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## The Motivation to Lead and Black Men's Lived Experiences in Airport Management

Vernice L. Haddix  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Vernice L. Haddix

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## Review Committee

Dr. Daphne Halkias, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty  
Dr. Danetra Quarterman, Committee Member, Management Faculty  
Dr. Stephanie Hoon, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
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Abstract

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by

Vernice L. Haddix

MPhil, Walden University, 2020

M.AS, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2004

BS, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

February 2022

## Abstract

Black men's motivation to lead across industry sectors tends to be overlooked, creating further disparities between Black and White individuals in high-ranking corporate positions. As of 2021, of the 519 U.S. primary commercial service airports, fewer than 10 were led by African American men. Since management scholars began to address Black representation in the corporate world in the 1990s, a literature gap existed on the leadership experiences of Black men in airport management. The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their motivation to lead in the airport management sector. This study was framed by Harl and Roberts's concept of racial diversity in aviation and Chan and Drasgow's concept of the motivation to lead. Data were collected from a purposeful sample of nine participants using virtual semistructured interviews. Moustakas's modified Van Kaam method was the data analysis strategy from which eight meaningful themes emerged: early role models of leadership, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, intrinsic motivation to lead, extrinsic motivation to lead, self-efficacy and the motivation to lead, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders. The findings may contribute to positive social change by driving policy initiatives that address racial bias in hiring and promotion in the airport management sector and may inspire young Black men to pursue a career with an upward trajectory to leadership positions.

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## Dedication

To the giants inside and outside of my family whose shoulders on which I stand. To my grandfathers, John Henry Ruffin and Simon Haddix; grandmothers, Mattie Lee Dixon, Maggie Haddix, and Willie Mae Haddix; parents, Arizona Ruffin-Haddix and Ernest Obie Haddix; soul mate, Shirley Ann Haddix; siblings, Ernest John Haddix and Robert Lewis Haddix, Marilyn Joyce Haddix-Warra, and Carolyn Delores Haddix-Johnson; children, Vernon Andre' Haddix, Venus Haddix, Jason Creig, Alono Morrison, and Mike Slish; wife, Rebecca C. Haddix; relatives and friends too numerous to mention. All of these people walked and talked with me at various points of this sojourn, touching my life in meaningful ways from the phone call just to see how I was doing (are you done yet?) to being silent when I needed to vent. Thank God for each of you, those who are still physically here with me, and for managing to keep me focused and headed toward the finish line even when it was too foggy for me to see. Special thanks to all those who have transitioned to a peaceful place before me for their sacrifices and constant reminders that it truly is possible if you only believe and trust in God. As Langston Hughes so eloquently stated, life for you was not a crystal stair, and yet you managed to show me, as we walked, where the boards were missing, and you pulled many splinters from my hands and feet enabling me to continue climbing, never giving up on me or permitting the fire of my dream burning inside me to be extinguished. Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study .....	1
Background .....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Question .....	6
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Nature of the Study.....	8
Definitions.....	10
Assumptions .....	12
Scope and Delimitations .....	13
Limitations .....	14
Significance.....	14
Significance to Practice.....	15
Significance to Theory .....	15
Significance to Social Change.....	16
Summary and Transition.....	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	18
Literature Search Strategy.....	19
Literature Review .....	22
Studies Grounding the Conceptual Framework.....	22



MTL in Leadership Studies .....	24
Alternate Theoretical Perspectives on African American Male Leadership	
Experiences .....	27
Black Men and Corporate Leadership in the United States: The Recent	
History .....	30
Research on Black Men and Corporate Leadership in the United States:	
2018–2021.....	32
Challenges of Airport Management for the CEO .....	36
Diversity Issues in Aviation and Airport Management.....	40
Black Men's Successful Work Experiences and the MTL .....	44
Literature Gap.....	46
Summary and Conclusions.....	46
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	48
Research Design and Rationale .....	48
Role of the Researcher .....	51
Methodology .....	52
Participant Selection Logic.....	53
Population.....	53
Sampling Criteria.....	54
Sampling Strategy.....	55
Instrumentation .....	56
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	59

Data Analysis Plan .....	62
Issues of Trustworthiness .....	63
Credibility .....	63
Transferability.....	64
Dependability.....	64
Confirmability.....	65
Ethical Procedures .....	65
Summary .....	68
Chapter 4: Results.....	70
Research Setting .....	72
Demographics.....	73
Data Collection.....	75
Semistructured Interviews.....	77
Member Checking.....	78
Data Analysis .....	79
Epoche Protocol.....	81
Preliminary Coding or Horizontalization.....	81
Significant Statements From Participant 1 .....	82
Significant Statements From Participant 2.....	87
Significant Statements From Participant 3.....	92
Significant Statements From Participant 4.....	100
Significant Statements From Participant 5.....	105

Significant Statements From Participant 6.....	111
Significant Statements From Participant 7.....	117
Significant Statements From Participant 8.....	119
Significant Statements From Participant 9.....	120
Phenomenological Reduction and Elimination .....	123
Clustering and Thematizing .....	128
Individual Textual Descriptions .....	129
Bracketing, Imaginative Variation, and Constructing Meaning.....	138
Individual Structural Descriptions .....	138
Synthesized Textural and Structural Description .....	146
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	150
Credibility.....	150
Transferability.....	151
Dependability.....	152
Confirmability.....	153
Study Results.....	153
Early Role Models of Leadership .....	154
Lifelong Experience of Systemic Racism .....	154
Intrinsic MTL .....	155
Extrinsic MTL .....	156
Self-Efficacy and the MTL.....	156

Diversity and Inclusion Challenges Within the Airport Management	
Sector .....	157
Career Trajectory as a Leader in Aviation .....	158
Inspiring the Next Generation of Black Leaders .....	158
Summary .....	159
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	162
Interpretation of the Findings .....	163
Early Role Models of Leadership .....	164
Lifelong Experience of Systemic Racism .....	165
Intrinsic Motivation to Lead .....	166
Extrinsic Motivation to Lead .....	167
Self-Efficacy and the Motivation to Lead .....	167
Diversity and Inclusion Challenges Within the Airport Management	
Sector .....	168
Career Trajectory as a Leader in Aviation .....	169
Inspiring the Next Generation of Black Leaders .....	170
Limitations of the Study .....	171
Recommendations .....	173
Recommendations for Research .....	173
Recommendations for Practice .....	176
Implications .....	177
Positive Social Change .....	177

Implications for Policy and Professional Practice .....	177
Theoretical Implications.....	178
Conclusions .....	180
References.....	183
Appendix A: Recruitment Letter.....	203
Appendix B: Interview Protocol .....	204
Appendix C: Precoding/Horizontalization of Step 2 the Modified Van Kaam	
Method .....	206
Appendix D: Total Significant Statements After Phenomenological Reduction and	
Elimination .....	247

List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b>	<i>Databases, Search Items, and Results</i> .....	19
<b>Table 2</b>	<i>Participants' Demographics and Characteristics</i> .....	75
<b>Table 3</b>	<i>Themes From Participants' Responses</i> .....	137

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

One workspace in which African American men are rarely seen at the top of the organizational structure is the airport management sector (Kelleher, 2020). In 2020, the Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (DOT/FAA) published its Administrator's Fact Book, which indicated that there are 19,919 U.S. airports, and of that number, 519 serve commercial flights. Of the 519 U.S. primary commercial service airports, fewer than 10 are led by African American men, at 0.026%, falling below the national trends. Due to this long-held underrepresentation across industry sectors, leadership scholars have overlooked documenting Black men's motivation to lead in the professional life (Burt et al., 2020). Motivation to lead is defined as "an individual differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and that affects his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482).

The challenges of running inclusive and diverse organizations apply to airports of all types and sizes (Graham, 2018; Pedulla, 2020). As recipients of federal funds, airports are required to administer a federal program that seeks to provide equal access for participation in airport-related business (Krop et al., 2020). Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader (Auvinen et al., 2020). The theoretical and practitioner literature has ignored how the MTL informs Black men's leadership experiences, and since the 1990s, Blacks in airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020).

Chapter 1 of this study presents the background literature supporting the problem statement and description of the literature gap. The chapter presents a logical alignment between the problem statement, purpose of the study, research question, and conceptual framework. Significance, assumptions, limitations, and definitions of key terms used throughout this paper are also presented. Chapter 1 concludes with a summary of the foundational elements of this study.

### **Background**

Wahba's (2020) article on the Fortune 500 ranking stated that despite years of diversity programs and pious pledges by corporate America, the ranks of African American male chief executives leading Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies remain measurably low. In 2012, six African American CEOs led Fortune 500 companies, possibly two were in the pipeline, and three were leading Fortune 100 companies. Comparably, in 2020, that number was down to three Black male CEOs leading Fortune 100 companies, including Marvin Ellison, president/CEO of Lowe's Cos Inc, (No. 44); Kenneth Frazier, chairman of the board/CEO of Merck & Co., Inc. (No. 69); and Roger Ferguson Jr., president/CEO of TIAA (No. 81).

The Alliance for Board Diversity's (2018) report revealed exclusionary numbers for board of director participation of African American men and provided another question about what motivates African American men to strive to lead in U.S. corporate organizations from which they are primarily excluded. The Alliance for Board Diversity (2018) also illuminated that Fortune 100 board seats available in 2018 were 1,222, of which White men held 750 seats (61.4%) totaling, and African American men occupied



94 seats (7.7%). In the same report, in Fortune 500 companies there were 5,670 available board seats; White men held 3,134 seats (67.3%), and African American men held 236 seats (5.1%). The aviation industry reported a similarly low number of African American male executive leaders, particularly in airport management (Stevenson et al., 2020). The DOT/FAA published the number of commercial service airports at 519 in 2020, and African American men lead fewer than 10.

Motivation is a driving force through which people strive to achieve their goals and fulfill a need or uphold a value. Mullins (2008) posited that the critical words to define motivation are needs, values, and goals, which are the building blocks of motivation that lead to actions. Only recently has an attempt been made to develop a theoretical framework for the MTL concept incorporating personality, motivational, and developmental factors that are capable of predicting the emergence of leadership, particularly leadership in everyday life (Chan, 1999; Chan & Drasgow, 2001). This model consists of three factors: affective MTL—the internal emotional motivation to reach a position of leadership, social-normative MTL—the wish to reach a leadership position out of social norms or as a source of social esteem, and noncalculative MTL. Chan and Drasgow (2001, as cited in Amit et al., 2007; Badura et al., 2020) developed the concept of the MTL to define the parameters that motivate people to lead an organization successfully. Due to a long-standing underrepresentation of Black men in executive positions across industry sectors, leadership scholars have overlooked documenting Black men's MTL in professional life (Burt et al., 2020). More specifically,

little is known about the motivating factors of African American men who lead in airport management due to a gap in the business and management literature (Sisco, 2020).

Commercial aviation in the United States has proliferated since the 1950s, yet racial diversity in the aviation workforce has shown little progress (Stevenson et al., 2020). Race has been and continues to be an issue in the aviation community, and often is a disqualifying characteristic for employment opportunities in aviation/airport leadership positions (Kelleher, 2020). A fair amount of research has been done on Black women's motivations to overcome leadership challenges in U.S. corporate environments (Horsford, 2020; Johnson, 2021). On the contrary, little research has been conducted on Black men's successful leadership experiences across industry sectors (Fries-Britt, 2018; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020), including one outdated study on Black men working in the airport management sector (Harl & Roberts, 2011). Black men's MTL in the airport management sector remains poorly understood (Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020).

### **Problem Statement**

Even though corporations have maintained a history of operating as racialized social systems that contribute to racial divisions and inequities in the workplace, high-achieving Black men have overcome limitations and unfavorable circumstances (Sisco, 2020). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) collected statistics on management-level roles that revealed a double-digit percentage disparity between Black and White people in management and professional level positions. Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader (Auvinen et al., 2020). Corporate leadership in the United States has overlooked Black men's MTL

as an interface to successful leadership experience (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). The social problem addressed in the current study was that Black men's MTL across industry sectors tends to be overlooked, thereby creating further disparities between Black and White individuals in high-ranking corporate positions (see Kelley, 2019; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020).

The airport management sector lacks diversity and inclusive hiring practices (Dolan et al., 2020) in its leadership positions, even though many U.S. airports are obligated to do so under state and local laws (Kelleher, 2020). Since business and management scholars began to address Black representation in the corporate world in the 1990s, Blacks in airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader, but only in demographic groups that are predominately White European in ethnicity (Auvinen et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). A need exists for more scholarly research on the lived experiences of Black people (Ross, 2020). There is a literature gap on how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (Collins et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020). The specific management problem addressed in the current study was that Black men's experiences with MTL in the airport management sector remain poorly understood (Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. Data were collected from a purposeful sample of nine

information-rich participants for in-depth study until data saturation was achieved. Qualitative methodologists noted that no more than 15 participants may be used to reach thematic saturation for a qualitative study and that extended interviews with 15–20 people tend to be sufficient for a phenomenological dissertation study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mason, 2010; Moustakas, 1994). To support the trustworthiness of study results to affect positive social change, organization and analysis of the data were conducted to develop individual textural and structural descriptions, a composite structural description, a composite textural description, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and descriptions (see Moustakas, 1994).

### **Research Question**

How do Black men describe their lived experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Two critical concepts grounded this study and aligned with the purpose of exploring how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experiences: (a) Harl and Roberts's (2011) concept of racial diversity in aviation and (b) Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of the MTL. This empirical investigation was aimed at advancing research, addressing a literature gap on how Black men in the airport management sector describe their lived experiences with their MTL, and contributing original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

To illustrate the need for racial diversity in aviation, Harl and Roberts (2011) performed a case study on the Black experience in business aviation, examining the

perceptions of Black pilots in the workplace. Scholars have used Harl and Roberts's (2011) exploratory case study work to develop suggestions for further empirical studies, recognize a literature gap on Black men's unique corporate leadership experiences related to their individual motivations, and recommend that these experiences be further understood (Harper, 2017). Critical human resource development (HRD) theory (Fenwick, 2005) has also been conceptualized as a lens to analyze power relations in organizations and focus on transforming workplaces and HRD practice toward justice, fairness, and equity. Moving beyond the conceptualization of the Black experience in leadership is necessary to minimize the gap between critical HRD theory and practice (Sisco, 2020).

Chan and Drasgow's (2001) MTL model is a seminal work that creates an empirical, standard-based model that facilitates examining different profiles in the MTL. MTL is defined as "an individual differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and that affects his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482). Exploring how personality and cognitive factors are reflected in the individual's MTL, Chan (1999) developed his conceptual model of MTL based on two central social-cognitive theories: Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action and Triandis's (1977) theory of interpersonal behavior. These theories posit that specific structures combine to form behavior and values relating to action, social norms relating to action, and beliefs about the action results (Chan, 1999). The conceptual framework is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

### **Nature of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. This study's nature was qualitative to align with its purpose and provide data for the research question grounded in the constructivist paradigm to understand how individuals find meaning from their lived experiences (see Frechette et al., 2020). Quantitative methods were inappropriate for this study because quantitative research designs address relationships, test theories, standardize reporting, and include quantifiable data (see Harkiolakis, 2017). A mixed-methods approach was not appropriate because quantitative data were not suitable to answer my research question (see Bryman, 2017).

A qualitative research method with a transcendental phenomenological research design is used to explore and describe individuals' subjective reality and experiences (van Manen, 2016). By using a phenomenological research method, I addressed scholars' recommendations for further research on the study topic and explicated the meaning, structure, and essence of a sample of Black men's lived experiences as leaders in the airport management sector (see Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020). Several qualitative methods that were found not to align with the purpose of this study were explored: ethnography, which involves understanding the culture through data collected from targeted environments; case study, which is used to explain an organization or entity or specific case; grounded theory, which is used to identify themes and develop theories;

and narrative, which is used to present the phenomena in the form of stories relevant to the participant (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

A transcendental phenomenological approach was appropriate for the current study because it allowed me to describe the essence of each participant's lived experience in ways other research approaches may not provide (see Moustakas, 1994). I collected data in alignment with the transcendental phenomenological tradition using in-depth interviews in the informal, interactive process of empirical phenomenological research through the use of open-ended questions and dialogue (see Moustakas, 1994). Interview questions generated original data addressing the participants' lived experiences, and interviews were conducted online with Zoom or another communication platform depending on the participants' preferences (see Gray et al., 2020).

Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research to recruit information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I recruited nine participants for my study using purposeful, criterion, and network sampling strategies and screened participants with the following inclusion criteria: adult Black men over the age of 18, work experience in an executive leadership position at a U.S. commercial service airport, 5 years minimum experience in upper management/executive leadership, and willingness to discuss his leadership experiences. The study sample's inclusion criteria replicated inclusion criteria from similar studies using a phenomenological method and a sample of Black leaders (see Small, 2020; Smith, 2021; Tedder & Smith, 2018). To meet the Walden dissertations standards for sample size, I conducted nine online semistructured interviews with participants meeting the study's inclusion criteria, and the

final sample size was determined by data saturation within the interview data (see Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

The data analysis method that was used for this study was Moustakas's (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method for analyzing phenomenological data. According to Moustakas, phenomenological data analysis follows a systematic and rigorous procedure. First, I depicted my experiences with the phenomenon (epoche). Second, noteworthy statements in the database from participants were acknowledged, and then these statements were clustered into meaningful units and themes. Finally, I synthesized the themes into an explanation of the experiences of the individuals (textual and structural descriptions) and then constructed a composite description of the meanings and the essences of the experience (see Moustakas, 1994).

### **Definitions**

*African American/Black:* This term refers to a person born in the United States or is a naturalized citizen having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (Tamir, 2021). In the current study, the term Black was used interchangeably with African American, which was common practice in the management literature.

*Airport management:* This term refers to the administration of airports and airlines and includes setting the airports' strategy to gather and provide information on airline commercial and operational priorities. The leader in airport management ensures that flight operations run smoothly, passengers receive quality service, flights take off and land in a timely manner, security is maintained, and commercial operations like duty-free shopping at airports and airport retail return a good profit (Graham, 2018).



*Diversity*: This term refers to the presence of differences within a given setting in the workplace that can mean differences in race, ethnicity, gender, or any other number of things (Dolan et al., 2020).

*Inclusion*: This term refers to the practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging and support from the organization (Pedulla, 2020).

*Intersectionality*: This term refers to an intersection of social categories, such as race and gender, relevant to a specified individual or group's identity and creates a unique experience that is separate and apart from its originating categories (Rosette et al., 2018).

*Leadership*: This term refers to the traits, behaviors, influence, interaction patterns, role relationships, and occupation of an administrative position requiring (a) efficiency and process reliability, (b) effective human relations, (c) access to needed resources to meet organizational goals, and (d) innovation and adaptation to the internal and external context of the work environment (Harper, 2017).

*Motivation*: This term refers to is a driving force through which people strive to achieve their goals and fulfill a need or uphold a value (Mullins, 2008).

*Motivation to lead (MTL)*: This term refers to "an individual differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and that affects his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482).

*Primary commercial service airport*: This term refers to publicly owned airports with more than 10,000 passenger boardings each year (FAA, 2020).

*Racial diversity*: This term refers to the inclusion of people of all races across

professions (Stevenson et al., 2020).

*Racism*: This term refers to a systemic advantage that benefits a dominant group, such as White people (Dutt, 2020).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions in research are statements or issues perceived as being true or taken for granted and may be in the researcher's control but must be monitored throughout the research process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The participants' lived experiences provided the data to complete the current phenomenological study. The participants in a phenomenological study are believed to have shared experiences (Englander, 2012). I assumed that the participants reported information associated with their lived experiences truthfully, candidly, and accurately (see Stenfors et al., 2020).

Fusch and Ness (2015) emphasized the importance of using a small sample size in qualitative research and that achieving saturation relies on the research approach and design. By adhering to the rigorous standards of an empirical phenomenology research design, I assumed that the participants' lived experiences would add to the body of literature about the challenges and opportunities for potential aviation leaders to prepare for opportunities from entry-level supervisors to senior airport executives.

In qualitative inquiry, the criteria for judging the quality of findings depends on three elements: rigorous methods, the credibility of the researcher, and the philosophical belief in the value and understanding of qualitative inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I assumed my integrity and values as a researcher ensured that I had no intentional or unintentional influence over the participants' will. Because I had worked during my long

career in airport management and was retired from that sector at the time of the study, I used care and consulted with my dissertation committee throughout the study to ensure no intentional personal biases and prejudices influenced the data collection or analysis. Any unintentional personal bias or prejudice was addressed within the study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This study's aim was to understand Black men's lived experiences and MTL in the airport management sector. This population was selected because of the small number of African American men in executive leadership positions at the more than 519 U.S. primary commercial service airports. In their duties, these Black male leaders in the airport management sector provide guidance, decision making, and direction to ensure sustainable operational efficiencies and proper financial management procedures at U.S. primary commercial service airports. I used these boundaries defined by the scope and limitations to obtain rich data in the study that could serve as a baseline for future studies on the intersection of gender and leadership development for Black men. I recruited participants for my study delimited to the following inclusion criteria: adult Black men over the age of 18, work experience in an executive leadership position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport, 5 years minimum experience in upper management/executive leadership, and the willingness to discuss his leadership experiences. The study sample's inclusion criteria replicated inclusion criteria from similar studies using a phenomenological method and a sample of Black leaders (see Small, 2020; Smith, 2021; Tedder & Smith, 2018). This study has the potential of transferability to future research

on the development experiences of Black male leaders in general, and specifically within the industry sector context of airport management.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the small number of African American men in executive positions leading U.S. primary commercial service airports and how many were willing to participate and share their lived experiences. The sample was limited to those identifying their job title designation as follows: CEO, chief administrative officer, administrator, president, senior partner, senior executive, director, or general manager. This limitation was mitigated by applying seminal methodologies' recommendations on sample size in a qualitative study. For example, Schram (2006) recommended that researchers have between five and 10 participants for a qualitative study because a larger sample size can lead to weaker research results.

Another limitation was the available scholarly literature on African American men in a leadership position in airport management. I broadened my literature search strategy to include updated peer-reviewed papers on Black men in executive leadership roles with U.S. corporations to mitigate this limitation. Although triangulation is recommended for qualitative studies, phenomenological research designs are limited in utilizing this validity technique mainly because "lived experience is the starting point and endpoint of phenomenological research" (van Manen, 1990, p. 36).

### **Significance**

This study's results may be significant in providing data to inform scholars, academics, practitioners, and corporate leadership on the interface between MTL and the

lived experiences of successful African American men in airport management. The conclusions reached in this research study provided a lens through which current and future Black male leaders may develop and negotiate their upward career trajectory as leaders in U.S. primary commercial service airports.

### **Significance to Practice**

This study was significant to practice by exploring motivation and perceived racial barriers, which provide both positive and negative elements to promoting African American men into executive leadership within the airport management sector in the United States. This study enhanced the practitioner literature relevant to motivation, leadership, and barriers that are gatekeepers to promotional opportunities for African American men. This study may inform corporate leadership on the racial inequities in hiring, placement, and promotional opportunities for Black men into executive-level positions in airport management. Additionally, this study may provide a robust understanding of how the MTL can be explored in Black men's leadership experiences and upward mobility by supporting diversity hiring and promotion in the aviation industry (see Krop et al., 2020).

### **Significance to Theory**

The MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader (Auvinen et al., 2020). The theoretical and empirical literature has not addressed how the MTL informs Black men's leadership experience, and since the 1990s, Blacks in airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). Because of this exclusionary bias in research on Black male

corporate leaders' experiences and the potential importance of the MTL concept in the leadership literature, scholars have begun to recognize that Black men have unique corporate leadership experiences related to their individual motivations that must be further understood (Harper, 2017). By addressing this literature gap, this study was significant to theory by extending scholarly knowledge within the conceptual framework with original qualitative data on how Black men's MTL in the airport management sector is expressed through their lived experiences.

### **Significance to Social Change**

This study was significant to social change because it addressed an underresearched area of motivation as applied to African American men's lived experiences in the airport management sector. Research into the lived experiences of the Black men in this study on the interface of their MTL and their executive leadership experiences in the airport management sector within the United States may foster meaningful, positive, and sustainable social change for this group. This study also exposed employment barriers for Black men that were not evident, supported professional practices, and provided aspiring Black male leaders with vital knowledge to plan the professional career trajectory in their leadership quest.

### **Summary and Transition**

The specific management problem was that Black men's experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector remain poorly understood (Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020). The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the

airport management sector. A qualitative method with a transcendental phenomenological design (see Moustakas, 1994) was used to explore and describe the participants' subjective reality and experiences. Data were collected by recruiting a purposeful sample of nine information-rich participants for an in-depth study until data saturation was achieved (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mason, 2010; Moustakas, 1994).

I used a conceptual framework grounded in Harl and Roberts's (2011) concept of racial diversity in aviation and Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of the MTL. This empirical investigation was intended to contribute to practice, theory, and positive social change by addressing a literature gap on how Black men in the airport management sector describe their lived experiences supported by the MTL. The data analysis was conducted to support the trustworthiness of study results to effect positive social change by developing individual textural and structural descriptions, a composite structural description, a composite textural description, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and descriptions (see Moustakas, 1994). Chapter 2 provides the literature search strategy that addressed the literature gap on the topic, and includes an updated narrative literature review, literature supporting the conceptual framework, and a summary of the chapter.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Since business and management scholars began to address Black representation in the corporate world in the 1990s, Blacks in airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader, but only in demographic groups predominately White European in ethnicity (Auvinen et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). A need existed for an empirical study to address the literature gap on how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (Collins et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020).

The specific management problem was that Black men's experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector remain poorly understood (Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020). The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. Research on the lived experiences of the Black men in this study on the interface of their MTL and their executive leadership experiences in the airport management sector in the United States may foster meaningful, positive, and sustainable social change for this group (see Stevenson et al., 2020).

Chapter 2 provides the literature search strategy and the conceptual framework that guided the study. I present a synthesis of knowledge on how Black men in the airport management sector describe their lived experiences and MTL. Finally, I offer a critical analysis of the literature in which this study was grounded.



### Literature Search Strategy

This literature review was conducted to analyze and synthesize scholarly literature on Black men's MTL in U.S. corporate environments and their leadership experiences in the U.S. primary commercial service airport management sector. My searches included the Walden University Library, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, EBSCOhost, ABI/INFORM Collection, ScienceDirect, SAGE Premier, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, PsycNET, SpringerLink, and Emerald Insight. I used the Google and Bing search engines to find peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to the study. My strategy for searching the literature included identifying essential search concepts, keywords, related terms, and databases. Table 1 includes information on the initial database search I conducted into peer-reviewed literature on the story's foundational topic and sample group to be studied.

**Table 1**

*Databases, Search Items, and Results*

Database	Search Item	Result	Note
Business and Management/Business Source Complete	"Leadership" AND "African American" AND "Men" AND "Business" - Limited to Full Text, Peer Review – Between 2011 - 2016	2	Leadership and African American men appear not to be practical search terms for Business Source Complete
PsycINFO	"Barriers" AND "African American" AND "Leadership" AND "Men or Male" – Limited to Full Text, Peer-Reviewed	5	Barriers, African American, Leadership, and Men or Male were not good search terms in PsycINFO

Database	Search Item	Result	Note
	– Between 2011 - 2016		
PsycINFO	"Leadership" AND "Black" AND "Barriers" - Limited to Full Text, Peer-Reviewed – Between 2011 - 2016	11	Leadership, Black, and Barriers were not good search terms in PsycINFO
PsycINFO	"Leadership" AND "Racial" AND "Ethnic" - Limited to Full Text, Peer-Reviewed –	116	Leadership, Racial, and Ethnic – were good search terms in PsycINFO
	Between 2011 - 2016		
PsycINFO	"Leadership" AND "Racial" AND "Ethnic" AND "Stereotyped Attitudes" - Limited to Full Text, Peer-Reviewed – Between 2011 – 2016	9	Leadership, Racial, Ethnic, and Stereotyped Attitudes – were not good search terms in PsycINFO
Business Management/Academic Search Complete	"Barriers to" AND "success" AND "Black men" AND "Employment" - Limited to Full Text, Peer-Reviewed – Between 2011 - 2016	1	Barriers to Success, Black Men, and Employment were not good search terms in Business Management /Academic Search Complete
ERIC/Education Source/Academic Search	"Subhuman to Humankind" Limited to Full	1	Hiring and promotional practices, and Critical Race Theory, and Implicit Bias/

Database	Search Item	Result	Note
Complete/Complementary Index/APA PsycInfo	Text, Peer-Reviewed – Between 2015 – 2020		were not good search terms in ERIC/Education Source/Academic Search Complete/Complementary

After the initial search, I discovered that peer-reviewed scholarly literature on my specific study topic was sparse, and I searched for various types of scholarly and nonscholarly literature, including public and private labor reports, using more specific topics interfacing with the phrase *Black men in airport management in the United States*. My strategy was to search for peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last 5 years on Black men's MTL in the airport management sector, including seminal literature, government literature, business reports, and published books not much older than 5 years. I checked articles using Ulrich's Periodicals Directory to identify peer-reviewed journals (see Grimes & Morris, 2006).

I also searched U.S. government websites, including websites of the DOT/FAA and the Alliance for Board Diversity, to obtain information on Black men in corporate leadership particularly within the field of aviation and airport management. Examples of keywords and phrases I used in this phase of the search include *Black men and corporate leadership in the United States*, *Black men and leadership experiences*, *challenges of airport management*, *MTL*, *systemic racism*, and *diversity in aviation*.

This literature review presents a synthesis of prior research related to Black men's MTL in the airport management sector. I also present a synthesis of scholarly literature on Black men and organizational leadership, Black men's MTL in various industry and

academic sectors, diversity issues in aviation and airport management, and leadership. I also review literature that addressed the context in which the current study's participants work (airport management) and the organizational challenges for those serving in the upper management level of U.S. primary commercial service airports. In conclusion, I summarize what is known and not known in the management literature related to the study's topic.

## **Literature Review**

### **Studies Grounding the Conceptual Framework**

Two critical concepts grounded this study and aligned with the study's purpose of exploring how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experiences: (a) Harl and Roberts's (2011) concept of racial diversity in aviation and (b) Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of the MTL. The current study was intended to advance research and address a literature gap on how Black men in the airport management sector describe their lived experiences with their MTL and to contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

#### ***Racial Diversity in Aviation***

Since its origins, the field of aviation has never been ethnically diverse, and aviation leadership does not reflect the diversity of the overall workforce or the community it serves (Stevenson et al., 2020). To illustrate the need for racial diversity in aviation, Harl and Roberts (2011) performed a case study on the Black experience in business aviation, examining the perceptions of Black pilots in the workplace. When Harl and Roberts developed their conceptual model, they wrote that there had been no studies

undertaken in this area, no published literature on Blacks in business aviation, and no theoretical propositions or rival explanations reported. Key conclusions from their study were there had been limited attempts to explore the leadership experiences of Black men, and this had significant implications for research, theory, policy, and practice.

Scholars have used Harl and Roberts's (2011) exploratory case study to develop suggestions for further empirical studies, recognize a literature gap on Black men's unique corporate leadership experiences related to their individual motivations, and recommend that these experiences be further understood (Harper, 2017). Critical HRD theory (Fenwick, 2005) has also been conceptualized as a lens to analyze power relations in organizations and focus on transforming workplaces and HRD practice toward justice, fairness, and equity. Moving beyond the conceptualization of the Black experience in leadership is necessary to minimize the gap between critical HRD theory and practice (Sisco, 2020). Given this literature gap, I investigated how and why Black men's MTL in the U.S. commercial airport sector remains poorly understood (see Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020).

### ***Motivation to Lead***

Chan's (1999) MTL model was a seminal work aimed at creating an empirical, standard-based model that facilitates examining different profiles of MTL. MTL was defined as "an individual differences construct that affects leaders or future leaders decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and that affects his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482). According to Chan's preliminary model in the 1990s, the MTL arises from four

factors: personality traits, values, leadership self-efficacy, and previous leadership experiences. Because these factors differ from one person to another in both intensity and essence, and because they exist in interaction with the environment, people may be expected to form different combinations of MTL (Badura et al., 2020).

Because some of the components of MTL (particularly the personality traits) are stable over time, the factor structure will likely be relatively stable (Badura et al., 2020). Exploring how these factors are reflected in the individual's MTL, Chan developed his conceptual model of MTL based on two central social-cognitive theories: Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action and Triandis's (1977) theory of interpersonal behavior. These theories posit that specific structures combine to form behavior and values relating to action, social norms relating to action, and beliefs about the results of the action (Chan, 1999).

In developing their seminal theory of individual differences and leadership, Chan and Drasgow (2001) established a clear link between leadership self-efficacy and MTL, suggesting that in order to want to lead, an individual also needs to feel able to lead. The assumption of self-efficacy to lead was also validated in further studies extending Chan and Drasgow's theoretical work by identifying the literature gap on leaders' experiences with MTL as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader (Auvinen et al., 2020; Badura et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020).

### **MTL in Leadership Studies**

Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader. Because some of the components of MTL (particularly the

personality traits) are stable over time, the factor structure will likely be relatively stable (Badura et al., 2020). Exploring how these factors are reflected in the individual's MTL, Chan (1999) developed his conceptual model of MTL based on two central social-cognitive theories: Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) *Theory of Reasoned Action* and Triandis's (1977) *Theory of Interpersonal Behavior*. These theories posit that specific major structures combine to form behavior: values relating to action (affective structure), social norms relating to action (social structure), and beliefs about the results of the action (calculative structure). Chan assumed that these theories provide the framework for understanding the psychological structure of MTL and that the dominant factors in an individual's wish to lead can be determined.

Chan (1999) hypothesized that three types of motivations explain an individual's drive to lead. First, affective-identity MTL states that intrinsic motivation drives individuals to become leaders because they enjoy leading. Affective-identity MTL is an intrinsic motivation because enjoyment comes from within and does not depend on context or environment. Affective-identity MTL has roots in McClelland's (1965) motivation theory and the need for achievement. Individuals who are high in need for achievement enjoy the challenge of a task and the challenge of leading (Özcan, 2021).

Social normative MTL is motivation derived from a sense of duty (Chan, 1999). Social normative MTL is an extrinsic motivator. Extrinsic motivation is driven by forces outside of the work itself, including pay or positive recognition. Social normative MTL is driven by extrinsic motivation because duty may vary depending on the situation or the leader's followers. Social normative MTL is grounded in McClelland's (1965) motivation

theory and the need for affiliation. Need for affiliation describes people as wanting to be liked by others, enjoying collaborating with others, and seeking close relationships on the job (Coccia, 2018).

Noncalculative MTL describes an individual's motivation for leading as the ability to avoid weighing the costs and benefits of leading (Chan, 1999). Noncalculative MTL stems from cognitive theories of motivation that define people as rational and usually weighing personal costs and benefits before leaping into action. According to cognitive theories, people's goals maximize their benefits and minimize their costs. Equity theory closely relates to noncalculative MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001).

Through their seminal equity theory, Adams (1963) and Adams and Freedman (1976) proposed that employees desire to be treated fairly and compare their inputs (e.g., education, credentials, expertise) and outcomes (e.g., pay, recognition) to their coworkers' inputs and outputs to determine whether they are being treated fairly. Equity theory relates inversely to noncalculative MTL because Chan and Drasgow (2001) suggested that people who do not engage in cost–benefit analyses are more likely to lead. Costs are exceptionally high when leaders do not appreciate their leadership or are mistreated compared to others in the workplace (Badura et al., 2020).

Corporate leadership in the United States has overlooked Black men's MTL as an interface to successful leadership experience (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). The social problem is that Black men's MTL across industry sectors tends to be overlooked, thereby creating further disparities between Black and White individuals in high-ranking corporate positions (Kelley, 2019; Wingfield & Alston, 2012). In



developing their seminal theory of individual differences and leadership, Chan and Drasgow (2001) established a clear link between leadership self-efficacy and MTL, suggesting that in order to want to lead, an individual also needs to feel able to lead. The assumption of self-efficacy to lead was also validated in further studies extending Chan and Drasgow's theoretical work by identifying the literature gap on leaders' experiences with MTL as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader (Auvinen et al., 2020; Badura et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020).

### **Alternate Theoretical Perspectives on African American Male Leadership**

#### **Experiences**

Livingston and Rosette (2020) posited that African American men are often stigmatized/biased based on race. Thus, as Livingston and Rosette stated, "stigmatism acts as a gatekeeper that denies entry into higher levels of organizational leadership" (p. 47). Due to black and male intersectionality, African American men should present themselves as docile and non-threatening. Due in part to the changing needs of the global economy and the demographics of today's working environment, leadership qualities are moving away from dysfunctional top-down, autocratic styles of leading and morphing into multi-faceted inclusionary styles of leadership that incorporate the five qualities of Hesselbein and Goldsmith (2013): diversity, knowledge of staff, improved communications, accountabilities, and agree to disagree.

Critical race theory was used by Small (2020) to review a phenomenological study to explore the experiences of five African American male leaders who worked in a predominately White organization. The author studied five African American men and

the intersectionality of white privilege, race, gender, religion, and the many facets of racial insensitivity and micro-aggressions. Small (2020) study opened the most current leadership theory by accounting for the intersectionality of cultural norms and experiences of successful African American spiritual males' leadership skills. Weller (2019) provides another insightful look into black employment barriers, which prompts a long look at the concepts of critical race theory and indoctrination through religion when discussing racial barriers to employment and leadership. Weller's (2019) depiction that African Americans face systematic racism and obstacles to getting good jobs as another gatekeeping force of racism and another barrier to executive leadership. However, some employers will permit African American men entry into lower/entry-level positions while simultaneously denying promotions or placements into executive leadership positions, and conservative religious views may play a role in this process (Small, 2020).

Religion, in some cases, has aided in the inability of African American Men to achieve executive leadership positions successfully. Due to some religious teachings, if a person is not a white male, they are not in God's image as posited by Roberts et al. (2020); therefore, they cannot be leadership. Brown (2017) argued that religious doctrine and the Bible help keep African Americans, particularly black males, status at the bottom economically, employment, and promotional opportunities, all being validated and sanctioned by God. Therefore, adding religion and biblical teachings to the equation and racial barriers to leadership for African American men adds another barrier to employment and promotional and placement opportunities for African American men. In the face of such unrelenting bias against Black men and assertions that God is a White

man, it is crucial to address racial barriers, which have not been adequately addressed in the research literature (Brown, 2017).

Due to the exclusionary bias in management and leadership research on Black male leaders' successful career experiences, several seminal theories were developed the most and taught in business schools nationwide without using any samples of Black people and include the following:

- Hersey's (2004) perception that leadership is in the eye of the beholder, and it is not how people see themselves that matters, but how they come across to others they are attempting to influence,
- Van Fleet and Griffin's (2006) dysfunctional leaders that display behaviors that are intended to inflict pain, discomfort, anguish, aggression, and dishonesty,
- Oakley and Krug (1991) enlightened leadership and things such as including all members of the team on decisions, quality services, profitability, productivity, and direction of projects,
- Greenleaf's (2012) servant leadership theory posits that service to the followers is the primary concern of the leader,
- Bass and Riggio's (2010) four core components of transformational leadership: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration.

Being mindful that, as Badura et al. (2020) state, motivated individuals work harder and longer to achieve and maintain leadership roles and responsibilities, scholars

call for more theoretical work on investigating Black men's MTL across industry sectors. For management and leadership, scholars to continue this exclusionary bias against Black leaders in research can only add further disparities between black and white individuals in high-ranking corporate positions (Kelley, 2019; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020).

### **Black Men and Corporate Leadership in the United States: The Recent History**

Corporations have a long history of operating as racialized social systems that contribute to racial divisions and inequities in the workplace (Sisco, (2020). Two decades of public and private labor statistics reports and research studies document that Black employees are often challenged by systemic racism in organizations, contributing to depression, anxiety, and professional and social exclusion at work (Burt et al., 2018). The dearth of relevant research data about African American men in corporate leadership exposes a gap in the research and a complete lack of understanding of what positive and negative motivational factors African American men experience as they pursue organizational decision-makers opportunities (Sisco, 2020). The tremendous gap in the management literature reveals sparse information that explains what motivates African American men to become executive leaders, their MTL, and how they might persevere through social and professional exclusion while pursuing leadership positions (see Burt et al., 2020).

According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission National Aggregate Report (2008), of the 872,386 organizational decision makers' level officials & managers, 14,608 were African American men, a 1.67% representation. Additionally, according to Alliance for Board Diversity's (2012) census report, seats held by white men

on corporate 100 boards increased by 34 between 2004 and 2010, while board seats held by African American men declined by 42 in that same period. Furthermore, the Alliance for Board Diversity's report indicates that of the 1,214 available board seats of Fortune 100 companies in 2012, white men held 835 (67.9%), and African American men held 88 (7.0%) (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008).

In the same report, the differences in fortune 500 companies are just as stark, in that, of the 5,488 available board seats, white men held 4,020 (73.3%), and African American men held 310 (5.7%) (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2008). Ironically, Board of Directors' positions, usually 10 or 12 per board, do not make implementation decisions regarding executive-level leaders. In actuality, US corporations are more willing to have African American Board members serving as advisors (7.0%) than having African American executives make decisions and take actions (1.67%).

In 2011 African Americans made up 11.6% of the US labor force representing approximately 18 million individuals either working or seeking employment; of that number, 46.2% were African American men. Of the 8,316,000 million African American men in the workforce, African American men's minuscule number of board seats is abysmal. Based on the numbers alone, one would be hard-pressed to accept the notion that African American men are in the current pipeline for advancement into executive leadership positions (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).

Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, scholars address the new racism, as espoused by Martinez (2014); even though the civil rights movement of 1964 was considered the legislation that ended racism, the institutional, systemic racism, and

inequities are fundamental to people of color in the United States today (Vasquez Heilig et al., 2012). Indicated by the small number of leadership positions occupied by African American men in organizations, systemic racism and inequalities remain evident more than 66 years after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v Board of Education*, which was to bring to an end the covert separate but equal racist policies against African Americans ability to participate in the American dream fully. Today's effects of systemic racism are alive and bear fruit in the hiring practices at many private and public organizations. Even so, more than a decade ago, it appeared an overwhelming challenge to hope that African American men may seek and maintain leadership positions in the face of long-embedded systemic racism in the upper echelons of America's corporate world (see Brown, 2017, p. 50).

In 2015 the United States' population was 30.6% White men and 7% Black men. White men accounted for 46.72% of middle-level management and 61.83% of senior management positions, and Black men accounted for just 3.64% of middle-level management and less than 2% of all senior management positions (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Given that individuals with diverse backgrounds often face workplace discrimination, it is crucial to understand better the data collected by the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC) related to Black men (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2017).

### **Research on Black Men and Corporate Leadership in the United States: 2018–2021**

Even though corporations have maintained a history of operating as racialized social systems that contribute to racial divisions and inequities in the workplace, high-

achieving Black men have overcome limitations and unfavorable circumstances (Sisco, 2020). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) collected statistics on management-level roles, revealing a double-digit percentage disparity between Black and White people in management and professional level positions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Creary's (2020) article reviews the relationship between American Black employees and their employing organizations. The research highlights the inadequacies associated with fairness and opportunities for Blacks.

Wingfield and Chavez (2020) studied organizational structure and perceptions of blacks regarding racial discrimination. Their study was concerning perceptions of race discrimination among black workers in the health care industry. They found that the nature and type of discrimination depended on the organization structure's Black employees' position. They also developed racialized organizations theories by identifying how internal mechanisms explain why position in the organizational hierarchy leads to varying perceptions of discrimination. Guynn and Schrottenboer (2021) state that a USA TODAY analysis shows that African Americans have been added as employees and to board positions but not to the executive suites.

Guynn and Schrottenboer (2021) were concerned about the abysmally small number of black executives at the top of the nation's largest organizations. Guynn and Schrottenboer (2021) found that while the top American corporations did not mirror the country they serve, whereas of the 279 top executives spots, only five, or 1.8%, were Black. This research is essential to racial diversity and how major organizations' actions

do not match their words regarding placing, promoting, and hiring Black people and Black men, particularly into executive positions (see Creary, 2020).

Black men face unique characteristics and barriers contributing to middle and senior management positions (Burt et al., 2018). Changes associated with systemic racism and corporate movements to change and support Black employees are starting at a more rapid pace than in the recent past yet, the need for more change continues (Creary (2020). A new wave of research measures how predominantly White organizations can become a better ally to black employees. Corporate efforts in the era of a heightened call for diversity and inclusion initiatives also support the organizational efforts of Black employees in reducing organizational racism and supporting long-term collegial relationships (Sisco, 2020).

Ramasubramanian et al.'s (2021) article reviewed research within media stereotyping related to positive stereotypes, counter-stereotypes, and prejudice reduction. The authors review historical and contemporary representations of these stereotypes and the adverse effects. The authors examined tokenization within minority groups and note that others evaluate racial minorities who chose to speak up when confronted with a positive stereotype as less favorable. Emerging research in this area moves toward more practical solutions and action-oriented research that can provide insights into reducing the harmful effects of both positive and negative stereotypes (Collins et al., 2017; Wingfield & Wingfield, 2014).

In the Coqual Report (2019), *Being Black in Corporate America*, the research found that Black professionals face bias and disproportionate barriers to success and



advancement despite higher levels of ambition. On average, 58 percent of Black professionals in the U.S. experience racial prejudice at work, and in some regions, it is far worse (79 percent of Black professionals in the Midwest, for example). Black professionals are 30 percent less likely than their white counterparts to access senior leaders at work. Nearly one-third say their colleagues underestimate their intelligence. Nearly one in five feel that someone of their race or ethnicity would never achieve a C-Suite or CEO role at their company. (Coqual, 2019).

Systemic racism includes microaggressions or daily exchanges that undermine people of color because they belong to a racial minority group (Torres-Harding, & Turner, 2015). A typical example of such microaggressions may include referring to a Black team member as a "diversity hire," a term equitable to "underqualified," or a "necessary hire to appease government policy and standards" (see Creary, 2020). The Coqual (2019) report uncovered evidence that Black professionals are more ambitious than their White counterparts to aspire to the top positions within their organizations and yet are denied access at a higher rate.

Posner (2020) studied the causes of economic inequality and ways to combat it, in addition to understanding the lack of and the need for C-Suites to have more black voices. Social interaction is paramount in work roles, and it has been found, as Vroom (1995) stated, that organizations add social components to performance reviews to elevate social to high status in worker roles. Motivation based on social satisfaction may be as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, in that "one person may derive satisfaction from one type of outcome whereas a second may derive satisfaction from a very different

kind of outcome" (Vroom, p. 48). Social status in many situations is a part of an individual's work status, such as a professional sports figure, a CEO, or a physical laborer. Thus, members of "high-status occupations" are afforded to defer freedoms that those of "lower status occupations" (Vroom, p. 48).

Posner's (2020) study shines a light on the long-held status quo of not allowing more than 3.3 % of Black people into executive and senior-level positions of leadership of fortune 500 companies when Black Americans make up at least 13% of the population. On the influence of social environment in leadership, Vroom stated in his seminal writings, "if the father is a slave, the son becomes a slave; if the father was a carpenter, the son becomes a carpenter" (p. 57). A company's successes and failures in promoting diversity and inclusion at all levels are needed, as Miner (2005) stated, so everyone before entering the labor market decides on the type of work they prefer; the limitation is that not everyone knows the many choices available. The Black man's decision to aim for the C-Suite on his or her environmental introduction to the types of work available in the workforce and today's significant data exposure supporting this process (Posner, 2020).

### **Challenges of Airport Management for the CEO**

Airports are economic activity centers with a wide range of job levels requiring varying skill sets depending on an individual's career path (Krop et al., 2020). Diverse hiring practices indicate that an airport successfully generates revenue and benefits the community in employment opportunities and income generation (Graham, 2018).

However, inclusive hiring and diversity practices based on the race or ethnicity of the

employees and associated with commercial airports must follow best practices as set out by the law; this may not always be the case (Krop et al., 2020).

Airport management is the safe and efficient movement of people and cargo (Graham, 2018). Wells (2007) states that for large U.S. primary commercial service airports, the responsibility to manage an airport is carried out through a person in the position of airport executive director and is responsible for the following: revenue generation, expense reduction, supervision, and coordination with airlines, general aviation, and military; reviews airport tenant activities for compliance; enforcement of aircraft and ground traffic regulations; confer with airlines, tenants and FAA regarding airport regulations; participate in planning for increased aircraft and passenger facility expansion; determines and recommends airport staffing requirements; compiles and submits for reviewing an annual airport budget; coordinate airport activities, construction, maintenance, and other work performed by staff and contractors; promotes acceptance of airport oriented activities in the surrounding communities; and other duties as assigned, to mention a few. The airport manager accomplishes these and other duties with the assistance of HR management tools, innovative technology, airport management systems tools, elected officials, airline management, community members, media, FAA regulatory advisories and mandates, and subordinate airport staffing (Graham, 2018; Wells, 2007).

As described by Classen et al. (2017), airport management is the interface between ground transportation and air transportation. From a differing perspective, Graham (2018) suggests that airport management philosophies had changed from publicly owned utility to commercialized private and, in some cases, a partnership

between public and privately-owned airports. Like Graham (2018), Jimenez et al. (2014) report that airport management is transitioning from utility providers to commercial enterprises consisting of multi-faceted players that interconnect with passengers, airports, airlines, and other stakeholders.

Reduced control over airline movement and operation at airports has begun to usher in irreversible changes. Graham (2018) suggested that challenges could be a future demand of ground and air space capacity, airline industry structure, space travel, autonomous aircraft, and technological innovations. According to Graham (2018), environmental pressures will reduce airport capacity expansion while casting flying into a negative light and socially unacceptable. The continuation of airport privatization will be a challenge and public spending on airports, along with a possible drive to discontinue state funding and control airports.

According to Graham (2018), the one size fits all approach to airport management will be a thing of the past, giving way to a hybrid strategy of low-cost carriers and public-private partnerships with airports. However, Classen et al.'s (2017) approach to the challenges for the future includes a complete connection between the passenger/airport/airline perspective. Classen et al. (2017) suggest that the connection between the passenger, ground, and air transportation, referred to as passenger trajectory, is paramount for the future success of airport management and on-demand door-to-door passenger travel service along with the management concepts of modern airport management.

The challenges leaders face in airport management in today's competitive environment are many and continue to be flushed out and presented in numerous think tanks and study sessions by various stakeholders (Graham, 2018), yet envisaged. Jimenez et al. (2014) liberalization of airports also favored ownership changes towards privatization or commercialization, contributing to increased competition between airports. Jimenez et al. (2014) posited that a new paradigm for airport management focuses on revenue generation, cost-cutting, retaining existing airlines, and acquiring new airlines with competitive routes. However, the future is expected to be competitive for airport management with new issues such as slot demand, airline structure, automated and drone aircraft, and land use by airports (Halpern, 2018).

Some of the many factors presenting challenges to airport management/CEO, as identified by Jimenez et al. (2014), are airport cost; destination attractiveness; access to low fares; intermodal integration; availability of slots; infrastructure planning; and aeronautical and non-aeronautical revenue. Although challenges may be substantial, Graham (2018) may have said it best for the airport management industry; the one size fits all approach to airport management will be a thing of the past. Classen et al.'s (2017) thoughts on the types of challenges for airport management revolved around data collection in understanding involving passenger connections with the airport and forecasting functionality of passenger trajectory and total airport management data concepts to serve best the airport traveling public. Competitive economic and labor forces drive airports' products and services, and airport leaders should be developing strategies that enable them to gain competitive advantages. However, it should also be noted that

many regulatory and governance structures control or influence airport decision-making and subsequently limit the strategic options available to many airports (Classen et al., 2017).

One issue not covered in scholarly literature is stakeholders' and stakeholder engagement in airport strategic management such as internal stakeholders, such as upper-level managers or CEOs, employees, and external stakeholders, such as local communities, government, interest groups, and business partners (see Halpern, 2018). Given the broader impacts of airports on the environment, regional economic development) Moreover, potentially conflicting stakeholders' expectations, management, and leadership studies would appear to be an essential but challenging issue for airport strategic management research (Stevenson et al., 2020). In a 2021 report by the *National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*, airport leadership has now been given airport leadership at the national level to develop strategies focused on the organization's culture and talent development by examining diversity and inclusion policies within the airport management sector. Scholars advocate diversity among stakeholders regarding the airport sector's leadership development strategy, yet more research and empirical evidence are needed on the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion strategies on airport leadership (Krop et al., 2020).

### **Diversity Issues in Aviation and Airport Management**

Diversity within the workplace has been connected to team member satisfaction and creating a more robust bottom line (Mor Barak et al., 2021). A more diverse workforce in all stratifications of airport employment will lead airports to more

significant support for workforce and contracting diversity initiatives. With colleagues and supervisors are representing workplaces that value inclusivity and openness can also result in a more satisfying team member experience (Krop et al., 2020).

Producing diversity research in leadership that matters for social change is particularly pressing given the emerging awareness that firms play a crucial role in (re)producing inequality across societies and structuring this inequality along with social identities (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021). Furthermore, investing in a diverse workforce that works to eliminate discrimination will help airports reduce turnover, improve stability, and reduce short-and long-term costs (see Filbeck et al., 2017). In contrast, work environments that do not foster inclusivity are more likely to result in higher turnover due to decreased job satisfaction. In addition, a more diverse work environment can drive staff to discuss creating a culture of inclusivity (see Mor Barak et al., 2021).

A diverse airport staff starting with the top leadership positions can bring a fresh perspective and innovative ideas and approaches (Krop et al., 2020). More innovation can increase project productivity and efficiency, lower contract costs, lead to innovative products and ensure successful work (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021). In addition, maximizing diversity at an airport, through the contracting or employment of a more demographically representative population, including at the CEO level, can increase productivity and lead to economic benefits for the airport (Kelleher, 2020).

The airport management sector lacks diversity and inclusive hiring practices (Dolan et al., 2020) in its leadership positions, even though many U.S. airports are obligated to do so under state and local laws (Kelleher, 2020). Tamir (2021) studied the

diversity of the black population of the United States and found through reviewing 2020 census data and a PEW Research Center report that demographic changes in racial identity, economics, income, and education had occurred. The study found that 10.6 million more people identified as black, from 36.2 million reporting in 2000 to 46.8 million people in 2019.

Tamir (2021) also found that the median age of Black people is 35, the South is home to 53% of the black people living in the U.S., and that 6.7 million (23%) of the black population over 25 had acquired at a minimum a bachelor's degree in 2019. Since business and management scholars began to address Black representation in the corporate world since the 1990s, Blacks in airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). Kelleher (2020) demonstrates the lack of effort by airlines to hire Black men into executive leadership positions. Kelleher (2020) studied the 59 commercial airlines that make up the airline industry of the United States, seeking diversity numbers. In another survey, Kelleher (2020) found an abundance of White men at the executive leadership level and on the board of U.S. commercial airlines and just a few Black men.

In one of the rare studies conducted on Black people in the aviation industry, Harl and Roberts (2011) studied the underrepresentation of Black people in this sector industry inclusive of airline/air transportation, military, and general/business aviation and focusing on the experiences of currently employed aviation maintenance techs, pilots, flight attendants, dispatchers, and management personnel with two to five years of experience. The researchers' found Blacks were motivated to join the rank of aviation working and,



contrary to some beliefs, had not had a lack of interest in aviation. The opposite is true in that the industry had closed the door of opportunity and not shown an interest in Black people, an assumption supported by Stevenson et al. (2020). The single case study focused on 35 individuals. The researchers could not find the literature of previous studies on the subject in question, leaving a gap in the research. Researchers also found that changes are needed, and business aviation needs to define itself to understand how that definition limits its ability to attract and retain minorities (see Harl & Roberts, 2011, p.18).

Stevenson et al. (2020) conducted a study to identify blacks employed in the aviation industry between 2009 and 2018. Their study made a comparison of five specialized professional aviation occupations from 2009 to 2018: aircraft pilot and flight engineer; air traffic controller and airfield operations specialist; aerospace engineer; avionics technician; and aircraft mechanic and service technician and showed that virtually no progress had been made through diversity in the aviation industry occupations since the 1950s.

A team of researchers at the FAA led by Krop (2020) developed guidelines to assist airport decision-makers and stakeholders in developing a cost-benefit analysis of diversity contracting for airport businesses. The researchers used twelve case studies to develop a foundation for developing the cost-benefit of conducting business as diverse entities and telling the story of workforce diversity and the economic benefit to aviation and surrounding communities. Krop et al. (2020) found that possession of the fact provides the ability to tell the story of benefits and economic impact to the airport and the

surrounding communities. In their study, Black people are motivated and aspiring to be a part of the business aviation industry and seek entry into the industry sector (Stevenson et al., 2020).

### **Black Men's Successful Work Experiences and the MTL**

Collins et al. (2017) investigated how leadership capacity differed between participants of a leadership development session targeted towards three different Black and racially and gender diverse groups. Collins et al. (2017) used Chan and Drasgow's (2001) 27 items of measurement to understand the participant MTL. The study consisted of three sample groups of Black men, n=46, n=47, and a sample of racially diverse men (n=148). The study by Collins et al. (2017) found that Black males that attended sessions made gains compared to other groups. However, the MTL continues to be a concept that needs further explorations on how Black men lead in the face of social and professional exclusion in the corporate world (Burt et al., 2020).

Fries-Britt's (2018) study examines the experiences of high achieving Black Males studying in STEM fields to understand their motivation to persist and succeed. The author uses an existing database of research that outlines the experiences of high achieving Black and underrepresented collegians majoring in STEM fields for several years. In addition, the database contained independent studies consisting of several small focus group interviews. Fries-Britt (2018) revealed the difficulty in finding literature of high-achieving Black men and found that the low number of Blacks who manage to graduate from STEM results in few Black STEM scientists and leaders. Furthermore,

Black employees are less likely to be granted leadership roles, despite acquiring educational credentials and training equivalent to their White peers (see Creary, 2020).

Sisco (2020) studied that corporations have maintained a history of operating as racialized social systems that contribute to racial divisions and inequities in the workplace. Despite this reality, high-achieving Black men and women have overcome limitations and unfavorable circumstances persistently faced. Sisco (2020) studied resilience to racial bias in corporate America through the lived experience of Black professionals using a phenomenological research method. The study identified how Black professionals continue to navigate racial bias in the workplace due to embedded systems of systemic racism (Hudson et al., 2020).

Burt et al. (2020) studied the sources of motivations of Black Men in predominantly white institution engineering graduate programs to determine what influences them to persist, despite the challenges associated with their race. The authors studied 42 students using adapted grounded theory techniques, conducted multiple analysis iterations to explore the motivation factors, and categorized results into themes. As a result, a new theory of Black Men's Graduate Motivation was developed. The theory explains the factors that influence Black Men's experiences and motivations to persist regardless of circumstances. Burt et al. (2020) further applied their results to explore the motivations to persist for understanding how a Black man can persist in navigating professional relationships.

## **Literature Gap**

Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader, but only in demographic groups predominately White European in ethnicity (Auvinen et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). There is a literature gap on how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (see Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020). Wiebold and Spiller (2017) studied black men living and working in mainstream society from a sociological perspective. Their study focused on 25 Black men living and working in the mainstream but not considered middle class and yet have achieved mainstream success. Their study found that men account for success from the personal choices in line with the personal motivation to succeed. Lately, studies reinforce that Black men in all phases of the work hierarchy that are motivated to succeed even in the face of racism and other barriers to success placed in their path, and through their motivation mindset, they will find success (e.g., Burt et al., 2020; Fries-Britt, 2018; Goldsmith, 2020)

## **Summary and Conclusions**

Race has been and continues to be an issue in the aviation community and, often, a disqualifying characteristic for employment opportunities in aviation/airport leadership positions (Kelleher, 2020). A review of data from multiple studies shows that Black men's MTL across industry sectors tends to be overlooked, thus creating further disparities between black and white individuals in high-ranking corporate positions (Kelley, 2019; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). Since 1990, business and management scholars have begun to address Black representation in the corporate world Blacks in

airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020).

Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career trajectory as a leader, but only in demographic groups predominately White European ethnicity (Auvinen et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). The gap in the literature is most evident in how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (see Collins et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020). Sparse research has been conducted on Black men's successful leadership experiences across industry sectors (Fries-Britt, 2018; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). There is only one outdated study regarding Black men working in the airport management sector (Harl & Roberts, 2011). Addressing this literature gap through future empirical studies is significant to theory by extending scholarly knowledge on Black men's MTL in the airport management sector (Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020).

In Chapter 3, the research method for this qualitative, transcendental phenomenology study. The sampling rationale, procedures used for recruitment followed by the data collection method were also detailed in the chapter. Finally, the logic for the study and methodological support for the data analysis was provided, along with aspects of trustworthiness of data and ethical research procedures.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. The airport management sector lacks diversity and inclusive hiring practices (Dolan et al., 2020) in its leadership positions, even though many U.S. airports are obligated to do so under state and local laws (Kelleher, 2020). A need exists for more scholarly research on the lived experiences of Black people (Ross, 2020), and there is a literature gap on how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (Collins et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020). More empirical research is needed on Black men's MTL in the airport management sector and its interface with their experiences as corporate leaders (Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020).

I chose the transcendental phenomenological design, as suggested by Moustakas (1994), because it provided a form of inquiry that facilitates the discovery of participants' lived experiences. This chapter provides information on the research method and rationale for conducting a transcendental phenomenological study and the research question guiding this empirical investigation. I present the participant selection strategy, data collection strategies, data analysis, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and a summary of the research method.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

Determining the appropriate methodology for this study was driven by the purpose of the study and the research question. Qualitative research focuses on comprehending how people interpret their lived experiences, how they construct those

experiences, and how they define their experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to present in narrative form a group's lived experiences in their day-to-day lives and the meaning of those experiences from the perspectives of those involved (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This methodology provided the qualitative data needed to answer the research question of the current study: How do Black men describe their lived experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector?

Quantitative methods were inappropriate for this study because quantitative research designs are used to examine relationships, test theories, standardize reporting, and collect quantifiable data (see Harkiolakis, 2017). A mixed-methods approach was not appropriate because quantitative data were not suitable to answer the research question (see Bryman, 2017). The qualitative method was appropriate to study Black men's leadership experiences in the airport management sector. I used a transcendental phenomenological design and focused on understanding, describing, and elucidating the meaning of human experience (see Moustakas, 1994).

Several qualitative designs were available for this study, such as narrative, ethnography, and case study. According to Yin (2017), case study research is one of the most challenging forms of social research endeavors, which aims to answer how or why questions related to a phenomenon. Ethnography involves observing cultural groups and collecting data from targeted environments; case studies are conducted to explain an organization; a grounded theory design is used to identify themes and develop theories and narratives to present the phenomena from storytelling relevant to the participant (Tracy, 2019). I chose transcendental phenomenology for the current study because this

design allowed me to focus on the essence of the participants' lived experiences (see Moustakas, 1994), in this case being Black men who had reached leadership status within the primary commercial service airport management. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) wrote on the shift away from the positivist philosophy of the past half-century to a philosophical line of thought closer to humanities, the phenomenological logical description of consciousness, and the dialectical situation of human activity in social and historical contexts.

The transcendental phenomenological model of Moustakas (1994) was used as the qualitative design for the current study to discover each participant's voice, perceptions, and lived experiences. The transcendental phenomenological design aligned with this study's framework. I discovered Black men's experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. The transcendental phenomenological design aligned with research strategies followed by scholars of similar studies. Smith (2021) conducted a phenomenological study on how the racial identities and lived experiences of Black male K–12 public and independent school leaders inform their professional lives and leadership. Tedder and Smith (2018) used the phenomenological design to understand the experiences of five male and one female Black American clergy leaders regarding intimate partner violence against women. Sisco (2020) chose a phenomenological design to study resilience to racial bias in corporate America is through the lived experience of Black professionals.

Applying transcendental phenomenology was appropriate for this qualitative study because the focus was on individuals' consciousness of an experience and gathering



information subjectively related to the essence of participants' lived experiences (see Moustakas, 1994). The central focus of this qualitative transcendental phenomenology study was to discover the essence of the meanings at the center of a phenomenon as experienced by the study's participants (see Creely, 2016). As the researcher, it was my responsibility to determine the underlying structures of experience by interpreting the experience based on the participants' accounts of the phenomenon (see van Manen, 2017). Through phenomenological research methodology, I endeavored to describe, understand, and interpret the meanings of lived experiences of Black male leaders through rich data on the experiences of the study participants (see Moran, 2019).

During this study, I applied the epoche process to track my judgment, biases, preconceived ideas, concepts, and past experiences as much as possible to focus on the lived experiences of the research participants (see Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) stated that during the process of knowledge attainment, releasing predisposition and prejudices through the epoche process and bracketing allows for seeing things as new and not being coerced by "voices of the past that tell us the way things are or voices of the present that direct our thinking ... to see things for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Bracketing my interpretations and assumptions allowed me to present the phenomenon for what it meant to the participants (see Finlay, 2012).

### **Role of the Researcher**

In selecting the transcendental phenomenological design, I was to be the research instrument and gatekeeper to facilitate the smooth and orderly completion of the study. While working for over 30 years as an executive leader in several public organizations, I

noticed in companies and organizations I encountered the small number of African American men in leadership positions. There were more African American women in management positions than African American men. The lack of African American men led to my questioning the motivation that enabled the few men in leadership positions to persevere in an environment in which their numbers were virtually nonexistent, yet they were successful when provided with opportunities. I wondered whether African American male leaders in other organizations experienced the same feelings, thoughts, and concerns, leading to the noema and noesis (what and how) interview questions.

In remaining faithful to Husserl's concept of the freedom of supposition, Moustakas (1994) stated that during the process of knowledge attainment, releasing predisposition and prejudices allows for seeing things as if new and not being coerced by "voices of the past that tell us the way things are or voices of the present that direct our thinking ... to see things for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). I employed the epoche/bracketing process to create an atmosphere and rapport for conducting the interviews and listening to the participants' lived experiences unencumbered by my past experiences and influences to nourish the free flow of rich information about participants' lived experience (see Finlay, 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

### **Methodology**

Methodology in a study refers to the steps that need to be taken to conduct the research (Maxwell, 2012). Methodology for qualitative research includes procedures used to explore experiences involving phenomena by examining in-depth discussions and conversations between the researcher and the participant rather than verifying or

disproving hypotheses and theories (van Manen, 2016). In this section, I outline the participant selection logic; instrumentation for the study; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and the data analysis plan.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. Data were collected using a purposeful sample of nine information-rich participants for an in-depth study until data saturation was achieved. Qualitative methodologists noted that no more than 15 participants may be used to reach thematic saturation for a qualitative study and that extended interviews with 10–20 people tend to be sufficient for a phenomenological dissertation study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mason, 2010; Moustakas, 1994). Thematic saturation is achieved when themes are repeated and no new themes emerge from the interview data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

### **Population**

The current study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's MTL in the airport management sector in the United States. Airport leadership is one workspace in the United States in which African American men are rarely seen in C-Suite management positions (Kelleher, 2020). In 2020, the DOT/FAA published its Administrator's Fact Book, which indicated that there are 19,787 U.S. airports, and 519 serve commercial flights. Of the 519 U.S. primary commercial service airports, fewer than 10 (0.026%) are led by African American men, falling below national trends. This

small group of African American men in airport leadership in the United States constituted my study population.

### **Sampling Criteria**

Identifying a sample population, detailing the specific population, and applying the relevant methodology are imperative to research integrity in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Participants for the current transcendental phenomenological study were recruited using purposeful, criterion, and network sampling strategies and were screened with the following inclusion criteria: adult Black men over the age of 18, work experience in an executive leadership position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport, 5 years minimum experience in upper management/executive leadership, and the willingness to discuss his leadership experiences. After selecting three participants for the study, I applied the network and snowball technique associated with purposive sampling by asking the selected candidates for recommendations of potential participants who met the qualifying criteria (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Network and snowball sampling is the most popular method for identifying research participants in purposive sampling and is administered by requesting a small group of current participants to refer others they know who may meet the sample criteria (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The network and snowball technique was applied in the current study because it increased the likelihood of identifying a hidden sample population that I was not unaware of, specifically Black men over the age of 18 with 5 years minimum experience in an executive leadership position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport. Identifying these criterion-matched participants from the

study's population was difficult using sampling techniques that did not necessitate expert knowledge to reach the target participant group (see Jorgensen & Brown-Rice, 2018).

### **Sampling Strategy**

Qualitative studies, in general, have smaller sample sizes than quantitative studies focusing on exhaustive descriptions from each participant (Tracy, 2019). In qualitative studies, the trustworthiness of data is not assessed by the number of participants but rather by the rich, in-depth information about the phenomenon provided by the individual participants (Harkiolakis, 2017). Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007) identified typical sample sizes for phenomenological studies ranging from 1 to 10 people. A study's conceptual framework is adequately represented by the data collected. Schram (2006) recommended that researchers have between five and 10 participants for a qualitative study because a larger sample size can lead to weaker research results. To meet the Walden dissertation standards for sample size, I conducted nine online semistructured interviews with participants meeting the study's inclusion criteria. The final sample size was determined by data saturation within the interview data (see Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

I recruited participants for this study via the social media site LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the number one social media site for fostering professional and business connections (Gray et al., 2020). Request for participation in this study was sent via sharing channels and direct messages on LinkedIn and through contacts within my professional network. LinkedIn is an effective means of recruiting professionals for a study and can provide a

natural network and snowball effect to identify participants meeting the study's inclusion criteria (Stokes et al., 2019).

### **Instrumentation**

In this study, the instrument of choice was Kvale's and Brinkmann's (2009) metaphor of the traveler asking participants questions that lead to telling their lived experience through interviews. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) recommended that the most efficient methodological instrument for qualitative research is the one-on-one interview. A phenomenological study's instrumentation must be aligned with the purpose to report lived experiences while limiting the researcher's judgments and assumptions (Moustakas, 1994). By bracketing my knowledge and experience, I minimized my influence on the data collection process throughout the research process. Individual face-to-face interviews in qualitative research are pivotal in building rapport and gaining rich and in-depth information and variable opinions compared to a group interview, in which one's opinion may be changed by the answers of others and result in similar responses (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

The goal of phenomenological research is to explore the array of meanings within a sample group as a group, not the sole meaning of each individual within the group (Akerlind, 2012). The foundation of transcendental phenomenology is that explaining the phenomena "should be connected to the meaning structure of real people" (Aspers, 2009, p. 5). The transcendental phenomenological design was considered when choosing an interview protocol to understand Black men's lived experiences in the airport management sector with the MTL. When using the phenomenological approach during

the interviews, I aimed to understand the nature or significance of everyday experiences (see Zahavi, 2018).

A semi-structured interview is a technique for generating qualitative data characterized by open-ended questions developed in advance and prepared probes (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). In the semi-structured interview, I had a set of questions on an interview schedule, and the interview was *guided* by the schedule rather than dictated by it; I probed interesting areas that arose from participants' lived experiences. Probes were included within the interview schedule, ensuring that broad coverage of issues was achieved during the semi-structured interview, and the participants were allowed to express themselves freely (see Moustakas, 1994).

The instrument I used was an adapted version of a semi-structured, piloted interview protocol adapted from the research work of Dr. Thomas Ulrich, faculty and scholar at Biola University in California, USA, who studied leadership and the MTL among engineers. Two questions (#3 and #7) were adapted to address MTL issues in Black men as corporate leaders rather than engineers in the interview protocol. In a seminal study conducted in the United States, Ulrich (2017) developed a qualitative, phenomenological study of six engineering managers promoted into management roles at a medical device manufacturer in Southern California within the past two years. Ulrich's (2017) inspiration for his study came from his time at Regent University, where he noticed that the research stream on MTL was primarily composed of quantitative studies (e.g., Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Rosch et al., 2014; Stiehl et al., 2015) with few qualitative articles.

Ulrich (2017) followed Patton's (2015) observation that qualitative inquiry can still be used later in the process "to add depth and detail to statistical findings" (p. 230) by way of a qualitative (phenomenological) inquiry into MTL. Ulrich (2017) piloted and standardized the interview protocol grounded in the scholarly literature related to the MTL and is published in an open-access document within the *Proceedings of the American Society for Engineering Management*. Being found within an open-access document, the interview protocol did not require permission for use in future research as long as the original author is cited.

I kept a reflective journal and recorded all pertinent information, participant observations, and situations (see Aspers, 2009) emerging from Black men's narratives of their lived experiences in the airport management sector and their MTL. The interview protocol (Appendix B) provided a solid basis to pursue an area of interest guided by these questions while still allowing the participants to introduce issues I had not previously identified. All the measures I adopted in the data collection and analysis process, including bracketing, ensured that the findings were conveyed as close to what the participants agreed to be the meaning they assigned to their lived experiences in airport management. I used data source triangulation to corroborate evidence, bracketing to clarify bias, and member checking (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). Once interviews were completed and transcribed, a copy of the summary was emailed to the participant for validation, and a copy was secured for possible replication, as Moustakas (1994) suggests, for additional validation.



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

Black men serving as corporate leaders in the US airport management sector and meeting the study's inclusion criteria were purposively selected via the criteria, network, and snowball sampling strategy (see Tracy, 2019). I requested recommendations of qualified participants from the first two selected participants. I continued this process until I had interviewed a small sample sized according to qualitative methodological guidelines until the data saturation had been met. The preliminary assessment of African American men in airport management was reviewed through their LinkedIn profile and any other professional information posted on open-access websites. A review of participants' professional websites provided supplementary rich data that contributed additional context to their lived experiences. An analysis of participants' online artifacts sets a context for the researcher to define the participants' professional identities as has been used in a prior phenomenological research study, providing a comprehensive narrative experience and positioning the researcher as an "immersed observer" (see Van Vooren, 2020; Wodarczyk, 2019).

The interviews were conducted in an open atmosphere that allowed for a sequence of themes such as motivation, leadership, and barriers to be covered and flexible enough to allow for follow-up questions for clarity during the interview process. The structure of the interview questions was to draw out the lived experience, knowledge, and perceptions of the participants. The interviews lasted an average of 55 minutes. Extra time was allotted for the interview when needed for follow-up questions. During the interviews, I

engaged in the epoche process to bracket my own bias, prejudice, and preconceived ideas to explore the phenomenon with a fresh and clear perspective (see Moustakas, 1994).

Interviews were planned with the participant's schedules in mind. I scheduled one to two interviews a day throughout four weeks, allowing the scheduling of interviews on a weekend if needed. I ensured data from interviews were recorded on two recording devices and captured the interview on Zoom and MS Team, based on each participant's operational preference and IT requirements. The interviews took place at the selected location of the participant's choosing, which was at their work location, home, or a location they found suitable (see Gray et al., 2020). Telephone communication was also available to maximize participant availability and address technical issues. Interviews were recorded using two audio recording devices to assist in data recall, transcription, and data analysis (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

One participant's interview process did not move forward until the informed consent form was read and attested to via email response. Demographic information and interview protocol was emailed to the participants, and a follow-up phone call and an email requesting a time and date of interview were made following the return of the participant's consent. Interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended in design to gather the essence of a participant's lived experiences of the phenomenon of how the MTL is experienced by Black men within the airport management sector.

While the participants were being interviewed, the data organization and analysis process continued until data saturation was reached. Data saturation occurred "when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties

of the researcher's core theoretical categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113). Saturation levels also were reached when every interview question had been exhausted to where the participants began to give the same answers, and the emergence of the same themes occurred (Tracy, 2019). I had in place member checking, a procedure to verify from participants their interview responses. Each participant was presented with a verbatim transcription of their respective interviews for member checking within three days of the interview. Participants were requested to respond with any comments within 48 hours of receiving their transcript or request any changes to the transcript (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The interview is a conversation between people. This researcher conducted a "semi-structured life world interview" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As defined by Kvale and Brinkmann, "an interview whose purpose is to obtain a description of the life world of the interviewee on interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena." I followed Moustakas' (1994) guidance to commence interviews by initiating a casual social conversation to create a relaxed and trusting atmosphere for each participant's interview. The interview followed Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological process for data collection: initiate 1) the epoche process to develop rapport and create a comfortable environment for carrying out the interview; 2) bracket the interview question; and 3) proceed with the qualitative interview questions to gather rich, thick descriptions of the phenomenon under study.

## **Data Analysis Plan**

The data analysis process in transcendental phenomenological studies requires the researcher to synthesize and summarize textual and descriptive data obtained during the data collection process to apply meaning to the phenomenon to be conveyed to others (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). By using transcendental phenomenology as a research design, the phenomenon of the study is investigated through the meaning of lived experiences as perceived and described by the participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Moustakas, 1994). In order to develop descriptive themes related to the essence and meaning of participants' lived experiences, Moustakas' (1994) modified Van Kaam data analysis was applied in this transcendental phenomenological study to provide meaning to Black men's lived experiences in the airport management sector. Coding was conducted manually without the use of electronic software. Manual hand-coding allowed the researcher to navigate the often complex and distinctive elements of analyzing data while maintaining control and ownership of the data analysis process (Saldana, 2016).

According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenological data analysis follows a systematic and rigorous procedure. Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method of analyzing phenomenological data consists of seven steps, with each one being used in the data analysis process: horizontalization, reduction and elimination, clustering and thematizing, validation, individual textual description, and textural-structural description (Moustakas, 1994). Interviews were transcribed, and responses from each participant's transcripts were analyzed by reducing the information to statements and quotes that are significant, combining the statements into themes, and writing a textual

description of the participant's experiences. The participants' experiences in which they lived the phenomenon were grouped into structural descriptions combined with a statement of textural descriptions to convey the essence of the experience provided (see Moustakas, 1994).

Since the purpose of the research was to understand Black men's lived experiences in the airport management sector, understanding the meaning and essence of the experience is critically important. The modified Van Kaam data analysis method was used extensively in previous phenomenological studies to identify themes, relationships, and connections between participants' experiences (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011). Discrepant cases that do not align with existing analytical findings were grouped under the heading of alternative findings and discussed to allow a more comprehensive analysis of data to the trustworthiness of the study results and draw meaningful conclusions (Maxwell, 2012). Identifying any discrepant cases strengthens the rigor of qualitative research and may lead to alternative conclusions that may be important for future research (Hays & McKibben, 2021).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

Credibility is a term that refers to a research study measuring what it intended to measure and that the study is a true reflection of participant experiences (Maher et al., 2018). Established qualitative research methods used to collect and analyze data will ensure credibility. Information was collected through interviews with 9 participants, allowing multiple perspectives and varied information. A process identified as cross-

information for a phenomenological study accounted for interview transcripts, field notes, and reflective journal notes achieved data source triangulation. Member-checking was also conducted to ensure the accuracy of conclusions drawn from findings, thus establishing study credibility (Tracy, 2019). I ensured data was rich and in-depth as I had envisioned spending a minimum of 30 minutes with each participant and creating a conducive and rapport-driven interview environment. As Billups (2014) suggests, a holistic review of the research is essential. Achieving saturation will conclude the research. The video conference recording, tape recording, and reflective journaling assisted in avoiding researcher bias.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to whether the findings of a study can be adapted in other scenarios and contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The transferability of a study was established by demonstrating, via comprehensive descriptions and theoretical examples, that the elements of a study can be transferred and applied widely across a myriad of participants, groups, and settings (see Maxwell, 2012). Rich, thick descriptions were shared from this research study describing Black men's lived experiences in the airport management sector and their MTL. Providing this level of detail will allow future researchers to replicate this study to achieve similar results.

### **Dependability**

Dependability in qualitative research refers to the ability of a study to result in similar findings if it were repeated in the same context with different participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To ensure replicability of the study in context and with

participants, the essence of dependability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), protocols and procedures used in qualitative data collection such as semi-structured interviews were conducted. Qualitative researchers use a semi-structured interview to ensure flexibility and subjectivity of data of a phenomenon from participants, thus dependable. To ensure dependability in this study, an audit trail was incorporated, the study protocol was outlined, and the data collection process was discussed in detail (see Tracy, 2019)

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability relates to the study's ability to be corroborated and verified by other researchers (Tracy, 2019). Data source triangulation and epoche were applied in this research study to support this area of trustworthiness. Confirmability and the removal of researcher bias were applied in this study by applying epoche, which requires the researcher to bracket and set aside all preconceived notions, ideas, thoughts, and biases regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). This process allowed me to capture the essence of accurate descriptions of participants' lived experiences with the phenomenon and gather data source triangulation for a phenomenological study that accounted for the interview transcripts, field notes, and reflective journal notes (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The design and methodology had previously been used in peer-reviewed journals by scholars thus conformable (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011)

### **Ethical Procedures**

Following policies set forth by Walden University, any student wishing to research human subjects must obtain approval from Walden University's IRB Board. The IRB is a process that clears any research performed using human beings or human

subjects with the intent of preventing harm and providing protection for the human subjects involved (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Ethical challenges may arise when conducting research and could present in all stages of the study. These ethical challenges include but are not limited to protecting the subject's anonymity, securing confidentiality, procuring informed consent, avoidance of harm, and ensuring privacy (Tracy, 2019).

To help minimize the risk of being curtailed by numerous ethical challenges during the data collection process, I abided by the guidance set forth by the Walden University IRB. Furthermore, I relied on training that has been supplied by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and subsequently completed concerning conducting student research. A personal computer contains password-protected research data. I reiterated to the interview participants that their responses will remain confidential and that their privacy is protected and will be retained in a password-protected file for five years, after which the responses will be destroyed. Additional details for how I followed ethical procedures for human research are listed below.

- An application was sent to the Institution Review Board (IRB) of Walden University, requesting permission to conduct this proposal. Approval from the IRB by assigning an IRB approval number allows the study to move forward according to research standards.
- There was a discussion and an agreement on each participant's ethical standards before each interview. Participants must agree to their willingness to participate by signing a consent form, participation agreement, and confidentiality agreement, all of which are a part of this study's ethical



standards. Data collected from participants will be securely stored in a locked safe and destroyed after five years from the date of the study. All data collected will be strictly confidential with access restrictions for researchers only. Participants retain the right to decline participation in the study.

Participants can request a stoppage or a withdrawal from the interview at any time. If a participant withdrew, I replaced the individual through snowballing to seek a replacement participant.

- Each participant was requested to review the collected data to capture their expressed lived experiences to the open-ended semi-structured interview questions. After the participants checked the transcript for completeness and finalized the document, each transcript was stored in individual files corresponding to the assigned pseudonym on a 16/GB zip drive.
- A copy of each participant's finalized interview transcript was sent to them individually via email attachment. A zip drive containing the transferred interview files will be stored in a locked safe for five years, after which the zip drives containing interview files will be destroyed by crushing.
- Data stored on the external hard drive is password protected.
- Collected data for this study and the participants' privacy is being held in confidentiality. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym from MP-A – MP-J (there was no MP-G) later converted to P1 – P9 to protect their identities.

- During the initial participant discussion, the participant was informed that the dissertation or portions thereof might be published in peer-reviewed journals.
- To avoid any conflict of interest, during the initial discussion with each participant, using Moustakas' (1994) epoche approach, I disclosed that I am an African American man who has worked in leadership positions at a U.S. primary commercial service airport. Setting aside biases and or prejudgments using epoche allowed me, the researcher, to approach the research study as the first time receiving the information.

### **Summary**

A transcendental phenomenological study was chosen to address how Black men in the airport management sector describe their lived experiences and MTL. I found that the transcendental phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to describe the essence of each participant's lived experience in ways other research approaches may not provide (see Moustakas, 1994). I collected data in the phenomenology tradition using informal, interactive, open-ended questions and dialogue (see Moustakas, 1994). Interview questions generated original data comprised of the participants' lived experiences while interviewing online with Zoom or MS Teams communication platforms depending on the participants' preferences (Gray et al., 2020).

Purposeful sampling was utilized in qualitative research to recruit information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I recruited participants for this study using purposeful, criterion and network sampling and snowballing strategies and screened with the following inclusion criteria: adult Black

men over the age of 18; work experience in an executive leadership position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport; 5 years minimum experience in upper management/executive leadership; possess the willingness to discuss his leadership experiences. To meet the Walden Ph.D. Dissertations standards for sample size, I conducted online, semi-structured interviews with participants meeting the study's inclusion criteria; the final sample size of 9 was determined by data saturation within the interview data (see Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

The data analysis method that was utilized for this research study was Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method for analyzing phenomenological data. According to Moustakas (1994), Phenomenological data analysis follows a systematic and rigorous procedure. I employed epoche to bracket and eliminate bias, preconceived notions, and prejudices; this allowed the researcher to approach the phenomenon fresh as if for the first time (see Moustakas, 1994).

The trustworthiness of this transcendental phenomenological study was developed by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Ethical procedures were followed to guarantee the protection of research participants, including IRB approval and oversight, informed consent, data protection, the anonymity of research participants, and disclosures about the researcher. Chapter four will outline and discuss the data analysis process and results of this study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. The research question guiding this study was the following: How do Black men describe their lived experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector? After an exhaustive review of the extant literature, I designed this question to address the literature gap on how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience in primary commercial service airports in the United States (see Roberts et al., 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020). Two critical concepts ground this study and aligned with the study's purpose of exploring how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experiences: (a) Harl and Roberts's (2011) concept of racial diversity in aviation and (b) Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of the MTL.

Leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career trajectory as a leader, but only in demographic groups of predominately White European ethnicity (Auvinen et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). The gap in the literature in the MTL area was how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (Collins et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020). Sparse research has been conducted on Black men's successful leadership experiences across industry sectors (Fries-Britt, 2018; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020), and only one outdated study addressed Black men working in the airport management sector (Harl & Roberts, 2011). I used a transcendental phenomenological design to collect data from the personal narratives of nine Black men successfully leading U.S. primary commercial service airports to address

this gap. By sharing their stories, these Black men allowed me to gain valuable insight into their lived experiences and career trajectories as leaders and their MTL within the airport management context.

Moustakas's (1994) modified Van Kaam data analysis approach was applied in this transcendental phenomenological study to understand Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. The central phenomenon of the study as perceived and understood by each participant is the noema, or meaning of the lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). The noesis is how the phenomenon is experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Noema and noesis coexist and represent the intentional consciousness of the phenomenon (Husserl, 1977). The experiences of individuals are continuous, with renewed meanings continuously arising within their lived experiences. As the researcher, I interpreted the meaning of participants' lived experiences via the process of epoche, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (see Moustakas, 1994).

The modification of the Van Kaam method of analysis consisted of the following seven steps: listing and grouping, horizontalization, reduction and elimination, clustering and thematizing, validation, individual textual description, and textural-structural description (see Moustakas, 1994). Using the transcendental phenomenological approach, I manually coded data by reading the data, creating meaning elements via reduction, reviewing reductions to develop thematic clustering, making comparisons across participants' data, and developing descriptions. I repeated this engagement process with the data, documenting summarized reflections and describing the essence of the participants' lived experience of being in the world (see Neubauer et al., 2019). The study

results presented in this chapter reflect Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. I also present the research setting, demographic data, data collection and analysis procedures, evidence of the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, and a composite of the study results.

### **Research Setting**

The data for this study were collected through semistructured interviews through Zoom and MS Teams web conferencing with nine Black men who lead or had led primary commercial service airports in the United States. Archibald et al. (2019) noted that Zoom and other online platforms are secure, innovative, cost-effective, and easy-to-use data collection tools. The interviews lasted an average of 55 minutes ranging from 32 to 86 minutes. Participant recruitment occurred using the networking site LinkedIn and snowball sampling. I sent potential participants recruitment messages via email, direct messaging, and the InMail features within the LinkedIn platform. I also emailed the recruitment letter (see Appendix A) to those recruited through snowballing, requesting that they respond to my Walden email address if they were interested in participating in the study.

After receiving confirmation from the potential participants of their willingness to participate in the study, I emailed them the letter of introduction and recruitment along with the letter of informed consent. Participants were directed to thoroughly read the contents of the documents and reply to the email with the words "I consent" if they wished to participate in the research study. After receiving the informed consent, I worked with the participants to schedule an interview date and time. However, many

airport leaders had time constraints due to the complex impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many found themselves scheduled into meetings addressing the impacts and developing solutions to address lost revenues with staff. Working with the participants, I conducted the interviews over 3 weeks. The interviews were recorded using a Sony digital recorder as a backup. The participants stated they were comfortable and in a place where they felt they would not be interrupted. Participants shared their lived experiences openly and freely. Several participants reflected on their youth and family members who inspired them to become leaders. I employed the epoche process to bracket and mitigate my biases, preconceived notions, and prejudices as a Black man. This process enabled me to approach the phenomenon from a fresh and unobstructed standpoint (see Moustakas, 1994).

### **Demographics**

Participants for this study were selected using purposeful sampling via the LinkedIn network and the snowball technique. This required identifying two potential participants and asking them to recommend additional potential participants who met the criteria. All nine participants met the criteria to participate in this study. There were seven demographic questions asked of participants, which provided additional insight into their lived experiences. The demographic categories included age, highest academic degree, total hours/years of aviation/airport training, total years of experience in aviation/airport management, total years of experience as an airport executive/CEO/aviation leader, and total number of employees under their supervision as airport CEO/aviation leader. Most participants were between 48 and 66 years of age. All participants identified as Black.

Participants' degrees ranged from BS to ABD Ph.D. The participants' time in senior leadership range from 1 to 20 years. Participants' years of airport training range from 0 to 30 years. Participants' years of aviation/airport experience ranged from 0 to 35. Participants' years of aviation/airport management experience ranged from 16 to 37. Participants' years as airport executive/CEO/aviation leaders ranged from 1 to 20years. Finally, the total number of employees reporting to participants ranged from 1 to 13. These demographic variables were essential elements in adding knowledge to the conceptual framework for this study. Table 2 provides the demographic details of all participants in this study. Participants are identified with a pseudonym.



**Table 2***Participants' Demographics and Characteristics*

Participant	Age	Highest academic degree	Total hours/years of aviation/airport training	Total years of experience in aviation/airport management	Years of experience as airport exec/CEO/aviation leader	Total employees under their supervision as airport CEO/aviation leader
P1	66	MBA	35 years	25	15	1
P2	58	Master's	BS-Aviation Management, Masters Transportation Management	33–34	16	5
P3	58	BA	0	37	19	13
P4	59	Executive MBA	0	33	15	6
P5	55	Master's	4 years	20	20	10
P6	48	BS Aviation	30 years	16	9	4
P7	50	ABD Ph.D.	21 years	17	2.5	6
P8	58	MBA	1 year 25 hours	27	1.75	6
P9	57	BA	20 yrs. air traffic control and 20 yrs. airport management	20	19	4

**Data Collection**

The data collection for this transcendental phenomenological study began on September 25, 2021, after receiving IRB approval from Walden University. The Walden University IRB approval number for this research study was 09-23-21-0049051. The nine participants were recruited using purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. I used the search tool within the business social networking site LinkedIn to search for potential participants to participate in this study. I used search terms related to the inclusion criteria to identify two – three potential participants, and then used the network and snowball

sampling strategy (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). LinkedIn search terms included *AAAE*, *ACI*, *airport authority*, *airport managers*, *airport executives*, and *African American/Black airport leaders*. I was able to go through the search results, identify African American/Black men via their LinkedIn profile picture, and contact them regarding participation in this study.

LinkedIn is set up to only send an in-platform email message to people with whom a person is already are connected. To identify potential participants for this study, I first had to send a request to be connected on LinkedIn and send an email message via the platform's sharing channels. I emailed the introductory email to those potential participants who accepted my request to connect on LinkedIn. I requested their email, to which I attached the formal letter of introduction/recruitment and the consent form to interested prospective participants. Not all potential participants I sent a connection request accepted my connection request on LinkedIn or traditional email. In these cases, I could not contact them directly within either platform. The potential participant did not respond, responded with questions about the study, or responded and indicated they were interested and provided consent to participate in the study. The potential participants who did not meet inclusion criteria either did not meet the number of years in aviation airport leadership or the airport they led was not a primary commercial service airport.

After identifying two participants who provided consent to participate in this study, I requested a recommendation from them of other potential participants who met the inclusion criteria and might have been interested in participating in this study. Those participants who knew of African American male airport directors provided me with

recommendations that included names and contact information. I sent an email and a direct message to the recommended potential participants via traditional email. In total, I sent 15 invitations to participate in this study via traditional email. Once potential participants provided consent to participate in this study, communications continued via email and phone to establish the date and time. The participants whom I initially contacted via Instagram opted for traditional email communication.

### **Semistructured Interviews**

The next phase of data collection consisted of scheduling participants for interviews. The long-form semistructured interview is characteristic of transcendental phenomenological research (Høffding & Martiny, 2016) and was used to understand the meaning and essence of the lived experiences of African American male airport leaders. Participants were scheduled for virtual face-to-face Zoom or MS Teams interviews at their convenience. Interviews took place over 3 weeks and were recorded using the Otter recorder device. All interviews were recorded with two backup Sony portable devices to ensure no data were lost and to mitigate technical recording issues.

During the data collection process of conducting interviews, I engaged in the epoche process, according to Moustakas (1994). I dismissed my personal biases, preconceived ideas, judgments, and concepts of African American men identified as airport leaders. I approached the phenomenon clearly and was receptive to new attitudes, experiences, and meanings (see Bevan, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). I also disclosed to each participant that I was an African American man with airport leadership experience.

I followed the semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix B) and bracketed my knowledge and experience. I listened to each participant intently and allowed participants to express their lived experiences with no interruption. While conducting interviews, I observed that participants were open and frank in their responses. Participants shared detailed and vivid descriptions of their lived experiences. The interviews yielded thick, rich descriptions of Black men's lived experiences and MTL in the airport management sector.

Participants were comfortable and expressive in their responses, and there were no signs of distress in their communication. Upon completing interviews with Participants 4 and 5, I noticed common themes forming across participant responses. After interviewing Participant 9, I observed evidence of data saturation as no new themes emerged from the data. I confirmed data saturation upon reviewing the data from all nine participants and verified that themes were being repeated and no new knowledge was emerging in the interview responses (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mason, 2010).

### **Member Checking**

After completing each interview, I uploaded the audio file of the recorded interview to the transcription service Rev.com for transcribing. Each transcription took between 1 and 3 hours to complete. Each participant was emailed a copy of the transcript for member checking to ensure the accuracy of their statements and to ensure the transcription accurately reflected each participant's responses. This type of transcript review is part of the member checking process to further ensure rigorous qualitative study results (Tracy, 2019).

Participants were asked to respond within 48 hours if any edits were needed. Two participants did not make or request changes, five participants made minor edits to their transcripts and returned them via email, one participant approved his transcript as is, and one participant did not respond in the allotted time for edits. I made the requested edits to the corresponding transcripts and verified the edits with the participants. Data collection concluded on November 9, 2021, after completing the member checking process. All data collected for this study were electronically stored in an electronic reflective journal in Microsoft Word and on a computer hard drive in mp3 format. I managed participant data confidentiality as outlined in Chapter 3.

### **Data Analysis**

Moustakas's (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method of analysis, as applied in the current study, consisted of the following seven steps:

1. Each interview was conducted via Zoom and Microsoft Teams using seven semistructured questions to explore Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. Each participant was asked the same questions, and the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed word for word via a Word document to organize the listing and grouping process. After reading the transcript, I engaged in the epoche process through careful phenomenological bracketing to track my judgment, biases, preconceived ideas, concepts, and past experiences as much as possible to focus on coding and organizing the data.

2. All interviews collected were significant to understanding participants' lived experiences with the phenomena studied. I carefully read and coded words by hand and formed codes from direct quotes of participants relative to the research question. This manual coding process ensured horizontalization with each question and the responses to each question for the nine interviews. With manual hand coding, I could navigate the often complex and distinctive elements of analyzing data while maintaining control and ownership of the data analysis process (see Saldana, 2016).
3. Each significant statement extracted from responses was evaluated to ensure reduction and elimination, and meaning units were created from each point recorded and then recategorized into meaningful categories. All duplications were consolidated, and exception statements were noted.
4. Clustering and thematizing were conducted by manually narrowing the remaining statements into organic themes and codes
5. The individual textual description was completed as compared, interpreted, and described in the study results.
6. The textural-structural description was satisfied with integration and summary of what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon under study.
7. In the final step, a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions provided the meanings and essences representative of the lived experiences of the entire group of participants as a whole.

### **Epoche Protocol**

Moustakas' (1994) modified Van Kaam data analysis approach was applied to the results of this transcendental phenomenological study to provide meaning to Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. I engaged in the epoche protocol to start the data analysis to uncover new knowledge. I meditated on my experience and perceptions with the phenomenon and then consciously set aside my suppositions, perceptions, and bias to disconnect from my memories' application to the phenomenon being studied (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing my interpretations and assumptions allowed me to see the phenomenon for what it was (see Finlay, 2012). This process of epoche is necessary for explicating the meaning of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector.

### **Preliminary Coding or Horizontalization**

Participants in this study provided rich, thick, verbal data in response to interview questions. All data collected was valuable in providing descriptive themes and meaning to the phenomenon. The second step in the transcendental phenomenological data analysis, using the modified Van Kaam method, is to identify pertinent quotes from participants related to the phenomenon for preliminary coding/horizontalization. I hand-coded the collected data and identified participants' significant statements gleaned from their transcript responses (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004).

Following are all the significant statements from each participant in this study, as quoted by the participants themselves and relevant to the research question: How do

Black men describe their lived experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector? The result of this primary coding or horizontalization was that 323 significant statements are as follows and listed by the participant (see Appendix C).

### **Significant Statements From Participant 1**

- "I think it goes back to my childhood, and experiences starting with high school, where it was the government public school, ok, and you were expected to be competitive, and so, by the early age my early teenage years 15 and 16."
- "The letter, my other colleagues around me, were looking to me about leadership. Ok, ok, and, and it really stayed with me throughout my life. So even when I joined teams and organizations at the entry-level."
- "My focus was never to be the lead sponsor the lead of those organizations. But to be the very best at the particular in the particular field that I was doing, which I think maybe some somewhere in the back of my mind might have been motivated by a desire to lead."
- "Today is really trying to figure out how to build succession. And because I guess if the truth be told, I feel like that's the one area I failed, is to build succession."
- "...and so Today, what motivates me still is because I still think there's work to be done."
- "Because 30 years 35 years later, they're the only nine of 455. And so I feel like what it's motivating me to continue is because I still think there's work to be done on the succession side of it, and I still have something to contribute to



that, in terms of mentorship and trying to change airport cultures and to get cultures, how they view minorities and women that that keeps me motivated still ok."

- "So to the degree that you have black leadership at an at an airport, it has a domino effect in terms of the potential for black men and women, and women, and women of all color, to succeed in both contracting and the employment process, both on how they adopt the solicitation or handle recruitments the gains of contract and respectively, employment, how they are written where they advertised, and the composition of the selection committee."
- "You have a flock of birds, and the ducks will always choose ducks."
- "I think I was motivated by the desire to level the playing field by ensuring you have solicitation and recruitment documents. That certainly doesn't act as barriers and in many cases promote inclusion, including adapting in addition to the documents the selection committee has also reflect inclusion so that black people, black men and women would have a fair shot."
- "Then I was on a panel, interviewing for an assistant general manager for an airport. And there were I think were five finalists, and it was this one man out of Houston who got to become CEO from the airport in Jackson, Alabama. I remember he was so outstanding. I mean, markedly superior."
- "...it's gonna be a challenge for us. Even when we do outstanding, and so I've experienced those barriers, personally, but I've also observed them. I think it's just as prevalent today as it was since I joined the industry."

- And in the history of the ACI fund, anyone who is "I think the title is vice chairman or vice president, automatically ascends to the Presidency, automatic succession plan. Except when I was the vice president."
- "I go back to saying when we get into top positions, we can do something about it, and have an obligation to."
- Well, you know that the only moral obligation "I really felt is that of paying forward, that wasn't the only one but certainly was the most compelling one."
- "Without any XXXXXX XXXXXX, my mentor, first black female in the industry, thought she saw something, and she agreed to mentor me. I would not, it would not be a P1 was a deputy at XXXXX and head of an airport in Atlanta."
- "For me, those are the obligations. The moral obligations that I had were really about paying forward—and correspondingly, setting an example. That was a twofold purpose."
- "The first example was for the blacks, Black men and women who were at the airport working, leading by example so that they could learn."
- And two, "for the white people who were there, demonstrating to them that was demonstrating to those who were probably only prejudice and racist, how amazing we could be, that motivated, really motivated me to be best."
- "it's that sense of, I probably at any given time, have five official people a mentor and probably another five was unofficial."

- "And I think we have that social obligation, not just to. We have a social obligation to the Black race, to do whatever we can to one, attract more of us to the industry and say things, that's one, second thing is to help whatever we can to reduce and eventually hopefully eliminate the barriers, towards career advancement—and third, related to that—working through the political process. I say political, which I will explain in a moment. To make sure that we have more of us become CEOs, for the reasons I mentioned earlier, the impact of being the CEO is what you do with contracting and so forth. And I see political obligation because I've come to believe that across the country. The medium to large-sized airports that the selection of the CEO is no more on average that 40% competency and 60% political, right, when a position is posted for CEO in any airport."
- "so, you really have a social obligation, you know, to help, even with all of those barriers, black folk have a social obligation to help mentor people, and hopefully, you know things will change slowly as they may so that you'll have people who are ready qualified for these positions."
- "Oh, I think I said that, at the center of our order. Identify the primary point of motivation for leadership."
- "...it's really rooted in the desire to excel and be the best in your field."
- "I think that's something that's sort of natural for humans, that if we do something. We want to be the best at it. And so, if we want to be a leader at an

airport, you're motivated to excel and be the best at it in terms of managing people."

- "The art, of managing people, or science of managing people and getting people to do, to be the best that they can be."
- "I really believe that in every bone in my body that its outstanding leadership is not about outstanding the degree to which a leader, provides outstanding leadership is the degree to which that leader is able to motivate the people who work for them to do the most outstanding job."
- "... with that comes a whole host of character traits and practices, not the least among them is giving people the authority with the responsibility and make them feel free to fail, let them fly."
- "I was motivated to Excel because I really just wanted to be the best at what I do for two reasons, one, self-gratification but to know I was mentoring others, I wanted to give them the best lesson there is."
- "You know, a young Black man or woman. I would really encourage them. The first thing I would encourage them to do is find a mentor with whom you're comfortable. I find that mentors can be so valuable."
- "This is my role. My goal is to try to make people safe, changing people's lives."
- "I would tell them that. Yes, aspire for this position, but they have to get a mentor and stay with it regardless of the barriers and challenges."

- "Magic. So airports have these amazing economic drivers, and you really what, what, what a career choice."
- "People who have been denied access. What a career choice for a black man."

### **Significant Statements From Participant 2**

- "I had two uncles who exposed me to aviation at an early age one of them. Both of them had military experience. One of them, my uncle Jardine, exposed me to aviation when I was probably five years old."
- "A later influence was my uncle Leroy, who was also in the military. In the Air Force, and he had been stationed at, or received some training at a place called Ellington Air Force Base in Houston, Texas. I wound up later in life, managing that airport."
- "There were a lot of things unrelated to aviation that caused me to lose sight of my early exposure to aviation until I met someone in college that said, you know, you're going to be in the aviation management degree program. So, as the saying goes that was a that."
- "I feel a sense of obligation to be a role model to other people of color, so they can see that there are opportunities in this vast industry."
- "...as you are probably aware, there were no examples from which I could draw from experiences to help me navigate a trajectory towards success in this industry. So, you know, you had to, at least for for me, I had to really rely on self and people who were part of my, I guess I call them accountability

partners, to help me navigate this trajectory because there was no mirror. I mean, I could count the number."

- "I don't recall seeing many people in a leadership capacity at those conferences, or as representative of the airports they were in attendance at those conferences."
- "It was a really tough row to hoe."
- "The void is still vast. I mean, I probably know every person of color that is in leadership in the United States, in a commercial service airport in this country."
- "That's saying a lot because there are a lot of commercial service airports in the country and for me to be able to count them and say, I know them all is really not a great testimony."
- "So, there is, you know, there's always the obvious barrier of being an African American and that may not be so apparent to everybody, but it is very evident to people of color."
- "So, you know, at some point, you look to go to someone and say, hey, what is it that I'm doing wrong. Well, the answer isn't that you're doing anything wrong. The answer is, you know, you don't fit the model."
- "I recall when I challenged, you know, the status quo. I inquired about, you know, why this was what was happening. The experience that I lived was, I was denied interviews for five years."

- "...but I'll say this in the back of every person of color's mind is this sense of you all, you're being watched. It's always there, and that you have to be cognizant that, there's no room for mistakes. Because if you do, you could very well affect an opportunity of someone else that comes along that looks like you. That pressure is always on you."
- "So, the moral obligation is, you know, don't make mistakes, you have to be very good at what you do, so that there's no excuse for you to experience some adverse outcome because you made a mistake. Not just you, but the people that follow you that look like you."
- "Having a sense of obligation. I believe that the reason I've been afforded the opportunity to lead is because it gives me the opportunity to help someone else, right?"
- "There's something that says, to whom much is given, much is required. I believe that, you know, because I'm in this leadership capacity it's my job to not only open the door, for others that look like me but to make sure that that door remains open. That I'm reaching back, help train and to prepare people to walk through that door."
- "So, I think it's imperative that when you are in this kind of capacity, you are should be interacting with the next generation, or the generation after that, we have to ensure that there's someone ready to cross that threshold."
- "Whether I accept it or not, I'm a role model."

- "I have to live my life, realizing that there are people that are looking up to me and that I have to live in accordance to an expectation; an expectation that supersedes, you know who I am, or what I am."
- "An expectation that says that I exemplify the ideal kind of character or behavior that's required to function in this kind of capacity. I live, you know, under the notion that someone behind me needs to see an example of what it means to live a life that leads to leadership."
- "So my mother's philosophy was, you know, in order to keep me safe, you know, don't we don't talk too much."
- "You know, don't overextend yourself because you get noticed, and you know you might become a statistic."
- "So I have to. I had to do things to learn how to self-promote not for me, but because there are people that need to see me in this role."
- "So, I would, I would say look to the axiom that says the black man has been twice as good. It still holds true today. It's unfortunate, but you know you have to really invest a lot in yourself, you have to be twice as educated, you have to be twice as experienced, you have to be twice as good in terms of your performance."
- "So, you know, you have to do that, you know, even though those that are in the non-minority category don't. So, you, you have to spend a lot of time and energy focused on developing yourself."



- "Not just, you know, the hard skills you learned in school, but the soft skills, how to interact with people that don't look like you and you know there's this, there's this terminology called I just, I don't know if it's the right application but code-switching."
- "You have to learn how to, you know, be someone that you're not in an environment of people that don't look like you, so they feel comfortable around you."
- "So, you have to learn that soft skill. I mean, it's hard to not be yourself so you never really fully actualize in your role because you can't be who you are."
- "You have to be this personification of who you are, so the others around you are comfortable."
- "That philosophy, you have to be white; you know someone that you are not. That connotation has some negative consequences associated with it."
- "But in reality, is you just have to do what you have to do, to increase your economic base."
- "So, I think one thing that people need to be cognizant of in our industry, as well as other industries, is there are organizations that exist, and we call them, professional organizations that are like clubs."
- "Alright, so you have to make sure you become a member of the member of "the club," so you can be considered for upward mobility."

- "Here's a problem with the club, the club established criteria that says that you have arrived, or you have achieved something so that you should be considered."
- "This is normal in almost every industry. Architects have their club, plumbers have their club, electricians have their club, administration has its clubs too. "
- "American Association of Airport Executive, Airport Council International has its own AMPAP program so, you know, when you get those accreditations, it says, and you've been institutionalized. You are good to go."

### **Significant Statements From Participant 3**

- "Early experiences I would have to attribute to my parents, my father, and mother in terms of making sure I got a good education, staying in school, being disciplined."
- "I did not realize I had the aptitude for leadership until probably in high school."
- "So, I would just say that it was family, education, church, those kinds of places that it made me a person who cared about other people understood the importance of discipline and wanted to do something for someone else other than myself."
- "Firstly, it was not my intent to manage an airport."
- "So I had an affinity to work in aviation."
- "My first airport job, I was working as a metropolitan planning organization director. I wasn't focused on this position, and I was offered a vacant position

in the newly elected mayor's administration. He offered me the position, and I accepted it."

- "So it was a great opportunity."
- "Though, me being a black person. There was one other black person in the mayor's administration, and there were not very many black people at the airport. At least not in the white-collar executive positions. They were black folks who worked in maintenance and those kinds of things. There were people who look like me."
- "The mayor was trying to increase participation of African Americans in city government, and certainly, I saw it as an opportunity to help in that endeavor. And so that's when I got real focused on airport management."
- "You know it's interesting, and When I look back at my career, I've always attributed my inability to get into a certain position or to get a certain ranking as based upon my skill level or, or level of expertise."
- "I have been reluctant to attribute it to race until fairly recently when I've unfortunately had to accept reality weighing large like I always say."
- "When I look at other examples, and there are people who or have much less in terms of education, experience and they have been granted certain positions or titles or whatever. Thus, there have been a lot of barriers."
- "So, as I look back on my experience now, I can say that given a lot of barriers, and people don't approach you and say, well, I'm not going to give you this because of this is usually."

- "...they find some other excuse to present and amounts to another obstacle to put in your way to prevent you."
- "if you come in as the airport manager, there's no place else to go at the airport, but there are other things that I could have done in the community that I was not permitted to do. Because in my view, because of the color of my skin."
- "I didn't get certain considerations for certain things because of the color of my skin."
- "They were a very, very closed community; I think the National Guard, the nature of National Guard, particularly in the state of New York is, it's a closed community, and if you are different."
- "If you not do not fit into their culture or their view of how you should be, then you will not excel, they will let you be there, but you won't get engaged or you won't be really included in."
- "I think that the airport industry is the same kind of way."
- "We as African Americans, we come into this industry, but it's not like we are welcome."
- "I didn't have any role models when I started as an airport manager, and I can count on one hand the number of African Americans who worked as the chief executive at an airport across the country; they were like three of them across the country when I had my first airport job."

- "There's no excuse for that we talked about, and we had over 500 Commercial Service airports at the time."
- "There's no excuse for that less than 1%."
- "As we look at the top S&P companies now you look at well how many African American CEOs there are and how many board members there are. Same kind of thing."
- "Working representations, I think being an African American now as I look back on my career has been a major impediment."
- "As I look back at my life, I tried to discern what my calling was or what I'm supposed to be doing because I have very, I have strong religious beliefs. And I think I was called to be a leader in several different environments."
- "I've tried to develop those skills over time to be a better person in terms of leadership, and when I approach leadership is more about the people."
- "I try, to you know, get people excited about how I and my organization see the future."
- "I try to focus on the people."
- "It's all about the people and making sure that they're engaged, making sure that I'm communicating effectively, putting myself in people's position and empathy, to be able to make decisions effectively. being a straight culture. So, I think leadership is very important."
- "There's not a lot of people who are effective leaders, they're people who are in leadership positions, but I don't know that all of them want to say are

effective at what they do, because typically there's some other motivation that has brought them to that position, as opposed to really caring about people."

- "Once again, I think we all, not only are we called but we all have a mission, and that mission is to give back is to do something for someone else other than ourselves is to leave a situation better than you found it."
- "When we are talking about the greater good or society at large, we have to do something, and a lot of my career I've spent building things, operating airports, but also building infrastructure, maintaining and improving infrastructure. And I think that is a certainly a contribution."
- "We have to have certain skills and abilities to be able to lead a project from concept into operation in terms of figuring out the planning, design, development, how to get it done."
- "So, I think that social, in terms of social impact. It's important to leave something."
- "I think once you realize what your capabilities and skills are, you try, and you try and apply them, no matter what area you are in, whether it's even in sports or something, you want to have some leadership role you want to be a coach or you want to be, you know you want to take some role to teach someone how to do something because you have that skill and you can share it with others in the in the workplace. When you're not, you don't have the title. A title that is specific to being a leader, you try and take an active role in project management or program management or trying to get things done."

- "So I think there's a natural propensity to look at a situation and determine how to make it better."
- "I'm trying to apply the skills that you have command of, you try and get to that point that vision that, that people have about how they want things to turn out and so you just pick up the pieces and try and get folks there, build a team that's necessary to do that and you engage them and figure out, you know, put a plan together okay you're doing this you're doing that, and I'm doing this and this is how we're all bringing this together and this is how we're going to do this, I think that leadership is in everything you do, even whether or not you were the leader, that's your approach to things and in certain people have a propensity to that."
- "If there's a young black man, I've got to tell him about some of the experiences that I've had being a black man, and how I got through them so that they will have the equipment or they will know what's necessary,"
- "So I think that's important to be able to impart that knowledge so that people can, you know, understand one that's not going to be easy because you are black, you carry, unfortunately you carry a burden of, you know, trying to compete and overcome that people don't deal with you based upon who you are, they deal with you based upon the way that you look the color of your skin. I don't care what laws are passed; that's just a natural inherent to how people are right, so I tried to pass that on to my sons and I pass it on the people that I interact with as a mentor, is that these are some going to be the

challenges impediments that you have to deal with. And this is how I've dealt with it but you might have a better way to deal with it based on the type of person that you are in the environment in the context and the situation."

- "It's very important to give people as much knowledge as possible. And one of the basic things I tell people is you have to be prepared when the opportunity presents itself. If you go into a meeting, you take a pad, and you take something to write."
- "I tell people, and that means, education, if you want a job in the aviation industry, you have to have something to work with, either you have to have education, or you have to have experience, you have to be able to bring a skill that you acquired in potentially another field is transferable so that you can use and exploit it so that you can get to where you want to get to in aviation field."
- "So, I try and let people know that. Nothing's easy, but it's persistence that will win the day, and you gotta, you know, you have to try and overcome the obstacles that are presented to you."
- "I guess one thing I would like to say is the workforce development piece. A lot of times, folks are not focused on that. And in order to increase the diversity of the industry, particularly with African American people, men, and women, it's important to think about workforce development and making sure that people have the skills that will bring them in number one, have that awareness, and then two, give them the bridge or the knowledge,



understanding, bring them into the industry so they can be successful, then staying in the industry in excelling and you only get that with the education, the experience the training and, you know, it's, we need to do more of that I think in this industry, we need to the people who are in the industry like myself need to get out there and tell story in the community about the wonderful world that aviation is and it has all these opportunities that we don't take advantage of to the large extent."

- "I think that I think the young would have developing their, their thoughts about who they want to be."
- "They do that between the grades of fourth and sixth, fourth grade and a lot of our efforts we target, and we're looking at high school, you know, we're like, 11th grade, I think that's too late."
- "Youth have already developed life ideas about who they want to be. So, I think that in the social studies curriculums when you're learning about history and geography and economics and government."
- "You should learn about airports, learn that there's an opportunity there, and that there's not just what, what, when I was when I was, I went to a catholic school, and we learned about airports we learned about pilots and air traffic controllers and flight attendants. I didn't learn about airport managers or airport engineers or airport planners, or wildlife biologists who work for an airport or electricians who work for an airport. That's the kind of education that we need to be providing our young people so that they can set their

targets. And these kinds of jobs so that they can you know they can direct their path to get here."

#### **Significant Statements From Participant 4**

- "Okay, so um, I mean, it's I always go back to when I was a young kid. 12, 13, 14 years old."
- "I would always study there was a magazine out called Black Enterprise, and Black Enterprise focused strictly on Black-owned businesses."
- "I would study that was the one hundred top Black-owned, and I would study those companies."
- "I would go to sleep with that magazine in front of me because I was just so inspired by guys like Herman J. Russell and can Rick Park and Raymond Hayesbird and so many others, John Johnson,"
- "I've just always kind of saw myself one day. Being on that list. I just envisioned myself being on that list."
- "And so my passion has always been entrepreneurship."
- "So I think that's where it started. was, you know, just being exposed to the figures in that magazine and then just always paying close attention to entrepreneurs around me and always just having a basic belief that one day I was going to be one of those entrepreneurs."
- "The larger commercial airports, you'll see a trend kind of developing where more and more large airports systems are looking at non-industry executives to head up airports."

- "So cities are looking for people that have leadership business management, they may look for someone who has experience managing major capital programs because airports are always delivering major capital programs."
- "And so I would say it's not so necessary for large airports, but for smaller, especially general aviation airports."
- "Yes, you have to be very technical now. You have to be an aviator."
- "I happen to be an airport executive, but my ministry is Minority Business Development and developing opportunities for minorities in employment, to understand the needs of a public in a way of air service."
- "And put you know, put in motion and move on put actions in place to address those needs in a way of an airport, expansion project."
- "And so that kind of that motivates me to keep going because there are endless opportunities at airports to try to offer or make sure opportunities are made available to minorities."
- "I like to invest in young professionals and see their careers evolve."
- "For me, it's legacy building, because that will outlive me and so I like making big impact and anytime I can be involved to the airport or somebody else who I'm involved with making, you know, big impact on on the public in a positive way. I'm excited about it."
- "I mean, diversity is passe, right? It's now all about diversity and inclusion. Right? It's one thing to have a segment or percentage of the workforce, you know, meet a certain demographic, but if that is all that's

happening, you're not growing and not impactful in the organization, then you still falling short."

- "It's, it's about creating an opportunity for people who otherwise wouldn't have those opportunities to get in. And then, you know, remove barriers that would prevent them from succeeding, giving them the tool that enables them to succeed."
- "I walked in. I went to the head of the table, and I looked around the table and seven white males. And I thought to myself, you know I'm not coming into here to blow everything up, but this isn't going to work."
- "It's not reflective of the population that we're serving. It doesn't reflect my priorities you know? My my personal interest in moving this system forward and in so now I knew I was gonna have to shake that up."
- "I think there's an innate fear on the part of the majority population that is if blacks are able to rise to the level where they have control over their fate, that they might be treated the same way that we will treat right Right, which, is absolutely not the case. We don't have the same heart, for the most part."
- "We don't hurt other people, and we hurt ourselves because too many of us don't see value in ourselves."
- "I said to myself, you know, I always thought that I'm going to be in that seat one day, and I said when I'm in that seat, I'm gonna I'm gonna make decisions differently."

- "I value, you know, the code of the streets, right, that you respect people that you know, you trust people you're a man of your word, despite how people might feel about those areas."
- "And so I care about people who, who otherwise would not be in a position to influence their fate, right and so, so that made a big influence on my leadership style."
- "I'm very close to the general workforce because I don't see them as someone who is subordinate to me."
- "So that is influenced me in a way that I truly see myself as a vessel to provide support and to assist people that otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to get there. And that's what I do, and that's how I use this role in support."
- "um, I, the first time I was in a, I was in an environment. That was where I was the minority is when I joined this airport."
- "I found myself in an environment where the minority is not the majority anymore. And that was quite a transition for me. I didn't have a self-esteem issue. I just, um, I had to learn that, that that, that not all people that do not look like me, are untrustworthy."
- "There are some, some white Americans who can take credit for certain periods of my career progression."
- "There was there was a secretary at the time and governor at the time, that just did not want somebody that looks like me to be in this room."

- "As a matter of fact, I had this one experience where the XXXXXXXX of XXXXXXXXXXXX, manufactured a, a reason to terminate me so there's little pockets of that kind of stuff that nothing that extreme but there are pockets of what I'll call racism, be it deliberate or will just passive racism where I had to I had to fight through wasn't I might have been ignorant to the fact that there was some level of racism there for me it was just something I needed to overcome And you know, you kind of work through it."
- "I just do not have a tolerance for anybody in my organization that engages in unethical behavior."
- "And I think it has everything to do with growing up in a caring, you know, just grew up in a very caring violent sometimes right because of the crime that stems associated with the drug trade but still a loving environment."
- "I'm in love with this industry."
- "So I am always now I'm not obsessed with perfection."
- "I'm certainly obsessed with not making big mistakes, and we do a lot of things right here."
- HBCUs have a way of having you believe that you're that you're that you're the best at what you do or you will be the best at what you do."
- "The margin and the margin of error is, is narrow and in when you're when you're in a high profile, public position."
- "It could be an issue. It's not a self-inflicted wound."

- "It could be you just caught up in the middle of politics or whatever and so, so you not only have to manage your actions, you have to also be looking out for those other landmines that you might be stepping on. That can also get you in trouble."
- "First of all, you can't be scared."
- "Got to be courageous, right."
- "Because if you if you prepare yourself and if you make decisions based on sound judgment you're going to make more right than wrong."
- "The decision is being made, whether you're making it or not, right? Not making a decision is a decision. You have to be decisive."
- "You have to be willing to take risks, calculated risks."
- "And you have to care about people. No matter who it is, you have to care about people,
- you have to always be respectful of people."
- "If you show people respect and care, your people will, people will pay that back."
- "People will go to the wall for you if they feel that you care about them."

#### **Significant Statements From Participant 5**

- "There was a point where I'm I think, I don't know if I hadn't had the motivation era strong motivation to succeed, and a strong motivation to be the best in the areas that I work."
- "There wasn't a strong motivation to lead."

- "The first real leadership job was when I came into aviation."
- "So now I was interested in leadership position at the busiest airport in the world."
- "And I was fortunate to be to his unofficial mentoring, right?"
- "I looked Oh, you know, they function and the things that they did, and I learned a lot from them."
- "You learn what to do, and you also learn what not to do."
- "Then a lot of people are recommending that you be the interim. The problem is you're the XX guy, and we want operations person. And I was like, whoa."
- "So the motivation for me is I'm doing this for hundreds, possibly 1000s of individuals, right, which translates into 1000s of families, and not just families for now but families for the next generation to come. That's what keeps me motivated."
- "It's creating jobs. When we expand the facility. Somebody has to maintain it recreated, so that's really read uh, what keeps me motivated."
- "I had the pleasure of starting in in aviation, and starting an aviation with one of the best are two of the best airport leaders who so happened to be people of color. One was the head of the airport was African American. And the second in charge was Hispanic or Latino."
- "It's a very class oriented society."
- "So when I came over to the U.S., my mindset wasn't race. It was more class."



- "And so having an airport director that was black, that was normal, where I'm coming from the majority of people there was Black."
- "They're coming up, young, young, African American professional, they're coming up in a in an airport where most of the leadership, for example, is there is white, and they're struggling because they're seeing the barriers and I'm trying to work them through. I can say I went through I did not go through that in my aviation career. Nope. I can tell you on the flip side coming up in in XXXXXX, I went through it from the social side when I just when I graduated from school from college, and I was applying for jobs."
- "Yes, it was. So it was this based on where you live."
- "...so that those are some of the things that that kind of the prejudices that I experienced when I got to the U.S.."
- "I think that and the judge says I only heard people speak that is on TV. I didn't know people speak like this in real life."
- "And he referred to me as boy. Wow, okay."
- "It didn't impact or affect me and the reason why I'm just coming from XXXXXXXX, when all that person refers to you as boy, it's just that's just the way we talk."
- "So I was it as this white judge is referring to me as a black person as boy."
- "He was explaining now when they say boy, that's a derogatory term."
- "I was programmed socially, not racially, and it took me a while to kind of, you know, but it's a what's a whole bunch of us but anyway."

- "And I figure Yeah, you know if they can do it, I can do it as well. And I learned a lot from them, and I learned a lot from them what not to do. as well."
- "I didn't experience the barriers coming into the industry."
- "I worked directly for two people, people of color, the barriers that I face was prior to coming to the U.S., and those were social."
- "As I think about it, it's I had to kind of hide where I was from in order to advance in society."
- "The Good, The Bad everything. And everything that I saw my mom and my dad my parents did to keep us still safe in that environment and to keep us from being a part of these gangs that was that right there and entice in your everyday honor. That is what made me who I am today, I wouldn't change a thing because that's what that's why I'm here."
- "I think airports and ports and cities that have all these resources, such as a port, such as an airport, should have a higher moral purpose, and that higher moral purpose is to influence as many people as possible, live in a positive way."
- "And one way of doing that is creating living wages, jobs for them, creating opportunities for them, not only jobs, per se, but also creating opportunities where they can become entrepreneurs."
- "Alright, that's one of the things I focus on a whole lot. Is to try to get more and more AC DBE companies to do business with us as they're trying to get

more DBE companies to do business with us whether it's in construction or it's in our seen the concessions on business hours of planning and design is to get more and more of these companies."

- "I'm extremely vocal, and I'm going out of the way to make sure that we don't have any barriers to those folks coming in, but I'm also interested in creating the entrepreneur opportunities because it's going to be generational."
- "If we can do that more multiple times. Right and create opportunities for women and people of color in a way that that that to me is one of the higher moral purpose that I have, and I think organizations such as this one should have as well."
- "One of the big challenges that I have is financing the growth of the airport."
- "And a lot of people migrated here from other places in the U.S. and from overseas so that their the demand for travel keeps growing and so we need to grow this airport and not be the bottleneck to do that, on the social side now is that as we grow, we have to do it in a sustainable manner, right?"
- "We call them Magnificent Seven, and there were 7 of them was a senior said they were bright, they're brilliant, well respected."
- "And I had opportunity to be inadvertently be in the room because I was fixing some computers and phones and blah, blah blah for them. And I'm listening to the meeting and listen, I'm like, this is where decisions are made. Right. This is where you can actually have an influence is when you're sitting at this table right."

- "You can use it to influence people's lives in a positive way. Or you can use it to influence people's lives and in a negative way."
- "It was supposed to be based on certain criteria that was established and people at the table with me. I realized that's not what they were doing."
- "So to me, the motivation to lead is you can be indoors position you can use it for good, you can also use it to do a lot of evil as well. Right?"
- "I'd say mentor, try to get a mentor, one or two mentors to kind of help you guide your career."
- "I would also say you have to network is extremely important."
- "You can be the most brilliant person, right? Nobody knows you. It's hard to move up the ladder. Right?"
- "Seize opportunity to expose yourself right if there's an opportunity to present at a whatever it whatever meeting where people in the organization sees you and hear you and yours. Take advantage of that."
- "Also, I would say try to work on projects outside of your area. If you want to become an airport manager, try to get operations experience, maintenance experience, security experience, finance, commercial try to work on project that gives you exposure because when you get become the airport manager, you have to have a not expert in all of them. But you have to have some knowledge of all of those things."

- "Treat people with respect. Just treat people basic respect, that's just the bottom line. I've seen people you probably passed on the ladder will be the same people you're gonna see coming back around."
- "Maya Angelou said people might not remember what you said, or what you did, but will remember how you made them feel?"
- "Another thing I'd say is don't only network with people who you really think can help you let work with people who you can help as well. Right? It's not just about networking with people you're trying to move up the ladder, drag some people up the ladder with you as well. This will help a few people and pull them up with you when you're going up."

#### **Significant Statements From Participant 6**

- "So I would say that the primary experience I had in terms of influencing me, not necessarily industry related but just in general, was my grandfather."
- "And I think without really, honestly without it, without me realizing it was having an impact on me up here because of what I was seeing."
- "So what I saw was a lot of black and brown folks, professionals in, you know, sort of a broad spectrum of capacities, all well educated, all seemingly doing well for themselves. And that again, I think, was something that without really understanding it, I recognized it, it, you know, definitely had an impact on me because I saw all these people that kind of looked like me, and they're all doing big things."

- "Also, my mother thought she was not, and she was someone she was sort of the other side. She was a hard worker. Right. And she would do anything and everything that that was necessary to ensure that I was provided for, so I had that example of someone who would stop at nothing to make sure I had what I need."
- "So I think that the two sides, when combined were pretty impactful to me."
- "What keeps me motivated today. I mean, I always want to do well. I feel like I have an obligation to do well, to those who have really leaned in and helped me get here."
- "One for me, I didn't see a lot of people that look like me and senior-level roles at larger US airports."
- "And I'm looking at this black woman who is leading one of the world's busiest airports. And I really had I had not really met before, and so I don't know if I really, at that time was aspiring to become a director, but when I saw that, I felt like it was possible."
- "All those things then led me to realize that airports were the place that I wanted to be. Yeah, I want to be in that environment. And that I didn't know how I was going to get to that top spot, but that did become my goal."
- "I want to be the aviation general manager."
- "I got in my mind, I want to get airport director and ultimately, I wanted to find my way."
- "You know, I, I know that there is there's a lot of resistance out there."

- "And I'm sure that at some point along the way, I have been victim to it."
- "But I also feel that i i the things that I have gone after more often than not, I've achieved so so my career progression I've moved around in order to move up and it became very strategic."
- "Now I've applied for some positions which I was not selected. I don't know if some of those were, you know, do to what I look like. Otherwise, most of the position I've gone for that I really, truly strongly can only desired went my way."
- "And I spent a lot of time building a network."
- "But I think that some of the people that I've come to know and come to be very close to who may not look like us have played a role."
- "I'm going to go I'm going to go after what I think I need, what I think I'm missing, that that last sort of one piece of the puzzle, and I believe that I'll be in a position to ascend to the number one spot and that's exactly what happened."
- "So, yeah, and in fact, I will tell you my first position as a director, was influenced by people of color, because they wanted to have diversity."
- "They had never had anyone of color in in that office. and so I was the first and the youngest, because I was still my 30s."
- "When I was thinking about my mother and almost the entire time I was in school, what she would do to make sure that I could be successful, whatever it

was that I wanted to achieve, she was going to be there to help me see it through, at the end of the day, it really comes down to pride."

- "I think that goes back to the fact that, you know, when I looked around I didn't see a lot of people who looked like me."
- "I just felt like I wanted to be one of those people who made it."
- "And to serve as an example. Not only to those, those folks who might, you know, in the everyday might not give us much credit, but also for some of those who may not have had the same opportunities."
- "Because of I didn't see very many people who look like me in senior-level roles at airports, you know, being in this position of high visibility it's one that you know, I hope that as we keep doing things, especially like within the community, that we're able to open some eyes of some of the youth and have them realize what's possible for them."
- "A lot of it for me is thinking of society and how, how black people are are viewed and, and then saying, basically, but you know, I'm going to, I want to prove you wrong, I'm going to show you."
- "With that is you end up being on such a pedestal, but a pedestal No, I know under a microscope."
- "I've tried very hard not to forget from where I've come, and, and all of the roles that I've served in, some of which are not supervisory in nature."



- "I've always also known that or believed that my attitude and approach needed to be a certain way or else I could be looked at, in a in a different light, right, and that could that light could dim, dim on my chances to excel."
- "But, you know, that's part of that is out of what I pick up as a necessity as well, because if you know if I show too much of one thing or one side, then that could become a problem."
- "So until the person that's on the inside opens the door and says Please come in."
- "So all of all that is has continued, I think to influence me in terms of how I've conducted myself and understanding that I need to always keep certain things top of mind so that I can remain at this level and hopefully you know to continue to be or strive."
- "I'm not actually trying to be, but in my mind through the things that I'm doing and the type of success I've achieved and hopefully that is having some trickle-down effect on you know, on the industry as a whole and you know, me being a person of color, which there are few in CEO and CEO positions, so it's it's something."
- "I've always once I decided what I wanted to be, which was an airport director, I understood there were there were things I would need to keep in mind along the way because they're always going to be way more of everybody else."

- "If somebody doesn't like you, or just decides that they're going to have it out for you and they're you know, they're going to bring you down and when you're someone who is already very much in the minority."
- "But I also know that there are people where you know if they have the resolve and you give them a little bit of fuel, they could turn it into a fire, and it could burn you up."
- "I'd like to go out in good standing and have a wonderful retirement chapter. So I'm not trying to burn bridges, and I try to be set on fire."
- "One of the biggest things is not to limit yourself."
- "Be open to the opportunities that are presented to you."
- "Don't have the geographic location as the top reason why you will or won't."
- "But I think a big thing really is number one, believe in yourself."
- "I think, learn quite a bit is just an observing other and then applying that to my reality and being patient."
- "Being patient."
- "Being strategic."
- "Not limiting yourself."
- "Having some people that you can reach out to."
- "Having a strong network of people and don't hesitate to reach out to them."
- "Because the more that we can tap into them, hopefully, we can wind up with more of us being represented at the top."

### **Significant Statements From Participant 7**

- "Having various actual positions in professional organizations helped to build kind of my leadership skills, gave me the actual soft skills, transferable skills, that were transferable for me to be able to lead a enterprise such as an airport."
- "I've served as, as a footnote, the first African American executive airport director in XXXXXXXXXX airport's 80-year history."
- "Being an African American I, I felt that it was a privilege. I felt that it was an opportunity to set a great example, to show that African Americans could indeed lead major transportation hubs. They connect individuals in and around the country. And so, from that, I felt very proud, I felt that it was a privilege."
- "And I also felt that there was you needed to be able to give back or basically pay it forward."
- "You have to be flexible enough to understand that you'd have to move to different locations in order to have an upward trajectory of moving to the next level."
- "I've experienced racism."
- "I've experienced colorism."
- "I've experienced, whereby it's been an issue with trying to balance and make sure that women and other folks who have different sexual preferences or religious affiliations that you have to balance that make sure that your politics you are playing with are on point."

- I wanted to, in turn, be in an environment where I was able to impact minorities, women, people of color."
- "But more so looking at how can I, in turn, make a difference in the communities in which I serve?"
- "A church or anything along those lines for support."
- "I also think that they gave me an opportunity to be in these fraternities, benevolent organizations, church affiliations always help to be able to flood the social into those, the ones that seek support and ones that start a path."
- "Well, more so, making the right decisions in terms of standing for what was right, I think, again, their moral compass and having a set of core values is something that you establish up front."
- "Some of the airport's leaders did not even have a mission statement, vision statement, actual goals or competencies or core values."
- "So started on the front end understanding from a strategic standpoint establishing those aspects at airports, make a difference in terms of how you run the enterprise."
- "I would say that first look at this as a Long Haul."
- "Clearly understanding the opportunity to serve as an executive airport manager and training at one of the large hub airports in which I worked, and so, really trying to understand the different functions and how airports operate, that's key."
- "Become a generalist, not necessarily a specialist."

- "Being really able to see it, experience it, and understand how an airport has an operations background."
- "Also understanding the finances and also to fit into small nuance, right?"

### **Significant Statements From Participant 8**

- "Oh, like a lot of folks, I owe my motivation to be a high achiever to a lot; it's due to my parents, you know."
- "Well, I guess I'm still striving for excellence."
- "Well, I just think finding out that there was so much representation in airport leadership was very encouraging when I finally got into it."
- "Yeah, they were about barriers."
- "Somebody had to be ready for me."
- "Okay, I had two experiences, that were I don't call them barriers. And I mean, nobody ever looked at me and said, hey, you're Black, and we can't hire you. That's beyond you, where I never got that overt reaction. But I did have some interesting experiences."
- "I never felt like I was under a microscope and till the XXXXXXXX experience, and that was running the largest at that time, the largest procurement for concessions in the world."
- "You want to be an example people there's people younger than you behind you trying to make a way. I didn't really come in touch with that side of me so, so I had a strong sense of who I was very early."

- "Okay, and what just might be so I, even though not having to go through actual segregation, because I was only born in 63."
- "It was around when I was growing up, and then as it faded out, people continue to hold on to things illegally, as they still do today."
- "So not wanting to be part of something mediocre kind of drives me if that really helps."
- "You're not going to work everywhere. It's not gonna work out in some places that you really don't need to be. I've managed to find a few of them."
- "What would I tell somebody, and I would say you gotta kiss a lot of frogs."
- "In order to figure out what you what you like."
- "Treat people like a customer."
- "Being a consultant."
- "I'm gonna say this right now because I don't see this in a lot of youth, which is learn to be reasonable."
- "Listen to people you know, and don't take immoral shortcuts because they add up to nothing."
- "So, yeah, but you got to spread yourself around and be willing to work really hard because whatever you put in that toolbox, you're gonna need to be able to draw upon later when we do get into a leadership position."
- "Take measured risks, take measured risks."

### **Significant Statements From Participant 9**

- "Well, I think it evolved over several years and several experiences."

- "And so I think early in life, you know, I saw him as a model for motivation, drive, even though during his time things were not necessarily fair."
- "And then when I got into the military, I was put in a position to lead unexpectedly when, when I deployed to an overseas location where I had no choice but to lead Okay, and I then discovered that I had some hidden talents and skills. That just led me to really continue to move up after that."
- "I'm still very competitive, except now I compete against other airports, and I compete against other airports presidents and CEOs."
- "And I have come to the conclusion that in order to continue with the advancement of people of color, in leadership positions, that my part is that I have to do extremely well, and I can't fail."
- "And what made it very comfortable for me is that I came up in a career field whose diversity was very similar in air traffic control, you know, I think when I came in the air traffic back in the 1980s, you know, I think 5% was African American. So for me to now be in a position of leadership at an airport where the numbers are probably very probably even worse than air traffic. It was a very comfortable place for me to be because I've always been there."
- "There are opportunities that I applied for that I thought I was more than qualified, but never got an opportunity."
- "So I guess the thing is, is if you get an opportunity to get in the door, but a lot of doors I was not able to get into because you know, and what happens

sometime in the industry is people you know, depend on who the hiring authority is right?"

- "They want people sometimes that look like their community. And so, I don't hold that as a fault against the airport authority. You know, the fact of the matter is that I probably was not a good fit. You know, and vice versa. If you have a mayor that is an African American mayor, and the city runs the airport. A lot of times, they may go in specifically wanting an African American to be in a position within their administration."
- "The problem is that there are more authorities and mayors that are not people of color than then they are people of color."
- "You know, when you when you grew up in an African American community as a kid, even though our positions are one where you have to be you have to be fair to all right, you want to make sure that what you do has a real benefit to the community and especially for people that are very similar to you."
- "That's the most important thing, that obligation that you feel to, you know, to the social, you know, part of a community hopefully."
- "That's another very important piece of who I am. To fail was not was not an option."
- "And, and it was always kind of, you know, mentioned that you know, whatever we did in life, you didn't want to, you know, bring any kind of shame to your family name."



- "To do the best you can at everything that you do everything that you do it all ends up in a certain place, and you may not know what that place is."
- "But if you do positive things, you're going to get a positive result."
- "The world is your stage."
- "And don't be prepared to move or leave where you're most comfortable in order to get an opportunity."
- "Every time you engage with somebody, you're being interviewed and always remember that you know."
- "Whoever you talk with, you know, you're under evaluation, right?"

### **Phenomenological Reduction and Elimination**

The process of phenomenological reduction involves identifying and eliminating participant statements that do not provide elements for understanding the lived experience, are nonspecific to the experience, and cannot be labeled (Moustakas, 1994). I reviewed and eliminated participant quotes that did not meet this requirement of the modified Van Kaam phenomenological data analysis. Completing this reduction process ensured that invariant participant statements that speak to the horizon of the lived experience remain (Moustakas, 1994). I began this process by asking myself two questions as I viewed a participant's individual statements: (1) Is this quote important to the participant's lived experience of the phenomenon? and (2) Can this quote be reduced to its latent meaning? If I answered no to any of these questions, then the quote is eliminated to separate the invariant constituents of the experience from redundant and

ancillary information. By eliminating those deemed less relevant to the research question, the reduced list totaled to 97 significant statements, as shown in Appendix D.

The first step in phenomenological reduction and elimination in this study involved developing the meaning of units extracted from significant statements and eliminating any duplication or redundancies noted in the data. Each significant statement extracted from responses was evaluated to ensure reduction and elimination. Meaning units were created from each point recorded and then re-categorized into two primary meaningful categories grounded in the study's conceptual framework: *racial diversity in aviation* and *the MTL*.

All duplications were consolidated, and exception statements were noted. It was included in the statement that unfolded the participant's experience of racial diversity in aviation and the MTL and could be reduced to underlying meaning. If the statement did not meet this criterion, it was considered ancillary and was separated. Statements that were excluded as a result of this process included:

***Racial Diversity in Aviation***

- "I think it goes back to my childhood, and experiences starting with high school, where it was the government public school, ok, and you were expected to be competitive, and so, by the early age my early teenage years 15 and 16."(P1)
- "...it's really rooted in the desire to excel and be the best in your field." (P1)
- "I think that's something that's sort of natural for humans, that if we do something. We want to be the best at it. And so, if we want to be a leader at an

airport, you're motivated to excel and be the best at it in terms of managing people." (P1)

- "I was motivated to Excel because I really just wanted to be the best at what I do for two reasons, one, self-gratification but to know I was mentoring others, I wanted to give them the best lesson there is." (P1)
- "I had two uncles who exposed me to aviation at an early age one of them. Both of them had military experience. One of them, my uncle Jardine, exposed me to aviation, when I was probably five years old." (P 2)
- "There were a lot of things unrelated to aviation that caused me to lose sight of my early exposure to aviation until I met someone in college that said, you know, you're going to be in the aviation management degree program. So, as the saying goes that was a that." (P 2)
- "Not just, you know, the hard skills you learned in school, but the soft skills, how to interact with people that don't look like you and you know there's this, there's this terminology called I just, I don't know if it's the right application but code switching." (P 2)
- "But in reality, is you just have to do what you have to do, to increase your economic base." (P 2)
- "I think that I think the young would have developing their, their thoughts about who they want to be." (P 3)

- "Youth have already developed life ideas about who they want to be. So, I think that in the social studies curriculums when you're learning about history and geography and economics and government." (P 3)
- "The larger commercial airports you'll see a trend kind of developing where more and more large airports systems are looking at non industry executives to head up airports." (P 4)
- "Yes, you have to be you have to be very technical now. You have to be an aviator." (P 4)
- "It could be an issue. It's not a self-inflicted wound." (P 4)
- "First of all, you can't be scared." (P 4)
- "And I was fortunate to be to his unofficial mentoring, right?" (P 5)
- "I would say that first look at this as a Long Haul." (P 7)

### ***Motivation to Lead***

- "You know, a young Black man or woman. I would really encourage them. The first thing I would encourage them to do is find a mentor with whom you're comfortable. I find that mentors can be so valuable." (P1)
- "Magic. So, airports have these amazing economic drivers, and you really what, what, what a career choice." (P1)
- "So, my mother's philosophy was, you know, in order to keep me safe, you know, don't we don't talk too much." (P 2)
- "My first airport job, I was working as a metropolitan planning organization director I wasn't focused on this position, I was offered a vacant position in

the newly elected mayor's administration. He offered me the position and I accepted it." (P 3)

- "If there's a young black man, I've got to tell him about some of the experiences that I've had being a black man, and how I got through them so that they will have the equipment or they will know what's necessary," (P 3)
- "I tell people, and that means, education, if you want a job in the aviation industry, you have to have something to work with, either you have to have education, or you have to have experience, you have to be able to bring a skill that you acquired in potentially another field is transferable so that you can use and exploit it so that you can get to where you want to get to in aviation field." (P 3)
- "I value you know, the code of the streets, right, that you respect people that you know, you trust people you're a man of your word, despite how people might feel about those areas." (P 4)
- "And I think it has everything to do with growing up in a caring, you know, just grew up in a very caring violent sometimes right because of the crime that stems associated with the drug trade but still a loving environment." (P 4)
- HBCUs have a way of having you believe that you're the best at what you do, or you will be the best at what you do." (P 4)
- "One of the big challenges that I have is financing the growth of the airport." (P 5)

- "I'd say mentor, try to get a mentor one or two mentors to kind of help you guide your career." (P 5)
- "But, you know, that that's part of that is out of what I pick up as a necessity is well, because if you know if I show too much of one thing or one side, then that could become a problem." (P 6)
- "I'd like to go out in good standing and have a wonderful retirement chapter. So, I'm not trying to burn bridges, and I try to be set on fire." (P 6)
- "Don't have the geographic location as the top reason why you will or won't." (P 6)
- "Not limiting yourself." (P 6)
- "Listen to people you know, and don't take immoral shortcuts because they add up to nothing." (P 8)
- "Well, I think it evolved over several years and several experiences." (P 9)

### **Clustering and Thematizing**

In the fourth step of Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method of analysis, I thematized the invariant constituents by taking the statements and quotes that passed the two-question test and exploring the latent meanings of significant statements based on those latent meanings. I began to identify and group the underlying meaning into themes. The groupings summarized similar themes that expressed participants' lived experiences with *racial diversity in aviation* and *the MTL*.

According to Moustakas (1994), the notion of *becoming* is the process of growing into the full potential that one can be, and the notion of *being* is a consequence of looking

within to discover one's path, reflecting a manner of existence. The eight themes that emerged from the theme formation process include: (a) early role models of leadership, (b) lifelong experiences of systemic racism, (c) intrinsic motivations to lead, (d) extrinsic MTL, (e) self-efficacy and the MTL, (f) diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, (g) career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and (h) inspiring the next generation of Black leaders.

Theme formation in transcendental phenomenology best reflects reality when the researcher is open to learning by initiating distance between themselves and the phenomenon being studied and intuitively merging with the participant's experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Before making judgments and arriving at conclusions, as in the case of theme formation using a transcendental phenomenology design, one must allow the participant's experience to be observed from various perspectives. Knowledge and discovery for the phenomenological researcher are embedded in being and existing, within ourselves and others—while connecting personal experiences and meanings; and thus forming an unbreakable connection to what exists and what is important and meaningful in a participant's life (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Individual Textual Descriptions**

A textual description is a complete description of the phenomena experienced by the individual participant in their own words (Moustakas, 1994). The textual description describing the lived experiences of participants using verbatim excerpts from their interview is a narrative that explains participants' perceptions of a phenomenon. In this step, I constructed the textual descriptions based on the invariant themes and the horizons

of the experience. I describe "what" was experienced by participants. Textual descriptions are built as additional meanings are sought through imaginative variation, leading me to the "essence" of a phenomenon in a participant's life. The following section outlines the textural descriptions I developed for each participant's responses. Bracketing my interpretations and assumptions allowed me to present the phenomenon for what it meant to the participants (see Finlay, 2012).

### ***Textual Description of Participant 1***

Inspiring the next generation of Black leaders " ...so that you'll have people who are ready qualified for these positions." Extrinsic motivation to lead, " ...so, you really have a social obligation you know, to help, even with all of those barriers, black folk have a social obligation to help mentor people. Participant 1 observed and states that systemic racism..." it's gonna be a challenge for us"... "I think it's just as prevalent today as it was since I joined the industry"... "I've experienced those barriers, personally." Participant 1 has a strong sense of self-efficacy and the motivation to lead, "and that it is important that ...when we get into top positions, we can do something about it, and have an obligation to." Diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector is a major impediment, so much so that "I think I was motivated by the desire to level the playing field," "You have a flock of birds, and the ducks will always choose ducks." His intrinsic motivation to lead, "came from some somewhere in the back of my mind might have been motivated by a desire to lead."



### ***Textual Description of Participant 2***

Career trajectory as a leader in aviation was nonexistent in that ... "there were no examples from which I could draw from experiences to help me navigate a trajectory towards success in this industry", leading to a strong need to inspire the next generation of Black leaders by having "a sense of obligation to be a role model to other people of color, so they can see that there are opportunities in this vast industry. "Participant 2 has experienced systemic racism and states that," ... "The void is still vast." "I mean, I probably know every person of color that is in leadership in the United States, in a commercial service airport in this country," ... "It was a really tough row to hoe." "So, there is, you know, there's always the obvious barrier of being an African American and that may not be so apparent to everybody, but it is very evident to people of color." Participant 2 has experienced the challenges of diversity and inclusion within the airport management sector, and "I believe that the reason I've been afforded the opportunity to lead is because it gives me the opportunity to help someone else." "I believe that...because I'm in this leadership capacity it's my job to not only open the door for others that look like me but to make sure that that door remains open. That I'm reaching back, help train and to prepare people to walk through that door," pushed by his extrinsic motivation to lead.

### ***Textual Description of Participant 3***

Early role models for leadership for Participant 3 was ... "there was one other black person in the mayor's administration, there were not very many black people at the airport. at least not in the white-collar executive positions." His lifelong experiences of

systemic racism were unique in that "I have been reluctant to attribute it to race until fairly recently, when I've unfortunately had to accept reality weighing large." ... "I think being an African American now as I look back on my career has been a major impediment." Diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector were disturbing because "When I look at other examples...and they've been granted certain positions or titles or whatever." "And so, there have been a lot of barriers." "...they find some other excuse to present and amounts to another obstacle to put in your way to prevent you." "I didn't get certain considerations for certain things, because of the color of my skin." Intrinsically Participant 3 "has strong religious beliefs, and I think I was called to be a leader in several different environments." While inspiring the next generation of Black leaders..."we have to have certain skills and abilities to be able to lead a project from concept into operation in terms of figuring out the planning, design, development, how to get it done."

#### ***Textual Description of Participant 4***

Experienced diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector by understanding that "I mean, divert diversity is passe...it's now all about diversity and inclusion." ... "It's one thing to have a segment or percentage of the workforce, you know, meet a certain demographic, but if that is all that's happening, you're not growing and not impactful in the organization, then you still falling short." His self-efficacy and motivation to lead exemplify, "...it's about creating an opportunity for people who otherwise wouldn't have those opportunities to get in, and then...remove barriers that would prevent them from succeeding, giving them the tool that enables them

to succeed." His lifelong experience of systemic racism, "I think there's an innate fear on the part of the majority population that is if blacks are able to rise to the level where they have control over their fate, that they might be treated the same way that we were treated..." The intrinsic motivation to lead for Participant 4, "I said to myself, you know, I always thought that I'm going to be in that seat one day and I said when I'm in that seat, ...I'm gonna make decisions differently."

#### ***Textual Description of Participant 5***

Participant 5 explained, "There wasn't a strong motivation to lead." He expressed that where he is from, "It's a very class-oriented society... and so having an airport director that was black, that was normal, where I'm coming from the majority of people there was Black." sharing his views on diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector. Participant 5 expressed that, "So to me, the motivation to lead is you can be indoors position you can use it for good, you can also use it to do a lot of evil as well."

#### ***Textual Description of Participant 6***

Early role models of leadership, "I didn't see a lot of people that look like me and senior-level roles at larger US airports." Diversity and inclusion within the airport management sector for Participant 6, "They had never had anyone of color in that office, and so I was the first..." and "I will tell you my first position as a director, was influenced by people of color, because they wanted to have diversity."

***Textual Description of Participant 7***

Participant 7 experiences with diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, "I've served as, as a footnote, the first African American executive airport director in XXXXXXXXXXXX airport's 80-year history." I've experienced racism." "I've experienced colorism." Inspiring the next generation of Black leaders Participant 7, "Being an African American I, I felt that it was a privilege I felt that it was an opportunity to set a great example, to show that African Americans could indeed lead major transportation hubs, they connect individuals in and around the country. And so, from that, I felt very proud, I felt that it was a privilege." Self-efficacy and the MTL, "Well more so, making the right decisions in terms of standing for what was right I think, again, their moral compass and having a set of core values is something that you establish upfront." His role in inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, "So started out on the front end understanding from a strategic standpoint establishing those aspects at airports, make a difference in terms of how you run the enterprise."

***Textual Description of Participant 8***

Diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, "Yeah, they were about barriers, and somebody had to be ready for me." "Okay, I had two experiences, that were I don't call them barriers, and I mean, nobody ever looked at me and said, hey, you're Black and we can't hire you." "That's beyond you where I never got that overt reaction." "But I did have some interesting experiences"... "Okay, and what just might be so I, even though not having to go through actual segregation, because I was only born in 63." Inspiring the next generation of Black leader, "You're not going to work

everywhere. It's not gonna work out in some places that you really don't need to be. I've managed to find a few of them."

### ***Textual Description of Participant 9***

His intrinsic MTL, ... "and I have come to the conclusion that in order to continue with the advancement of people of color, in leadership positions, that my part is that I have to do extremely well, and I can't fail." Self-efficacy and the MTL, "you know, when you when you grew up in an African American community as a kid, even though our positions are one where you have to be you have to be fair to all right, you want to make sure that what you do has a real benefit to the community and especially for people that are very similar to you." While inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, "and, and it was always kind of, you know, mentioned that, you know, whatever we did in life, you didn't want to, you know, bring any kind of shame to your family name."

### ***Composite Textual Description***

Once I completed the individual textural descriptions of the nine participant's significant statements, I configured a table of all eight themes formed from participants' responses. Highly recurring themes included early role models of leadership, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, intrinsic motivations to lead, extrinsic MTL, self-efficacy and the MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders. Moderately recurring themes that arose were as follows: Barriers, racism, challenges, level the playing field, the color of my skin, tough row to hoe, innate fear, were grouped under lifelong experiences of systemic racism; I have to do extremely well,

when I'm in that seat I'm gonna make decisions differently, I have strong religious beliefs, came from somewhere in the back of my mind were grouped under intrinsic MTL; ... the ability to help someone else, ...they find some other excuse to present, I've experienced racism, I've experienced colorism, when we get into the top position we can do something about it, it's about creating opportunities for people...giving them the tool to enable them to succeed, were grouped under self-efficacy and the MTL. The themes from individual participants' responses are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3***Themes From Participants' Responses*

Participant	Theme
P1	Early role models of leadership, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, intrinsic motivations to lead, self-efficacy and the MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders
P2	Early role models of leadership, intrinsic MTL, extrinsic MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders
P3	Early role models of leadership, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, intrinsic motivations to lead, extrinsic MTL, self-efficacy and the MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders
P4	Early role models of leadership, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, intrinsic motivations to lead, self-efficacy and the MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector
P5	Early role models of leadership, intrinsic MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, self-efficacy and the MTL, career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders
P6	Early role models of leadership, intrinsic MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, self-efficacy and the MTL, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and extrinsic MTL
P7	Early role models of leadership, intrinsic MTL, self-efficacy and the MTL, inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and extrinsic MTL
P8	Early role models of leadership, intrinsic MTL, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, career trajectory as a leader in aviation, self-efficacy and the MTL, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders
P9	Early role models of leadership, intrinsic motivations to lead, lifelong experiences of systemic racism, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, extrinsic MTL, self-efficacy and the MTL, and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders

### **Bracketing, Imaginative Variation, and Constructing Meaning**

To construct individual participants' structural meanings, I reflected on my preconceived ideas about the phenomenon and bracketed them (see Finlay, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Next, I constructed the themes into structural descriptions of the individual participant's experiences using imaginative variation and removing quotes of individual participants that were not relevant to participants' lived experiences with *racial diversity in aviation and the MTL*.

### **Individual Structural Descriptions**

By applying imaginative variation in this step of Moustakas' modified van Kaam method of analysis, I was able to identify potential meanings of the participant's individual experiences (see Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative variation supports the phenomenological investigator in searching for the "how" of the phenomenon being studied and is a distinct method to explore individuals' identities in organizations (Gill, 2020). The individual structural descriptions that follow reveal the hidden meanings and dynamics of each participant's lived experiences of being a Black man with the MTL in the airport management sector.

### ***Structural Description of Participant 1***

For participant 1, his early leadership role model was the first Black female in the aviation leadership industry who agreed to mentor him. Participant 1 is adamant that the lifelong experiences of systemic racism have motivated him to level the playing field and remove barriers to entry and success of Black Men and women entering the airport



industry by ensuring inclusion, so Black men and women have a fair shot. He thinks that he was motivated to lead from an early age somewhere in the back of his mind.

Participant 1, through his self-efficacy and the MTL, believes there is work to be done along with building succession. He is emphatic that having Black leadership at airports has a domino effect in hiring Black men and women and people of color to influential positions, by adopting solicitation and recruitment policies and how they are written and enforced will serve multiple purposes reducing many of the diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector. While paying it forward, he deeply expresses that it will be challenging but get a mentor, stay with it regardless of the barriers and challenges and what a career choice for a Black man when he speaks with and inspires the next generation of Black leaders.

### ***Structural Description of Participant 2***

Participant 2 was introduced to the aviation industry and leadership early through his two uncles, who were early role models and an individual when in college. Intrinsic MTL come from knowing people are looking up to me and that I have to live up to their expectations, of investing in myself by being twice as educated, as experienced, and be twice as good in terms of performance even though those that are in the non-minority category do not.

Participant 2 expresses that he believed that his external MTL is deliberate and that he has an opportunity to help someone else, and that to whom much is given, much is required. He states that his job is to open the door for others who look like him and make sure the door remains open and reach back to help train and prepare people to walk

through that door to ensure that diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector are improved. When speaking with an individual of the next generation of Black leaders, he shares that it was a tough row to hoe, that pressure is always on you, you have to be very good at what you do, and there is no excuse for mistakes. Participant 2 stated that there are always the apparent barriers of being an African American which may not be apparent to everybody, but it is very evident to people of color.

### ***Structural Description of Participant 3***

For Participant 3, his early role models of leadership were his parents' teaching and actions. He had not attributed adverse actions toward him as systemic racism until relatively recently when he, unfortunately, had to accept the reality that there have been many barriers he had to deal with during his career. His internal MTL emanates from entering an industry and not being welcomed. The lack of African American men, around 1% in a leadership position at commercial service airports, keeps him motivated to demonstrate that Black men can lead when allowed to do so. The significant impediments of being an African American man continually motivate him to be the best leader possible.

Participant 3 has strong religious beliefs and was called to be a leader in several different environments. He feels that to increase the diversity and inclusion within the airport management sector for African Americans, it is essential to think about and implement workforce development by building skills and bridges of knowledge. When

inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, let them know they should learn about airports to set their targets.

#### ***Structural Description of Participant 4***

For Participant 4, his early role models of leadership as a youth of 12 came from the magazine Black Enterprise and its focus on Black-owned businesses. He would study the one hundred top Black-owned businesses. He envisioned himself on that list. His lifelong experiences of systemic racism have demonstrated to him that there is an innate fear of the majority population that if Blacks can rise to the level where they have control over their fate, they might be treated the same way we were treated. However, he is an airport executive. His self-efficacy and the MTL came from his ministry of minority business development and developing opportunities for minority employees to understand the needs of the public in the way of air service. The endless opportunities at airports to make sure said opportunities are made available to minorities keep him motivated.

For participant 4, diversity is passe, and it is now about diversity and inclusion. It is all about creating an opportunity for people who otherwise would not have those opportunities to get in and then removing barriers that would prevent them from succeeding. When thinking about his career trajectory as a leader in aviation, he always thought: " I would be in that seat one day, and when I am, I am going to make decisions differently. When sharing and inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, he ensures they know the margin of error is very narrow, and you cannot be scared. You have to be courageous. If you prepare yourself and make decisions based on sound judgment, you

are going to make more right than wrong decisions, you have to care about people no matter who it is you have to care about and respect people. People will go to the wall for you if they feel you care about them".

### *Structural Description of Participant 5*

He had the pleasure of having as early role models of leadership two of the best airport leaders, one African American, and the other Hispanic or Latino. This is a very class-oriented society. Coming to the U.S., his lifelong experiences were not systemic racism but rather systemic classism. He believes he is doing this for hundreds, possibly thousands of individuals, which translated into thousands of families for now, but families for the next generation are intrinsically motivated to lead. He believed: "I figured if they could do it, I can do it as well. I learned a lot from them and learned a lot from them about what not to do, which affected my self-efficacy and MTL".

Participant 5 had markedly different experiences of diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector. Young African American professionals were coming up in an airport where most of the leadership is white, and they are struggling because they see the barriers, and "... I am trying to work with them. I did not go through that in my aviation career, and I went through it from the social side when applying for jobs. I did not experience the barriers coming into the industry. For Participant 5, inspiring the next generation of Black leaders would involve: "obtaining a mentor or two to help guide your career, seize opportunities to expose yourself to presentations at meetings, work on projects outside of your area of expertise, treat people

with respect, and do not just network with people that know you but also those who are not acquainted with you".

### ***Structural Description of Participant 6***

Early role models of leadership for participant 6 came from observations of his grandfather's interaction with people that were doing great things. His intrinsic MTL was stirred by observing a Black woman leading the worlds' busiest airport, which led him to realize that airports were the place he wanted to be and his obligation to do well to those that leaned in to help him get there. Diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector did not allow him to see many people in leadership positions that looked like him. Thinking of his mother and all she did to prepare him for success provided him with the external MTL, and at the end of the day, he held his self-efficacy and MTL.

His lifelong experiences of systemic racism have shown that him the following: "when someone does not like you or decide they are going to have it out for you, they will do what they can to bring you down, and if you give it a little fuel, they will turn it into a fire which could burn you up." Being visible in high-level positions as participant 6 was, it was hoped that it would be inspiring to the next generation of Black leaders. He continued by saying: "Being open to opportunities that are presented to you, not limit yourself, do not have geographical locations as the top reason why you will or will not take a position, believe in yourself, be patient, be strategic, not limit yourself, have someone you can reach out to, develop a network of people and do not hesitate to reach out to them is the advice he shares with inspiring future black leaders." His career

trajectory as a leader in aviation and the airport was where he wanted to be. Getting to the top position was his goal. To fulfill his career progression, he moved around to move up, becoming very strategic.

### ***Structural Description of Participant 7***

Early role models of leadership were established while working in various positions with professional organizations building on his leadership skills. Being an African American man, he felt it was a privilege and an opportunity to set a great example intrinsically motivated him to lead. He felt proud. The self-efficacy and the MTL for participant 7 were sustained by the need to give back or basically pay it forward. When inspiring the next generation of Black leaders, participant 7 suggest to first look at this as a long haul, understand the opportunity to serve as an executive airport manager and trainee, become a generalist, experience it, and understand how the airport has an operations background, understand the finances and to fit into small nuances. During his lifelong experiences of systemic racism, he experienced racism, colorism, and the imbalance and disparity imposed on the different racial, ethnic, and sexual preference groups

### ***Structural Description of Participant 8***

Early role models of leadership were his parents; not wanting to be part of something mediocre intrinsically motivation him to lead. His lifelong experiences of systemic racism were spattered with barriers and those he does not call barriers, but someone had to be ready for him if he was to be successful. He did not actually have to go through segregation because he was born in 1963. When he was growing up, and then

it faded out, people continued to hold on to things illegally, as they still do today. Striving for excellence is driving the career trajectory as a leader in aviation for participant 8. His self-efficacy and the MTL are driven by the knowledge of younger people behind him trying to make a way. He had a strong sense of who he was very early. Some thoughts he had for inspiring the next generation of Black leaders were: "you going to have to kiss a lot of frogs in order to figure out what you like, treat people like customers, become a consultant, learn to be reasonable, listen to people you know, take measured risk, do not take immoral shortcuts."

### ***Structural Description of Participant 9***

Participant 9's early role models of leadership evolved over several years and experiences early in life, seeing him for motivation and drive even though things were not fair. While in the military, he was placed into a position of leadership. He intrinsically concluded that he had to do exceptionally well to motivate African American men to leadership positions and could not fail. Interestingly his lifelong experience of systemic racism goes back to when " I came into air traffic in 1980. I think 5% were African Americans for me to now have a position of leadership at an airport where the number is even worse than air traffic. It is a very comfortable place for me to be because I have always been there". For him, diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector boil down to wanting people who look like their community. He shared that if an African American mayor and the city runs the airport, they may often want an African American to be in that position. The problem is that some more authorities and mayors are not people of color than people of color. Not wanting to bring

shame to the family has always been his part of his extrinsic MTL. Another critical piece of who he was was that failure was not an option to fail. When asked to inspire the next generation of Black leaders, participant 9 shared: "Do the best you can at everything. If you do positive things, you will get positive results. The world is a stage, do not be prepared to move or leave where you are most comfortable in order to get an opportunity, every time you engage with somebody, you are being interviewed, and whomever you talk with you are under evaluation".

### **Synthesized Textural and Structural Description**

Being a successful African American/Black male in the executive leadership position in one of the over 19,900 general aviation airports in the United States of a U.S. primary commercial service airport is monumental. There are over 5200 public-use airports and approximately 500 primary commercial service airports currently in the United States. Despite being qualified and exceeding in all aspects of the proposed and obtained positions, these Black men still experience internal and external challenges during their leadership ascension. Some challenges have included being misunderstood or misinterpreted due to racial bias and stereotyping, fear of the Black man, and being overlooked for advancement and promotions. Astonishingly, the number of African American males leading U.S. primary commercial service airports stand at less than 10, or 0.02%.

Airports are business enterprises, and all African American/Black male airport executive leaders are responsible for providing guidance to staff on capital improvement programs, marketing the airport, and ensuring the airport departments are appropriately



staffed and maintain facilities. Executive leaders are also responsible for airport safety and security, business, and property management, ensuring the airport is technologically advanced, and ensuring their airport is financially generating sustainable non-airline and airline revenues from concessionaires, airlines, tenants, and on and off-airport properties that support the airports and develop employment opportunities within and outside the communities of their location. They must set up the airport for success. They are involved in developing minority business opportunities and opportunities for minorities in employment at their airport, and as airport executives, many are vital members of local economic planning and recruitment teams.

These African American/Black men were inspired to lead at an early age by family members except one who was inspired when having the opportunity to observe an African American/Black woman leading a major airport. Influencing change and being a part of the decision-making process was also a motivator for leadership. They all admit the scarcity of African American male executive leaders of U.S. primary commercial service airports. They know each of them personally by name.

These African American/Black men have experienced systemic racism during their journeys into executive leadership of U.S. primary commercial service airports, except for one who experienced systemic classism coming of age in his home country. These men provided direction for their staff to reduce and, in many cases, eliminate exclusionary policies and practices of African Americans and other minorities from employment opportunities at their airports. They have the desire and ability to level the playing field and remove barriers to entry and success for Black men and women entering

the airport industry by ensuring inclusion for Black men and women. They are proud of their blackness and want to like other men, to exist as a man and not the systemically labeled category of their race.

Being Black individuals and knowing the significant impediments of being an African American/Black man, not just in leadership positions, motivates them to be the best leader possible. They each had intrinsic motivators that kept them focused, from "knowing people are looking up to me" and that "I have to live up to their expectations, investing in myself by being twice as educated, twice as experienced," and twice as good in terms of performance even though those that are in the non-minority category. Many of these men entered an industry where they were not welcomed. They had to demonstrate that Black men can lead when allowed to do so and do exceptionally well to motivate other African American men to seek leadership positions. Several men expressed that they could not fail, and failure was not an option. Threads of their motivation were in each of their comments.

These African American/Black men had similar results to the treads running through their internal motivation. Their external motivators included being called to lead, to whom much is given, much is required, not bringing shame to the family, the understanding being under a microscope, and mentoring people to be ready for promotional opportunities. Failure may preclude another African American male from being given the same opportunity.

These African American/Black men have a sense of self-efficacy, knowing there is work to be done. Building succession to secure a place for African American male

airport executives, to open the door for others that look like them and to make sure the door remains open, and to reach back to help train and prepare people to walk through the door ensuring diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector are improved. Each learning not only what and how to do things but also what not to do, and understanding younger people are trying to make their way into leadership.

These successful Black men want to help others who look like them provided clarity that not seeing people like them in leadership positions focused on diversity and inclusion challenges in the airport management sector. To have implemented solicitation and recruitment policies to include not only how said policies are written but also enforced will serve to develop the workforce by building skills and bridges to knowledge, which will reduce many of the diversity and inclusion challenges and allow the duck to not only fly with ducks but to fly with other birds as well.

When beginning their careers in the airport industry, many African American/Black men did not see a trajectory into the executive leadership position of a U.S. primary commercial service airport due to barriers and lack of support. They could make it into the top leadership position with mentorship, sponsorship, and people who provide guidance and support. Mentorship is viewed as an essential aspect of leadership development. Collectively, African American/Black men that lead U.S. primary commercial service airports suggestions to the next generation of Black leaders do the best they can at everything. The collective voice of the lived experiences of the Black men in my study spoke to the younger generation: If you do positive things, you will get

positive results, the world is a stage, and figure out what role you wish to play in your own life story.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

As outlined in Chapter 3, trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to a research study measuring what it intended to measure and that the study is a true reflection of participant experiences (Maher et al., 2018). Transferability refers to whether the findings of a study can be adapted in other scenarios and contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Dependability in qualitative research refers to the ability of a study to result in similar findings if it were repeated in the same context with different participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Confirmability relates to the study's ability to be corroborated and verified by other researchers (Tracy, 2019). In a qualitative study, these components of trustworthiness denote thorough, high-quality research (Peterson, 2019). Support follows for the alignment to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### **Credibility**

I did not adjust the strategies noted in the Chapter 3 process to ensure participants' interviews were transcribed as recorded. Credibility is a term that refers to a research study measuring what it intended to measure and that the study is a true reflection of participant experiences (Maher et al., 2018). I followed Moustakas' (1994) modified Van Kaam method of data analysis, a proven, structured, and rigorous process for analyzing participants' lived experiences in phenomenological studies. To establish the credibility

of the study findings, information was collected through interviews with nine participants, allowing multiple perspectives and varied information.

Member-checking was conducted to ensure the accuracy of conclusions drawn from findings, thus establishing study credibility (Tracy, 2019). I notified participants in writing via email prior to the interview that I would conduct member checking and that it involved me sending them a copy of their transcribed interview after completing the interview. They were then to review the transcript and verify that I accurately captured their lived experiences or if edits were needed and return the transcript within 48 hours. Four participants made minor edits to their interview transcripts, confirmed the accuracy of their transcripts, and returned their transcripts, as did all other participants in this study. After completing the member-checking process within the allotted time, I proceeded with data analysis.

### **Transferability**

Adjustments to the strategies of Chapter 3 were not necessary for using the sampling of nine African American/Black male leaders of U.S. primary commercial service airports. Transferability refers to whether the findings of a study can be adapted in other scenarios and contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In this study, the transferability of a study was established by obtaining rich, thick descriptions of participants' lived experiences, providing a model for future research in other research contexts. By using these strategies, I demonstrated that the elements of this study could be transferred and applied widely across a myriad of participants, groups, and settings (Maxwell, 2012). Black men's rich lived experiences, and thick descriptions were shared

in this research study. Each participant described their MTL and their lived experiences in the airport management sector as an African American/Black male. Providing this level of detail will allow future researchers to replicate this study to achieve similar results. Transferability ensures that research findings may apply to other scenarios and contexts in the broader field (Rheinhardt et al., 2018).

### **Dependability**

I applied dependability without adjustments to strategies addressed in Chapter 3 involving crosschecking to ensure consistency of immersing themes. Dependability ensures that similar findings would arise if this qualitative study were replicated with different participants in the same context (Suter, 2012). To ensure replicability of study in context and with participants, the essence of dependability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), protocols and procedures used in qualitative data collection such as semi-structured interviews were conducted. To ensure dependability in this study, an audit trail was incorporated, where the study protocol will be outlined, and the data collection process was discussed in detail (Tracy, 2019)

To ensure dependability in this study, an audit trail was incorporated, the study protocol was outlined, and the data collection process was discussed in detail (Tracy, 2019) with participants. An examination of the audit trail included a review of how data analysis was conducted, notes, how themes were constructed, and how data was coded (Cruz & Tantia, 2017). My dissertation committee chair, Dr. Daphne Halkias, acted as an external auditor to strengthen the dependability and trustworthiness of this study. I provided a detailed description of the data collection process using Moustakas' (1994)

modified Van Kaam method. All these elements support the potential replication of similar findings with different participants.

### **Confirmability**

No adjustments were made to strategies denoted in Chapter 3 to mitigate unconscious biases. Confirmability relates to the study's ability to be corroborated and verified by other researchers (Tracy, 2019) and the degree to which another researcher can verify or replicate findings (Connelly, 2016). Confirmability and the removal of researcher bias were applied in this study by applying epoche, which requires the researcher to bracket and set aside all preconceived notions, ideas, thoughts, and biases regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). I applied triangulation to confirm data collection and the epoche process to address researcher bias. Triangulation consisted of reviewing multiple sources of information to confirm the collected data in a research study and ensure consistency (Hadi & Closs, 2016). I kept a reflective journal to record thoughts, observations, and consistent themes shared by participants of their MTL and their lived experiences as a Black man in airport management.

### **Study Results**

I developed the research question for this study based on the purpose of the study, the research problem, and the qualitative research design. The purpose of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study is to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. The central research question for this transcendental, phenomenological study was: How do Black men describe their lived experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector?

The interview questions were reflective of the various challenges and obstacles faced by successful black men in airport leadership positions, given the aviation sector's issues with a lack of diversity and inclusion. The questions also focused on their MTL and how that characteristic inspired their leadership journey. The participant's responses were categorized into the following eight themes based on the coding and analysis results.

### **Early Role Models of Leadership**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview question one. The participants described their lived experiences and the circumstances from early role models that led them to become airport executives. A participant stated, "When I joined airports, I think there were four or five black CEOs of commercial airports." He also stated that "I was both inspired and encouraged." Another participant described his experience as "I saw a lot of black and brown folks, professionals, had an impact on me." Participants also described how their family members inspired them to be the best they could be by improving their education to achieve executive-level positions at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

### **Lifelong Experience of Systemic Racism**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview questions two and three. The participants described their lived experiences and the circumstances that led them to endure various treatments while becoming airport executives. A participant stated that "for me, the self-identity the experience of self-identity as a black man in terms of consideration of motivating me to lead. I think I was



motivated by the desire to level the playing field". Another participant stated "that in every instance that I can reflect on, in a past life, or these past experiences, I don't recall seeing many Black people in a leadership capacity at those conferences, or as representative of the airports they were in attendance at those conferences. It was a really tough row to hoe." Participants described their experiences as a Black man in an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport as it is crucial to watch the thing one did and is disappointing there are not more than the small number of Black airport executives, and the work is not finished.

### **Intrinsic MTL**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview questions four and six. The participants described their lived experiences and the circumstances of internal motivation that led them to become airport executives. A participant stated that "he had an obligation I really felt is that of paying forward and correspondingly, setting an example." Another participant described his experience as a moral obligation, "So, the moral obligation is, you know, don't make mistakes, you have to be very good at what you do so that there's no excuse for you to experience some adverse outcome because you made a mistake. Not just you, but the people that follow you that look like you." Participants also describe how to never engage in any illegal and unethical, immoral activity, look out for each other, and influence as many people as possible in a positive way furthered their quest and enabled them to achieve an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

**Extrinsic MTL**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview questions five and seven. The participants described their lived experiences and the circumstances of external motivation that led them to become airport executives. Another participant stated, "here's something that says, to whom much is given, much is required. I believe that, you know, because I'm in this leadership capacity, it's my job to not only open the door for others that look like me but to make sure that that door remains open." Participants also describe how important it is for them to be a part of the greater good for society at large, that we have to do something, and want to be one of those who made it into an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

**Self-Efficacy and the MTL**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview questions five and six. The participants described their lived experiences and the circumstances, self-efficacy, and motivation that led them to become airport executives. A participant stated, "We have a social obligation to the Black race, to do whatever we can to one, attract more of us to the industry and say things, the second thing is to help whatever we can to reduce and eventually hopefully eliminate the barriers, towards career advancement, and third...working through the political process." Another participant described his experience in this way, "whether I accept it or not, I'm a role model, so I have to live my life, realizing that there are people that are looking up to me and that I have to live in accordance to an expectation; an expectation that supersedes, you know who I am, or what I am. An expectation that says that I exemplify the ideal kind of

character or behavior that's required to function in this kind of capacity." Participants also describe having a natural propensity to look at a situation and determine how to improve it. They do not feel they have the luxury to make significant mistakes while ascending into executive-level positions at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

### **Diversity and Inclusion Challenges Within the Airport Management Sector**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview questions two, three, and four. The participants described their lived experiences and the motivation from the lack of diversity and inclusion that led them to become airport executives. One participant stated, "So, to the degree that you have black leadership at an airport, it has a domino effect in terms of the potential for black men and women, and women, and women of all color, to succeed in both contracting and the employment process," A second participant described his experience as, "I didn't see a lot of people that look like me and senior-level roles at larger U.S. airports."

Another participant described his lived experience as, "I remember he was so outstanding. I mean, markedly superior and this, I was so proud of him, a brother coming in, and he just blew everybody away, and so there is no question I was going to be right. But I had two other men on the committee. And they chose instead a white guy who had airline experience, no airport experience. And I thought, how could you all have done that. And one person said, oh, he wasn't passionate enough. He said, you know, people have said that to me before that I'm too calm to be an airport CEO and things like that but, you know, if a plane is going down, I want to calm guy flying it." Participants also describe how it's a challenge for us, experiencing barriers, being passed over, and training

the white person who was hired over self en route to achieving an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

### **Career Trajectory as a Leader in Aviation**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview questions two, three, and six. The participants described their lived experiences and the circumstances that led them to become airport executives. A participant stated, " I want to be the aviation general manager...one day... I want to get airport to director" He also stated that "I was both inspired and encouraged." Another participant described his experience as "I felt that it was a privilege. I felt that it was an opportunity to set a great example, to show that African Americans could indeed lead major transportation hubs." Participants also describe that one must never, never explored exclude yourself, let them do it, find mentors, become well versed in multiple disciplines, so you are ready to fully function in an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

### **Inspiring the Next Generation of Black Leaders**

The formation of this theme is based on participant responses to interview question seven. The participants shared their advice for the next generation of Black leaders. A participant stated, "The first thing I would encourage them to do is find a mentor with whom you're comfortable." Another participant stated that "I would say look to the axiom that says the black man has been twice as good. It still holds true today. It's unfortunate, but...you have to really invest a lot in yourself, you have to be twice as educated, you have to be twice as experienced, you have to be twice as good in terms of your performance." Participants also describe that joining professional organizations like

AAAE AMAC, ACI, provides networking opportunities to develop relationships en route to achieving an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport.

### **Summary**

Data collection for this qualitative study was driven by the research question: How do Black men describe their lived experiences with the MTL in the airport management sector? I conducted the data analysis utilizing the seven steps of the modified Van Kaam method (Moustakas, 1994). I began to identify and group the underlying meaning of participants' lived experiences into themes that expressed participants' lived experiences with racial diversity in aviation and the MTL to support the notion of becoming, the process of growing into the full potential that one can be, and that of being, a consequence of looking within to discover one's path, and reflecting a manner of existence. The eight themes that emerged from the theme formation process include: (a) early role models of leadership, (b) lifelong experiences of systemic racism, (c) intrinsic motivations to lead, (d) extrinsic MTL, (e) self-efficacy and the MTL, (f) diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, (g) career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and (h) inspiring the next generation of Black leaders.

Being a successful African American/Black male in the executive leadership position in one of the over 19,900 general aviation airports in the United States of a U.S. primary commercial service airport is monumental. There are over 5200 public-use airports and approximately 500 primary commercial service airports currently in the United States. Despite being qualified and exceeding in all aspects of the proposed and obtained positions, the study participants still experienced internal and external

challenges during their leadership ascension. Some challenges have included being misunderstood or misinterpreted due to racial bias and stereotyping, fear of the Black man, and being overlooked for advancement and promotions.

These African American/Black men were inspired to lead at an early age by family members except one who was inspired when having the opportunity to observe an African American/Black woman leading a major airport. Influencing change and being a part of the decision-making process was also a motivator for leadership. These men have the desire and ability to level the playing field and remove barriers to entry and success for Black men and women entering the airport industry by ensuring inclusion for Black men and women. They are proud of their blackness and want to like other men, to exist as a man and not the systemically labeled category of their race.

Being Black many of these men entered an industry where they were not welcomed. They had to demonstrate that Black men can lead when allowed to do so and do exceptionally well to motivate other African American men to seek leadership positions. Several men expressed that they could not fail, and failure was not an option. Their external motivators included being called to lead, to whom much is given, much is required, not bringing shame to the family, the understanding being under a microscope, and mentoring people to be ready for promotional opportunities. Failure may preclude another African American male from being given the same opportunity. These African American/Black men have a sense of self-efficacy and want to build and inspire the next generation of young Black men as leaders. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of the

study findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, implications of this study, and my final conclusions.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. I used a transcendental phenomenological design to describe the essence of each participant's lived experience with the phenomenon under study (see Moustakas, 1994). I collected data aligned with the transcendental phenomenological design using in-depth interviews in the informal, interactive process containing open-ended questions and dialogue. I conducted semistructured interviews, and once data were collected, I engaged in the epoche process as recommended by Moustakas (1994) to bracket my prior knowledge on the topic and remove my bias and preconceived judgments. Participants in this study described their experiences of becoming successful Black male leaders in the airport management sector.

Two critical concepts grounded this study and aligned with the study's purpose of exploring how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experiences: (a) Harl and Roberts's (2011) concept of racial diversity in aviation, and (b) Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of the MTL. Through this empirical investigation, I supported my goal of advancing research and addressing a literature gap on understanding how Black men in the airport management sector describe their lived experiences with their MTL, and contributing original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. The eight themes that emerged from the completed modified van Kaam method were as follows: (a) early role models of leadership, (b) lifelong experiences of systemic racism, (c) intrinsic motivations to lead, (d) extrinsic MTL, (e) self-efficacy and the MTL, (f) diversity and



inclusion challenges within the airport management sector, (g) career trajectory as a leader in aviation, and (h) inspiring the next generation of Black leaders.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

With findings from this transcendental phenomenological study, I confirmed existing scholarly knowledge. Each narrative of participants' lived experiences presented issues that confirmed findings outlined in the literature review. During the modified Van Kaam data analysis method, I observed no discrepant data contradicting the themes emerging from my data analysis and theoretical suppositions presented within the conceptual framework. I compared and contrasted this study's findings with scholarly research presented in the conceptual framework and my critical review of the scholarly literature (see Auvinen et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2017; Dolan et al., 2020; Harl & Roberts, 2011; Kelleher, 2020; Kelley, 2019; Roberts et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020; Sisco, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2020; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020).

For any phenomenology study, a researcher must examine the available theories and discuss the body of knowledge on the topic. Qualitative research findings can indicate constructs that inform the development and extension of theory (Harkiolakis, 2017). Many theories contain phenomenological material or are built on certain intuitions that presume phenomenological understanding. Bracketing theoretical meaning includes examining it for possibilities of extracting phenomenological sensemaking. Theories are often used in phenomenology to indicate whether the data collected and analyzed provides consistent results with previous findings and to include something different that no one has described before. Theme formation in transcendental phenomenology best

reflects reality when the researcher is open to learning by initiating distance between themselves and the phenomenon being studied (Moustakas, 1994). In this section, I provide evidence of how the study findings by themes confirmed, aligned with, or defied existing knowledge found within the literature addressing racial diversity in aviation and the MTL.

### **Early Role Models of Leadership**

Scholars indicated that due to the long-standing underrepresentation of Black men in executive experiences across industry sectors, leadership scholars have overlooked documenting Black men's MTL in professional life (Burt et al., 2020). More specifically, little is known about the motivating factors of African American men who lead in airport management due to a gap in the business and management literature (Sisco, 2020). My study results confirmed that Black men in leadership positions are underrepresented in the executive ranks. My study participants set forth to be successful executive leaders who came from role models within their community. The lessons learned manifested in the product they deliver and benefit society and Black men aspiring for leadership positions at U.S. primary commercial service airports. Study participants confirmed that family members were early influencers for their desire to lead along with their early leadership training.

Findings from the current study align with Chan's (1999) assertion in his MTL theory that specific structures in early life combine to form behavior and values relating to action, social norms relating to action, and beliefs about the action results. Chan developed his earliest MTL model based on two central social-cognitive theories:

Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action and Triandis's (1977) theory of interpersonal behavior. These theories posit that specific structures combine to form behavior: values relating to action (affective structure), social norms relating to action (social structure), and beliefs about the results of the action (calculative structure). Chan assumed that these theories provide the framework for understanding the psychological structure of MTL. The current study results provide new knowledge and assumptions based on Chan's and Chan and Drasgow's (2001) scholarly works by offering original qualitative data that early role models of leadership interfacing with values, social norms, and beliefs contribute to the MTL in adult life.

### **Lifelong Experience of Systemic Racism**

Two decades of public and private labor statistics reports and research studies documented that Black employees are often challenged by systemic racism in organizations, contributing to depression, anxiety, and professional and social exclusion at work (Burt et al., 2018). My study results confirmed that Black male professionals continue to navigate racial bias in the workplace due to embedded systems of systemic racism. Study participants confirmed that challenges continue for Black men in corporate America. This finding aligns with Sisco's (2020) conclusions that the dearth of relevant research data about African American men in corporate leadership exposes a gap in the research and a lack of understanding of the positive and negative motivational factors African American men experience pursuing organizational decision-making opportunities. The study results extend knowledge based on the works of Sisco (2020) regarding how corporations have maintained a history of operating as racialized social

systems that contribute to racial divisions and inequities in the workplace. Despite this reality, high-achieving Black men and women have overcome limitations and unfavorable circumstances persistently faced.

### **Intrinsic Motivation to Lead**

Scholars indicated that three motivations explain an individual's drive to lead. First, affective-identity MTL states that intrinsic motivation drives individuals to become leaders because they enjoy leading. Affective-identity MTL is an intrinsic motivation because enjoyment comes from within and does not depend on context or environment. Affective-identity MTL has roots in McClelland's (1965) motivation theory and the need for achievement. Individuals who are high in need for achievement enjoy the challenge of a task and the challenge of leading (Özcan, 2021).

My study results confirmed that although the number of Black airport executives is low, their MTL supported them moving forward in their careers. Study participants confirmed that they had an internal drive to lead and improve hiring and promoting Black male employees seeking leadership positions. This finding aligns with Chan (1999), who developed his conceptual model of MTL based on two central social-cognitive theories: Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action and Triandis's (1977) theory of interpersonal behavior. The study results extend knowledge based on Chan's scholarly work on the MTL, which posits that major structures combine to form behavior and that the dominant factors in an individual's wish to lead can be determined.

### **Extrinsic Motivation to Lead**

Scholars indicated that social normative MTL is an extrinsic motivator. Extrinsic motivation is driven by forces outside of the work itself, including pay or positive recognition. Social normative MTL is driven by extrinsic motivation because duty may vary depending on the situation or the leader's followers. Social normative MTL is motivation derived from a sense of duty (Chan, 1999). Social normative MTL is grounded in McClelland's (1965) motivation theory and the need for affiliation. Need for affiliation describes people as wanting to be liked by others, enjoying collaborating with others, and seeking close relationships on the job (Coccia, 2018).

My study results confirmed that Black executive leaders express social obligations to level the playing field and ensure employment and promotional opportunities remain available to capable Black potential leaders. Study participants confirmed that it is their job to open the door for others who look like them; to make sure that that door remains open; and to reach back, help train, and prepare people to walk through that door. This finding aligns with McClelland's (1965) motivation theory, the need for affiliation, and a sense of duty (Chan, 1999). The study results extend knowledge based on the works of Chan (1999), McClelland (1965), and Coccia (2018) in understanding how extrinsic motivation can drive a successful career trajectory in the leadership area.

### **Self-Efficacy and the Motivation to Lead**

Scholars indicated a clear link between leadership self-efficacy and MTL, suggesting that in order to want to lead, an individual also needs to feel able to lead. My

study results confirmed this. The assumption of self-efficacy to lead was validated in other studies extending Chan and Drasgow's (2001) theoretical work by identifying the literature gap on leaders' experiences with MTL as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader (see Auvinen et al., 2020; Badura et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). Current study participants confirmed that it is about creating an opportunity for people who otherwise would not have those opportunities and the tools to remove barriers that would prevent them from success.

My study results align with Badura et al.'s (2020) conclusions that factors differ from one person to another in both intensity and essence, and because factors exist in interaction within the environment, they may be expected to form different combinations of MTL. The current study results extend knowledge based on the works of Chan and Drasgow (2001), Auvinen et al. (2020), Badura et al. (2020), and Schyns et al. (2020) on the assumption of self-efficacy to lead by identifying the literature gap on leaders' experiences with MTL as a personal resource for building a sustainable career as a leader.

### **Diversity and Inclusion Challenges Within the Airport Management Sector**

Scholars highlighted the long-standing status quo of not allowing more than 3.3% of Black people into executive and senior-level positions of leadership of Fortune 500 companies when Black Americans make up at least 13% of the population. Posner (2020) and Miner (2005) noted that promoting diversity and inclusion at all levels is needed. My study results confirmed that the airport management sector lacks diversity and inclusive hiring practices (see Dolan et al., 2020) in its leadership positions, even though many U.S. airports are obligated to do so under state and local laws (see Kelleher, 2020).

Study participants confirmed diversity is passe; it is now all about diversity and inclusion. The participants agreed that Black men continue to meet diversity and inclusion challenges within the airport management sector. This study's results align with Kelleher's (2020) conclusions that diversity at an airport, through the contracting or employment of a more demographically representative population, including at the CEO level, can increase productivity and lead to economic benefits for the airport. The study results extend knowledge based on the practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging and support from the organization (see Pedulla, 2020). Dolan et al. (2020) noted that the presence of differences within a workplace setting can mean differences in race, ethnicity, gender, or any number of things.

### **Career Trajectory as a Leader in Aviation**

Scholars indicated that leaders' MTL has been investigated as a personal resource for building a sustainable career trajectory as a leader, but only in demographic groups of predominately White European ethnicity (Auvinen et al., 2020; Schyns et al., 2020). My study results confirmed a lens of lived experiences through which current and future Black male leaders may develop and negotiate their upward career trajectory as leaders in U.S. primary commercial service airports. Such lived leadership development experiences solidified the participants' upward career mobility into executive leadership positions.

Study participants confirmed that they never excluded themselves from leadership education, found mentors, and became well versed in multiple disciplines to be able to function in an executive-level position at a U.S. primary commercial service airport. This

study's results align with Harl and Roberts's (2011) and Stevenson et al.'s (2020) conclusions that Black representation in the corporate world and in airport management has been largely overlooked. The study results extend knowledge from the works of Sisco (2020) and Stevenson et al. (2020) on how understanding Black men's MTL in the airport management sector can improve the trajectory of Black men into leadership positions at U.S. primary commercial service airports.

### **Inspiring the Next Generation of Black Leaders**

Scholars found that Blacks were motivated to join the ranks of aviation leaders and, contrary to some beliefs, did not have a lack of interest in aviation. Regardless of how motivated and inspired the next generation of Black leaders might be, the industry has closed the door of opportunity and has not shown an interest in Black people (Stevenson et al., 2020). My study results provided a lens through which current and future Black male leaders may develop and negotiate their upward career trajectory as leaders in U.S. primary commercial service airports.

Study participants confirmed that a leader's duty is to interact with the next generation of Black male leaders. Black male mentors are needed to help mentees cross over that threshold to success. Participants reported that they hoped to share their leadership development experiences to inspire the next generation of Black leaders. This study confirms evidence reported in the Coqual (2019) Report that Black professionals may be more ambitious than their White counterparts to aspire to the top positions within their organizations and yet are denied access at a higher rate. The study results extend knowledge from Stevenson et al.'s (2020) study that Black professionals continue to



aspire to the top positions within U.S. primary commercial service airports yet are denied access at a higher rate.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were limitations and challenges during this study, and as the researcher, I must be aware of the limitations of this research study (Cypress, 2017). Identifying the limitations of a study is critical for ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015). While this study contributes to the literature by furthering the understanding of how African American/Black male airport executives described their lived experiences with leading one of nine U.S. primary commercial service airports and the meaning of their racial identity within this non-traditional mode of work, limitations, and challenges of this study must be noted.

One limitation was the difficulty identifying the small number of African American men who are current or past executive leaders of a U.S. primary commercial service airport and how many were willing to participate and share their lived experiences. The sample was limited to those executives leading U.S. commercial service airports and identifying their job title designation as CEO, CAO, Administrator, President, Senior Partner, Senior Executive, Director, or General Manager.

A second limitation is that the small sample sizes of qualitative research do not allow the generalizability of results to the general population. Participants' narratives of lived experiences are critical, as they offer substance for an information-rich study while following transcendental phenomenology guidelines for establishing the credibility of the coded data. I collected and analyzed the data and ensured transferability to similar

populations in other contexts (see Stake, 2010). These efforts were performed and extended throughout the analysis of each participant's narratives of lived experiences and were solidified at the best level possible despite the described limitations.

A third limitation was that during recruitment for this study. However, the researcher was able to contact possible participants, most of those contacted did not meet the requirement for participation in this research for reasons such as that they were the leader of general aviation airports and lacked the experience of providing executive leadership at a U.S. primary commercial service airport with over 10,000 annual enplanements. Of those contacted, nine met the requirement for participation.

A fourth limitation was that as the researcher and an African American/Black man myself who has worked in the ranks of U.S. commercial service airport leadership, I needed to avoid potential bias in this study. To ensure that my current experience and knowledge as an airport leader did not influence this study, I incorporated the protocol of epoche. Epoche calls for removing understandings, biases, what is known, and preconceived notions so that the researcher can approach the phenomena from a fresh viewpoint, as if for the first time (see Moustakas, 1994).

Another limitation focuses on the reliability or self-reporting of participants in responding accurately and openly. However, I triangulated information from the interview questions, member checking, and a personal journal to ensure the validity of the research. It was a challenge working around the busy schedules of the participating executive leaders to allow their support staff to establish meeting time, date, and the

medium to capture the meeting via Microsoft Teams or Zoom conferencing within the timeline for completing all research interviews.

### **Recommendations**

The purpose of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study was to explore and gain a deeper understanding of African American/Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. Two critical concepts ground this study that focuses on aligning with the study's purpose on how African American/Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experiences: 1) Harl and Roberts' (2011) concept of *racial diversity in aviation*, and 2) Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of *the MTL*. The data I collected during this study showed how corporate environments might appear to be in support of closing the racial gap through diversity and inclusion in hiring. However, the evidence remains abysmally: less than expected because of 519 U.S. primary commercial service airports, and there are less than 10 African American/Black male executive-level leaders.

### **Recommendations for Research**

I undertook this study to bring awareness to the airport leadership community concerning the lack of African American/Black men who lead U.S. primary commercial service airports, and the lived experiences of these men. This unique group of men and their working environment must be recognized and addressed. Although participants shared similar experiences surrounding exclusion and promotional opportunities, common discussion areas were the lack of sponsorship, recognition of their education and experience when evaluated for leadership positions, their ability to lead, and the necessity

to train the incoming leader. It is recommended that research focus on answering the question as to why African American/Black men are passed over for airport leadership positions and yet are responsible for training the incoming leader who may only have limited knowledge and experience in the field of aviation and in particular the leadership of a U.S. primary commercial service airport or airports in general.

A lack of literature describing the lived experiences of African American/Black men in experiencing airport management was the foundation for creating my study. Based upon the data collected from African American/Black U.S. primary commercial service airport executives, recommendations for further research are indicated. Further studies can be conducted to include a large-scale study to validate the findings, including interviews with airport department heads, airport division leaders within the United States aviation industry, and interviews with other aviation personnel, including airline station managers or aviation operation executives.

Additionally, a need exists for more scholarly research on the lived experiences of Black people (Ross, 2020). It has been determined that there is a literature gap on how Black men's MTL contributes to their leadership experience (Collins et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2020). Previous research found that in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018)'s collected statistics on management-level roles, there is a double-digit percentage disparity between Black and White people in management and professional level positions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

Furthering the need for additional research is partly due to corporate leadership in the U.S. overlooking black men's MTL as an interface to successful leadership

experience (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020). Furthermore, the airport management sector lacks diversity and inclusive hiring practices (Dolan et al., 2020) in its leadership positions, and Blacks in airport management have been largely overlooked (Harl & Roberts, 2011; Stevenson et al., 2020).

Identifying any discrepant cases strengthens the rigor of qualitative research and may lead to alternative conclusions that may be important for future research (Hays & McKibben, 2021). The results of this study confirmed and expanded the conceptual framework and identified opportunities for future research that could expand it further. The recommendation for further study is needed for Black men in general. Although this study was about African American/Black men specifically, further studies should be conducted to identify any differences in the motivating factors of men seeking aviation leadership positions and the ability to become leaders in aviation. Further studies also are needed to answer the following questions

1. How do family members motivate African American/Black and White men to lead?
2. What impact does the family have on the motivation of African American/Black and White men to lead? and
3. What are the similarities and possible differences between the successes of African American men and those of White men in executive employment and promotional opportunities in the aviation industry?

Another recommendation for additional research should be to study the effectiveness of mentoring African American/Black men in an aviation career. Such a

quantitative study could be advantageous in determining the type of mentoring relationship that would be most beneficial for the career development of African American/Black men for successful career progression.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Literature on the leadership of U.S. primary commercial service airports is non-existent. Therefore, results from my study are not supported by the literature that African American /Black men have the ability, motivation, education, and training to lead U.S. primary commercial service airports. However, my study has implications for professional practice as it provides much-needed research in an area that has not been previously studied to drive change in battling systemic racism and promoting social justice, diversity and inclusion within the airport management sector. With this information in hand, individuals, agencies, and organizations may create awareness and training regarding Black men in leadership and its effect on organizations. These adjustments may also affect how professional Black men interact with their colleagues, forming lasting personal and professional bonds.

Ultimately, the knowledge produced by my study's results may educate future airport professionals by providing insight into the lived experiences of African American/Black men experiencing leadership and their leadership skills. It is recommended that sponsors and the aviation industry understand how the lack of promotional opportunities impacts this unique population. My study offers valuable information that may help the aviation industry recognize the effect exclusion has on individuals and the steps that may be taken to assist in the coping processes and longevity

of an African American/Black male leader's career. These are just a few of many possible opportunities for future research that could further expand the related knowledge base and influence related meaningful social change.

## **Implications**

### **Positive Social Change**

The findings of my study may contribute to positive social change by driving policy initiatives that address racial bias in hiring and promotion in the aviation sector and specifically in the airport management sector. Findings from my study may impact positive social change by encouraging Black men to pursue a career with an upward trajectory to leadership positions. Research into the lived experiences of the Black men in this empirical study on the interface of their MTL and their executive leadership experiences in the airport management sector within the United States may foster meaningful, positive, and sustainable social change for this group. Black men face many barriers in their path to leadership positions in the airport management sector. Despite these barriers, the African American men in my study have persevered nonetheless in strengthening their MTL and succeed in a sector where Black men are all but invisible (see Stevenson et al., 2020).

### **Implications for Policy and Professional Practice**

Policy changes and government action are often driven by research. As recipients of federal funds, airports are required to administer a federal program that seeks to provide equal access for participation in airport-related business (Krop et al., 2020). However, as referenced in my study by scholarly papers and professional reports, these

laws are often circumvented, denying Black men equal access to leadership opportunities. I have made recommendations for future research based on the findings of my study, which may offer the opportunity for continued research on the experiences of African American men entrepreneurs and their MTL in the airport management sector. As airport leadership research literature and scope continue to develop, it is essential to include marginalized leadership experiences.

My study has implications for informing university and business school programs to readdress their admissions policies to allow African American men to seek a career in the aviation industry. The results of my study showed that these men often found themselves on a lonely road to enter the aviation sector and fight for opportunities coming more easily to their White counterparts. Increasing professional documentation of racial inequities in the American workplace can drive policy, and professional practice may help further allow access to Black men aiming for corporate leadership positions. Furthermore, the proliferation of professional literature and government and privately sponsored business reports on the state of Black men in organizational, such as the 2019 *Coqual Report* and McKinsey and Co.'s 2021 report, *The Black Experience in the American workplace*, both referenced in my study, may further address workplace diversity and inclusion challenges for this group.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The research on the experiences of successful Black male leaders in the American workplace is scarce (Fries-Britt, 2018; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). This literature gap research has resulted in theoretical frameworks that lack representation of African



American men in corporate leadership positions, especially within the aviation sector. The findings of this empirical study using a transcendental phenomenology design contributed original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework aiming to advance a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector.

My study confirms the two concepts that ground this study. Harl and Roberts' (2011) concept of racial diversity in aviation and their exploratory case study has previously been used by scholars work to recommend for further empirical studies on Black men's unique corporate leadership experiences related to their motivations and to extend critical human resource development theory (Fenwick, 2005). The authors analyzed power relations as influenced by systemic racism in organizations and focused on guiding corporate HR departments toward justice, fairness, and equity. My study further extends knowledge within critical human resource development theory by presenting the lived experiences of Black men with successful airport leadership careers and their challenges with diversity and inclusion challenges in the aviation sector.

Chan and Drasgow's (2001) concept of the MTL was grounded on two central social-cognitive theories: Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action and Triandis's (1977) Theory of Interpersonal Behavior. In developing their seminal Theory of Individual Differences and Leadership, Chan and Drasgow (2001) established a clear link between leadership self-efficacy and MTL, suggesting that in order to want to lead, an individual also needs to feel able to lead. My study extends knowledge within Chan and Drasgow's (2001) theoretical framework through my study participants' told

experiences in how specific social structures combine to form behavior and values relating to action, social norms relating to action, and beliefs about the action results, and as applied to MTL of successful Black men employed in airport leadership positions.

### **Conclusions**

Since the inception of aviation and the construction of the first airport on American soil, African Americans have been excluded from piloting aircraft and leading airports. The nine individuals selected for this study were eight current and one past executive leaders of U.S. primary commercial service airports. The research participants revealed professional and personal barriers that manifested into experiences of systemic racism towards African American/Black men that stood in the doorway of their employment and successful career progression. The effects of racism can have either positive or negative implications to an individual's MTL and have the potential to sideline the abilities of a group of potential leaders whose contribution to our nation cannot be ignored or discounted.

The purpose of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study is to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their MTL in the airport management sector. I utilized a transcendental phenomenological approach for this study to describe the essence of each participant's lived experience with the phenomena under study (see Moustakas, 1994). I conducted semi-structured interviews, and once data was collected, I engaged in the epoche process as recommended by Moustakas (1994) to bracket my prior knowledge on the topic and remove my bias and preconceived judgments. The result of my study showed that the nine African American/Black male

participants' MTL was not stifled by experiences of racism and exclusion but emboldened them to seek executive leadership positions, which each achieved.

Since the opening in 1909 of the first United States airport constructed in College Park, Maryland, and the prohibition of African American's ability to fly aircraft, and the hiring of the first black airport manager in the U.S., Fred Hutcherson Jr., in 1932 to manage Northwest Airport in Des Plaines, Illinois (Fikes, 2020), African American/Black male participation in aviation leadership positions have been all but denied. From those times and up until 2021, African American/Black men have continued to be excluded from airport management, particularly from U.S. primary commercial service airports to the extent that of the over 19,000 airports. Of the 519 primary commercial service airports in the United States as of 2021, less than 10 have African American/Black men in the executive leadership position.

Black men face unique characteristics and barriers contributing to middle and senior management positions (Burt et al., 2018). Changes associated with systemic racism and corporate movements to change and support Black employees are starting at a more rapid pace than in the recent past yet, the need for more change continues (Creary (2020). A new wave of research now measures how predominantly White organizations can become a better ally to black employees. Corporate efforts in the era of a heightened call for diversity and inclusion initiatives also support the organizational efforts of Black employees in reducing organizational racism and supporting long-term collegial relationships (Sisco, 2020). My study is one more needed investigation on giving

successful Black men a voice on their experiences of implicit racism and how their personal strength and determination led them to the top of their field.

Knowledge is a proven avenue for positive, meaningful social change by leveling the playing field and allowing equal access to employment positions for all Americans, including African American men. Each individual must ask and answer the following when it comes to ending racial discrimination and exclusionary practices in employment: Who (self); What (end discriminatory employment practices, and hold hiring agents accountable for inclusionary hiring, training, promotion, and retention practices); Where (place of employment); When (today); Why (it improves the potential for meaningful social change, and it is the right thing to do); and How (when you hear it, speak up, do not be silent for silence is acceptance and stand in the door of current exclusionary employment practices). Individual industry sectors play a crucial role in reproducing inequality and structuring this inequality to marginalize the strong social identities of minority groups (Janssens & Zanoni, 2021). Producing diversity research in leadership founded on the lived experiences of oppressed social groups could build a bridge to carry more African American men into executive leadership positions could greatly benefit meaningful, sustainable social change.

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## Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Hello,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University, inviting you to participate in my research study.

**The purpose of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study is to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their motivation to lead in the airport management sector.**

The study is important because the findings may help corporate leaders understand that knowledge is a proven avenue for positive, meaningful social change by leveling the playing field and allowing equal access to employment positions for all Americans, including African American men. Empirical research that could build a bridge to carry more African American men into executive leadership positions could greatly benefit meaningful, sustainable social change.

Research into the lived experiences of the Black men in this empirical study on the interface of their motivation to lead and their executive leadership experiences in the airport management sector within the United States may foster meaningful, positive, and sustainable social change for this group. This study may also expose employment barriers for Black men that are not currently evident, support professional practices, and provide aspiring Black male leaders with vital knowledge to plan the professional road they travel in their leadership quest.

If you would be interested in being a part of this study, please review and return the signed consent form attached to this letter. If you would like to request additional information, you may reply to this email. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Vernice Haddix (Researcher)  
Ph.D. Candidate – Walden University

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in this interview process. **The purpose of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study is to gain a deeper understanding of Black men's lived experiences with their motivation to lead in the airport management sector.**

### **Preliminary Actions: Interviewer to participants:**

*Before we get started and ensure consistency among participants' interview responses, I would like to share the definitions of terms we may use within the interview process as they are defined within this study.*

**African American/Black:** This term refers to a person born in the United States or is a naturalized citizen having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (Tamir, 2021). *Note: In this research, this term is used interchangeably with the term "Black," which is often used interchangeably with the term "African-American" in the management literature.*

**Airport management:** This term refers to the administration of airports and airlines and includes setting the airports' strategy to gather and provide information on airline commercial and operational priorities. The leader in airport management is responsible for revenue-maximizing and expense minimization, ensures that flight operations run smoothly, passengers receive quality service, flights take off and land timely, security is maintained, and commercial operations like duty-free shopping at airports and airport retail return a good profit (Graham, 2018).

**Motivation to lead:** This term refers to an individual differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities, and that affects his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (Chan & Drasgow, 2001, p. 482).

*If you should need clarification on any question's content, please feel free to ask me to explain responding. Periodically I may ask clarifying questions or encourage you to describe in more detail. You are invited to elaborate where you feel comfortable and decline from doing so when you do not have information to add.*

*Before we begin the interview, you must be comfortable in your location, and you feel free to participate without interruptions. Do you feel this description describes your setting at this moment?*

*May I begin the interview?*

Participant No: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Academic Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Total hours/years of aviation/airport training \_\_\_\_\_

Total years of experience in aviation/airport management \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience as an Airport Executive/CEO/Aviation Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Total employees under your supervision as Airport CEO/Aviation Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What early experiences and relationships do you associate with your motivation to lead, and what did those early influences mean to you?
2. How did your lived experiences with your self-identity as a Black man contribute to your motivation to lead at a US primary commercial airport?
3. What have been your lived experiences with barriers to career advancement in your present leadership position?
4. How did your lived experiences with a sense of moral obligation contribute to your motivation to lead?
5. How did your lived experiences with your sense of social obligation contribute to your motivation to lead?
6. How did your lived experiences with your wanting to excel as a leader influence your motivation to lead?
7. If you could advise a young Black man aspiring to lead in airport management, what would you tell him?

**Prompts to facilitate conversations:**

*"Can you give me an example of that?"*

*"Please tell me more about that."*

*Thank you for assisting me with this research study. I will contact you via email once the transcription from our interview is finalized. I will provide a summary of the interview, and I would like for you to review the summary as a confirmation that I have captured the essence of what you have shared with me. If any discrepancies are found, I will correct the interpretations.*

*Do you have any questions? Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.*

## Appendix C: Precoding/Horizontalization of Step 2 the Modified Van Kaam Method

Following are all the significant statements from each participant in this study, as quoted by the participants themselves and relevant to the research question: *How do Black men describe their lived experiences with the motivation to lead in the airport management sector?* The result of this primary coding or horizontalization was a total of 323 significant statements are as follows, listed by participant:

### **Significant statements from Participant 1:**

- "I think it goes back to my childhood, and experiences starting with high school, where it was the government public school, ok, and you were expected to be competitive, and so, by the early age my early teenage years 15 and 16."
- "The letter, my other colleagues around me, were looking to me about leadership. Ok, ok, and, and it really stayed with me throughout my life. So even when I joined teams and organizations at the entry-level."
- "My focus was never to be the lead sponsor the lead of those organizations. But to be the very best at the particular in the particular field that I was doing, which I think maybe some somewhere in the back of my mind might have been motivated by a desire to lead."
- "Today is really trying to figure out how to build succession. And because I guess if the truth be told, I feel like that's the one area I failed, is to build succession."
- "...and so Today, what motivates me still is because I still think there's work to be done."

- "Because 30 years 35 years later, they're the only nine of 455. And so I feel like what it's motivating me to continue is because I still think there's work to be done on the succession side of it, and I still have something to contribute to that, in terms of mentorship and trying to change airport cultures and to get cultures, how they view minorities and women that that keeps me motivated still ok."
- "So to the degree that you have black leadership at an at an airport, it has a domino effect in terms of the potential for black men and women, and women, and women of all color, to succeed in both contracting and the employment process, both on how they adopt the solicitation or handle recruitments the gains of contract and respectively, employment, how they are written where they advertised, and the composition of the selection committee."
- "You have a flock of birds, and the ducks will always choose ducks."
- "I think I was motivated by the desire to level the playing field by ensuring you have solicitation and recruitment documents. That certainly doesn't act as barriers and in many cases promote inclusion, including adapting in addition to the documents the selection committee has also reflect inclusion so that black people, black men and women would have a fair shot."
- "Then I was on a panel, interviewing for an assistant general manager for an airport. And there were I think were five finalists, and it was this one man out of Houston who got to become CEO from the airport in Jackson, Alabama. I remember he was so outstanding. I mean, markedly superior."

- "...it's gonna be a challenge for us. Even when we do outstanding, and so I've experienced those barriers, personally, but I've also observed them. I think it's just as prevalent today as it was since I joined the industry."
- And in the history of the ACI fund, anyone who is "I think the title is vice chairman or vice president, automatically ascends to the Presidency, automatic succession plan. Except when I was the vice president."
- "I go back to saying when we get into top positions, we can do something about it, and have an obligation to."
- Well, you know that the only moral obligation "I really felt is that of paying forward, that wasn't the only one but certainly was the most compelling one."
- "Without any XXXXXX XXXXXX, my mentor, first black female in the industry, thought she saw something, and she agreed to mentor me. I would not, it would not be a PI was a deputy at XXXXX and head of an airport in Atlanta."
- "For me, those are the obligations. The moral obligations that I had were really about paying forward—and correspondingly, setting an example. That was a twofold purpose."
- "The first example was for the blacks, Black men and women who were at the airport working, leading by example so that they could learn."
- And two, "for the white people who were there, demonstrating to them that was demonstrating to those who were probably only prejudice and racist, how amazing we could be, that motivated, really motivated me to be best."

- "it's that sense of, I probably at any given time, have five official people a mentor and probably another five was unofficial."
- "And I think we have that social obligation, not just to. We have a social obligation to the Black race, to do whatever we can to one, attract more of us to the industry and say things, that's one, second thing is to help whatever we can to reduce and eventually hopefully eliminate the barriers, towards career advancement—and third, related to that—working through the political process. I say political, which I will explain in a moment. To make sure that we have more of us become CEOs, for the reasons I mentioned earlier, the impact of being the CEO is what you do with contracting and so forth. And I see political obligation because I've come to believe that across the country. The medium to large-sized airports that the selection of the CEO is no more on average that 40% competency and 60% political, right, when a position is posted for CEO in any airport."
- "so, you really have a social obligation, you know, to help, even with all of those barriers, black folk have a social obligation to help mentor people, and hopefully, you know things will change slowly as they may so that you'll have people who are ready qualified for these positions."
- "Oh, I think I said that, at the center of our order. Identify the primary point of motivation for leadership."
- "...it's really rooted in the desire to excel and be the best in your field."

- "I think that's something that's sort of natural for humans, that if we do something. We want to be the best at it. And so, if we want to be a leader at an airport, you're motivated to excel and be the best at it in terms of managing people."
- "The art, of managing people, or science of managing people and getting people to do, to be the best that they can be."
- "I really believe that in every bone in my body that its outstanding leadership is not about outstanding the degree to which a leader, provides outstanding leadership is the degree to which that leader is able to motivate the people who work for them to do the most outstanding job."
- "... with that comes a whole host of character traits and practices, not the least among them is giving people the authority with the responsibility and make them feel free to fail, let them fly."
- "I was motivated to Excel because I really just wanted to be the best at what I do for two reasons, one, self-gratification but to know I was mentoring others, I wanted to give them the best lesson there is."
- "You know, a young Black man or woman. I would really encourage them. The first thing I would encourage them to do is find a mentor with whom you're comfortable. I find that mentors can be so valuable."
- "This is my role. My goal is to try to make people safe, changing people's lives."
- "I would tell them that. Yes, aspire for this position, but they have to get a mentor and stay with it regardless of the barriers and challenges."



- "Magic. So airports have these amazing economic drivers, and you really what, what, what a career choice."
- "People who have been denied access. What a career choice for a black man."

**Significant statements from Participant P 2:**

- "I had two uncles who exposed me to aviation at an early age one of them. Both of them had military experience. One of them, my uncle Jardine, exposed me to aviation when I was probably five years old."
- "A later influence was my uncle Leroy, who was also in the military. In the Air Force, and he had been stationed at, or received some training at a place called Ellington Air Force Base in Houston, Texas. I wound up later in life, managing that airport."
- "There were a lot of things unrelated to aviation that caused me to lose sight of my early exposure to aviation until I met someone in college that said, you know, you're going to be in the aviation management degree program. So, as the saying goes that was a that."
- "I feel a sense of obligation to be a role model to other people of color, so they can see that there are opportunities in this vast industry."
- "...as you are probably aware, there were no examples from which I could draw from experiences to help me navigate a trajectory towards success in this industry. So, you know, you had to, at least for for me, I had to really rely on self and people who were part of my, I guess I call them accountability partners, to help

me navigate this trajectory because there was no mirror. I mean, I could count the number."

- "I don't recall seeing many people in a leadership capacity at those conferences, or as representative of the airports they were in attendance at those conferences."
- "It was a really tough row to hoe."
- "The void is still vast. I mean, I probably know every person of color that is in leadership in the United States, in a commercial service airport in this country."
- "That's saying a lot because there are a lot of commercial service airports in the country and for me to be able to count them and say, I know them all is really not a great testimony."
- "So, there is, you know, there's always the obvious barrier of being an African American and that may not be so apparent to everybody, but it is very evident to people of color."
- "So, you know, at some point, you look to go to someone and say, hey, what is it that I'm doing wrong. Well, the answer isn't that you're doing anything wrong. The answer is, you know, you don't fit the model."
- "I recall when I challenged, you know, the status quo. I inquired about, you know, why this was what was happening. The experience that I lived was, I was denied interviews for five years."
- "...but I'll say this in the back of every person of color's mind is this sense of you all, you're being watched. It's always there, and that you have to be cognizant that, there's no room for mistakes. Because if you do, you could very well affect an

opportunity of someone else that comes along that looks like you. That pressure is always on you."

- "So, the moral obligation is, you know, don't make mistakes, you have to be very good at what you do, so that there's no excuse for you to experience some adverse outcome because you made a mistake. Not just you, but the people that follow you that look like you."
- "Having a sense of obligation. I believe that the reason I've been afforded the opportunity to lead is because it gives me the opportunity to help someone else, right?"
- "There's something that says, to whom much is given, much is required. I believe that, you know, because I'm in this leadership capacity it's my job to not only open the door, for others that look like me but to make sure that that door remains open. That I'm reaching back, help train and to prepare people to walk through that door."
- "So, I think it's imperative that when you are in this kind of capacity, you are should be interacting with the next generation, or the generation after that, we have to ensure that there's someone ready to cross that threshold."
- "Whether I accept it or not, I'm a role model."
- "I have to live my life, realizing that there are people that are looking up to me and that I have to live in accordance to an expectation; an expectation that supersedes, you know who I am, or what I am."

- "An expectation that says that I exemplify the ideal kind of character or behavior that's required to function in this kind of capacity. I live, you know, under the notion that someone behind me needs to see an example of what it means to live a life that leads to leadership."
- "So my mother's philosophy was, you know, in order to keep me safe, you know, don't we don't talk too much."
- "You know, don't overextend yourself because you get noticed, and you know you might become a statistic."
- "So I have to. I had to do things to learn how to self-promote not for me, but because there are people that need to see me in this role."
- "So, I would, I would say look to the axiom that says the black man has been twice as good. It still holds true today. It's unfortunate, but you know you have to really invest a lot in yourself, you have to be twice as educated, you have to be twice as experienced, you have to be twice as good in terms of your performance."
- "So, you know, you have to do that, you know, even though those that are in the non-minority category don't. So, you, you have to spend a lot of time and energy focused on developing yourself."
- "Not just, you know, the hard skills you learned in school, but the soft skills, how to interact with people that don't look like you and you know there's this, there's this terminology called I just, I don't know if it's the right application but code-switching."

- "You have to learn how to, you know, be someone that you're not in an environment of people that don't look like you, so they feel comfortable around you."
- "So, you have to learn that soft skill. I mean, it's hard to not be yourself so you never really fully actualize in your role because you can't be who you are."
- "You have to be this personification of who you are, so the others around you are comfortable."
- "That philosophy, you have to be white; you know someone that you are not. That connotation has some negative consequences associated with it."
- "But in reality, is you just have to do what you have to do, to increase your economic base."
- "So, I think one thing that people need to be cognizant of in our industry, as well as other industries, is there are organizations that exist, and we call them, professional organizations that are like clubs."
- "Alright, so you have to make sure you become a member of the member of "the club," so you can be considered for upward mobility."
- "Here's a problem with the club, the club established criteria that says that you have arrived, or you have achieved something so that you should be considered."
- "This is normal in almost every industry. Architects have their club, plumbers have their club, electricians have their club, administration has its clubs too. "

- "American Association of Airport Executive, Airport Council International has its own AMPAP program so, you know, when you get those accreditations, it says, and you've been institutionalized. You are good to go."

**Significant statements from Participant P 3:**

- "Early experiences I would have to attribute to my parents, my father, and mother in terms of making sure I got a good education, staying in school, being disciplined."
- "I did not realize I had the aptitude for leadership until probably in high school."
- "So, I would just say that it was family, education, church, those kinds of places that it made me a person who cared about other people understood the importance of discipline and wanted to do something for someone else other than myself."
- "Firstly, it was not my intent to manage an airport."
- "So I had an affinity to work in aviation."
- "My first airport job, I was working as a metropolitan planning organization director. I wasn't focused on this position, and I was offered a vacant position in the newly elected mayor's administration. He offered me the position, and I accepted it."
- "So it was a great opportunity."
- "Though, me being a black person. There was one other black person in the mayor's administration, and there were not very many black people at the airport. At least not in the white-collar executive positions. They were black folks who

worked in maintenance and those kinds of things. There were people who look like me."

- "The mayor was trying to increase participation of African Americans in city government, and certainly, I saw it as an opportunity to help in that endeavor. And so that's when I got real focused on airport management."
- "You know it's interesting, and When I look back at my career, I've always attributed my inability to get into a certain position or to get a certain ranking as based upon my skill level or, or level of expertise."
- "I have been reluctant to attribute it to race until fairly recently when I've unfortunately had to accept reality weighing large like I always say."
- "When I look at other examples, and there are people who or have much less in terms of education, experience and they have been granted certain positions or titles or whatever. Thus, there have been a lot of barriers."
- "So, as I look back on my experience now, I can say that given a lot of barriers, and people don't approach you and say, well, I'm not going to give you this because of this is usually."
- "...they find some other excuse to present and amounts to another obstacle to put in your way to prevent you."
- "if you come in as the airport manager, there's no place else to go at the airport, but there are other things that I could have done in the community that I was not permitted to do. Because in my view, because of the color of my skin."

- "I didn't get certain considerations for certain things because of the color of my skin."
- "They were a very, very closed community; I think the National Guard, the nature of National Guard, particularly in the state of New York is, it's a closed community, and if you are different."
- "If you not do not fit into their culture or their view of how you should be, then you will not excel, they will let you be there, but you won't get engaged or you won't be really included in."
- "I think that the airport industry is the same kind of way."
- "We as African Americans, we come into this industry, but it's not like we are welcome."
- "I didn't have any role models when I started as an airport manager, and I can count on one hand the number of African Americans who worked as the chief executive at an airport across the country; they were like three of them across the country when I had my first airport job."
- "There's no excuse for that we talked about, and we had over 500 Commercial Service airports at the time."
- "There's no excuse for that less than 1%."
- "As we look at the top S&P companies now you look at well how many African American CEOs there are and how many board members there are. Same kind of thing."



- "Working representations, I think being an African American now as I look back on my career has been a major impediment."
- "As I look back at my life, I tried to discern what my calling was or what I'm supposed to be doing because I have very, I have strong religious beliefs. And I think I was called to be a leader in several different environments."
- "I've tried to develop those skills over time to be a better person in terms of leadership, and when I approach leadership is more about the people."
- "I try, to you know, get people excited about how I and my organization see the future."
- "I try to focus on the people."
- "It's all about the people and making sure that they're engaged, making sure that I'm communicating effectively, putting myself in people's position and empathy, to be able to make decisions effectively. being a straight culture. So, I think leadership is very important."
- "There's not a lot of people who are effective leaders, they're people who are in leadership positions, but I don't know that all of them want to say are effective at what they do, because typically there's some other motivation that has brought them to that position, as opposed to really caring about people."
- "Once again, I think we all, not only are we called but we all have a mission, and that mission is to give back is to do something for someone else other than ourselves is to leave a situation better than you found it."

- "When we are talking about the greater good or society at large, we have to do something, and a lot of my career I've spent building things, operating airports, but also building infrastructure, maintaining and improving infrastructure. And I think that is a certainly a contribution."
- "We have to have certain skills and abilities to be able to lead a project from concept into operation in terms of figuring out the planning, design, development, how to get it done."
- "So, I think that social, in terms of social impact. It's important to leave something."
- "I think once you realize what your capabilities and skills are, you try, and you try and apply them, no matter what area you are in, whether it's even in sports or something, you want to have some leadership role you want to be a coach or you want to be, you know you want to take some role to teach someone how to do something because you have that skill and you can share it with others in the in the workplace. When you're not, you don't have the title. A title that is specific to being a leader, you try and take an active role in project management or program management or trying to get things done."
- "So I think there's a natural propensity to look at a situation and determine how to make it better."
- "I'm trying to apply the skills that you have command of, you try and get to that point that vision that, that people have about how they want things to turn out and so you just pick up the pieces and try and get folks there, build a team that's

necessary to do that and you engage them and figure out, you know, put a plan together okay you're doing this you're doing that, and I'm doing this and this is how we're all bringing this together and this is how we're going to do this, I think that leadership is in everything you do, even whether or not you were the leader, that's your approach to things and in certain people have a propensity to that."

- "If there's a young black man, I've got to tell him about some of the experiences that I've had being a black man, and how I got through them so that they will have the equipment or they will know what's necessary,"
- "So I think that's important to be able to impart that knowledge so that people can, you know, understand one that's not going to be easy because you are black, you carry, unfortunately you carry a burden of, you know, trying to compete and overcome that people don't deal with you based upon who you are, they deal with you based upon the way that you look the color of your skin. I don't care what laws are passed; that's just a natural inherent to how people are right, so I tried to pass that on to my sons and I pass it on the people that I interact with as a mentor, is that these are some going to be the challenges impediments that you have to deal with. And this is how I've dealt with it but you might have a better way to deal with it based on the type of person that you are in the environment in the context and the situation."
- "It's very important to give people as much knowledge as possible. And one of the basic things I tell people is you have to be prepared when the opportunity presents itself. If you go into a meeting, you take a pad, and you take something to write."

- "I tell people, and that means, education, if you want a job in the aviation industry, you have to have something to work with, either you have to have education, or you have to have experience, you have to be able to bring a skill that you acquired in potentially another field is transferable so that you can use and exploit it so that you can get to where you want to get to in aviation field."
- "So, I try and let people know that. Nothing's easy, but it's persistence that will win the day, and you gotta, you know, you have to try and overcome the obstacles that are presented to you."
- "I guess one thing I would like to say is the workforce development piece. A lot of times, folks are not focused on that. And in order to increase the diversity of the industry, particularly with African American people, men, and women, it's important to think about workforce development and making sure that people have the skills that will bring them in number one, have that awareness, and then two, give them the bridge or the knowledge, understanding, bring them into the industry so they can be successful, then staying in the industry in excelling and you only get that with the education, the experience the training and, you know, it's, we need to do more of that I think in this industry, we need to the people who are in the industry like myself need to get out there and tell story in the community about the wonderful world that aviation is and it has all these opportunities that we don't take advantage of to the large extent."
- "I think that I think the young would have developing their, their thoughts about who they want to be."

- "They do that between the grades of fourth and sixth, fourth grade and a lot of our efforts we target, and we're looking at high school, you know, we're like, 11th grade, I think that's too late."
- "Youth have already developed life ideas about who they want to be. So, I think that in the social studies curriculums when you're learning about history and geography and economics and government."
- "You should learn about airports, learn that there's an opportunity there, and that there's not just what, what, when I was when I was, I went to a catholic school, and we learned about airports we learned about pilots and air traffic controllers and flight attendants. I didn't learn about airport managers or airport engineers or airport planners, or wildlife biologists who work for an airport or electricians who work for an airport. That's the kind of education that we need to be providing our young people so that they can set their targets. And these kinds of jobs so that they can you know they can direct their path to get here."

**Significant statements from Participant P 4:**

- 'Okay, so um, I mean, it's I always go back to when I was a young kid. 12, 13, 14 years old."
- "I would always study there was a magazine out called Black Enterprise, and Black Enterprise focused strictly on Black-owned businesses."
- "I would study that was the one hundred top Black-owned, and I would study those companies."

- "I would go to sleep with that magazine in front of me because I was just so inspired by guys like Herman J. Russell and can Rick Park and Raymond Hayesbird and so many others, John Johnson,"
- "I've just always kind of saw myself one day. Being on that list. I just envisioned myself being on that list."
- "And so my passion has always been entrepreneurship."
- "So I think that's where it started. was, you know, just being exposed to the figures in that magazine and then just always paying close attention to entrepreneurs around me and always just having a basic belief that one day I was going to be one of those entrepreneurs."
- "The larger commercial airports, you'll see a trend kind of developing where more and more large airports systems are looking at non-industry executives to head up airports."
- "So cities are looking for people that have leadership business management, they may look for someone who has experience managing major capital programs because airports are always delivering major capital programs."
- "And so I would say it's not so necessary for large airports, but for smaller, especially general aviation airports."
- "Yes, you have to be very technical now. You have to be an aviator."
- "I happen to be an airport executive, but my ministry is Minority Business Development and developing opportunities for minorities in employment, to understand the needs of a public in a way of air service."

- "And put you know, put in motion and move on put actions in place to address those needs in a way of an airport, expansion project."
- "And so that kind of that motivates me to keep going because there are endless opportunities at airports to try to offer or make sure opportunities are made available to minorities."
- "I like to invest in young professionals and see their careers evolve."
- "For me, it's legacy building, because that will outlive me and so I like making big impact and anytime I can be involved to the airport or somebody else who I'm involved with making, you know, big impact on on the public in a positive way. I'm excited about it."
- "I mean, divert diversity is passe, right? It's now all about diversity and inclusion. Right? It's one thing to have a segment or percentage of the workforce, you know, meet a certain demographic, but if that is all that's happening, you're not growing and not impactful in the organization, then you still falling short."
- "It's, it's about creating an opportunity for people who otherwise wouldn't have those opportunities to get in. And then, you know, remove barriers that would prevent them from succeeding, giving them the tool that enables them to succeed."
- "I walked in. I went to the head of the table, and I looked around the table and seven white males. And I thought to myself, you know I'm not coming into here to blow everything up, but this isn't going to work."

- "It's not reflective of the population that we're serving. It doesn't reflect my priorities you know? My my personal interest in moving this system forward and in so now I knew I was gonna have to shake that up."
- "I think there's an innate fear on the part of the majority population that is if blacks are able to rise to the level where they have control over their fate, that they might be treated the same way that we will treat right Right, which, is absolutely not the case. We don't have the same heart, for the most part."
- "We don't hurt other people, and we hurt ourselves because too many of us don't see value in ourselves."
- "I said to myself, you know, I always thought that I'm going to be in that seat one day, and I said when I'm in that seat, I'm gonna I'm gonna make decisions differently."
- "I values, you know, the code of the streets, right, that you respect people that you know, you trust people you're a man of your word, despite how people might feel about those areas."
- "And so I care about people who, who otherwise would not be in a position to influence their fate, right and so, so that made a big influence on on my leadership style."
- "I'm very close to the general workforce because I don't see them as someone who is subordinate to me."



- "So that is influenced me in a way that I truly see myself as a vessel to provide support and to assist people that otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to get there. And that's what I do, and that's how I use this role in support."
- "um, I, the first time I was in a, I was in an environment. That was where I was the minority is when I joined this airport."
- "I found myself in an environment where the minority is not the majority anymore. And that was quite a transition for me. I didn't have a self-esteem issue. I just, um, I had to learn that, that that, that not all people that do not look like me, are untrustworthy."
- "There are some, some white Americans who can take credit for certain periods of my career progression."
- "There was there was a secretary at the time and governor at the time, that just did not want somebody that looks like me to be in this room."
- "As a matter of fact, I had this one experience where the XXXXXXXXX of XXXXXXXXXX, manufactured a, a reason to terminate me so there's little pockets of that kind of stuff that nothing that extreme but there are pockets of what I'll call racism, be it deliberate or will just passive racism where I had to I had to fight through wasn't I might have been ignorant to the fact that there was some level of racism there for me it was just something I needed to overcome And you know, you kind of work through it."
- "I just do not have a tolerance for anybody in my organization that engages in unethical behavior."

- "And I think it has everything to do with growing up in a caring, you know, just grew up in a very caring violent sometimes right because of the crime that stems associated with the drug trade but still a loving environment."
- "I'm in love with this industry."
- "So I am always now I'm not obsessed with perfection."
- "I'm certainly obsessed with not making big mistakes, and we do a lot of things right here."
- HBCUs have a way of having you believe that you're that you're that you're the best at what you do or you will be the best at what you do."
- "The margin and the margin of error is, is narrow and in when you're when you're in a high profile, public position."
- "It could be an issue. It's not a self-inflicted wound."
- "It could be you just caught up in the middle of politics or whatever and so, so you not only have to manage your actions, you have to also be looking out for those other landmines that you might be stepping on. That can also get you in trouble."
- "First of all, you can't be scared."
- "Got to be courageous, right."
- "Because if you if you prepare yourself and if you make decisions based on sound judgment you're going to make more right than wrong."
- "The decision is being made, whether you're making it or not, right? Not making a decision is a decision. You have to be decisive."

- "You have to be willing to take risks, calculated risks."
- "And you have to care about people. No matter who it is, you have to care about people,
- you have to always be respectful of people."
- "If you show people respect and care, your people will, people will pay that back."
- "People will go to the wall for you if they feel that you care about them."

**Significant statements from Participant P 5:**

- "There was a point where I'm I think, I don't know if I hadn't had the motivation era strong motivation to succeed, and a strong motivation to be the best in the areas that I work."
- "There wasn't a strong MTL."
- "The first real leadership job was when I came into aviation."
- "So now I was interested in leadership position at the busiest airport in the world."
- "And I was fortunate to be to his unofficial mentoring, right?"
- "I looked Oh, you know, they function and the things that they did, and I learned a lot from them."
- "You learn what to do, and you also learn what not to do."
- "Then a lot of people are recommending that you be the interim. The problem is you're the XX guy, and we want operations person. And I was like, whoa."
- "So the motivation for me is I'm doing this for hundreds, possibly 1000s of individuals, right, which translates into 1000s of families, and not just families for

now but families for the next generation to come. That's what keeps me motivated."

- "It's creating jobs. When we expand the facility. Somebody has to maintain it recreated, so that's really read uh, what keeps me motivated."
- "I had the pleasure of starting in in aviation, and starting an aviation with one of the best are two of the best airport leaders who so happened to be people of color. One was the head of the airport was African American. And the second in charge was Hispanic or Latino."
- "It's a very class oriented society."
- "So when I came over to the U.S., my mindset wasn't race. It was more class."
- "And so having an airport director that was black, that was normal, where I'm coming from the majority of people there was Black."
- "They're coming up, young, young, African American professional, they're coming up in a in an airport where most of the leadership, for example, is there is white, and they're struggling because they're seeing the barriers and I'm trying to work them through. I can say I went through I did not go through that in my aviation career. Nope. I can tell you on the flip side coming up in in XXXXXX, I went through it from the social side when I just when I graduated from school from college, and I was applying for jobs."
- "Yes, it was. So it was this based on where you live."
- "...so that those are some of the things that that kind of the prejudices that I experienced when I got to the U.S.."

- "I think that and the judge says I only heard people speak that is on TV. I didn't know people speak like this in real life."
- "And he referred to me as boy. Wow, okay."
- "It didn't impact or affect me and the reason why I'm just coming from XXXXXXXX, when all that person refers to you as boy, it's just that's just the way we talk."
- "So I was it as this white judge is referring to me as a black person as boy."
- "He was explaining now when they say boy, that's a derogatory term."
- "I was programmed socially, not racially, and it took me a while to kind of, you know, but it's a what's a whole bunch of us but anyway."
- "And I figure Yeah, you know if they can do it, I can do it as well. And I learned a lot from them, and I learned a lot from them what not to do. as well."
- "I didn't experience the barriers coming into the industry."
- "I worked directly for two people, people of color, the barriers that I face was prior to coming to the U.S., and those were social."
- "As I think about it, it's I had to kind of hide where I was from in order to advance in society."
- "The Good, The Bad everything. And everything that I saw my mom and my dad my parents did to keep us still safe in that environment and to keep us from being a part of these gangs that was that right there and entice in your everyday honor. That is what made me who I am today, I wouldn't change a thing because that's what that's why I'm here."

- "I think airports and ports and cities that have all these resources, such as a port, such as an airport, should have a higher moral purpose, and that higher moral purpose is to influence as many people as possible, live in a positive way."
- "And one way of doing that is creating living wages, jobs for them, creating opportunities for them, not only jobs, per se, but also creating opportunities where they can become entrepreneurs."
- "Alright, that's one of the things I focus on a whole lot. Is to try to get more and more AC DBE companies to do business with us as they're trying to get more DBE companies to do business with us whether it's in construction or it's in our seen the concessions on business hours of planning and design is to get more and more of these companies."
- "I'm extremely vocal, and I'm going out of the way to make sure that we don't have any barriers to those folks coming in, but I'm also interested in creating the entrepreneur opportunities because it's going to be generational."
- "If we can do that more multiple times. Right and create opportunities for women and people of color in a way that that that to me is one of the higher moral purpose that I have, and I think organizations such as this one should have as well."
- "One of the big challenges that I have is financing the growth of the airport."
- "And a lot of people migrated here from other places in the U.S. and from overseas so that their the demand for travel keeps growing and so we need to

grow this airport and not be the bottleneck to do that, on the social side now is that as we grow, we have to do it in a sustainable manner, right?"

- "We call them Magnificent Seven, and there were 7 of them was a senior said they were bright, they're brilliant, well respected."
- "And I had opportunity to be inadvertently be in the room because I was fixing some computers and phones and blah, blah blah for them. And I'm listening to the meeting and listen, I'm like, this is where decisions are made. Right. This is where you can actually have an influence is when you're sitting at this table right."
- "You can use it to influence people's lives in a positive way. Or you can use it to influence people's lives and in a negative way."
- "It was supposed to be based on certain criteria that was established and people at the table with me. I realized that's not what they were doing."
- "So to me, the motivation to lead is you can be indoors position you can use it for good, you can also use it to do a lot of evil as well. Right?"
- "I'd say mentor, try to get a mentor, one or two mentors to kind of help you guide your career."
- "I would also say you have to network is extremely important."
- "You can be the most brilliant person, right? Nobody knows you. It's hard to move up the ladder. Right?"
- "Seize opportunity to expose yourself right if there's an opportunity to present at a whatever it whatever meeting where people in the organization sees you and hear you and yours. Take advantage of that."

- "Also, I would say try to work on projects outside of your area. If you want to become an airport manager, try to get operations experience, maintenance experience, security experience, finance, commercial try to work on project that gives you exposure because when you get become the airport manager, you have to have a not expert in all of them. But you have to have some knowledge of all of those things."
- "Treat people with respect. Just treat people basic respect, that's just the bottom line. I've seen people you probably passed on the ladder will be the same people you're gonna see coming back around."
- "Maya Angelou said people might not remember what you said, or what you did, but will remember how you made them feel?"
- "Another thing I'd say is don't only network with people who you really think can help you let work with people who you can help as well. Right? It's not just about networking with people you're trying to move up the ladder, drag some people up the ladder with you as well. This will help a few people and pull them up with you when you're going up."

**Significant statements from Participant P 6:**

- "So I would say that the primary experience I had in terms of influencing me, not necessarily industry related but just in general, was my grandfather."
- "And I think without really, honestly without it, without me realizing it was having an impact on me up here because of what I was seeing."



- "So what I saw was a lot of black and brown folks, professionals in, you know, sort of a broad spectrum of capacities, all well educated, all seemingly doing well for themselves. And that again, I think, was something that without really understanding it, I recognized it, it, you know, definitely had an impact on me because I saw all these people that kind of looked like me, and they're all doing big things."
- "Also, my mother thought she was not, and she was someone she was sort of the other side. She was a hard worker. Right. And she would do anything and everything that that was necessary to ensure that I was provided for, so I had that example of someone who would stop at nothing to make sure I had what I need."
- "So I think that the two sides, when combined were pretty impactful to me."
- "What keeps me motivated today. I mean, I always want to do well. I feel like I have an obligation to do well, to those who have really leaned in and helped me get here."
- "One for me, I didn't see a lot of people that look like me and senior-level roles at larger US airports."
- "And I'm looking at this black woman who is leading one of the world's busiest airports. And I really had I had not really met before, and so I don't know if I really, at that time was aspiring to become a director, but when I saw that, I felt like it was possible."

- "All those things then led me to realize that airports were the place that I wanted to be. Yeah, I want to be in that environment. And that I didn't know how I was going to get to that top spot, but that did become my goal."
- "I want to be the aviation general manager."
- "I got in my mind, I want to get airport director and ultimately, I wanted to find my way."
- "You know, I, I know that there is there's a lot of resistance out there."
- "And I'm sure that at some point along the way, I have been victim to it."
- "But I also feel that i i the things that I have gone after more often than not, I've achieved so so my career progression I've moved around in order to move up and it became very strategic."
- "Now I've applied for some positions which I was not selected. I don't know if some of those were, you know, do to what I look like. Otherwise, most of the position I've gone for that I really, truly strongly can only desired went my way."
- "And I spent a lot of time building a network."
- "But I think that some of the people that I've come to know and come to be very close to who may not look like us have played a role."
- "I'm going to go I'm going to go after what I think I need, what I think I'm missing, that that last sort of one piece of the puzzle, and I believe that I'll be in a position to ascend to the number one spot and that's exactly what happened."
- "So, yeah, and in fact, I will tell you my first position as a director, was influenced by people of color, because they wanted to have diversity."

- "They had never had anyone of color in in that office. and so I was the first and the youngest, because I was still my 30s."
- "When I was thinking about my mother and almost the entire time I was in school, what she would do to make sure that I could be successful, whatever it was that I wanted to achieve, she was going to be there to help me see it through, at the end of the day, it really comes down to pride."
- "I think that goes back to the fact that, you know, when I looked around I didn't see a lot of people who looked like me."
- "I just felt like I wanted to be one of those people who made it."
- "And to serve as an example. Not only to those, those folks who might, you know, in the everyday might not give us much credit, but also for some of those who may not have had the same opportunities."
- "Because of I didn't see very many people who look like me in senior-level roles at airports, you know, being in this position of high visibility it's one that you know, I hope that as we keep doing things, especially like within the community, that we're able to open some eyes of some of the youth and have them realize what's possible for them."
- "A lot of it for me is thinking of society and how, how black people are are viewed and, and then saying, basically, but you know, I'm going to, I want to prove you wrong, I'm going to show you."
- "With that is you end up being on such a pedestal, but a pedestal No, I know under a microscope."

- "I've tried very hard not to forget from where I've come, and, and all of the roles that I've served in, some of which are not supervisory in nature."
- "I've always also known that or believed that my attitude and approach needed to be a certain way or else I could be looked at, in a in a different light, right, and that could that light could dim, dim on my chances to excel."
- "But, you know, that's part of that is out of what I pick up as a necessity as well, because if you know if I show too much of one thing or one side, then that could become a problem."
- "So until the person that's on the inside opens the door and says Please come in."
- "So all of all that is has continued, I think to influence me in terms of how I've conducted myself and understanding that I need to always keep certain things top of mind so that I can remain at this level and hopefully you know to continue to be or strive."
- "I'm not actually trying to be, but in my mind through the things that I'm doing and the type of success I've achieved and hopefully that is having some trickle-down effect on you know, on the industry as a whole and you know, me being a person of color, which there are few in CEO and CEO positions, so it's it's something."
- "I've always once I decided what I wanted to be, which was an airport director, I understood there were there were things I would need to keep in mind along the way because they're always going to be way more of everybody else."

- "If somebody doesn't like you, or just decides that they're going to have it out for you and they're you know, they're going to bring you down and when you're someone who is already very much in the minority."
- "But I also know that there are people where you know if they have the resolve and you give them a little bit of fuel, they could turn it into a fire, and it could burn you up."
- "I'd like to go out in good standing and have a wonderful retirement chapter. So I'm not trying to burn bridges, and I try to be set on fire."
- "One of the biggest things is not to limit yourself."
- "Be open to the opportunities that are presented to you."
- "Don't have the geographic location as the top reason why you will or won't."
- "But I think a big thing really is number one, believe in yourself."
- "I think, learn quite a bit is just an observing other and then applying that to my reality and being patient."
- "Being patient."
- "Being strategic."
- "Not limiting yourself."
- "Having some people that you can reach out to."
- "Having a strong network of people and don't hesitate to reach out to them."
- "Because the more that we can tap into them, hopefully, we can wind up with more of us being represented at the top."

**Significant statements from Participant P 7:**

- "Having various actual positions in professional organizations helped to build kind of my leadership skills, gave me the actual soft skills, transferable skills, that were transferable for me to be able to lead a enterprise such as an airport."
- "I've served as, as a footnote, the first African American executive airport director in XXXXXXXXXXXX airport's 80-year history."
- "Being an African American I, I felt that it was a privilege. I felt that it was an opportunity to set a great example, to show that African Americans could indeed lead major transportation hubs. They connect individuals in and around the country. And so, from that, I felt very proud, I felt that it was a privilege."
- "And I also felt that there was you needed to be able to give back or basically pay it forward."
- "You have to be flexible enough to understand that you'd have to move to different locations in order to have an upward trajectory of moving to the next level."
- "I've experienced racism."
- "I've experienced colorism."
- "I've experienced, whereby it's been an issue with trying to balance and make sure that women and other folks who have different sexual preferences or religious affiliations that you have to balance that make sure that your politics you are playing with are on point."

- I wanted to, in turn, be in an environment where I was able to impact minorities, women, people of color."
- "But more so looking at how can I, in turn, make a difference in the communities in which I serve?"
- "A church or anything along those lines for support."
- "I also think that they gave me an opportunity to be in these fraternities, benevolent organizations, church affiliations always help to be able to flood the social into those, the ones that seek support and ones that start a path."
- "Well, more so, making the right decisions in terms of standing for what was right, I think, again, their moral compass and having a set of core values is something that you establish up front."
- "Some of the airport's leaders did not even have a mission statement, vision statement, actual goals or competencies or core values."
- "So started on the front end understanding from a strategic standpoint establishing those aspects at airports, make a difference in terms of how you run the enterprise."
- "I would say that first look at this as a Long Haul."
- "Clearly understanding the opportunity to serve as an executive airport manager and training at one of the large hub airports in which I worked, and so, really trying to understand the different functions and how airports operate, that's key."
- "Become a generalist, not necessarily a specialist."

- "Being really able to see it, experience it, and understand how an airport has an operations background."
- "Also understanding the finances and also to fit into small nuance, right?"

**Significant statements from Participant P 8:**

- "Oh, like a lot of folks, I owe my motivation to be a high achiever to a lot; it's due to my parents, you know."
- "Well, I guess I'm still striving for excellence."
- "Well, I just think finding out that there was so much representation in airport leadership was very encouraging when I finally got into it."
- "Yeah, they were about barriers."
- "Somebody had to be ready for me."
- "Okay, I had two experiences, that were I don't call them barriers. And I mean, nobody ever looked at me and said, hey, you're Black, and we can't hire you. That's beyond you, where I never got that overt reaction. But I did have some interesting experiences."
- "I never felt like I was under a microscope and till the XXXXXXXX experience, and that was running the largest at that time, the largest procurement for concessions in the world."
- "You want to be an example people there's people younger than you behind you trying to make a way. I didn't really come in touch with that side of me so, so I had a strong sense of who I was very early."



- "Okay, and what just might be so I, even though not having to go through actual segregation, because I was only born in 63."
- "It was around when I was growing up, and then as it faded out, people continue to hold on to things illegally, as they still do today."
- "So not wanting to be part of something mediocre kind of drives me if that really helps."
- "You're not going to work everywhere. It's not gonna work out in some places that you really don't need to be. I've managed to find a few of them."
- "What would I tell somebody, and I would say you gotta kiss a lot of frogs."
- "In order to figure out what you what you like."
- "Treat people like a customer."
- "Being a consultant."
- "I'm gonna say this right now because I don't see this in a lot of youth, which is learn to be reasonable."
- "Listen to people you know, and don't take immoral shortcuts because they add up to nothing."
- "So, yeah, but you got to spread yourself around and be willing to work really hard because whatever you put in that toolbox, you're gonna need to be able to draw upon later when we do get into a leadership position."
- "Take measured risks, take measured risks."

**Significant statements from Participant P 9:**

- "Well, I think it evolved over several years and several experiences."
- "And so I think early in life, you know, I saw him as a model for motivation, drive, even though during his time things were not necessarily fair."
- "And then when I got into the military, I was put in a position to lead unexpectedly when, when I deployed to an overseas location where I had no choice but to lead Okay, and I then discovered that I had some hidden talents and skills. That just led me to really continue to move up after that."
- "I'm still very competitive, except now I compete against other airports, and I compete against other airports presidents and CEOs."
- "And I have come to the conclusion that in order to continue with the advancement of people of color, in leadership positions, that my part is that I have to do extremely well, and I can't fail."
- "And what made it very comfortable for me is that I came up in a career field whose diversity was very similar in air traffic control, you know, I think when I came in the air traffic back in the 1980s, you know, I think 5% was African American. So for me to now be in a position of leadership at an airport where the numbers are probably very probably even worse than air traffic. It was a very comfortable place for me to be because I've always been there."
- "There are opportunities that I applied for that I thought I was more than qualified, but never got an opportunity."

- "So I guess the thing is, is if you get an opportunity to get in the door, but a lot of doors I was not able to get into because you know, and what happens sometime in the industry is people you know, depend on who the hiring authority is right?"
- "They want people sometimes that look like their community. And so, I don't hold that as a fault against the airport authority. You know, the fact of the matter is that I probably was not a good fit. You know, and vice versa. If you have a mayor that is an African American mayor, and the city runs the airport. A lot of times, they may go in specifically wanting an African American to be in a position within their administration.
- "The problem is that there are more authorities and mayors that are not people of color than then they are people of color."
- "You know, when you when you grew up in an African American community as a kid, even though our positions are one where you have to be you have to be fair to all right, you want to make sure that what you do has a real benefit to the community and especially for people that are very similar to you."
- "That's the most important thing, that obligation that you feel to, you know, to the social, you know, part of a community hopefully."
- "That's another very important piece of who I am. To fail was not was not an option."
- "And, and it was always kind of, you know, mentioned that you know, whatever we did in life, you didn't want to, you know, bring any kind of shame to your family name."

- "To do the best you can at everything that you do everything that you do it all ends up in a certain place, and you may not know what that place is."
- "But if you do positive things, you're going to get a positive result."
- "The world is your stage."
- "And don't be prepared to move or leave where you're most comfortable in order to get an opportunity."
- "Every time you engage with somebody, you're being interviewed and always remember that you know."  
"Whoever you talk with, you know, you're under evaluation, right?"

Appendix D: Total Significant Statements After Phenomenological Reduction and  
Elimination

**Significant Statements from Participant (P1):**

- "My focus was never to be the lead sponsor the lead of those organizations. But to be the very best at the particular in the particular field that I was doing, which I think maybe some somewhere in the back of my mind might have been motivated by a desire to lead." (P1)
- "Today is really trying to figure out how to build succession. And because I guess if the truth be told, I feel like that's the one area I failed, is to build succession." (P1)
- "...and so Today, what motivates me still is because I still think there's work to be done." (P1)
- "So to the degree that you have black leadership at an at an airport, it has a domino effect in terms of the potential for black men and women, and women, and women of all color, to succeed in both contracting and the employment process, both on how they adopt the solicitation or handle recruitments the gains of contract and respectively, employment, how they're written where they advertised, and the composition of the selection committee." (P1)
- "You have a flock of birds, and the ducks will always choose ducks." (P1)
- "I think I was motivated by the desire to level the playing field by ensuring you have solicitation and recruitment documents. That certainly doesn't act as barriers and in many cases promote inclusion, including adapting in addition to the

documents the selection committee has also reflect inclusion so that black people, black men and women would have a fair shot"(P1)

- "...it's gonna be a challenge for us. Even when we do outstanding, and so I've experienced those barriers, personally, but I've also observed them. I think it's just as prevalent today as it was since I joined the industry." (P1)
- "I go back to saying when we get into top positions, we can do something about it, and have an obligation to." (P1)
- Well, you know that the only moral obligation "I really felt is that of paying forward, that wasn't the only one but certainly was the most compelling one." (P1)
- And two, "for the white people who were there, demonstrating to them that was demonstrating to those who were probably only prejudice and racist, how amazing we could be, that motivated, really motivated me to be best." (P1)
- "it's that sense of, I probably at any given time, have five official people a mentor and probably another five was unofficial." (P1)
- "so, you really have a social obligation you know, to help, even with all of those barriers, black folk have a social obligation to help mentor people, and hopefully, you know things will change slowly as they may so that you'll have people who are ready qualified for these positions." (P1)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 2):**

- "I feel a sense of obligation to be a role model to other people of color, so they can see that there are opportunities in this vast industry." (P 2)

- "...as you are probably aware, there were no examples from which I could draw from experiences to help me navigate a trajectory towards success in this industry. So, you know, you had to, at least for for me, I had to really rely on self and people who were part of my, I guess I call them accountability partners, to help me navigate this trajectory because there was no mirror. I mean, I could count the number." (P 2)
- "It was a really tough row to hoe." (P 2)
- "The void is still vast. I mean, I probably know every person of color that is in leadership in the United States, in a commercial service airport in this country." (P 2)
- "So, there is, you know, there's always the obvious barrier of being an African American and that may not be so apparent to everybody, but it is very evident to people of color." (P 2)
- "I recall when I challenged, you know, the status quo. I inquired about, you know, why this was what was happening. The experience that I lived was, I was denied interviews for five years." (P 2)
- "...but I'll say this in the back of every person of color's mind is this sense of you all, you're being watched. It's always there, and that you have to be cognizant that, there's no room for mistakes. Because if you do, you could very well affect an opportunity of someone else that comes along that looks like you. That pressure is always on you." (P 2)

- "Having a sense of obligation. I believe that the reason I've been afforded the opportunity to lead is because it gives me the opportunity to help someone else; right?" (P 2)
- "There's something that says, to whom much is given, much is required. I believe that, you know, because I'm in this leadership capacity it's my job to not only open the door, for others that look like me but to make sure that that door remains open. That I'm reaching back, help train and to prepare people to walk through that door." (P 2)
- "Whether I accept it or not, I'm a role model." (P 2)
- "I have to live my life, realizing that there are people that are looking up to me and that I have to live in accordance to an expectation; an expectation that supersedes, you know who I am, or what I am." (P 2)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 3):**

- "So it was a great opportunity." (P 3)
- "Though, me being a black person. There was one other black person in the mayor's administration, there were not very many black people at the airport. at least not in the white-collar executive positions, they were black folks who worked in maintenance and those kinds of things. There were people who look like me." (P 3)
- "I have been reluctant to attribute it to race until fairly recently, when I've unfortunately had to accept reality weighing large, like I always say." (P 3)



- "When I look at other examples, and there are people who or have much less in terms of education, experience and they've been granted certain positions or titles or whatever. And so, there have been a lot of barriers." (P 3)
- "...they find some other excuse to present and amounts to another obstacle to put in your way to prevent you." (P 3)
- "I didn't get certain considerations for certain things, because of the color of my skin." (P 3)
- "If you not do not fit into their culture or their view of how you should be, then you will not excel, they will let you be there, but you won't get engaged or you won't be really included in." (P 3)
- "I think that the airport industry is the same kind of way." (P 3)
- "We as African Americans, we come into this industry, but it's not like we are welcome." (P 3)
- "There's no excuse for that we talked about, we had over 500 Commercial Service airports at the time." (P 3)
- "There's no excuse for that less than 1%"(P 3)
- "As we look at the top S&P companies now you look at well how many African American CEOs there are and how many board members there are. Same kind of thing." (P 3)
- "Working representations, I think being an African American now as I look back on my career has been a major impediment." (P 3)

- "As I look back at my life, I tried to discern what my calling was or what I'm supposed to be doing, because I have very, I have strong religious beliefs. And I think I was called to be a leader in several different environments." (P 3)
- "I've tried to develop those skills over time to be a better person in terms of leadership and when I approach leadership is more about the people." (P 3)
- "Once again, I think we all, not only are we called but we all have a mission, and that mission is to give back is to do something for someone else other than ourselves is to leave a situation better than you found it." (P 3)
- "We have to have certain skills and abilities to be able to lead a project from concept into operation in terms of figuring out the planning, design, development, how to get it done." (P 3)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 4):**

- "And so that kind of that motivates me to keep going because there are endless opportunities at airports to to try to offer or make sure opportunities are made available to to minorities." (P 4)
- "I mean, divert diversity is passe, right? It's now all about diversity and inclusion. Right? It's one thing to to have a segment or percentage of the workforce, you know, meet a certain demographic, but if that is all that's happening, you're not growing and not impactful in the organization, then you still falling short." (P 4)
- "It's, it's about creating an opportunity for people who otherwise wouldn't have those opportunities to get in. And then, you know, remove barriers that would

prevent them from succeeding, giving them the tool that enables them to succeed." (P 4)

- "I think there's an innate fear on the part of the majority population that is if blacks are able to rise to the level where they have control over their fate, that they might be treated the same way that we will treat right Right, which, is absolutely not the case. We don't have the same heart, for the most part." (P 4)
- "We don't hurt other people, we hurt ourselves because too many of us don't see value in ourselves." (P 4)
- "I said to myself, you know, I always thought that I'm going to be in that seat one day and I said when I'm in that seat, I'm gonna I'm gonna make decisions differently." (P 4)
- "I'm very close to the general workforce, because I don't see them as someone who is subordinate to me." (P 4)
- "I found myself in an environment where the minority is not the majority anymore. And that was quite a transition for me. I I didn't have a self esteem issue. I just, um, I had to learn that, that that, that that not all people that do not look like me, are untrustworthy." (P 4)
- "There are some, some white Americans who can take credit for certain periods of my career progression." (P 4)
- "There was there was a secretary at the time and governor at the time, that just did not want somebody that look like me to be in this room." (P 4)

- "I just don't have a tolerance for for anybody in my organization that engages in unethical, behavior." (P 4)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 5):**

- "There wasn't a strong motivation to lead." (P 5)
- "So the motivation for me is I'm doing this for hundreds, possibly 1000s of individuals, right, which translates into 1000s of families, and not just families for now but families for the next generation to come. That's what keeps me motivated." (P 5)
- "It's a very class oriented society." (P 5)
- "So when I came over to the U.S., my mindset wasn't race. It was more class." (P 5)
- "And so having an airport director that was black, that was normal, where I'm coming from the majority of people there was Black." (P 5)
- "Yes, it was. So it was this based on where you live." (P 5)
- "It didn't impact or affect me and the reason why I'm just coming from XXXXXXXX, when all that person refers to you as boy, it's just that's just the way we talk." (P 5)
- "I was programmed socially, not racially and it took me a while to kind of, you know, but it's a what's a whole bunch of us but anyway." (P 5)
- "I didn't experience the barriers coming into the industry." (P 5)
- "I worked directly for two people, people of color, the barriers that I face was prior to coming to the U.S. and those were social." (P 5)

- "As I think about it, it's I had to kind of hide where I was from, in order to advance in society." (P 5)
- "And one way of doing that is creating living wages, jobs for them, creating opportunities for them, not only jobs, per se, but also creating opportunities where they can become entrepreneurs." (P 5)
- "I'm extremely vocal and I'm going out of the way to make sure that we don't have any barriers to those folks coming in, but I'm also interested in creating the entrepreneur opportunities, because it's going to be generational." (P 5)
- "If we can do that more multiple times. Right and create opportunities for women and people of color in a way that that that to me is one of the higher moral purpose that I have and I think organizations such as this one should have as well." (P 5)
- "You can use it to influence people's lives in a positive way. Or you can use it to influence people's lives and in a negative way." (P 5)
- "It was supposed to be based on certain criteria that was established and people at the table with me. I realized that's not what they were doing." (P 5)
- "So to me, the motivation to lead is you can be indoors position you can use it for good, you can also use it to do a lot of evil as well. Right?" (P 5)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 6):**

- "One for me, I I didn't see a lot of people that look like me and senior level roles at larger US airports." (P 6)

- "You know, I, I know that there is there's a lot of resistance out there." (P 6)
- "And I'm sure that at some point along the way, I have been victim to it." (P 6)
- "And I spent a lot of time building a network." (P 6)
- "But I think that some of the people that I've come to know and come to be very close to who may not look like us have played a role." (P 6)
- "So, yeah, and in fact, I will tell you my first position as a director, was influenced by people of color, because they wanted to have diversity." (P 6)
- "They had never had anyone of color in in that office. and so I was the first and the youngest, because I was still my 30s." (P 6)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 7):**

- "I've served as, as a footnote, the first African American executive airport director in XXXXXXXXXXXX airport's 80-year history." (P 7)
- "Being an African American I, I felt that it was a privilege I felt that it was an opportunity to set a great example, to show that African Americans could indeed lead major transportation hubs, they connect individuals in and around the country. And so, from that, I felt very proud, I felt that it was a privilege." (P 7)
- "I've experienced racism." (P 7)
- "I've experienced colorism." (P 7)
- "I've experienced, whereby it's been an issue with trying to balance and make sure that women and other folks who have different sexual preferences or religious

affiliations that you have to balance that make sure that your politics you are playing with are on point." (P 7)

- "I wanted to in turn be in an environment where I was able to impact minorities, women, people of color." (P 7)
- "But more so looking at how can I in turn make a difference in the communities in which I serve?" (P 7)
- "Well more so, making the right decisions in terms of standing for what was right I think, again, their moral compass and having a set of core values is something that you establish up front." (P 7)
- "Some of the airport's leaders did not even have a mission statement, vision statement, actual goals or competencies or core values." (P 7)
- "So started out on the front end understanding from a strategic standpoint establishing those aspects at airports, make a difference in terms of how you run the enterprise." (P 7)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 8):**

- "Well, I just think finding out that there was so much representation in airport leadership was very encouraging when I finally got into it." (P 8)
- "Yeah, they were about barriers." (P 8)
- "Somebody had to be ready for me." (P 8)
- "Okay, I had two experiences, that were I don't call them barriers. And I mean, nobody ever looked at me and said, hey, you're Black and we can't hire you.

That's beyond you where I never got that overt reaction. But I did have some interesting experiences." (P 8)

- "Okay, and what just might be so I, even though not having to go through actual segregation, because I was only born in 63." (P 8)
- "So not wanting to be part of something mediocre kind of drives me if that really helps." (P 8)
- "You're not going to work everywhere. It's not gonna work out in some places that you really don't need to be. I've managed to find a few of them." (P 8)

**Significant Statements from Participant (P 9):**

- "And I have come to the conclusion that in order to continue with the advancement of people of color, in leadership positions, that my part is that I have to do extremely well and I can't fail." (P 9)
- "They want people sometimes that look like their community. And so, I don't I don't hold that as a fault against the airport authority. You know, the fact of the matter is that I probably was not a good fit. You know, and vice versa. If you have a mayor that is an African American mayor, and the city runs the airport. A lot of times, they may go in specifically wanting an African American to be in a position within their administration.
- "The problem is that there are more authorities and mayors that are not people of color than then they are people of color." (P 9)



- "You know, when you when you grew up in an African American community as a kid, even though our positions are one where you have to be you have to be fair to all right, you want to make sure that what you do has a real benefit to the community and especially for people that are very similar to you." (P 9)
- "And, and it was always kind of, you know, mentioned that, you know, whatever we did in life, you didn't want to, you know, bring any kind of shame to your family name." (P 9)