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# Mentoring Among Homosexual Male Managers: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract

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MBA, Walden University, 2012

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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## Abstract

Homosexuality has become more accepted and recognized in the past 50 years by the public. Mentoring has been a key factor in employee engagement and job satisfaction of proteges. While past studies have investigated discrimination towards homosexual employees, there has been an absence of research about homosexual mentorship relationships between homosexual managers and employees in the workplace. The research question for this study inquired about the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations. The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological investigation was to develop an understanding of the mentoring experiences of homosexual male mentors and proteges in corporate management. Leader-member exchange and queer theories formed the conceptual framework and were used to guide the research questions about the mentorship relationship in the work environment of homosexual management mentors and proteges. Data were gathered through convenience and snowball sampling from seven participants. Semistructured interviews queried three areas from the literature including mentoring and career paths, management skill development, and sexual identity management. Emergent themes included skill set, increased acceptance, professionalism, personal freedom, and work environment. A key result was that homosexual managers who were transparent about their sexual identity were more satisfied with their work environments and were freer to be themselves. The findings could positively impact social change by increasing an understanding of the experiences of homosexual manager mentorship relationships with their proteges and thereby increasing homosexual employees' career engagement.

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# Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my husband Allen Smith, who has stood by me through the ups and downs of this life journey. Thank you for being you. Also, my family, who has supported and nurtured me to be proud of who I am. Life is a journey, and through the positive and negatives, my family has been there for me. Thank you.

# Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Stephanie Hoon, whose support and guidance have been greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank my committee member, Dr. Marcia Steinhauer, who I met at my first residency and who has inspired me when I needed it most. Thank you as well, to Dr. Hamid Kazeroony, my university research reviewer, for his assistance in guiding this work.

I have to extend a special thank you to the staff and members of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and the LGBTQ Business Council for their assistance in recruiting participants for this study.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the participants – your words and courage have inspired me and I hope they will inspire others, as well.

Finally, I have to acknowledge Dr. Lizabeth Kleintop, who encouraged me to never give up.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

The goal of this investigation was to gain a better understanding of the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in today's corporate environment. This research will add to the literature on homosexual male management by examining the lived experiences of homosexual male manager experiences with mentoring. This chapter presents background information, the problem statement, and the purpose of this study. I describe the research questions, as well as the conceptual framework and nature of the inquiry. The chapter also includes definitions, assumptions, scope, and delimitations of this work. Finally, Chapter 1 concludes with the limitations and significance of the investigation.

## Background

Throughout U.S. history, homosexuals and lesbians have been forced to remain silent about their sexual orientation and denied full citizen membership in society (deLeon & Brunner, 2013). Beginning with the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City, homosexuals began the struggle to gain equal rights with the rest of the heteronormative society (McCann, 2011). Although a backlash developed during the 1970s through the middle of the1990s, when an antihomosexual movement gained ground through religious speakers such as Anita Bryant, gains have been made to establish equal rights (Wilson, 2014). Despite this, homosexuals and lesbians continue to have a genuine fear of disclosing their sexual orientation (Leipold, 2014).

Twenty-nine states allow employers to discriminate against homosexuals (Leipold 2014), and the expectation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals

in the workplace is to face some discrimination (Gedro, 2010). This discrimination may be one reason why there is a lack of visible self-identified LGBT managers in the corporate world, as well as a lack of research and academic literature related to LGBT management in general (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010; Snyder, 2006). Researchers postulate that the sparsity of research on LGBT individuals may be due in part to the historically negative environment surrounding the LGBT population (Leipold, 2014).

Because of growing social acceptance, sexual minorities are increasingly more visible in corporations, and recent estimates of the total population of LGBT individuals in the United States are approximately nine million (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). In the workforce, homosexual men and lesbians make up approximately 4%-17%, which is greater than other racial, ethnic, or minority groups (Church, 2012). These numbers are likely to be an underestimate, as a significant number of LGBT individuals still prefer to keep their sexual orientation private as disclosure may lead to discrimination, termination, or stigmatization in the workplace.

Historically, society has devalued LGBT individuals, who are aware of their marginalized status (Gates & Kelly, 2013). Though there have been rapid changes in overall societal attitudes over the past decade, sexual prejudice still exists in a variety of forms (Russell & Horne, 2009). Corporate research has been conducted to examine and describe homophobia and discrimination in the workplace (Bilgehan, 2011; Coronges, Miller, Tamayo, & Ender, 2013; Rumens, 2015). Snyder (2006) noted that homosexual managers could be more effective in several key areas, including increased job

satisfaction and employee engagement. Nearly half of homosexual managers have not identified themselves as homosexual in the workplace while 67% of homosexual men experienced discrimination in promotion practices (Collins & Callahan, 2012, Frank, 2006). Homosexual men in the workplace struggle to be viewed as equals to heterosexual men, and disclosure of sexual orientation is often viewed as risky for career advancement.

A review of the literature indicated that there is a body of research regarding mentoring, sexual orientation, and discrimination, as well as leader-member exchange (LMX) and queer theory. However, there is little research to describe sexual orientation among corporate managers, although employees have been a topic of inquiry (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001; Fassinger, et al., 2010). Research has been conducted in education, accounting, student leadership, and public relation fields regarding sexual orientation and leadership (Lugg & Tooms, 2010; Renn; 2007; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Similar relevant research has not been conducted in corporate management or mentoring among homosexual managers. The sparsity of material on homosexual male managers may represent the power of belonging to the heterosexual norm in being able to silence this marginalized group (deLeon & Brunner, 2013). However, sexual orientation is becoming increasingly more visible, which may lead to the need for changes in the work environment.

The corporate environment is dominated by a heterosexual norm that views homosexual males as different (Dixon, 2013; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). Within this environment, homosexual males must manage their homosexual identity while rising into

management positions and maintaining successful career paths (Marrs & Staton, 2016; Snyder, 2006). While work environments are changing to become more inclusive for sexual minorities, there are still no openly homosexual managers in *Fortune* 1000 companies (Leipold, 2014). Media stories of homosexual managers in the workplace describe the struggles faced by these individuals, as well as negative outcomes associated with coming out at work, despite the increase in positive national attitudes (Gedro, 2010). Furthermore, individuals whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual, or who fall into other minority groups, must work harder than individuals from the dominant culture to demonstrate competency in management (Leipold, 2014).

Snyder's (2006) research was one of the few studies on sexual minorities within the managerial field that exhibited a low tolerance for sexual minorities (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). Very little research exists for addressing management and sexual orientation. This sparse research is due in part to a small number of self-identified homosexual and lesbian managers, as well as to the existence of a historically negative environment (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Fassinger et al., 2010). As homosexual and lesbian managers emerge in corporations, multidimensional models have been proposed to include sexual and gender orientations (Fassinger et al., 2010). While gender stereotypes are changing, there still exist stereotypes related to gender identity (Tindall & Waters, 2012). Within this context, the homosexual manager emerges as one who, though stigmatized, marginalized, and discriminated against, is still a positive, effective force for corporate success and employee satisfaction (Leipold, 2014; Snyder, 2006).

However, the effects of homosexual managers on relationships in the workplace environment are not well understood. Also, the effects of gender and role identity on homosexual management styles have not been described in the literature. Despite marginalization, homosexual managers have overcome many barriers to achieve professional success (Brown, 2014; Snyder, 2006). By achieving success in the face of pressures to conform, homosexual managers may help remove these barriers to make it easier for future homosexual employees. Furthermore, in this study I aim to present an understanding of homosexual males in the corporate environment and how homosexual managers resolve challenges as they climb within corporations.

The study helped to fill a gap in the literature regarding the actual experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations with environments traditionally viewed as the domain of the heterosexual male. Previous studies have reviewed gender and racial discrimination, as well as mentoring, but have not addressed sexual orientation (Cotter et al., 2001; Eagly & Chin, 2010). Also, researchers have tended to view homosexuals as marginalized and disenfranchised, which may be true for some individuals within the community but focusing on these negative aspects may also contribute to the continued stigmatization of this group. Shifting toward a strength-based perspective allows the researcher to identify the strengths and resources possessed by homosexuals (Gates & Kelly, 2013).

With this inquiry, I sought to develop a better understanding of the impact of management and mentoring by homosexual males in a corporate environment. Recent research indicated that homosexual managers could be strong, positive managers by

developing skills such as adaptability, intuitive communication, and creative problem solving (Snyder, 2006; Stein, 2013). Also, an openly homosexual person can be viewed as a role model, particularly for younger members of the corporation (Anteby & Anderson, 2014).

Mentoring can occur in either formal mentoring programs, or as part of an informal relationship developed between a mentor and a protégé (Janssen, van Vuuren, & de Jong, 2018). Managers are in a unique position to mentor subordinates, and the homosexual male manager may offer a different perspective to inspire his employees. For this study, participation in mentoring was the key consideration and not whether this was done in a formal program. Mentoring has also been demonstrated to be a key strategy in career development in the workforce (Leck & Orser, 2013). Understanding the experience of mentoring is important because successful mentoring leads to increased employee engagement (Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang, & Avolio, 2011).

A study to explore the experiences of homosexual men in a corporate environment is significant as evidence exists to indicate that homosexual men may be more capable managers than heterosexual counterparts (Snyder, 2006; Stein, 2013). An understanding of these experiences may lead corporations to greater competitive advantage. Finally, positive social change may also be achieved by providing a voice to a marginalized population to promote their worth, dignity, and development as individuals.

## Problem Statement

There is increasing visibility of homosexual males in the workplace, including in management positions, with an estimated 4% to 17% of the workforce identifying as

homosexual (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). However, nearly half of homosexual managers have not identified themselves as homosexual in the workplace, while 67% of homosexual men experienced discrimination in promotion practices. Also, between 24% to 66% of homosexual employees will hide their orientation out of fear of being denied professional advancement (Frank, 2006; Tindall & Waters, 2012).

The general problem was that although previous research has described homophobia and discrimination in the workplace (Brown, 2014; Leipold, 2014; Snyder, 2006), little is known about the phenomenon of the lived experience of successful homosexual male leaders in corporations. The specific problem was that there is little understanding of homosexual managers' view of their mentoring experiences in a heteronormative environment (Leck & Orser, 2013).

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological inquiry was to examine and understand the collective experiences of homosexual men in management positions in corporations. Utilizing the lens of queer theory and LMX theory helped to frame this inquiry.

## Research Question

The following central research question (Appendix A) was used:

RQ: What are the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations?

## Conceptual Framework

Utilizing the lens of queer and LMX theory, an understanding of the homosexual male in corporate management positions may be achieved. At this stage in the research, the homosexual male is defined as one who exclusively prefers same-sex relations. The male manager is one who coordinates resources, including employees, to meet corporate goals.

The term *queer* is viewed as problematic as it is used in multiple ways, including as a derogatory noun or adjective for homosexuality. It is also used to describe something that is somehow not right or is out of the ordinary. Beginning in the late 1980s, the term "queer" has been used to describe all nonheteronormative individuals and as a challenge to hegemonic assumptions of sexuality (Callis, 2009). Queer theory focuses on binary social constructs of heterosexuality and homosexuality and the webs of power that create this binary system. These binary terms, homo and hetero, are not concrete. However, Derrida (2008) would argue for the need to deconstruct these terms. In binary oppositions, one term is always privileged, dominating the opposite term (Griffiths, 2014). Deconstruction removes the power difference, so the two are seen as equals.

Further, the LMX theory was used as a framework for viewing dyadic management roles between homosexual male managers and their employees to understand how homosexual male managers may be more effective than their heterosexual counterparts. The LMX dynamic is multidimensional, resulting in reciprocal job-related and socially related elements through mentoring in high-quality dyadic teams (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012; Leck & Orser, 2013).

Mentoring is a key factor in building positive relationships, which leads to increased efficacy for both managers and members and contributes to increased job satisfaction and employee engagement (Lester et al., 2011). Mentors work to support mentees, to serve as positive role models for effective management, and to help overcome stereotypes (Metz & Kulik, 2014; Streets & Major, 2014). Additionally, mentors provide sponsorship, which can increase self-esteem and self-confidence and enhance the careers of the mentee (Bagilhole, 2014).

## Nature of the Study

For this investigation, I employed a descriptive phenomenological design. I used the phenomenological approach to describe the common meaning or the lived experience of individuals (Dowling & Cooney, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). I used interviews to collect data. The basic units of analysis included homosexual males and their lived experiences. Data was collected through face-to-face personal interviews until no new information was obtained (data saturation). I used purposeful sampling initially to select information-rich cases for in-depth study. I followed purposeful sampling with snowball sampling, another method for seeking out information-rich cases (Suri, 2011), as participants were asked for referrals to other homosexual male managers.

To analyze the data, I used *epoche* to suspend judgment until evidence had been revealed (see Finlay, 2014). I used the process of *bracketing* to take the phenomenon out of the worldly experience and away from presuppositions to analyze the data in its most natural form (see Finlay, 2014; Tufford & Newman, 2012). To address the study's validity, I employed triangulation techniques (such as member checking and peer

debriefing) and used several sources to confirm the data and ensure that the data was complete (Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013).

I developed an interview protocol guide to help guide the session. This protocol included a description of the study. The questions were derived from the main research question and the subquestions but written less formally for ease of understanding by the participant. I recorded and transcribed interviews and obtained participants' informed consent. The transcriptions were reviewed with interviewees to increase credibility (Schwandt, 2015). The text data was reduced into themes and codes and analyzed using NVivo version 12 PRO software, which has been demonstrated to be an effective qualitative analysis tool (Bergin, 2011). Finally, I analyzed the data utilizing data displays such as word clouds, graphs, tables, and extended text to develop a narration of the essence of the experience (see Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The data was encoded, and primary identifiers such as names were stripped from the data and replaced with codes to ensure the privacy of the participants. Neither the participants nor the corporations were identified from the data.

## Definitions

*Coming out:* The process of sexual identity disclosure to friends, family, or coworkers (Dooley, 2009; Sheran & Arnold, 2012).

*Heteronormative:* The routine embodiment of heterosexuality as "natural" and as the normative status (Butler, 1990; Rumens, 2011).

*Heterosexual:* An individual who is sexually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually attracted to a member of the opposite physical sex (Leipold, 2014).

*Heterosexism:* A belief that heterosexuality is the only normal mode of sexual expression and any other forms of sexuality are immoral or perverted (Button, 2004).

*Homosexual:* An individual who is sexually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually attracted to a member of the same physical sex (Leipold, 2014).

*Manager:* An individual whose responsibilities include directing, planning, and coordinating available resources, including employees, to meet corporate goals (Davis, 2014).

*Mentoring:* A developmental workplace relationship in which the mentor promotes the professional and personal growth of the mentee. Managers who act as mentors have demonstrated positive outcomes for corporations that include commitment and job satisfaction (Lapointe & Vandengerghe, 2017).

*Stigmatization*: A process in which individuals are referred to as inferior because of a personal characteristic (Dooley, 2009).

## Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that there were enough homosexual male managers who were willing to be interviewed and who had experiences as mentors or mentees. Also, I assumed that homosexual managers (mentor or mentee) were engaged in a work environment conducive to mentoring. An additional assumption was that participants would answer interview questions authentically and honestly.

## Scope and Delimitations

With this inquiry, I sought to explore the lived experiences of homosexual male managers and their experiences with mentoring in the corporate workplace. The study

was bounded by queer theory, LMX theory, and the concept of mentoring in the corporate workplace as these theories describe the interactions of individuals with fellow employees. The study addressed the gap in the literature of the experiences of homosexual male managers with mentoring to rise in corporations.

The investigation included open-ended semistructured interviews with 7 homosexual male managers who coordinate resources, including employees, to meet corporate goals in the Lehigh Valley metropolitan area. A further delimitation was that the homosexual male managers had to be comfortable enough with their sexual orientation to be interviewed.

In descriptive phenomenological research, the experience and perceptions of individuals within their sociocultural context are studied. This shared context allows individuals to describe the world with a common meaning, which results in a certain degree of psychological variance (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Generalizations using this methodology are not specific or universal, but rather fall within a middle range in which generalizations are of an eidetic type to provide themes and essences of human experience (Giorgi, 2009; Keaton & Bodie, 2011). These themes are necessary as psychological reality is limited by space, time, and context, as well as by the experiences of the person relating to this reality (Giorgi, 2012).

## Limitations

The findings were limited to the descriptions of the participants' experiences as homosexual male managers who have mentored or been mentored in corporations. Further, because the data were the experiences of individuals, the individual descriptions

were within a specific spatial-temporal context; thus, the descriptions were limited as they were based upon individual perceptions. This research was also limited by the inclusion of only homosexual male mentors or mentees. Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, and queer managers were excluded because there are likely to be even fewer potential numbers of this group in management.

An additional limitation was the geographic nature of the sample, and further inquiries should include corporations in rural areas as well as individuals from various regions of the United States. The assumption that there were enough homosexual managers with mentoring experience who would participate in the study limited the study. Also, participants who withdrew from the study as well as potential participants who did not respond provided a limitation. Further limitations were the sampling method, which included members of the local Chamber of Commerce, and snowball sampling, as well as the inclusion of only homosexual managers who have been mentored. As a homosexual male manager, I acknowledged my potential bias in this subject matter and employed methods of bracketing to put aside past knowledge to appreciate the phenomenon as the participants presented it. However, this potential bias may constitute a limitation.

## Significance of the Study

The following section describes the significance of this research for practice, theory, and social change. Briefly stated, the significance for practice is to give a voice to a minority group in corporations. The significance to theory is to fill a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of homosexual male management in corporations

with mentoring. Finally, the study provided social significance by contributing to an improved understanding of the mentoring experiences of a homosexual male in corporations.

**Significance to Theory**

This investigation helped fill a gap in the literature concerning homosexual male managers and their use of mentoring to rise within corporations. The homosexual male manager has been researched in other fields such as education and student leadership, but the homosexual male manager has not been significantly addressed in corporate and management fields (Lugg & Tooms, 2010; Renn, 2007). Within the field of education, the homosexual male manager has been examined through the conceptual framework of social dominance theory, which was used to understand the oppression of groups (Leipold, 2014). With the current inquiry, I sought to examine homosexual males in the corporate environment and used a conceptual framework of LMX (Rockstuhl, Ang, Dulebohn, & Shore, 2012) as viewed through the lens of queer theory. Also, I reviewed the mentoring aspects of the leader-member dyad (see DeConinck, 2011).

While there have been studies to examine discrimination and bias towards employees who are sexual minorities, there has been little research on sexual minority managers (Eagly & Chin, 2010). This research contributes to theory by examining aspects of sexual minorities in management roles, rather than a focus on the negative aspects of being a sexual minority. These negative aspects include discrimination and bias, which have largely been the focus of research on sexual minorities (Gedro, 2010; Leipold, 2014).

**Significance to Practice**

A better understanding of homosexual male managers and mentoring practices, if applicable, will provide corporations with an improved framework for advancing minority individuals along an upward career path. Researchers have found that homosexual males provide better management (Snyder, 2006), and utilizing and recognizing this resource will provide improved outcomes for corporations.

The research findings also contribute to practice through greater recognition of diverse sexual minority groups as viable managers with a keen sense of the effects of disparities in society and corporations. The homosexual male manager may have had to struggle to get to the management position, and then may utilize his experience to become a role model and mentor for future managers. Corporate recognition of homosexual male managers' experiences may have a positive effect on human resource policies to diversify management candidates within the corporation further.

**Significance to Social Change**

Homosexuals have been gaining equal rights among mainstream social, political, and corporate circles. The political and social environment in the United States has been changing over the past 40 years. The homosexual population has seen increasing acceptance since the 1969 Stonewall riots (McCann, 2011), which began the homosexual-rights movement, to today's environment where same-sex marriages have been legalized. Homosexual men have increasingly been disclosing their sexual orientation to their peers (Ragusa, 2004). Even as they continue to make progress, discrimination may still exist in corporations that have been traditionally described as

heteronormative (Harding, Lee, Ford & Leermonth, 2011). Moreover, the White, heterosexual male mentality tends to infuse not only the professional lives of male managers but also their personal lives (Collins & Callahan, 2012). Researchers have only recently begun to study this progress to better understand the ongoing acceptance of homosexuality (Giuffre, Dellinger, & Williams, 2008; Pichler, Varma & Bruce, 2010).

Networking and mentoring have been identified as possible means of overcoming disparities known as glass ceilings. The glass ceiling effect has been described among women in the workplace as limiting their ability to achieve promotions, as well as to achieve salary equality with men (Frank, 2006). Glass ceilings may also be addressed through a mentoring effect, in which those in upper positions work to promote people whom they support (Cotter et al., 2001). Also, by giving voice to a marginalized population, a mentor can help homosexual male managers rise above the limits of a heteronormative culture that can include stigmatization, homophobia, and bias (McCann, 2011). Thus, this study addressed positive social change by contributing an improved understanding of homosexual male managers and their experiences with mentoring as an aid to furthering their career paths.

## Summary

In summary, homosexual managers have become more visible in the workplace. While there is research on sexual minorities in the workplace, the past literature has emphasized employee discrimination and bias, and not discrimination against managers. Snyder (2006) was one of the few studies to address management among homosexual males in corporations. Managers are also in a unique position to mentor fellow employees

as well as to have been mentored by senior employees but mentoring among homosexual managers has not been analyzed in the literature. The purpose of this work was to examine the lived experiences of homosexual men in corporations. I used a phenomenological approach to frame this research.

Through the central research question, I sought to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations. I also wanted to understand the role, if any, that mentoring may have played in shaping the career paths of homosexual managers. An additional aspect included asking if homosexual experiences helped to develop successful management skills, and how homosexual males managed sexual identity in dominant heterosexual environments.

This research has implications for positive social change as an appreciation of the experiences of sexual minority managers may aid corporations in human resource development of sexual minorities. In Chapter 2, I present the literature review.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem was that there is little understanding of homosexual managers' views of their mentoring experiences within a heteronormative environment. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological inquiry was to examine and understand the collective experiences of homosexual men in management positions in corporations. In this chapter, I describe the strategies used for the literature review, as well as the conceptual framework guiding this research. A content summary of the pertinent literature includes LMX theory, mentoring and work relationships, homosexual males in management positions, and a description of research related to homosexual males and career paths. An initial description of queer theory organizes the review as the overarching theory through which LMX is viewed, with a focus on mentoring aspects of management. The literature search strategy was conducted using several keywords and phrases as discussed below. The search was limited to works in English published between 2009 and 2017 to capitalize on the latest research.

Currently, the literature focuses on describing workplace homophobia and discrimination, as well as gender or racial discrimination (Brown, 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010). This research, however, does not describe the experiences of homosexual males in management positions. Likewise, research on sexual orientation and leadership exists in some fields, such as student leadership, accounting, and public relations (Lugg & Tooms, 2010; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005; Tindall & Waters, 2012), but not management. Work also has been done on sexual orientation and employees (Fassinger et al., 2010). This research

is important because giving a voice to minorities helps to provide an understanding of how they navigate barriers to achieve success.

## Literature Search Strategy

I conducted a keyword search utilizing 27 keywords, which included *bracketing, corporate, corporate leadership, corporation, diversity, epoche, homosexual glass ceiling, homosexual leadership, homosexual male, homosexual management, homosexual men not HIV, gender identity, gender role, glass ceiling, homophobia, leader-member exchange, manager, men not women, mentor, mentoring, mentorship, methodology, phenomenology, phenomenological method, queer theory, queer theory and business, sexual orientation,* and *stereotypes and queer theory.*

I used Boolean operators and conducted more than two dozen searches. I searched the following databases: Academic Search Complete, ACM Digital Library, Annual Reviews, Business Plans Handbook, Business Source Complete, CINAHL Plus with Full Text, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Cochrane Methodology Register, Communications and Mass Media Complete, Computers and Applied Sciences Complete, Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE), Dissertations & Theses at Walden University, EBSCO ebooks, Education Source, Education Research Starters, Education Source, Emerald Management, ERIC, Expanded Academic ASAP, Gale Virtual Reference Library, General Science Collection, GreenFILE, HathiTrust, Health and Psychosocial Instruments (HaPI), Health Technology Assessments, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, IEEE Xplore Digital Library, International Security and Counter Terrorism Reference Center, LGBT Life with Full

Text, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, MEDLINE with Full Text, Mental Measurements Yearbook with Tests in Print, Military and Government Collection, NHS Economic Evaluation Database, Opposing Viewpoints in Context, Oxford Criminology Bibliographies, Oxford Education Bibliographies, Political Science Complete, Project Muse, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycCRITIQUES, PsycEXTRA, PsychiatryOnline, Psychological Experiments Online, PsycINFO, PsycTESTS, Regional Business News, SAGE Knowledge (formerly SAGE Encyclopedias), SAGE Premier, SAGE Research Methods Online, ScienceDirect, SocINDEX with Full Text, Springer e-books, Taylor and Francis Online, Teacher Reference Center, Thoreau, Walden Library Books, and Web of Science.

I used keywords either singly or in combination. For example, a keyword search of *homophobia* alone led to another keyword search utilizing both *homophobia* and *sexual minority*. Limitations of the search included English language, full-text, peer-reviewed journals, and a date range of 2009-2017. I chose articles based upon relevance to the study and excluded studies not related to corporate management. Research into homosexual male management is sparse, so the search was expanded to include other fields such as education and accounting, as these fields have included homosexual management research. Seminal works by Butler (2004) and Snyder (2006) were included as they provided a theoretical foundation. The theories used in this inquiry included queer theory and LMX theory; both are described in the following section.

## Conceptual Framework

This section provides a brief overview of queer theory, including a history, major theorists, critiques of queer theory, and how it relates to the current query. This theory provided the overarching conceptual framework for this inquiry. Queer theory, which represents a postructuralist paradigm, is a conceptual perspective used to provide explanatory power in a variety of fields (Lee, Learmonth, and Harding, 2008; Tindall & Waters, 2012). Rooted in the LGBT movements of the 1960s, queer theories and perspectives began to emerge in research in the 1990s (Leipold, 2014; Pfeffer, 2014).

The concepts of queer theory were developed in the latter half of the 20th century, and are founded upon the works of Sedgwick (1990) and Butler (1990). These works built upon Foucault's (1986) ideas to question and critique such binary concepts and categorizations as heterosexual/homosexual, straight/homosexual, and even male/female (Harding et al., 2011). Derrida (1978) furthered queer theory by applying a poststructuralist framework. This representation is enacted through the lens of performativity in which social activity occurs within the framework of hegemonic binaries (Simpson, 2014; Whitehead, 2014). These binaries were artificially created through social structures, which form the crux of queer theory (Bartle, 2015; Benozzo, Pizzorno, Bell, & Koro-Ljungberg, 2015). The literature's focus on queer theory examines the relationships between heterosexuality and homosexuality. However, research tends to ignore the cultural and social constructs present in sexuality (Rumens, 2016).

Relatively new in corporate studies, queer theory critiques categorization and fixed identities, which broadens perspectives in diversity management (Gedro, 2013; Rumens, 2016). This critique is accomplished through the core concepts of heteronormativity and performativity (McDonald, 2013; Moore, 2013). Leipold (2014) noted that Butler characterized the phenomenon of heteronormativity as a dualistic sex model. Most societies use this model, in which every individual is defined as either male or female, with heteronormative privilege viewed as a key domain in social membership (Pfeffer, 2014; McCann, 2011). Rumens (2016) noted that there exists a heteronormative bias currently in corporate studies on business schools, which favors the White male as the norm.

Corporations can be thought of as heteronormative in that employees are expected to conform to the prevailing heterosexual norm (Dixon, 2013; Harding et al., 2011). Anyone who does not conform is viewed as queer and represents a contradiction to the accepted category (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). Corporations are further modeled along societal norms by adopting familial terms and concepts of the heterosexual family, such as when a corporation is viewed as paternalistic and led by father figures (Harding et al., 2011). Queer theorists defy these norms by not accepting conformance and challenge that heterosexuality is not a given, biologically speaking (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). Concepts of heterosexuality, according to queer theorists, are derived through social manipulations that require constant work to be maintained (Harding et al., 2011). The queer, or those who are “other” or do not desire to conform, threatens the stability of the heterosexual norm (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; Pfeffer, 2014). Corporations are so steeped in

heteronormative concepts that even homosexual managers often conform to heteronormative behaviors.

Applied in the Derridian poststructuralist framework, queer theory provides a theoretical process to deconstruct rigid hegemonic sexual identities perpetuated by social and legal regulation (Moore, 2013; Pfeffer, 2014). While societal constructs have recognized an opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality, with homosexuality outside the normative condition, queer theory seeks to understand that the outside is already inside and that homosexuality is an essential part of societal norms and is not to be excluded (Carlson, 2014; Moore, 2013). By understanding that general broad labels are insufficient, queer theory helps inform corporate theories through the recognition that there exist several differences between people, including gender.

Butler advanced the concept of performativity, in which gender and sexual identity are created through behaviors, not through attraction or psychological factors (Bilgehan, 2011; Simpson, 2014). These behaviors are described as the expected performances of socially recognized actors (Butler, 2004). Thus, males perform or act as males are expected, that is, through masculinized behaviors such as hunting and wage earning, while females are expected to act in the more passive role. The performative behaviors were used to create gender and sexual identity, but these identities are not concrete and may change over time (Bartle, 2015; McDonald, 2013; Whitehead, 2014).

The central aim of queer theory was to deconstruct categories of knowledge and identity that have long been considered natural and beyond question, and to challenge the stability of binary identities such as woman/man, and straight/homosexual (McDonald,

2013; Rumens, 2015). This deconstructive approach aimed to destabilize the structural power of heteronormativity in society and critiques the normalizing effect on the understanding of sexuality and gender as restrictive dualisms (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). It is important to remember that queer theory was not against heterosexual orientations, but rather it expanded ideas of what were described as normal and natural. The scope of queer theory can then be expanded to review concepts of corporate management and management identities.

In applying queer theory, one can see that managers strongly evoked homoerotic desires in followers, who were essentially seduced to achieve corporate goals (Harding et al., 2011). Some scholars, including Rumens (2011, 2015, 2016) and Ozturk and Rumens (2014), have used queer theory to study LGBT employees in corporations, while Lee et al. (2008) and McDonald (2013) employed queer theory to analyze the lives of homosexual men in corporations. Queer theory had also been used to describe how heterosexual norms impose homogeneity, or sameness, of identity (Harding et al., 2011). Queer theory, however, had not been employed in management or corporate studies (Harding et al., 2011; Rumens, 2016).

While the theory provided a theoretical lens for more fluid and even multiple identities without necessarily applying labels to these identities, it also robbed the individual of making connections with the community at large (Carlson, 2014; Pfeffer, 2014). Another critique of queer theory was that it can designate relationships between men as either homosexual or heterosexual. By making homosexuality compulsory, queer theory did little more than embody the normalization of homosexuality practices

(Carlson, 2014). For example, same-sex kisses are not necessarily homosexual or even homoerotic and do not need to be defined by the binary of homo/hetero behaviors (Bartle 2015).

Queer theory was also criticized because it cannot properly define the emerging queer community into a single discourse (O'Rourke, 2012). Sexual orientation had been viewed as highly fluid, including not only the binaries of hetero and homo, but also transsexual, queer, and questioning identities (Carlson, 2014). However, queer theory is described as having a quality of openness and an anticipatory quality in trying to bring a queer world into being (O'Rourke, 2012). O'Rourke (2012) argued that queer theory is not the theory of any one thing, but rather represented a theory of everything. He also stated that commentators have described queer theory as stagnant and passé and that the death of queer theory has been pronounced almost since the beginning of queer theory.

At the same time, Derrida and Mullarkey have worked to change the shape of queer theory and renew the theory for new directions of inquiry that were forward-looking, rather than rooted in past phenomena (O'Rourke, 2012). The works of Eve Sedgwick (1990) and Judith Butler (1990) also described a future-looking queer theory, wherein it was noted that the theory had always been about the promise of tomorrow. Theorists such as Tim Dean (2009), Jose Esteban Munoz (2009), and Sara Ahmed (2010) have brought about a return of the affirmative, yet revolutionary potential offered by queer theory.

In summary, queer theory provides a poststructural framework to examine the social contexts of sexuality and gender. Queer theory called into question such binary

concepts as male/female, in which individuals performed the part society expected based on external birth gender. Queer theory also questioned societal concepts of categories and fixed identities and recognized that human sexuality and gender was fluid and may represent a moving point anywhere along a gender and sexual orientation axis. Taken within the context of this study, queer theory provided a conceptual framework to examine the binaries of manager and employee, as well as the sexual norms inherent in corporations as they affected the homosexual manager.

One core concept included heteronormativity, where power was exhibited through binary male/female roles, with the heterosexual male typically representing the privileged societal role. A second core concept included performativity, in which individuals acted out the expected role based upon societal definitions of binary gender and sexual orientation. For example, boys wore blue and played with trucks, while girls played with dolls. Individuals continued to act out these expectations to fit into the culture's definition of what it meant to be a girl or boy. These ideas were challenged and deconstructed by queer theorists to break down rigid hegemonic perpetuations of identity. By deconstructing stereotypes and binary values, queer theory allowed the general population to gain a better understanding of those who fit outside societal norms.

Also, queer theory deconstructed knowledge categories and questioned the stability of binary identities. In doing so, queer theory was used to expand the notion of identity, including corporate identities. By bringing together feminist, poststructuralist, and gender theories, queer theory provided an analytic lens to question why things were

done the way they were done. This lens opened the possibility of finding a new corporate analysis that did not rely on black and white binary concepts.

## Literature Review

The following section is a description of the major theories of the proposed inquiry. A review of homophobia and bias in the workplace begins the review, followed by a brief description of sexuality and diversity in the workplace to discuss gender and sexual orientation diversification in the workplace. LMX provided a foundation to describe relationships between the homosexual manager and his subordinates. This description of LMX, and brief analysis of mentoring and work relationships, provided a basis of information related to the processes of mentoring and developing future managers. Research related to mentoring, and where found, research specific to homosexual male mentoring, is presented, as well. A section of previous studies related to homosexual management was included to form a basis of knowledge regarding current work in this field. Finally, research related to homosexual men's career paths and identity management described the work environment found in many corporations.

### Homophobia and Bias in the Workplace

Due to increasing acceptance, sexual minorities are becoming more visible in corporations, and recent, conservative estimates of the total population of LGBT individuals in the United States are approximately 9 million, or 4% of the population (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). These numbers are likely to be an underestimate, as a significant number of LGBT individuals still prefer to keep their sexual orientation private as disclosure may lead to discrimination, termination, or stigmatization in a

hostile workplace (Einarsdóttir, Hoel, & Lewis, 2015). Regardless, some employers and legislation began to recognize this population, and the number of *Fortune 500* companies who offered same-sex benefits rose from two in 2002, to 67% by 2014 (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). Additionally, Anteby and Anderson (2014) reported 21 states and 91% of *Fortune 500* corporations included in their employment nondiscrimination policies sexual orientation.

Despite this higher visibility, sexual minorities continued to remain one of the largest and least studied groups in corporations. Among social science research, the topic was considered taboo, particularly in corporate and management research. Among mainstream management scholarship, the twelve most cited journals published ten articles that referenced LGBT in 2013 (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). In one of the few studies to address homosexual male management, Goodman et al. (2008) found that despite an increasingly more acceptable social climate, LGBT individuals still experienced discrimination. In social contexts in which homosexual managers were derogated, the employees viewed his management as poor, compared to straight managers or homosexual managers who did not experience derogation (Goodman et al., 2008). These attitudes were further reflected by senior management, who may publicly condone having homosexual men in the workforce, but did not necessarily want homosexual men represented at management levels. Tindal and Waters (2012) found that in general, homosexual men had to sacrifice their identities to gain advancement, which was in line with queer theory's concepts of power struggles between the binaries of heterosexual and homosexual.

Attitudes held by managers were one of the factors that help shape the normative culture within the work environment. This culture was based on shared values, assumptions, and norms that defined interpersonal interactions (Coronges et al., 2013). A "locker room mentality" often existed in work environments in which workers gathered to discuss topics unrelated to work from a heteronormative, and often homophobic, perspective (Rene Gregory, 2011). Hegemonic men often used sport and athletic metaphors and masculinities to construct gender differences (Hearn, 2014; Whitehead, 2014). These gender differences were used to structure heteronormative activities and homophobia in the workplace (Whitehead, 2014). Men were expected to fulfill the masculinized gender myth of the assertive, aggressive, and dominating male who crushes opponents. If he lost, he was then considered to be feminized. Terms such as "faggot" were used to describe him as homosexual, and he was rendered impotent by the dominant male (Rene Gregory, 2011; Whitehead, 2014).

Although there have been many social advances in the LGBT population, there still existed homophobia and bias, particularly in the masculinized corporate environment. Also, diversification, particularly gender and sexual orientation was a concern for many corporations. In the following section, I provide a brief review of these diversity concerns.

**Sexuality and Diversity in the Workplace**

The term diversity described differences among such dimensions as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, and socioeconomic status (Volckman, 2012). One common element of leadership

definitions included inspiring others to create a shared vision, though a diverse workgroup can complicate this vision. This diversification included sexuality, which had become part of the management and corporate literature since the 1980s (Calas, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014).

Mentoring, task forces, and diversity officers were successful in increasing diversity because these initiatives actively and directly engaged managers to hire and retain minorities (Kim et al., 2012). Individuals engaged in mentoring relationships received more promotions while earning higher wages and saw an increase in job satisfaction. Despite the success of mentoring programs, only 10 to 20 percent of American corporations actively supported mentoring programs. Mentoring provided managers with a direct role to promote diversity, and unlike networking programs or affinity groups, mentoring provided social and professional ties to minorities with managers and corporate managers (Kim et al., 2012).

Workplace environments have become increasingly more diverse concerning race, culture, gender, gender-role identity, and sexual orientation (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Kent & Moss, 1994). Despite this, few studies addressed gender-role identity and sexual orientation in management (Pfeffer, 2014). There were also relatively few women and minorities in management roles, leading to the question of whether the glass ceiling effect was held in place by the predominantly White male leaders in corporations (Calas et al., 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Streets & Major, 2014).

In fact, the concept of management and leadership theories had long been formulated from the viewpoint of the White male and their experiences in corporate

management roles (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). When gender was considered, it was viewed from the physical attributes of the male/female dyad instead of a multidimensional stance that would include gender-role identity and gender-role traits. This lack of multidimensionality excluded the study of the homosexual male in management contexts in many studies, as well, leading to less inclusive leadership theories (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Research into gender differences among corporate managers also did not include sexual orientation as part of their studies (Anderson & Hansson, 2011).

In a male-dominated environment, adherence to heteronormative gender roles, including antifeminine norms and status, exerted effects on increased aggression toward homosexual males through sexual prejudice (Dixon, 2013; Tindall & Waters, 2012). The heteronormative male gender role included a belief that males must be respected, males were tough and inclined toward aggression, males were the wage earners, and antifemininity, which was the belief that males avoided stereotypical feminine behaviors and activities (Metz & Kulick, 2014). The sexual stigma associated with social norms and institutions was referred to as heterosexism and implicitly sanctioned aggression towards sexual minorities (Dixon, 2013; Tindall & Waters, 2012). Gender role enforcement was rooted in sexual prejudice and further perpetuated the heteronormative status (Dixon, 2013). Homosexual males threatened this status quo as they were perceived to possess feminine qualities which violated the heteronormative male gender role (Tindall & Waters, 2012). Traditional male gender role belief supported aggression, whether

physical or verbal, towards homosexual males, who appeared to be a threat towards masculinity (Metz & Kulick, 2014; Tindall & Waters, 2012).

However, when women enacted these agentic behaviors, they often faced a backlash effect and were viewed as deficient (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Androgynous behaviors, in contrast, were perceived as more conducive in women to management behaviors (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Female managers in male-dominated corporations were expected to enact management styles that were agentic or masculinized modes of management (Herrera, Duncan, Green & Skaggs, 2012). Studies such as Rudman and Glick (2001), Duehr and Bono (2006), Herrera et al. (2012) did not include sexual orientation as a mediating factor. While the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study considered gender as a cultural dimension of management (Herrera et al., 2012), it did not consider sexual orientation as a dimension of management.

Workplace discrimination could have a deleterious effect on institutions and was related to a decrease in job satisfaction, as well as a decreased commitment to the corporation, decreased self-esteem, and increased turnover (Ruggs, Martinez, Hebl, & Law. 2015). Gender identity discrimination can also lead to increased stress, which led to negative health consequences. Corporations had begun to adopt hiring policies as a means for indicating corporate support for diversity hiring. These hiring policies were effective in decreasing discrimination among stigmatized groups such as LGBT employees. Additionally, discrimination was decreased in municipalities that enacted sexual orientation discrimination laws (Ruggs et al., 2015).

The process of homosocial reproduction furthered discriminatory attitudes as managers from the dominant group tended to hire and promote those that were most likely to conform to corporate expectations (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2014; Tindall & Waters, 2012). These actions reinforced the status quo and left those who were deemed as *other* outside of management positions.

Corporate expectations of management roles tended towards stereotypes of how role takers should behave. Corporate expectations can work in favor of the homosexual male employee, provided he fulfills the assigned role (Tindall & Waters, 2012). These advantages stemmed from social perceptions of homosexual males and corporately defined stereotypes (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2014). It was also important to note that homosexual male leaders and managers can become important for corporations to interpret or explain the LGBT culture to those who had little experience with this culture. Homosexual employees, however, can become limited to filling these roles and can be viewed as the token homosexual person, instead of being recognized for their professional skills (Tindall & Waters, 2012).

Diversity management has become more important to corporations as the workplace increases in diverse employees. However, references to sexual orientation were lacking in diversity discussions (Tindall & Waters, 2012). Corporate support was also linked to increased job satisfaction, higher corporate commitment, and decreased stress (Ruggs et al., 2015). In addition to administrative policies, supportive coworkers also contributed to a positive corporate climate, which increased positive attitudes toward LGBT employees (Ruggs et al., 2015).

With an increasingly diverse workforce, corporations were faced with the task of managing this diversity. However, sexual orientation was often an aspect missing in discussions of diversification. Moreover, for the homosexual male, negotiating heteronormative environments and role expectations can be challenging. These challenges can be mitigated through the development of successful relationships between managers and employees. The following section describes how the LMX theory and how this theory can be used to describe this process.

**Leader-Member Exchange**

The purpose of this section was to provide a brief review of LMX. LMX was developed in the early 1970s with an initial emphasis on role theory that later developed into a heavier reliance on social exchange theory (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Rockstuhl et al., 2012). The original theory was based on the work of George Graen and his team (Graen & Schiemann, 2012). One of the key tenets of LMX was the relationship between member attitudes and behavior towards work and the member's dependence upon leadership treatment (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). LMX theory was used to describe the different types of relationships between superiors and subordinates, or leaders/managers and members (Dulebohn et al., 2012). This theory had evolved from both the social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity (Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Social exchange theory described the voluntary relationships of individuals who were motivated by positive outcomes such as career advice, social support, and feedback (Douglas, 2012; Kaminskas, Bartkus, & Pilinkus, 2011). Social exchanges

typically engendered feelings of trust, respect, and personal obligations to the manager (Murphy, 2012).

Managers and followers in LMX relationships used these social exchanges, though the focus in LMX theory was upon vertical dyad relationships between managers and followers (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, Carsten, 2014). LMX relationships developed into either high-LMX or low-LMX relationships based upon the quality of interactions between managers and subordinates (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). As each member of the relationship reciprocated favors, the quality of the relationship increased so that as praise was given, performance improved, which was an expectation of the manager (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Graen & Schiemann, 2012). High exchange relationships can be characterized as strong in mutual trust and loyalty (Rockstuhl et al., 2012).

Dyadic relationships are an inherent aspect of corporations and are seen in mentoring, negotiation, performance appraisals, and interpersonal conflict and cooperation relationships (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012). These relationships evolved as a series of exchanges (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012). Gender also played a role. For example, males reported less stress when working with gender mixed superiors (Douglas, 2012; Schieman & McMullen, 2008). This mix was composed of both a female and a male manager (Schieman & McMullen, 2008). Males reported more stress when working with only a male manager when compared to working with a female manager or a combination of male and female managers. Women reported less stress when working with one male manager compared to women who worked with gender mixed superiors

(Douglas, 2012). However, Schieman and McMullen (2008) had not considered sexual orientation when analyzing these relationships.

Management plays a key role in today's corporations, creating progressive environments for innovation (Aarons, Ehrhart, & Farahnak, 2014). Management also had a positive relationship with the success or failure due to the complex social relationships inherent in management, as well as on empowering employees for success, job satisfaction, and performance (Wong & Laschinger, 2012). Management behaviors, as well as leader-subordinate relationships, had been found to affect employee performance and behaviors (Douglas, 2012). Activities, such as paying attention to the needs and skills of subordinates, as well as inspiring loyalty and trust, were considered necessary aspects of effective management (Dussault, Frenette & Fernet, 2013). Also, researchers had previously found that how managers behave in their roles influenced their effectiveness (Douglas, 2012).

However, few researchers had examined the effects of gender on the LMX relationship (Douglas, 2012). Investigators that had reported the impact of sex on management styles noted that male management behaviors were rated higher than identical female management behaviors, which suggested a male management advantage. Additionally, when manager behavior matched role expectations, the manager was considered more effective, reinforcing the notion that male and female managers were affected by gender stereotypes. Douglas (2012) also noted that same-sex dyads developed stronger relationships than mixed-sex dyads, although sexual orientation was not considered.

The LMX relationship was similar to mentoring and overlaps in providing psychosocial support (Murphy, 2012). The development of successful connections between mentors and mentees at work enabled both the corporation and the individual to thrive (Murphy, 2012). The quality of relationships between subordinates and their managers also influenced manager effectiveness. Through a collaborative relationship, managers and subordinates gained trust, shared input, and ideas, which contributed to improved performance for both parties (Douglas, 2012; Dulebohn et al., 2012).

Management paradigms using mentoring contributed greatly to corporate success as the mentor program trained and developed effective future managers (Lester et al., 2011). Leader-member exchanges were essentially a form of mentoring. Managers and followers in high LMX relationships enjoyed mutual benefits of trust and increased job satisfaction (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Rockstuhl et al., 2012). These benefits represented the essence of a strong mentoring relationship, in which the manager undertook to provide extra training to a follower who exhibited a high potential for success.

To summarize, LMX theory had been used by researchers to explain the social changes seen in relationships developed by managers and followers. Some of these relationships were positive, or high LMX, while other relationships were low LMX or negative. Managers have used these relationships to develop the potential of an employee further. Quite often, these relationships exhibited qualities like those seen in mentoring relationships. In the following section, I will describe this type of relationship.

**Mentoring and Work Relationships**

Mentoring had been described as a key strategy in career development. Successful mentoring resulted from a trusting relationship between mentors and their protégés (Murphy, 2012). Leck and Orser (2013) have suggested that a gender difference existed in this trusting relationship, with male mentors trusting their male protégés more than their female protégés. In mentoring relationships, trust was shaped by the mentor's perception of the mentee's ability and integrity (Leck & Orser, 2013). The mentoring was a reciprocal relationship that provided psychological support, including acceptance, friendship, and support for career development, increased fulfillment, and self-efficacy (Madera, King, & Hebl, 2012; Sheran & Arnold, 2012).

Mentoring had been further defined as a transformational process that utilizes a professional dialogue to aid the development of individuals (Lester, Het al., 2011; Popoola, Adesopo, & Ajayi, 2013). Popoola et al. (2013) defined mentoring as a process involving an experienced and empathic person who guided the protégé to develop skills, competencies, and knowledge during face-to-face meetings and that fostered professional and personal growth. This process can be part of a formal relationship developed during an employee's orientation or as part of an employee's career development (Miller Burke & Attridge, 2011a). While some managers may block subordinates in their professional endeavors, others choose to form relationships that were more positive with their followers. It was this positive aspect that managers can use to rise in their career paths, as well as to mentor subordinates.

Mentors and protégés should understand the nature of stigma and be aware of its potential to impact the mentoring relationship (Russell & Horne, 2009). By directly discussing sexual prejudice and stigma, mentoring partners identified potential sources of stress and can engage more effectively to reduce these stressors (Russell & Horne, 2009). Also, perceived workplace discrimination posed an obstacle towards mentoring relationships of homosexual and lesbian employees (Church, 2012).

One such source of stress related to coming out issues, which represented an important milestone and can significantly impact both the professional and personal lives of LGBT individuals (Gedro, 2010). Coming out while one is attempting to manage a career can be especially challenging since the LGBT individual was learning to manage both same-sex attractions and professional identity (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015; Ryan, Legate, & Weinstein, 2015). These stressors can make the mentoring relationship both challenging and more intense. However, the mentoring relationship that acknowledged and worked through sexual prejudice can be rewarding and enriching for both the mentor and the protégé as the individuals worked through social, personal, professional, and institutional concepts of sexual identity (Russell & Horne, 2009).

An openly homosexual person, particularly one in a position of authority and responsibility, can be viewed as a role model for members of the corporation (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). However, research related to specific homosexual male mentor and mentee relationships was scarce. Researchers who examined this issue had indicated that mentoring played a key role in helping support homosexual identity development and increased feelings of being part of a homosexual community (Sheran & Arnold, 2012;

Tsai et al., 2014). Also, mentoring improved homosexual-related stress management and helped to develop role modeling of positive homosexual identities (Sheran & Arnold, 2012; Tsai et al., 2014). When mentoring LGBT individuals, it was important to recognize the persistent stigma and homosexual-related stress associated with being LGBT (Gedro, 2016; Russel & Horne, 2009). Homosexual-related stress included depression, physical, verbal, and sexual abuse, workplace discrimination, and isolation or social difficulties with family and peer relationships (Gedro, 2016). Mentorship provided psychological and behavioral encouragement to deal with this stress through role modeling and increased support of sexual identity disclosure (Graen & Schiemann, 2012; Streets & Major, 2014).

To summarize, researchers had reviewed the issue of mentoring in corporate studies in the past, but many of these studies have not included sexual orientation as a factor, nor have these studies specifically had homosexual male managers as participants. One purpose of mentoring was to help employees manage their careers, as well as to advance these careers. Mentoring individuals provided positive relationships between managers and employees, which can increase corporate stability and growth. As one sought to understand mentoring relationships between homosexual individuals in the workplace, it was important to understand homosexual management. The following section reviewed the pertinent literature on homosexual management.

**Homosexual Managers**

This section reviewed the literature on homosexual managers. As this population continued to transition from out of the closet and into public awareness, one expected to

see more managers make this same transition. The development of managers was an important corporate goal, as managers were an integral aid in creating an improved performance of followers (Ray & Goppelt, 2011). Management behaviors included role modeling, or setting an example, creating a culture of respect and collaboration, excellent two-way communication, accountability, personal involvement, and personal learning (Latham, 2013). Latham also described management characteristics, which included purpose and meaning, humility and confidence, integrity, and having a systems perspective. In a similar vein, Miller Burke and Attridge (2011a) described management traits to include conscientiousness and openness to experience, as well as resilience and flexibility. Associated with these traits was a positive correlation between career success (Miller Burke & Attridge, 2011a).

LGBT issues among management research had not been well studied, despite the acknowledgment that sexual minorities faced unique challenges in the leadership field (Fassinger et al., 2010). Stigma and marginalization were factors that affected management. Management models that took account of LGBT leaders should have incorporated sexual orientation, including identity disclosure, and gender orientation (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2015). One reason for this inclusion was that LGBT managers presented unique perspectives and characteristics to the leadership process.

Research into homosexual management was more often related to the management of homosexual social corporations (Briscoe, Chin, & Hambrick, 2014). LGBT management was apparent in social causes, with groups working for workplace rights, same-sex marriage, and HIV/AIDS advocacy (Fassinger et al., 2010). However,

no single national LGBT manager had emerged when compared to those seen with other minority groups, such as Martin Luther King Jr. (Fassinger et al., 2010). Fear had also worked to strengthen LGBT managers with a sense of personal power and inner strength as leaders and managers worked through the emotional impact of discrimination and homophobia). These managers developed invaluable personal traits that have also led to increased acceptance and self-awareness (deLeon & Brunner, 2013).

Traditional masculine management traits included a more autocratic, task-oriented style that is highly structured, while women tended to exhibit more democratic, relationship-oriented management which was consistent with a more consideration-oriented style of management (Streets & Major, 2014). However, Cuadrado, Navas, Molero, Ferrer, & Morales (2012) found that male subordinates evaluated female managers as more democratic, which was contrary to both previous studies and traditional gender stereotypes. This difference may be due to how managers were viewed, which is a traditional male. Female managers, simply because of their role as managers, may be viewed as more masculine. Cuadrado et al. (2012) found that management styles did not differ significantly by gender, except as perceived by subordinates, which also differed based on the subordinate's gender. However, this study did not look at sexual orientation as a factor.

Successful LGBT managers could navigate acceptance of their sexual orientation within heteronormative environments. However, to do so, it was key that these LGBT managers be viewed as normalized lesbian/homosexual individuals to be accepted. Normalized lesbian and homosexual individuals were viewed within this context as

essentially similar to heterosexual individuals. Thus, behaviors were expected to be normalized to the expectant behaviors of their gender (deLeon & Brunner, 2013). In other words, in this type of environment, one can be out as homosexual, if the homosexual employee did not act homosexual.

While homosexual management studies were focused on homosexual social corporations, the exception was Snyder's (2006) five-year study. Snyder found that corporations with white-collar homosexual male managers experienced 35 percent higher levels of employee engagement and work satisfaction, as well as higher levels of workplace morale, employee loyalty, and productivity. The homosexual experience, and learning to come to terms with themselves, had helped the homosexual manager learn to understand and value themselves, and helped them learn to trust others.

To summarize, few studies focused on the homosexual male leader or manager in corporate environments. While research had been conducted on homosexual educational leadership, homosexual corporate leadership was largely a silent aspect of corporate literature. Studies were needed in this area as homosexual males become increasingly public about their sexual orientation. The homosexual manager struggled with both sexual identity management and career management. In the following section, I provide a more in-depth review of the literature in these areas.

**Homosexual Career Path and Identity Management**

Estimates of homosexuals and lesbians in the workforce ranged from 3.5% and 17%, although obtaining an accurate number of homosexual professionals can be difficult (Tindall & Waters, 2012). As many as eight million people identified as LGBT in the

U.S. workplace (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). Acknowledging homosexuals and lesbians in the workforce was further complicated because these workers made career choices in a work environment characterized by discrimination, as well as stigmatization, despite an overall increase in social acceptance of homosexuals and lesbians (Gates & Kelly, 2013; Kaplan, 2014; Prati & Pietrantoni, 2014). This discrimination included harassment, vulnerability to being fired, absence of benefits for dependents, and lower wages (Gates & Kelly, 2013). Consequently, homosexual and lesbian workers made career decisions to minimize these adverse effects and to manage their identities, which resulted in the potential for limited career options (Kaplan, 2014). Successful career paths included the general development of management skills, diverse work positions, starting a corporation, networking, the development of good interpersonal communication skills, having a mentor, and professional training or licensure (Miller Burke & Attridge, 2011b). Challenges to successful career paths included the experience of prejudice or discrimination.

Conducting qualitative research in 2013, deLeon and Brunner examined an inductive model to understand these issues in educational leaders better. To maintain anonymity, which was viewed as critical, the study design used computer-mediated technology, including a virtual environment with a secure ID code and password. One finding was that most managers overcompensated for their same-sex attraction to feel equal to their heterosexual peers.

Homosexual managers who grew up with homophobia passed themselves off as being heterosexual to avoid hostility and reprisals at work. Assimilation and covering

their homosexuality became the norm for these managers and led to living a double life of pretense. Homophobia, as well as fear, had kept the LGBT manager invisible, and the lavender ceiling had prevented managers from being promoted. As a result, LGBT individuals often possess unique perspectives, as well as heightened empathy for others (deLeon & Brunner, 2013). Also, homosexual employees often negotiated their identities to minimize the effects of stereotypes, as well as sexual prejudice and homophobia (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). Between 24 and 66 percent of homosexual employees hid their orientation out of fear of being denied professional advancement (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2014).

Lesbian and homosexual employees may choose to create a false heterosexual identity, avoid sexuality issues, or integrate their sexual identity in the workplace by coming out as homosexual (Dixon, 2013; Marrs & Staton, 2016; Tsai et al., 2014). Behaviors typically seen in passing as heterosexual included fabrication, concealment, and discretion (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). Additional identity management strategies included overcompensating in order to have an impeccable reputation and to develop a separation strategy to keep their personal and professional identities isolated (Marrs & Staton, 2016). These strategies have led to increased freedom to live their lives openly, though not without some personal and professional risk.

Identity management was an important aspect of career management for minority groups. For homosexual men, the stigmatization of being homosexual, where homosexual acts had been viewed as criminal in many states, and homosexuality was viewed as a psychiatric disorder and religious condemnation, the need for identity management

became more of a concern (Church, 2012; Einarsdóttir et al., 2015; Kaplan, 2014). Although homosexuality was no longer considered a psychiatric illness today, homosexual relations were legal, and there was a growing acceptance within religious communities, scholars continued to note that homosexual and lesbians were a minority group that remains stigmatized (Gates & Kelly, 2013; Yoder & Mattheis, 2016).

Implications of a heteronormative construction of sexual and gender identities, or passing as heterosexual, included blunting of relationships with coworkers, as well as social and professional development within the corporation. Homosexual employees who were out in the workplace often took on unwanted identities based upon cultural and social interpretations of what it meant to be homosexual. Typically, if a homosexual worker desired to enter management positions, they downplayed or remained silent about their homosexual identities. Homosexual men referred to this situation as the lavender ceiling that can only be crossed into upper management positions by remaining closeted (Tindall & Waters, 2012).

LGBT workers can be out and closeted at the same time, as the employee may post this information on social media, but not communicate the information officially in the workplace. This dichotomy added complexity to communicating and negotiating their sexual identities in the workplace (Dixon, 2013). Coming out also reinforced the hetero versus homo binary, as these social constructs implied a subjugation to regulatory discourses and hence a power relationship between straight and homosexual (Benozzo et al., 2015). This subjugation was further heightened by the heteronormative privilege of not having to announce one's private sexuality publicly.

Coming out can be one of the most difficult decisions made by the LGBT worker (Marrs & Staton, 2016; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). When employees came out, they had several options, particularly regarding corporate social events. These events were often an anxiety-filled issue for the LGBT employee, who negotiated these concerns by determining their values versus workplace expectations (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). The individual can then either yield to the dominant expectations for heteronormative behaviors or review their relationships with coworkers to decide to come out (Marrs & Staton, 2016). Alternatively, the employee may use the event as a teaching moment to help promote inclusivity and acceptance.

Researchers had found that open LGBT employees displayed higher job satisfaction, decreased role conflict, and decreased conflict between home and work (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). However, Prati and Pietrantoni (2014) noted that this increase in satisfaction was related to the level of workplace heterosexism and the subject's anticipation of discrimination. Other researchers noted that coming out can be met with negative experiences such as anger and hostility (Marrs & Staton, 2016; Ryan et al., 2015).

Additionally, other researchers found that disclosure of sexual orientation led to increased vulnerability in the workplace for sexual orientation discrimination, and lower pay (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). At the same time, concealment of one's identity could lead to observations of sexual prejudice among coworkers, which could lead to stress and depression (Marrs & Staton, 2016).

Corporations, in general, were places of masculine power exhibited through corporate control, decision-making, and cultures that reinforced heteronormative, masculine discursive practices (Hearn, 2014). Workplace environments that had a strong masculine culture, such as police and fire, as well as skilled trade jobs, prevented homosexual employees from disclosing their orientation or hampered openly homosexual employees from job promotion (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). These issues worked to complicate career management for the homosexual manager.

Researchers had begun to describe how work friendships provide homosexual men in developing workplace identities that challenged heteronormative corporate structures (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). These friendships among managers can be particularly important in developing resources for career advancement and success (Rumens, 2011). Rumens also (2011) noted that past researchers have suggested that minority employees were disadvantaged in developing these networks when their minority status was deemed incompatible with institutional views of the employee or managerial characteristics.

Heteronormative corporations can negatively impact work relationships among LGBT workers from enjoying the same benefits offered by male homosocial informal networks (i.e., good ole boy network) which had been demonstrated to have positive effects upon career development (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). This requires LGBT workers to attempt to fit into the heteronormative environment if they desired to advance their careers (Rumens, 2011). One way these employees managed their identities was to accept

the unspoken understanding of what was acceptable and to work within that context to develop successful career identities (Yoder & Mattheis, 2016).

Successful management of career identities had been discussed in previous studies. Gates and Kelly (2013) described how past studies reframed stigmatized behaviors into survival skills and positive resources, thus promoting the concept that individuals who endured discrimination also possessed an innate strength to recover from these experiences and thrive despite the marginalized status. LGBT workers may also possess skills and traits that presented advantages to corporations to increase performance (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). Researchers could extend Snyder's (2006) suggestion that homosexual and lesbian managers managed differently and, in some respects, better than their heterosexual counterparts. The very aspects of living as a sexual minority gave these minorities a set of learned skills, including adaptability, creative problem solving, and intuitive communication that had value for corporations.

In summary, there was little research to examine further how the minority status of homosexual and lesbian workers affected their abilities for forming workplace relationships that encourage career development (Rumens, 2011). Many corporations had developed a heteronormative culture that was essentially a source of stigma and oppression for homosexual and lesbian workers (Gedro, 2013; Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). Understanding how LGBT workers manage careers and identities within this heteronormative context can greatly contribute to knowledge about how LGBT workers develop opportunities for career growth and visibility. Homosexual managers were often challenged in managing their personal and professional identities. When managed

successfully, the homosexual manager offers several positive contributions to the corporation, including creative problem solving, increased performance, and an innate strength inherent in overcoming obstacles.

## Summary and Conclusion

Homosexual male managers are becoming increasingly visible in today's corporate world. Additionally, mentoring had been recognized as a tool for career advancement. I conducted this literature review to search for relevant, current information related to both homosexual male managers and mentoring. I presented information on queer theory, which provided the conceptual framework to separate the binary terms of manager and employee from expectant stereotypes. I provided literature related to homophobia and bias, as well as sexuality and diversity in the workplace, as background information on the corporate environment of homosexual male managers. Research on homosexual managers, their career paths, and identity management was also reviewed.

The literature related to homosexuals in the workplace focused on employees within corporations and their experiences with homophobia and bias. Workplace discrimination against sexual minorities had been well described. Literature related to diversity in the workplace described the benefits of a diverse workplace, though much of the research focused on gender and racial diversity and not upon sexual orientation as a factor. A review of the literature related to the LMX theory, which described interactions between managers and employees as either high or low quality, also included. LMX provided a binary framework to describe relationships between managers and

subordinates through dyadic relationships. A literature review of mentoring in the workplace focused on relationships between mentors and mentees, and the positive association between mentoring and career advancement. I also reviewed homosexual management literature, though sparse, included issues related to coming out as homosexual. Finally, I described the career path and identity management of the homosexual manager. I also described identity management related to how a homosexual male created workplace identities, which either hides their homosexuality, or their homosexuality became a part of their public persona.

Scholars know a great deal about issues related to mentoring in the workplace, LMX relationships, and management. I found in the literature review that both mentoring and positive LMX relationships contributed to workplace satisfaction and career growth. However, very few researchers had considered the homosexual male as either a mentor or a manager. Where there was research on homosexual male managers, it did not include managers in corporations. Therefore, leadership researchers had a minimal understanding of the homosexual male corporate manager. As a result, there was a gap in the literature which this study helped to fill. In Chapter 3, I presented the research method.

# Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological inquiry was to examine and understand the collective experiences of homosexual men in management positions in corporations. This chapter includes an explanation and rationale for the research design as well as the role of the researcher. The methodology was described, including participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, as well as the data analysis plan. I concluded Chapter 3 with the issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures.

## Research Design and Rationale

The chosen research design was guided by the question of the experiences of homosexual male managers. The general problem that this phenomenological study addressed was the lived mentoring experience of homosexual male managers who mentored others or have been mentored. The following research question, which is also found in Appendix A, guided this investigation:

RQ: What are the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations?

Previous research had described homophobia and discrimination in the workplace (Brown, 2014; Gedro, 2010), but not the phenomenon of homosexual management. These managers were defined here as those who coordinate resources, including employees, to meet corporate goals. The purpose of this inquiry was to describe the experiences of homosexual male managers and their leader-member relationships through

the lens of queer theory. This study demonstrated that mentoring influenced the leader-member relationships and the career paths of homosexual managers.

The qualitative approach is best used to answer questions about *how* or *why*, versus *how many* or *how much* questions that are typically answered through quantitative methods (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Qualitative methods are also used to gain knowledge about the experiences and attitudes of the participants. Alternatively, quantitative methods are better suited to classify, count, and construct statistical models (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The current inquiry was to understand the how and why of homosexual male management experiences in corporations; therefore, a qualitative study was the best design.

The qualitative method includes five approaches (Elkatawneh, 2016). The narrative approach gathers stories of life events and analyzes this type of data. Narrative research provides thick and in-depth descriptions but lacks a standard set of procedures seen in quantitative research. Grounded theory generates a theory of how experiences work. Ethnography is used to study cultures within a group. Case study research describes a specific event, process, or person within defined boundaries. Phenomenology explains experiences and people's perceptions of phenomena. This method is further described as hermeneutic phenomenology, which uses texts to explain lived experiences, and the transcendental approach, which explores the individual's notion of the essence and nature of the experience. While any of these methods may be suitable, the best approach here was the phenomenological method as it was used to gain knowledge of experiences and conceptions, the aim of the current inquiry.

Phenomenology, as described by Husserl (1962), concerns how individuals understand the world, with a focus on the participants' perceptions of lived experiences (Butler, 2016; Conklin, 2014). Phenomenology was used to investigate consciousness and how people described meaning to these objects (Giorgi, 2012).

A central feature of phenomenology is the descriptive data gained through in-depth interviews that provides information-rich descriptions of the participants' points of view on research to understand its experiential meaning (Finlay, 2012; Zeng, North, & Kent, 2012). The interview narratives allowed the participants to share their stories, in their own words, to provide meaning to the topic under study (Leipold, 2014). While a mixed methods methodology could be used to compensate for a single strategy (Zeng et al., 2012), this study was exploratory, with the goal of explaining what the experience was like for the subjects (see Finlay, 2012). Similarly, a quantitative method could be used to gather data, but the purpose here was to learn about the experiences of the population, which was best answered through a phenomenological method (Giorgi, 2012).

Phenomenology provides a framework that was both rigorous and nonreductionist when applied to human experiential phenomena (Conklin, 2014; Giorgi, 2012). Utilizing the descriptive phenomenological approach requires the researcher to have an attitude of phenomenological reduction, resisting the urge to accept the phenomenon simply as is, by using bracketing (Giorgi, 2012; Randles, 2012). Bracketing is defined as suspending self-knowledge of a phenomenon and being open to the data (Chan et al., 2013).

With a phenomenological reduction, the researcher takes an approach to obtain a sense of the data (Butler, 2016). The researcher next rereads the description, marking off sections that transition in meaning from the reduction attitude, a process that Giorgi (2012) described as constituting parts. These parts are also known as meaning units, which are unique to each researcher so that it is assumed that different investigators can have different meaning units. The next step, free imaginative variation, is critical and occurs when the researcher transforms the data into phrases that impart a psychological revelation of the subject's phrases (Finlay, 2012; Giorgi, 2012). These direct expressions were reviewed, and an essential structure of the phenomenon was described. The resulting description was then used to clarify and interpret raw data.

The nature of this inquiry was to describe the experiences of homosexual male managers through the lens of LMX. The chosen method enables the researcher to reduce these experiences to their essence and allowed for an understanding of the true nature of the phenomenon. By developing a reduction attitude, the researcher views the object without applying premeditated social descriptions. The researcher is an intrinsic part of this method, and my role as researcher is further described in the next section.

## Role of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the investigator is the instrument for analysis of the data and plays a greater role in data collection than the quantitative investigator (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Avoiding preconceptions and assumptions is a key element of this type of research. It was important for me to avoid biases or assumptions regarding gender identity, sexual orientation identity, gender role identity,

and manager role stereotypes. In this case, I have experienced what it is to be homosexual in the workplace, both as a worker and as a manager. As a homosexual manager with over 10 years' experience in management, I understand the issues facing homosexual managers in the workplace.

I took caution to separate myself from identifying with the participant. While the conceptual framework used queer theory to view the binaries of manager/employee, as well as heterosexual/homosexual, I needed to suspend judgment of the participant's words. This was done by using epoche, which is defined as the suspension of belief, judgment, and a priori psychological, spiritual, or scientific notions (Bazzano, 2014; Sosa, 2013). Epoche is an acknowledgment of the researcher's own biases and prejudices. Epoche is important for the researchers in a phenomenological study to avoid ideas that might obscure the unfolding phenomenon (Bazzano, 2014). Epoche allows the investigator to see the world as it is experienced by people (Butler, 2016).

Bracketing this knowledge is used to avoid an interpretation of the current phenomenon (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013; Giorgi, 2012). New experiences are regarded relative to past experiences. In doing so, the present experience is dismissed as identical to previous experiences when, in fact, the new experience may be similar rather than the same. Giorgi (2009) stated that Husserl's introduction of bracketing previous knowledge allows the researcher to focus on the new experience without tarnishing it with previous concepts. The researcher does not simply forget the past experience but instead prevents past knowledge from being engaged while analyzing the present experience (Giogi,

2009). By bracketing in this way, the investigator can analyze the data untarnished from past experiences.

## Method

I used the phenomenological method of deep, rich data gathered through interviews and observations in this study. This type of research, utilizing conversational encounters, provides a method of harnessing and exploring the experiences of participants (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Data collection continues until no new information is obtained or information becomes redundant; data saturation is therefore reached. Saturation may occur between 16 and 24 interviews (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2016).

### Participant Selection Logic

Participants were selected from the Greater Lehigh Valley region of Northeast Pennsylvania. This area was selected for convenience as I live in this region. It encompasses Lehigh and Northampton County, which includes the major cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, as well as Phillipsburg in New Jersey (Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, 2016).

More specifically, participants included homosexual males who were at the management level within a corporation. Males were chosen as they tend to exist in higher numbers in management positions than females. I used purposeful sampling initially. Homosexual managers were identified through the LGBT Business Council of the Chamber of Commerce. These initial participants could further identify relevant participants (Suri, 2011). This type of sampling may be particularly useful in a population

that may be difficult to identify, as homosexual managers may not be open in their workplace, rendering other sampling methods, such as intensity or heterogeneity sampling, useless (Suri, 2011).

In this case, sampling began with the local Lesbian, Bi, Homosexual and Transgender subcommittee of the local Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Inclusion criteria included homosexual male managers in a corporate environment. I used snowball sampling by asking subjects for names of other potential participants. I derived data from interviews based on five questions. As each individual will have their own perspectives on their experiences, it was anticipated that additional data would be derived as the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on their answers. Additional data included descriptions in more detail of what their experiences mean, how they have shaped their management styles, and their willingness and ability to mentor other employees.

**Instrumentation**

I developed an interview protocol. I used a journal for observation, as well as a digital audio recording of interviews. Individuals were identified in the journal as a sample number to protect their identities. I conducted interviews one-on-one, face-to-face. I developed a list of open-ended questions. As the interview progressed, I asked additional questions to explore or clarify the participant's meaning. Documentation review provided a source of questions.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot was conducted to review the research protocol. Such studies are used to assess the instrumentation and to provide feedback to the researcher (Petersen, Harvey, Reddihough, & Newall, 2015). Three participants were interviewed to assess the wording and order of the questions, and the protocol. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. These individuals were asked to identify ambiguity in the questions, and if revisions were needed.

**Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

Individuals were recruited through the local LGBT Business Council of the Chamber of Commerce. Potential participants were asked if they had been mentored in order to be included in this study. Type of mentorship, such as formal or informal, was also asked as both types are of interest. If a potential individual had not experienced mentoring at work, this person was excluded. Participants were also asked for suggestions for additional people to interview. Prospective participants were provided with a study information letter, a confidentiality agreement, and consent form before study participation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in their office, after obtaining informed consent. These interviews were scheduled for one hour, though it was explained that more time may be needed if necessary.

Data was collected based on interview answers from seven participants. Instrumentation included a researcher-developed guide of open-ended questions. Interviews will be conducted in a quiet space, or in the participant's office. As noted by Moustakas (1994), data collection may include individual interviews, an audiotape of the

session, descriptive and reflexive interview notes (such as a journal kept by the researcher) and a transcription of the interview. Subjects were debriefed and reviewed their transcripts to ensure the accuracy of the interview. Additional data included a review of corporate policy documents regarding sexual orientation discrimination if available, promotion practices, corporate charts that define manager-subject interactions, and mentoring programs. While the goal was to conduct 20 interviews, a sample size between five and 16 participants can be beneficial, especially when multiple interviews are conducted with the same subject (Robinson, 2013). Multiple interviews are useful because they can provide rich data that has depth (Robinson, 2013).

**Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis in phenomenological studies must be responsive to the issue at hand in capturing the essence of the lived experiences (Butler, 2016; Findlay, 2014). Responses will be coded and transcribed into the software program NVivo, version 12. After analysis, participants reviewed their information to ensure agreement with their lived experiences. Each individual was debriefed at that time. In viewing the phenomenon through fresh eyes, also known as the phenomenological attitude, the researcher must be careful not to rush into describing phenomena before being sure what it is that needs to be defined (Giorgi, 2012).

The phenomenological approach provides a method for pushing away from the known and from one's natural attitude (Finlay, 2014; Hansen, 2012). In doing so, the researcher develops new understandings of the phenomenon (Hansen, 2012). Adopting the phenomenological stance entails bracketing one's understandings to allow the

phenomenon to show itself in its truest form (Giorgi, 2012). The researcher must have a philosophical openness to the data and the experiences (Hansen, 2012). Becoming empathetic and genuinely curious, as well as reflexive, were the attitudes needed.

Dwelling is taking a pause and allowing the phenomenon to reveal its true meaning to the researcher (Finlay, 2014; Hansen, 2012). While dwelling is partly passive, it also involves actively mining the meanings, as well as shaping the themes through successive iterations of the data. By immersing oneself in the data, the researcher obtained a sense of the whole through listening to the recorded interviews and re-reading the transcripts. The researcher attended to both verbal and nonverbal elements, as well as subtle pauses and intonations. Meaning units were focused upon to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. As the meanings become clearer, they were sifted and honed to result in a fine-grained analysis (Finlay, 2014).

Dwelling also enabled the phenomenologist to experience the feel of the language of the lived experiences (Hansen, 2012). The lived experience was understood through the words and expressions used by people, allowing the researcher insight into the meanings this experience had for the individual. Through dwelling, the researcher can develop new understandings and transform the data into innovative meanings to explain the experiences (Finlay, 2014). During this early stage of analysis, the scientist engages with the raw data to draw out implicit, layered meanings. However, this was not a passive analysis; instead, meanings were mined and layered and are brought out through successive iterations, known as intuiting (Abalos, Rivera, Locsin, & Schoenhofer, 2016).

By immersing in the data, the investigator reviewed the data and transcripts multiple times to develop a sense of the whole, including nonverbal and verbal elements and becomes engaged in the essence of the human experience (Abalos et al., 2016; Finlay, 2014). Data was divided into smaller parts, known as meaning units, which are further crystallized and condensed, all while staying as close to the participant's words as possible (Abalos et al., 2016). In brief, data analysis was used to develop a sense of the data for its whole meaning. This process was accomplished by breaking data down into meaning units, transforming the individual's statements into a natural description of the phenomenon, and distinguishing its essential features (Finlay, 2014; Giorgio, 2009). Meaning units were established by rereading the individual's statements and marking each time a significant shift in meaning occurred. This procedure can be subjective, but ultimately the importance of these units was when they are transformed and reintegrated into the structure of the phenomenon as it was experienced (Giorgi, 2009).

The next stage was to explicate the data or to pull emergent themes into larger narratives (Abalos et al., 2016). Also called eidetic analysis, this stage was one of synthesis and integration to clarify themes and to search for connections across the data set (Finlay, 2014). This stage focused more on the phenomenon and less upon the description of the participant's experiences. By transforming meaning units and themes across the data set, clusters of essential meanings were brought forth (Giorgio, 2009). Individual experiences were compared to identify more general characteristics, and a free imaginative variation was used to carry the analysis forward into an integrated

description of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2014). Eidetic reduction involved seeing past the lived experience toward a universal essence.

These processes were facilitated using software, such as NVivo, which aided in data analysis. NVivo enabled me to code the text, which can be either a transcript or an audio file. Coding was the process of grouping related texts into nodes. This eidetic reduction produced nodes of information, which can be grouped into tree nodes. Tree nodes group specific nodes into more general categories (Zamawe, 2015). The information can then be charted or diagrammed for data analysis.

## Issues of Trustworthiness

In this section I described how this study established credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and ethical procedures to promote trustworthiness in the research method. These steps were necessary to demonstrate that the data was reliable, and that the methodology developed was one that can be replicated.

### Credibility

Credibility can be established through such techniques as having each participant review transcripts and preliminary analysis to check for misinterpretation (Zeng et al., 2012). Credibility can also be established by making the research steps explicit and sequential so that they may be followed by other investigators (Finlay, 2014).

Credibility was also increased when social location and context were addressed by researchers (McDonald, 2013). For example, homosexual men may be more willing to work with a researcher who was more like them than they are different. Social location or the personal relation of the researcher to the participant was a central concept of

reflexivity (Popoveniuc, 2014). One of the goals of reflexivity was to place the researcher within the context of the research situation, which required scientists to regard the implications of the research on both the participants and the researcher (Conklin, 2014). I was self-aware of my interactions with the subject and possible influences upon this environment (see Popoyeniuc, 2014). This awareness helped me to question the nature of what was real, as well as the nature of the knowledge that was gained, which further increased credibility.

**Transferability**

Transferability referred to the generalizability of the data and how the findings may be applied to other contexts (Morse, 2015; Zeng et al., 2012). Enrolling a sufficient number of participants to reach saturation, or the point at which there existed a repetition of the salient themes, helpedto ensure transferability (Zeng et al., 2012). Rich, thick descriptions provided a means of ensuring that anyone who reads this study will be able to understand the essence of the lived experience.

**Dependability**

Dependability can be achieved by requiring the principal researcher to have the responsibility for ensuring that the research process was logical, clearly documented, and traceable (Zeng et al., 2012). Dependability was also attained through multiple methods such as triangulation and the use of an audit trail (Morse, 2015). By having participants review transcripts, also known as member checking, as well as having interviewees review their descriptions of events and reflections, it was possible to ensure the dependability of the information gathered (Randles, 2012).

**Confirmability**

Confirmability involved an affirmation that all findings were derived from the data (Zeng et al., 2012). Bracketing was an effective means of establishing confirmability (Chan et al., 2012). Bracketing further helped to minimize the effects of preconceptions that can mar the research process (Tufford & Bewman, 2012). Reflexivity, including self-reflexivity and defining social locations, aided confirmability of information (McDonald, 2013). Reflexivity strategies were used to examine values and identify areas of bias and minimize these by bracketing (Chan et al., 2012). A reflexive diary was kept to develop bracketing skills and to re-examine positions when issues were raised during the research.

**Ethical Procedures**

Several ethical concerns potentially existed and needed to be mitigated. Ethical concerns may arise as part of explaining the purpose of the study, making promises and expecting reciprocity, risk assessment, confidentiality, informed consent, data access and ownership, advice, data collection boundaries, reporting of the data and publishing the study. These issues were addressed by using an interview protocol, informed consent and by seeking approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). An interview protocol is a checklist that the researcher can use to ensure all necessary information was covered (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The IRB ensured the ethical treatment and protection of subjects and approved research protocols. Informed consent addressed several issues, including the purpose of the work, how the information will be used, what will be asked during the interview, confidentiality issues, and risks and benefits of participating in the

study (Cho et al., 2015). The consent form and interview protocol were reviewed with each participant before the interview, and all data collection remained confidential.

I gathered the data was and secured it electronically on an encrypted external hard drive, with a backup copy kept on a second, encrypted external hard drive. I kept all data kept confidential, with each participant identified only by an assigned identification number. Access to the data was limited to me and the dissertation committee. All data will be eliminated by physical destruction of hard drives in seven years.

Additional ethical concerns included issues related to researching a minority population. I personally  assured the participants that their information will remain confidential. They may choose to remain anonymous, as well. In these cases, the identification number ended with the letter "A" to indicate anonymity, though no one in this study chose the option of remaining anonymous. At no point was a participant's sexual orientation discussed publicly. A subject's privacy was respected at each step of the process. The member may also withdraw at any time. Two members did withdraw after reviewing their transcripts.

## Summary

To summarize Chapter 3, the research method was a qualitative, descriptive, phenomenological study to capture deep, rich information of lived experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations. Mentoring and career path management were examined. The methodology included a qualitative analysis of data gathered through interviews and document reviews.

The interviews were based on four open-ended questions, which left room to explore additional information. Data collection occurred until saturation was reached and included seven participants. Study members were enlisted through snowball sampling, with initial participants gathered from members of the local Chamber of Commerce LGBT Business Council.

Issues of trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were addressed through a variety of strategies. Credibility, or internal validity, was established through member check, saturation, and reflexivity. Triangulation was used as well. Transferability, or external validity, was verified through strategies that included thick, rich descriptions. Dependability was shown through audit trails and triangulation. Confirmability strategies included reflexivity. Ethical issues were addressed through IRB approval, as well as by addressing participant needs as they occurred. In Chapter 4, I present the data collection, analysis, and the results.

# Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological inquiry was to examine and understand the collective experiences of homosexual men in management positions in corporations. I used the research question to understand the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations. The following subset of questions was also explored:

SQ1: How do homosexual managers (mentors and mentees) use mentoring to advance their careers?

SQ2: How do the experiences of being homosexual lead the homosexual manager to develop successful management skills?

SQ3: How do homosexual managers manage their sexual identities in the work environment?

This chapter includes a description of the pilot study, the research setting, participant demographics, and data collection. Data analysis is also described, including evidence of trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Finally, I present the study results and a summary of the answers to the research question(s).

## Pilot Study

As described in Chapter 3, upon approval from Walden University's IRB (approval #09-12-18-0278003), I conducted a pilot study with three participants. These participants were recruited through the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the clarity of the interview questions, to ensure

that the interview questions would answer the research question, and to identify any issues with the data collection process.

The open-ended interview questions elicited appropriate responses to answer the research questions. The interview process was well received by the participants. When asked for suggestions for improvements, the participants responded that they believed the process worked well for the interviews.

After reviewing the responses and data obtained, I determined that no refinements of the interview questions were necessary. Also, no changes were needed for the data analysis strategy. While a researcher cannot conclude from a pilot that the main study will be successful, in this case, the pilot study was successful.

## Research Setting

I selected participants from the Greater Lehigh Valley region of Northeast Pennsylvania. Participants were culled from personal contacts and members of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. I conducted seven face to face interviews at times and places based on the participants' work and personal schedules. As I described in Chapter 3, the collection method consisted of known contacts and snowball sampling. Participants varied in length of management positions, from 6 years to 47 years. Many participants had spent their careers in several organizations, though two had spent most of their careers with one organization.

## Demographics

Each participant was a homosexual male with experience in managing employees in a corporate environment. Corporations represented included finance, beauty, fashion,

retail, service industries, utilities, insurance, healthcare, adult care, and communications. All participants were White males, though ages varied from 38 to 68. All participants were college graduates. The number of direct reports varied from six to 50 employees. Company sizes varied from small, with about 140 employees, to large corporations with greater than 1,000 employees. The length of time with their current organization also varied, from 6 years to 47. Two of the participants had been married to women in the past.

**Sexuality and Diversity in the Workplace**

Sexual identity has been introduced into the concept of diversity in the literature since the 1980s (Calas et al., 2014). As workplace environments become more diverse, there is a need to address the lack of literature regarding gender-role identity and sexual orientation in management (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, Pfeffer 2014). With few minorities in management roles, questions arise about the glass ceiling effect held by the predominantly White heterosexual leaders in corporations (Calas et al., 2014; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Streets & Major, 2014). The good old boy club was echoed by participants, most notably P4, who stated that the “insurance industry was dominated by White male Republicans. At one time, my boss joked that not only was it White male Republicans. They were all 6-foot, 180. They looked exactly alike.” P5 stated that “it's fortunate that I happened to have two kids. So, Monday mornings, I could go into the office and talk about my kids.” P7 noted his workplace was “very Republican, very White, very straight.”

Leadership and management theories have generally been written from the viewpoint of the White male, and if gender is considered, it relates to male and female dyads (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). This study extends the literature in that it provides the homosexual male manager voice in describing their management roles. Providing more diverse voices may lead to more inclusive leadership theories (Ayman & Korabik, 2010).

Participants in this study all voiced an increase in diversity within their companies, and one individual played a role in developing corporate policies related to diversity and sexual/gender identities. Participants also noted that in most cases, their superior managers also supported increasing diversity. This supported the literature related to the concepts that increased diversity leads to decreased discrimination (Ruggs et al., 2015). Despite the increased acknowledgment of diversity, discussions of sexual orientation were often missing (Tindall & Waters, 2012). However, this study helped to extend this literature by discussing sexual orientation and the homosexual male in diverse workplaces.

## Data Collection

For this study, I sent 15 letters to potential participants, as well as the heads of LGBTQ programs at local corporations. One participant was interviewed through snowball sampling. From the initial pool of participants who received letters, nine homosexual males responded and were interviewed. Three of these interviews were conducted for the pilot study. When asked, 2 participants were able to name other homosexual managers. Of the suggested men, only one chose to participate in this study. In addition, two participants chose to withdraw for personal reasons. A total of seven

participants were interviewed for the final study. However, a qualitative framework requires the research to become immersed in the field, and a small number of cases can allow a researcher to develop close relationships with the participants (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). This can also enhance the validity of in-depth inquiry within a naturalistic setting (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006).

Each interviewee was initially contacted via e-mail and given the opportunity to review the study introduction letter and the consent form. Once a participant agreed to take part, a mutually convenient time and place was selected for the interview. Three of the interviews were completed at the participants' workplace, while the other interviews took place in a public setting such as a restaurant or at the Chamber of Commerce office. Interview duration varied from 17 minutes to over an hour. Each interview was digitally recorded, then uploaded to a transcription software program. Each document was then reviewed and corrected for accuracy. Only one recording was difficult to transcribe due to background noise. A second transcription software was used, and this transcription proved to be much more accurate. There were no deviations from the data collection plan described in Chapter 3.

Data saturation was used as a criterion to halt data collection; data saturation occurred when the information being gathered does not contain any new data (Saunders et al., 2018). When conducting interviews, saturation could be reached when there are no new themes generated by the interviews (Saunders et al., 2018). When interviewing the managers in this study, I concluded that I was hearing the same themes, albeit worded differently, from the participants. For example, the notion that "I had to be me" was

common to all participants, as was the idea that once a participant declared their sexuality, they felt freer in the work environment. The idea that this freedom also led to higher job satisfaction, less stress, and increased loyalty were also voiced by all the participants. After hearing the same themes from each participant, I was able to conclude that saturation had been reached.

## Data Analysis

I conducted semistructured interviews to give voice to the lived experiences of the participants. I initially transcribed interviews through NVivo Transcription, but the transcription service Rev.com provided more accurate transcriptions. Hence, all interviews were transcribed through this service. I reviewed each transcription for accuracy and shared the transcripts with each corresponding participant to receive their view on the accuracy of their words and transcriptions. Key words were then used to construct a code list. I established codes, or meaning units, by rereading each transcript and marking each time a significant shift in meaning occurred. Member checking or continued rereading of the transcripts provided a key method of ensuring accuracy and was instrumental in the coding process. While this process is subjective, the importance of the meaning units becomes apparent when they are transformed and reintegrated into the structure of the phenomenon as it was experienced (Giorgi, 2009).

Eidetic analysis, in which the codes are synthesized and integrated to clarify themes and to search for connections across the data set (Finlay, 2014) was the next stage of analysis. Through the transformation of meaning units and themes across the data set,

essential meanings were brought forth (see Giorgi, 2009). The eidetic analysis provided a means to see past the individual lived experiences and discover a universal essence.

Though the sample size was small, key words quickly emerged. Phrases such as "less stress," and "free to be yourself" were also commonly used by the participants and were repeated in some variation by all participants. For example, P2 stated, "It's really freed me up," while P7 stated, "It's so much easier to be yourself when you are yourself." These key words and phrases became part of the code and were used to establish categories and themes. Member checking continued, as I reviewed the data re-iteratively, and further through line by line coding. As the codes grew in number, it became apparent that several codes could be grouped into categories. In addition, NVivo's AutoCode Function was used to further code each node and develop subcodes within each node. For example, autocoding the node OIW created additional codes such as person, team, managers, life, policy, worker, people, inclusion, executive, employee resource group, employee, and management. After completion of the coding, I reviewed each code to determine the frequency of use by each participant. This frequency was used to further group the codes into larger categories, and then into themes. The initial high frequency codes are listed in Table 1. See Appendix B for the full NVivo coding structure.

Table 1

*Key Word and Code*

| Key word | Code | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Career advancement | CAD | Communication | COM | Compassionate | COP |
| Empathy | EMP | Free | FRE | Homosexual | HOM |
| Helping others | HEO | Honesty | HON | Integrity | INT |
| Inclusion | INC | Listening | LIS | Managing | MAN |
| Not out | NOT | Out in workplace | OIW | Professional assist | PRA |
| Sensitivity | SEN | Sexual identity | SEI | Trust | TRU |
| Understanding | UND | Work office | WOF | | |

I organized the codes into a coding tree. Figure 1 below shows an NVivo screenshot of the basic coding tree. Clicking on each of the '+' symbols in NVivo then reveals the "child nodes" or subthemes. I edited this coding structure iteratively as I further analyzed interviews.

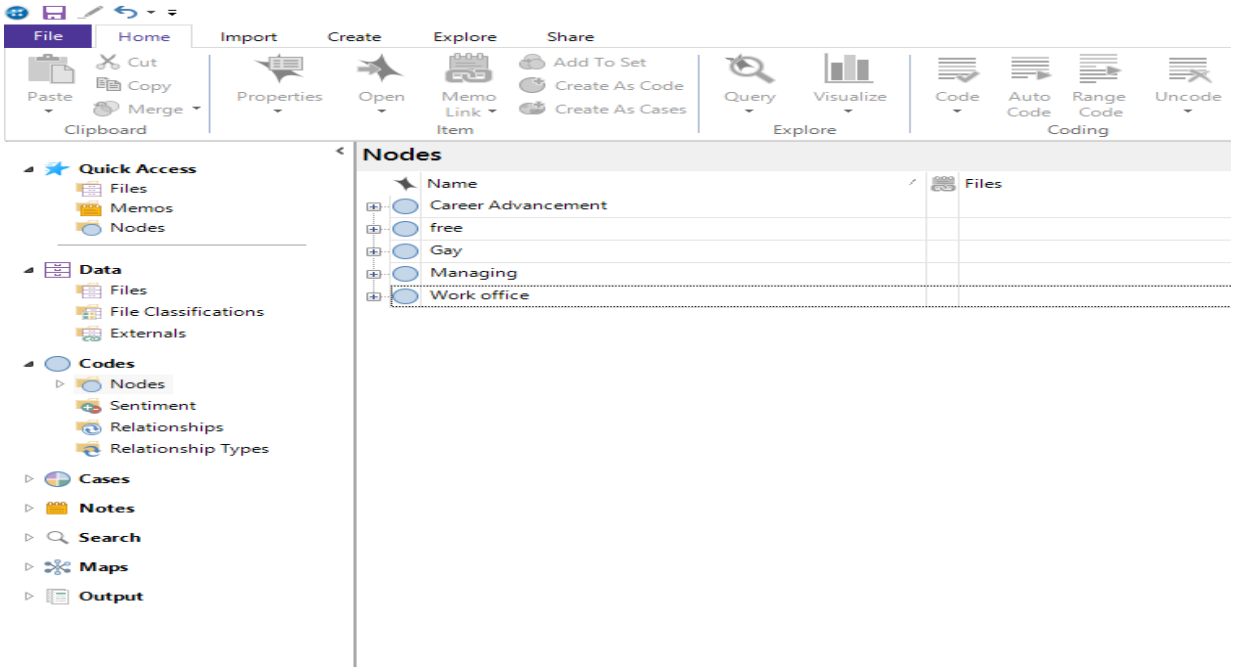


*Figure 1*. Basic coding tree for analysis shown in a screenshot from NVivo 12 Pro.

## Participants

The following section will briefly outline the background of each of the seven interviewees.

P1 wanted to be a minister when he was a child. At the time of the interview, he had worked in the restaurant business for the past 2.5 years and before then been mainly retail-based in his career. In the past, he had been a trainer and developed training programs. He said,

> I was a supervisor for Sam's club for ten years, and before that, I was a, the last job I was at David's Bridal, where I was a director of a third-party customer service and creative development. Before that, I started out as an hourly employee

> and just worked my way up the corporate ladder. When I first started at David's Bridal, we had eight stores. When I left, we had over 280.

P2 was a pastor in a church, then felt freed up when he left to be who he was in his next position as manager nursing home administrator. He stated,

> So, my first management position as a gay manager was a little different, because I was a gay manager in that I was a pastor of a church, which people don't think is management, but it's definitely like administrative management.

P3 worked in a female-led healthcare corporation. P3 commented,

> So the guy struggled in the workplace because the women took control. It's not how it is today. More women are faced with discrimination, pain discrimination, sexual abuse, the whole thing. It was the opposite for us coming on board.

P3 found that it was challenging to join the corporate management world within healthcare. He spent time in numerous temporary management positions, then was let go from his previous position before returning to education to complete an HR Management degree. He then became a regional director in HR at a large private health company.

P4 started working in the insurance industry in 1986 as an underwriter trainee, before returning to grad school and getting a master's in business studies degree. Before he moved into this area, he was a social worker in the field of mental health. Initially, he had planned on becoming a school psychologist. P4 said, "I had some issues going through the whole determining who I was phase and thought that that would be a good outlet for me to help other kids. That was my goal." In his current HR role, P4 felt that he learned on the job.

> I was lucky enough that the expertise was already there, so I had two HR consultants who reported to me, a Director of Employee Development, and a trainer and an HR coordinator, so they had all their depth of knowledge, so what I was really supposed to do was go in there and lead them. The person I worked for really thought that putting you in a situation where you needed to rely on other people for the expertise and just lead was a good experience, and it really was…Up until that point, I had managed groups and people where I was the expert, and they all came to me for answers. In this situation, I wasn't an expert. They were.

P5 previously worked in the corporate headquarters of a huge industrial gas company with global employee numbers of between 20-25,000 people. P5 stated,

> My specific job was global materials management. My responsibility was associated with the operating plants that we have around the world. I was responsible for various global regions and teams of people that provided some procurement, but most of it was what we had termed as materials management support.

During this time, he had teams of people in Shanghai, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, the Americas, Brazil, and Europe reporting to him, with a total of up to 75 employees. He has been with this company for 38 years. “I grew up there, essentially,” he said.

P6 was 38 years old and had been in the banking business for 11 years. Prior to that, he was in the military for six years. He has eight direct reports in his current role.

P7 had been in management for 32 years and has worked in fashion the whole of his career, beginning by working for Calvin Klein for many years in New York City as a college intern. He stated,

> I worked retail for many years for the RH Macy corporation and he kind of mentored me into fabric design and purchasing and things like that. So that's how I started. I went to school for marketing communication. I always bartended part-time in this industry. I guess I started, you know, private clubs. But then my big break came when I started working for Hilton Hotels. Totally flip-flopped my career. Went in as just a part-time bartender and three months later I was the food and beverage director and then just worked my way up from there. So that was all basic corporate ... the corporate ladder. Found that I loved it and then just rode with it, and here we are 32 years later.

Participant 7 worked directly with Calvin Klein, then was hired as a designer specialist before he was even 18 years old. He later entered the hotel management field, specifically as a food and beverage director, and then as a special events director.

**Initial Key Words and Codes**

Figures two through eight show the top ten codes for each participant by percentage coverage for each theme. 9% for management means that 9% of P1's transcript was coded to this theme. All participants discussed being out in the workplace, as well as helping others, and being homosexual in the workplace. The participants also discussed professional assistance, management, being free, and other personal skills such as communication and honesty.

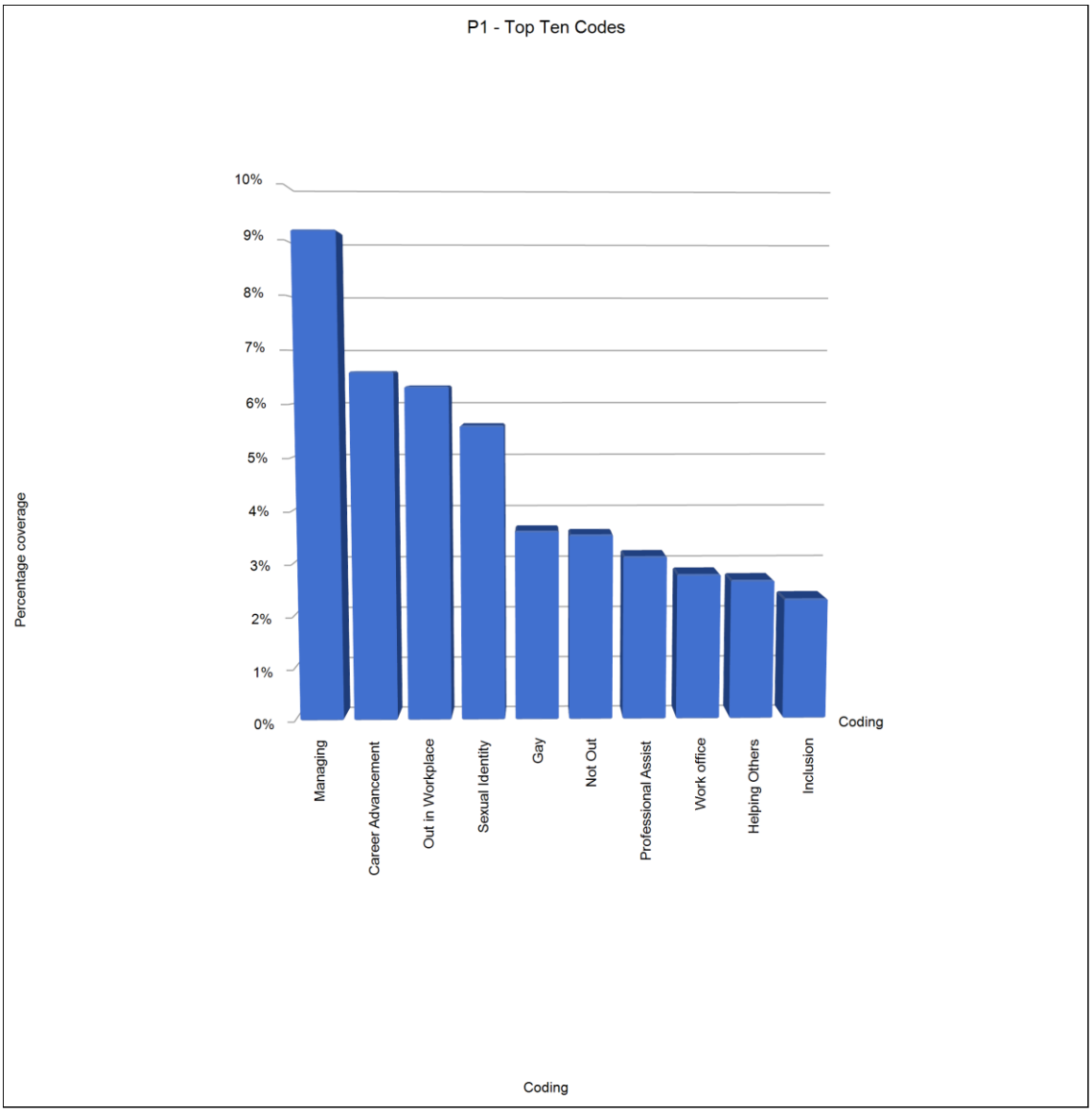


*Figure 2.* Top 10 codes for Participant 1. Top code = Managing (9.2%), bottom code = Inclusion (2.31%).

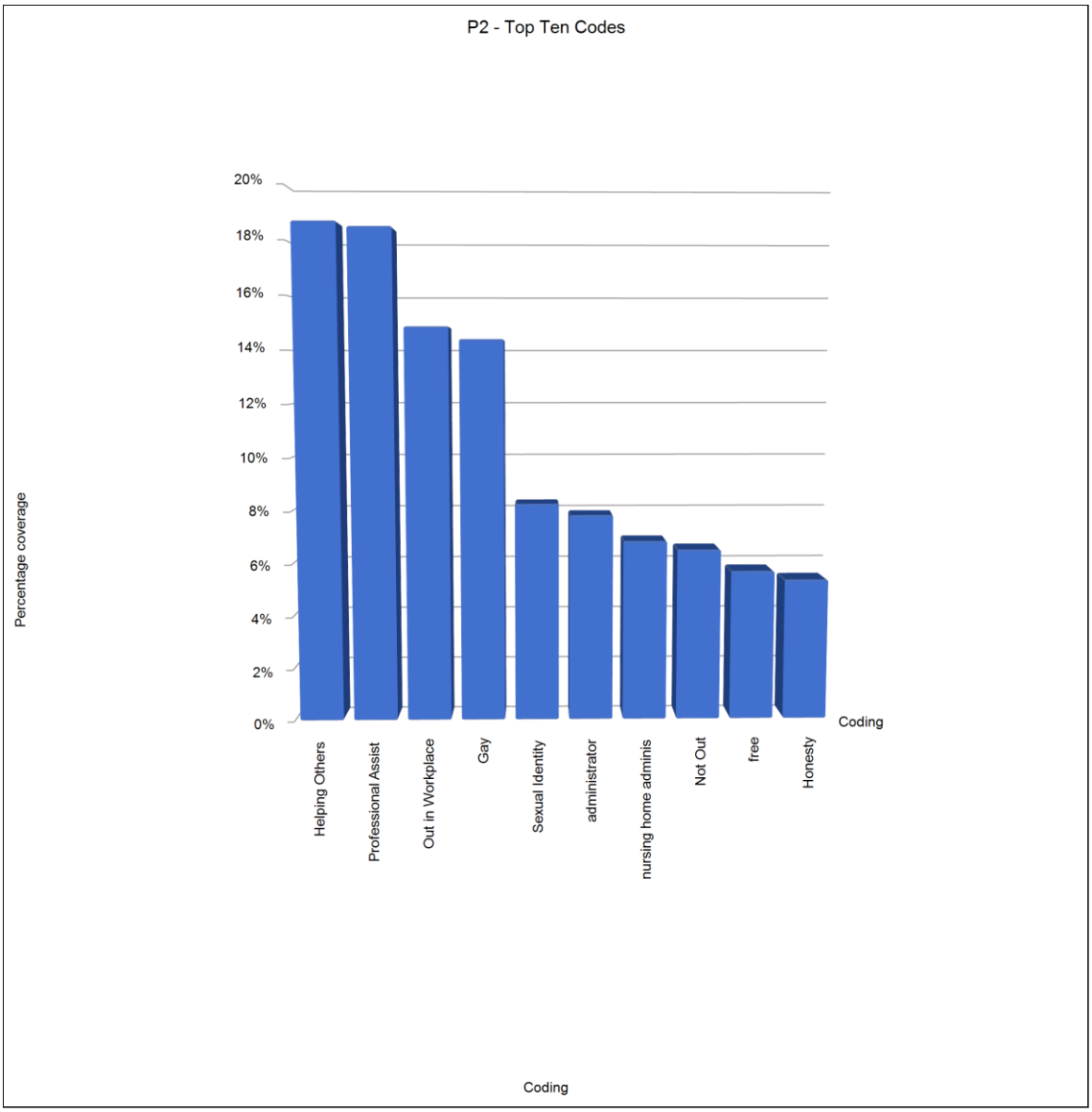


*Figure 3.* Top 10 codes for Participant 2. Top code = Helping others (18.725), bottom code = Honesty (5.35%).

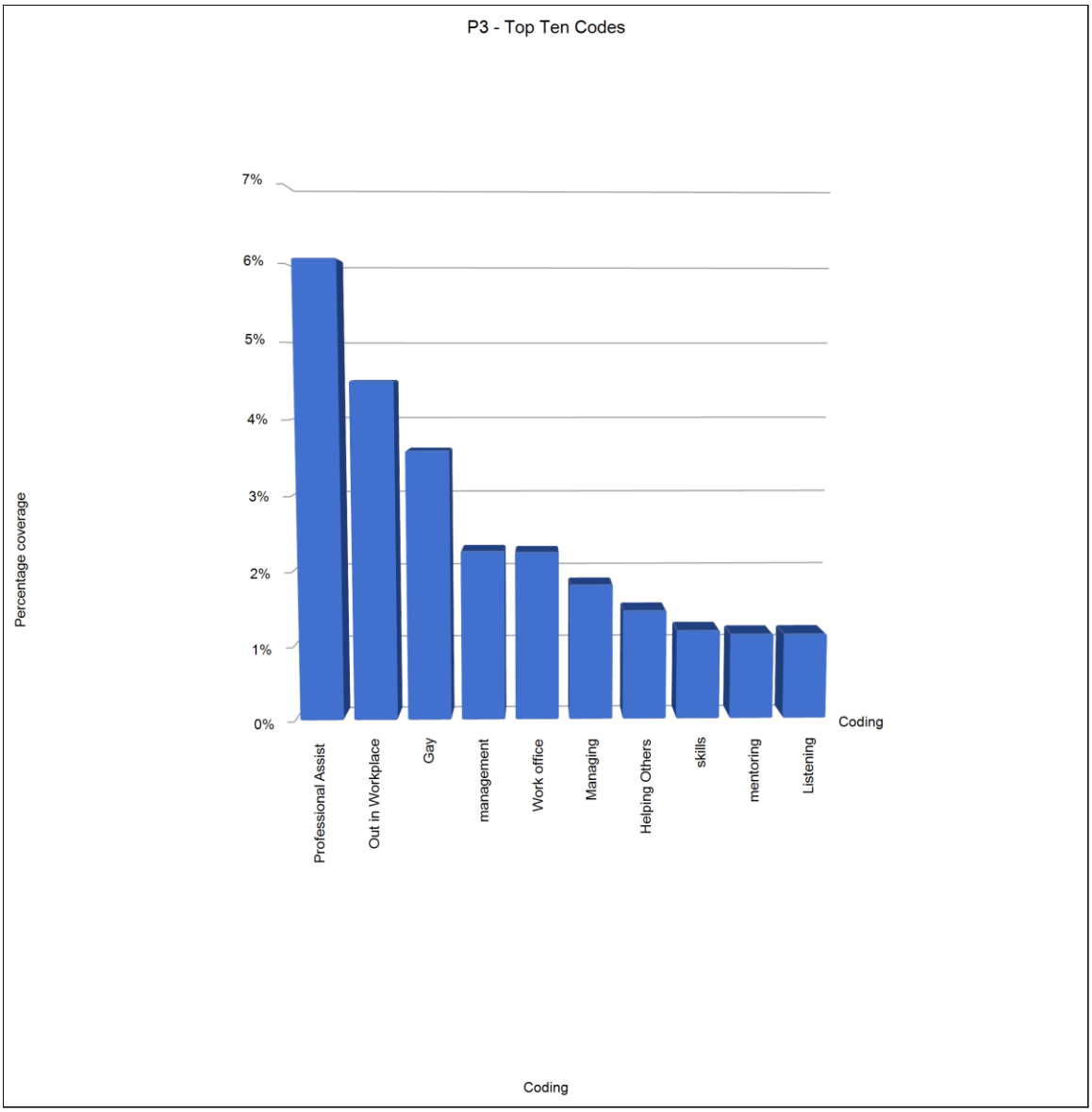


*Figure 4.* Top 10 codes for Participant 3. Top code = Professional assist (6.08%), bottom code = Listening (1.14%).

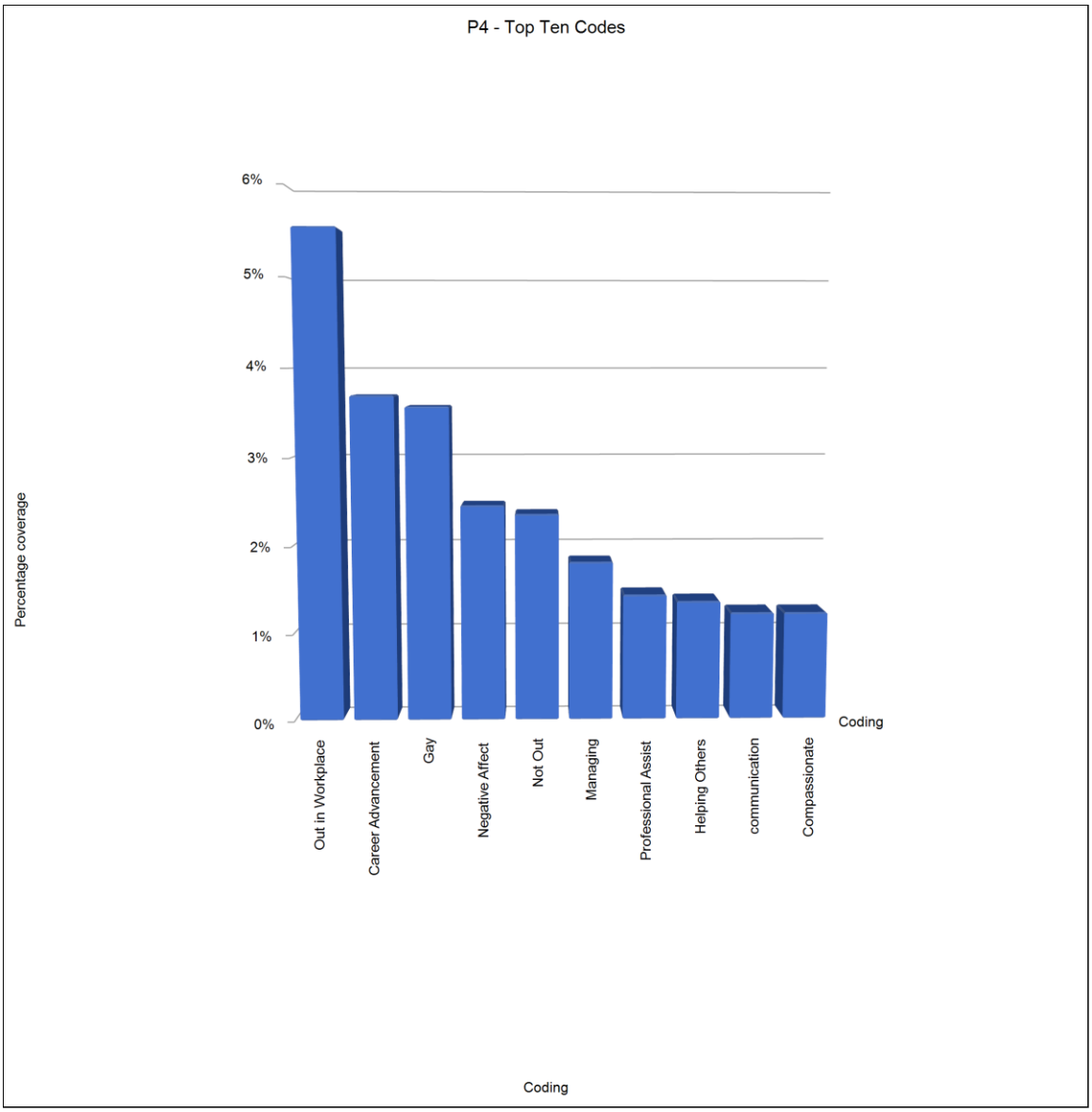


*Figure 5.* Top 10 codes for Participant 4. Top code = Out in workplace (5.55%), bottom code = Compassionate (1.23%).

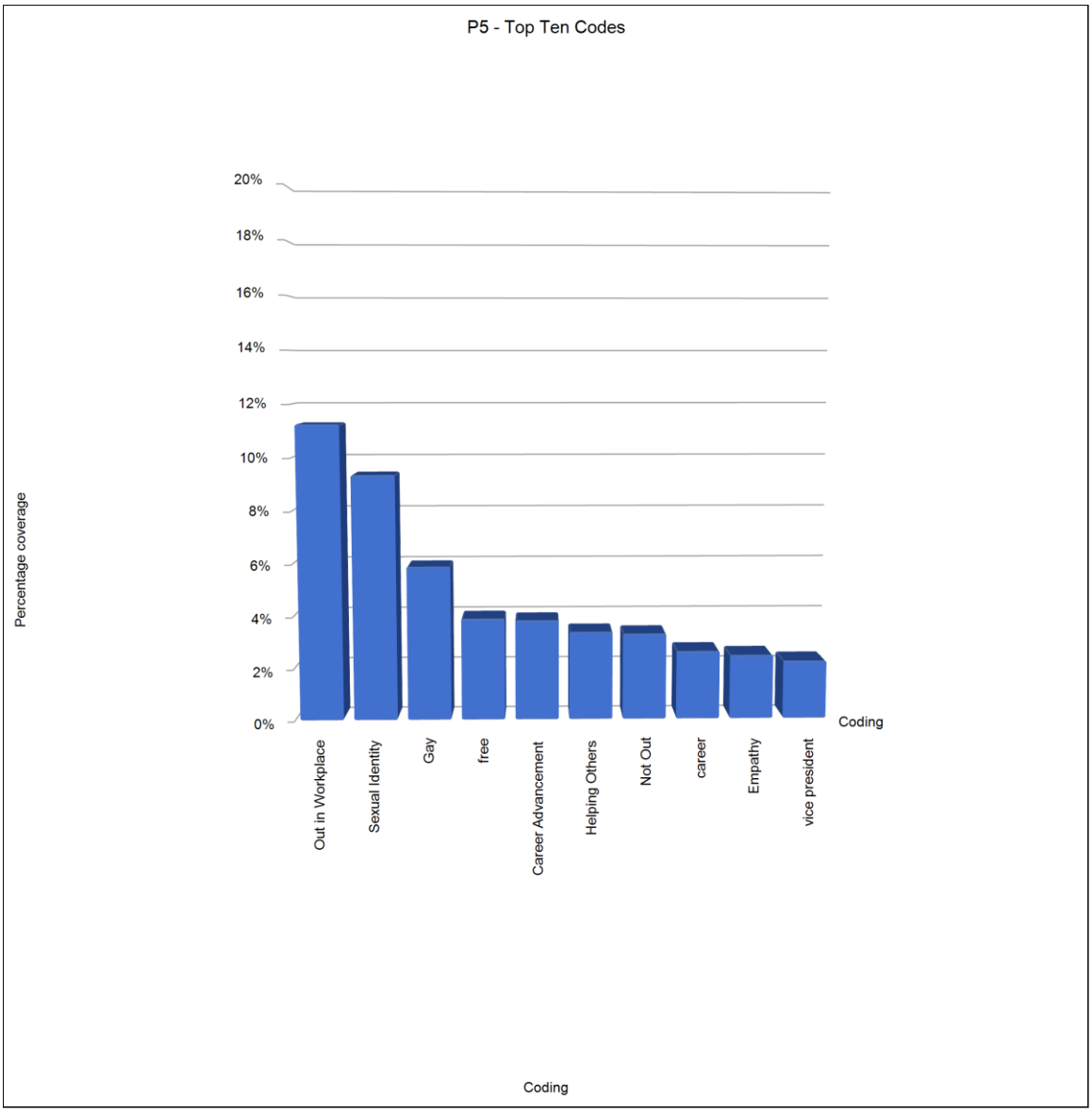


*Figure 6.* Top 10 codes for Participant 5. Top code = Out in workplace (11.25%) bottom code = Vice president (2.22%).

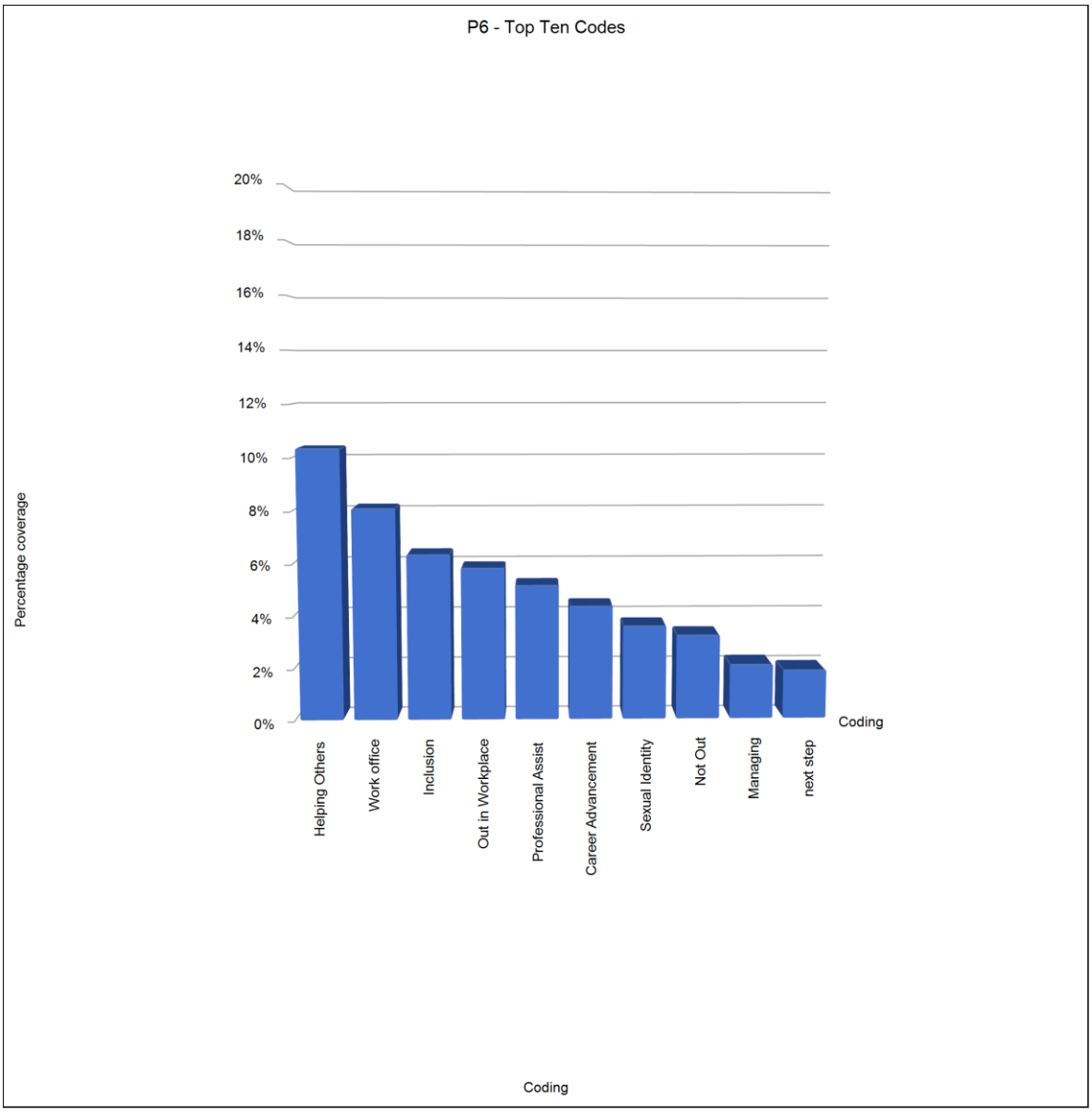


*Figure 7.* Top 10 codes for P6. Top code = Helping others (10.37%), bottom code = Next step (1.88%).

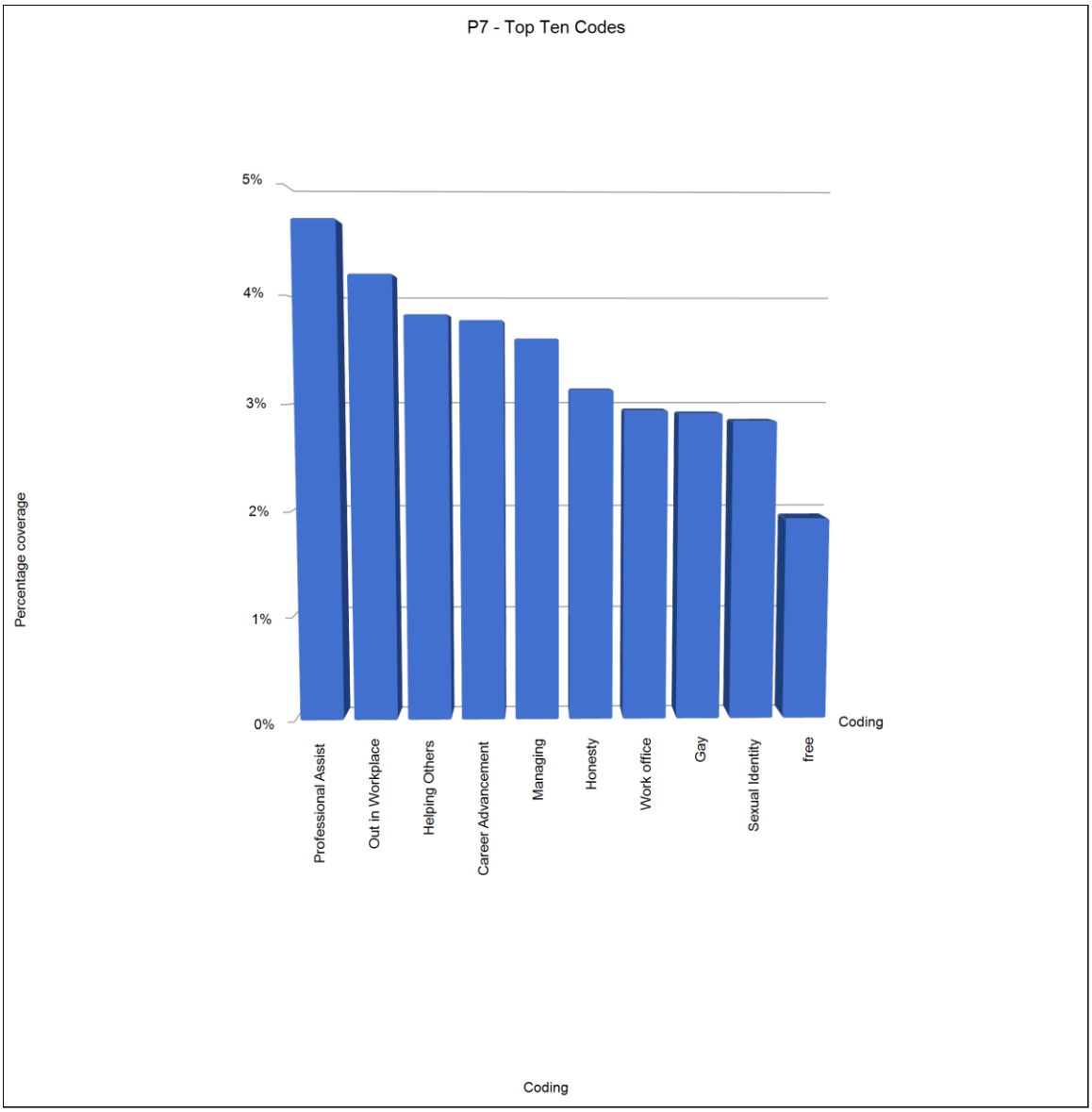


*Figure 8.* Top ten codes for P7. Top code = Professional assist (4.7%), bottom code = Free (1.92%).

Word lists are also useful tools to help identify how often a participant chose certain words, as well as to help identify themes. Utilizing this term and limiting the choices to the top 25 most frequently used words created the word lists for each node in figures nine through thirteen.

Some words appeared quite frequently in all word lists. These include the words people, think, and gay. Words commonly used in the Career Advancement node included career, position, think, time, and people. When discussing Managing, common words included mentor/mentoring/mentored, people, management, program, and kind. The participants spoke most often about people, know, gay, and company in the Work Office node. Commonly used words in the Free node included think, free, people, honest, work, and hiding. In the Homosexual node, participants commonly used words such as *think*, *gay*, *people*, *know*, and *place*.


*Figure 9.* Career advancement word list.

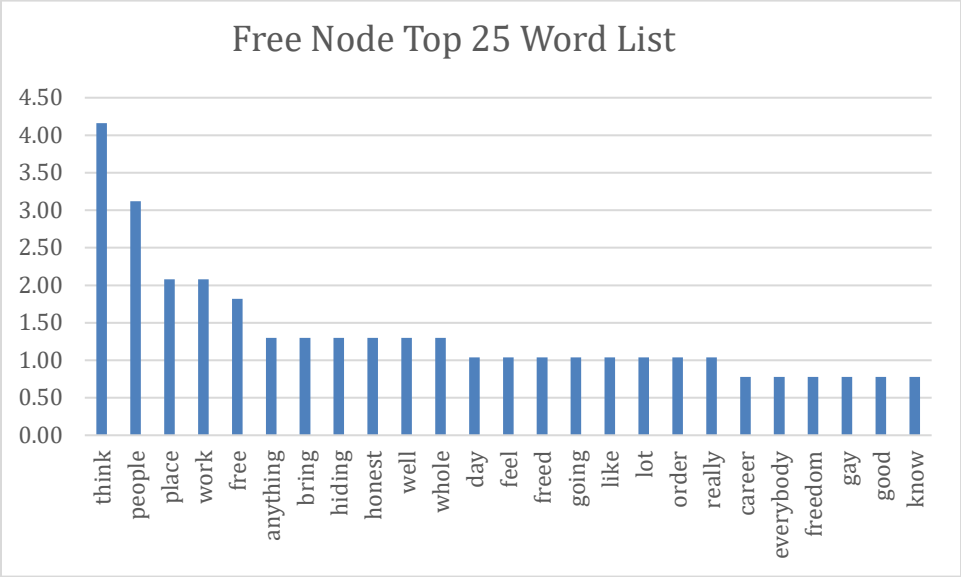


*Figure 10.* Free word list.

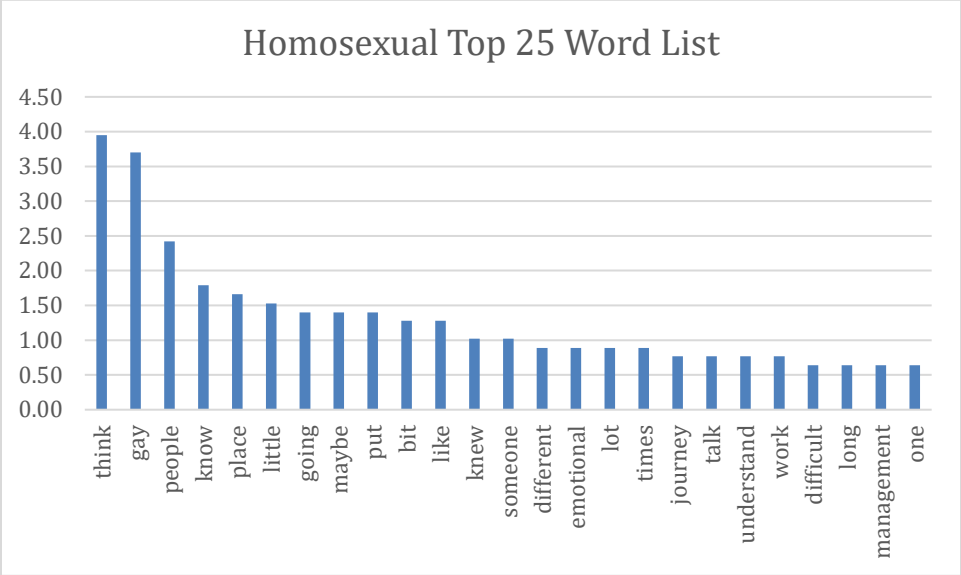


*Figure 11.* Homosexual word list.


*Figure 12.* Managing word list.

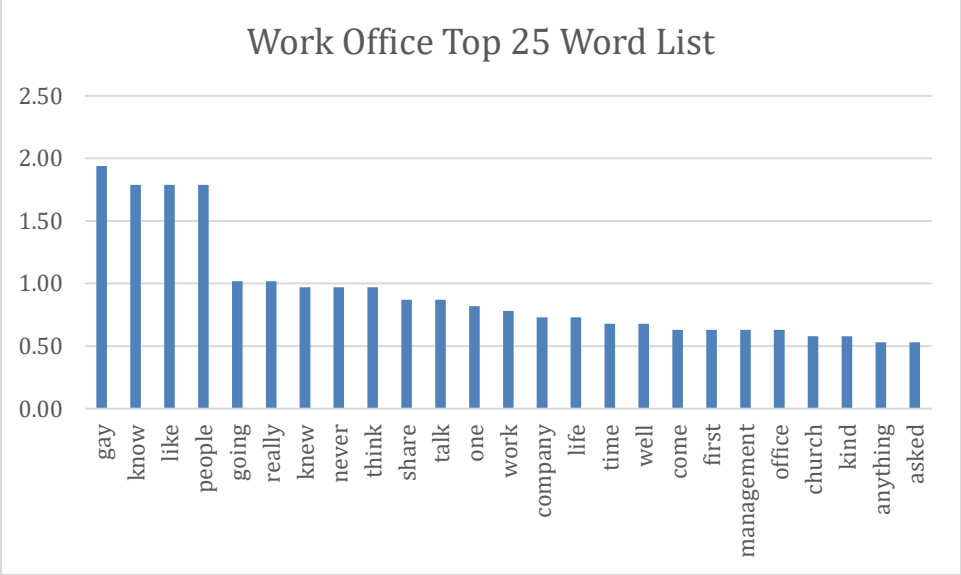


Figure 13: Work office word list.

Upon further review, categories emerged which I used to help create themes and to demonstrate the importance of these words to the participants. For example, HON and INT could be grouped under FRE. COM, EMP, SEN, HEO, and UND were grouped under HOM. COM, LIS, PRA, and TRU were grouped under MAN. INC, NOT, SEI and OIW were grouped under WOF. CAD could also be subdivided into positive, neutral, and negative effects, as could PRA, though in this case, participants only noted positive effects. For example, P2 noted that mentoring "helped to nurture loyalty in a team," while P4 stated that "I get the most satisfaction out of coaching and developing others."

Themes began to emerge upon further review of the data. In looking at the data, and the coded nodes, I began to visualize how they formed themes. These themes included Skill Set, Increased Acceptance, Professionalism, Personal Freedom, and Work Environment. I noticed, however, that participants often answered questions in two parts, indicating whether they were discussing their professional or their personal self. For example, P1 noted that he was "working with people I can't be out with." P7 stated, "It's like your living a separate life." P3 described his situation as "when I'm at work, I'm there to represent a company and that's what I'm getting paid to do, to provide the best performance that I can provide." No discrepant cases were noted.

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

### Credibility

As I described in Chapter 3, credibility was established by having each participant review their transcripts for misinterpretation. I also explicitly described each research step so that other researchers may be able to duplicate this study. I addressed social

location and context, as well. For example, as a homosexual male manager, participants were more willing to work with me. Homosexual males were sometimes reluctant to discuss themselves in the work environment, and alternate locations for the interviews were provided.

**Transferability**

Transferability referred to how the data may be applied in other contexts. I recorded the interviews digitally, providing a means for thick descriptions, which aided in transferability. In addition, enrolling enough participants to reach the point in which repetition of themes occurs or saturation, also aided in developing transferability. I wrote comments during each interview, noting key words and repeated responses as they occurred. This added to the thick description, as well. Participants also reviewed their transcripts to clarify meaning and ensure that the participant said what he meant to say during the interview.

**Dependability**

Dependability occurred through careful documentation, ensuring that the research process was logical and traceable (see Zeng, et al., 2010). Another method used to ensure dependability included having participants review their descriptions and transcriptions. In addition, each interviewer was asked the same questions. No adjustment to the strategies stated in Chapter 3 was needed.

**Confirmability**

Bracketing and reflexivity were effective means of establishing conformability (see Chan et al., 2012; McDonald, 2013). I kept a reflexivity diary in the form of

comments noted in each interview form, which helped to develop bracketing and to provide self-reflection during the interview process.

## Study Results

For each study questions, the results are discussed as they relate to the question, and how each of the themes related to the question as well as how they relate to LMX and/or Queer Theory.

### Subquestion 1

SQ1: How do homosexual managers (mentors and mentees) use mentoring to advance their careers?

The purpose of SQ1 was to ascertain what effect mentoring had on advancing the careers of the participants. None of the participants had started as managers in their careers and had been promoted to that level at some point. All participants used mentoring, to varying degrees, to advance their careers. P4 stated that “only two individuals who I worked for who really helped me advance my career.” P2 described his career advancement as “I think definitely so. One, as a recipient of it, definitely.” Mentoring programs were a mix of formal and informal structures. Two participants, P1 and P7 were not required to participate in mentoring programs by their organizations. P4 was the only one who was a mentor, but not as a mentee. P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, and P7 all initially disclosed their sexual orientation to their mentors, whom they trusted.

LMX discussed relationships between superiors and subordinates. The mentoring relationship is similar to the LMX relationship in that the mentoring interactions can benefit both the mentor and the mentee. Individuals in high LMX relationships also find

themselves in mutually benefitting from their interactions. Queer theory discussed binaries, such as that seen in a mentoring relationship. Queer theory states that one person in the dyadic relationship holds power, and this is often true in a mentoring relationship. The mentor is generally an older person, often a superior of the mentee, and is one who holds the power in a binary relationship.

**Skill set.** Participants noted that working as a mentor, or having a mentor, helped them develop their own personal and professional skills. P2 noted that he "was a better pastor because of that experience with the pastor who mentored me and helped to develop me." P3 stated that "if you take an active interest in people, their education, their work performance, how they can be successful in the job, give them the tools they need… people will respond to you and work for you." Skills such as communication and listening were also fostered through mentoring relationships. In addition, helping others to develop their skills and career advancement was described by several participants. For example, P7 described a mentee who "was promoted to like conference services manager, then food and beverage director. Now he's the guy there, and that's been in this career for 25 years."

**Increased acceptance.** Mentoring also provided a means for the participants to develop increased acceptance, whether of themselves or others, within the corporation. P2 noted that "helped to nurture a loyalty in the team" and that "it helped to form a strong bond." Being able to relate to others and help them feel accepted was described by several participants, as well. For example, P4 stated that "when other individuals were struggling to either get ahead or make a name for themselves, I could relate to that" and

that he could “give them suggestions and advice.” P2 noted that” but it helps you not to be judgmental of those, and to be open to wherever people are at, and what they're doing.”

**Professionalism.** Participants noted part of mentoring helped others to develop their professional careers. P3 described mentoring as a process to help others “gear them to be professionals.” P6 stated that mentoring was a means to “give them the help and the guidance that they want.” P6 also noted that he owes his current position to being mentored, stating that “I’ve had a lot of help from coworkers or their managers that have mentored me and have helped me get to where I am today.” P5 noted that mentoring was a means “to coach them, to mentor them, to try to improve.”

**Personal freedom.** Mentoring also provided a means of personal freedom, as many of the participants first came out to their mentors or immediate supervisors. P2 noted that coming out to his administrator “that made all the difference.” P3 stated that “the management team, they had asked me, are you homosexual? And I said yes.” This allowed participants to become more fully involved at work, as noted by P4, who stated that “I would start sharing things.” P5 noted that “came out to at work was my boss. And the next level up was the vice president, from him. And it was a nonevent. And that made me feel really good. It wasn't an event.”

**Work environment.** Mentoring helped to support a positive work environment. Helping others to grow and develop was noted by all participants. P5 stated that “I enjoyed mentoring young folks.” P4 noted that “I get most of my satisfaction out of coaching and developing others.” P4 also described a high level of job satisfaction when

he stated that “being able to walk them through and see them have all these first experiences, that's why I come to work every day.”

**Subquestion 2**

SQ2: How do the experiences of being homosexual lead the homosexual manager to develop successful management skills?

The purpose of SQ2 was to enable the participants to describe if the experiences of being homosexual helped them to develop their skills in management. Participants noted that attributes such as compassion, empathy, sensitivity, understanding, and integrity helped them become better managers. However, several participants also noted that being homosexual may not play a role in their own management skill set. For example, P5 noted that “I don't think the homosexual part really came into play. Although, being homosexual, my personality and some of my attributes might be different than a straight guy.”

The answers to this question can be viewed best through the lens of queer theory. The binary focus between hetero and homo, and the power struggle seen between these two sexual orientations, was echoed by the participants. Growing up and working in a heterosexual environment led the participants to develop more compassion (P2), empathy (P1), and more understanding (P3). At the same time, participants such as P4 noted that he had to work harder to prove himself against his heterosexual peers.

**Skill set.** P3 noted that the homosexual experience helped him develop “people skills” such as communication and listening. P5 also noted that he had a set of people skills, which meant, at least for him, that “you can educate them the proper way.” P5 also

stated that “I think I could be a little bit more understanding and a little more emotional than some of my straight counterparts.” However, P4 noted that “has being homosexual done that? No, I wouldn't attribute it to that. I would say that college experience did that more than anything.” P2 stated that “I think being homosexual and growing up homosexual, has the ability, but it doesn't always, but I think it can make you a more compassionate person.” P1 noted that being homosexual helped him to be more empathetic, while P2 replied that being homosexual “help you to see when people are struggling, be more aware of that.” P3 noted that “I think it made me a strong individual. I think that's what God gave me my leadership skills.” Participants noted that they did have to work harder, as stated by P4, “I think that I had to prove myself to a greater extent than anyone else did who wasn't homosexual. I had to make it so obvious that they would have been overlooking me and that they couldn't justify not promoting me.”

**Increased acceptance.** Being able to come out as a homosexual manager allowed the participants the freedom to manage better. As a homosexual manager, P2 noted that “it helps you not to be judgmental of those, and to be open to wherever people are at, and what they're doing.” P2 described that being homosexual has “been an asset, because I think when you live out of a place of freedom, it draws that or has the potential to draw that out in others, and it gives other people the permission kind of, as it were, to be free and to do that” and by doing that, one, you'll encourage other people to do that, and it'll put you in a better place, and will allow other people, invite other people to be in a more free place as well.” P5 stated that coming as a homosexual manager enabled him to “being able to focus on what needs to be done and feel good inside about listening to

other people's stories about their family." P7 noted that "it's so much easier to be yourself when you are yourself."

**Professionalism.** Coming out as a homosexual manager freed the participants to be more involved in their careers. For example, P5 noted that "you're better off being able to bring yourself to work, and focus on the task, and not think about your personal life from that perspective." P3 stated that "when I'm at work, I'm there to represent a company and that's what I'm getting paid to do, to provide the best performance that I can provide." P5 also noted an issue that was stated by several participants, "my biggest concern was my employees and how they would look at me different than maybe the person they saw before coming out." Knowing that there were other homosexual managers, as noted by P2, "there were openly homosexual people in management. And so, you just knew that it was okay, and you never, I know I never received any kind of negative expression based on who I was while I was there" also helped participants develop a sense of professional self. In a similar vein, P7 stated that "there's a lot of trust that's involved. And if you don't like ... I don't care if you're like me personally, but this is my job, this is my profession, and we've got to be on the same page or it's just not going to work."

**Personal freedom.** The participants felt a sense of freedom as managers once they did come out in the workplace. P1 noted, "well I need to be me." Coming out brought a sense of integrity, as noted by P7, who stated that "I think that probably the biggest is that it's honest, I'm not hiding anything." P2 believed that "when people know your story, it can add a level of respect." P5 described his coming out as "It took a lot of

stress away from day-to-day." For all participants, coming out allowed themselves to truly express who they were, and thereby manage as best as they truly could as they were being true to themselves.

**Work environment.** Working as a homosexual manager in an accepting environment was an important factor for all participants. Also, all participants worked in corporations that valued diversity and inclusion. This was evidenced by their handbooks, which had the terminology to include sexual orientation and gender identification. P1 noted that "I was always working with people I can't be out with. And some of us, I was not that out at work in those cases because you don't know who you're dealing with. And I can't not be," which led to a change in companies. P2 stated that "I wasn't free to express that." He lost his position and changed careers once he did come out. About his early career, P4 remarked that "obviously I was closeted. The insurance industry was dominated by White male Republicans. At one time, my boss joked that not only was it White male Republicans. They were all 6-foot, 180. They looked exactly alike." This also led to a career change. P7 observed that "I'm not saying conform, but if you're not going to work with me to make this a universalistic, for everybody, then I can't be part of it."

**Subquestion 3**

SQ3: How do homosexual managers manage their sexual identities in the work environment?

The purpose of this question was to develop a description of the participant's sexual identity in the work environment. Participants were all closeted at work to some degree, at least initially, even if they were out to their families. Once they did come out,

many chose to come out to only a few associates, such as their immediate supervisors and subordinates. All participants noted that they either passed for straight or simply did not discuss the issue before coming out. However, P7 did state that in his "case, I never really had to worry about that because I just did it and everybody ... I'm not saying I was a big, flamboyant ... I was so out and proud and, you know ... I just led my true life." Early in his career, P5 noted that "in the very beginning, I was very quiet and closeted," while P4 stated that "I didn't deny who I was, but I wasn't sharing information." P1observed that "again I hate this as much... I can pass." This led to another issue, however, as noted by P7, "you deceive them. It's like you're living a separate life." P5 noted that "although everyone, before they come out, they're always concerned about their management. How are they going to deal with it? Are they going to treat me any different? And in my case, that was a bit of a concern. But my biggest concern was my employees and how they would look at me different than maybe the person they saw prior to coming out."

Queer theory has described concepts of performativity, in which social activities are lived within artificial hegemonic binaries. The actor, or person, performs as he/she is expected to within this social framework. Thus, men were to act like men, and women were to act like women. Applying this concept to the question of sexual identities allowed me to see beyond the social framework. Homosexuals were expected to act similarly as their heterosexual counterparts. However, doing so created strife and conflict for the homosexual manager. Early in their careers, all the participants chose to hide their sexual identity and to pass as heterosexual. However, at some point, they all became

more comfortable in their careers, and their working environment, to reveal their true sexual identity.

**Skill set.** For all participants, hiding their sexuality became burdensome. It also meant that they were not being honest with their employees, supervisors, or themselves. This stance is summarized by P7 as “I mean, I can't imagine living that double life where, "Oh my God, did I tell him?" P7 also observed that “well I think that probably the biggest is that it's honest, I'm not hiding anything.” This honesty became an important part of the skill set for homosexual managers. Coming out also allowed managers to develop better skills, as noted by P3 “I think every skill I have from maintaining eye contact with people to acknowledging them to integrity.” P2 described this as a journey and “because I've been on that journey and it was a lot of work and it was a long time, it's helped me to understand to look at where somebody is on their own journey, and understand if they might be at a place where they haven't fully grown into mature adulthood or something like that.”

**Increased acceptance.** Managing their sexual identities honestly and openly was an important factor for each participant. Being accepted for who they were and being able to share that part of their lives was also important. P5 summarized his team’s acceptance as “it was a good feeling that, if I wanted to share, I could share what happened over the weekend or the night before. Tell people what I was doing, and still share some of my family ties with people.” As noted by P2 “and then out of that place too, it frees you to accept people.” Not being accepted was described by P7, who noted that “if I sense you don't like me because I'm homosexual, then I'll walk away from you. It's not worth the

drama you're going to put me through." Similarly, P1 remarked that "I don't resent it. But that's the way it is. That's the way surviving is. I am still different. I am different. So, I don't think I have to justify my difference, I just am."

**Professionalism.** Once these managers came out, they were no longer afraid and were better able to incorporate their whole self into their professional selves. P7 noted that "I think because I'm openly homosexual, it puts them at ease." P4 noted that being homosexual "didn't define me" as a manager, but also that he had received "positive feedback from employees throughout my career, and not that I want to attribute that to being homosexual, but I think that it does give me a different perspective of, especially in a corporation, the difficulty that people can have in navigating a corporate life." Once a manager came out, he could often lead by example, or as P3 noted, "you can educate them the proper way."

**Personal freedom.** Having to come out and describe one's sexual identity can become very tiring, as noted by P1 "telling people is exhausting. Telling people every day that I'm homosexual. Or that I don't have a wife." However, once the managers did come out, they were free to be themselves, for the most part. P4 stated that "I didn't deny who I was, but I wasn't sharing information about, yeah, we went here or I." Similar thoughts were expressed by most of the participants. Being out was one thing, but as P4's supervisor stated, "as long as you don't flaunt it." However, all participants stated something similar to P2's thought that by coming out, he "just felt so freed." P2 also noted that "it was the first time I ever shared my story and I didn't feel any kind of

anxiety around it or whatever. I'd finally gotten to a place where I was very free to be who I was."

**Work environment.** Coming out in the workplace as a homosexual manager helped these managers create a better work environment. P7 became part of the team to go "through the entire handbook line by line and brought it to the 21st century," which helped to create a more inclusive environment. Although many of the corporations allowed it, few individuals had pictures of their significant other on their desks. P5 stated that "I had pictures of my sons in my office, but I never had a picture of my partner." P6 remarked that "we are allowed to have one picture, and I don't have a picture now, but I probably should have at least one picture." Coming out also allowed individuals to have discussions with their supervisors about diversity and inclusion. P6 remembered a conversation with his CEO, who stated that "the reason behind diversity and inclusion, he said it's socially the right thing to do, but also that it makes good business sense." P6 also noted that "I like to start out my meeting on a little bit of a personal level and talk about what I did over the weekend, and I may not have been able to do that when I was not out."

## Summary

The homosexual managers in this study had a variety of experiences with mentoring in a corporate environment. However, they shared several items in common. All participants described helping others and assisting people professionally as positive factors in their careers. Five participants described honesty as an important factor, while 3 described mention integrity as important. Only one participant was always out at work,

although he would sometimes pass or remain quiet about his sexuality, depending on the situation. The other participants described coming out at work as a freeing process where they could be themselves and bring their best efforts to work. The following section will summarize the three subquestions that were used to answer the overall research question of "What are the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations?"

The first subquestion asked how homosexual managers, whether they were mentors or mentees, used mentoring to advance their careers. The participants had all used mentoring to some degree to advance their careers. Except for one participant, who had only mentored, all other participants had been both mentored by another person and have mentored other people. Mentoring programs differed among organizations, though corporations used mentoring in some form. Having a mentor helped the participants become better managers. Mentoring other people also helped the participants increase their job satisfaction. Mentoring helped all participants increase their skill set in managing others, including such people skills as communication, and listening. Mentoring also fostered a sense of inclusion for the participants and served to nurture loyalty and create strong bonds. Participants often came out first to their mentor, which further strengthened the personal bonds between the individuals.

The second subquestion asked about the experiences of being homosexual and how that might have led the participant to develop successful management skills. Attributes such as understanding, compassion, sensitivity, honesty, integrity, and empathy all helped the participants to become better managers. One participant believed that it was not so much being homosexual that made him a better manager, but that his

skills were what made him successful. However, he also noted that being homosexual did make him different than his heterosexual peers, which might have helped him in his success. Being homosexual also contributed to the participants' sense of being strong individuals, although participants also noted that they might have to work harder to prove themselves as being capable managers. Out managers experienced a sense of freedom from not hiding who they were and were better able to manage from their whole self. This contributed to a better work experience and allowed managers to be able to better understand the personal issues of their employees.

The third subquestion asked managers to describe how they handled their sexual identities in the work environment. Except for one participant, all participants were closeted in the early stages of their careers. The one who was not closeted was cognizant of the need to keep a low profile, however, in certain work situations. All individuals chose to either pass as straight or not discuss their sexual identity with their peers. As the individuals advanced in their careers, the need to be true to themselves, and to be honest with their work teams brought about the need to come out. In addition, participants often described leaving corporations that were less accepting of their homosexual identity. Coming out also allowed managers to be honest about themselves, and to develop trust with their peers. Participants noted that coming out as a homosexual manager was a freeing process where they could share their personal experiences, if they choose, with their peers.

In this chapter, I presented the pilot study, research setting, and the demographics of the participants, data collection and analysis method, evidence of trustworthiness, the

study results, and a summary of the results for each of the three subquestions. In Chapter 5, I will present the discussions, conclusions, and recommendations.

# Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of mentoring among homosexual male managers in the Greater Lehigh Valley region of Northeast Pennsylvania. I used a descriptive phenomenological approach to give voice to this minority population regarding their experiences. Key findings indicated that mentoring played a role in the career advancement of the participants and provided a means of initially coming out as homosexual in the workplace. Participants indicated that their experiences with mentoring, and their experiences as homosexual, helped them to become more satisfied with their roles. Concepts of honesty, integrity, and being free to be themselves also helped increase the participants' job satisfaction and relationships with their peers. Themes of Skill Sets, Increased Acceptance, Professionalism, Personal Freedom, and Work Environment arose from the data. In Chapter 4, I discussed how each of the research subquestions related to these themes. In Chapter 5, I discuss the interpretations of these findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications for positive social change.

## Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study were consistent with some of the literature regarding mentoring, leadership, and homosexual employees. However, there is very little in the literature pertaining specifically towards the homosexual male manager. Five themes did emerge that relate to homosexual managers and leadership, sexuality in the workplace, identity management and mentoring, and homosexual employees: skill sets, increased acceptance, personal freedom, and work environment. The data collected in this study

provided increased insight into LMX theory, as well as mentoring in the homosexual male management population.

**Homosexual Managers and Leadership**

A key aspect of LMX is the relations between superiors and subordinates, as well as the relationship between member attitudes and behaviors toward work and the member's dependence upon leadership treatment (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Rockstuhl et al., 2012). Relationships may either be high quality or low quality, depending upon the nature of the interactions between managers and subordinates (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The data in this study is consistent with this theory, and most of the participants indicated that they had a high enough level of trust with their supervisors that enabled them to be open and come out as homosexual to their supervisors. In a similar vein, participants noted a high level of trust with some peers and subordinates, and came out to these employees, as well. As noted by Murphy (2012), social exchanges brought about feelings of trust and respect to the manager. This was seen in many participants, such as P7, who noted that "there's a lot of trust that's involved. And if you don't like . . . I don't care if you like me personally, but this is my job, this is my profession, and we've got to be on the same page or it's just not going to work." This also supports the concept that inspiring loyalty and trust are necessary aspects of management (Dussault et al., 2013).

The dyadic relationship seen in mentoring is an important function in corporations (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012). These relationships were valuable to the participants, who supported this idea as evidenced by P2's statement that it "always felt too like it fostered a loyalty of sorts, because of that relationship that you develop." The effects of

gender on LMX has been infrequently studied, though Douglas (2012) reported that same-sex dyads developed stronger relationships than mixed-sex dyads. Douglas (2012) did not consider sexual orientation in his study. This study supports and extends this literature to include sexual orientation in same-sex dyads. This study presented a sample of mixed sexual orientation dyadic relationships. None of the participants reported having a homosexual superior manager or mentor. However, they all supported the idea that strong relationships developed as a result of their relationships with their mentors and superiors.

Homosexual management has not been specifically studied in the literature, and this study helps to extend the literature in this area. More often research into homosexual management related to management in homosexual social corporations (Briscoe et al., 2014). All the participants in this study worked for traditional corporations such as banks, finance, communications, and utilities, which helps to extend the literature related to homosexual management outside homosexual social corporations. While homosexual leadership has been addressed in fields such as education and student leadership, it has not been addressed in corporate and management fields (Lugg & Tooms, 2010; Renn, 2007). This study extends the literature in this area, as well. In addition, this study supports the findings of Cuadrado et al. (2012) regarding how managers are viewed. That study did not look at sexual orientation, but as noted by P7, “I think that because I’m openly gay, it puts them at ease.” At the same time, participants noted that they often tended to be more emotional and empathetic than their heterosexual counterparts. This

information supports the concept that homosexual managers may lead with a mix of traditional male and female characteristics.

Data from this study also support the work of deLeon & Brunner (2013), who reported that homosexual and lesbian employees were often viewed as normalized individuals when their behaviors were similar to their heterosexual counterparts. P7 indicated this when he stated that “I've seen people in this industry, who I know they're homosexual, but when you put them in a room, whether it's a room full of guests or in a meeting across a table, it's a different person. They're their corporate self.” Other participants noted that being homosexual was generally accepted if the person was not *too* homosexual.

This study also supports Snyder’s (2006) work in which he found that homosexual male managers had higher levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction. All participants in this study noted that once they came out, their job satisfaction increased, as did their relationships with their peers. Coming out enabled these managers to be free to manage and not hide.

**Identity Management**

Managing their homosexual identities was reported to be a significant issue in the literature. Homosexual employees often hid their sexual orientation to minimize the effects of prejudice and out of fear of being denied promotions (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2014; Yoder & Mattheis, 2016). The participants in this study mostly supported these ideas. All participants reported passing as straight at some point early in their careers. Participants were also afraid of being denied promotions or of being talked about behind

closed doors, as noted by P4, who asked his boss, “Is it talked about at the bar after meetings are over?”

Overcompensating and working harder was noted by several participants, which supports the work of Marrs & Staton (2016). Keeping personal and professional identities separate as a strategy (Marrs & Staton, 2016) was also supported by the data in this study. Concepts such as “work is work and home is home” were echoed by several participants.

In the literature, researchers have discussed a hetero versus homo binary in which the homo construct was subjugated to the more powerful hetero construct (Benozzo et al., 2015). Coming out reinforces this subjugation. The data supports this concept, as noted by P1, who stated that coming was “ongoing, exhausting.” Coming out was not something that heterosexual managers need to negotiate, putting the homosexual manager at a disadvantage. However, all participants noted that being open about who they were became an important aspect of their career. All participants who worked in organizations where they could not be themselves left those organizations. This study did not support the concept that disclosure of sexual orientation led to increased workplace discrimination (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). The opposite was noted, with all participants noting promotions after disclosure of their sexual orientation.

Managing sexual identities successfully can be described as a survival skill in which individuals who are discriminated against possess an innate strength to recover and thrive (Gates & Kelly, 2013). Participants noted similar themes regarding how they managed their sexual identities. P1 stated, “I don’t resent it. But that’s the way it is.

That's the way surviving is. I am still different. I am different. So, I don't think I have to justify my difference, I just am."

**Mentoring**

Mentoring had been described in the literature as a key to career development and involves the development of trusting relationships between mentors and mentees (Murphy, 2012) as a reciprocal relationship is developed to provide support and acceptance (Madera et al., 2012; Sheran & Arnold, 2012). While openly homosexual individuals in the workplace can be viewed as role models for other members of the corporation, there was little research related specifically to homosexual male mentoring relationships (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). This study helped to extend the literature by examining mentoring relationships among homosexual male managers. The data supports the idea of trust, as noted by most participants who initially came out to their mentors or superior manager. Participants also noted that mentoring, in general, helps to provide support, build trust, and increase loyalty, whether the individual was a mentor or a mentee.

Mentoring has been reported to aid in the professional development of individuals (Lester et al., 2011; Popoola et al., 2013). As P3 noted, "I started mentoring other people to move into the other positions." P4 stated, "I get most of my satisfaction out of coaching and developing others," indicating that mentoring and personal development is a reciprocal process and benefits both members of the relationship. For P6, mentoring was a continual process in which he was "always mentoring them, but here we call it we develop them."

## Limitations of the Study

This was a descriptive study, and several limitations are noted. The sample size was small, possibly due to the recruiting techniques. Most members of the Chamber of Commerce LGBTQ Board were not management, and many did not know of other homosexual managers. Often, if they knew of a homosexual businessperson, it was an owner of a small business. Snowball sampling proved difficult with this population as most homosexual managers could not name other homosexual managers. Some recommendations were not useful, such as the referral to a homosexual bar manager. Also, all participants were White. A further limitation was that this study only included managers from a specific region. The group was a homogenous group, with most members between the ages of 40 and 60. Social class, race, ethnicity, or age were not restrictions in this study.

An additional limitation was the inclusion of only homosexual males, excluding bisexuals, lesbians, transgender, and queer individuals. The length of time as a manager could be limiting as well. Most of the participants had been in management for more than 10 years in this study. All the participants had reached a place in their career where they felt comfortable coming out, but only after they had spent quite a bit of time in management. Hearing from managers with less experience could be beneficial.

As a phenomenological study, there was a limitation in that individual's perceptions are used to describe their experiences. Perceptions, however, can differ from person to person, and the same experience could have different meanings for different individuals. Finally, a limitation existed concerning the two participants who withdrew

from the study, as well as the limited number of responses from potential participants. It should be noted that all participants were known to me before the study. The two potential recruits who dropped from the study were not known to me.

## Recommendations

There are several opportunities for further research in this area. A future study across multiple geographic areas could be done to further the scope of this study. The population in this study was largely middle-aged and White. The inclusion of a more diverse population is recommended, including race, ethnicity, and age. The inclusion of lesbians, bi-sexual, transgender, and queer managers may also broaden the scope of this work. A quantitative study may be useful to help provide measurable information on this population, as well. Broader sampling techniques, including social media, are also recommended to increase the number of participants. Future research should also seek homosexual managers in additional environments such as non-profit organizations, as well as managers with a wider range of experience in management. Future research that seeks out executive-level managers would also be recommended.

## Implications

My research was a descriptive study to provide a voice to a minority population. While there had been much research on the LGBTQ population, most of these studies focused on negative issues such as discrimination. This study provided a more positive light on the homosexual manager within corporate environments.

Implications for positive social change apply on an organizational level. While corporations are acknowledging the need for diversity, this may not include sexual

orientation, at least at the management level. A more inclusive organizational structure benefits the organization as a whole and provides increased job satisfaction for its employees. As noted by one manager's CEO in this study, diversity is simply the right thing to do. In supporting homosexual management, organizations can decrease their turnover, increase job satisfaction, and increase loyalty among its staff. Additionally, developing mentoring programs is a powerful aid in helping individuals raise in their careers and helps to develop positive relationships within the organization.

While I had initially thought that positive social change on the corporate level would be important, I realized during this study that there was another level of positive social change. When managers spoke about how coming out and being themselves, their true selves, was a freeing experience, I realized that there was a positive social change on the individual level, as well. All managers noted that once they came out in the workplace, they were happier. Even if it meant leaving that workplace, as P2 did with his church. Managers spoke about being open and honest with themselves and their peers. For all the participants, this freedom started with their mentor or superior manager, who could be described as a mentoring figure. These mentoring relationships helped the managers to increase their job satisfaction, trust, and loyalty to the organization.

There are also several implications for theory. Leadership theory had traditionally been described from the viewpoint of the heterosexual White male. Descriptions of anyone who is "other" were not provided in the leadership literature. Including homosexual male manager helps to broaden the definition of what is a manager, as well as provides an opportunity to include sexual orientation in leadership theories. In

addition, providing a positive voice to the LGBTQ literature helps others to see homosexual managers as “similar” as opposed to “different.”

On the practice side, mentoring helps individuals navigate the corporate world. Mentoring among homosexual males, however, provided a level of freedom that was not present before the start of that relationship. The mentoring relationship offered a trusting environment in which he could disclose his sexual identity. Corporations should seek to include homosexual employees mentoring and support programs to maintain and build better relationships with these employees. In doing so, corporations will be able to provide an environment that is welcoming and inclusive and be better able to retain talented employees.

There exists a further implication in that few participants were willing to discuss being a homosexual manager. As mentioned previously, the two participants who declined to include their information in the study were not known by me, while the other seven participants were known by me through the Chamber of Commerce. It should also be noted that I received no responses from emailing study information to the LGBT corporate groups in this area. The lack of snowball sampling could indicate that these participants did not know other homosexual managers in this area. When the individual did know of a manager, that person was already on my list of participants. Or if the person did know of a manager, that contact invariably failed to follow through in responses to my messages.

All of this indicated that homosexual managers were still very much closeted and seem to be willing to be open about their experiences only to people they knew. Perhaps

it is a matter of trust, but it is curious that despite most of these managers being open in the workplace, they could not name another homosexual manager, indicating perhaps that there are even fewer homosexual managers in the workplace. Finally, a null result was not a zero result. This study still presented insights that may guide other researchers in this area of study. Although there was a lower than expected number of participants in this study, the results, and even the absence of expected findings, can still provide suggestions for future studies, as well as guide researchers in using their time and resources productively.

## Conclusions

Homosexual managers have traditionally been excluded from the management and corporate literature. Even studies on homosexual people in the workplace will often not differentiate between management and employee. This descriptive study provided a voice for this minority, a generally excluded group, and adds to the literature in understanding mentoring relationships among homosexual managers. The specific problem was that there was little understanding of homosexual managers' view of their mentoring experiences within a heteronormative environment.

This study provided answers to the research question, "What are the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations?" A key finding was that the participants believed that mentoring, whether as a mentor or as a mentee, was a valuable experience that helped the homosexual manager feel more included in the corporation. Mentoring experiences elicited feelings of trust, allowing the participants to become more

comfortable coming out in the workplace. As managers became free to be their true selves, their job satisfaction increased, as did their loyalty to the inclusive organization.

While this study had some acknowledged limitations, including the small size, giving voice to a minority population can provide valuable lessons and recommendations. Recommendations for corporations are to expand mentoring programs among management teams and employees. Corporations should seek to be more inclusive and provide an environment where sexual orientation is not stigmatized. Finally, homosexual managers should seek out mentoring experiences to find support and become comfortable with who they are and how they fit in the corporate environment.

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# Appendix A: Study Questions

"What are the mentoring experiences of homosexual male managers in corporations?"

The following subset of questions will also be explored:

1. "How do homosexual managers (mentors and mentees) use mentoring to advance their careers?

2. "How do the experiences of being homosexual lead the homosexual manager to develop successful management skills?"

3. "How do homosexual managers manage their sexual identities in the work environment?"

# Appendix B: Codebook

Nodes

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Career Advancement | | 7 | 35 |
| Negative Affect | | 2 | 4 |
| No Affect | | 2 | 2 |
| Positive Affect | | 2 | 2 |
| free | | 5 | 20 |
| Honesty | | 5 | 16 |
| Integrity | | 3 | 6 |
| Homosexual | | 7 | 42 |
| Compassionate | | 3 | 3 |
| Empathy | | 5 | 11 |
| Sensitivity | | 3 | 5 |
| Understanding | | 3 | 4 |
| Managing | | 7 | 21 |
| communication | | 4 | 6 |
| Helping Others | | 7 | 39 |
| Listening | | 1 | 3 |
| Professional Assist | | 7 | 36 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| positive | | 7 | 13 |
| trust | | 1 | 1 |
| Work office | | 7 | 31 |
| Inclusion | | 7 | 22 |
| Not Out | | 6 | 20 |
| Out in Workplace | | 7 | 59 |
| Sexual Identity | | 7 | 30 |

Nodes\\Autocoded Themes

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| administrator | | 1 | 6 |
| church administration | | 1 | 1 |
| licensed nursing home administrator | | 1 | 1 |
| nursing administrator | | 1 | 1 |
| nursing home administrator | | 1 | 2 |
| nursing home administrator program | | 1 | 1 |
| beverage | | 1 | 2 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| beverage director | | 1 | 1 |
| beverage management side | | 1 | 1 |
| career | | 3 | 7 |
| career development position | | 1 | 1 |
| career development program | | 1 | 1 |
| career path | | 1 | 2 |
| entire career | | 1 | 1 |
| initial career | | 1 | 1 |
| retail career | | 1 | 1 |
| career path | | 1 | 2 |
| career path | | 1 | 2 |
| communicator | | 2 | 2 |
| communication part | | 1 | 1 |
| good communicator | | 1 | 1 |
| conservative | | 2 | 2 |
| conservative industry | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| republican conservatives | | 1 | 1 |
| corporate ladder | | 2 | 2 |
| corporate ladder | | 2 | 2 |
| department heads | | 1 | 1 |
| department heads | | 1 | 1 |
| development | | 2 | 2 |
| developing others | | 1 | 1 |
| leadership development program | | 1 | 1 |
| director | | 2 | 2 |
| beverage director | | 1 | 1 |
| regional director | | 1 | 1 |
| diversity | | 1 | 3 |
| diversity goals | | 1 | 1 |
| diversity slate | | 1 | 1 |
| diversity standpoint | | 1 | 1 |
| employee | | 2 | 4 |
| employee resource group vice president | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| employee resource groups | | 1 | 2 |
| helping employees transition | | 1 | 1 |
| employee resource group vice | | 1 | 1 |
| employee resource group vice president | | 1 | 1 |
| end | | 2 | 2 |
| end goal | | 1 | 1 |
| fashion design end | | 1 | 1 |
| executive | | 2 | 2 |
| executive branch | | 1 | 1 |
| executive sponsorship | | 1 | 1 |
| experience | | 3 | 6 |
| college experience | | 1 | 1 |
| good experience | | 2 | 2 |
| management experience | | 1 | 1 |
| much life experience | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| restaurant experience | | 1 | 1 |
| experiences | | 2 | 3 |
| experienced people | | 1 | 1 |
| good experiences | | 1 | 2 |
| fashion | | 1 | 2 |
| fashion design end | | 1 | 1 |
| fashion industry | | 1 | 1 |
| flag | | 2 | 2 |
| pride flag | | 1 | 1 |
| rainbow flag | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual manager | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual manager | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual people | | 2 | 2 |
| homosexual people | | 2 | 2 |
| group | | 2 | 2 |
| leadership group | | 1 | 1 |
| particular group | | 1 | 1 |
| guy | | 2 | 4 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| big football player guy | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual guy | | 1 | 2 |
| straight guy | | 1 | 1 |
| handbook | | 2 | 4 |
| employee handbook | | 1 | 2 |
| entire handbook | | 1 | 1 |
| entire handbook line | | 1 | 1 |
| hiding anything | | 1 | 2 |
| hiding anything | | 1 | 2 |
| industry | | 1 | 2 |
| beverage industry | | 1 | 1 |
| fashion industry | | 1 | 1 |
| insurance | | 0 | 0 |
| insurance industry | | 0 | 0 |
| insurance perspective | | 0 | 0 |
| whole insurance industry | | 0 | 0 |
| insurance industry | | 1 | 2 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| insurance industry | | 1 | 1 |
| whole insurance industry | | 1 | 1 |
| internship program | | 1 | 2 |
| internship program | | 1 | 2 |
| job | | 1 | 2 |
| mentoring job | | 1 | 1 |
| next job | | 1 | 1 |
| leadership | | 0 | 0 |
| male leadership group | | 0 | 0 |
| senior leadership team | | 0 | 0 |
| life | | 5 | 11 |
| dating life | | 1 | 1 |
| double life | | 1 | 1 |
| everyday life | | 1 | 1 |
| love life | | 1 | 1 |
| normal life | | 1 | 1 |
| personal life | | 2 | 3 |
| professional life | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| separate life | | 1 | 1 |
| true life | | 1 | 1 |
| little bit | | 2 | 3 |
| little bit | | 2 | 3 |
| male leadership group | | 1 | 2 |
| male leadership group | | 1 | 2 |
| management | | 5 | 16 |
| administrative management | | 1 | 1 |
| beverage management side | | 1 | 1 |
| conference services manager | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual manager | | 1 | 1 |
| generation managers | | 1 | 1 |
| management employees | | 1 | 1 |
| management experience | | 1 | 1 |
| management position | | 2 | 2 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| management positions | | 2 | 2 |
| management role | | 1 | 1 |
| management skills | | 1 | 2 |
| management style | | 1 | 1 |
| management system | | 1 | 1 |
| management position | | 2 | 2 |
| management position | | 2 | 2 |
| manager | | 4 | 5 |
| conference services manager | | 1 | 1 |
| female managers | | 1 | 1 |
| management role | | 1 | 1 |
| manager position | | 1 | 1 |
| senior manager | | 1 | 1 |
| managers | | 3 | 3 |
| male managers | | 1 | 1 |
| management positions | | 1 | 1 |
| next manager | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| market | | 0 | 0 |
| great market | | 0 | 0 |
| potential market | | 0 | 0 |
| marketing | | 1 | 3 |
| marketing material | | 1 | 1 |
| potential market | | 1 | 1 |
| whole marketing campaign | | 1 | 1 |
| members | | 2 | 2 |
| staff members | | 1 | 1 |
| team members | | 1 | 1 |
| mentoring | | 4 | 11 |
| bad mentors | | 1 | 1 |
| formal mentoring program | | 1 | 1 |
| good mentors | | 1 | 1 |
| mentor somebody | | 1 | 1 |
| mentor someone | | 1 | 1 |
| mentoring job | | 1 | 1 |
| mentoring ship | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| mentoring somebody | | 1 | 1 |
| mentoring type program | | 1 | 1 |
| mentoring type situation | | 1 | 1 |
| spiritual mentoring | | 1 | 1 |
| next step | | 1 | 3 |
| next step | | 1 | 3 |
| nursing | | 2 | 3 |
| male nurses | | 1 | 1 |
| nursing home administrator | | 1 | 2 |
| nursing home administrator | | 1 | 5 |
| church administration | | 1 | 1 |
| licensed nursing home administrator | | 1 | 1 |
| nursing home administrator | | 1 | 1 |
| nursing home administrator program | | 1 | 2 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| nursing home administrator program | | 1 | 2 |
| nursing home administrator program | | 1 | 2 |
| official capacity | | 1 | 2 |
| official capacity | | 1 | 2 |
| part | | 2 | 2 |
| communication part | | 1 | 1 |
| early part | | 1 | 1 |
| pastor | | 1 | 2 |
| associate pastor | | 1 | 1 |
| youth pastor | | 1 | 1 |
| people | | 5 | 9 |
| clearing people | | 1 | 1 |
| couple people | | 1 | 1 |
| different people | | 1 | 1 |
| experienced people | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual people | | 2 | 2 |
| handling people | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| helping people | | 1 | 1 |
| telling people | | 1 | 1 |
| people skills | | 1 | 3 |
| people skills | | 1 | 3 |
| person | | 5 | 5 |
| cis person | | 1 | 1 |
| homosexual person | | 1 | 1 |
| safe person | | 1 | 1 |
| straight person | | 1 | 1 |
| whole person | | 1 | 1 |
| personal life | | 2 | 2 |
| personal life | | 2 | 2 |
| place | | 1 | 2 |
| free place | | 1 | 1 |
| safe place | | 1 | 1 |
| policy | | 2 | 2 |
| 35 page policy | | 1 | 1 |
| nondiscriminatory policies | | 1 | 1 |
| position | | 2 | 4 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| career development position | | 1 | 1 |
| important position | | 1 | 1 |
| manager position | | 1 | 1 |
| present position | | 1 | 1 |
| program | | 5 | 9 |
| career development program | | 1 | 1 |
| developing others | | 1 | 1 |
| formal mentoring program | | 1 | 1 |
| internship program | | 1 | 2 |
| leadership development program | | 1 | 1 |
| mentoring type program | | 1 | 1 |
| nursing home administrator program | | 1 | 2 |
| role | | 1 | 2 |
| current role | | 1 | 1 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| management role | | 1 | 1 |
| side | | 1 | 3 |
| beverage management side | | 1 | 1 |
| culinary side | | 1 | 1 |
| design side | | 1 | 1 |
| skills | | 1 | 5 |
| leadership skills | | 1 | 1 |
| management skills | | 1 | 1 |
| people skills | | 1 | 3 |
| someone | | 2 | 2 |
| chose someone | | 1 | 1 |
| mentor someone | | 1 | 1 |
| team | | 2 | 3 |
| european teams | | 1 | 1 |
| leadership team | | 1 | 1 |
| whole team | | 1 | 1 |
| team members | | 1 | 2 |
| team members | | 1 | 2 |
| thing | | 3 | 5 |

| Name | Description | Files | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| big thing | | 1 | 1 |
| change thing | | 1 | 1 |
| cool thing | | 1 | 1 |
| generational thing | | 1 | 1 |
| single thing | | 1 | 1 |
| vice president | | 1 | 3 |
| employee resource group vice president | | 1 | 1 |
| level vice president | | 1 | 1 |
| vice president | | 1 | 1 |
| whole self | | 1 | 3 |
| whole self | | 1 | 3 |
| worker | | 3 | 3 |
| construction worker guys | | 1 | 1 |
| social worker | | 1 | 1 |
| work family | | 1 | 1 |