant to the president of a key business group, improvement consultant, and currently business strategist for a highly successful oil and gas corporation. Over the course of her career, Rhonda has managed as many as 77 employees for her organization.

Darnell Jenkins

I agreed to meet Darnell Jenkins at a café in an upscale suburban community, a place that he believed to be peaceful and accommodating. Little did he realize that the café was being renovated and that we would eventually have to move to different location to complete our interview. A medium height gentleman with close cut hair and a sparkling smile, Darnell was conservatively dressed for casual Friday in a beige button down shirt and beige khakis. We met on a Friday morning in the parking lot of the café and eventually moved to the reading area of a local book store for our interview.

Born 53 years ago, Darnell grew up in a small town outside of Houston, Texas. As an only child in his family, Darnell spoke fondly of his mother, a primary school teacher with a master's degree and his father, who ran a very small retail store. His parents laid firm groundwork upon which Darnell has built his life:

They also insisted from the time that I can recall, that attendance at church was not an option either. And attendance was not just a part of it, but, you know, holistic participation. The full engagement in activities, including public speaking, and whether I liked it or not.

Thus, Darnell has applied these same values to his own family:

I am passionate about my service to God. I think that one has to be taught. I study and read my Bible. But I think one has to be fed. And when my children

were young, they had no flexibility to not attend church and attend Sunday School, and to attend children's activities at church...

His mother and aunt were both school teachers, and Darnell credits them for the value he places on education:

My mom was passionate about the – and unwavering, unbending in her focus on the value of an education as a critical part in the component of navigating a path that was different from what my great-grandparents, grandparents, or that she had followed.

He went on to say, “she was a voracious reader, and whether I wanted to read or not, it was something that was not an option in our home. And so from the time that I was about three years old, I read books.” Darnell responded to his parents' expectations by completing a bachelor's degree in banking and finance and a master's degree in banking.

Since entering the banking industry, Darnell has worked for the same organization for 31 years, which supervises the banking industry. For over 24 years, he has advanced through various management roles before earning a position on the executive committee of the organization leading 75 employees.

Data Analysis

This section contains key data that appear to be common or related across the informants' experiences and that possibly lend insight to the study's questions. Each question has a section organized in the following way: (a) the study question is stated, (b) a brief paragraph summarizes the pertinent findings addressing the study question, and (c) the actual responses of each informant relevant to the study question are expressed.

Research Question # 1

How are values expressed through these African American managers?

The informants' responses were interpreted and broken down as follows:

- 90% are products of homes where advanced education was either an expectation or at least inspired by a family member.
- 90% indicate that their sense of efficacy was instilled through family values.
- 10% express that their educational inspiration and sense of efficacy were received from outside the home.
- 100% express high work ethics as being critical to their success.

Prevalent attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of these managers reflect values that are rooted in their upbringing and are often mirrored in aspects of their management values and styles. A strong reverence for education is often stressed, inspired, and even expected by family and is commonly positioned at the foundational base of each informant's journey. Confidence, self-awareness, and solid work ethics instilled in them convince these informants of achieving higher education and professional success in leadership roles even as a minority in a majority setting.

Darren Washington

His parents were divorced during his late teens but instilled in Darren a strong work ethic very early. Pondering, he said, "I think one of the things that both of my parents taught me..." clinching his fist, "how maybe you can be anything you want to be."

Even before my parents split, they always told us, “Don’t let anybody stop you.” My dad worked two jobs to take care of us, and my mom worked as long as I can remember; and they always said things like, “We want you to have a better life than we did.” Which, a lot of parents say that kind of thing, but I really think my parents had a focus for that...for us to do better.

So, Darren chose to work his way through high school and college. While both parents inspired Darren to go to college, it was another relative, a cousin, who he admired, that convinced Darren of the benefits of an advanced education.

He had gone to college and had shared with me the importance of continuing education, and how education was – that education would make a difference for me. And he felt like, if I did that, I could go further. This was a guy I admired and trusted, and really was one of my early mentors.

Darren smiled when he revealed that he was the first one in his family to go to college, completing his bachelor’s degree in finance and marketing.

Believing that strong work ethic is critical, Darren soon discovered a key support that would also be instrumental to opening doors of opportunity – a mentor who recognized his potential. Darren’s story reads almost like a fairy tale.

It’s a really funny story, but when I was working part-time and going to college – I’ll never forget this. Between Christmas and New Year’s, 1977 and ’78, my job in this restaurant was to pour coffee and to mingle with the clients. And I was already an assistant manager at 19. And so at this restaurant, a CEO of a company – and I don’t know, can I use his name? Maybe I shouldn’t. Okay. He – anyway, the CEO of a pretty large company would come into this restaurant every day with his senior executive team. And I can remember the day before Christmas, 1977, he said to me, “Darren, have you ever done a resume?” I didn’t even know what a resume was. And I said, “Well, no, but I can do it.” And I said, “Why?” And he said, “I know somebody looking for someone like you.” And I thought, “Oh, boy, I’m going to get a job at a corporation.”

Darren continues:

And so I went home and told my mom and all my friends, Mr. X asked me about a resume. So he said, “Darren, in a couple weeks I’ll come back, and we’ll talk some more.” So he came back and said, “I’m on the Board of

Directors of a local bank, and their Chairman is looking for somebody like you. So, and they're going to have someone call you." So two weeks later their VP of – back then they called it Personnel, not HR – the VP of Personnel gives me a call. I go in for an interview.

He starts to laugh:

Now this is the hilarious story. I have an Afro out to here. I have a pink short sleeved shirt on. And this is in 1978, so I have a tie this wide, four inches wide, stack heel shoes, and polyester waistband slacks. And I go into the most conservative bank in northeastern Indiana for a job interview dressed like that.

Darren is laughing with embarrassment:

And I look back today, and I just think that's hilarious. So, the guy sits down with me. He talks to me for about 45 minutes and offers me a job on the spot. And says, "How would you like to start with us in a couple weeks making \$10,700 a year?" And I'm thinking, "I'm in college. I'm working part-time...sure." I was making about \$10,600. So I said, "Do you think you could give me \$10,800?" He said, "No problem." And that's how I got into financial services. And I'm still in there today. So I finished up school working at that bank.

Today Darren is an executive in the financial services industry but he has never forgotten the significance of his value for strong work ethic and the willingness of someone who saw his potential and offered to help him. Darren fast forwards to the present:

About three months ago, my wife and I were having dinner at a local restaurant. And the waitress was so outgoing, so interactive, so energetic. I saw something in her. Now I knew for a fact she had no degree. No business training. But her spirit she had fit that "it" quality managers look for and leaders look for. And so I asked her the question my friend asked me 25 years ago. "Have you ever done a resume?" The look she gave me told me she doesn't know what a resume is.

I began to see where Darren's story was leading.

And I wrote my e-mail address on a napkin and said, "Send me your resume in a week." And I thought, "This person will never write me." About three weeks later, she writes me an e-mail. And then I tell her who I am and all that. I give

her resume to my recruiter, and I say, “I found this girl in a restaurant. I believe, based on what I heard, that she would be a wonderful call rep.”

Darren beams proudly, “She came in for an interview. Our interview process is probably four or five steps, exhaustive. She passed with flying colors...interviewed well. And she works for me now and is doing well.”

Michael Rollins

Michael was born into a family of educators:

Both my parents were teachers. Their parents before them were teachers, and so I am from a line of teachers. My dad, I think, ended up as a principal when he retired. My mom decided to stay in the classroom and teach, I believe, fifth grade, if you can believe that. She taught fifth grade all her whole career. And my sisters, all three of them are teachers or in something to do with the school system.

Michael was inspired by his father and also a local African American doctor, “you know, they didn’t have very many Black doctors at that time.” But in particular his uncle made a big impression upon him:

My dad’s brother, was instrumental. Uncle Donald was very instrumental. One thing that always impressed me was his ability to get along with people. He was also in the clergy. He was bilingual, which was very odd at that time when I was growing up for a Black man to be bilingual.

Michael credits those individuals for his values of tenacity and strong work ethic, his “ability to not give up and give in when things get tough.”

They more or less inspired, instilled in me that things are going to get tough; and when they get tough, that’s when you have to work the hardest or you have to do the most. And so rather than get down on yourself when things get tough, that’s the time when you have to pick yourself up and be the most inspired, and do the most for yourself.

Having completed a Bachelor of Computer Science, Michael was willing to overcome any roadblocks that stood in the way of his achieving a management role.

I requested a job in management. At that time, one of my managers, that was going to give me the job, suggested I get the management training. As a result, I went to [the] University for a semester, an accelerated management class...for a complete semester. It was a condensed version of an MBA program. Upon completing that, and completing it successfully, he gave me a job as a manager.

Charles Mathis

Charles attributes his educational aspirations to his parents, and in particular, his grandparents.

My grandmother was on the local school board, which was a Black school district....My parents, my grandparents all said, you know, “You’re going to go to college, and you’re going to be successful.” Of course none of them had gone to college, but, you know, that wasn’t going to keep me from not going.

He recognized his gift early on, “I always excelled in math and science, which is why I went to engineering school.” This talent would ultimately lead Charles to complete a degree in chemical engineering and also an MBA. Charles proceeded to acknowledge his grandfather as his role model:

My grandfather is my role model. I try to model my life after my grandfather. And I’m very proud of my grandfather. I think my grandfather maybe finished sixth grade. He helped start the fire department in our community and was on the Fire Board for over 50 years. He and my grandmother helped get the elementary school built in our community, you know. If there is a hero in my life, it’s my grandfather. It’s not Winston Churchill. It’s not John Kennedy. It’s my grandfather.

Collectively, both generations of parents laid the foundational underpinning for Charles’ values in life: “From my grandfather, I learned to do what was right, regardless of the consequences. From my grandmother I learned to have compassion. And from my mother I learned to be tough.” Even in his leadership role, Charles relies on those values to serve as a beacon for his behavior: “you should be a leader that,

stands up for what you think is right. You should do what you think is right, you know, regardless of the consequences. So that's kind of what I have always tried to do."

Kayla Mitchell

Both of Kayla's parents were influential in her educational values – her father because of his actual educational accomplishments as an education administrator holding a master's degree, and her mother who had no degree. Ironically, Kayla recalls her mother being the most insistent of the parents, "because my Mom does not have a degree, I think [she felt] 'Because I don't...you have to.' So I think more of the push was from her, but my dad was more of...the framework, the role model." Kayla was also inspired by her oldest sister, who was already in college when Kayla was small. In her family, she recalls that education was expected, "It was just expected. It was something that...was the expectation. We would go to college and would do whatever you wanted to do...it wasn't a pressure. It was just, 'That's what we do.'" Those expectations led Kayla to complete an MBA.

Tracey Collins

Unlike the other informants who all have family members who served to inspire their educational aspirations, Tracey credits conditions of her childhood for ironically inspiring her to reach beyond "the norm." Growing up in a family of seven cared for by a single mother, Tracey explains:

It was tough, but I learned a lot from my experiences of growing up the way I did. I knew it was not the way I wanted to live when I grew up. So, that was what inspired me to go to school and try to do more than what I saw when I was growing up....I guess, just seeing the lifestyle that I grew up with, I knew there had to be more there to life. And so it just inspired me to say, "I want more." But I knew in order to *get* more, you've got to *do* more. And so in doing that, I

knew I had to really do better in school if I were to have some of the things I wanted out of life.

Tracey, however, did have someone in her life who inspired her and convinced her that she could advance educationally. That person would later become her husband.

Hmm. Well, tell you a funny thing. When I was growing up, my Mom never talked about college....it was like a foreign language in my house. We really didn't hear a lot about it. So I have to say my husband, once I met him in the eleventh grade, we were talking. And he was talking about going off to college, and what he was going to do. And I asked, "You're going off to college? What about me?"

Concerned that she needed to stay home to work and to help her mother and family, Tracey trusted the advice that her high school sweetheart gave her, that she must continue school. She recalls the discussion:

"Ah, I don't know. You know, I can't. I've got too much to try to help at home. I'm trying to help my mom." But he inspired me. He'd say, "You can do it. You can still go to school. You can work, and you can still help your Mom." And so that's what I did. I went to school. I worked on the weekends. I'd come home on weekends and work. I worked on campus. Those were the things I did to help – still helped at home, and also helped myself. So, he inspired me more so to go to school.

A distant glare came over her eyes as she remembered his words: "He said, 'You could still do this.'" Tracey and her sweetheart both went on to finish college together at a historically Black university. Having been the only one in Tracey's family to go to college, fulfilling this dream has been bittersweet for her.

Uh, it was tough because you have those who make you feel guilty because you now can have a better life. And then you have those who are very proud of you. You sort of have a double – the impact is kind of, I don't know how to say it – it's interesting...been interesting.

Ray Williams

Ray recalls that even though his parents were sharecroppers and uneducated, they were determined that their children would be educated: “They stressed education to all of their kids. To where, of course, two of the kids have died at an early age, but the seven remaining all graduated from high school.” Ray described the standards that his parents set for their children’s performance and the lasting impressions the family values have made upon him:

They thought it was important that we got an education, and would not accept failure. What they accepted was your best efforts. And for them, it was nothing lower than a B! I think it was great. I learned from the discipline. I mean, if you messed up at school, you know, you got it when you got home. Or if you messed up any other place, you’d have got it right then, or they’d tell you that old famous statement, “I’m going to get you when I get you home.” And you could never run away from that. Even run back, jump into bed, pretend that you’re asleep, they would wake you up.

But I was very fortunate to have a lot of positive support from my immediate family. And, of course, a lot of people, you know, don’t have that opportunity. I am very grateful for having that. And I became an engineer because my older brother was an engineer. And I tell him, you know, how much I appreciate him helping out.

Ray remembers his dream to become a professional football player but how the safety net of education was his savings grace:

I also had this very good high aptitude in math and science, and being an athlete, college was paid for with an athletic scholarship....But because of my parents making us understand that you have to plan for tomorrow, you can’t always focus on today. Well, one thing was sure, I wanted to get a good education in case I didn’t make it in football because – and maybe because I was good in math and science, especially math, I knew the odds, you know. So when some guys were saying that they were going to become a professional football player, I said the same thing, but I went to class.

Valerie Dawson

Both parents and all four children attended and graduated from the same university in Valerie's family. Valerie believes that "education was not an option. And because they were both educated themselves [parents]...it was their influence for me to pursue greatness." She has held steadfast to those family traditions and values passed on to her through her parents by attending a historically Black university, even though some tried to discourage Valerie from attending a predominantly Black college institution: "some of my teachers in high school said to me, "If you attend a Black university, you won't get a good job." But in fact, a recruiter for a large company once told Valerie:

We don't go to top White universities looking for top Black students. We come to top Black universities looking for top Black students. And that's a message that I've continued to share with students who are graduating from high school, trying to figure out where they're going. And I had something to prove...that it didn't matter where you attended college for you to be able to excel in life.

Valerie is a witness to that fact as she has taken advantage of internships and co-ops, throughout her college years, understanding that they would provide her the foundational preparation for the professional endeavors she would soon pursue: "I was in college to get exposure just like my White counterparts would be getting while they were in college."

Leyla Nichols

Leyla reflects on how her aunt has made an impression upon her educationally: "She has her doctorate degree, and she's very high in the education field." Having dropped out of a historically Black university her junior year, Leyla credits her aunt for

inspiring her to go back to school. “I’ve started going back to school to obtain my bachelor’s...just me seeing how she [aunt] interacts with others, and how education – it just gives you a different air about yourself.” Although Leyla has made progress professionally in her career, it is the stigma of not having a degree that has compelled Leyla to develop tactics to prevent her from being placed in awkward positions of discussing educational credentials among her colleagues. “At first when I became a manager, I was recluse because I knew I didn’t have my degree, so I didn’t get in an arena with them to where they would speak about degrees and things like that.”

Still, Leyla finds that she also compensates for not having her degree by being extra aggressive toward her professional development:

Not only was I given formal training, I would also go out and seek additional training for myself. Because I felt I wanted to be number one in my role, since I was new to the role, and all the other managers did have their degrees. I wanted to have as much training under my belt so that I can be...just as good.

Rhonda Jackson

Rhonda admires her mother’s educational achievements that provided useful options for her mother as she later became the single parent of the household:

She kept going with four small children after a divorce. As well, she had her education to fall back on, which was something that was reinforced in myself and my siblings. As you can imagine, that’s something that’s very important – to make sure that you have something to fall back on should, you know, your initial plans not go through as planned.

Like her mother, Rhonda achieved a master’s level of education. Her mother also imparted other values that Rhonda believes to be a significant influence on how she conducts her life: “aspirations for being married and then having kids and leading a life that, you know, adheres to traditional values.” Inspired by her mother’s ability to

“just do it,” Rhonda not only completed college but she attended on full scholarships and held internships every summer with a professional organization. She was used to going after what she wanted. Likewise, as a young professional, Rhonda sought a developmental position on the leadership team of her corporation to learn the “full story” of how business is run:

Once I got on that team and understood what kinds of conversations were really going on, and what kinds of things mattered, the light went on....and just from a political standpoint, [understanding] how – who makes decisions and based on what criteria. And, you know, everything you read in black and white is not necessarily what is used to make the decisions.

As Rhonda learned to do at an early age, she proactively seeks to educate herself in her leadership role through consistent self-examination:

In my mind, it’s about being honest with yourself. Look in the mirror and say, ‘Look, I’ve got a gap. Everyone over here knows something that I don’t know. I’m not sure what it is, but I’m going to go find it out.’

Darnell Jenkins

Darnell explains his mother’s perspective of education. His mother, a primary school teacher who attended two historically Black universities and completed a master’s degree, believed in the holistic approach to education:

My mom was passionate and unwavering, unbending in her focus on the value of an education as a critical part of navigating a path that was different from what my great-grandparents, grandparents, or that she had followed. She believed that the liberal arts were hugely important, the ability to communicate, one’s ability to interrelate with other people.

But it was Darnell’s father who left a lifelong impression of demonstrating honorable leadership as he reinforced a valuable lesson about his son’s respect for education:

In college, I made incredible grades my first year. I was an athlete. I played football in college. I literally made all A's my first year in school. First semester in my sophomore year, I started on the football team after the second game...which was unusual back at that time...and started every game subsequent to that. But I discovered whisky and women that semester, and the grades that I brought home, they were atypical of what I – I made a 2.2 grade point average the first semester of my sophomore year. And my mother was outraged and very vocal about it. My dad never said a single word.

As Darnell's eyes seem to take him back in time, he continues:

On returning to school, I got a call from my coach. He said, "You need to come by my office before you go down to the stadium to work out." This was in the middle of January when we typically went back to school. And my father was sitting there in his [coach's] office, and he said, "You need to clean out your locker. And also move out of your room up to the ninth floor of the dormitory," which was a non-athletic floor. And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you're not playing football any more." I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Your dad has removed you from the team, and he's the boss. I have no choice but to honor his wishes." I said, "What have I done?" And he put my grades on the table. And he said, "You'll never play pro football. You're an offensive guard. You're 5'10." You weigh 225 pounds. And the way you're headed, you are headed toward a path of destruction. And your dad's not going to stand for it, and I'm supportive of it. So you're gone."

Darnell throws his hands up describing how he'd responded to his father and coach in incredulity.

"But I still have over a 3. grade point average." And he said, "But you didn't last semester." And I tried to – and my dad said, "That's enough. Do what he said. Clean out your stuff. I'm headed back home." So he got in his little '59 Chevrolet, which was about 11 years old at the time, and he headed back home. And that singularly was probably the most significant gift he ever gave me. I don't think I'm strong enough to do the same thing to *my* children because it embarrassed me. But he knew what my response was going to be. Little did I know he had made a deal with the coach, that when they checked my grades at the middle of the semester, if they were what he thought they should be, he would permit me the opportunity to come back on the team. And I did come back. But I can promise you, I finished school with a very high grade point average. He got my attention.

Refocusing on the present, Darnell brings his story full circle:

He absolutely got my attention. And it changed things. He didn't say very much, and he...wouldn't talk to me about it. And my dad died on Christmas day in 1990, but just after Thanksgiving, he and I had a long conversation. His health was really failing then – I said, “you have got to tell me more about this story.” And he said “I almost caused a divorce.” He said, “Your mother was as angry at me as she's ever been angry at me.” But he said something that I use frequently now. He said, “You have to swim upstream when you know and your convictions tell you you're right. And I knew I was right. And I knew it would change your life,” he said, “and it caused more trouble than you'll ever realize between me and your mother,” he said. “But, you know, she got over it. And you got over it. And are you different?”

Darnell's eyes water as he recalls how he responded to his father:

I hugged that old man, and we cried, and we cried, and we cried. I said, “Dad, well, thank you.” And all that I could say, and I tremble now when I think about it, but he was especially gifted in leadership. Now, that I have a very large team of people that I work with, there comes a time when a hundred people say, “Why?” You, listening to them and deliberately analyzing what they have said, but there comes a time when one's heart leads you, irrespective of what the head-based analysis has said to you, to do what allows you to sleep at night.

Darnell's father passed on the value for keeping priorities straight in life and

Darnell carries this value with him proudly into the workplace:

I make no pretences that my first and most important love in this life is to the Christ whom I love, whom I will serve to the day that I die. I am unwavering in that belief...While you can't, you can't consciously exert [religion] in the workplace, I think they [my team] would tell you that I am God-fearing. I don't hide that [I'm] competent, capable, confident but not pretentious, I'm caring, generous.

Research Question #2

What management approaches do these African Americans managers say they use?

The informants' responses were interpreted and broken down as follows:

- Planning, Evaluating, Innovating
 - 80% evaluate and measure in concrete and quantitative terms.
 - 20% express a blend of abstract and concrete terms of measuring and evaluating.
- Organizing and Controlling
 - 70% emphasize individual development and growth as being key to the greater good of the organization.
 - 30% express individual development as secondary to business demand.
 - 70% believe in a decentralized approach to management, placing emphasis on empowerment and accountability of individuals with some degree of management control.
 - 30% express more of a centralized approach to management with some degree of input to decision-making.
- Recruiting, Selecting, Rewarding
 - 100% look for competency and accomplishment above other attributes when recruiting. They place no value upon social or family ascription.
 - 70% concentrate on skills that the candidate “brings to the table” when recruiting.
 - 30% emphasize the importance of considering affiliation/compatibility along with achievement when recruiting.

- Leadership
 - 100% believe that managing by intimidation is not necessary and that a good open relationship between a manager and their team brings forth more effective performance.
- Communication
 - 100% believe in and foster two-way communication in their organizations.

Each informant shares aspects of their management or leadership philosophies and describe how they manage and engage their organizations. These informants address their leadership styles through approaches relevant to these management values categories: planning, evaluating, innovation; organizing and controlling; recruiting, selecting, rewarding; leadership; and communication.

Darren Washington

My philosophy is: “It’s not the process, but it’s the people.” So the people make the difference. And leadership is an art. Anyone can be a manager, but leading, inspiring, and motivating people takes a special talent and gift. And corporations today I think miss the point, when they don’t focus on their people and their customers. And I think you have to do those two things first.

The way I try to manage is by consensus. I changed the old command and control thing. I like a free-flowing give and take. So I expect them to be walking into my office any time they want. I’ll do the same thing with them. We have – there’s a hierarchy there, but there’s a lot of informal interaction and a lot of free-flowing energy. And I think a lot of our decisions get made in some of that free-flowing energetic exchange that may be on an informal basis.

Darren explains his openness to diversity of thought and input to decision-making:

Early on with this view that I have, I told them plainly, I love hearing the contrarian's point of view because I think it gives me the opportunity to look at my organization from a lot of different perspectives. I may not always agree with their perspective, but if their story is compelling, I can be persuaded.

I try to manage by consensus, so I want to hear everyone's ideas. Even though most of the time I know exactly what I want. But I listen to everyone around the table, and I try to go with the group's consensus. Now, every good leader knows the buck stops with him or her. So there are instances where I listen to everyone's perspective, but I know where we're going strategically, and I just have to be the boss.

Referencing his decision-making style, Darren says, "my team knows that I like to be intuitive and I'll make several decisions from my gut. I love looking at numbers. My background is analysis," pointing to his temple, "but I believe some of the best management and leadership decisions are made from the midsection instead of the head. And my management team knows that."

Darren divulges his beliefs of how to manage the diverse team that he has built: "the trick is understanding the different styles. Tapping into them and getting them to play all together like a piano chord." He continues to elaborate on his approach:

I think some people manage by fear and intimidation. I think that's an old rule, and it doesn't work. People are motivated by feeling that they are included, when their opinions are valued; and so I just think the *collaborative* "do it" wins out every time.

Darren beams when he speaks of rewarding his people:

Something I do that I am very proud of: I run the customer service shop, so if my people get a complimentary note or letter from a client – and this happens really frequently because we take two million calls a year – so I would say about 300-400 times a quarter, customers will say, "Let me speak to your supervisor. I want to share how good the services are." We have a thing where the managers send a note to the entire department. So what I do is, I will print those notes off. I write personal notes of encouragement on each and every one. And every quarter, I write the notes. I get the big stack. I walk around on the floor and I pass them out individually. Just the simple act of saying, "I thank

you. I appreciate you. I believe you are professional and talented.” Man! People cannot believe how they respond to that. You walk the floor. People have those notes pinned up on their displays.

Michael Rollins

[Management] It’s a different challenge. The individual contributor job, of course, is more finite in scope. You have an objective that is seeable. Managing people, there is always something different or something hidden. There is always a hidden agenda, and the toughest thing is to get to the real root cause of a problem.

Regarding how he manages diverse skill sets and personalities, Michael explains, “You have to match the person with the situation. So, I have a philosophy of always putting people in positions where they can succeed. So certain people will succeed in different situations and environments.” He gives an example:

You may have a very disgruntled customer. Well, you may not necessarily need to send the most technical guy. You may send the most patient guy, and the one that will be able to withstand the verbal abuse that the customer may heap on him before he [the technician] explains why or gets the customer calmed down. Some people that are very, very good technically don’t like abuse. So you don’t send that guy to that delicate situation; you send him to the initial call, or the closing call.

Michael believes that it is important to stay connected with his team: “I’m a verbal person...So I talk to them. I set aside time and verbally talk to them every week. Even though it is 15 of them, I talk to everybody every week. He believes in engaging his team in much of the decision-making:

I involve them in every process possible. Some processes you can’t involve them in from the management standpoint; but any process that I can involve them in because it pertains to how we are going to run this team and how you are going to do that job, I involve them in it.

Reward and recognition are both monetary and non-monetary such as emails, notes, or verbal. But Michael sometimes applies a more personable touch to rewarding

his team: “Sometimes I will take one or two of them out who have done an exceptional job. I will take their spouse and them out to dinner as a reward.”

Charles Mathis

Charles describes what he sees as the essence of managing:

Understanding people’s dynamics to be able to motivate people and get people to do things together have always been important aspects of being successful, or at least getting things done in the business environment. So, the journey has been one of continuing to grow technically as you continue to grow with more managerial responsibility.

He describes his management style in this way:

I think I have a pretty informal management style, so that people feel comfortable coming to see me on a non-appointment basis, even though people will generally try to schedule because they know that not much of my time is free. So, I think in the main I have a pretty decent working relationship with folks in terms of being recognized as somebody who is open and honest and caring about the people that they work with...I think.

Communication flows through Charles’ organization both formally and informally:

I will pop in, and go down to their offices, and see what’s going on in their businesses. And I will call them, and they will call me and sometimes pop up into my office. And so that’s what I would call the informal part...And then we have some structured meetings where they have responsibilities to come and report their businesses to me on a more formal kind of basis. And we do that, you know, on a monthly kind of basis as well. [Communication] It’s both. It’s formal. It’s informal. It’s two-way. It’s up. It’s down. It’s sideways.

Charles has a definitive approach to decision-making:

Well, we do most things by what we might describe as consensus decision-making, which means, we all get in a room and express ideas, and in the end, I say, “Oh, this is what I heard, and this is what we’re going to do.” And that’s a consensus...And then there’s power. There’s power, and there’s authority that goes with the position. And while we can all debate...

One of the things that I remember hearing Colin Powell describe about why he enjoyed being in the military so much and being a general, he said because it gave you the opportunity to have spirited debates with your subordinates, and then when you gave the order, recognizing that 99 times out of a 100, they are going to go out and do exactly what you said because there are severe consequences if they don't, and they all understand that.

He then explains the purpose for giving his team a voice in the decision-making in the first place:

The purpose of giving them the voice is ultimately getting to a better decision. Because if you are the smartest person in the world, and you've got all the right answers, then you don't need the other 99 people who are there. And you can get rid of that overhead. But because they probably can add some value...as an organization, we like to have that spirited debate and discussion; but at the end of the day, we have to move forward on some line, you know, and some purpose. And that is left up to either the management team or the manager. And that's at all levels. That in the end, somebody has to say, "This way is north."

Charles discusses how he recognizes and rewards his organization:

Well, a simple answer is, we give them a lot of money. And the more deliberate answer is, we recognize people by putting them in a position of increasing authority and influence in the organization. We recognize people by putting their names on plaques and putting their names on bulletin boards and highlighting the good stuff that they do. But the bottom line analysis is, we give them more responsibility, if they want it, and we give them a bigger economic payout for the sacrifices that they make in contributing to the enterprise's success.

Kayla Mitchell

Kayla prides her group with having open communication but it is mostly over the phone, particularly because most of them work virtually from other geographic sites. She credits the openness partly to the fact that she is a good listener, even when it is not principally something she would like to hear:

You know, I've got someone who's got the business knowledge. She didn't grow up in HR. She grew up on the business side and transferred to HR. So if it's a business question, I call her. So there's different people I tap into,

depending on what it is. But in this particular situation, I need this employee to vent and get it off her chest, bounce it off, do whatever she needs to do before she goes and gets somebody else ticked, and then I get a call, or my boss gets a call about the HR manager....So when I say I have no boundaries, I literally – she can call me and say, “I think corporate is the stupidest...” I mean, she can say whatever she wants to say. I’ll listen. I’ll play devil’s advocate. I’ll support whatever it is at the appropriate time. But at least I know that she is not going to go do something stupid.

Kayla, refers to this two-way communication that the team has as their pipeline.

Kayla often recognizes and rewards verbally and also through quick emails, although she is making an effort to give more recognition publicly. Still, she believes that her team has to be self-motivated: “They’ve got to be self-motivated. I am not there managing them on site. These are professional people.” Kayla believes that distance itself is possibly a motivating factor:

That [being remote] sometimes is the motivation in and of itself because they feel that they’ve got the authority, autonomy; but yet they know that I am just a phone call away if they need guidance or something. So, I think people on the team right now are self-motivated because of their roles.

Kayla speaks of her decision-making style: “my general style is more participative. When a decision has to be made, unless it is something that has to be done quickly, my tendency is to have a more participative style.”

Because Kayla manages team members remotely, she is less concerned with the orchestration of diverse personalities than she would be if the team functioned as an intact team:

You know, I’ve got to say I look more at the business than I do at the team, the HR team. Because that person is fitting into that business. So I think more of, ‘what’s the fit going to be with that group [client group].’

Tracey Collins

Tracey takes her management role very seriously and sums up her feelings about the magnitude of such a role: “you are responsible now for all these people who report to you. You are pretty much responsible. And I always tell people, ‘You have these people, pretty much their lives in your hands.’” For Tracey the joy of management is being able to be a voice for her team when they need her to.

Tracey takes pride in fostering an environment in which a highly diverse team feels that they may be open with each other:

We’ve had meetings where they will sit and ask questions of each other about the cultural differences. And it’s just amazing because we are so open with asking questions, and people are just amazed at, like I said, the teamwork, the openness and willingness, and no one is offended by what someone says. That, I take pride in because I think it is great. Because, you know, we all know how to ask the question without offending that person.

Tracey extends that openness to herself as well:

I think they are very comfortable. I would say, I have some that are very, very comfortable [with Tracey], who will come to me with anything. And I have some who still seem a little hesitant, although I always try to tell them, “Nothing you say to me will I ever place in your performance review. If you come to me screaming, kicking, howling, cursing, I’ll allow you to vent. And that’s at that moment, when you vent it. And now I want to deal with [the issue at hand] after you finish, and then let’s figure out how we can make this happen.”

She describes the communication style the following way:

Well, you know, grapevine is always the way everybody gets the bulk of, you know....I always tell them, “I’ll give you as much as I can without losing my job.” So I try to be up front with them, give it to them as quickly as I get it. The hard part is when you give them stuff ahead of time, they’ve got lots of questions that you can’t answer. So, I always try to give them what I can, to the extent that I can, and then tell them, “As soon as I know more, it’ll come.”

Because Tracey does not have much money on her budget for reward and recognition, she finds other ways of showing appreciation:

I give them time off, send thank you notes appreciating what they've done... for a good job. But mostly right now it is just time off. I have to give them time off because I don't have money to give them. This year I am trying to look for different ways to do it.

Tracey engages her team as much as possible in decision-making:

I may send a note out saying, "Hey, guys, here's a project. Here's what we need to get done. Give me your feedback on the best way you think we can make this happen and meet our deadline." So, I always get their input. I tell them, "Hey, come on. Let's put our hats on. Let's all get this together." And in most cases I even try to call a meeting, saying, "Let's talk with all of you in here, and, you know, throw out some things, and see how we're going to get this to the end results that we need."

Ray Williams

Ray completed his bachelor's degree and became a petroleum engineer. Having evolved into his leadership role, Ray acknowledges that while having technical skills is a positive attribute when you lead other engineers, it does not automatically make you a good manager. In fact, Ray believes that one of the things that makes him effective in his role is that he has strong people skills. Being told that he seems to always 'want to do something for somebody else,' Ray often replies, "It's not about me." Ray's philosophy of managing people is reflected in his belief that people are more productive when they are happy. Still, he reflects upon the feedback that he has received in the past: "I've been told by my bosses that people above them go, 'Don't get too nice.'" For Ray, coercion and intimidation have no roles in his style of management:

I like seeing people smile because sometimes that's a thank you for me...If everything that needs to be done, gets done. The employees are, in my mind, happy and satisfied with what's going on. They understand what I want. They understand what the company wants. And they know what needs to be delivered. If I can get someone to do something by saying, "Could you get this done, and we need it done by this time?" I don't feel I have to yell at them or be looking over their shoulder every hour to see if things get done.

When Ray selects resources to join his organization, he has a general idea of the qualities that he's seeking:

I look for similarities, compared to me. You know. And I'm not talking about physical looks. I am talking about work habits and what they want to give back. And I look at potential, you know, because it could be someone that – I may end up taking someone younger if I figure they have this high energy level, which is what we need in a position, and not saying that someone that is experienced couldn't have that level, but they are looking at a certain part of their life where they want to get certain things done.

Ray distinguishes his own values from those he believes are sometimes displayed by his company:

Our company has – they have certain universities they recruit from because the management went to those schools. And I look at what you can *do*. Because when you look at an engineering book, and there's only certain ways to do certain things, it doesn't matter which school you learned it from. And if you've done well in it, you have the potential to do well in the workforce. And sometimes if that person doesn't do well, it's not necessarily that they don't have the mental capacity. It's maybe they don't have the work ethic, you know, to get it done. Or it's a lack of maturity, which we see a lot of times in young employees, which is just natural...So it doesn't matter which school you graduated from.

He laughs, "unless it's one of my bitter rivals when I was in college. And it doesn't matter which Greek association." However, he did proceed to say:

I think it's important that they were in some type of extracurricular activity because you're getting some additional training right there. You're getting leadership skills. You're getting to work in a team environment. You're getting to work on speaking skills, on organizational skills, planning, the whole thing.

Ray believes that two-way communication is definitely part of the fabric of his group's culture, and even more importantly, a demonstration of interest and caring:

Overall, I think they feel they can talk to me about anything. Because I, I have spoken with them both about [their] professional world and personal, you know, and I think it's important that when they talk to you about it, you remember it. You know, if their child has been involved in something, and if they feel they need to tell you, why, they're proud of it. I have to make sure that I ask later, "How is your daughter doing? How is your son doing?" Or if someone's parents have been ill or something, hey, a couple of months later you say, "You were doing some stuff to help out your parents. How did that work out? How are they doing?"

Ray explains his thoughts regarding rewarding and recognizing people:

Well, I think the best way to motivate someone is to compliment them. Tell them that they're doing a good job, you know. And also, when you set targets, have celebrations along the way. And I try to say, "Thank you," to the guys when they do something good.

Although Ray acknowledges that he rewards both monetarily and non-monetarily, he stresses the importance of being sensitive to the comfort of the individual in how they receive recognition:

You have to be very careful because some people really don't like to be recognized in a big audience, you know. But you can get them to the side, one-on-one, just to say, "Hey, look, I appreciate what you did. Thanks for the help." And I think that goes a long way.

Valerie Dawson

Valerie works hard to balance family and career and has even made the sacrifice to leave a management role in order to keep her family together and ensure that they live in a diverse community environment. She is conscious that these values are reflected in her job and models them for her organization:

I impose – and it's probably not a good thing...but I do impose some of my values on the people that I report to. Because I let them see that my family is

more important than my job. I let them see that taking care of home is foremost important. Don't spend so many hours away from your family for the job because eventually you won't have a family to go home to.

Valerie's strong values of "family first" are reflected in her management

philosophy:

I believe that [if] a person has values of home and family first and *then* their job, that's critical. Because that's important to me. So, for instance, we've had situations where I've had employees that have asked me, "Can I work from home three days out of the week because I live 45 minutes away, because my wife is pregnant, because I have a sick baby, because I..." Because of whatever choices they've made. As long as their job is still being done, I don't need to micromanage them, watch them do their job. So to me, I value people and their values before I value what their job is – what the company is going to get out of these people...because you make the people happy, and they'll perform better.

Valerie describes her relationship with her team in terms of a mutual and

understood respect:

There were a couple of people who reported to me who thought that, you know, they made so much money, and they had been there so long, and they were so valuable that they didn't have to listen to me. But that quickly turned around when they realized that I had the final voice on some things for their careers. But for the most part, it [team relationship] was one of respect....I had a good group. It was a mutual thing to where I didn't try to do their jobs, or they didn't try to tell me how to do mine.

Valerie believes that she forged an open environment and exuded a caring

nature to her team:

The people that I managed had very open lines of communication. I have one of those faces...and the compassion that I have for people says, "I care." Even though I'm not going to dig in your business, it still says, "I care. I'm here for you. You can always talk to me." So with that, my people would come to me, talk to me about their problems, their personal lives. But I'd do nothing with it. I hear it. I show concern and compassion. And they are very comfortable talking to me.

I don't know if it's – if people do it, trying to make excuses for other things that are not getting done because they like to lean on that personal to take the place of productivity. But I hear it. I acknowledge it. But then I still say, "But when can we expect it?" The lines of communication are still wide open. I want them to feel comfortable talking to me, but at the same time, I'm still not going to let that open line of communication cloud the view of "this is what still needs to happen."

In terms of knowing what was going on within her team, Valerie describes how she stays informed:

I usually have an ally, someone who was watching my back. Someone who felt closer to me than – because, you know... Someone who would be that "you didn't hear this from me, but I'm going to tell you what's going on just because I don't want you to be blindsided." I would usually have one of those who would help me [stay] informed of what was going on.

She then describes how she communicated organization news and issues to her team:

I like to err on the side of over-communicate. So I'd rather go overboard with sharing information. And, you know, sometimes that got me in trouble. But I'd prefer that they hear it from me instead of hearing it in the halls. I'd give them a chance to ask about rumors, to validate rumors, you know, the whole works.

Valerie believes she had a strong rapport with her team partly because of her approach to rewarding them:

I was really good about giving a pat on the back. If someone did something, I'd recognize it. Now, even if I had to follow that up with, "but," I'd still start off recognizing the achievement because I didn't want to discourage anyone. I mean, the whole industry claims that they are about taking risk; but if someone takes a risk and then gets a, you know, an "Uh-oh" after a "Hooray," you know, I still start off with the "Hooray." I believe that that is critical.

You've got to keep your people motivated. And I, in management, I look at myself as a cheerleader. Yes, I know these guys keep long hours because there are deadlines that are constantly having to be met, one deadline after the next. So what motivates them? I start asking them. "You know, what is it going to take for you all to not be so bummed out that you have to stay here till nine

o'clock tonight to finish this?" I've ordered them pizzas, and I've ordered them, you know, dinner; and have those things there for their evening work because I knew they'd need it to keep their minds going.

I'd have play dates. I've actually taken my team out on boat rides to where, you know, I'd provide all the food, provide all the beer and booze and wine that they wanted; and we'd go out on the boat.... We did that quite frequently, especially when we finally got releases out of the door. We hit a major milestone, I'd tell them, "Okay, we all need some downtime. Let's go celebrate." And I'd do those type things. And again, building rapport, because a team can't be a team if we're only in our siloed environment, you know, day in and day out, where somebody is cracking a whip.

Valerie engages her team in aspects of decision-making such as interviewing job candidates for hire because she feels it important that their personalities were compatible:

I would normally do peer interviews so it was not just me interviewing the [job] candidates. I would give my employees an opportunity to have conversations with potential candidates.... see if the personalities match with theirs With people who are going to be working side-by-side, I want to make sure that there was some kind of camaraderie that they could establish quickly. That there was not a Type A personality that was coming in with all the rest who were not Type A's; and then there was a clash. Because if you put that in the mix, even though I'm not expecting everybody to look the same, act the same, and talk the same; but there's still got to be some sense of – you know, I guess the only word is camaraderie. But did they, were they able to relate to one another? Could they converse and not have conflict constantly?

She describes the attributes she looks for in those candidates:

First, I look for a good team match. Someone who is going to work well with the members on the team, personality match. Then, skills. You know, do they have the necessary skills? Do they have the experience and the background to be able to get in and add immediate impact?

Valerie expresses that affiliation of educational institution or academic societies have little-to-no importance in her selection process.

Leyla Nichols

Leyla shares her management philosophy by explaining what she enjoys most about management:

People...the different people – learning from others that you manage. You know, managers don't know everything; and there are some subordinates or direct reports that can show you different things. I like to be the developer of others, assist them in their career goals, putting them on the correct path on where they would like to be, help with career development, things like that. Anything that can enhance an individual, that's what I like.

She describes her approach to management as hard, but fair and caring:

I am hard if there is something that we need to get done, let's get it done. And then we can play later. You know I don't micromanage, but I like to get the job done. They could – some would say that I'm stern. I don't always allow them to do the things that they feel is [sic]correct if it could put the company at risk. So, we have to compromise...and “maybe not this time we'll use your idea, but the next time.”

I would describe it as getting along well with other individuals that I manage. Making sure that I knew what was going with them. Not too personal, but if there was something that was bothering them, I would [observe] for instance, “You're not looking very well,” or I would say, “Oh, is there anything wrong? What's going on?” Just try to know them so that I can identify if their work is not up to par this week, if something's going on.

Leyla speaks about both formal and informal ways that she communicated with the team she formerly managed. She describes the formal approach as follows:

Normally, I would do a desk drop, send an e-mail, and post it on the bulletin board before they entered our team area. We would have frequent departmental meetings as a whole, but we had team meetings on a weekly basis. It was per my standards that I meet with my team on a weekly basis.

Informal communication was not as fluid. Leyla describes how she stayed informed of what was happening on her team:

My assistant would let me know. Some individuals didn't feel comfortable coming to tell me if there was a problem because they thought that I wouldn't, you know, handle the problem; or they just didn't want to make any waves. Some tried to figure out [solutions] for themselves, just trying to keep me out of the loop. Not thinking it was worthy enough to bother me with.

Leyla also discusses how she would proactively engage with the team

members:

Just actually going by their desks, pulling up a chair...seeing, observing how they worked....And letting them know different things – spot feedback, that's what we would call it. You know, if I'm observing your work, and I notice that you are doing something that is incorrect, I am going to give you immediate spot feedback to let you know how we can correct that before you go any further.

She describes the attributes that she looked for in hiring candidates. Mindful of her own success, in spite of not having a degree, Leyla made a conscious effort to also consider candidates who did not hold degrees but otherwise showed potential.

I look for individuals who did have a degree and those – I did give some a chance who didn't have a degree. I wanted them [the team] to have a balance, so that those who had the degree could encourage those who didn't. I looked for individuals who worked well with others...great team players, who had great communication skills. And who didn't mind going that extra mile; if I asked them to stay two hours over, it was no problem.

Leyla illustrates how she engaged the team in the interviewing process:

If the opportunity presents itself, I would allow one of those individuals to go into the interview with me as a panel [member] so that they could let the individual [candidate] really know what the job entailed, "this is what we do." If it was one of the junior managers that was going into management, I would allow them to go into the interview with me so that they could get their interview skills up to par.

In a later discussion to compare notes, the junior managers would give their input of their impressions of the candidates for consideration in the decision-making part of the process.

Leyla describes the company's monetary and non-monetary reward programs and various venues of public recognition, but simply states her own personal approach as being verbal:

“Oh. Great job.” I don't have a problem with telling them they did a great job. “You really did well on that project, you know. When another project comes around, I'm going to really consider you”...things like that.

Rhonda Jackson

Rhonda describes her enjoyment of management:

Being able to have an impact on how things get done. Not just being an implementer, but actually being able to have an impact on how things get done – who does it, who is on what team. Really being able to maybe bring some awareness to folks who have the talent but just, you know, just aren't seeing the full picture. I think that piece of it was particularly gratifying.

She shares her perception of the environment she fostered for her team:

We had a very good working relationship. I would say that it was high trust, high empowerment. I – one of the things I think I do well is empower people to do their job. Okay. Now, having said that, the trust piece of it is really built as individuals – I hate to say prove themselves.... You know, my tendency is to be a micromanager, to want to do everything myself. But I give folks a chance to, you know, to try to define the problem. Give them a chance to do it, come back, we discuss it; and based on that, you know, the leash either gets longer or shorter.

She speaks frankly about her communication style:

I think I'm a very direct communicator. People really don't have to wonder where they stand or what the issues are. And most people are really appreciative of that because you find a lot of people, because they have a personal relationship as well as a professional relationship [with employees], they don't want to give that feedback.

Rhonda examines the flow of communications in her organization and describes how communication takes place informally.

Two ways – one way is by people talking to me. There are always those in the organization who, you know, want to tell you what’s going on. So that’s one way. The other way is by just being out there. Just being with folks while they’re doing their job, and not in a threatening kind of way, but just in a very casual kind of routine way. You know, making it a part of my routine to go and sit at the control room, control board, with some of the operators. Coming up on a weekend, if I happen to be out, you know, just swinging by there and saying, “Hey, how’s it going there?” Sitting out there for a couple of hours, you know, seeing how things are.

She then begins to describe her formal approach to communicating within her organization. She tries to attend meetings that her team members invite her to:

And, you know, checking up on them in a sincere kind of a way. Really wanting to hear what the issues are in a non-threatening kind of a format. Typically I don’t like daily reports or weekly reports or any of that kind of stuff because I think it’s – we get enough of that stuff from up above. But I believe it’s my job to stay on top of what’s going on without a report. You know, if there’s a problem in the organization, you know, I’m not saying I should know about it as soon as it happens; but boy, before it becomes a big deal, I certainly ought to have some idea that it’s coming.

Information in the organization typically flows from central, you know, “Here’s what’s going on in the company,” on down to the people. And so typically what I’ll do is at a safety meeting or at a birthday, an anniversary celebration, you know, we have those – stand up and talk about something that’s happened that’s significant. Either a game changer for the company, or something that is a really big deal that will have a material impact on the company.

So it’s [information flow] formal and informal. It’s pretty much all verbal and followed up by written as necessary.

Rhonda ponders various ways in which she has rewarded and recognized performance:

Now, this is a tricky, tricky area because one of the things that we debate is, what is above and beyond the call of duty, versus what’s in your job scope? Okay. The other thing that is tricky about it is that people are motivated by

different things. Some people just need affirming words. Other people want big money. Other people want a title. Other people want, you know, a promotion. They don't need any money, you know, no title, just promote me. So it's really sort of a tricky entity. And then when you start looking at – because even though people are motivated by different things, and they don't give a hill of beans about one thing or the other, if you gave it to somebody else, “Well, why didn't you give it to me?” So that is tricky, tricky, tricky.

How do I manage it? Well, very gingerly. When I have an idea that doesn't come from me, what I try to do is to have a few confidants in the organization, to say, “Okay, well, I think I observed this behavior, or this exceptional contribution, you know. What do you guys think?” And people usually – again, because the culture is open you know, people will usually pretty well tell you, “I know everybody thinks this person is great, but they really stink,” or they'll say, “You know, really, you know, Joe over here, even though he hasn't said a lot, he was really the one that made Project B go.” And so from there you get this information, and you corroborate it; and you come up with a recognition plan. And again, you have folks who are leaders in their various areas sit down and review it; and you roll with it, and say, “This is it.” And stand behind it.

Rhonda conveys that while she empowers her team members to make decisions regarding their own projects, other key processes such as staffing, recruiting, and hiring are managed and decided by “central.” Her team members may be involved if called upon to speak with candidates who want to understand the intricacies of the job. When evaluating job candidates, Rhonda reveals her thought rationale for determining “fit” for the team and exactly what she looks for in the candidate:

Number one, job skills...can you do the job? Number two, it depends. Some of our team, or some parts of the organization, need skills. Some parts of the organization need more cohesiveness, collaborative, teamy-kind of soft stuff. Some parts of the organization need just a new input of ideas. You may have a group that may have 20 people there involved in doing the same thing, and they just need something different. You know, somebody to kind of stir up the pot a little. So, it really depends on what the nature of that particular team is, as far as the fit goes.

She continues:

If I've got a cliquy group that's been together for 10, 15, 20 years, and every time we try to get something done, you get this unified front of, "Well, we can't do this because of that," or, "Here's the way we ought to do it," – darn it, I'm looking to put somebody in there who's got some different thoughts, different experience, can stand up and help and kind of break some of that up.

If we've got a group where, you know, say maybe we're asking a certain function to step up and do something a little bit different, go to the next level, but we've got people who are a little bit reticent about building the skills. Or maybe, if things have been kind of stagnant, I'm going to be looking for a high-performing person who doesn't mind taking charge; and that's the kind of person I'm going to put in there.

If everything is going okay, and this group is all right, and no real problems, we're just looking for a new person, well, you know, I may look for somebody who's more of a fit. Somebody who won't disrupt anything, won't rock the boat...

Regarding her selection of new team members, Rhonda explains that special affiliations such as educational institutions, academic societies, or social organizations are not important. However, she does acknowledge the reality of when and where they may matter to the organization:

Everybody looks at it. What does it mean to me? To me, it really doesn't mean a whole lot. But depending on where the decision is actually going to be made, if it's something that fits well within my purview, I tend to look at it less. If it's something that I know I'm going to have to sell colleagues or sell upwards, I tend to look at it more because I know it matters more to those individuals.

So...when I interview a person or when folks send me people for my organization...what I try to focus on is their most recent past behavior. I use the STAR method, usually start, "Could you tell me about your recent past. What your goal was? What you actually did?" And if they are very strong in that area, can you get examples. And you can see where and how they contributed, it really doesn't matter...GPA really doesn't matter.

But when you start going upwards, and particularly when you start looking at diversity candidates, that kind of thing is really scrutinized heavily. And so you have to – I mean, in order to maintain your political capital and your credibility in the organization – also to be able to sell these candidates upwards. You've

got to have some of those measures, if you will. GPA, what school did they go to...were they involved in extracurricular activities, what prior work experiences do they have? That kind of thing. So for stuff in my purview, it's less important. If I've got to sell it upwards, it becomes a lot more important.

Darnell Jenkins

Darnell shares his philosophy of leadership, which is reflected in the experiences he later discusses:

But I think that you don't talk leadership. You walk it. And that's very trite. But I don't show my love to my family by just telling them how much I love them. You have to demonstrate how much you love them by what you do. And I think that the most important thing is trying to instill by the walk that you walk a genuineness in what your core values are. At work, I say to my team, my immediate team, that my primary responsibility is way beyond them. It's the whole organization.

During the interview, Darnell demonstrates a key quality he expects a leader to have. He explains to me:

This BlackBerry has been buzzing the whole time that we've been talking. Whatever is on it can wait. And I don't care what's going on, it can eventually wait. And it used to be that if I were meeting with you, and our CEO would call, my secretary would interrupt me, and "So and so has called." But she now knows to ask the most powerful question: "Is it an urgent emergency that can't wait?"...Because if it's not, and I'm talking with someone, they have my attention, and I am not going to be distracted by someone else. Inevitably, if someone walks into my office, I hit the "Do not disturb" button on that telephone so that it does not ring. People are *the* most important part of this life that we live.

Returning to his thoughts of leadership:

The concept of leadership – I believe that we are all endowed and are born with certain characteristics that enable us to have impact on the lives of others in providing leadership....and I'm a firm believer that leadership is a choice, that you choose to make a difference in the lives of others. Which means that I acknowledge and accept that there are certain gifts that I obviously got from God.

I also believe really that the learning never stops. You, on an ongoing basis, have to continue to feed the pipe with – because there are so many other perspectives out there...it broadens my perspective on the things that I should give consideration to that may have a positive impact as I'm trying to navigate through and successfully work with others.

I think that we're all – we're all the leaders We all have impact...I am a strong believer in stewardship. And there are those who typically believe that stewardship is of your money, your time, and your talents...but I think that there's a fourth dimension of stewardship that is just as important. That's your influence.

He shares his thoughts of how he relates to his team:

I just believe that – I don't think anyone works for me. I get feedback routinely...that they're not fearful of me. But I never want anyone to be fearful of the position, or fearful of [me] the person.

Darnell fosters an open culture that encourages his team to share their ideas and give input for consideration:

My team, I believe, feels comfortable...at any point to come in and say, "Darnell, that doesn't make any darned sense." "We can't do that. Let's step back and reconsider this. Let's think of another..." But I'm also very comfortable that after having listened to everything that they have said, if I've got to swim upstream, I don't mind it. And as long as I'm able to comfortably sleep at night, and not toss and turn and wrestle with that, not only what I've done, but how I've don't it – I'm a firm believer that in this life that we live and how we do anything is as, if not more important than what we do.

Because I have encountered and experienced brilliant people in my life who have the personality of a toad. Who would literally PO'd anyone that they came in contact with. I have seen those who, for temporary periods of time, experienced extraordinary success in their business lives; but who soon crumbled and imploded in front of them because those who they worked with are fearful of telling them what they needed to hear, and only gave them what they thought they wanted to hear.

Darnell describes communication in his organization as “unfettered.” He states, “[It’s] primarily not a lot of formality around it, but yet enough structure so that there is efficiency.” He explains:

I think the most important part of communication, again, is listening. I believe in...being available and accessible to everybody in the office. My door is – I almost never close it. I do one-on-ones with my team all the time. And a lot of it is unstructured. “What are you up to? Let’s go to lunch.” Or, “Come by and see me this afternoon.” And just, “Tell me what you want to tell me...you know your job better than I know your job.” Or sometimes it’s not even job-focused. It’s just a free flowing of conscious thought coming from members of the team. But what it does, it keeps me – I’m not going to say it keeps me totally, but reasonably connected to what’s going on. And I learn far more doing that than I would through the formalized channels of communication that occur. You know, the formal meetings that we have, the update in status, and the briefings, and all those things that we have. I think I stay more connected just through the informal connection to the team than I would from any other way.

Darnell enjoys talking about rewarding his people:

I endeavor to do it merit-based. But in doing that, I think that you have to be very careful, particularly in the passing around of the special projects which typically spawn special recognition, that you are careful that you spread them very broadly within the organization. We give large numbers of awards, some of them substantial, some of them don’t have to be real large.

He proceeds to elaborate:

One small thing last year during the holiday season, totally unexpected – I write a holiday letter every year, that I mail to every member of the team. And it typically has, you know, a little heartfelt message in there, wishing them the best for the New Year. But this year I put a Pappas gift certificate of a hundred bucks in every one of them. In every...it cost me \$3,500. It didn’t cost a whole lot of money. And you would have thought I had put \$10,000 in there. Hundred bucks is all that was in there...and some of them had gotten year-end bonuses, and all that, but in the Christmas letter that they got was a hundred dollar gift card from Pappas. And some of them are calling me at home saying, “Oh, my God, thanks.” “I gave you a hundred dollars. It’s nothing. But it is simply to say thank you. You know, we are a very important part of our agency’s mission.” And everybody plays a key role in that, and I wanted them all to think that they’re important.

Darnell demonstrates the significance of everyone in the organization realizing their value from the top to bottom positions:

I tell the receptionist that she is more important than I because she is the voice and face of the organization. That before they get to me, they've gotten to her. And if she has pissed them off and not given them a pleasant experience, then there is nothing I can do oftentimes that will change their initial perception...I mean, she is very, very, very good at what she does.

I don't think there is any big "I's" and little "you's" in any place in the organization. And you show that by what you do, rather than what you say. My personal administrative assistant, who is near and dear to me – you know, when it came time to award bonuses last year, I mean, in fact HR called me and said, "Are you sure you want to give her this much?" "Can I give her more?" you know. "Can I give her more?" And she was shocked when I sat down with her. She says, "You sure this is all for me?" And I said, "Absolutely."

Well, when I travel, in the 12 years that she and I have worked together, I've never had a botched reservation. I've never had a wrong hotel that I've gone to. I mean, she has always been organized and structured. She takes care of things I never even know she has taken care of. I mean, this woman is extraordinary. If she is that extraordinary, then I need to do something extraordinary for her...if you give generously, you receive generously. I believe that.

Research Question #3

How does subcultural identification affect management approaches of these African American managers, particularly across cultures?

The informants' responses were interpreted and broken down as follows:

- 100% express an acute awareness of themselves as minorities in a majority setting and of the scarcity of minorities in management roles within their organizations.
- 100% believe that mentoring relationships are critical within the careers of minority professionals.

- 70% express deliberate and direct efforts to coach, mentor, or develop deserving minorities whenever possible.
- 30% express indirect efforts of coaching minorities through engagements with minority associations and professional organizations.

Each informant works in an environment in which they are a minority. So, there is a conscious awareness of self within these environments. The criticality of having a mentor is of particular importance, even if the informant did not have the good fortune of acquiring one during her/his career. Particular attention is paid to diversity, often with a conscious effort to “reach back” and help to develop or mentor other deserving minorities.

Darren Washington

Darren credits an African American executive vice president, from his past, for playing a critical mentoring role, enlightening him even in his career today:

I found a guy who was the CFO of the company I worked for. This guy more or less pulled me aside and shared with me his experiences, how to dress, how to present yourself as an executive, what kind of behavior was acceptable, how to express myself, presentations, just polish – all of that was invaluable to me....I considered him my mentor, and I still do to this day. Whenever I get into a situation that I just want to get away from, the people I work with and run things by him, I call him up. And to me it is invaluable having that mentor. And the good thing for me is, he’s an African American male, so he understands the position I’m in of being one of very few at the senior level.

Darren also reflects upon what he believes is the difference between him and his White counterparts:

I think my background and heritage has made me more caring and empathetic about people’s feelings, and I have more of a sense of community and that

effect comes out in my leadership style. Whereas I think some of my majority counterparts sometimes, “It is what it is. Take it or leave it.”

Michael Rollins

Michael has mentors and coaches several African American workers because he fears that they are naïve in their expectations of what it takes to succeed.

You know, I have saved several Black kids coming up, saved their jobs simply because a White guy came to me and asked, “Michael, do you know so-and-so?” I said, “Yes, I do.” “Will you please go tell him he needs to get back – when we have breaks? He needs to get back on time.” Because they are afraid to tell him, they are going to just punish him career-wise.

“...a rookie underneath me...we straightened him out,” Michael enlightened the younger employee,

“... they look at these things. When you see a Black guy with five or six White people that they work with, you need to be with those people. If you’re working with five or six Whites, it’s not a crime to be with them. Because if you ain’t with them, guess what kind of job you’re going to get assigned. Those jobs are not assigned at the meetings. Those jobs are assigned in coffee breaks and at lunch. If you don’t go to lunch with them, you’re going to get the shit jobs.” Excuse my language, but “you’re going to get them.” Somebody needs to break that down.

Charles Mathis

Charles makes a concerted effort to provide access to opportunities that some otherwise would not have.

I’ve mentored a number of people. I guess the value proposition, I would say is it’s always in the eye of the beholder, whether or not they saw what I was doing as mentoring them or not. And so have I helped people to get to levels in the corporation that they might not have otherwise gotten to, and gave them advice about how they can be successful as they define success, I think there are a number of people who would say that I have kind of consistently done that for people.

Kayla Mitchell

Kayla explains the times when she feels it is significant to be an African American manager is when mentoring minorities:

If I have an employee relations issue and I have some very young, junior, you know, inexperienced person in my office, in trouble for something, I take off my [managerial] hat and I say, “Look, this is me talking to you seriously.” That’s when I think I give the most benefit – probably not the best word. But that’s my feeling, that being an African American manager means something to that entry level, you know, clerical, administrative person who is looking for guidance from somebody who they have seen successful.

Kayla struggled to acknowledge that she has had what one would deem a true mentor for herself. She explains: “There’s a line between the supervisory person managing you and then the coach.” However, in an effort to acquire some much needed coaching, she describes an encounter she recently had with her own manager:

I just went to my boss this week, on Monday, actually had a one-on-one, and we started talking about careers. I laid it on the line. I said, “You know what, I don’t know that this is where I want to be.” So I asked him, “I need coaching. You know, I am talking coaching. I am not talking, you know, manager relationship. I’m talking about...”

So, that was not a manager-subordinate relationship, discussion. That was truly a, “I’m looking at your experience as I am wanting to find out more about what made you make this decision.” And I don’t know that you always have...that type conversation with your manager. Some people do, I guess. But...

Tracey Collins

Having grown up with so little, Tracey does not expect things to be easy or handed to her. Even as she assumed a management role in corporate America, Tracey quickly realized that she had to proactively seek knowledge of “how to manage” since she could find no mentor of her own:

So you didn't get the training as a new manager. You just are on your own. It was a lot of 'by the seat of your pants,' make mistakes...I found myself going to other managers, saying, "Can you tell me how this works? What does this mean?" Even when it was time to do reviewing, you know, "Can you help me?" I mean, I found myself going out and trying to buy books on how to write a review, how to say what you want to say, and say it the right way without giving them, one rating, but yet, in the verbiage, you've said something else. So it's clearly been a 'learn on my own as I go' thing...it has been all self-initiated.

Ray Williams

Ray would like to have had the guidance of a mentor in the beginning of his career, but found limited resources he felt he could turn to: "I would ask for others' guidance. You know, but I didn't know anyone available. At the time, the only African American manager I knew was my older brother."

Today, Ray not only reaches out to African American engineers that he works with, but also tries to share insight and provide guidance to others outside of his company through professional networking organizations.

I see the importance of it [mentoring] – especially for young African Americans who are just getting into the workforce, what I try to pass onto them " ...the things I have gone through...when you first start as an engineer...that first performance review. Very few entry-level engineers or employees get a glaring performance review because there is so much left for you to learn."

And I tell them, "So, if they have something they want you to work on, or develop an area, don't take it personally. It's probably because you need it." And I think the sensible thing to do is to look in the mirror and say, "Well, I need to improve on that." Versus saying, "Well, this guy doesn't like me because I'm African American, or Hispanic, or female." It's real easy to say it's somebody else's fault why you didn't do well.

So mentoring is extremely important. Yes. And actually I just went to a luncheon about two and a half months ago sponsored by NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers) to talk about that very same thing. To provide some type of insight into, how I did make it up the ladder.

Valerie Dawson

For herself, Valerie leverages a relationship with a White counterpart who she believes provides her “access” and insight that Valerie otherwise would not have.

Interesting enough, I have an unspoken mentor that is someone who does not look like me or act like me. I have a White male mentor. And, unfortunately, I chose this person because I knew that there were areas that I would not be privy to that this mentor could give me an insight to. This is the person who was very instrumental in moving me into management. Someone who saw something in me where nobody else did. And they have basically taken me under their wings. So, I have a very strong mentoring relationship with this person, and it seems to be quite healthy for my career.

In the interests of others, Valerie declares the criticality of mentoring for African Americans:

I have made it a point to identify other Black men and women in my company and in my business that have not had an opportunity to break through that unspoken glass ceiling, that invisible glass ceiling that we always feel. And because there are several people who come up to me – because there are so few Black managers in our company – there’s so many people that come up to me and ask me the question of, “How can I get to where you are? What must I do to get an opportunity to get on the management track?” And I give them guidance. I give them support, and I give them some of the hidden tips and tricks that worked for me. And, you know, I basically remind them that they need a sponsor. Someone who can help them get to their next breaking point. And, you know, even though I may not be able to put in a word for these people and have the voice like I would need to help them, boost them to where – I’m at least giving them guidance and direction how they can get there.

Leyla Nichols

Leyla finds that having a relationship with a mentor helps her learn how to navigate the professional playing field. She still values such a relationship for keeping her on track today:

I have a manager that I used to report to....she could handle the department. She takes a chaotic situation and makes it smooth. And I liked that about her because she does it with poise, and she does not hurt anyone. You know, she

goes over it gracefully to where, if you are the problem, you won't feel that you're the problem when she's discussing the matter. Now I'm not in contact with her because she is working in Hong Kong. She is global management.

But I have a young lady that I do work with [today] who I have sort of latched onto to be in a mentor-type... within the organization that I'm currently working with. I started at the organization with no allies, so I thought that my direction would be my own. So I started going out on my own, trying to meet the shakers and the movers, finding out who's who, and what I need to do to get where I need to go. And this one particular individual – we started out as just “Hi” and “Bye,” and then we were going to lunch, and we started talking more. And now I go and meet with her in her office, and she shares her responsibilities with me. I don't actually do the work; I just learn how to do the work, so when the opportunity presents itself, I can step up to the plate to assist her whenever she needs additional assistance.

As she recognizes the effectiveness of mentoring in her career, Leyla makes a conscious effort to mimic the same deed for another:

I was given an assistant who latched on to me to be a mentor; and I wanted to make sure that I gave her all the tools and resources that she needed to be successful, showed her exactly what I did on a day-to-day basis, to prepare her for the next step of becoming a manager because that's what she wanted to do.

Rhonda Jackson

Rhonda believes that her attitude was detected by others and that this prompted them to take interest in her career and become instrumental in her professional success. She is grateful for “the personality and the openness of those individuals to share learnings. And to really take a concerted interest in my development was a plus.” She describes the two people, non-minorities, who she considers strong mentors in her career:

Actually one lady who probably is about 13 years my senior and one male who is about 8 years my senior, both of which I still keep in contact with and still have a relationship with. I would say the big gap there was from a social and political standpoint, even though those individuals gave me what I needed to be successful in my job...the hard tangible things – the soft skills...sort of the

unwritten rules...who really has influence in the organization and could make things happen, versus [who could] not – those things they did not coach me on.

It's one of the things where you just don't know. And these individuals were at a high level in the company, you know, when I started; and they reached out to me, and, you know, I got the things that I thought I needed to do a quote unquote good job.

But there was another level there that I wasn't aware of, and I didn't – I just didn't know to tap in for that per se. And when they realized over four or five years time they could see a gap developing between me and my peers, they did some things to try to put me in situations to meet certain people and participate on certain teams to kind of close that [gap]. But, like I said, it took a while for me to even understand that that was going on.

Having learned the value of having mentors and how to leverage their wisdom, Rhonda now accepts those relationships as vital resources for helping to keep her on track:

It's one of those things where you don't want to feel like you're using people. I don't know how best to say that. You want to be respectful of their time and whatnot, but you have career ambitions and you realize that there's a gap. You know, I had real candid conversations with them. I said, "Hey, now I see a lot of things I hadn't seen before. Can you give me some career advice and career coaching, etc., etc.?" And I think by my opening the door for them to kind of get in my business, if you will, I think that's when things really took off.

Rhonda reaches out to minority engineers through her involvement with NSBE. Her involvement offers her an opportunity to bolster her leadership skills and leverage even stronger influence by serving on the regional advisory board of the organization.

Darnell Jenkins

Darnell credits his mentor, who is White, for being courageous enough to assume the role in Darnell's career at a time when there were few minorities and women in banking:

There were White men, but there weren't any Black men or women or other minorities within the organization. And so I have a huge and deep respect for

those who were mentors. I have – one of the dearest friends, who is long gone from our organization – that I talk to routinely, and never a month goes by that we don't chat, who watched out for me, talked with me, said some things to me that I many times didn't want to hear, but they were the things that I needed to hear. He was one who continued to prime the pump with opportunity and challenge me. But yet when there were those who said, "Why is he doing such and such?" He said, "because he's capable of doing it." Just a hugely, hugely impactful person...and, I mean, at a time when it wasn't popular for a White man to have someone who looked like me under his tutelage and provided me with opportunities. I'm deeply grateful for the chances that he gave me. And because of it, I think I have no choice...but to give back even more than what was given to me.

Darnell explains that mentoring is almost second nature to him and speaks of his own involvement in minority organizations that provide developmental support to many:

I've...without a lot of effort, mentored a lot of folks. I am the executive sponsor for our African American affinity group. We have a partnership with an organization that's called the National Academy Foundation, which is an organization that has financed academies in travel and tourism and information technology within high schools – 750 of them around the country. Because I believe education is important, we keep on our staff high school and college interns with us all the time.

While I cannot consciously in any way, with a focus that's discriminatory, choose children who are minorities and women, they *are* overwhelmingly minorities and women. Because I think it's critically important – and many of them are from underprivileged backgrounds – hugely important that they see early on in life what's possible. That they see what it means to operate in a professional setting so that they can aspire to do more when they are in the classroom. It puts a meaning to what they think is esoteric, because I remember when I was in school...I said, "I'll never use this calculus, differential equations, derivatives and all. I will never use that mess." Well, I found that I use those things, but it was not meaningful to me when I was studying the theory. I didn't understand it. Well, it's important that these kids now know that when their parents are pushing them to take AP level courses in high school, and they think, "Why do I ever need that mess?" well, it's not mess...here is a Black man that's using that stuff in a professional setting. "So who am I, as a Hispanic man or woman, or as an Asian man or woman, or as a Black man or woman, to say that I too can't learn?"

Research Question #4

How do the management values of the African American managers impact their work experiences within their organizations?

The informants' responses were interpreted and broken down as follows:

- 70% network with other African American professionals outside the company through professional organizations or through professionals with whom they have relationships in other companies.
- 10% network with other African Americans at her company.
- 20% do not express any networking.
- 80% have little to no social engagements with colleagues and subordinates outside the workplace. The limited engagements are work-related social events.
- 20% engage with some colleagues on both a work-related and purely social basis.

These African American managers clearly share similar experiences having few African American peers or superiors to relate to within their own corporate environments. Each informant finds ways to compensate for the limited presence of those they can “relate to” during work hours. Outside of work, most of the informants have either very limited or no social engagement with their subordinates and colleagues.

Darren Washington

Darren speaks about engaging with his team outside of the office:

In many ways, there are some times you feel so all alone when you're an African American in senior management because my White counterparts, I feel, work together, have more common interests. And now I fall short of saying it's cliquish, but it's tough to break into that sometimes.

Occasionally, I have dinner with my direct reports. They've been to my house for a surprise birthday party for me. But I don't, I can't say they are my best friends outside of work. I'm acquainted with them. I'm not one that eats lunch with them every day. I usually eat lunch alone at my desk. So, there's not a lot of interaction outside of work. But I would classify every one of my direct reports as my friends.

There's even less social engagement with colleagues, other VP's, with the exception of one individual who is also African American:

The woman I report to now is the EVP of Operations. She came to the same company I'm in, and we worked together in Indiana. So, I followed her here. We're friends outside of work. Our families aren't together every weekend, but she is my friend as well as my colleague; and I would say she is the only other person of an executive level that I hang out with. That's quite different than my former employer because here I am one of only two African American VP's. Where I used to work, there were several.

Darren holds up a picture that he'd brought with him from his office desk.

“There were 17 of us, and we had what we called the Black Officers' network.”

We met together formally every month, and several of us were very close friends and hung out socially and drew on our experiences from work. A couple guys were in the same fraternity as I was, Alpha Phi Alpha, and there was more of a kindred spirit. I think they understood the challenges that I had in working in a majority organization. So I had more people to interact with and draw experience from. I think people tend to gather around their own. And even though we in management all have the same financial goals, you are not really part of the clique.

Michael Rollins

Michael discusses how he compensates for the small presence of African American colleagues by staying connected with those who are in leadership roles even if they are outside of his own company.

There's a need to establish relationships with other Black managers not in your industry, in your industry, and in other adjacent industries. There is a big need for networking to learn the process that you need to go through in order to obtain that upper managers' buy-in that you are better than just a first-line manager, that you need to be a director, or VP – how do we get to that? How do we get to CEO? How did the boy from American Express get to be CEO?

Those things...it's very rare that I go to customers, and the director, or the CIO, or COO, or the people I call on, are Black. I can name the cities in America where that may happen. You know, that may happen in Atlanta. It may happen in Philadelphia. It may happen in New York. It may happen in Washington, DC. It may happen in L.A. or San Francisco and in Detroit. And every now and then it happens in Chicago. But other than those big cities, there is no representation in second and third and fourth line managers. If you're not in a big city, you don't have a prayer of making it.

I mean, it's not that many Black people [managers] I have a relationship with. [Have] some people in Atlanta... I don't have any [African American manager contacts] in New York or at Chicago. So, you just try to keep friends and relationships that way. But a lot of times, you know, between job or home and other things, you know, you've only got so much time in a day, I know, but you've got to keep a little lifeline out there. And that lifeline, you need to not only just be with your fellow African Americans, but you need some Hispanic or White and...

Michael does spend some social time with his team, which he believes is important.

You know, some of them I like to play golf. If they do the things I like to do after work, then I play with them. But I'm not a big museum-goer, so I'm not going to go to a museum with them. But as long as they like to play golf, I play golf with them. The ones that like to play basketball, when I play, I play with them. The ones that like to go drinking, I go drinking with them. You know, so I do interact with them...but normally I'm not running in and out of their

houses and that kind of stuff like that. I see them after work, but it's normally just for a social occasion like that.

His social interaction with colleagues is different, however:

That's selective. You know...I probably have interacted more with my team outside of work than I do with my colleagues outside of work. I've got a couple buddies that are just that, buddies. And it doesn't matter whether they are colleagues or not, we are going to be friends. So outside of work I interact with them, but the other colleagues that are just business-related...we don't interact outside of work.

Charles Mathis

Charles reflects upon not just having a limited presence of African American colleagues to relate to on-the-job, but the regret of not having built a base of Black friends and contacts normally established through relationships started in school.

I lament that I didn't go to a Black college. When I see the alumni associations from those schools, and the friends that I have who went to those schools, and the allegiance that they have having gone to those schools – well, I went to a school that had 45 Black people out of 5,000 students. So, the allegiance that most of us have to that place isn't what you would want that experience to have been. You know, spending four years in a place where people were mostly trying to get rid of you, as opposed to grow you, you know, leads to a very different experience.

And so, you don't want to work in a place for 45 years where the people – where you constantly are feeling like, “everything that I do is being looked at under a microscope.” Now, it may be that that is the reality, but, you know, if you feel that way every day, doesn't that bring a lot of tension and disharmony into your life? So, my perspective when I came to work here [at his company] was, I was going to be myself. And if being myself got me fired, well, there were other places I could go and work because I had two degrees. There was a demand for people who had the kind of talents that I had, or at least the paper that I had. To a certain extent, there was a demand for people who looked like I did.

Charles describes his limited social engagement with his direct reports:

I've had a couple of them over to the house for barbecues. I've been to at least two of their houses for dinner because I've known them a long time. We've gone to some other social events. But would I say that those people are my friends? No.

Speaking of his colleagues: "They are all basically work relationships. Most of my colleagues are in different locations, so I don't interact with them on a day-to-day basis."

Kayla Mitchell

Kayla acknowledges that while she serves as a "connection" for other African American employees; there is hardly anyone who she can turn to in the company:

There is no connection higher. You know, because I have not – there are very, very few, peers at my level who are African Americans and females, for sure...there are not that many African Americans or minorities represented. So, I am that connection for a lot of employees. The employee base is very diverse. The management...

She then realizes that the higher you go position-wise in the company, the more difficult it is to find that African American who you can relate to professionally.

Although she does believe that networking is important to make those connections, she admits that it is something that she needs to work on doing.

Regarding interacting with co-workers in social gatherings outside the office:

That's just more of a personal thing for me because I have young kids. I dread those things, actually. I'll make up any excuse... If I'm traveling and I'm at their site, then it's more of a team building. That's more of an opportunity for me to, bond or whatever. When I did manage in-town people, I had a very select group...and it may be lunch. It was rarely after hours. If somebody was leaving...that's different. But routinely, no.

The same was true with colleagues: “I’ve got two counterparts who’ve both asked in different cases to come to their homes for whatever, get together. It’s too far. I can’t find a baby-sitter. I mean, I have no desire.”

Tracey Collins

Tracey discusses the importance of having close by, those to whom you can relate:

I think it’s just important that you get to discuss, what you’ve been through. What they may have been through. How they dealt with it. How do you get through some of the issues...it’s a support system.

I know, for me right now some friends that I have – we get together and we talk about some of our experiences sometimes...but as far as management, I don’t have any because the ones that were there [in the company] who I really could talk to have since left the company. So, there’s not many of them there that I could say, yes, that they [African American managers] have a support group. They don’t.

Tracey describes her limited social engagement with her co-workers:

Mainly because I have my family, so I don’t – I can’t do anything... But I have gone to social events – I guess I think of weddings, showers, different things like that. But to say that I actually just hang out with my team, I don’t do a lot; and mainly because I have a family. So, it is very little.

Ray Williams

Ray maintains a connection with other African American managers through his involvement in various networks such as the Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering (TAME): “I’m an active member, and I make it to a couple events during the year.”

Ray takes time with his team members outside the workplace, but acknowledges his limited time.

Every once in a while...we will have like a mini-celebration when it is someone's work anniversary. We will get together and just have something for them. Last year we – the group, we all went to an Astros baseball game. And just to get away from the office and have fun and, you know, not worry about work, even though everybody's cell phone went off while we were there because our work is 24/7. But I do get out. Maybe I can get out a little bit more, but there's some other things I need to do that I think has a higher priority.

Ray tells a story, however, of an issue of culture clash when he tried to 'hang out' with a White colleague:

On business trips. I was in Denver once, and this guy says, "Hey, let's go do something after class today." So I said, "Sure." I said, "Just tell me where." So, they picked a place, and we went there. And it was almost equivalent to a country and western bar. Asked if it was fine, I said, "You know, country and western music ain't too far away from the blues. They're always crying. They're crying into something." And so I talked – I had met a few people around the hotel. Asked them where a good jazz bar where they just kind of relax. And they said, "Well, here's one," and I got directions and everything. Say, "Hey, what you want to do tonight?" "Tell you what, I found this little jazz bar, you know. We can go there and just kind of relax a little bit." He asked, "Is it safe?" I said, "Look. Tell you what. You don't have to go." I said, "Now, I went to this place with you the other night and I never once asked you if it was safe. But I come up with a place that may or may not be in a Black neighborhood, and your first question is, 'Is it safe?'" "Well, I didn't mean that." I said, "yes, you did." I said: "because the first thing that came to your mind is, 'I'm going to be this White person in this Black environment.' You're asking about your safety." I said, "I never even questioned, I mean, worried about..." I said, "I just went with you." And I didn't go with them. I said, "Y'all go where you want to go." And I went to my little jazz bar and just had me a good time, just kind of relaxing and just listening to music.

Valerie Dawson

Valerie feels the need to demonstrate the sadness of the situation of minorities in management roles:

I mean, just look around us. Look around us. At the company I'm with – oh, I want to say there are maybe 6,000 employees. Now, of those 6,000, there may be a dozen minority first-line managers. A dozen! Out of 6,000 people. There

may be two at the next level up. One above that. What's wrong with that picture?

There are companies that are constantly trying to reach customers that look like us, but we're never sitting at the table with our customers who look like us to try to help get business for people like us. Tell me what's wrong with that picture? We have one Black account manager and one Black inside sales rep. One and one – two in all of the company...you tell me what's wrong with that picture.

In terms of her relationships with co-workers outside the office:

I am very careful not to get too personal with anyone who reports to me, or even one that I report to. I don't invite them over to my house. I don't go to theirs. I don't go to birthday parties. I don't – you know, I just don't. I send cards. I recognize what's going on in their lives. But that's a very thin line. I remember once I gave a Christmas party for my team. I saw a side of four of my team that I would prefer not to have seen. All the drinking and the smoking and the party, party, party and talking trash and getting wild that they do once they drink. It made me quite uncomfortable. And how it had me look at them in a different light later. I'm careful not to ever drink, do anything, around them because I never want them to remind me of anything later. I don't want to cross that boundary with them.

Leyla Nichols

Leyla is reminded of the support team that bonded among African Americans at her company:

We all would get together and try to share our workload and what we're doing. And share the knowledge. How did you get that done? What tool are you using? What's easier for you? You know, what are you doing? So, we really shared a lot, and we would talk a lot off line, you know, about the frustration, about the things that we see around the office. So, we had a really good relationship. And sometimes you would see, if you look at the minutes of the meeting, all the minorities on one end of the table and all the other managers on the other end.

However, she very quickly expresses the boundaries of the relationships with her team:

Oh, I didn't cross any boundaries. I tried to keep it professional, but still let them share what was going on with them. Not outside of the office. I had kind of got a little in trouble...one time – not really in trouble, just heard, learned from others' experience that another manager went out and some things got back to the office. And that was a no-no. So, I just kept everything strictly in the office. No outside affairs, only company-sponsored programs.

Her relationships with some colleagues were different:

I would interact with colleagues on my team that I managed. You know, we were managers all on team reporting to one director. I would interact with them outside of the office. But senior management, we would sometimes have outside meetings, and that would be the extent of that.

Rhonda Jackson

Rhonda, speaks of the scarcity of African American representation among upper management:

From a senior management standpoint, we had one VP, and his focus was more on developing others, and particularly other females. In terms of people who were maybe senior managers but not at the VP level, they were few and far between. I mean, there was just so few that to build a relationship with them – and they had to meet demands of a family and – it was just tough. I would say they were probably pretty receptive, but every person, every African American in the organization wanted to talk to them. So, you know, it was just – they were taxed.

She also expresses social interaction with African American colleagues as very limited as well:

In terms of my peer group...we got along great. I mean, we shared things pretty regularly. But, again, I was married, trying to hold down a family and I lived 35 miles away from my workplace.

However, Rhonda stays active in the NSBE and the Black MBA Society to maintain connection with other African American professionals.

Rhonda explains the limited interaction with her peers outside the workplace:

Had I been a male, I probably would have invested more time outside of work with my peers. But because I was a female – I was a single female for the first five years of my career – and so certainly didn't want to do anything that would be misconstrued later. And then, being a married female for the rest of the time, definitely didn't want to, you know, have anything questionable come up and any of that kind of stuff. I think that – and again, for me, from the way I was raised – made me a lot more conservative in investing time and outside of work, which a lot of people do. And that I didn't realize at the very beginning. And in terms of, just being honest, the conversations – the best conversations for me are with the guys because we have the common work experience. We have the sports in common – I'm an avid sports fan.

You know, typically if the ladies are stay-at-home ladies, which a lot of them were when I was in operations, you know, we just didn't have anything in common. And when I had a child, yeah, we had a little bit more in common, but not really. So, it was just kind of a disconnect.

Darnell Jenkins

Darnell identifies the one individual in his company to whom he can best relate in terms of his experience as an African American executive:

Our CIO is an African American woman. And the rest of them don't look like us.... We're an organization that, I think, lukewarmly values diversity. I'll say that we're getting much better. We have an executive body that has more diversity than it has ever had.

Still, Darnell is the executive sponsor for their African American affinity group.

In terms of his position on socializing with his team outside the workplace, he expounds:

I intentionally do not personally socialize with anybody on our team outside work. And that may be unusual, but that's a conscious decision that I made many, many, many years ago. Because I don't want the lines cluttered and to think – two things: Thinking that I am interfering in their personal lives and I don't want to confront the probability of preferred or special treatment because of some special relationship that I've developed with someone.

I care about them personally, deeply. But I don't go to happy hours because I don't go to happy hours. I travel a lot, and sometimes I travel with members of

the team – we may eat together. Eating on the road with someone is a little bit different than when I'm here in town, running out to happy hour and all those kinds of things...I don't go out with them. We have a good time at work. We laugh. You know, while we get our jobs done, it's not a tense, tension-filled environment.

Regarding spending time with his colleagues:

We spend healthy time together. Because I am not in Washington, DC., I don't reside there, I'm there often. I participate in all of our activities that need to be participated in. But the social quote "gatherings" that we have, like occasionally the CEO will have us over to his place. I always will travel there for that. And occasionally my wife will go with me for those because I think it's important that we know each other as holistically as we can.

I don't draw as much of a line there [with colleagues] as I do with my immediate team. Although there's not an excessive amount of that [socializing]... part of it [participating] is because I am not there. But I don't think the ones that are there spend excessive amounts of time outside of work with each other. In fact, I know they don't.

Research Question #5

How closely aligned are the African American responses in the Peppas study to the experiences reflected by the sample group in this study?

In this study, informants share their management experiences which address some management values (Appendix D) explored in the Peppas (2002) study regarding subcultural approaches to management. Table 2 presents those management values African Americans preferred in the Peppas study that are also addressed in the findings of this study.

Key findings in the Peppas (2002) study show no significant difference between African American and Euro American management values. However, the purpose of this study was not to compare the management values of the two cultures, but rather examine more closely the experiences of African American managers to determine if

qualitative inquiry yielded deeper insight than the quantitative measures rendered regarding some of the those management values.

Table 2. African American Management Value Preferences Found in the Peppas Study and Relevant to This Study

| Management Values | African American Preferences in the Peppas Study |
|--|--|
| <u>Planning, Evaluating, Innovating</u> Abstract/Concrete | Concrete |
| <u>Organizing and Controlling</u> Individualism/Collectivism Dependence/Independence | Individualism Independence |
| <u>Recruiting, Selecting, Rewarding</u> Affiliation/Achievement Ascription/Affiliation | Achievement Achievement |
| <u>Leadership</u> External/Internal | Internal |
| <u>Communication</u> One-way/Two-Way | Two-Way |
| <u>Relationships Between Work and Social Life</u> Integrated/Separated | Separation |

The discussion below examines alignment of some the informants' responses to relevant key findings in the Peppas study.

Planning, Evaluating, Innovating

Portions of the findings in the Peppas (2002) study reveal these preferences:

[African Americans] thought that plans should be based upon and evaluated in terms of projected future benefit with little regard for customs and traditions, and that plans should be made and evaluated in terms of concrete, quantifiable results. Further, in terms of planning, [they] felt that plans should be based upon the recognition that the resources necessary for, as well as the benefits to be gained from, individual and organizational activity can be obtained by everyone to the extent that they are willing to seek, develop, and utilize them.

Finally, [they] felt that the older personnel in an organization should be given as much or more respect than the younger personnel because the older individuals know more. (p. 51)

The informants of this study hold high regard for taking the organization forward. In fact, this was often reflected in their strategies for staffing and selection as one informant illustrated:

If I've got a cliquy group that's been together for 10, 15, 20 years, and every time we try to get something done, you get this unified front of, "Well, we can't do this because of that," or, "Here's the way we ought to do it," – darn it, I'm looking to put somebody in there who's got some different thoughts, different experience, can stand up, and help and kind of break some of that up.

One informant even confronted the "set in their ways" attitude that she believed was evident in the more mature workers. She has a desire to, "show them how the new era of the workplace does things...let them know that learning is great. 'Be a lifelong learner. There's nothing wrong with changing.'" Also, some of the informants spoke of assuming their roles during points of organizational mergers and transition. So, it was a natural posture to enter their roles with the intent for change.

These managers seemed to believe that it is their duty to take the organization forward and deliver concrete performance, as one informant describes success in the group:

You know where your team is working together as a team. And they are sharing stories. They are sharing experiences. They are sharing technical materials. They are mentoring each other in things that – you may be weak in this, and I may be strong in that – and they get together, put their heads together, and improve each other in areas that they are different.

But, he is quick to add the bottom line:

If you make your quota, then you are successful. That's really all they want to know. Is your team pulling together?...I also evaluate as to whether or not we

are being effective. Where we make sales calls, are we making them a closing? Or helping them sell seven out of ten? So, that's also one of my measurements as well as that – that's how we get paid. So, I kind of measure that as well.

One informant expresses her values succinctly regarding metrics, “Here’s why we’re here, first and foremost, is to make a contribution. You have to always be able to demonstrate what your worth is, what you have contributed.” Another informant demonstrates how he has designed an environment of metrics:

We measure everything. And we actually developed an incentive plan based on collective performance. So, I’ve created an environment of competition, friendly competition. And the sequel to that, they can earn up to \$2,000 more a year in incentives, based solely on their performance.

When determining who they relied upon most often in the workplace, mature experienced employees or young and energetic employees, most of the informants immediately say that they deferred to the most experienced individual. However, after pondering the question, they would alter the response and say, “it depends.” They all struggle with giving a black or white response to that question.

Considering the backgrounds of these informants – engineering, banking, technology, finance, etc. – one may clearly see their propensity toward applying concrete measures.

Organizing and Controlling

The Peppas (2002) study also finds the following:

African American[s]...felt that organizational structure and controls should emphasize individual growth and development within the organization and a high concern for job satisfaction. They believed that emphasis should be placed on individual freedom and that organizational structures should be altered to meet individual needs. Further, [African Americans] felt that authority and responsibility should be decentralized and that organizational structure should

allow for self-reliance and individual accountability for decisions and results.
(p. 53)

The managers of this study stress the importance and value of developing their resources in order to get the most out of them as the employee has an opportunity to also reach their potential:

I challenge people to get their securities license. I do that....I am encouraging people to get that designation [NASD license] and to keep learning so they grow and develop. And they really can't be promoted unless they get designation.

The majority of these managers allow their employees to make decisions regarding their own projects, sometimes even against the strong urge for the manager to step in and control:

I – one of the things I think I do well is empower people to do their job. Okay. Now, having said that, the trust piece of it is really built as individuals – I hate to say prove themselves... You know, my tendency is to be a micromanager, to want to do everything myself. But I give folks a chance to, you know, to try to define the problem. Give them a chance to do it, come back, we discuss it; and based on that, you know, the leash either gets longer or shorter.

Still, all of the managers believe that they foster open, empowering, and trusting environments. They share their philosophies of leadership and management that commonly place emphasis on valuing people. They demonstrate their people skills describing their style of reward and recognition, interpersonal interactions, and sensitivity. However, one informant admits the reluctance of some team members to seek her help. She explains why:

My assistant would let me know. Some individuals didn't feel comfortable coming to tell me if there was a problem because they thought that I wouldn't, you know, handle the problem; or they just didn't want to make any waves. Some tried to figure out [solutions] for themselves, just trying to keep me out of the loop, not thinking it was worthy enough to bother me with.

Interestingly, another informant describes her relationship with her team as one of mutual respect, but also she expresses the following:

There were a couple of people who reported to me who thought that, you know, they made so much money, and they had been there so long, and they were so valuable that they didn't have to listen to me. But that quickly turned around when they realized that I had the final voice on some things for their careers. But for the most part, it [team relationship] was one of respect... I had a good group... it was a mutual thing to where I didn't try to do their jobs, or they didn't try to tell me how to do mine.

Still, all believe that they foster open environments and with clear accountability and empowerment.

Recruiting, Selecting, Rewarding

The Peppas (2002) study expresses the following:

[African Americans] felt that emphasis should be placed on recruiting and selecting persons who have unique accomplishments and are highly skilled in areas of organizational need. Persons should be rewarded with more challenging and complex tasks and be given greater responsibility to motivate them to work against their own standards of excellence. In addition, both groups agreed that unusual competence, accomplishments, and highly developed skills necessary to the organization (as opposed to social and family backgrounds) should be sought in recruiting and selecting personnel, with rewards given to those who perform best under competitive conditions. (p. 53)

All of the informants express that ascription (social or family connections) is not a consideration while selecting resources for their organization. However, an exception is cited for considering affiliations such as alma maters, academic, or professional organizations when "selling" a candidate to the upper ranks.

While they all say that ascription does not play a role in their resource selection evaluation, they do all emphasize achievement as the most important aspect of their selections. They all reward and recognize their people in forms that would satisfy them

intrinsically and extrinsically. Only one informant does not use monetary rewards due to budget constraints.

Leadership

The Peppas (2002) study expresses

...[African Americans] believed that the threat of punishment and external controls are not the only means for getting people to work toward organizational objectives....[African Americans] believed that people exercise self-direction and self-control toward achieving objectives to which they are committed. (p. 53)

These managers of this study express that they strive to keep their teams happy because they believe that happy and satisfied employees are productive. Most of them speak of disdain for managing by intimidation and expressly make the effort to build open relationships.

Communication

Peppas (2002) finds the following:

African Americans...felt that information should flow both up and down through the organization with subordinates suggesting alternatives to their superiors and testing alternatives in order to arrive at the best decision. (p. 53)

All of the informants say that communication is and should be open and flowing both ways in their organizations. They illustrate how they remain in touch and engage with their teams formally and informally. However, two informants do mention a dependence upon administrative assistance to keep them informed of occurrences on their teams. This informant shares how it works:

I usually have an ally, someone who was watching my back. Someone who felt closer to me than – because, you know...Someone who would be that “you didn’t hear this from me, but I’m going to tell you what’s going on just because

I don't want you to blindsided." I would usually have one of those who would help me [stay] informed of what was going on.

Most of the informants engage their people in some aspects of decision-making such as interviewing job candidates. The pooling of thought is done for two reasons, giving the team a stake in the game and arriving at the best decision.

Well, we do most things by what we might describe as consensus decision-making, which means, we all get in a room and express ideas, and in the end, I say, "Oh, this is what I heard, and this is what we're going to do." And that's a consensus...And then there's power. There's power, and there's authority that goes with the position. And while we can all debate...The purpose of giving them the voice is ultimately getting to a better decision. Because if you are the smartest person in the world, and you've got all the right answers, then you don't need the other 99 people who are there. And you can get rid of that overhead. But because they probably can add some value... as an organization, we like to have that spirited debate and discussion; but at the end of the day, we have to move forward on some line, you know, and some purpose. And that is left up to either the management team or the manager. And that's at all levels. That in the end, somebody has to say, "This way is north."

Another informant describes decision-making in his organization this way:

...early on with this view that I have, I told them plainly, I love hearing the contrarian's point of view because I think it gives me the opportunity to look at my organization from a lot of different perspectives. I may not always agree with their perspective, but if their story is compelling, I can be persuaded.

I try to manage by consensus, so I want to hear everyone's ideas. Even though most of the time I know exactly what I want. But I listen to everyone around the table, and I try to go with the group's consensus. Now, every good leader knows the buck stops with him or her. So, there are instances where I listen to everyone's perspective, but I know where we're going strategically, and I just have to be the boss.

All informants say they engage their teams in decision-making to some degree.

Relations Between Work and Social Life

Peppas (2002) also finds:

[African Americans] felt that there should be considerable concern for separation of work and social relationships with care to avoid “conflicts of interest” and personal obligations that might affect job performance. (p. 54)

All informants of this study express limited-to-no social involvement with team members outside the workplace for these reasons: (a) to avoid conflict of interest, (b) family priorities, and (c) no interest. Only two informants express a deliberate effort to socially engage.

Emergent Themes

An unexpected finding in this study reveals that these African American managers believe that they are observed more closely than others. They also feel that they are challenged and tested by others particularly because *they* must prove their worthiness. Many also offer their thoughts on how to survive such challenges and even succeed – being on guard and going the extra mile or better.

Darren

What I noticed early on in my leadership career was, people will question and really probe to see if you really knew your stuff. That was my perception, and so I was always working really hard to make sure I knew my stuff. All the details...really understand what they mean. Because I didn't want to give anyone the opportunity to say, “He got the job because he's an African American.” I think that's something that I've had to overcome during my management career. And I've talked to my counterparts, and that's something they've also seen during the course of their career.

Darren acknowledges that these challenges may also come from within:

It's really intriguing, this story. When I first came here, every direct report I had was African American. And what I found is that we were cohesive, but I first – when at first got here, “Oh wow, we can relax. Our boss is an African

American.” But my challenge for then was, “There’s just no relaxing because dollars are green, and we are challenged to produce, no matter what color we are.” So, I had to really overcome that when I first got here. I think being an African American in leadership, you have to prove that you know your stuff.

He shares some wisdom of how to make critical connections when striving to succeed in the large companies:

Even though we in management all have the same financial goals, you are not really part of the clique if you know what that means. And so you have to go beyond. You have to almost transcend your race to be a part of things that are normal and customary for the majority people. I’ll give you an example.... I used to play golf all the time. I never liked golf as a young man, but what I learned in business is that most of the people in management as most of the customers were White, they play golf. Me and my friends didn’t grow up playing golf, so I had to learn the game because that’s where deals were done, on the golf course and in the clubhouse and on the way to the golf course.

You do have to do that. I think my White counterparts don’t have to think about that kind of thing because they fit in without going that extra mile and having to do things they are not used to doing.

Darren shares another pearl of wisdom:

I think it is a wonderful thing I’ve learned in my life. And you wouldn’t know it because I don’t have multiple degrees. But I think one of the things that helped me as an African American professional was to read and learn as much as I could. I never want to stop. And I think the more you know, the more you are able to operate in different circles. It makes you more conversive on many different levels. And I don’t think you can ever get hurt by that. I think knowledge helps you transcend any diversity issues.

Michael

Credibility...that’s your number one challenge. There is a stereotype that is pervasive in the world, and in the business world, I should say, that Black folks don’t know what they are talking about, or they don’t give your ideas the credence that they deserve until something happens in a disaster mode, and then you are called in to straighten out the problem.

You have to earn the respect from your subordinates. Just because they make you the manager of the group, does not give you any rights whatsoever. And as

a man of color, you really have to earn your rights. You are actually tested. I have actually been tested several times by several of my employees that did not have an open mind, a different view of the world. I've not reason to believe. I know it. The questions that I field are nowhere near the questions that my colleagues hear. The questions that I am asked sometimes at staff meetings by certain employees – let's face it, if you've got a prejudiced employee, then he's not going to give you the credibility that he would give a White person, a White manager.

Michael learned tactics of survival some time ago:

...the big difference [in credibility] is, sometimes the non-minorities can actually come in and hammer an idea in and then gain support. That's the biggest difference, I gain support first, and then hammer the idea in.

I think as Black people we think that if we go up there and do a hell of a job, that we are going to get promoted. And that's a myth. That is not correct. Your work will speak for itself once you get the job. But getting in that position, you need to do some networking. You need to do some kissing up. And a lot of times, we've got to tell each other that – the younger Blacks, "it's okay to kiss up." Because they come out with an attitude of, "That's Uncle Tomming." That's not Uncle Tomming. That's actually doing your job. Part of your job is that – making an impression on your manager, or your manager's manager, so that he will put your name in the hat. So, you've got to throw that old stereotype away, that that's Uncle Tomming.

Charles

Charles explains what he sees as the challenge:

Whenever you're Black in a predominantly White environment, there is a lot of discounting that can go on. There is a lot of testing that goes on. Everybody, to some extent...we maybe get tested more. So, I think the challenge is always to not take things personally. That some of the challenges, and some of the questioning, and some of what people often describe as having to continuously prove yourself, that happens to everybody.

He advises on how to combat those challenges:

I have an ability or maybe an experience of not taking most things that happen to me as personal things, but as systemic things, and saying, "Some of these things happen to everybody. Maybe more of these things happen to people who look like me, but so what. You've got to go on. You can't whine."

I think for African Americans working in what we might describe as a corporate White world, that a key process to learn is that we can be ourselves and we can do a good job without giving up who we are. So, many people will be tested by the organization... and I see this in younger people, particularly, who did not experience firsthand the civil rights struggle, didn't learn their history, and who think, "Well, if I just do what these other people do who are here, then I will be judged the way that they are judged." And then they're naïve, as you well know. Being able to communicate in a positive way to people, without making it sound so onerous that you can't be successful like that, is a challenge...to impart reality without imparting defeatism.

So we ought to be talking about those things – that when somebody pulls you aside and talks about issues and how those issues are different because of who you are and how you look, that you just can't discount that as, "Well, that's somebody who is old, you know, just doesn't understand." And that older person who is trying to impart that wisdom needs to try to find the right mechanism to help educate that younger brother or sister about the reality of our situation without them feeling, "Well, there's really no room for me to play inside the sandbox."

Kayla

Kayla also believes that credibility is a significant challenge for African

American managers:

I mean, you have to get in there and get to be confident. And if you show any sign of weakness, you know, they are going to go out for blood. So again, that was earlier on...you kind of have to prove yourself, and each day is a new opportunity to prove yourself. But once they figure out, "Oh, okay, she's pretty solid," or, "She's got a lot of authority," or, "She can make or break..." then that kind of puts everybody at bay, and they kind of figure out, "Okay, I need to work with her, and she's on my side. She's here to help me"

Although Kayla admits that she is not good at politics, her weapon of choice for succeeding is competence:

You know, that's one area [politics] that I probably need to be a little bit more in tune to the reality of it. But I deal with it by being competent. That's how I deal with it...and that's how I think. Okay, if I can deliver, if I can provide a service, if I can help someone out of a situation, if they call me for help and I

can help them, that's how I build political capital with everyone. It's not by, "Oh, you know, let's go have a drink, and..."

Tracey

My biggest challenge, just earning the respect as a manager. Truly a manager, not just a figurehead that they've put here to hold a spot...I think, again, it's the respect, earning the respect of all the individuals that you work with. They may know you have the knowledge, but they still sometimes don't respect you for what you know. You are often challenged at what you know.

I've learned – I'm not a very confrontational person, so I find myself sometimes having to learn to stand my ground. I've had a couple of my managers along the way tell me that. "You know, you have to learn to stand your ground..."but I think that sometimes you just have to earn your respect.

Ray

Ray sees his first challenge as being recognized as simply a manager:

...to get them to eventually understand that I am a manager. I just happen to be African American – not let them think that I am an African American manager. And they may think it's not that important, but I do. Because in the end, I'm a human being, and I also happen to be an African American – part of that will become obvious as soon as you see me. I think people naturally describe you by your race.... In fact, I actually rejected a job in Alaska because they said they were looking for a Black manager. I thought, "You call me back when you're looking for a manager." End of story.

His second challenge is being able to outperform the other managers.

Because I stopped looking at the color line a long, long time ago. And I tell people right now, "You know, if you really want to make a difference, that really there's just one color, green." And I say, "You've got to really – even if you don't believe it, you've got to say it over and over again." And I said, "That's how you make the difference. You perform well." And my biggest challenge is at this time to outperform guys that are in the same position that I am.

I've learned over the years, a lot of things have happened because I was an African American that you really have to get over that and move on. You know, because if you stayed there and just wallowed in it, it wouldn't do you any good. Not that I liked what happened, but I knew I had to move on.

Another survival tip that Ray highlights is being careful in professional-social gatherings:

I try not to give them these certain situations. You know, a lot of times you avoid trouble by avoiding where trouble is. If trouble's over there, you stay away from it. It sounds pretty simple...because I guarantee that somebody's watching, you know, and they will always think the worst of the situation ...never think anything positive of you.

Valerie

Valerie at first found overcoming some cultural boundaries a challenge – managing across cultures and races:

...getting the respect that I need to be a good – to continue to do my job, you know, without having my skin and my gender as an issue, is something that just takes a little bit of time to get beyond.

She also acknowledges the existence of the “proving game”:

I believe that this whole proving game that they [current organization] are putting me through, each opportunity that they can to say, “Oh, well, you have to prove that you're worthy of more people again, and prove that you're worthy of leading the team.” That to me is crap. It's unfortunate that those who look like us have to constantly prove that we can have some more people again. When they begin leveling off, we're not the first ones that are considered. It's the others who are right around us.

We can work the hardest. But it doesn't matter. You know, I have a teenager that I tell all the time, “You still have to work twice as hard to get half as far.” I wish there was something we could do to turn it around, to where the first thing they see when we walk in a room is not just, “Oh, it's a Black person.” They see Black first, and they put limits on what they think we can go do because we're Black folks. It's this lazy stigma that's stuck with us time and time again that makes them believe that laziness is going to overshadow productivity.

That's not true. That's not reality. But in the minds of our White counterparts here, that's the way they see us. They look at us as though, because we're Black, and two or three of us are gathered, we're plotting. We're conspiring. But they don't choose to include us. The good old boy network is still alive and well. Five White men all sit together at lunch. You ask to join them. The

conversation changes, or it dries, or it dies...because we're not part of that network. That's where those decisions are made. The golf course is where those decisions are made. We don't golf. We don't sit and drink beer after work with these guys. But yet, when we don't, then we're not part of the clique. We're not trying to be where they are. It shouldn't take that, because we value family. I'd rather go home and spend time sitting with my son and my husband, having a conversation, instead of figuring out how to climb the ladder.

Valerie reflects once again about the challenge of gaining respect as a manager:

Respect...gaining their respect. Making them realize that just because I don't come from where they come from, and I don't look like them, act like them, talk like them, party like them, they did not want to give me the respect that I had. And I had to constantly come back and do a sales pitch, which I used to shy away from doing. I didn't feel like I would have to sell myself to my team because no one else ever did it for me. It was, "This is what you have. Take it or leave it."

So, I at first would approach it that way. And I kept going through all this history of where I come from and proving that I'm worthy of being in the position that I have, until I could see all the resistance that I was getting. Then once they'd realized that I'd had just as strong a technical background as they did, and I had programmed for the space shuttle, and I had programmed for the oil and gas industry, it immediately would change, so much so that each time that I would acquire a new set of resources, my management above me would say, "The first time that you get in front of them, I want to make sure that you sell yourself, and want you to let them know all about where you come from. Give them a good marketing background on yourself." And this is what was constantly required from me to gain my acceptance by my team. Not just, "We've promoted you to this position because you're qualified." No. "You're qualified, however, we want everybody else to know that you are really qualified." That's qualified qualification. Does that make sense?

Being conscious of constant scrutiny, Valerie developed a survival tactic of self-protection:

If we write or speak anything, every single word we say, they hang on. If we state it not quite like we're thinking it, there's repercussions. If we speak something that's going to offend someone, three levels up, three levels down, three levels around, it gets blasted over to all parts of the company. So, you've got to know that anything you say, you better be okay with it getting all the way up to the CEO...because they love to exploit the fact, so that they're thinking

that our words are going to be something that are going to come back to bite us later. So, I'm careful now. I know exactly how to be politically correct with anything I say. Keep the harsh words out. But they don't care. They will say it and not care....I type with kid gloves on. I speak with them on.

Leyla

Leyla's challenge is slightly different – ageism:

...managing individuals who are more mature than I am in age...trying to reassure them, even though I am younger, I will not mislead them. I have a real rough time with more mature individuals previously reporting to me. With the past experience that I've had with these more mature individuals, I would not now take them as being just "set in their ways"...moving forward, if the opportunity ever presents itself, I know now to take a buy-in approach with those individuals. Show them how the new era of the workplace does things...let them know that "learning is great. Be a lifelong learner. There's nothing wrong with changing."

Leyla believes she has learned how to handle the issue:

Well, it took many meetings in the director's office. And one lady, they actually moved her from my team. She just was not having me as her manager. So, from that perspective, I knew everyone can't be moved from me. I'm going to have to learn how to make this work. So, I took some additional training, and now I make sure that I check with those individuals. "What's going on with you today? Is there anything that I can assist you with?" To me, they are more needed. With the younger people coming into the workplace, they give the impression that they're [the mature] not needed. But they are needed. We need their knowledge.

She also feels, however, the need for African Americans to "be better." Going back to what I said about me taking as much training as I could, because I felt I always had to do over and above, I was there from sunup to sundown to make sure that all my t's were crossed and my i's were dotted, so that I would never have to be called in about my work. So, it's very hard. You always have to do – to me, 10% more. If they want 100%, you have to do 110%.

The minority managers in the arena where I came from, you don't get all of the limelight exercises or special project. They'll give those to the other managers and expect for the minority managers to manage two teams, which could easily be over to 50 individuals. And we would have to still meet key performance measures, if you have to do one-on-ones and things like that. You still are

accountable for those 50 individuals one-on-one with no extension. So, that was very hard.

As a survivor, Leyla reads avidly of management-related topics and attends professional development in order to help her gain knowledge and insight to handling various challenges she confronts as a manager. She is also back on track to completing her bachelor's degree to eliminate the stigma of being without the academic credentials she deems critical in the professional realm.

Rhonda

Rhonda sees much of the challenges for African American lying within themselves:

I just don't see a lot of awareness around that [knowing your contribution to the business] as I talk to other African Americans about, "Here's why we're here, first and foremost, is to make a contribution. You have to always be able to demonstrate what your worth is, what you have contributed." ...But being career-minded, you know, my number one focus at work is, "How am I adding value?" If anybody walks up to me on any given day, bad or good, can I say, "Look, here's what I've done in the past 30 days," or "Here's what I've been working on the past six months."

If I'm honest and candid about what has made me successful versus what I see in other individuals, it's, number one, you have to be willing to step out there and not know. There have been ten jillion times when I didn't have a freaking clue. But I did not let that intimidate me. Okay? If somebody came up to me and said, "Oh, you mean you don't know that?" I said, "Huh, no I don't. Can you show me?" And got through it.

The other thing is, when people show you things, or when people are helping you, you've got to be A's and E's helping yourself. If somebody – when these individuals were mentoring me and they said, "Oh, you know, you need to go and find this book and read about this and blah-blah-blah," I went and got the book and I read it! You know what I mean? I didn't blow it off. And I don't see individuals willing to do that.

I mean, sometimes you will be in a position where you just flat don't know, where you just flat... You can't just up and go away. You've got to own it ...and be proactive about going out and finding the help that you needed. Everybody that you contact is not going to roll out the red carpet and say, "Oh, let me come help you." Some people are going to turn up their nose. Some people will say... But if you are persistent and polite, eventually somebody, even if it's just an admin assistant, will help. And I don't see people doing that. The first thing that happens is I see people withdraw. They stay in their office. They don't come out. They're embarrassed. Which, you know, you can be. But you've got to learn how to manage that. They start blaming people. Their attitude gets bad. You know what I mean? And it's one of those kinds of things. That is the number one thing [for minorities].

Rhonda continues to examine some of the issues with some African American workers:

And being able to – I hate to use this term, but being able to pull yourself up by your bootstraps and go to your supervisor. Say, "Hey, look, I know this is a gap. I know this is a blah-blah-blah." And a lot of it is, can be a function of your supervisor. Again, I was fortunate. Some supervisors will say, "Well, you know, maybe you're just not a fit and you just don't belong in the organization." That happens. Other supervisors or other people in the organization may say, "Well, you know, you really did okay." Or, "You know, your big gap is – that, that, or the other." Or, "Let me just tell you about my experience." And then from them telling you about their experience, you can pick up some things. You know, you may kind of have to dig the nuggets out this little 'let me tell you my story' deal.

And so I'm not as sympathetic with individuals who say, "Well, you know, this happened to me." – the victim mentality. I'm not sympathetic with that. I acknowledge fully that the world is not perfect, and that there are lots of obstacles out there. Okay. But I'm not sympathetic to someone who says, "Well, you know, I went to A&M on a full scholarship, but, you know, it was really hard. And, you know, nobody looked like me, and I flunked out."... I'm not really that sympathetic, you know. I'm not. Because the first thing I'm going to say is, "Okay, well, what did you do to try to help yourself?"

Offering some advice for survival and success, Rhonda states:

I guess, the one thing I would like to do is to just raise awareness around what is important to key decision-makers. I think if individuals, particularly African

Americans, knew really what was important to decision-makers, they could fare a whole lot better.

Because the perception out there – again, this just like [the perception of] me being a Republican – the perception out there is that African Americans underachieve, and they want a handout, and they blah-blah-blah, and this and that. And whenever they get a new data point that corroborates that, it makes it harder and harder to dispel. And I know it's tough. I know it's tough. I know it's hard. Because it was tough, it was hard for me, you know. And I just didn't care what people thought, to be honest. I'm like, "Look out for yourself. You got to deal with me."

In my mind, it's about being honest with yourself. Look in the mirror and say, "Look, I've got a gap. Everyone over here knows something that I don't know. I'm not sure what it is, but I'm going to go find it out." You know? As opposed to, "Oh, you know, they don't like me because I'm different." Or, "Oh, you know, they don't like me because I went to this school."... Very few people are just going to roll out the carpet to you. You know what I mean?

Darnell

Darnell warns of the naive assumption that holding an executive or leadership role means that you're "home free."

I know that I am, and our CEO, who is an African American woman, are challenged – that we are challenged more than any of our peers. My son said to me one time, "You're the boss. You've got it made." You never have it made. In this life, you are on a constant course of navigation to – ensuring that you are doing the job that you should be doing. You can never be presumptuous enough into thinking that quote, "You have it made." I'm not troubled at all, and I don't think – but I had hoped that I would live to see the day where gender and race were not significant in one's role. I have not seen that. I know a number of other minorities and women that have done very well professionally. With rare exceptions, the stories of – and sometimes horror stories – are still the same regarding some of the differences that we encounter as we navigate through our work lives. I accept that for what it is. Because it's not a show stopper, but believe that because it is what it is, that there is a complete obligation to stand tall and to tear through as many of the obstacles, burdens, walls that I can personally influence.

Regarding his commitment to diversity and his role to make a difference,

Darnell sensitively explains:

I hope you don't think this sounds militant, but I am not willing to accept the crap that White boys throw down at me sometimes. I don't take it any more, tolerate it any more. I confront it in the right way that will yield the results that I think is a positive result. But there used to be a time when some of the things that I do and say today would have a different impact on me than what it has today. And I think that the God that I serve has postured me in the position that I am in, not to be passive, not to be overly assertive, but to be real in the position that I'm in. And when I see opportunities to address things that would have the wrong impact, I can't rest...and I do address them, oftentimes with vigor. Selection decisions, I'm a firm believer that you don't change organizations in fell swoops. You don't do it all at one time. You change the face of organizations one decision at a time. It is easy for one to rationalize, "No," and uncomfortable oftentimes for those to make the decisions for "Yes" when it pushes you out of your own comfort zone.

I will not accept those who are my peers who expound their philosophy and their beliefs in the value of diverse teams, but yet when it comes to making individual selection decisions, always find ways to rationalize why the minority or the woman is not selected. And I've gotten to the point now where, while they don't owe me an obligation, when they are selecting those in their units, I always get a call now. "Let's talk about the list of candidates that I have for this high-level position that we have." And what I have seen is sometimes they just haven't thought about the global impact of what they're doing.

Darnell echoes the familiar acknowledgement of "being tested":

There's always going to be points of strain and stress. Who am I to think I am not going to get tested. They persecuted Jesus Christ for doing nothing but good. And who am I to think I'm going to walk through this life without difficulty, without pain and suffering. I don't think that. But what I do already know is that the future pain and suffering that I'll encounter is going to make me stronger for the next hurdle that's going to come. And I'm not fearful of life...ain't fearful of no man or woman.

Darnell offers practical advice for succeeding in life:

I don't believe in being cavalier, you know, shooting from the hip. I am a strong believer in preparation. I say to my son in particular – he is my oldest child – that oftentimes you sit back and you look at "brothers" who you think

are incredibly successful. And, yeah, you see the façade. I mean, you see them, they are eloquent. You see some of the fruits of their labor...but what you don't see are the times when they are in the office at five in the morning, or they are up late at night. All the preparation that's required.

Summary of Findings

The study provided insight to the researcher's stance – shedding light upon the researcher's consciousness of self and effort to manage subjectivity; informants' profiles – providing backgrounds of informants and demographic information of the informants; data analysis – presenting key and related elements appearing to be common across the informants' experiences that lend insight to the study's questions; and emergent themes – revealing unanticipated findings not addressed in the study questions.

The findings in this study mainly corroborate the findings of related values in the Peppas (2002) study. However, interpretation of the informants' behavioral experiences in a few instances slightly contrasted to their expressed beliefs. Emergent themes reveal a consistency in the belief of these African American managers that they are observed more closely than other non-minority managers and that they are challenged and tested by others particularly because *they* must prove their worthiness.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Today, global businesses acknowledge the criticality of being competitive in international markets; this new awakening also compels these businesses to not just understand the diverse cultures across which they manage and operate (Rodrigues, 1998), but to also recognize the impact of their own cultural grounding within their business context. However, little attention has been given to the subcultural (Nkomo, 1992; Peppas, 2001) aspects of business culture. One of the few studies examining subcultural management values was conducted by Peppas (2002). He conducted a comparative analysis between the subcultures of African Americans and Euro Americans and their management values. This study builds upon that quantitative research (Peppas, 2002), but focuses specifically on the management values of the African American subculture.

Purpose

While this study is similarly framed around some values examined in Peppas' (2002) research, the purpose of this study was to: (a) explore the African American subcultural experiences in practice through qualitative inquiry, (b) describe the experiences of African American managers through their emic views in order to elucidate management experiences from their subcultural perspectives, and (c) examine the management experiences of the African American subculture in an effort to

understand uniqueness or commonalities of their management values (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors) and how these values are expressed through practice.

Sample

The methodology utilized a purposive sample of 10 African American managers working in corporations across technology, financial services, oil and gas, healthcare, and banking industries. The informants' ages range from 38 to 55 years of age. These informants collectively hold five bachelors' degrees, four masters' degrees, and one informant has completed three years of college. The informants work for companies ranging in size from 3,000 to 92,000 employees. These informants manage organizations ranging in size from 12 to 1,000 workers. The amount of time these informants have spent in management ranges from 5 to 24 years.

Analysis of the Data

This basic qualitative, exploratory study employed semi-structured face-to-face interviews framed around some of the management values examined in the Peppas (2002) study. Data collected through taped interviews offered rich narratives that were later analyzed. Comparative analysis was conducted in order to identify patterns and emergent themes that were both common and unique. Interpretation of the data was also compared to research findings in the Peppas study.

Results of the Study

The data specifically revealed insight regarding aspects of management values examined in the Peppas (2002) study such as planning, evaluating, innovating; organizing and controlling; recruiting, selecting, rewarding; leadership;

communication; and relationships between work and social life. The findings in this study mainly corroborate the findings of those respective management values in the Peppas (2002) study. However, descriptive narratives of the informants' behavioral experiences in a few instances slightly contrasted to their expressed beliefs. For example, the Peppas (2002) study found that:

African American[s]...believed that emphasis should be placed on individual freedom and that organizational structures should be altered to meet individual needs. Further, [African Americans] felt that authority and responsibility should be decentralized and that organizational structure should allow for self-reliance and individual accountability for decisions and results. (p. 53)

While one informant believes that she provides empowerment, she also recognized her tendency to control or “micromanage.” She used the term “leash” to describe her degrees of empowerment. While she may verbally express that she empowers, deeper analysis of practice may or may not reveal differently. Another example of contrasting verbal and behavioral indicators was revealed as an informant expressed that she fosters an environment of open communication, however, proceeded to explain how she stays informed of what is happening among her team members through an ally that “has her back.”

While both of these informants may very well practice what they verbally expressed, qualitative inquiry provides that additional layer of insight that filters the interpretation of their own judgment. These informants shared their experiences, openly and truthfully. Their experiences also corroborate the responses in the Peppas (2002) study. However, we must be mindful of the fallacy of research instruments as Hofstede (1984) explains how we express values – what one *desires* may sometimes be

reflected in their deeds, while what one deems *desirable* may be reflected in how they may respond verbally to questionnaires, interviews, etc. As qualitative inquiry has given us more insight into the understanding of these management values and how they are expressed in behavior, more accurate interpretation of how these values are practiced may best be understood through field observation.

Emergent themes reveal a consistency in the belief of these African American managers that they are observed more closely than other non-minority managers and that they are challenged and tested by others particularly because *they* must prove their worthiness, leading to a common belief that they must perform better to acquire the same as non-minorities.

Repeatedly, these informants spoke of the daily consciousness that they need to arm themselves with in order to not become any more victimized than they felt they inevitably would be. They expressed the need to have a layer of guardedness that their White counterparts did not have to have. The terms “tested” and “prove” were consistently expressed by each of them as though it were a passage of rite that every African American who seeks to excel expects to endure. The question was posed by these informants often: “When will I be recognized as a manager and not an African American manager”? Also, “Why must I prove myself to my subordinates as well as colleagues?”

Still, these managers each devised ways of coping, surviving, and even succeeding in their work environments and careers. Interestingly, the survival capabilities were instilled in them early in life through their family values. The first

value was the confidence in being who they are and the ability to achieve whatever they dared to dream through hard work. Bell and Nkomo (2001) explain this value as defensive efficacy to describe this survival mechanism of Black women:

It is clearly an outgrowth of the armoring they received as young Black girls. A strong racial identity also helped the women have a firm sense of self-efficacy (belief in one's own competency) and helped them not internalize negative perceptions of their own competence. Defensive efficacy helped them to maintain self-confidence in the face of both the subtle and the sometimes blatant acts of racism they encountered in the early years of their corporate careers. Without defensive efficacy, such messages might have diminished their personal agency and derailed their managerial careers at an early age. (p. 127)

Through such grounding, the informants' reared to expect that they needed to "do better to get the same." Accepted as though it were a mantra for all African Americans who stepped out into the working world, it seemed to be an assumption of these informants that they would have to work harder than their White counterparts in order to first gain a management or leadership role and most certainly in order to succeed.

Bell and Nkomo (2001) discussed the findings of their study that revealed the beliefs of many African American women that they must be 1000% as good to progress:

Many of the African American women we interviewed believed they were held to higher and often different standards than their White colleagues, even when their credentials were extraordinary. Sixty-five percent of the African American women managers who participated in our national survey believed they had to outperform their White colleagues for the same rewards. (p. 145)

This study revealed a common groundwork in which the seeds were planted at a very early age to bolster and reinforce defensive efficacy and ensure success. That groundwork was education. Every informant had attended college and all had undergraduate or graduate degrees except one, who is in the process of completing a bachelor's degree with the intent to later pursue a doctorate. The value of education

was instilled in these individuals mainly through family values. Only one received inspiration primarily from a non-blood related source. Education was an “expectation” of the family regardless of the parents’ educational status:

Parents’ education, family circumstances, and social class are all correlated with achievement in the U.S. society. This is in part because these indicators may be predictors of family expectations about education and performance. However, high expectations are not the exclusive province of the well-educated or upwardly mobile. Indeed, a common theme among the overwhelmingly majority of our minority executives and managers, regardless of social background, was the emphasis their parents placed on education, achievement, and the importance of hard work. (Thomas & Gabarro, 1999, p. 88)

However, many of the informants came from families of educators such as parents, siblings, and parent’s siblings. “Education was not an option” was echoed by many of the informants. Thomas and Gabarro (1999) demonstrate that this value is apparently adopted by minorities overwhelmingly:

Two-thirds of the minority executives we studied there [Gant Electronics] held graduate degrees while only half of the White executives did. Several of the minority executives completed their graduate work after entering the workforce. In our interviews, minorities were more likely than Whites to tell us that their educational preparation contributed significantly to their career success by providing them with important training or qualifying credentials. (p. 87)

Conclusions

The interview data revealed that relevant management values in this study such as planning, evaluating, innovating; organizing and controlling; recruiting, selecting, rewarding; leadership; communication; and relationships between work and social life corroborated the data in the Peppas (2002) study. These were corroborated through the verbal expressions of the informants; however, additional insight gained indicates the need for closer and more in-depth examination to truly examine expressed and behaved

values. Findings in this study also concluded that education commonly stands at the foundation of these informants' value set and experiences, indicative that it is an important element for the success of a minority in the U.S. corporate arena.

Figure 2 illustrates the co-existing values of the African American manager. The subcultural values instilled earlier in life by family are transformed into expectations through which these managers filter their management values and experiences.

Values Filter of African American Managers

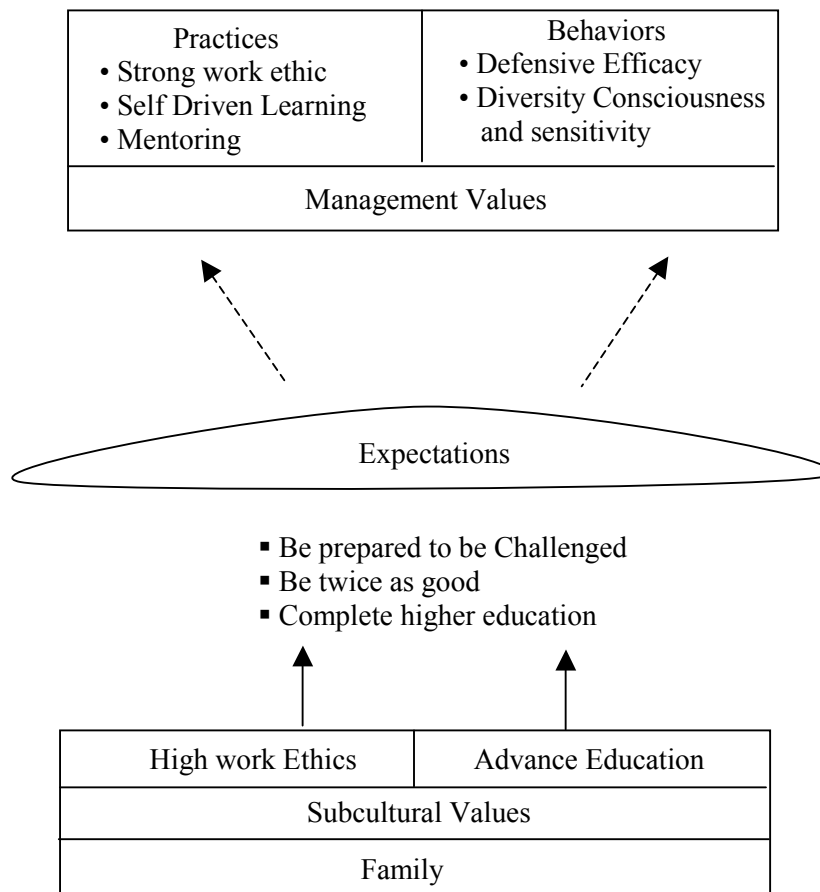


Figure 2. Values Filter of African American Managers.

This study also reveals an underlying belief and assumption of African American managers of the inequities of work expectations of minorities versus their White counterparts. Additionally, the study discloses survival practices and efforts to eradicate the inequities by reaching back to mentor other deserving minorities and women. While the study does not dismiss the findings in the Pappas (2002) study, it does, however, introduce another subset of values that enable the African American manager to co-exist and even progress in a majority setting.

Contribution to Literature

The findings from this study contribute to closing the research void of examining business culture from a subcultural perspective, possibly providing insight to be applied to U.S. organizational theory that is traditionally explained through predominantly Eurocentric perspectives (Nkomo, 1992). By exploring the subcultural existence and management values of African American managers through their personal narratives, we are allowed a glimpse of how these males and females leverage various approaches to management and strategies for their successful co-existence and practices. In particular, findings from this study provide insight to the knowledge area of organization development, bringing to light some implications of the African American subcultural membership upon the management experience. Consequently, a call to re-examine management theory through various subcultural lenses has surfaced challenging the assumption that management theory is universal. Nkomo (1992) states:

Researchers who ignore the influence of race in understanding organizations may reflect a veiled hope that, indeed, management theories and constructs are universal. Once there is acceptance of the idea that the major theories and

concepts of the field of management do not address all groups, the holding of and search for universal theories is undermined. (p. 490)

New insight from this study may also be useful to understanding how management values may be manifested in other subcultures, possibly contributing to the shaping of new management theory.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study has provided more insight to the understanding of African American management values and how they are expressed through behavior and practice. As a result of this study, three recommendations are made.

1. It is recommended that building upon this study by combining qualitative inquiry with field observation would be more informative, providing additional data points of corroboration and triangulation through which to interpret and distinguish management values. Perspectives may be gleaned from others working within the common environments and settings such as peers, subordinates, superiors, etc. Closer engagement through observation would bolster the researcher's effectiveness as the investigative instrument, enabling her/him to distinguish the desirable from the desired values.
2. It is recommended that this study be replicated to examine subcultural management values of other ethnicities by gender, industries, or professional disciplines to determine if there are any distinguishing values and experiences pertinent to those specific groups.
3. It is recommended that this study be replicated to examine the cultures of non-profit organizations, the military, and other government organizations

to determine if there are any distinguishing values and experiences pertinent to those specific groups.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, R. (1998). Instrumental values: A five-nation comparative study. *Cross Cultural Management*, 5(1), 5-22.
- Adeyemi-Bello, T. (2003). The impact of leader characteristics on the performance of organizational members: An exploratory study. *Work Study*, 52(6), 286-289.
- Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. (1997). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (3rd ed.). Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bell, E. L. J. E., & Nkomo, S. (2001). *Our separate ways: Black and White women the struggle for professional identity*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Bravette, G. (1996). Reflections on a Black woman's management learning. *Women in Management Review*, 11(3), 3-11.
- Brenner, O. C., & Tomkiewicz, J. (1982). Job orientation of Black and White college graduates in business. *Personnel Psychology*, 35, 89-103.
- Brickson, S. L. (2000). The impact of identity orientation on individual and organizational outcomes in demographically diverse settings. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 82-101.
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cox, T., & Nkomo, S. M. (1990). Invisible men and women: A status report on race as a variable in organization behavior research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11(6), 419-431.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed, pp. 1-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dolan, S. L., & Garcia, S. (2002). Managing by values: Cultural redesign for strategic organizational change at the dawn of the twenty-first century. *Journal of Management Development*, 21(2), 101-117.
- Friday, S. S., Moss, S. E., & Friday, E. (2004). Socioethnic explanations for racioethnic differences in job satisfaction. *Journal of Management Development*, 23(2), 152-168.
- Gavin, J. F., & Ewen, R. B. (1974). Racial differences in job attitudes and performance: Some theoretical considerations and empirical findings. *Personnel Psychology*, 27, 455-464.
- Grahn, J. L., Swenson, D. X., & O'Leary, R. (2001). A comparative analysis between American Indian and Anglo American leadership. *Cross Cultural Management*, 8(1), 3-20.
- Grubbs, J. W. (2000). Cultural imperialism: A critical theory of interorganizational change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(3), 221-234.
- Hampden-Turner, C., & Trompenaars, F. (1997). Response to Geert Hofstede. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 12(1), 149-159.
- Harris, P. R., & Moran, R. T. (1999). *Managing cultural differences*. Woburn, MA: Butterworth-Heinmann.

- Hill, O. W., Block, R. A., & Buggie, S. E. (2000). Culture and beliefs about time: Comparisons among Black Americans, Black Africans, and White Americans. *Journal of Psychology, 134*(4), 443-462.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). *Cultures' consequences: International difference in work-related values*. Newbury, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. (1997). *Culture and organizations' software of the mind; Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jackson, T. (2002). The management of people across cultures: Valuing people differently. *Human Resource Management, 41*(4), 455-475.
- Jones, A. P., James, L. R., Bruni, J. R., & Sells, S. B. (1977). Black-White differences in work environment perceptions and job satisfaction and its correlates. *Personnel Psychology, 30*, 5-16.
- Jones, E. W. (1986). Black managers: The dream deferred. *Harvard Business Review, 64*(3), 84-93.
- Kluckhohn, F. R., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in value orientations*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, & Company.
- Korman, A. K. (1985). Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour, 6*(3), 243-244.
- Laurent, A. (1983). The cultural diversity of western conceptions of management. *International Studies of Management and Organisations, 13*(1/2), 75-96.

- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. (1995). *Analyzing social settings* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Martin, J. K., & Tuch, S. A. (1993). Black-White differences in the value of job rewards revisited. *Social Science Quarterly*, 74(4), 884-901.
- McGuire, D., O'Donnell, D., Garavan, T. N., Saha, S. K., & Murphy, J. (2002). The cultural boundedness of theory and practice in HRD? *Cross Cultural Management*, 9(2), 25-44.
- McSweeney, B. (2002a). Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith – A failure of analysis. *Human Relations*, 55(1), 89-118.
- McSweeney, B. (2002b). The essentials of scholarship: A reply to Geert Hofstede. *Human Relations*, 55(11), 1363-1372.
- Mellahi, K. (2001). Differences and similarities in future managerial values: A five cultures comparative study. *Cross Cultural Management*, 8(1), 45-58.
- Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study application in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mishler, E. G. (1979). Meaning in context: Is there any other kind? *Harvard Educational Review*, 49(1), 1-19.
- Nicholson, J. D., & Stepina, L. P. (1998). Cultural values: A cross-national study. *Cross Cultural Management*, 5(1), 34-49.
- Nkomo, S. M. (1992). The emperor has no clothes: Rewriting "race in organizations." *The Academy of Management Review*, 17(3), 487-513.

- Paprock, K. (1983, October 21). *Globalization and HRD: Qualitative and quantitative continuum in methodologies*. Manchester, UK: University of Manchester, Institute for Development and Policy Management.
- Peppas, S. C. (2001). Subcultural similarities and differences: An examination of U.S. core values. *Cross Cultural Management*, 8(1), 59-70.
- Peppas, S. C. (2002). Subcultural approaches to management: A comparative study of African-and Euro American values. *Cross Cultural Management*, 9(2), 45-64.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity – One’s own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(17), 17-21.
- Peterson, M. F., & Smith, P. B. (1997). Does national culture or ambient temperature explain cross-national differences in role stress? No sweat! *The Academy of Management Journal*, 40(4), 930-946.
- Portwood, J. D. (1982). Culture’s consequences: International differences in work-related values (book review). *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*, 36(1), 129-130.
- Rodrigues, C. A. (1998). Cultural classifications of societies and how they affect cross-cultural management. *Cross Cultural Management*, 5(3), 29-39.
- Shapiro, E. G. (1977). Racial differences in the values of job rewards. *Social Forces*, 56(1), 21-30.
- Silvers, A. L. (1986). Culture’s consequences (book review). *Annals of Regional Science*, 20(2), 118-120.

- Thomas, D. A., & Gabarro, J. J. (1999). *Breaking through: The making of minority executives in corporate America*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Thornbury, J. (2003). Creating a living culture: The challenge for business leaders. *Corporate Governance*, 3(2), 68-79.
- Trompenaars, F., & Hampden-Turner, C. (1998). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Van De Vliert, E., & Van Yperen, N. W. (1996). Why cross-national differences in role overload? Don't overlook ambient temperature! *The Academy of Management Journal*, 39(4), 986-1004.
- Williamson, D. (2002). Forward from critique of Hofstede's model of national culture. *Human Relations*, 55(11), 1373-1395.
- Yoo, B., & Donthu, N. (2002). Culture's consequences (book). *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39(3), 388-339.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

Interviewer: _____

Informant: _____

| Code | Questions | Observations |
|------|---|--------------|
| | <p>Demographics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Gender • Race • Place of birth • Education • Length of time in management • Size of organization | |
| | <p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about your background (family, environment, education). ➤ How has family impacted/influenced your professional journey? ➤ Describe the environment in which you grew up. <p>What role do you think the environment played in your life experiences that led you to your professional role?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Describe your educational background. <p>Who inspired you as a child?</p> <p>Who/what inspired the educational path you've taken?</p> | |

| Code | Questions | Observations |
|------|---|--------------|
| | <p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How did you come to your current or last company? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Length of time with the company? ➤ What were some of your prior roles before you became manager? ● When and how did you decide to enter management? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Describe your journey into management. ➤ How long have you been in management? ● Tell me about how you were trained to be a manager? (programs, mentoring, coaching) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do you have an established relationship with others in leadership that serve as a mentor? How important is that? Do you mentor? ● Describe the organization/team that you manage. ● How would you describe the diversity and cultural makeup of your organization? ● How do you feel about your role as a manager compared to other roles you previously held? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What do you most enjoy? ➤ What are some of your biggest challenges? ➤ Describe how you've dealt with those challenges? ➤ How do you feel about your future in management and beyond? ➤ What are you long term career goals? | |

| Code | Questions | Observations |
|------|---|--------------|
| | <p>Planning, Evaluating, Innovating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your perspectives regarding experienced resources on your team versus those with less experience but promising potential. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Which do you defer to most? Why? • How important is historical or past knowledge of the organization in moving forward? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Describe one of your most successful efforts in which you've led your team? ➤ From your personal perspective, what constitutes success in your organization/for your teams? • How do you determine when your resources have met full potential/capacity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where are the limitations of your resources? | |

| Code | Questions | Observations |
|------|--|--------------|
| | <p data-bbox="397 346 1153 420">Relationships, Communication, Interpersonal Relationships, Organizing & Controlling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="409 436 1144 682"> <p>● How do you feel about managing people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="457 483 1136 556">➤ Describe your relationship with your organization/team members. <li data-bbox="457 567 1063 682">➤ How would you describe the boundaries of your relationships with others in the company? (team members, colleagues, superiors, etc) <li data-bbox="409 735 885 772">● How do you think they perceive you? <li data-bbox="409 787 1112 861">● What are some of the challenges being a minority leader (w/peers, subordinates)? <li data-bbox="409 877 1079 951">● How do you know what's happening in terms of group dynamic within your organization/team? <li data-bbox="409 1008 1104 1081">● How does your org/team become informed about what's happening within the organization? <li data-bbox="409 1144 1144 1291">● How do you value accountability at the group and individual level? What are your perspectives regarding group/team and org loyalty? | |

| Code | Questions | Observations |
|------|--|--------------|
| | <p>Leadership, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Managing Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe your approach to achieving results through your teams? Tell me how you have motivated/incentivized them? Disciplined them? ● Describe your relationship with your manager. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How comfortable are you about making decisions for others? ➤ How empowered are your team members in giving input and suggestions in key decisions involving your organization? ➤ How comfortable are you in making decisions and dealing with political situations impacting those decisions? <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Do you approach political issues differently than non-minority leaders do? How?</p> ➤ Describe an instance. What was the outcome? ● When given business challenges, how would you describe your approach to problem solving (assessing, analysis, alternative solutions). ● How do you deal with conflict? ● Describe an instance of conflict within your organization. How was it resolved? What was your role in the resolution? | |

| Code | Questions | Observations |
|------|--|--------------|
| | <p>Negotiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about an instance when you have had to negotiate on behalf of your organization or related issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Describe your approach and role in the negotiation. ➤ In what ways if any was your org/team involved? | |
| | <p>Recruiting, Selecting, Rewarding, Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the attributes and characteristics you look for when selecting new resources for your organization. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How important is the individual's similarity to the rest of the team? ➤ How important is difference? ➤ How do you weigh achievement vs. other attributes when determining "fit"? ➤ What types of affiliations do you look for (socially, professionally, politically, academically)? • How do you recognize and reward accomplishment in your organization (personal, group, publicly)? • Describe ways in which you believe that individuals are best trained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What priority does training for your organization have in terms of importance? ➤ How do you develop your org/team? | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on your corporate experience, do you feel you have compromised any personal values? How? • Is there anything that you'd like to share that I did not address in the questions? | |

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Interview Script

- Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study.
- To review, the purpose of this study will attempt to explore and understand experiences of African American managers. Describing these experiences through voices of African American managers will provide an opportunity to examine these experiences and possibly determine if there are common themes that may determine distinct management values of this subculture and how they are reflected in practice.
- Portions of what you share with me in this study may become part of the final and published dissertation as well as follow-on related articles. However, your identity will be confidential.
- Allow me to review the consent form stipulating your rights within this study.
(Explain detail of the Consent Form)
- If you are still in agreement with participating, please sign the consent form acknowledging that I have explained your rights and that you fully understand them.
- We will now begin the interview.
(After the interview)
- Thank you for your participation in the study. I will follow up soon and ask you to review the transcription of this interview to ensure that I have captured your thoughts accurately.

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Examining the World of Subcultural Existence: A Descriptive Analysis of African American Management Experiences and Values

Chandra Stephens, researcher and Ph.D. candidate, Department of Educational Administration and Human Resources Development, Texas A&M University, will conduct a qualitative study during the approximate timeframe of April 25 through July 31, 2005. The study will explore African American management experiences and practices in an effort to understand the research participants' management values (attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors).

I was identified as a qualified candidate to participate in the study by a professional colleague. I will be one of ten African American managers interviewed individually by the researcher. The following points have been explained to me:

1. I understand that the interview, lasting approximately one hour, will be audio taped and additionally handwritten field notes of observation will be captured.
2. I understand that there is minimal risk associated with this research such as possible discomfort in answering some questions. I am free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make me feel uncomfortable. What I choose to share in the interview will be up to me.
3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of my participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the records, or destroyed.
4. I understand that the dissertation resulting from the study will become a published document. However, I also understand that my identity will be kept confidential and while some of my comments may be used in the final dissertation, my name will not be used. My identity will be known only to Chandra Stephens, the researcher conducting this interview.
5. The tape recording of my interview will be kept by the Chandra Stephens in a secure place and will not be made available to anyone else except to a transcriber who is also committed to confidentiality. The transcriber will produce a verbatim transcript of the interview and I will be sent a copy of it for review. I may receive one to two brief follow-up phone calls or emails to: (a) provide clarity for aspects of the interview that may be vague in the transcript and (b) validate that my statements were captured as intended. After the data have been analyzed, any references regarding the data that may identify me will be destroyed. The consent form will be kept in a secure place for three years.
6. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me for participating in this study. The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, either now or during the course of the study.

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board—Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Ms. Angelia Raines, Director of Research Compliance, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) 458-4067 (araines@vprmail.tamu.edu).

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form for my records. I also understand that the original consent form will be kept in a secure place for 3 years. By signing this document, I consent to participate in the study.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

Participant's Name (print)

Chandra Stephens, Ph.D. candidate, EAHR (281) 463-7066, chandras@neo.tamu.edu
 Dr. Kenneth Paprock, Associate Professor (Committee Chair), EAHR
 (979) 845-5488, kpaprock@tamu.edu

APPENDIX D
MANAGEMENT VALUES DEFINITIONS

MANAGEMENT VALUES DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are found in a management values instrument applied in the Peppas study (2002, p. 61) defining management values. The instrument was originally derived from a “crosscultural management values instrument designed by Renwick and Rhinesmith” (as cited in Peppas, 2002, p. 50). These definitions were also leveraged as guidelines for interpreting responses from the informants in this study.

PLANNING, EVALUATING, INNOVATING

Abstract

Plans should be based upon, and evaluated in terms of general, abstract, social, and moral values that are used as the yardstick for measuring man’s activities in his personal life and in organizations. Innovation and change must be justified in terms of these social and moral values.

Concrete

Plans should be made and evaluated in terms of concrete, quantifiable results that can be measured and compared against other individual and organizational performance to determine competitiveness and effectiveness.

ORGANIZING AND CONTROLLING

Collectivism

Organizational structure and controls should emphasize group and organizational needs with little concern for the individual. A high degree of organizational control should be maintained in order to maximize organizational solidarity against any potentially disruptive individuals. Emphasis should be upon organizational loyalty and years of service.

Individualism

Organizational structure and controls should emphasize individual growth and development within the organization. There should be high concern for job satisfaction. If necessary, organizational structures and controls may be altered to meet individual need preferences and interests. Emphasis should be upon individual freedom.

Dependence

Authority and responsibility should be centralized. Organizational structure should be tightly organized and controlled, and should require high conformity and adherence to a strict set of rules and regulations in order to ensure individual conformity.

Independence

Authority and responsibility should be decentralized. Organizational structure should be loose, and should require little control over individual performance. Emphasis should be upon self reliance and upon individual accountability for decisions and results.

RECRUITING, SELECTING, REWARDING**Affiliation**

Strong emphasis should be placed on recruiting and selecting persons who are compatible with persons already in the organization. Rewards should be given in the form of personal praise and support with emphasis upon loyalty and personal leadership.

Achievement

Emphasis should be placed on recruiting and selecting persons who have unique accomplishments and are highly skilled in areas of organizational need. Persons should be rewarded with more challenging and complex tasks and greater responsibility that motivates them to work against inner standards of excellence.

Ascription

Social and family backgrounds should be stressed in recruiting and selecting personnel. Rewards should be given to those related to family, caste, or social connections.

Achievement

Unusual competence, accomplishments, and highly developed skills necessary to the organization should be sought in recruiting and selecting personnel. Rewards should be given to those who perform best under competitive conditions.

LEADERSHIP**External**

Because of a general dislike for work, one must be coerced, controlled, directed or threatened with punishment to get one to put forth adequate effort toward achieving organizational objectives.

Internal

The threat of punishment and external control are not the only means for getting people to work toward organizational objectives. People will exercise self-direction and self-control toward achieving objectives to which they are committed.

COMMUNICATION

One-way

Information should flow down through the hierarchy of the organization in the form of orders and directives that are not questioned by subordinates.

Two-way

Information should flow both up and down through the organization with subordinates suggesting alternatives to their superiors and testing alternatives in order to arrive at the best decision.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORK AND SOCIAL LIFE

Integrated

Little distinction should be made between social relationships and work relationships. Friendships should easily cross the line between work and social life.

Separated.

There should be much concern for separation of work and social relations. Care should be taken to avoid conflicts of interests and to avoid personal obligations that might affect job performance.

VITA

CHANDRA D. STEPHENS

10200 Bellaire Blvd.

Houston, Texas 77072

EDUCATION

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2005 | Doctor of Philosophy, Human Resources Development Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas |
| 2000 | Master of Science, Instructional Technology University of Houston, Clear Lake, Texas |
| 1981 | Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia |

EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 2000-Present | Director, Training and Development Halliburton Corporation, Houston, Texas |
| 1999-2000 | Independent Instructional Designer/Consultant Houston, Texas |
| 1994-1999 | Learning Consultant BP Amoco, Houston, Texas |
| 1984-1994 | Communications Specialist IBM, Atlanta, Georgia |
| 1982-1984 | Creative Assistant M&M Products Company, Atlanta, Georgia |
| 1981-1982 | Graphic Artist Cable News Network (CNN), Atlanta, Georgia |

CERTIFICATIONS Training and Development, Diversity, Mager Facilitation,
Mager Criterion Reference Instruction, Performance Modeling

This dissertation was typed and edited by Marilyn M. Oliva at Action Ink, Inc.