

2016

# Women Working in Leadership Roles Who were Raised in Father-Absent Families

Lauren Huff  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Lauren Huff

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Walden University  
2016

Abstract

Women Working in Leadership Roles Who Were Raised in Father-Absent Families

by

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MPA, Troy University, 2007

BA, Clayton State University, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2016

## Abstract

Girls from father-absent families tend to form low levels of trust that may dictate relationships throughout life, including progression into leadership roles. There is evidence to suggest that girls raised in father-absent families fail to reach their potential, and therefore public programs that address the development of strong interpersonal and leadership skills would enhance these capacities. Unfortunately, public programming gaps exist for girls raised in father-absent families that would provide the skills needed to be effective leaders in their schools, communities, and careers. Using House's path-goal leadership theory as the framework, this phenomenological study explored how girls from father-absent families developed the skills to lead and what factors the women perceived to be contributors or barriers to their development as organization leaders. A sample of 10 women who were raised in father-absent families, and who held leadership positions in public or nonprofit sectors in the southeastern area of the United States participated in the in-depth interviews that generated data for this study. The data were coded and analyzed using a modified van Kaam method. Findings suggest that lack of trust hindered the transition and development into a leadership role, as did the leadership style of the participant. Alternatively, participants reported that their sense of resiliency and spiritual connections were factors that helped in their development as leaders. These results may contribute to social change by providing policymakers, leaders, and service organizations recommendations that will encourage support for public programming initiatives for girls from father-absent families.

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## Dedication

I am dedicating this paper to Audrey Nefertiti Donaldson, “Aunt Neff.” She was always encouraging me, but she passed away before seeing me make it to the end of this process. My sister, Aisha, was fatherless due to her father’s death. My sisters, Ashley and Christina, were fatherless due to our father’s incarceration. My sisters, Drew and Rachel, were fatherless due to a divorce. To all fatherless women who may be feeling broken and empty, you, too, can overcome the pain and be successful.

## Acknowledgments

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Young girls who are growing up in father-absent families face many obstacles to reaching their full potential. The government allocates funds to My Brother's Keeper for public programming for boys and men with absent fathers; however, I did not locate any funding being directed towards public programs for girls raised without fathers. For example, President Obama established the My Brother's Keeper initiative to address issues faced by boys and young men to reach their full potential (The White House, 2015); yet no similar program exists for young women. There are other youth programs that focus specifically on boys from father-absent families; such mentoring programs are typically designed to combat developmental, social, psychological, and interpersonal issues believed to be correlated with being reared without a father (Senior, 2010). Similar programs may also be beneficial for adolescent girls who are being raised without a father.

With this study, I explored the lived experiences of women who grew up in a father-absent family and who are working in organization leadership roles in the nonprofit or public sectors as supervisors, managers, directors, vice-presidents, or presidents. For the purposes of this study, the definition of a father-absent family was adapted from the work of Ratele, Shefer, and Clowes (2012). According to Ratele et al., biologically, everyone has a father, yet socially, the term father-absent was defined as having fewer than 5 years of contact from age 0–17 with any significant adult male in the

home, particularly a biological father. In a father-absent family, there may be emotional distance between the daughter and her mother (Deardorff et al., 2011). This emotional distance is likely due to the mother's stress of being the sole income earner and working long hours to support the family (Deardorff et al., 2011).

Previous research on a father's absence supported a common theme that an individual's adult life is affected by a father's absence in childhood (Golombok & Badger, 2009). The intent of this study was not to focus on the negative outcomes of women who were raised without a father, but rather to focus on the fact that these women are now leading public and nonprofit organizations and subordinates within these organizations. This approach provides data that could be useful to single-mothers, funders for programs in communities, educators, policy makers, and public service professionals.

### **Background**

Single-mother families continue to be prevalent. According to McLanahan and Sandefur (2009), one-third of infants are born to a single-mother. In 2009, 19.6 million children in the United States lived in a home with only a mother (Mather, 2010). In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau's report showed over 8 million children residing in a home with only a mother. The number of father-absent households was at 8,365,912 in 2010 and was an increase from 804,038 households in the year 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The 2013 U.S. Census Bureau's 5-year estimate from 2008 to 2013 in one southeastern city in the United States reported that there were 17,938 households with children under the age of 18; moreover, 15,711 of these households had only a mother.



The data have shown negative outcomes for girls growing up in an absent father home. Girls growing up in father-absent families are more likely to experience sexual intercourse at an earlier age than their peers who live in a home with a biological father (Ellis et al., 2012). Adolescent girls raised without a father are also more likely to become teenage mothers, commit crimes, and live in poverty (James, Ellis, Schlomer, & Garber, 2012; Simpson, Griskevicius, Kuo, Sung, & Collins, 2012).

Girls who grow up in father-absent families may experience a multitude of problems in adulthood. There are two basic needs that must be met early in a young girl's life which are love and security (Patterson, 2011). If those two needs are not met in childhood, a woman who grew up in a father-absent family may struggle with feelings of rejection, feelings of being unwanted, and feelings of insecurity as an adult woman (Patterson, 2011). The fatherless daughter syndrome explains that adult women raised in a father-absent family often have trouble in relationships and trouble with their finances and their careers (Patterson, 2011). The literature that I located regarding girls growing up in a father-absent family was underscored by the potential issues that these girls may face due to their situation. There was a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of women who grew up in father-absent families and become leaders. In order to explore these factors, I conducted in-depth interviews of 10 women who were raised in a father-absent family and are now working in an organization leadership role in the public and nonprofit sectors.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Adult women raised in a father-absent family often have trouble in relationships, with their finances, and in their careers (Patterson, 2011). The problem that I addressed in this study was that women who are raised in father-absent families are not likely to reach their full potential or to have leadership skills, as a result of their fathers being absent. There is a lack of support for services to empower girls from father-absent families to reach their full potential and equip them with the skills to be leaders in their schools, communities, and careers.

Children form characteristics referred to as attachment patterns that will determine how they interact with people throughout life (Dykas & Cassidy, 2011). The attachment patterns formed during childhood may determine the emotional stability, self-perception, and resiliency for a woman from a father-absent family (Dykas & Cassidy, 2011). Children raised without a bond with both parents are more likely to form avoidant or insecure attachment patterns (Dykas & Cassidy, 2011). The focus of attachment patterns in earlier research was limited to the relationship between parent and child (Bowlby, 1963). The specific problem addressed in this study was the need to understand how some women raised without a father present have managed to thrive in their professional lives.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of female business leaders who were raised in a father-absent family and have achieved success in their professional lives. In the study, I used in-depth interviews

to understand the factors these women believe contributed to their development of ambition, insight, wisdom, and other factors related to leading an organization. The findings from this could be used to contribute to positive social change by providing enhanced awareness for policymakers and support for programs and policies impacting girls growing up in father-absent families.

### **Nature of the Study**

In the study, I used a qualitative research method to probe and explore a phenomenon experienced by a group of women. A qualitative study may help to reveal a situation and address a phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine 2011; Merriam, 1998), and so, in this study, I employed a phenomenological research design. This approach allowed for detailed descriptions to emerge of the lived experiences of women raised in a father-absent family who are now leaders at their organizations.

Other research designs were also considered. For example, Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory design was considered. Grounded theory is used when a researcher's goal is to establish a theory through the use of interviews and observation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory may also analyze documents, objects, and other social artifacts. Dunne (2011) explained that a study employing grounded theory may take more time because it uses several stages for data collection. Because the intent of this study was to investigate the underlying meaning of the human experiences of women who were raised in a father-absent family through their senses, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments, phenomenology, as explained

by Moustakas (1994), was more appropriate to guide this study than a grounded theory design.

I also considered an ethnographic design for this study. Sangasubana (2011) explained that the ethnographic design focuses on the relationship among members of a group. This approach involves studying a group of people daily in a natural setting (Sangasubana, 2011). The ethnographic design attempts to understand a particular group by observing patterns of behaviors (Rudestam & Newton, 2014). This type of design focuses on cultural patterns. I rejected the ethnographic design for this study as my intent was not just to examine the behaviors of women with absent fathers but to obtain a deeper understanding of these women raised in father-absent families who are now working in leadership roles.

The narrative design was also considered for this study. The narrative design focuses on events or activities (Creswell, 2013). The narrative design is normally focused on a single participant; therefore, I rejected narrative design because more than one participant was desired in the sample population.

Case studies are used to study individuals or small groups of people (Yin, 1984). According to Yin (1984), case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations; they do not represent a sample, but instead they generalize theories, and therefore, the case study design was dismissed for this study. After considering all other designs, the phenomenological study design was found to be the best choice because it fit the purpose of this study. I used the phenomenological research design to

determine the lived experiences of women who were raised in father-absent families who now work in a leadership role in the public and nonprofit sectors.

### **Research Question**

The current qualitative phenomenological study explored the perceptions and lived experiences of purposively selected women participants working in leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors. The research question is described as a statement that distinguishes the phenomenon under investigation. The overarching research question for this study was: What are the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered their development as leaders?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework plays an integral role in a research study. The theoretical framework has an effect on how the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Yilmaz, 2013). This study was based on House's (1971) path-goal leadership theory, which described a successful leader as one who has skills to match his or her behaviors to the requirement of the situation and to the characteristic of his or her subordinates. House explained that path-goal leadership theory was known as the theory of effective leadership. This theory explains that leaders should provide support to facilitate job satisfaction for their subordinates (House & Shamir, 1993).

Organization leaders must embrace the leadership styles that are most effective in the motivation of their subordinates. When specific leadership styles are used according to the situation, it increases subordinate effectiveness and decreases turnover (House, 1971). This theory provides a background that supports my investigation of leadership.

The participants were asked in their in-depth interview if they change their leadership style to adapt to situations. A more thorough examination of path-goal leadership theory will be included in the Chapter 2.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Adolescent girls:* For this study, I am describing adolescent girls as female children between the ages of 12-17 years old.

*Attachment styles:* Attachment styles are relationships that are formed with other people. Individuals develop attachment patterns as children. The attachment style may affect the way one behaves throughout life. Attachments styles include secure, avoidant, and insecure (Bowlby, 1969; Harms, 2011).

*Avoidant attachment:* Avoidant attachment is a type of attachment pattern when an individual avoids forming relationships and is resistant when others attempt to form relationships with him or her (Bowlby, 1969; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2009).

*Father:* For this research, a father is the male biological parent who is emotionally available to his child(ren; Lamb, 2012).

*Father-absent family:* A father-absent family is a family unit without the biological father present (Ratele et al., 2012). For the purpose of this research, the definition for this term was having fewer than 5 years of contact with a father or any significant adult male in the home, particularly a biological father when the child is between the ages of 0–17 years old.

*Fatherless daughter syndrome:* A syndrome is a predictable pattern of behavior that occurs under certain circumstances. When a daughter grows up in a father-absent

family, she may experience feelings of emptiness, abandonment, and rejection (Patterson, 2011).

*Leader:* For the purpose of this research, a leader is a supervisor, manager, director, vice president, or president of an organization that has people who report to them (Yukl & Muhsud, 2010).

*Leadership style:* Leadership style is the leader's behavior when attempting to influence the activities of subordinates (Holmes & Marra, 2004).

*Paternal investment:* Paternal investment is the time that a father spends with his children (Tither & Ellis, 2008).

*Situational leadership:* Situational leadership is a type of leadership which requires the ability to understand the needs of subordinates, while being flexible enough to use a variety of leadership styles. Leadership styles are based upon variables like employee development and the relationship between managers and their subordinates (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1985).

*Stepfather:* The stepfather is the nonbiological male parent that is married to the biological mother of a child (Jensen & Shafer, 2013).

*Transactional leadership:* Transactional leadership is when a leader promotes compliance of their subordinates through both reward and punishment (Weber, 1947).

*Transformational leadership:* Transformational leadership is when a leader builds up their subordinates by motivating them to achieve their goals (Grimm, 2010).

### **Assumptions**

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) explained that without assumptions there would be no need for a research problem. A research assumption is when something is presumed to be true by a researcher without definitive evidence. In this study, I assumed that the participants knew their participation was voluntary, and so, they would be willing to honestly share their experiences freely. I assumed that the in-depth interviews questions were valid and reliable tools that would answer the research question. I also assumed that the participants had the cognitive and intellectual ability necessary to adequately understand the questions they were asked during their in-depth interviews.

### **Limitations**

Ellis and Levy (2009) explained that the meaning of a limitation in research is a potential weakness. One limitation of the study was that it was focused on an absent father, rather than all father figures, who may include male primary caregivers, such as uncles, grandfathers, and stepfathers. The focus of this study was women raised in a father-absent family. The participants that were used in this research highlight families with minimal male involvement in a parental role.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The participants were women who grew up in father-absent families who now work in a leadership role. I used a survey with qualifying questions to acquire demographic information from the participants. The survey questioned if the biological father was in their home and if so for how long. The accuracy of the interviews relied on the participant's honesty. According to Simon (2011), delimitations limit the scope of a



study. For this study, each participant would need to have had fewer than 5 years of contact with her father while she was 0–17 years old. This study was delimited to investigating the lived experiences of women over the age of 18 from father-absent families in the southeastern part of the United States. I used bracketing in this qualitative research study to mitigate any preconceptions or biases (Tufford & Newman, 2012). I set aside my own assumptions and beliefs about this phenomenon in order to examine how the phenomenon presented itself in the world of the participant.

### **Significance of the Study**

I examined the lived experiences of women who grew up in father-absent families and who now work in organization leadership positions (supervisors, managers, directors, vice presidents, or presidents) in the nonprofit and public sectors in the southeastern part of the United States to learn what has helped or hindered their development as leaders. I understand that leadership and management are different terms, but both skill sets need to be present when motivating subordinates and administering work. The outcome of this research could be used as a tool to create initiatives and programs for girls growing up in father-absent families to help them reach their full potential and empower them to be leaders in their schools, communities, and careers. The in-depth interviews that I conducted examined the perceptions of women who were raised in father-absent families to explore if they felt that they had the skills that are needed to handle the responsibility of a leader and how the skills were developed.

In the 2014 speech that launched the My Brother's Keeper program, President Obama said My Brother's Keeper was personal to him because of the absence of his own

father (The White House, 2014). The personal feelings of policymakers may influence how some policies may pass for one group over another group. President Obama established the My Brother's Keeper initiative in 2014 to address obstacles faced by boys and young men (The White House, 2015). It was created to help boys and young men of color because opportunities for this group lagged behind in the past (The White House, 2015). Government funds are provided to communities to help put these boys on the path to success (The White House, 2015). These young men are being connected to mentoring, support networks, and skills they need to find a good job or go to college and work their way into middle class and beyond (The White House, 2015). One major goal of the program was to help young men stay in school and find a good job so they have an opportunity to reach their full potential to contribute to their communities and build decent lives for themselves and their families (The White House, 2015).

The government has already paid \$150 million toward this initiative and will pay \$200 million over the next 5 years (The White House, 2015). These types of funding could also benefit leadership programs for girls growing up in father-absent families. After much investigation, I did not locate a similar program for girls growing up in father-absent homes. This study could provide information to policymakers who could potentially prevent factors that are associated with being reared in a father-absent family, such as teenage promiscuity and pregnancy, poverty, substance abuse, and crime and delinquency among adolescent girls. This study's implications for positive social change may include informing policymakers of the importance of increased awareness and political and public support of girls from father-absent families.

## Summary

In this phenomenological study, I sought to examine a social phenomenon and to reveal the experiences of women who were raised in a father-absent family. In this study, a leader was defined as someone who holds an organization leadership position as a supervisor, manager, director, vice-president, and president within their professional organization and has people who report to them. This study could provide policymakers with information to consider when establishing new policy.

In the first chapter, I provided detailed information and analysis pertaining to the problem statement, purpose, and significance of the problem, theoretical framework, research question, and the nature of the study. The chapter also included operational definitions, assumptions and limitations, scope, and delimitations. Path-goal theory provided the foundation for the research problem in relation to the literature. The data collection instrument consisted of in-depth interview questions of 10 participants. This study took place in the southeastern part of the United States.

Chapter 2 will be comprised of a review of the literature as it relates to the social problems that girls raised in a father-absent family may face. Poverty, promiscuous activity, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and crime and juvenile delinquency are a few salient factors associated with being raised in a father-absent family according to the literature found in Chapter 2. In the chapter, I will present a detailed discussion of the social problems related to being raised in father-absent families. The different leadership styles will also be discussed. I will examine transformational, transactional, and situational leadership types.

In Chapter 3, I will present an outline of the qualitative research method that I used in this study and provide an explanation of the phenomenological approach and data collection and analysis. I used a demographic survey to gather pertinent information about the participants' backgrounds and to understand the phenomenon under investigation. The third chapter will also provide a detailed discussion of the research method that I used for the study. Previous literature focused on problems associated with the physical, mental, and emotional development of girls who grew up in father-absent families. Chapter 4 will present an analysis pertaining the pilot study, setting, data collection, demographic information, data analysis, data management, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and emergent themes. Chapter 5, I will present the interpretation of the results, inferences about the important findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of 10 women working as supervisors, managers, directors, vice presidents, or presidents in the nonprofit and public sector to better understand the factors they perceived that helped or hindered their development as leaders that were raised in father-absent families. I gathered the participants' lived experiences and perceptions by conducting in-depth interviews with them. I also hoped to understand the factors that these women believe contributed to their success in becoming leaders of public or nonprofit organizations despite their circumstances. The literature review that I conducted was a summary of empirical studies that will provide the background necessary for understanding the lived experiences of the participants. The literature review will also summarize issues related to child welfare, health and human services, and the court system, as well as contain a discussion of the theoretical framework.

My objective in conducting the literature search was to explore the factors related to the characteristics of women raised in father-absent families. I also wanted to examine various leadership types. The sections of this literature review will focus on the following: (a) theory and framework, (b) leadership styles and path-goal theory, (c) attachment patterns, (d) girls from father-absent families, (e) social issue of growing up in a father-absent family, (f) current public programs, (g) women from father-absent families, (h) public sector and nonprofit leaders, and (i) the chapter summary.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

To write the literature review, I used the following online databases and search engines to locate peer-reviewed journals, online sources, and books: Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Premier, ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis, Google Scholar, JSTOR: Journal Storage, EBSCOhost Online Research Databases, and Thoreau. The following keywords were used, either as separate words or grouped together as phrases: *leadership, fatherlessness, absent fathers, attachment styles, policy, public programs, adolescent females, overcoming adversity, nonprofit leadership, and single mothers*. All of the key terms yielded studies that were relevant to the problem and research question.

Most of the literature I reviewed was published between 2009 and 2016; however, literature on the experiences of women raised in a father-absent family was limited. In order to expand the results, older articles that were relevant to the topic were included. Older articles were also used in the theoretical framework of the study in order to reflect the seminal studies on path-goal theory.

### **Background**

Policymakers have recognized that father-absent families are often economically dependent on government assistance. The crisis of children raised in father-absent families has been called the most destructive trend of a generation (Ellis et al., 2012). There have been policy attempts to place emphasis on a father's responsibilities to provide financially for his children in hopes of shifting the economic costs from the state to the fathers (Lamb, 2012). For example, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2006 set aside

one third of the \$150 million annual budget for family support for programs promoting fathers' involvement with their children by providing father-focused services; however, Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, and Wong (2009) disagreed with Lamb's (2012) assertion that finances was the reason that fathers are not involved with their child(ren). Cowan et al. explained that the deficit model of father involvement assumes that the social problems related to growing up in a father-absent family does not have to do with the father's education or lack of employment. Rather, father-absence in America has to do with a lack of motivation for men to maintain relationships with their children (Cowan et al., 2009). Marsiglio and Roy (2012) urged policymakers to establish initiatives to teach absent-fathers skills to nurture their children, rather than only how to provide for them financially. Coles and Green (2010) and Johnson (2010) believed that it is more difficult for African American men to remain involved in the lives of their children. Others believe that most fathers choose to relinquish the responsibility of fatherhood (Baskerville, 2004).

There were 19.6 million children in the United States still living with only a mother in 2009 (Mather, 2010). To address this, I will show that there have been more social service programs established in the past 20 years for fathers living away from their children. For example, the administration of President George W. Bush proposed \$300 million annually to promote responsible fatherhood and for federal promotion of healthy marriage in 2002 (The White House, 2015). Earlier, President Clinton created a Presidential Fatherhood Initiative, and Vice President Gore chaired a federal staff conference on nurturing fatherhood (The White House, 2015). Congress has established

bipartisan task forces on fatherhood promotion and issued a resolution affirming the importance of fathers (President Advisory, 2010).

In 2010, President Obama introduced the Fatherhood Program (The White House, 2015). This program provides help to fathers who do not have the skills or education necessary to financially support their children (Department of Health and Human Services; DHHS, 2010). The program was established to provide training, education, and job placement opportunities for fathers who live away from their children (The White House, 2015). The participants also are involved in survival skills, life management workshops, workforce preparation, job readiness, and counseling (The White House, 2015). The program also helps these fathers find temporary employment (DHHS, 2010). This program is a collaborative effort between the Department of Human Resources, Office of Child Support Enforcement, the Department of Technology, and Adult Education Special Workforce Services (The White House, 2015).

The Fatherhood Program offers a specialized training specifically for young fathers between the ages of 16-21(DHHS 2010). The program is 6 weeks long and focuses on vocational career choices and summer work experiences (The White House, 2015). The fathers are required to go to school, to earn a high school diploma or GED, and to attend parenting workshops (DHHS, 2010). The Fatherhood Program offers a means for noncustodial fathers who have court-ordered child support to meet their financial obligations (DHHS, 2010). The collection and issuance of child support funds are also monitored through the program (The White House, 2015). This program is an attempt by the state to decrease single mothers' growing dependence on state-funded



support (The White House, 2015). This program has benefited the U.S. economy because more fathers who live away from their children are able to pay child support (DHHS, 2010); however, I did not locate any evidence that the number of single mother households has decreased since the implementation of the fatherhood program. I did not locate data that addressed whether an absent father who participated in the Fatherhood Program maintained a connection to his child or children. Tax payers may be interested in knowing why the U.S. government continue to allocate millions of dollars a year to support fathers who choose not to parent their children.

The government programs previously mentioned are not necessarily benefiting the physical or emotional needs of children being raised in father-absent families. But, rather providing a financial relief for government. Lamb (2012) argued that child support payments do not have a direct impact on a child's emotional or physical development; however, due to the implementation of these programs, the increased attention of policymakers given to fathers who live away from their child(ren) can be attributed to growing awareness of the ways in which fathers directly affect their children.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For this study, House's (1971) path-goal leadership theory guided the research. Path-goal was based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, which explained that an individual will act in a certain way based on an expectation. Path-goal leadership theory was first introduced by Evans (1970) and further developed by House. Path-goal was best defined as the process in which leaders select specific behaviors that are best suited to the employees' needs and working environment (House, 1971). Once this is met,

leaders may best guide the employees through their path in the obtainment of their daily work activities (goals; Northouse, 2013). My search of existing literature revealed few published peer-reviewed studies about path-goal leadership theory within the last 5 years.

I chose path-goal theory as the framework for this study because it explains that leaders who are flexible are able to generate high levels of work group effectiveness by increasing the subordinate's motivation through clarification, direction, structure, and rewards (Howard & Irving, 2012). Leaders are deemed effective if they complement the environment in which their subordinates work by providing the necessary tools for the success of subordinates (House, 1971). Moreover, the role of the leader was to provide the necessary support that will ensure that the subordinate has job satisfaction and effective work performance (House & Shamir, 1993). The path-goal leadership theory was based on the leadership style that was used to fit the work environment and subordinate's skill level (House & Mitchell, 1974).

In this study, I did not measure leadership styles, leader-follower bonds, or leadership effectiveness. Instead, I questioned the participants about their perceptions of how they feel they are performing as an organization leader. I also asked the participants how they developed their leadership skills and to describe a time when the participant had to change their leadership styles to fit a particular work situation.

Organization leaders must embrace the leadership styles that are most effective in the motivation of diverse groups of subordinates. When specific leadership styles are used according to the situation, it increases subordinate effectiveness and decreases turnover (House & Shamir, 1993). House and Shamir (1993) described a successful

leader as one who matches his or her behaviors to the requirement of the situation and to the characteristic of his or her subordinates. House and Shamir also explained that an effective leader's behavior encourages subordinates' satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Research has indicated that leaders who initiate structure for subordinates are generally rated highly by superiors and have higher producing work groups (House & Shamir, 1993).

House and Mitchell's (1974) path-goal theory defined four kinds of behaviors used by effective leaders. The first is directive path-goal which gives the subordinate specific guidance to rules and procedures (House & Mitchell, 1974). The second is supportive leader behavior, which provides self-confidence and social satisfaction and a source of stress reduction and alleviation of frustration for subordinates and increases performance (House & Mitchell, 1974). House and Mitchell noted that the third behavior is participative leader behavior which provides encouragement to subordinates. Participative leaders take the subordinates opinions and suggestion into account when making decisions (House & Mitchell, 1974). The fourth is achievement oriented behavior which causes subordinates to strive for higher standards of performance and to have more confidence in their ability to meet challenging goals (House & Mitchell, 1974).

Path-goal theory was used by other researchers in their studies. Jing and Avery (2008) and Alanazi, Alharthey, and BanderKhalaf (2013) studied path-goal theory; however, these researchers disagreed that House's (1971) path-goal theory is the paradigm for effective leadership. Jing and Avery stated that there are weaknesses in the

path-goal theory because conclusions cannot be drawn about the extent to which leadership behaviors and styles facilitate the improvement of subordinate or organizational performance. Alananzi et al. stated that some weaknesses to the path-goal theory are: (a) it does not encourage the subordinates to participate in leadership process; (b) there are a lack of research findings that support a consistent and complete picture of the theory's claims. Alananzi et al. argued that it had not been proven that a positive relationship between the leader and subordinate affects the subordinates' job performance. Jing and Avery stated that there is a deficiency in path-goal research that shows a clear connection to the leadership-performance and the leader-subordinate relationship.

Rosing, Frese, and Baush (2011) are proponent of the path-goal theory. Rosing et al. explained that leadership should be directive and clarify path-goal relationships in case of the subordinates' lack of knowledge or abilities to reach these goals. Rosing et al. agreed with House's (1971) path-goal theory that the leader's behavior should be contingent on the situation. Rosing et al. also stated that in addition to being able to be flexible and the adjusting leadership behaviors, the leader must also be flexible when assigning the appropriate innovation tasks that quickly change over time.

Vandegrift and Matusitz (2011) conducted a study that examined path-goal theory's effectiveness. Ten top executives employed with Columbia Records Company were interviewed to understand how Columbia Records managed to continue to be a successful thriving organization after 120 years in business. It was determined that early on, the company adopted leadership characteristics similar to the path-goal leadership

styles. The executives used the path-goal leadership styles in the relationships with their subordinates and their artist. According to Vandegrift and Matusitz, the outcome of the study showed that when path-goal's multiple leadership styles were applied, the organization remained successful. Currently, House's (1971) path-goal theory is being used by all the executives at Capital records (Vandegrift & Matusitz, 2011). The executives credit the ongoing success of Columbia Records to the path-goal theory (Vandegrift & Matusitz, 2011). Path-goal theory was chosen as the best theory for my study because it provides the framework for the phenomenon under investigation.

### **Leadership Styles and Path-Goal**

In this section, I will discuss transformational, transactional, and situational leadership types. Each of these leadership types has been shown to motivate employees; however, each style is distinct from the others (Almansour, 2012). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that is focused on change; these types of leaders build up their followers by motivating them to achieve their goals (Grimm, 2010). Weber's (1947) transactional leadership theory explains that people are motivated by reward and punishment. When a transactional leader assigns work to subordinates, the subordinates are considered to be fully responsible for the work, whether or not they have the resources or capability to complete the work (Weber, 1947). When things go wrong, the subordinate is considered to be personally at fault and is punished (Weber, 1947). In the situational leadership model, on the other hand, the development levels of the employees dictate which leadership style the leader will use and how the leader will produce anticipated results for the work (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

Chen, Chen, and Chen (2010) collected data from 150 employees who worked within 12 organizations about the casual effects of transformational and transactional leadership and the mediating roles of trust on follower outcomes. This author's finding in this study did not agree with Weber (1947). The result of the study indicated that the level of education is the factor that affects subordinate job satisfaction from transactional and transformational leadership types (Chen et al., 2010).

Situational leadership is a form of transformational leadership. According to the situational leadership model, one specific type of leadership style is not effective in all situations (Lynch, McCormack, & McCance, 2011). Hersey and Blanchard (1982) explained that leaders should have the sensitivity to sense and appreciate the differences among their followers. Situational leadership creates a successful relationship between the leaders and subordinates. Hersey and Blanchard explained that the skill level of the subordinates determines how the leader responds to specific situations. If the leader does not provide emotional support, the followers may not be motivated to help the organization accomplish goals (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). The situational leadership model explains how the leader can change leadership styles depending on the maturity or the developmental level of the subordinate (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

Path-goal is the theory of effective leadership. According to Simon (2011), there is extensive research on what makes a leader effective. Leaders that are considered effective should be able to adapt to different leadership styles (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Nevertheless, in order to have a successful organization it is important for subordinates to feel a sense of worth in the organization. Fiedler's (1964) contingency

model explained that power is determined by the position the leader holds in the organization. For this study, a leader has people who report to them and has the power to make decisions for the organization. Fiedler's contingency model explained that the relationship the leader has with the subordinates is very important if the leader wants to have influence over the subordinate's job performance (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). Fiedler's contingency model also influenced Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) situational leadership theory.

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) listed four leadership types within their situational leadership theory: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. Directing is used when the employee is at the novice level, coaching and supporting is used when the subordinate has some competence, delegating will be used when the employee has high competence (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). When a leader chooses to lead all the subordinates with one leadership type, this can cause problems for the organization and the leader. An effective leader has the ability to analyze and find solutions to problems (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Hersey and Blanchard explained that situational leadership is based on the relationship a leader has with subordinates in regards to: (a) a specific task, (b) the amount of emotional support a leader has to give to his/her follower, and (c) the skill level of the subordinate to perform a specified task. In situational leadership, the skill level of the subordinate is a significant factor on how the leader responds to a specific situation.

Effective leaders develop their styles as they interact with their followers. The most effective leader does not hold to a single style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). The

development level of the subordinates determines how the leader responds to specific situations. Leaders should apply to assorted methods of leadership to be effective. In the situational leadership model the skill levels of the subordinate will determine the type of leadership needed to produce the best results for the organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

Situational leadership incorporates the maturity levels of the subordinates to the leadership type. For example, when an employee is highly competent and committed, delegating leadership is used by the leader (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1985). Hersey and Blanchard (1982) believed that the leadership style is directly affected by employees' development and needs to be assessed prior to the leader being effective. A leader must assess the employee's maturity level and then decide on the most appropriate way to lead before making a decision (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Hersey and Blanchard suggested that there is not one method of leading that is better than the others. The type of leadership is dependent on other factors that involve the subordinates' needs. Hersey and Blanchard argued that the maturity of the follower is defined as the ability and willingness of people to take responsibility for directing their own behavior (p.151). The path-goal leadership theory is based on the effective working relationship between a subordinate and leader. House (1971) believed the leader should take responsibility for the performance and job satisfaction of the subordinate. Leaders should be responsible for directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating tasks (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

When looking at how situational leadership was applied previously, Papworth (2009) conducted eight in-depth interviews of supervising clinicians to determine the



effectiveness of the situational leadership model. Papworth explained that the situational leadership model is limited because it is based on observation and experience. The outcome of the study showed only partial support for situational leadership. Furtado, Batista, and Silva (2011) conducted a study of 266 nurses. Furtado et al.'s goal was to determine leadership type as it relates to job satisfaction. The results of the study showed that nurses tend to have higher job satisfaction when situational leadership was being used. Schreuder et al. (2011) used a cross-sectional study to investigate the relationship between managerial leadership and calling out of work due to sickness. The researcher distributed questionnaires to 699 nurses, and 579 questionnaires were returned and included in the research. The leadership styles used by the leaders were found to be associated with the attendance of the subordinates. The nurses with leaders who displayed situational leadership had a significantly lower level of absenteeism and staff turnover. The participants reported that situational leadership was the best management tool.

Craven and Kao (2006) compared 163 executives to find a relationship between leadership style and demographic characteristics. The researcher focused on leaders' effectiveness with motivating subordinates to encourage them to help meet organizational goals. Adaptive leaders have the ability to choose the appropriate leadership style for the situation. The outcome of the study was that leaders who were adaptive were more effective. In a similar study, Yukl and Mahsud (2010) discovered that flexible and adaptive leaders require changing behaviors for different situations. An effective leader

will need to have secure attachment patterns to be able to meet the emotional needs of subordinates (Polychroniou, 2009).

### **Attachment Patterns**

Trust patterns and the development of interpersonal relationships are determined from early childhood attachments (Jackson, 2010). The attachment between a parent and child is essential in the development of self-esteem, interpersonal trust, and psychological well-being (Jackson, 2010). Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory showed a relationship between early childhood attachments to the ability to develop positive relationships with others. If secure attachments are not developed in childhood, the individual will exhibit interpersonal defenses pertaining to fears of loss and separation. Bowlby explained that attachment patterns that are formed during infancy are usually the same attachment patterns present in all adult relationships (Bowlby, 1973). According to Bowlby, the attachments of an individual's experiences with primary caretakers will influence their attachment patterns throughout life. Insecure attachment is developed from the lack of parental involvement during childhood. Fathers who were more involved produced children with secure attachment patterns (Brown, Mangelsdorf, & Neff, 2012). There is a need to have a loving interaction from both biological parents in order to have the ability to trust others in adulthood. Trustworthiness is determined by the attachments in early childhood.

According to Bowlby (1973), early childhood relationships are essential in a child's ability to understand and to adjust to his or her environment. Freud's psychoanalytic theory explained that all behaviors that are developed from early

childhood relationships with parents and primary caregivers create a child's ability to understand and adjust to his or her environment (Fonagy, 2010). Both theorists showed a relationship between fear and anxiety; however, Freud (1969) believed individuals developed specific types of defense mechanisms in response to a loss or separation. Freud believed that fears of separation and loss affects attachment patterns that in turn affect the ability to form relationships. Freud and Bowlby have different views on how early childhood attachment patterns relate to fear of loss and separation. Freud explained that attachment patterns are formed prior to loss or separation. Conversely, Bowlby argued that attachment patterns are formed as a result of the loss and separation. Bowlby's attachment theory explained that different types of attachment styles are believed to be formed as a result of a child's attachment or (lack of attachment) with the primary caregivers.

Newer studies have shown interpersonal relationships between leaders and subordinates in the workplace (Harms, 2011). Organization leaders are faced with many challenges, among which is navigating these attachment patterns. For example, employees are more productive when there is an increase in motivation and satisfaction (House & Shamir, 1993). House's (1971) path-goal leadership theory is concerned with increasing the subordinates' motivation, empowerment, and satisfaction so that the subordinates will become a productive member of the organization. Polychroniou (2009) argued that a leader needs to have a secure attachment pattern to be able to meet the emotional needs of subordinates. In this study, I gained additional understanding of how women raised in father-absent families developed the skills to lead despite their

circumstances. A study focused on the effects of a father's absence and attachments is important to parents, teachers, and social service providers and may yield an understanding of how children raised in father-absent families can still reach their full potential into adulthood.

Bohlin and Hagekull (2009) conducted a longitudinal study to examine insecure attachment patterns using children with no paternal involvement from infancy (6 weeks old) to when the participants turned 21 years old. The result of the 21-year study confirmed that when a child has no paternal involvement, the child develops insecure attachment patterns and may exhibit shyness and social anxiety as an adult (Bohlin & Hagekull, 2009). Manicavasagar, Silove, Marnane, and Wagner (2009) who conducted a qualitative study using questionnaires of 83 clinical patients to examine their attachment patterns showed similar results with a direct relationship to separation and anxious attachment patterns.

Avoidant or insecure attachment patterns in a leader may cause the leader not to trust the subordinate enough to carry out a task. Leaders with avoidant attachment styles were reported to be less cohesive (Harms, 2011). According to Harms (2011), subordinates with poorer work performance had leaders with avoidant or insecure attachments styles. Cranshaw and Game (2010) agreed with Ronen and Mikulincer (2010) that the insecure attachments can lead to poor career satisfaction but could also result in low levels of trust. Ronen and Mikulincer argued that if the leader has insecure attachments it could result in the subordinate having poor job satisfaction.

The first attachment style is secure attachment. Secure attachment is developed when there is consistent and sensitive parenting during childhood. The outcome results in personal trust with others (Surcinelli, Rossi, Montebanocci, & Baldaro, 2010). Securely attached leaders feel more comfortable delegating tasks to subordinates. The next attachment style is insecure attachment, which occurs when a primary caregiver shows neglectful behaviors towards a child (Bowlby, 1969). Individuals who have insecure attachment styles are likely to have difficulty trusting. They may also experience negative thinking (about oneself) and have a higher report of depression and anxiety (Surcinelli et al., 2010). Children who have not had their emotional needs met by a primary caregiver may develop insecure attachment patterns (Dykas & Cassidy, 2011). According to Garrison, Kahn, Sauer, and Florczak (2012), people with insecure attachment styles often have unhappiness in their relationships. Cranshaw and Game (2010) found that having an insecure attachment relationship between leader and follower resulted in low levels of trust and low career satisfaction.

Path-goal is concerned with how leaders interact with subordinates. It is essential for leaders to build trusting relationship where they work. Leaders must maintain a high level of trust with subordinates, peers, executive staff, and clients. Cranshaw and Game (2010) found that an insecure attachment relationship between leader and follower resulted in low levels of trust. Chen, Chen, and Chen (2010) disagreed with Cranshaw and Game explaining that a leader having undergraduate and graduate levels of education is what affects the trust relationship between a leader and subordinate. Chen et al.'s

study also revealed that an individual's gender was the contributing factor to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

### **Girls from Father-Absent Families**

For this study, father-absent refers to having fewer than 5 years of contact from age 0–17 with any significant adult male in the home, particularly a biological father. A father's absence has been known to have some negative outcomes for girls and there is a direct link between a father's absence to a girl's development (Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel, Schwartz-Soicher, & Mincy, 2012). This was supported by Krampe (2009), who used in-depth interviews with fathers and daughters to gain additional understanding of how important a father's presence is to a daughter's individual development. The outcome of the study showed that an absence of a father resulted in negative effects on the girls' overall development; however, Brumariu and Kerns (2010) argued that it was not only the father's absence that effects a child's development, but the absence of both the mother and the father have a comparable impact.

To further explore which parent's absence was the most significant, I looked at the study of Pascholik and Gauthier (2010). This study used a time-use questionnaire with a 24-hour diary instrument to study mothers and fathers. The study was used to explore where mothers and fathers spent most of their time in a 24-hour period. The study revealed that more fathers admitted to not devoting any time with their children. The result of the study showed that when a child spends time with both biological parents, the outcome was beneficial for a child's development.

Due to the increased rates of divorce, more children are being raised in father-absent families (Mancini, 2010). Daughters from divorced homes are 92% more likely to get divorced themselves as adults (Mancini, 2010). This statistic may be a concern to policymakers because this means more children will be prone to the negative effects associated with growing up in a father-absent family. When examining the varying types of development, the absence of a biological father could accelerate the reproductive development in girls. The outcome of the stressful environment can lead to an early onset of puberty (Ellis et al., 2012). Tither and Ellis (2008) and Bogaert (2008) agreed that young girls who grow up in a family without their biological fathers are more likely to start puberty at an earlier age than their peers and tend to start their menstrual cycle earlier than girls reared in a father-present home. The paternal investment theory explained that the timing of pubertal maturation, sexual behaviors experience, and unstable male-female relationships was due to a father's absence (Tither & Ellis, 2008).

The absence of a biological father results in an early onset of puberty that can be related to negative health concerns like breast or reproductive cancers later in life (Deardorff et al., 2011). Deardorff et al. (2011) conducted a prospective study of 444 adolescent girls who lived a part from their biological fathers. The researcher explored if biological fathers' absences was linked to earlier onset of menstrual cycle. The findings of the study showed that girls from father-absent families are twice as likely to experience the menstrual cycle before the age of 12 years (Deardorff et al., 2011).

As a consequence of growing up in a father-absent family, girls are also more likely to have a difficult time forming lasting relationships with men or avoiding men

completely (Burns, 2008). A father's absence negatively affects children's social-emotional development (McLanahan, Tach, & Schneider, 2013). McLanahan et al. (2013) argued that these effects may be more pronounced if the father's absence occurs during early childhood rather than later in childhood. McLanahan et al. (2013) and Tither and Ellis (2008) agreed with other authors that a father's absence increases adolescents' early sexual encounter. A longer term effects of a father's absence may result in mental health problems in adulthood (McLanahan et al., 2013).

### **Social Issues of Being Raised in a Father-Absent Family**

Bowlby (2008) explained that the attachment pattern formed in childhood explored the way an individual will interact with others in adult life. Even though data has shown that women raised in father-absent families may have negative outcomes, some women raised in father-absent families may have had the desire to improve their circumstances and become better. In order to understand the implications that a father's absence has on a daughter into her adulthood, it was important to understand the consequences of this problem. This qualitative review has a detailed discussion of five social problems that girls raised in father-absent families are more likely to experience. The first social problem resulting from a father's absence was poverty. Father-absent families may not have a lot of financial support and may suffer from material hardship (Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, & Garfinkel, 2011), and children raised in father-absent families are at a greater risk of growing up in poverty (Brady & Burroway, 2012). Research pertaining to the lack of a father's involvement revealed that childhood poverty was strongly correlated with the absence of a father. A lack of an education may result in



poor employment choices, which may lead to ongoing generational issues of poverty.

McLanahan and Percheski (2008) analyzed the increase of single-mother households and discovered that the majority of these homes are headed by less educated women. Less education sometimes equates to less pay. This may further explain why women raised in father-absent families contribute to the high poverty rates.

In 2012, families headed by a single-mother had a poverty rate of 47.6%, which was over four times the rate of families with married parents according to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS, 2012). The U.S Census in 2011 revealed that children in father-absent families are almost four times more likely to be poor. In addition, African American families have the highest poverty rate, which may be due to African American fathers having the highest rate of absence in homes (Cole, 2009). Crosnoe and Cooper (2010) noted that father-absent families that are economically disadvantaged could contribute to an adolescent struggling with low self-esteem issues (Jackson, 2010). Economic deprivation could lead to problems with drug or alcohol use amongst adolescents, as a means of coping (McCambridge, McAlaney, & Rowe 2011). Adolescent drug and alcohol use could be a serious concern for policymakers because it could affect the high number of families and children living in poverty. Poverty was recognized as a female problem because it affected female-headed households (Chant, 2012). Chant (2012) referred to poverty as a global phenomenon. A search of the literature did not result in any authors who disagreed with Chant.

The second social issue from a father's absence was promiscuous sexual activity. Adolescent girls from father-absent families engage in sexual activity at an earlier rate

than their peers from two parent households (Sheppard & Sear 2011). In addition, adolescent girls raised in father-absent families exhibit promiscuous behavior in an attempt to meet an emotional need and because they lack a viable bond with their father (Burns, 2008). The stress associated with the inability for a daughter to bond with her biological father may result in an earlier onset of risky sexual activity. Mendle et al. (2009) concurred that most girls who are raised without their biological father experience sexual intercourse at an earlier age than girls who were raised in a home where the father was present.

The literature outlines some factors associated with early sexual activity such as early onset of puberty, not having parents who are attentive and nurturing, not having school or career goals, performing poor in school or dropping out of school, and problems with substance abuse. The preceding factors are parallel to the problems of being raised in a father-absent family. Wheeler (2010) suggested that self-esteem among adolescent girls is a factor that is linked to risky sexual behavior. Wheeler explained that girls with a poor self-esteem are more likely to have many sexual partners and will be less likely to require the males to use condoms. Early sexually activity may be the result of worrying that she may not be loved completely if she does not have sexual relations.

Lau (2010) conducted cross-sectional questionnaires using 556 pairs of working fathers and their young children. Lau showed that there is a direct correlation with father-daughter interactions and a daughter's self-esteem. It was also revealed that a father's workload could cause family conflict, which may result in poor father-daughter interaction. Lau's study was somewhat effective in determining the importance of a

father's presence but it would have been more significant if it would provide information on the number of hours that are needed daily for successful father-daughter interaction.

The third social problem was teenage pregnancy. There was research that shows a direct correlation between adolescent girls raised in a father-absent family and teenage pregnancy. In fact, teenage girls raised in father-absent families are more likely to experience teen age pregnancies compared to their peers from two-parent households (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010). Additionally, in the U.S., there were 273,105 babies born to teenage girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years old (U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics, 2015). This issue should be of great concern for policymakers because 22% of daughters born to teenage mothers become teenage mothers themselves (U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics, 2015). This statistic demonstrates a generational cycle of teenage pregnancy perpetuated by years of being raised in a father-absent family. Teenage mothers have been shown to perform poorly in school and have high dropout rates (U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics, 2015). Children born to teenage mothers statistically do not do well in school either (U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics, 2015).

In the last 30 years the number of teenage mothers has increased (DHHS, 2012). In 2012, 71% of all teenage mothers were unmarried when they gave birth (DHHS, 2012). The social problem of teenage pregnancy was being examined by The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS: 2012). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has also weighed in on the teenage pregnancy issue by funding demonstrations for the prevention of teen pregnancy. The CDC is working with the state

and local educators to help policymakers establish ways to prevent teenage pregnancy (DHHS, 2012).

The fourth social problem was substance abuse. There was a higher chance of substance use in single-mother households, children who live with one-parent are more likely to begin using alcohol, tobacco and drugs at a very young age (Hemovich, Lac, & Crano, 2011). Adolescent girls raised in father-absent families' abuse alcohol and drugs for many different reasons. For example, when a child does not have adequate supervision, this may result in the adolescent girl experimenting with drugs and associating with drugs-using peers (Hemovich et al., 2011).

A child's upbringing was a factor that determined if the child will have substance abuse problems during adolescence and young adulthood. The risk of alcohol and drug use may be greater for young adults who grew up without a father in the home because fewer limits are set on the adolescent child's behavior. Another factor was when a mother was a sole income earner and has to work long hours to support her family (Deardorff et al., 2011). Hemovich et al. (2011) explained that being raised in a father-absent family has shown to have a direct relationship to drug and alcohol abuse. Drug and alcohol abuse is directly linked to crime and juvenile delinquency.

The fifth social problem is crime and juvenile delinquency. Father-absent families are a result of increased incarceration rates of fathers (James et al., 2012; Perrin, Baker, Jones, & Heesacker, 2009; Simpson, Griskevicius, Kau, Sung, & Collins, 2012). According to Wildeman (2010), there is an increase in children's physical aggression when their father is incarcerated (Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, & Garfinkel, 2011).

Economic disadvantages are associated with increased incarceration rates of children (Crosnoe & Cooper 2010). Adolescents raised in a father-absent family have high occurrences of committing crimes (Mackey & Buttram, 2012). This social problem is causing issues within the juvenile court system. In the United States the crime rate for adolescent girls have increased. Girls of incarcerated fathers are at a higher risk of exhibiting delinquent behavior (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010). The increase in violent offenses by girls may be linked to a change in the family dynamic. Adolescent girls who did not have a commitment to their family were more likely to exhibit violent behavior. This may be due to little to no adult supervision which allows more access to deviant peers.

Adolescent behavior problems are more common among girls from homes headed by a single-mother than any other group (Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield, & Walsh-Samp, 2008). Mackey and Buttram (2012) asserted that children from father-absent families are more likely to experience incidences of violent crimes. The after school hours of 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm are the times when juvenile crimes occur. Policymakers may not have focused on adolescent girls because violent crimes committed by adolescent girls are disproportionately lower than the violent crimes that involve boys.

All of the study's participants may have experienced a social problem related to being raised in a father-absent family. The final study answered the questions pertaining to how the women were able to overcome the issues related to being raised in a father-absent family, how the participants were able to lead organizations and lead subordinates,

and how were these leaders able to employ path-goal leadership theory of effective leadership. This information will be presented in Chapter 5.

### **Current Public Programs**

Currently, there are some mentoring programs that are available to help at-risk children. Rhodes (2008) explained that when a youth program is effective, it will be a successful intervention strategy for at-risk youth. An intervention and prevention program that targets adolescent girls raised in father-absent families could help minimize the associated risk factors. Adolescence is a crucial period because this is when the development of a girl's reasoning and judgment is formed. Intervention through public youth programs is a strategy for addressing adolescent risk behavior (Mueller et al., 2010). Intervention programs focus on positive youth development with the belief that all adolescents have the strength and the ability to make a contribution to their families and their communities. Current intervention programs target a single behavior problem at a time (Dawes & Larson, 2011). Public programs are based on the philosophy that the cause of a given behavior problem must be considered when developing prevention strategies. Public programs focus on fixing negative behaviors in adolescents who are at-risk.

Dawes and Larson (2011) showed that different types of public programs provide specific services for specific behaviors. For example, there are programs aimed at preventing sexual behavior, and separate programs that are aimed at preventing drug and alcohol use. There are youth programs for prevention of adolescent pregnancy, and separate public programs that help adolescent females with self-esteem issues. The

current public programs provide different services for the youth. Since it has been shown that adolescent girls raised in father-absent families are more likely to experience a multitude of social problems, it would seem to be more practical to create one program that addresses all of the social problems related to being raised in a father-absent family. Honig (2008) suggested that positive male involvement in youth programs and in an educational setting could benefit troubled youth. Senior (2010) discussed the effectiveness of mentoring programs that provide girls the opportunities to be exposed to positive male mentors. Senior showed that male mentors could be beneficial to young girls and their communities because they would provide the girls with the day to day interaction with a caring man. Rhodes (2008) examined programs for children and discovered that there are over three million children within the United States currently receiving services from a mentoring program; however, Rhodes did not specify how many of these programs are specifically for girls. Rhodes asserted that the large numbers of mentoring participants was an indication that the public understands the importance to develop mentoring relationships with at-risk children. Senior conducted a study that focused on the effects of the absence of a biological father. The outcome of the study provided evidence that the presence of the biological father was essential for an individual to establish and to maintain trust in adult relationships (Senior, 2010).

The relationship between the parent and the child forms a pattern for the type of interpersonal relationships the child will experience throughout his or her life (Hartup & Rubin, 2013). Based on the preceding information, communities may benefit from the implementation of mentoring programs created specifically for girls raised in a father-

absent family. Mentoring programs with caring male mentors could provide an opportunity for girls raised in father-absent families to have exposure to caring and nurturing men within their own communities (Senior, 2010).

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) is a program that can provide one-on-one mentoring for young girls. This program matches a young girl to a female mentor. BBBSA was listed as a very effective mentoring program (BBBSA, 2014).

Girls Incorporated (Girls Inc.; 2011) is a nonprofit organization for the youth. Girls Inc. inspires girls to be strong, smart, and bold. The program teaches girls aged 6 to 18 ways to manage money, and also helps them with skills to avoid the pressure of alcohol and other drugs. Girls who participate in this program are encouraged to consider careers in science, technology, and engineering mathematics. The girls in this program are given the necessary skills to help them make informed decisions about their sexual health. They are taught skills for self-defense and the importance of social change through community projects (Girls Inc, 2011).

Girls Inc. (2011) offers programming to help build leadership skills for young girls; however, girls from father-absent families have unique needs. Therefore these types of organizations may not have a direct impact on all of the social problems associated with being raised in a father-absent family. The public could do more to ensure that girls raised in father-absent families are equipped with what is needed to grow up as productive members of our society. It is possible that if the social problems are addressed while during adolescence it may decrease the chances of more serious issues carrying over into adulthood.



### **Women Raised in Father-Absent Families**

For this research, father-absent was defined as having fewer than 5 years of contact with a father or any significant adult male in the home, particularly a biological father when the child was between the ages of 0–17 years old. A review of the literature did not show how long a father needs to be absent from a girl's life for her to be considered to be from a father-absent family. Research on successful women who were raised in father-absent families is also limited.

Harris (2014) conducted a qualitative study of 10 women from father-absent families to explore how their spiritual connection affected their circumstances of growing up without fathers. The outcome of the study showed that the women exhibited high self-esteem; however, all the women involved in the study had trust issues that were carried from childhood to all adult interactions (Harris, 2014). According to Harris, not developing trust in relationships early will dictate trust levels in relationships later in life. Most adult women who were raised in father-absent families have trouble in relationships (Patterson, 2011). Patterson (2011) explained that adult women who were raised in father-absent families have trouble in finances, relationships, and trouble in their careers. Most women from father-absent families struggle with feelings of rejection, feelings of being unwanted, and feelings of insecurity (Patterson, 2011). A review of the literature did not reveal any researchers who disagreed with Patterson.

### **Public Sector and Nonprofit Leadership**

It is essential for leaders to be able to build trusting relationships with individuals at work. Most public sector and nonprofit organizations provide a service to the

community. These types of organizations often operate from funds from government grants, and/or donations (Urban Institute, 2015). Leaders must maintain a high level of trust from subordinates, peers, executive staff, and clients. House's (1971) path-goal leadership theory explained that leaders should provide support to their subordinates.

According to Bryson (2011), organization leaders face many challenges.

Nonprofit leaders must trust others in order to create a shared vision within the organization. It is the trusting relationships that help the leaders communicate organizational goals and vision to subordinates. It is essential for nonprofit leaders to participate in and have access to key networks within their respective organizations and in the communities they serve (King, 2004). Nonprofit leaders must maintain a high level of trust among donors, board members, employees, clients, and the public. Not having a secure attachment pattern may prove difficult for a leader to be effective.

Johnson (2010) explained that the nonprofit sector employs a higher number of women as leaders in the United States. Vasavada (2012) conducted a study of semistructured interviews with 32 women in leadership positions. The results of the study indicated that there was an increase in the average income of the organization after women assumed leadership positions. The increase in the average income appeared to be directly related to the accomplishment of the performance of the women in their leadership roles.

Vasavada argued that emotions influence the decision making process of women leaders; because of this, women leaders may be perceived as weak. The literature was limited on the topic of women leaders in public and nonprofit sectors.

## Summary

The path-goal leadership theory comprises the theoretical framework for the study. Path-goal leadership theory in the field of public administration was used to provide a benchmark of effective leadership. Path-goal explained that organization leaders must embrace the leadership styles that are most effective in the motivation of the subordinates (House, 1971). When a leader has the skill to adjust their leadership styles according to a situation it increases subordinate effectiveness and decreases turnover (House, 1971). This theory impacts my study by providing a background that supports my investigation of leadership. In this review of literature, I examined the social problems of being raised in father-absent families to provide a solid argument to why policy for girls without fathers was needed. Chapter 2 was comprised of an examination of relevant theory that formulated ideas related to this subject and also discussed the varying types of leadership styles. This review showed a gap in the literature that addresses how the characteristics of women raised in father-absent families affect their ability to lead. The chapter ended with an introduction of the research methodology. Chapter 3 will include a detailed discussion on the methodology that I used in this study. I will also provide information about the study population and the data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 will present an analysis pertaining the pilot study, setting, data collection, demographic information, data analysis, data management, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and emergent codes. Chapter 5, I will present the interpretation of the results, inferences about the important findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

This phenomenological study sought to reveal the lived experiences of women leaders who were raised in a father-absent family. I examined the perceptions of 10 women raised in father-absent families who now work in organization leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors. I did not attempt to analyze a cause-effect relationship but to develop a better understanding about the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered their development as leaders. In Chapter 2, I explored many social ills that correlate to being raised in a father-absent family. The literature did not reveal positive outcomes of being raised in a father-absent family.

Chapter 3 will include information on the methodology I used to conduct this study. This chapter will include the research design and approach, research question, role of the researcher, coding framework, procedures, data collection and analysis, and protection of human participants. In the research design section I will also identify the rationale for using the qualitative method. Chapter 3 will also include the importance of obtaining informed consent from the participants.

### **Research Design and Approach**

When considering the research method to use, I evaluated both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative research is a formal, objective, and systematic process (Grove & Burns, 2005). The difference between quantitative and qualitative studies is that quantitative researchers use numerical data and test theories (Grove & Burns, 2005).

I chose qualitative research because it is used to understand social phenomena (Creswell, 2009; Hill, 2012).

I examined many qualitative traditions for their appropriateness for this study. The case study design was considered. According to Yin (2003), there are descriptive case studies, explanatory case studies, and exploratory case studies. Case studies are used to generalize theories; therefore, I dismissed the case study approach as inappropriate for the goals of this study.

I also considered an ethnographic design. The ethnographic design collects data over an extended period of time and focuses on the relationship among members of a group (Sangasubana, 2011). The ethnographic approach was rejected for this study because the intent was to obtain a deeper understanding of women in leadership roles who were raised in a father-absent family.

The narrative design was considered for this study. The narrative design focuses understanding the human experience through stories (Lal, Suto, & Ungar, 2012); therefore, the narrative approach was inappropriate for the aim of this study and was rejected. I also considered Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory design for this study, but this design was also rejected because grounded theory focuses on developing new theory (Dunne, 2011).

The phenomenological methodology was the best choice for this study. Moustakas (1994) explained that a goal of a phenomenological study is to understand the significance and nature of people who had experienced a common event. In most phenomenological studies, the investigator collects data from individuals who have

experienced the phenomenon under investigation (Moustakas, 1994). Typically, this information is collected through interviews (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological study uses interviews that consist of a series of predetermined open-ended questions that prompt, but do not lead, participants in the discussion and explanation of their experiences through the narrative process (Merriam & Tisdale, 2015). The initial questions are followed by probing questions to reveal lived experiences and perceptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additional inquiry is generated from the developing concepts and categories identified from participants during the interviews and from previous study participants' interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In addition, this method explains a situation or addresses a phenomenon through the perspectives of those who have lived the phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011).

With this study, I sought an examination of several participants' experiences. After considering all other designs, the phenomenological research design was found to be the best choice because it fit the purpose of this study. The phenomenological approach was used to gain additional understanding of the lived experiences of women working in leadership roles who were raised in father-absent families in the public and nonprofit sectors.

### **Research Question**

In the study, I explored the lived experiences of women leaders to find out what they perceive as barriers to their development as leaders. The overarching research question for this study was: What are lived experiences of women raised in father-absent

families that helped or hindered women's development as leaders? It was used to guide and focus the research.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to function as the primary instrument for the data collection process and to maintain strict adherence to ethical guidelines (Yilmaz, 2013). As a daughter raised in a father-absent family now working in a leadership role, it was important for me to be familiar with my own biases and experiences. It was important to remain objective when interviewing participants (Nieswiadomy, 2011). I conducted the interviews in a setting that was comfortable for the participant. The interviews were recorded for accuracy to eliminate any bias. Researchers should be concerned with issues of bias because bias impacts the reliability and validity of the findings (Smith & Noble, 2014).

Bracketing in qualitative research mitigates preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Simon (2011) explained that bracketing is removing bias by setting aside a portion of the information (i.e., feelings, attitudes, biases, and understanding of the phenomenon) prior to the conducting the study. I set aside my feelings by journaling in order to remain objective during the study and to avoid any biases. The journals will be destroyed in a compactor after 5 years in accordance with Walden University policy.

### **Methodology**

In this study, I used a qualitative method with a hermeneutic phenomenological design to investigate the experience of women who grew up without fathers through their perceptions and beliefs. The hermeneutic phenomenological research design focuses on

the subjective experience of participants (Kafle, 2013). I gained additional understanding on the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families and learned what helped and/or hindered their development as leaders.

I analyzed and coded each of the interview responses by description and theme. Allan and Dixon (2009) explained that the hermeneutic research design provides an understanding of human action. I also looked at other phenomenological research designs. The empirical research design uses direct and indirect observation or experience (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). The empirical design is useful when investigating phenomena from the first person perspective (Polkinghorne, 1989). Transcendental research collects data that clearly explains the essence of the human experience (Moustakas, 1994). The hermeneutic phenomenological design was chosen because it is used to gain insight into lived experiences and focuses on the person in order to facilitate an understanding of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The population for this study were adult women who had fewer than 5 years of contact from age 0–17 with any significant adult male in the home, particularly a biological father, and who now work in an organization leadership role. I located participants by placing flyers on bulletins boards at one State agency in a large city in the southeastern part of the United States. Additionally, I placed a notice advertising the study in the online publication, *Nonprofit Quarterly*.

This phenomenological study involved 10 participants. Moustakas (1994) explained that having a small number of participants is essential when the goal is to obtain extensive information regarding lived experiences of a group. Snowball sampling



enabled me to identify more individuals for the study. Snowball sampling occurs when a researcher asks participants to recommend others for the study (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). I experienced data saturation early in the interview process. I continued my data collection efforts until I interviewed 10 participants. I knew that I reached saturation when the information that was being analyzed became repetitive and contained no new information (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). At that point, I was confident that the inclusion of additional participants was unlikely to provide new findings.

Due to the small sample size, this study was a reflection of the particular experience under study and cannot be assumed for the entire population. There are many issues that can affect a sample size in qualitative research. A phenomenology study should include five to 25 participants (Creswell, 1998, p. 64). Conversely, Morse (2000) stated that a phenomenological study should have at least six participants. Mason (2010) explained that the concept of saturation does not provide a general rule of how many people will make up a sample size but explains that qualitative samples must be large enough so that all of the perceptions may yield important new information that were uncovered. If the sample is too large data becomes repetitive. Researchers should continue to collect data until the researcher is no longer seeing or hearing new information on the subject that is under investigation (Mason, 2010).

### **Procedures for Recruitment**

The participants obtained my contact information from a flyer on the bulletin board at one state agency, or the notice in the *Nonprofit Quarterly* online publication. Potential participants contacted me via telephone expressing interest in the study. I

notified the first 10 participants via an e-mail that included a copy of the informed consent and the list of counseling resources that provided services for little to no cost to the participant. In the e-mail, I explained that the prospective participant had 1 week to reply to my e-mail with the words, "I consent," in order to agree to be a participant in the study. I also conducted a short telephone screening to make sure that each participant met the criteria for the study. The qualifying questions included a question asking if and for how long the participant's father was in the home during her childhood.

I then e-mailed the demographic survey (see Appendix B) to the participants. Once the participants e-mailed the demographic survey back to me, I then sent an e-mail asking the participants to choose a day, time, and location that they were available for me to conduct the interview along with an attachment of the introduction letter (see Appendix A) which provided more information about the study. The participants chose the location for the interview from one of four public libraries. I chose four separate locations so that the 1-hour interview was at a location that was comfortable for the participant.

In the interview, I reviewed the consent form with participant and provided an opportunity for questions. I re-emphasized that participation was voluntary. I asked the participants semistructured, in-depth, and open-ended interview questions about the factors that they believed helped them develop their leadership skills (see Appendix C). The data collection process was anonymous to ensure the participant's confidentiality.

The interview questions were reviewed in a pilot study by a small group of three individuals not connected or familiar with the final participant pool. I held three separate

interview sessions for the pilot study. The interviews determined if the questions were easily understood and protected against any errors in wording or any unclear directions. The questions were intended to be simple and understandable. The interview questions were developed to determine the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered their development as leaders. Initial questions were followed by probing questions to reveal the participants' lived experiences and perceptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The protocol was designed by me and was submitted to the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to being used in the research. The identity of the participants remained confidential. E-mail reminders were sent as follow-up whenever possible. Any information sent via e-mail was secured by a password that only I can access.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

In the study, the focus was to identify themes and patterns pertaining to the factors pertaining to the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered their development as leaders. In order to obtain an understanding of the participants' perspectives, I conducted face-to-face, audio-recorded, and semistructured interviews. The participants' rights to confidentiality were fully explained. If the participant chose not to be audio-recorded during the interview, I explained to the participant that only my committee members of Walden University and I would have access to the recording.

Once the study was complete, the audio recordings and paper data were locked in a lockbox. The information will remain in the lockbox for 5 years. I am the only person

with a key to the lockbox. After 5 years, disk copies of the electronic data and recordings will be demagnetized, destroying the data. For the participants that insisted on not being audio-recorded during the interview, I depended on written notes. I explained the procedures and reminded the participant that her participation was completely voluntary. A brochure with a list of resources was e-mailed to each participant the counselors available for free or low cost to the participants along with the informed consent. I informed the participant not to include identifying information, such as name, address, and phone number on anything to insure that her identity was kept confidential. If identifying information was spoken by mistake, I told the participant that I would remove the identifying information from the transcript. I assigned the participants fake names for the purposes of reporting and quoting. I asked the participants to answer each question to the best of her knowledge. I did not allow anyone else in the room in order to protect the participants' privacy.

I interviewed the women to learn their perceptions and beliefs. I used the modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) with audio and semistructured transcribed interviews. Atlas.ti 7 qualitative data analysis software assisted in the analysis of the data. The Moustakas modified van Kaam method was used to analyze the data using eight steps:

Step 1: Horizontalization: Used to inventory and assemble initial expressions relevant to the experience.

Step 2: Reduction and elimination: Categorizes the constant components by testing for necessity to understand the experience and the ability to conceptualize into a characterization.

Step 3: Clustering and thematizing: Groups the constant elements of experience in themes.

Step 4: Final identification of the invariant: Identifies where themes are fully expressed constituents and where themes are applied in the participant's transcript through a compatible or validating experience.

Step 5: Creating individual textural description: Encapsulates each participant's experience using verbatim examples from the transcription.

Step 6: Creating individual structural description: Involves developing a vivid explanation of the underlying factors of the experience, and the connection to themes, feelings, and thoughts.

Step 7: Creating textural-structural description: Entails developing a description of the core meaning of the experience incorporating the constant elements and themes.

Step 8: Composite description of the meanings and essences: Combines the identified belief of the participants to identify common meanings using qualitative data analysis software to assist in the analysis of the data for qualitative research purposes.

I transcribed each in-depth interview. Data from the in-depth interviews were used to describe the life experiences of the individuals who have experienced this social

phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). I transcribed each in-depth interview. Data from the in-depth interviews were used to describe the life experiences of the individuals who have experienced this social phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). A comparison of data were analyzed to find similarities in the participants' experiences.

I established a 6-week period to interview the participants. I asked each person to recommend someone else for the study. I conducted sessions until the sample size of 10 was obtained. The same questions were used at all of the sessions. This was done to ensure that there were a limited differentiation in the way in which the data were collected. I verified the validity of the responses using the member-checking technique by emailing transcripts of the interview to the participants and ask if it is accurate or if they would like to change or add any information. In-depth interviews were conducted with each participant to form an understanding of the commonalties and differences in women working in leadership roles who were raised in a father-absent family in the public and nonprofit sectors. Atlas.ti7 qualitative software was used to aid in managing the data.

Field notes were used when observing a culture or phenomenon. The process consists of the researcher writing down short sentences that help recall something that was observed (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Short sentences are used to remind the researcher what was observed and allows the researcher to have a coherent description of the details of the observation (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Field notes are meant to be read by the researcher to produce meaning and an understanding of the subject of the study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability are the characteristics needed for the participants in this study. Creswell (1998) explained that in order to manage threats of trustworthiness research findings must be authentically represented. Researcher reflexivity, audit trails, and triangulation help a qualitative researcher determine validity (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative researchers emphasize validity rather than reliability (Creswell, 2012). Reflexivity facilitates an understanding of both the phenomenon under investigation and the research process (Watt, 2007). The audit trail consists of notes documenting each step (Watt, 2007). Triangulation is a method that is used by qualitative researchers in order to establish and verify validity in their study (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). According to Carlson (2010), member-checking helps increase trustworthiness. I triangulated by member-checking. The process started by interviewing the participants. Next, I transcribed the in-depth interview. Finally, I sent an e-mail of the written transcription to the participant and asked for verification of accuracy.

### **Transferability**

Transferability can be different depending on the way the findings are used (Guion et al., 2011). Some researchers argued that qualitative research should be focused on trustworthiness as it relates to transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Burchett, Umoquit, & Dobrow, 2011). Qualitative research assumes that all research bring a unique perspective to the literature. I considered transferability as early as participant selection phase. It is more commonly used when placing emphasis on

concepts that need to be studied more in-depth. The likelihood that the study findings could be replicated in a new specific setting is an example of transferability (Burchett et al., 2011).

### **Dependability**

When examining dependability, I also considered audit trails and triangulation. Audit trails consist of notes that document every step. Triangulation provides a way to understand a phenomenon. In order to guarantee dependability in this study a strict protocol was followed. In-depth interviews should be tape-recorded and transcribed accurately (Funder et al., 2014). Additionally, I took field notes of each interview and provided a short written summary of each interview. Yin (2003) suggested that in order to increase dependability, a researcher should follow the protocol that is outlined in the procedures.

### **Confirmability**

Reflexivity helps a researcher recognize thoughts and feelings of the participants. I employed the reflexivity strategy by making my position clear by being conscious of the biases and experiences that I brought to the study (Creswell, 2013). I was conscious not to influence any participant's opinion. I allowed the data to speak for itself. This is to establish the truth and accuracy of the actions and perceptions of participants.

Confirmability needs to be present when establishing trustworthiness and is the qualitative counterpart to quantitative objectivity (Farrelly, 2013). Transparency in the dialogue between researcher and participants improves confirmability throughout the research. The concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research provide ways of



assessing credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Miyata & Kai, 2009). When various strategies are employed, trustworthiness in the study is ensured.

### **Coding Framework**

The data were coded for path-goal leadership theory as the theory relates to women in leadership roles. Saldaña (2012) suggested that coding patterns be examined and analyzed. This information was used to identify the meaning of the data by comparing the data, and looking for similarities and differences in the answers to the interview questions. According to Saldaña, open coding is one of the first stages involved when describing a phenomenon. Open coding helps a researcher to categorize data by putting the information into categories (Creswell, 1998). The data were categorized in a set of themes. I recorded each interview and also used a pen and paper to take notes. The data were analyzed using the van Kaam method for themes. For this study, I used a preliminary codebook. The data are organized and presented in Table 1. Path-goal leadership theory of effective leadership include methods of leadership that show behaviors that are natural or driven by policy protocol. The interview questions that were used in this study are listed here so that the reader can reflect on them as they review the coding table.

#### **Interview Questions:**

1. How do you feel your circumstance of growing up in a father-absent family has affected you in your personal life, work life, community, and leadership?
2. What role, if any, did growing up in a father-absent family, affect your ambition, insight, and wisdom?

3. What challenges did you face during childhood that may have been due to not having a father present in your life? How did you overcome these challenges?
4. Describe any community program that you were a part of at any point of your childhood that helped you cultivate your leadership skills. What is the name of the program and what are the services that it provided? What was the impact for you?
5. In your position as leader, describe how you handle trusting individuals who are on different skill levels?
6. How do you describe your leadership style? Explain how you feel you could improve your leadership style? What areas would you improve?
7. Describe a time, if any, that you had to change your leadership style to adapt to your subordinates' needs.

I used preliminary coding for this study. I coded for behaviour, policy, and leadership. The secondary codes were encouragement, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and situational leadership. These codes resulted in Tertiary codes that described (a) transactional, (b) transformational, and (c) situational leadership types. Lastly, I included the interview question number that corresponded to the different coding categories in Table 1.

Table 1

*Coding Interviewing Questions*

Preliminary Code	Secondary Code	Tertiary Code	Interview Questions Related to Theory
Behaviour (B) Policy	Encouragement (B-E)		1 3
Leadership ( L)	Transactional (L-T)	Give Orders	5
Leadership (L)	Transformational (L-T- )	Encourage	
Leadership (L)	Situational (L-S)	Flexible; skill level of subordinates	4, 6

**Protection of Human Participants**

I required that each participant read the informed-consent form and reply to my e-mail with the words *I consent*, before participating in the interviews. IRB approval # 05-10-16-0139317 was received on May 10, 2016. The informed consent explained that no one was being forced to participate and that involvement with the study was purely voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any time. According to Creswell (2002), study participants should clearly understand their rights to participate in all studies. Creswell (2003) explained that it is important not to harm the study participants in anyway. Walden University's IRB protocol was followed, and no data were collected until after IRB approval was received on May 10, 2016. I did not have any ethical concerns related to any items in this study. Participants indicated whether they wanted to receive a copy of a 1–2 page summary of the study results and they provided the appropriate email or mailing address to the interviewer.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 3, I provided information on the methodology being used to conduct this study. This chapter included the research design and approach, role of the researcher, coding framework, procedures, data collection and analysis, and protection of human participants. The research design identified the rationale for using the qualitative method.

Chapter 3 also included the importance of obtaining informed consent from the participants. Data were handled in strict confidence to protect the participant's identity. Chapter 4 will present an analysis pertaining the pilot study, setting, data collection, demographic information, data analysis, data management, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and emergent codes. Chapter 5, I will present the interpretation of the results, inferences about the important findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of 10 women working as supervisor, manager, director, vice president, or president in the nonprofit and public sector to better understand the factors they perceived to help or hinder their development as leaders. In Chapter 4, I will present the study findings and detailed analysis of the interview narrative responses. The focus of the study was women from father-absent families working in leadership positions. Interviews using open-ended and semistructured questions enabled the participants to share their experiences and perceptions on how their father's absence affected their development as leaders. A digital voice recorder captured their verbatim responses for accuracy. I manually transcribed the digital files to identify emerging themes. The van Kaam eight-step process modified by Moutakas (1994) facilitated the phenomenological reduction and exploration of gathered data. Direct quotes were used to give weight to the stories. To assure confidentiality, I created pseudonyms for the participants. Data collection and analysis addressed the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered women's development as leaders.

### **Pilot Study**

I conducted a pilot study to test the procedures and interview questions prior to carrying out the study. For the pilot study, I contacted three women working in nonprofit leadership roles who were unrelated to the final study participants to schedule a time and date for their interviews. In order to replicate the setting of the final interviews, I met

with each woman individually. The purpose of the study was explained to each pilot study participant. They were asked to answer all seven interview questions as thoroughly as possible. The interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes per interview session. The pilot study was used to obtain feedback regarding confusing, awkward, or redundant questions. As a result of the pilot study, the research instrument and data analysis strategies did not need to be revised. The pilot test feedback aided in evaluating each interview question's alignment with the research questions and purpose statement. The main objective of this pilot study was to assure that the in-depth interview questions were easily understood.

### **Setting**

In the final study, the participants chose the location of their interview from a meeting room in one of four different libraries. The quiet room provided a relaxed atmosphere that allowed the participants to talk freely with minimal prompting. I established a rapport with all the participants by thanking them for agreeing to be a part of the study. I explained that participation was completely voluntary and could be stopped at any time. I asked the participant probing questions about themselves and fully explained the purpose of the study. This resulted in a demonstrated willingness to answer each question. There were no personal or organizational constraints that influenced the participants' participation.

### **Data Collection**

After receiving IRB approval on May 10, 2016 (IRB approval # 05-10-16-0139317), the interviews with participants whom had given informed consent occurred over a 6-week period, between May 21, 2016 and July 2, 2016 and lasted 45 and 60

minutes each. The interview protocol consisted of seven open-ended questions (see Appendix C). Each session opened with a brief explanation of the purpose and details of the interview procedure. I explained that there were no right or wrong answers, and this gave the participants the flexibility for open, authentic responses. There were no variations in the data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3.

I located participants by placing flyers on bulletins boards at one State agency in a large city in the southeastern part of the United States. Additionally, I e-mailed a notice to advertise the study in the *Nonprofit Quarterly* online publication. I was contacted by telephone by 13 individuals expressing interest in participation in the research study. I e-mailed the informed consent and a copy of the brochure with the list of counselors to all 13 individuals. In the e-mail, I explained to the prospective participants that she had 1 week to reply to my e-mail with the words, “I consent” to participate in the study.

Once the first 10 women replied to the e-mail with the words “I consent,” I contacted those women to qualify them for the study. One out of the 10 women declined to participate because her work schedule conflicted with the interview dates. Therefore, I continued on to Participant 11. I followed-up with the prospective participants to schedule a date and location of the interview. Each of the participants chose one out of four public libraries and the interviews were conducted in a meeting room. During the interview, I clearly explained the research purpose, confidentiality, and informed consent with the participants. I provided the participants with an opportunity for questions and re-emphasized participation is voluntary. Interview data were collected from 10 participants. Two interviews were conducted per week. All of the participants answered

the questions, and no one appeared to be distressed during their interview. The data were recorded using a digital voice recorder. After the fourth interview, it became evident that I had reached data saturation. Each of the participants expressed the similar experience of having a lack of trust. This theme was repeated over and over again; however, I continued my data collection efforts until I interviewed all 10 participants.

After each interview, I transcribed the responses verbatim. I read each transcription thoroughly and found that when analyzing the interviews, the information was repetitive. At that point, I was confident that the inclusion of more than 10 participants was unlikely to provide new findings. Within 1 week of the interview, I e-mailed the transcribed interviews to the participant and asked each participant to review them and contact me with any changes.

### **Demographic Information**

In the final study, I used the qualifying questions to gather personal background information about the participants. To meet the criteria of the study, each participant needed to be a women over the age of 18 who (a) grew up in a father-absent family; (b) worked as a supervisor, manager, director, vice president, or president in the nonprofit or public sector; and (c) had people who reported to them. Table 2 displays descriptive information related to the study participants.



Table 2

*Study Participant Information*

Pseudonym Used	Organization Type Title	Marital Status	Age
A = Alice	Public Sector Manager	Divorced	36 years old
B = Becky	Public Sector Director	Divorced	53 years old
C = Cathy	Public Sector Manager	Never married	41 years old
D = Denise	Nonprofit Director	Divorced	46 years old
E = Elisa	Nonprofit President	Divorced	40 years old
F = Freda	Public Sector Supervisor	Never Married	46 years old
G = Gloria	Public Sector Supervisor	Divorced	44 years old
H = Heidi	Public Sector Supervisor	Divorced	45 years old
I = Iilan	NonProfit Vice-President	Divorced	44 years old
J = Julie	Public Sector Manager	Divorced	43 years old

Ninety percent of the participants were between the ages of 36–55. Ten percent of the participants were between the ages of 26–35. Three supervisors, three managers, two directors, one vice-president, and one president were amongst the interviewees. Sixty percent of the father-absent leaders in this study were in middle management positions. Twenty percent of the participants had their father in the home for 5 years, 10% of the participant had her father in the home for 1 year, and 70% of the participants did not have their father in the home at all.

All the participants dealt with some sort of obstacle or barrier while growing up. On the demographic survey, the participants were asked to check all the obstacles or barriers that applied to them. Eighty percent of the participants admitted to being sexually promiscuous, and 50% of the participants experienced a teenage pregnancy. Only 10% of the participants stated that they experienced poverty, drug or alcohol abuse, or a psychological disorder. Additionally, 10% of the participants experienced an obstacle or barrier that was not listed on the demographic survey. Table 3 provides demographic data related to the aggregate sample population of participants.

Table 3

*Demographic Data of All Study Participants*

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Age		( <i>n</i> = 10)
18–25	0	0%
26–35	1	10%
36–55	9	90%
56–65	0	0%
> 65	0	0%
Position		( <i>n</i> = 10)
Supervisor	3	30%
Manager	3	30%
Director	2	20%
Vice-President	1	10%
President	1	10%
Years Biological Father Involved		( <i>n</i> = 10)
0 Years	7	70%
1 Years	0	0%
2 Years	0	0%
3 Years	1	10%
4 Years	0	0%
5 Years	2	20%
Obstacles due to Father-Absence		( <i>n</i> = 17)
Poverty	1	6%
Teenage Pregnancy	5	29%
Drugs or Alcohol	1	6%
Psychological Disorder	1	6%
Sexually Promiscuous	8	47%
Other	1	6%

**Data Analysis**

During the data analysis process, I considered the preliminary coding framework completed in Chapter 3 to move inductively from coded units to larger representation.

When analyzing the study's final results, I started my analysis without any predetermined

ideas about which codes I would use in the process. The epoché processes are used to block biases and assumptions to explain the phenomenon regarding its internal system of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Epoché involves the steps of tracing experiences relevant to investigating the phenomenon, interpreting data from participants' interpretations, and identifying recurring themes without bias (Moustakas, 1994).

Through bracketing, I set aside my personal beliefs and experiences about how women who grew up in father-absent families perceived their upbringing helped and hindered their development as leaders. I began bracketing my personal thoughts very early in the research process as an attempt to proceed exclusive of judgment, as suggested by Moustakas (1994). Without totally dismissing my own historical knowledge of the outcomes of women raised in father-absent families, my own assumptions about the interpretation of meaning were set aside to envision the experience through the participants' perceptions. In my preliminary coding, I coded for the word, leadership. During my secondary coding, I coded for the words: transformational, transactional, and situational leadership types. Any statements like, "Do you know what I mean?" were excluded so that they would not confuse the meaning of the descriptions.

As recommended by Moustakas (1994), bracketing allowed the research process to be rooted solely on the leadership topic and research question. Organizing and managing the transcribed verbatim interview data through Atlas.ti7 qualitative software further reduced researcher bias. The software allowed for coding, searching for specific words, and linking data, which enabled me to discover patterns, themes, and meanings in the participants' responses, as suggested by Gale, Heath, Camerom, Rashid, and

Redwood (2013). I followed the eight-step van Kaam method, as modified by Moustakas (1994), to reduce or eliminate redundancies, allowing for extraction of phrases about the phenomenon and to have a systematic and orderly way for phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation.

### **Horizontalization**

I used horizontalization to assemble initial expressions germane to the experience by listing and grouping information so that every statement was treated with equal value, as recommended by Moustakas (1994, p. 90). I listened to the voice-recorded conversations several times for accuracy. I removed redundant text to leave only the textual constituents. I transcribed data in their entirety and then read and re-read the transcripts, replaying specific excerpts, and re-reading passages that were considered necessary in order to clarify the expressions.

### **Reduction and Elimination**

I used reduction and elimination to categorize related components by testing the relevancy of each expression. I considered two questions:

- Is there an instance of this experience that is necessary and relevant to the study objective?
- Is it possible to abstract and label the expression?

I deleted statements that were irrelevant to the study. Statements that were repetitive, vague, and overlapping were presented in more descriptive terms. The remaining statements became the invariant constituents of the experiences. Phenomenological

reduction offered an opportunity to interpret the participants' subjective experiences; taking meaning expressed at face value (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Clustering and Thematizing**

Through clustering and thematizing, I organized the invariant constituents into themes to develop a textural description of the father-absent family phenomenon. Atlas.ti7 data analysis software was used to manage the transcribed files and field notes containing the filtered participants' accounts and experiences. I highlighted words and ideas of each participant. A search for all text matching each code was conducted using Atlas.ti7 software. Next, the data were queried for patterns and themes of common concepts.

### **Final Identification and Validation**

Final identification of the invariant step required that I check the invariant constituents against the transcriptions for consistency. The matrix query was used to search for changes themes and meanings. A return of null values signified the meaning was consistent, thus validating the meaning of the invariant constituents.

### **Fundamental Textural and Structural Descriptions**

Creating individual textural descriptions allowed the emergence of textural and structural meaning and essences of the father-absent family and leadership experience. The perception of the participants' words, responses, opinions, and quotes, resulted into common themes. The combined accounts facilitated a deeper understanding of the father-absent family phenomenon and how it may affect leaders working in the public and nonprofit sectors.

### **Individual and Textural Structural Descriptions**

Creating individual structural descriptions required that I develop a vivid explanation of the underlying factors. The textural structural description step marks the end of the filtering process. I created textural-structural descriptions for each participant to reflect meanings and essences of their experience, to include the invariant constituents and themes. For confidentiality, I assigned alphabetical pseudonyms to the participants, assigning them the corresponded to the letters of the alphabet. For example, Participant A in the study is also known as Alice. The objective of the interviews was to understand how the father-absent family phenomenon of women working in leadership is interpreted and navigated by women leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. Excerpts of each participant's experience from the transcripts are explained in detail below.

#### **Participant A - Alice**

Public sector manager Alice is a divorced mother of three sons, and said that growing up in a father-absent home affects her in her personal life and in most relationships. Alice has been told that she is harsher when compared to others. Alice said that she thinks life is not fair. Alice was quoted saying, "In my work life, I feel that I am really strict." It is really hard for Alice to find balance in all other areas of her life. Alice admitted to having to work on her interpersonal skills and the way she interact with people. Alice believed she needs to learn how to relate to people fairly and a class may be needed to help.

Alice claimed that she is very ambitious because she grew up in a father-absent family. Alice explained, "For example, if someone loses their eye sight their other senses

get stronger.” Alice did not think anyone understands what she has been through. She said, “I have been through a lot which may explain why I react to things the way that I do.”

Alice said she does not think people really understand her situation. In high school, Alice was not overly friendly. She did not hang around a lot of people and described herself as reserved. Alice noted that she has not overcome issues from growing up in a father-absent family. She said, “It is challenging not knowing my other half or another point of view.”

When I asked Alice if she was involved in a community program she said in middle school she was a part of a singing group with two other people. Alice explained that being a part of the singing group and performing around the city gave her confidence and helped build her leadership skills. Alice was also a part of the Big Brother Big Sister program. Alice’s big sister’s name was Jackie. Alice was able to spend time around Jackie and she enjoyed being around Jackie’s family. Alice noted that Jackie’s family was really close and very positive.

When it comes to trust, Alice does not trust anyone. She does not think it has anything to do with their skill level. Alice said, she just does not trust anyone. Alice said, “Someone would need to prove that they could be trusted.” She said she does not like her boss’s ways of doing things. Alice does not think her boss is patient. She does think her boss is a good person to work for. When describing her boss Alice said, “Her skill level is weak. I don’t trust her because she is trying to control me. I feel that she hired me because she did not think I would stay.”



Alice said in her leadership, she does not babysit her employees. Alice said, she likes to build people to be leaders while supporting from a far. Alice could improve her leadership by learning to build rapport and being consistent with people. Alice said that she will try to get to know people but only to a certain extent. She said, "I just want to keep it professional and not personal." Alice said she likes for people to leave their problems at the door and pick them back up when they leave. Being more personable is an area where she could improve. Alice said she does not adjust according to people's needs and thinks of things as either "black or white." Alice said she will not accept any work not submitted on time. Her motto is, "a deadline is a deadline." Alice gave an example when she had to change her leadership type, she said, there was this one time when one of her employees had to work another job and did not have time to complete a report. This was the only time Alice approved an extension.

#### Participant B - Becky

Public sector director Becky is a 53 year old divorced mother of one daughter and one son. Becky said, "Because my father was absent from the home and absent in my life, the effect or the damage that I believe it has caused to me is more prevalent the older I get." Becky, said that she really thinks and believes that if her father was present he would have taught her a better selection process in choosing a mate. She said her father would have guided her on the things to say and to do when she was married. Becky suggested that if her father was there she would have had an insight on how a man feels and what a man's expectations were. Becky said, "I am not saying this is the reason I am

divorced, I just truly believe in my heart that would have helped to keep my marriage intact.”

Many things that she learned came from trial and error. When it came to leadership and community work, she found out across the board in all areas she has high levels of not trusting people. Becky said she has a wall around her heart and she tries to figure out what people’s motives are and what are people trying to do. She over analyzes things. Becky said it was difficult not to have a dad to talk to her and tell her what the world expects. Becky said, “I will say it over and over again, having a dad there to tell me what the world is expecting of me as women would have helped.”

Becky stated in her interview that growing up in a father-absent family made her ambitious and strong minded. She said she always felt that she had to take care of herself and never wanted to depend on a man because of the fear that the man would not be present in her life. So she was driven to become educated by being an excellent student. Becky said she feared that all men would eventually leave her and she would have to depend on herself.

Becky said she has not overcome the challenges of being raised in a father-absent family. The challenges that she faced during her childhood are related to the advances from the men in her family. She said she did not have anyone to take up for her or defend her. Becky said these experiences have caused her to be very defensive. She explained that she stays in fight or flight mode. Becky said, she did not have a dad she could call on. Becky does not think she will ever overcome the challenges. She said she just learned to deal with the fact that she was missing an important person in her life.

When Becky was in the ninth grade she was involved with the Cleveland chapter of Delta Sigma Theta (DST) sorority. This was a huge eye opener for her. This group of women embraced her and taught her how to be a professional woman. This organization took Becky to college fairs and leadership summits. Becky was exposed to seeing women as leaders, as managers, and as directors.

When I asked Becky about trust she said trusting individuals has nothing to do with their skill level. It has to do with their heart. A skill does not equate to honesty or ethics or your morality it is your heart. She admitted to not look to people for skill level. She said, "I have great conversations and I trust people that are in housekeeping and cafeteria workers because I may asked them a question and they have been honest with me." Becky does not link skill level and trust together, she does not think they have anything to do with the other. Becky said if she does not trust her employees she will bombard them with e-mails. Then the trust factor is totally diminished because she is not confident that the work will be done. Becky said an area where she could improve is to allow people to regain trust with her once the trust is betrayed. Whether personal or professional, Becky said she goes from 100 to zero in trust. Nine times out of 10 she will remain at zero. Becky said once the trust is gone, she limits what she asks of people that she does not trust. Becky said she could improve by learning to trust people again after they have shown themselves not to be trust worthy.

Becky described her leadership style as dual. She said she is a charismatic leader with a transformational style. According to Becky, what happens is the transformation side forces her to change from a macro manager to a micro manager. Becky gave an

example when she had to change her leadership style. The best time she can explain is when she was a manager at Bronner Brothers hair care products. She hired two young ladies. One had a biology degree, was very outgoing, extravert, and asked a lot of questions. The other, had a chemistry degree, an introvert, and did not talk much. This employee would fall asleep at work or not come to work at all. Becky and the employee went to Human Resources and the employee complained that Becky did not treat her the same way she treated the other employee. Becky said this situation was a wakeup call because Becky had not realized that she did not have the leadership skills to adapt to the needs of the employee that did not act like her.

#### Participant C – Cathy

Public sector manager Cathy is a 41 year old who has worked for the state for one year. She has never been married and has two daughters and one son. Cathy said growing up in father-absent family affected her childhood. Cathy said her mother had to work long hours and either left her home alone or home caring for her younger sibling. Cathy never established an emotional connection with her mother. She described her mother as a dictator that barked orders. Even as an adult, Cathy and her mother do not have a close relationship. In school, Cathy said she made horrible grades. She had a lot of boyfriends, experienced two teenage pregnancies, and had suicidal thoughts. Cathy said she was involved with the Girls Scouts of America during childhood. She explained that she was not sure if Girls Scouts provided her with leadership skills, but it did show her how to sell cookies and earn patches. Cathy said she always had the desire to go to college, but almost was expelled because she did not perform well in her classes. She

was on academic probation in her freshman year, but started to study and turn in assignments because she did not want to be put out of college.

Growing up, Cathy attended five elementary schools and three high schools because she and her mother moved around a lot. Cathy said growing up in a father-absent family has affected her work life. She admitted to switching jobs a lot and blames it on the instability that she experienced in childhood. The longest job she held was almost three years. In her leadership, Cathy said she does not believe she is a good leader. Cathy said, "I give my employees a task and I expect them to complete the task. I do not check on them or micromanage them, as long as the work gets done there is no problem." In her community, Cathy is very compassionate about helping other people. Cathy said she believes growing up in a father-absent family affected her ambition. She never thought that her family supported her, so she always tried to prove herself. She said, "It makes me sad because I never felt like I was good enough regardless of what I accomplished."

Cathy said, at work she does not feel like her manager and the leadership team pulls their own weight a lot of times. She said, "I feel like I am being taken advantage of at work and my manager walks behind me a lot to look at my computer screen to see what I am working on." Cathy said, she feels like her manager is very sneaky. Cathy said she does not feel like her manager trusts her professionally. Cathy said, "I do not think my manager is competent in her role because I always have to correct her."

Cathy described her leadership style as "hands-off." She tells her employees what to do and she expects them to do it. She does not trust them with tasks that she ultimately

is going to have to answer for because she just believes if you want something done right you have got to do it yourself. Cathy said, she tries not to assign too much work to her employees because she does not want to have to go behind them to make sure that the task were completed correctly; so, she does mostly everything herself. She said, “I guess I could improve by entrusting some task to my employees so that they can develop and grow.”

Cathy explained that there was an incident when she was swamped with meetings and also had to prepare for a presentation. One of her colleagues suggested that she ask one of her employees to do the research for the presentation so she would not feel rushed. Cathy asked the employee to do the research for the presentation. When she returned to the office after a long day of meetings she asked her employee if she completed the research she said no because she was so busy with other work. Cathy said her employee told her she did not have time to do her research. Cathy sat the employee down to coach her on how to prioritize her work. She told her employee, “When I give a direct request it takes priority over everything else.” As a result, Cathy had to stay at work three extra hours to do the research for her presentation herself.

#### Participant D - Denise

Nonprofit director Denise is a 46 year old divorced mother of one daughter and one son. Denise said growing up in a father-absent family has affected her tremendously. She said she would see her dad from time to time while growing up, but she lost him forever when he died from a heart attack when she was 15 years old. Previously to that, she lost her mother. “So I pretty much was a parentless child,” she said. Denise said

growing up without having that father figure, that leadership, that guidance, and that structure was very difficult. Denise said she made really bad decisions regarding school activities. She experimented with alcohol at a very young age. She got into relationships with guys at a very young age that she was not ready for. So said that in itself impacted her self-esteem for sure. Denise noted, learning to trust men was difficult for her. Not only from the standpoint because of her experiences with meeting the wrong people and not knowing how a guy was supposed to treat her, what a man supposed to do, and what a man supposed to be like. But not trusting, in the fact that as a young adult she thought all men left. She felt that they were not stable. That they were not consistent. She was really afraid to enter any real relationship because of fear of them leaving because her father left, but because he died but in essence he still left so there is a lot of fear of rejection that trickled into many, many aspect of her life. Even till this day she still is very skeptical. She fears rejection, so sometime she does not let people get as close to her that she should but that is something that she is learning to change and she is learning to grow from.

Denise does not know if growing up in a father-absent family really impacts her work life. Maybe as it relates to her professional relationship with men, there is always some skepticism. Denise explained, "I am always analyzing professional relationships maybe really seeking out who they are and are they trustworthy." She is always wondering, what type of man they are, and do they have integrity. She analyzes men probably more than she would with a female counterpart.

In the community part of what motivates her now is to teach parenting classes to men who are incarcerated and who will be reconnecting with their children. This motivated her because she knows the impact that the absence of a father has at home and in the life of their children. That in itself motivated her to encourage and equip men to be active in their children's lives especially when they have been absent for a period of time. Denise said it serves as a motivator now to help other people because not having her father in her life and not having another father figure at all after that.

Denise explained that she has a very strong personality, one that is probably built on survival and so that may come across in her leadership style. Denise described herself as no nonsense kind of person even though she does not lead with a strong hand but she says she is very independent. Sometimes it is hard for her to give responsibility or full control to someone that she is leading or someone that she is partnering with because she has always been in survival mode. She had to and that probably is a part of her leadership style. Being strong independent and making things happen because she had to. Denise said growing up in a father-absent family ignited her ambition. She noted that growing up without her father probably served as a catalyst to wanting to be better because she was in survival mode for so long. Denise said,

I didn't have that direction, so the things that I have learned as a child by error or by mistake kind of shifted me into a stronger person because I have had to make decisions that I have made because my dad was not there for guidance when I was young. Kind of made me the person that I am now.



Denise said it is almost like a “been there, done that” kind of thing, so now she is stronger. Denise said she is wiser because she had the experience of learning things quickly before her time and because she had to think. Denise explained, “I am wiser now because I have experience a whole lot when I was younger.”

Denise said she was promiscuous and had several boyfriends growing up. Now she is not a relationship type of person because she will not let people become that close. Denise said she becomes vulnerable and builds emotional attachments so that definitely played a critical part in her understanding of relationships in her beliefs in relationships. Denise explained that she should not have been in environments that pressured her to experience sex and experience alcohol at a young age. Denise was living the life that an adult should have experienced. Denise said, “I know that played a major part because there was no structure, there was no discipline, and there was no guidance.”

Denise said she knows that she was not a good student in junior high or high school because she did not have very much discipline or interest in school. No one taught Denise that education was important. Denise went to college after high school because she did not have anywhere to live. Surprisingly, she did fairly well in college. Denise studied psychology and a part of studying psychology was trying to understand her own behavior and trying to process the death and loss of her father and her mother. No one at a younger age taught her how to process the grief and the loss. Denise said she thinks studying in college gave her an identity, it gave her a voice, and it gave her better choices than what she had when she was younger. Denise said even now, overcoming being raised in a parent-less environment particularly a fatherless environment made her

a stronger parent. She said, she believes that she parents her children in a way that she wished she would have been parented. Denise explained,

I parent very intentionally now because I know what it was like to not have the structure. I know what it was like to not have the safety and the nurturing especially during teenage years. So, I parent intentionally because I know what it's like not to have that.

Denise said she was never been in a community program. The only thing that she was somewhat active in that quickly came to a halt was church. She sang in the choir, but there was no intervention for her or her sibling after her dad died or after her mom died. There was no intervention so there was not any mentoring. There was not any youth programs that anyone introduced her to which is probably why she made some of those decisions that she made. So, it was not even until she got to college that she saw structure. Denise said, now as a leader she thinks she recognizes where the strengths of people that she leads are and she gives the responsibility not just according to where there strengths are but she gives them responsibilities that challenges their potential. She does this so her subordinates can reach their potential and she thinks she does that so she is able to look at people individually not for what they think they can do.

She said she knew what she was capable of as a young adult but no one encouraged that and so she always maintained the status quo, if that or beneath her potential. So, she does not look at people where they think they are she looks at them for where she knows what potential they have inside and she challenges that. She wishes someone would have challenged her and she probably would be further in life if someone

challenged her and so that is how she leads. She looks at potential even seeing her subordinates differently than what they see in themselves and she gives them responsibility and assignments and task to challenge them so that they do not get comfortable or complacent with just surviving.

Denise said that she has been told or partially been evaluated as being a laissez-faire leader because she does not hover over her employees. Denise has expectations of people and she kind of let them do what it is that they are equipped to do or that they know to do. She probably still leads like that and that is something that she would like to change because people like autonomy to do what they have been trained or hired to do. She said, "I probably lack the immediate follow up that her employees may need and I may not give feedback as quickly as it needs to be given to prevent any errors or change in direction that hasn't been agreed upon." That is one thing that Denise would like to change about herself, is being a little more hands on without being smothering or hovering. Denise said,

I am a visionary. I see the big picture and I am able to communicate the big picture but my personality does not really care too much for details and that is why I am sort of a hands-off laissez-faire leader because I give the vision and I trust people to work out the details and so sometime that is not how it ends up. The goal is not always met exactly the way she envisioned it or as quickly as she would expect because she may be a little too hands off.

Denise gave an example when she had to change her leadership's style. She said she was working with a team of training specialist and she had a team of five and every

personality was different. She had some that were pretty independent, self-starters, self-motivated, and disciplined. Some employees that could take a task or assignment or responsibility and run with it because they all worked sort of independently. They did not have an office so they all met and worked eight hours a day. Her employees had autonomy for their schedules and so maybe there were a couple of people that she had to lead differently because they were not disciplined. She had to be more hands on and be a little more directive in giving them assignments and following up and encouraging or correcting behavior that was not team oriented. Denise said she had to correct behavior and be a little more hands on with individuals versus being a hands on in general with her entire team. That was actually the only thing she remembers changing.

#### Participant E - Elisa

Nonprofit president Elisa is a 40 year old divorced woman with no children. Elisa said she feels that being raised in a father-absent family has put her in the position where her male and female relationships have been kind of difficult. In reference to trusting she cannot completely let her guard down. In a boyfriend and girlfriend, husband and wife situation it is very guarded. Elisa said sometimes she is almost looking for that reason for them to leave or if they will stay or whatever wondering what will be the deal breaker. She said she is always questioning if she is good enough. It took a long time for her to get to a place where she was comfortable enough in herself to understand and love herself enough to know that she is enough and whatever is lacking is on the male party side. Even with her father, Elisa said, "It is his problem and not mine."

Elisa said the male figure is supposed to set the example and without the man present children are left to pick up the pieces on their own. As a result, daughters really do not know what the correct behavior they should accept from a male party if they have not had or seen it. "As daughters this is something we have to work through and it carries over to our teens because we are taught to have that male figure," she stated. In marriage, Elisa said it is difficult if you have not had the male party in the home. She said as wife, you are not aware of how a husband is supposed to cover you.

In the interview Elisa said, from a spiritual standpoint, it is the man that is supposed to be the head of the household, but if you do not see that head being a male figure and you see it the head being a female you would not know what to do in the marriage. In her marriage, she admitted that her expectation were a little high to the reality of what the man needs. As she went a long she learned that the man needs her as much as she needs him. Even though, she may show a hard exterior or put up a front like she does not need a man. She said, "We needed each other in order to survive, there needs to be a balance." Elisa said she found it difficult to humble herself as a women to a man because she was always taught to stand in her strength and to not let her guard down. "So with that being said, it made for a constant battle all the time. It was like having two Chiefs and no Indians in the household," Elisa stated. So for Elisa, she said she should have been taught to be a wife. She said, "I did not have the tools to really be able to be the neck and to allow her husband to be the head. And really allow him to lead and guide her along the way." Elisa said, there are so many men not in the home, it is vicious cycle. In turn, the woman suffer.

In her work life, Elisa said she sometimes gets closer to the males than the females. All of her best friends are males. She tends to cling to the males more than the females. In her community, she tends to link up with businesses with more males because it is an easier going environment.

She has a male friend that she leans on because sometimes as a woman she need that. Elisa said, if she would have had that male perspective there, it would have made things a lot easier growing up. One of the biggest things she dealt with from the absence of her father is that he was not there for anything. She said it was hard growing up having relatives that had fathers that were active and would do things with them and she did not have either parent there. Her mother was not there because she was in the military. Her father was not there because he was incarcerated. Once he was no longer incarcerated than he chose not to be there, she said that was hurtful. Elisa stated, "I am 40 years old and it is still hurtful. It leaves you in a space when you have to find your own family dynamic. You literally don't have one." Elisa, said she learned to cope with it through God. She asked God to help her to understand why a person that gave your life did not want to participate in your life. She said, "It is probably one of the most hurtful things that you have to deal with as a child." She constantly questions why her father did not value her. It made her not value herself. She said she had to find God and lean on that so she will not feel like a mistake. Elisa said God gives her discernment to deal with certain people. Early on, God will revealed things to her.

When Elisa was a child she was involved in high school fights. She fought to help her deal with a lot of anger for her father not being there and not feeling loved. She

said that she lashes out of her angry feelings. Elisa was involved with Youth Fill USA, which is a program for troubled youth. Youth Fill USA allows trouble youth to get their GED and they are taught a trade, like construction. Elisa said the program taught her life skills. She felt it was an invaluable experience that shaped her to be a functioning adult. She is not sure if the program still exist. In her leadership, she says she rules with an iron fist. She gives people enough rope to hang themselves.

As far as a leadership aspect she will lead people as far as they want her to. Sometimes people do not see the resources that are being provided to them. It is hard for Elisa to see so much potential in someone but they do not see the greatness in themselves. She has dealt with her employees saying that she is mean. Elisa said, if someone wants something no one is going to hand it to them. People cannot be lazy, they have to have a drive within themselves. She said, "The younger workers seem to want everything handed to them. The older workers tend to work a little harder." Elisa said she gets overwhelmed because there is so much in reference to things that she needs to get done. She said she probably could delegate more, but because she is meticulous about getting things done a certain type of way makes it difficult to let loose to the reins. Someone has to truly show Elisa that they can be trusted. She explained, "Delegating is the biggest thing to improve or finding someone worthy for her to trust to delegate." Once, Elisa had a gentleman that worked for her. She said, he would be hyper sensitive to the way she would speak to him. She really had to watch her tone to make sure she was not being mean. She learned to take the time to ask questions to figure out all of her employees. I try to figure out a resolution instead of always seeing a problem.

### Participant F - Freda

Public sector supervisor Freda is a 46 years old college graduate with one daughter and has never been married. She takes classes and is always finding opportunity to better herself. Freda described herself as very ambitious and sees herself running her own company one day. Growing up in a father-absent home was difficult for Freda because she said she always felt like she was Daddy's little girl. She remembers her dad always use to talk to her and spend time with her so when he died, she took it the hardest. She said she believes she is still grieving her dad's loss and it affects her whole life.

Freda connects being raised in a father-absent family with her desire to always seek out attention from boys/men growing up. She said she felt like she had to have sex with every boyfriend she had, so he would like her and stay with her. Freda said now she realizes that was wrong. She is working on loving herself more. She does not think she has overcome being raised in a father-absent family, but her faith has helped her cope. Her faith is extremely important to her. Freda said, loving God has helped her to stop doing the things that are not healthy for her. Freda said she was not involved with any programs growing up. She said maybe if she was involved in a community program, it could have helped her, but she is not sure.

At work, Freda said she often asks herself, "how did I get here, am I going to get found out" because she never envisioned herself in her current role. She really does not get close to the women in her office because she feels that they are always in competition with her. She has been told that she gravitates to men more than the women. This is a



struggle for her because her current manager is a women and she does not think her manager likes her at all. Freda leads a group of professionals. She said she is lucky to have this group of people working for her. Most of them are on the same skill level. They are all IT professionals and each employee is required to have a bachelor degree and at least three years of experience. Freda said she likes to get her employees involved when making decisions because ultimately the decision will affect everyone. She said she turns to her team for input because they are all intelligent, highly compensated employees. Freda described a time that she had to hire a new staff member. She had to be involved in his onboarding and getting him acclimated to the organization. Freda said it was challenging for her because she had to be more hands on. She had to walk around with him and show him around the organization. Freda said, her organization rarely has turnover so this was something new for her.

#### Participant G - Gloria

Public sector supervisor Gloria is a 44 years old who has been a state employee for the past 11 years. She is a single parent of one daughter and two sons and divorced twice. She said she works hard to provide for her children. Gloria grew up in a home with her mother, father, and three siblings. She remembers when she turned 14 years old, her mother told her that her father was not her biological father. She said,

I do not know why my mom had to tell me. I am sad that she would keep the secret from me so long. I wished she would have never told me. I feel like if I cannot trust my mom, how can I trust anyone?

Gloria said she always felt that she looked different and acted different from everyone else in her household. She said her life changed because she began to start wondering who her real father was, what he looked like, and why he did not want to be a part of her life. Gloria said as a result she struggled with low self-esteem. In high school, she said that she stayed to herself because she did not feel adequate. She did not participate with any community programs growing up, but she participated with the high school track team. It taught her the importance of working as a team.

Gloria said that she thinks her ambition changed once she found out that her step-father was not her biological father. She felt insufficient, and not worthy. Gloria said she got pregnant and stopped going to college in her senior year. She said that she really is not motivated to do anything. Gloria said, she still wonders why her father does not want to be a part of her life. Gloria said that she does not think she overcame issues from being from a father-absent family. Gloria's step father did not really treat her any different but she said she felt like the outsider of the family. Even though, Gloria has been divorced twice, her younger sister is still married and has maintained her marriage for over 20 years. Gloria said not having her biological father affects how she interacts with people.

In her work life, she said she stays to herself. Her employees complain that she does not talk to them that much. Gloria said she has always acted the same way and she still does not trust people. Gloria makes sure everything is done in writing. She makes sure she always cover herself because she said, "people like to lie on you and make up stuff. I need my job, so I don't take anything to chance." Gloria described her leadership

style as, “do as I say, not as I do.” She said, “Everyone has their own job duties and as long as they get their job done then we do not have any problems.” But if her boss calls her in and she is in trouble then everybody is in trouble because better them than her. Gloria said she is only there to earn a check to pay her bills. She said, “I don’t like anyone to play with my money.” Gloria said that her job performance could improve if she was more passionate about her job. She said at work she feels like she is babysitting adults. When Gloria was placed over a new team she was unfamiliar with the employees and the employee’s different jobs. She admitted to actually have to swallow her pride and be a student so that she could learn their various jobs. That was a very humbling experience for her.

#### Participant H - Heidi

Public sector supervisor Heidi is a 45 year old who has worked for the state for five years. She is divorced with one son. She grew up without her mother and father. She was raised by her grandmother. Heidi said she had to figure out a lot of things on her own. The women in her family would talk about her really bad. No one took the time to teach her. Everyone would just say how bad she was. When Heidi was pregnant at 14 and was a mother at 15, she felt ashamed. She did not know what she was doing but her son made her grow up fast. She was not involved in any community programs to help her. Heidi said having her son at 15 years old was the biggest challenge. She did not know how to be a mother because she did not have her own mother. She tried her very best, but she thinks she resented her child because she really did not want him. She said

she was a kid herself. She did not overcome, being a young mother. It changed her life. She had to grow up fast.

Heidi said she did not go to college. She said she barely got out of high school. The job that she has now is not at all what she wants to do. Heidi believes it is a dead end job but she said she feels stuck because she gets paid the most she has ever made. Heidi said, she never thought she would ever make \$40,000 a year without a college degree. She struggled with low self-esteem most of her life. She said she would always defeat herself before she would ever try anything new. She said she was her own worst critic. She would talk herself out of new jobs because she felt she was not qualified. Or she did not think she was smart enough. She said she thinks the only reason she is in the supervisor position she is in now because the turnover is so high and everyone else keeps quitting. Heidi said she would like to leave but she does not think she can make any more money anywhere else.

In her leadership, she said people tell her all the time that she makes a good boss and she is very bossy. She said, "I think I am fair to my employees." Heidi said her employees do their work. Heidi said she loves her team and she makes sure that they know how much she appreciates them. If Heidi could improve her leadership style she would learn to help develop her employees. She said there is not a budget for training, but she wishes she could be creative to find ways to teach her staff new things to help them get to the job they want. This may be why the turnover is so high.

Heidi said her boss is not fair at all. He shows favorites. Heidi said that her boss does not act like he likes her at all. He picks a part her work and her team's work but he

allows Kari, another supervisor, to get away with everything. Heidi feels like he is trying to get rid of her for some reason. She said, "I just stay out of his way. I do not ever speak to him." Heidi said her boss was accusing her team of not meeting production. This made her upset because she knows her staff is hard working but she still had to go behind each of staff member to make sure that each of them completed their work with quality and quantity. Heidi stated, "I had to double check their work for at least 90 days." She said her staff told her that they felt like she was micromanaging them and they were not happy. This was Heidi's way of making sure that her staff was producing so she would not look bad to her boss.

#### Participant I - Iilan

Nonprofit vice president Iilan is a 44 year old divorced mother of two daughters. She said she tried not to let her circumstance of growing up in a father-absent family affect her personal life, work life, community and leadership. Iilan said she made a conscious effort to live each day and constantly move forward. The only thing she really could think of is the fact that she made a lot of mistakes as a teenager and young adult. Iilan said she always had to have a boyfriend. She does not think she has ever gone without one. Iilan said she is attracted too much older men. The men that would take care of her and provide for her. Iilan said she thinks that is because she never had that in a father. Iilan's mother struggled financially so, Iilan said she was always drawn to men that were financially stable. Iilan said she does not think love played a factor at all. Iilan said she has two older sisters. She said, she learned everything from them. She said,

Both of my older sisters had children by professional athletes. My sisters taught me how to survive and live a good life. I had sex at a really young age. I thought you had to have sex with your boyfriends and all the men that I was involved with required it.

Iilan said she looks back at her life and says dang if she only would have done things differently. Iilan said she sees the same mistakes she made and the decisions that her daughters make today. Iilan said, "So apparently, just living and acting like certain things never happened was not the answer." As she reflects, she admitted that she would have done things differently she would have faced the fact that her oldest daughter's father was a drug dealer and spent time in jail. Her youngest daughter's father was basically a one night stand that she did not know very well. "He really did not want anything to do with me after that night." She stated. Instead of talking about it she tried to hide it. Iilan later got married and decided to pretend that her daughters were her new husband children. She changed her daughters' last names and this brought normalcy to her life. Iilan said she always felt that the marriage was a fraud. Her husband began cheating on her and she began cheating on him. They were cheating on each other throughout the entire marriage.

Iilan said, "In my work life, I play a role (like an actress) everyone knows just as much as I want them to know." She started her career as a medical billing customer service representative eighteen years ago. She worked her way through different careers to get to her current role as Vice-President of her organization. She said she is leading her organization through two acquisitions within the next weeks. Iilan said, "I will be

responsible for 8.4 million dollars.” Prior to this job, Iilan said she traveled as a consultant and the organization where she works for right now was one of her clients. She would meet with the CFO on a regular basis to discuss different billing and products and the CFO basically fell in love with her. The CFO offered Iilan a salary she could not refuse to join their team. She said, “So, here I am.”

Iilan said this is when her marriage starting falling a part, she said her husband could not handle that. Iilan said she finally made enough money to move out and be on her own. They are in the process of getting a divorce. Iilan said trust is a big deal to her. She said, she has to have managers and supervisors in place that will make sure that the work gets done even in her absence. Iilan’s boss is someone she says she does not trust. When all the information came about the acquisition. Iilan said her boss presented the information like Iilan would not be involved or be doing any of the traveling. Iilan was told that she would not be the one closing any deals. When the CFO came for a meeting she explained that it would be Iilan and her boss handling the acquisitions together. Iilan she said she still does not understand why her boss would present the information to her like it would have only been her closing the deals.

Iilan said she is a laid back leader. She explained that she has good people in place and they pretty much know what their jobs entail and they get it done. She said she seldom has to correct any behavior or meet with anyone about negative job performance. She would improve her leadership by working more as a team player. She considers herself as an individual contributor but she knows as vice president she needs to learn to be more collaborative by working more with her colleagues and staff. Iilan admits to

staying in her office a lot. She said her staff complains that they hardly see her throughout the day. She would improve by making herself more visual to the department.

When she started in her current role, she made the mistake by trying to be friendly with everyone. I wanted to seem relatable and I wanted everyone to feel comfortable. Iilan went to lunch with one of her subordinates. Iilan would invite her to her house. They became good friends, so she thought. Iilan said her subordinate was having financial problems so she asked Iilan to borrow money. Iilan said she knew borrowing/loaning money was not a good practice. Iilan said no, she could not let her borrow money. Iilan's employee became upset with her and did not want to talk to her anymore. Iilan's employee would tell people at work personal things that Iilan and she discussed. From that experience, she learned that she could not be close friends with her employees. She said she had to separate business from personal completely. Iilan did not participate in any community programs growing up, but she said she has a passion to help young girls in her own community. She feel like she has so much to offer them as far as information and mentoring. She sees herself as successful and she thinks she could help the younger generation.

#### Participant J - Julie

Public sector manager Julie is 43 years old and has been a state employee for eight years. She is a single mother of two daughters and one son and has been divorced twice. Julie said growing up in a father-absent family was hard for her because her mother was always so harsh and she never felt a close connection with her. As a result,



Julie said she would act out a lot while growing up. Julie said she had a lot of boyfriends and a lot of sexual partners. She did not have the best grades in high school and she dropped out of college after her freshman year. She made several attempts to go back to college, but it never worked out. Julie said, "I think I was a very confused child because I did not know who my dad was and my mother did not tell me much about him." Julie said she is still living with issues of not having her father present in her life. "Every day of my life," she said. Julie said that she and her mother do not have a good relationship, so it would have been nice to have had a father to balance things out. Julie said she is lucky to have had her grandmother and grandfather. They always were so good to her. Julie said that she believes if she had a supportive and loving mother and father bond she would be further in life.

Julie said her work life is pretty good. She said she does not love her job; but, she has to support herself and her two adult children that are living with her. Julie said even though she was not involved in a community program as a child, she wants to help young girls in her own community. Julie works a third shift and is sleep during the day hours. Julie said that she just does not have enough time to do much besides working. She struggles through a lot of issues with anxiety. Her anxiety keeps her from doing a lot of things. Julie said that she is trusting God to help her overcome her anxiety very soon.

As far as her leadership, she is totally different person at home than at work. At work, she describes herself as the boss. She tells people where to go and what to do. Julie said, "I do not have time for casual conversations, we are there to do a job!" She said that she works hard because she wants to eat. Julie applied for her current job as a

manager because it paid her what she needs to cover her rent and support her household. Julie said, she thanks God that the promotion came when it did because she did not know how she was going to support herself after her last divorce. She said, "I just do not know how to get this marriage thing right." Julie said she knows that she has to work harder because she does not have anyone at home that she can depend on. Julie believes that people will leave you and your life without any regrets or concerns. She explained, "So, I have to look out for myself to make sure that I am alright and I will always be alright."

Julie had to make a decision to terminate one of her employee because she violated the tardy policy. Her employee began crying hysterically. The employee said that she was a single mom of two small children and she depends on family members to keep her children while she works 3rd shift. Julie said, she felt so bad because that employee reminded her of herself. She knew that she had to follow policy, but she also should deal with situations on a case by case basis. A better solution would have been to refer the employee to the employee assistance program or even helping her get a day shift job during times when day care facilities were open.

### **Composite Description**

The results of the study clearly answered the research question. The composite descriptions of meanings and essence of the participant's experiences represent the group as a whole. I created the final deduced meanings and themes of their lived experiences. Finally, I identified common meanings using Atlas.ti7 qualitative software to assist in the analysis of the data.

### **Data Management**

Atlas.ti7 qualitative data analysis software assisted in managing and sorting the interview data collected. The software allowed coding and linking of themes to easily display the experiences. To identify the major themes, participants' expressions were coded in elements of themes and patterns within a hierarchical structure. These created three sets of data: (a) phrases consistent with and that support the existence of the word trust, (b) expressions that did not support that existing community youth programs helped women develop leadership skills, and (c) leadership. These elements were considered significant and clustered to form four major themes.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

In Chapter 3, I discussed the importance of trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability as key characteristics for the participants in this study. In regards to credibility, I made sure that all of the participants met the criteria to participate in the study. I possessed a general understanding of both the phenomenon under investigation and the research process (Watt, 2007). I maintained an audit trail by documenting each step using notes. I triangulated my result by member-checking to help increase trustworthiness (Carlson, 2010). The process started by interviewing the participants. Next, I transcribed the in-depth interview. Finally, I sent an e-mail of the written transcription to the participant and asked for verification of accuracy.

Transferability of the study findings was also considered as an important aspect of trustworthiness. Previous studies on girls from father-absent families focused on developmental concerns.

This study was focused on women from father-absent families that are leaders in the public and nonprofit sectors. This concept needs to be studied more in-depth. In Chapter 3, I discussed how transferability can be different depending on the way the findings are used (Guion et al., 2011). Some researchers argued that qualitative research should be focused on trustworthiness as it relates to transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Burchett, Umoquit, & Dobrow, 2011). Qualitative research assumes that all research brings a unique perspective to the literature. I considered transferability as early as participant selection phase. The likelihood that the study findings could be replicated in a new specific setting is an example of transferability (Burchett, Umoquit, & Dobrow, 2011).

### **Dependability**

While conducting this study, I followed the strict protocol that was approved by the IRB. When examining dependability, I also considered audit trails and triangulation. Audit trails consist of notes that document every step. Triangulation provides a way to understand a phenomenon. In-depth interviews should be audio-recorded and transcribed accurately (Funder et al., 2014). Additionally, I took field notes of each interview and provided a short written summary of each interview. Yin (2003) suggested that in order to increase dependability, a researcher should follow the protocol that is outlined in the procedures.

Researcher reflexivity helps a researcher recognize thoughts and feelings of the participants. Confirmability needs to be present when establishing trustworthiness and is the qualitative counterpart to quantitative objectivity (Farrelly, 2013). Transparency in

the dialogue between researcher and participants improves confirmability throughout the research. The concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research provide ways of assessing credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Miyata & Kai, 2009).

### **Results**

The research question for this study was: What are lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered women's development as leaders? The study findings validated the research question. The literature review of the research study formed the basis for bracketing phrases to identify themes such as leadership. Path-goal theory of effective leadership is based on the effective working relationship of a leader. According to path-goal theory of leadership, a leader must be able to focus on motivational factors that will help the subordinate to succeed (House, 1971). Additionally, a leader must be able to select a leadership style that would be more beneficial to each subordinate that they lead (House, 1971). The 10 participants that I interviewed spoke of a lack of trust and hurt from growing in a father-absent family. Because of this, I believe that it would be a challenge for the participants involved in this study to employ path-goal theory of effective leadership. This is due to the fact that participant's displayed an inability to take the focus off themselves and their own hurt feelings.

The path-goal method gives the responsibly to leader to clear a "path" for the subordinates; so, that the subordinates are able to achieve their work goals (House, 1971). This theory involves looking outside oneself for the betterment of organization and subordinates. In order for a leader to be able to do this they must have secure attachment

patterns or some type of leadership training to help them. Path-goal requires the leader to take responsibility for the performance and job satisfaction of the subordinate by directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating tasks (House, 1971). House (1971) believed the leader should take responsibility for the performance and job satisfaction of the subordinate. Leaders should be responsible for directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating tasks (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). The father-absence and leadership phenomenon patterns deducible from the lived experiences of the participants show adequate accounts to address the research questions reasonably well. The participants answered questions relating to their experience of growing up in a father-absent home (see Figure 1).

Title		Involved w/Community Program (CP) as a child	Credits CP for leadership skills	Overcame issues of growing up in a father-absent family	Was hindered by growing up in a father-absent family
Alice	Public Sector Manager	✓			✓
Becky	Public Sector Director	✓	✓		✓
Cathy	Public Sector Manager	✓			✓
Denise	Public Sector Director				✓
Elisa	Non-Profit President	✓	✓		✓
Gloria	Public Sector Supervisor				✓
Freda	Public Sector Supervisor				✓
Heidi	Public Sector Supervisor				✓
Lilian	Non-Profit Vice President				✓
Julie	Public Sector Manager				✓

*Figure 1.* Summary of responses.

According to Saldaña (2012), coding is primarily a hermeneutic act that represents the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis. In Chapter 3, my preliminary codes were behavior, policy, and leadership. The secondary code for behavior was encouragement. Policy did not result in a secondary code. The secondary codes for leadership were transactional, transformational, and

situational. Leadership was the only code from the preliminary codes that was also seen in the final coding stage. The Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam eight-step process was used to analyze the data, identify themes, and patterns.

### Emergent Codes

The patterns derived from the invariant constituents indicated that lived experiences of all 10 participants support the existence of a father-absent phenomenon. The study results shows two emerging secondary codes for leadership, (a) autocratic and (b) laissez-faire. These two leadership types were not considered in the preliminary coding framework. Results of the leadership types expressed by all 10 participants (see Figure 2).

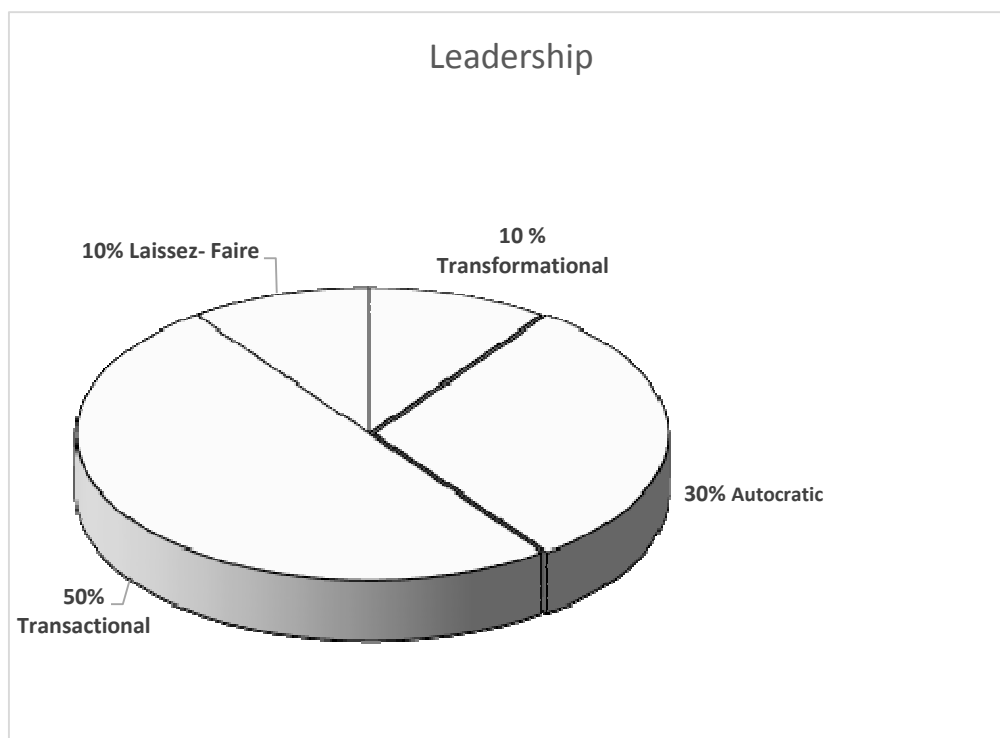


Figure 2. Participant leadership types



Results of the in-depth interview, questioned each participant about their leadership. Participant Becky claimed to be a charismatic leader with a transformation style; however, her responses and body language were more in line with a transactional leader. In the field notes I wrote, Participant Becky's body language made her seem unapproachable. She kept her arms crossed, rolled her neck, and never made eye contact with me. Denise (nonprofit director) said she has a laissez-faire leadership type because she fails to provide regular feedback to her subordinates. According to Tims, Bakker, and Xanthopoulou (2011), laissez-faire leaders have no interest at all for the subordinates. Denise said, she gives the vision and she trust people to work out the details. Gloria, Julie, and Elisa descriptions of their type of leadership seemed more autocratic. Autocratic leaders dictate stages of goal attainment and are unconcerned about subordinates' autonomy and personal development (Schoel, Bluemke, Mueller, & Stahlberg, & 2011). Schoel et al. (2011) argued leaders with low and unstable self-esteem tend to possess an autocratic leadership type. Gloria (public sector supervisor) tells her employees to, "do as I say, not as I do." Julie (public sector manager) said she tells her employees, where to go and what to do. Elisa (nonprofit president) said she rules with an iron fist. Tims, Bakker, and Xanthopoulou (2011) suggested that subordinates are more likely to leave an organization when there is a transactional or laissez-faire leader. After interviewing 10 participants, none of participant's description of their leadership type would be considered as situational. The situational leadership model explains how the leader can change leadership styles depending on the maturity or the developmental level of the subordinate (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

Responses by women in nonprofit and public leadership did not provide varied opinions significant to form distinct sets of information. Each participant identified similar hindrance and contributors that directly impacted their development as leaders. Supporting literature on the absence of a father showed that an individual's adult life would be effected. Denise (nonprofit director) and Becky (public sector director) noted that regardless of their titles, they both feel that they have not overcome issues of being raised in a father-absent family. According to Iilan (nonprofit vice-president), whereas she admits that being raised in a father-absent family did affect her decisions growing up, she will not let her past dictate her present and future. I do believe growing up in a father-absent family has affected the leadership style of the participants.

The results showed three most occurring concepts. The concepts that showed up most were Trust (any variation of the trust), leadership, and community program. See the most occurring concepts in Table 4.

Table 4

*Three Most Commonly Occurring Concepts*

Code	Frequency	Percent
Trust	27	38.0%
Leadership	23	32.39%
Community Programs	21	29.58%
TOTAL	71	100.00%

### **Building Trusting Relationships**

Two requirements leaders need to be effective in their roles is trusting and the possession of strong interpersonal skills. Trusting others was rated as the highest barriers of all of the participants. All participants acknowledged it has not been easy for them to trust others. Participant Alice said she does not trust anyone. She does not work well with her peers or her boss due to lack of trust. Alice keeps to herself and does not want to participate in after work functions or team building activities. Alice thinks her boss is out to get her. Alice said,

Someone would need to prove that they could be trusted. My boss for example, I don't like her way of doing things. I do not think she is patient. She is not a good person to work for. Her skill level is weak. I don't trust her because she is trying to control me. I feel that she hired me because she did not think I would stay. I do think it is a problem.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Gloria who feels that she does not trust anyone either. Gloria said, "I still do not trust people I am sad that my mom would keep the secret from me so long I feel like if I cannot trust my mom how I can trust anyone. At work I make sure everything is done in writing," said Gloria. With the lack of resources as children, women are growing up still feeling hurt and pain from their childhood that are not going to go away without some sort of intervention. This pain is affecting their adulthood and making it difficult for them to live up to their full potential and be the best leaders that they can possibly be. Becky and Elisa contribute their divorce to growing up in a father-absent family and not learning the tools to be a wife or what a man needs from

his wife. Although seven other participants are divorced they did not link their divorce to growing up in a father-absent family. Cathy, has three children but did not marry any of their fathers because she saw her mother and father go through a divorce so she feared ever getting married herself.

### **Leadership**

In Questions 1, 4, 6, 7 asked the participants' about their leadership. Freda, a public sector supervisor had this to say, "In my leadership I often feel like how I got here." She lacks confidence in her ability and constantly questions her self-worth. In response to question one Denise said,

I have a very strong personality one that is probably built on survival and so that may come across in my leadership style. I am probably a no nonsense kind of person even though I don't lead with a strong hand but I am very independent so sometimes it is hard for me to give responsibility or full control to someone that I am leading or someone that I am partnering with because I have always been in survival mode because I have had to and so that probably is a part of my leadership style being strong independent and making things happen because I had to.

Becky, said in leadership she has high levels of not trusting people she over analyzes things. She has a wall around her heart. She thinks everyone has ulterior motives and she tries to figure out what are people's motives.

### **The Impact of Community Programs**

Question 3 asked the participants to describe any community program that they were a part of at any point of your childhood that helped them cultivate their leadership skills. What is the name of the program and what are the services that it provided and what was the impact for them? Four women (40%) participated in a community program during childhood. Two of the participants believe their participation in the program played a valuable role in their career advancement. Forty year-old Elisha, was emphatic that Youth Fill USA helped her become a functioning adult. The program is for troubled youth. Elisha said she was involved with high school fights. She said it was from dealing with a lot of anger from her father not being there and not feeling loved. She said, “You tend to lash those anger feelings”. Elisha said, “Youth Fill USA was an invaluable experience that taught me life skills to be the person I am today”. Cathy was a member of the Girls Scout. Alice said the Big Brother Big Sister program had an impact on her. Her big sister Jackie was very positive. Alice said, “I was able to spend time around her and I enjoyed being around Jackie’s family.” Jackie’s family was really close. Becky was also involved in a community program, she said, when she was in high school she participated with the Cleveland chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority incorporated. That was a huge eye opener for her. This group of women embraced the young girls and taught them how to be professional women. They took them on a college tour. Becky was able to participate in leadership summits. She saw women as leaders in roles as directors and managers.

Frequency tables shows the coding categories that were used in the final study. The table list the frequency of the concepts occurring during the interviews and the number of participants who mentioned the themes at least once. The results are limited because I only used 10 participants in the study. A general overview of the most occurring frequencies is provided in Table 5.

Table 5

*Overall Frequencies. Total Participants: 10*

Categories Code	Frequency of Occurrence during the interviews	Number of participants who mentioned the theme at least once
Lack of trust	27	6
Leadership	23	10
Community Programs	21	4
Fear	8	2
Transactional Leadership type	5	5
Hurt	3	2
Spiritual Connection	8	3
Resiliency	2	1
Sees themselves as Successful	1	1
Transformational Leadership Type	1	1
Expressed lack of trust for	0	0

Table 5 continued

subordinates

0

0

Situational Leadership type

### Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study made use of a demographic survey and interview questionnaires to explore the lived experiences of the 10 participants regarding their perceived obstacles/barriers to women's development as a leader. Cranshaw and Game (2010) found that an insecure attachment relationship between leader and follower resulted in low levels of trust. The study's findings support previous research that an absence of a father hinders the development of healthy interpersonal skills and trust. It is essential for effective leaders to build trusting relationship where they work. Leaders must maintain a high level of trust with subordinates, peers, executive staff, and clients. The path-goal theory is concerned with how leaders interact with subordinates.

In Chapter 4, I reported the results with data analysis exploring deeper lived experiences and participants' perceptions. Data analysis discovered four major themes; with each of the 10 participants experiencing at least more than two of the themes. Barriers and/or obstacles reported included poverty, teenage pregnancy, promiscuous sexual activity, and alcohol and drug abuse. The hindering factors were determined to be the inability to trust and build cohesiveness amongst colleagues. Participants further expressed that they have not been offered any training opportunities. Strategies adopted by women to counter the father-absent effects were to have a faith and believe in God. Some women found strength in their situation by being resilient. The answers to the

interview questions were significant and formed a firm basis to draw conclusions. In Chapter 5, I will present the interpretation of the results, inferences about the important findings, conclusions, and recommendations.



## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of 10 women working as supervisors, managers, directors, vice presidents, or presidents in the nonprofit and public sector to better understand the factors they perceived to help or hinder their development as leaders. These women are now in organization leadership positions in public and nonprofit sectors. I asked them about any barriers or obstacles they may have faced in childhood and factors that they believed to be instrumental in their success.

In the study, I used in-depth interviews to understand the factors these women believed contributed to their development of ambition, insight, wisdom, and other factors related to leading an organization. The findings of the study will be used to provide enhanced awareness for policymakers and support for programs and policies impacting girls growing up in father-absent families. The results I presented in Chapter 4 revealed useful themes which formed the foundation for the study's conclusion. In the study I used a qualitative research method with a phenomenological design to explore a phenomenon experienced by this group of women. A qualitative study may help to reveal a situation and address a phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine 2011; Merriam, 1998).

The phenomenological approach allowed for detailed descriptions to emerge of the lived experiences of women raised in a father-absent family who are now leaders at their public and nonprofit organizations. I found the phenomenological study design to

be the best choice because it fit the purpose of this study. According to Creswell (2003), data interpretation and conclusions are drawn in a research endeavor to assign a larger meaning to the data. In Chapter 4, I provided the results of the study. In Chapter 5, I will conclude the study by presenting the findings, underscoring major results and bounded by the evidence collected, under the following headings: (a) interpretation of findings, (b) limitation of the study, (c) implications, and (d) conclusion.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

Interpreting the study data provided answers to the research question that guided the study: What are the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered their development as leaders? The outcome of the study in relation to the research questions concluded that women raised in father-absent families admitted to exhibit trust issues, but the majority did not credit a childhood community program for assisting with overall development of leadership. The women were determined to be resilient and desired to do better. The results of this study are not unique from other women from father-absent homes. A major trend is that despite being in leadership roles, the women admit that they still feel that they need leadership training. The category of findings that emerged that exhibits this fact was that women leaders continue to feel emotional hurt from their past from growing up in a father-absent family. Four major themes surfaced from the coding of participants' expressions in Chapter 4: lack of trust, spiritual connection, leadership types, and resiliency. Exploring each theme carefully established the association to literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the path-goal theory framing the study as identified in Chapter 1.

The path-goal leadership theory provided the framework for the study. House and Mitchell's (1974) path-goal theory defined four kinds of behaviors used by effective leaders. The first is directive path-goal behavior which gives the subordinate specific guidance to rules and procedures (House & Mitchell, 1974). The second is supportive leader behavior which provides self-confidence and social satisfaction and a source of stress reduction and alleviation of frustration for subordinates and increases performance (House & Mitchell, 1974). House and Mitchell also noted the third behavior is participative leader behavior, which provides encouragement to subordinates. According to Miao, Newman, Schwarz, and Xu (2013), participative leadership types have been shown to result in positive subordinate work attitudes in the public sector. Participative leaders take the subordinates' opinions and suggestions into account when making decisions (House & Mitchell, 1974). The fourth kind of behavior is achievement-oriented behavior, which causes subordinates to strive for higher standards of performance and to have more confidence in their ability to meet challenging goals (House & Mitchell, 1974).

Transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles were discussed in Chapter 2. Each of these leadership styles has been shown to motivate employees; however, each style is distinct from the others (Almansour, 2012). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that is focused on change; these type of leaders build up their followers by motivating them to achieve their goals (Grimm, 2010). The 10 participants that were interviewed did not seem to possess the ability to employ the path-goal theory. The study participants spoke of a lack of trust, feelings of hurt, and feelings

of pain in their own lives. The path-goal theory requires the leader to be able to look past oneself in order to focus on subordinates and organizational goals.

### **Finding 1: Lack of Trust**

The study findings pointed to a new pattern, and this finding consistently supported research that women raised in father-absent families struggle with issues of trust as stated by Jackson (2010). The leaders do not trust their subordinates to complete a task. Surprisingly, at least 60% of the participants reported that they did not trust their own superiors. Trust patterns and the development of interpersonal relationships are determined from early childhood attachments (Jackson, 2010).

The attachment between a parent and child is essential in the development of self-esteem, interpersonal trust, and psychological well-being (Jackson, 2010). Avoidant or insecure attachment patterns in a leader may cause the leader not to trust. Leaders with avoidant attachment styles were reported to be less cohesive (Harms, 2011). The women interviewed admitted to not trusting. Contrary to recent studies, the women showed a lack of trust for their peers and superiors. These findings can provide women with the information they need to better understand the steps they should take to improve their interpersonal skills and trust so that they may become more effective leaders.

### **Finding 2: Spiritual Connection**

Congruent with existing findings, at least three participants credited their spiritual connection to help overcome the obstacles and barriers associated with being raised in a father-absent home. Harris's (2014) qualitative study of 10 women from father-absent families explored how their spiritual connection affected their circumstances of growing

up without fathers. The outcome of that study showed that the women exhibited high self-esteem; however, all the women involved in the study had trust issues that were carried from childhood to all adult interactions (Harris, 2014). According to Harris, not developing trust in relationships early will dictate trust levels in relationships later in life.

### **Finding 3: Leadership Types**

I used transformational, transactional, and situational leadership types in the preliminary coding of the data. Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that is focused on change; these type of leaders build up their followers by motivating them to achieve their goals (Grimm, 2010). Weber's (1947) transactional leadership theory explained that people are motivated by reward and punishment. The situational leadership model explains how the leader can change leadership styles depending on the maturity or the developmental level of the subordinate (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). The study results showed one participant described her leadership type as laissez-faire. One participant described her leadership type as transformational. Three participants described their leadership type as autocratic. The other five participants' leadership type was described as transactional. None of the participants described their leadership type as situational leadership.

### **Finding 4: Resiliency**

A new premise emerged with resiliency. A common characteristic with the entire group in the study was their display of perseverance and determination to succeed. The participants' accounts from the study confirmed that they strived to be in a leadership position because they had the desire to be better. Howard and Irving (2012) explained

that leadership formation may be linked to the ability of overcoming obstacles. Howard and Irving's study noted that several business leaders admitted to having hardships in childhood. The development into a leader can come from many factors associated with family background or hardships (Howard & Irving, 2012). Howard and Irving elaborated by stating that leaders use hardships in their life and childhood experiences as a training ground for their careers. Seven participants in this study were not involved in a community program during childhood that cultivated leadership skill. Two participants said that they pursued their leadership role because those were the positions that paid more and they needed the money to support themselves and their families.

The rich data that I gathered from the 10 women participants have a major impact on women aspiring to become leaders. The study findings facilitated more understanding of why some leaders do not perform well with others and reasons women are not advancing beyond their current positions. The current study contributes to the body of literature by filling the knowledge gap about what helps or hinders women from father-absent families develop as leaders. The study results confirmed prior literature's contentions that not providing resources and services to girls from father-absent girls at a young age will affect them from reaching their full potential in adulthood. Results also revealed crucial factors that limit women's progress which policymakers may use to direct efforts to relevant areas. Policymakers may use the study results to develop policies that encourage and recognize the needs of young girls raised in father-absent families.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations are unavoidable in qualitative phenomenological studies, even when triangulation measures are followed (Creswell, 2003). There is room for bias or personal influence of data validity by the interviewer. To preserve credibility, I began bracketing early in the research process. The interviews were also triangulated for accuracy (Moustakas, 1994). In the study, I relied on the participants' being honest in their responses.

One limitation of the study was that in a few instances, some participants allocated inadequate time for the interviews, hindering a full exploitation of experiences. Another limitation was that the unique experiences of the 10 participants might not represent all women raised in father-absent families. Lack of data for comparison also limited the study findings as only women from father-absent families participated. The study's geographic location was concentrated in the southeast United States, limiting data influenced by other areas. The limitations to trustworthiness that arose from the study were in line with limitations presented in Chapter 1. Another limitation of the study was that it focused on an absent father, rather than all father figures, who may have included male primary caregivers, such as uncles, grandfathers, and stepfathers. The data received from the participants was reliable because it was clear, and the participants understood what the definition of father was when discussing the interview questions.

The focus of this study was women raised a father-absent family. The participants that were used in this research highlighted families with minimal male involvement in a parental role. Two participants had fewer than 5 years with their

biological father in the home. One participant fewer than 3 years and six participants had zero years of their biological father in the home.

### **Recommendations**

The findings in this study support the presence of the common theme of lack of trust being an issue for women who were raised in father-absent families. This finding would be useful to policymakers when creating new policies on issues related to women and girls. These women participants possessed the ambition to pursue their leadership roles, but it is unclear if they have the skills to remain in the position and be effective. One of my recommendations for further research is to explore how long these women remain in these leadership positions in the public and nonprofit sectors. Additionally, if the women were given the opportunity to participate in interpersonal skill training, would this help with their ability to trust their superiors and colleagues. A large percent of the codes displayed trust as an issue for 100% of the participants. The emergent themes were: lack of trust, spiritual connection, leadership types, and resiliency. A study of leaders that goes in-depth as to why a trust issue exists between their peers and superiors may also be interesting and enlightening. Consequently, it would be prudent to replicate the study with women from mother-absent households to determine if trust issues exist.

### **Implications**

This study's implications for positive social change may include informing policymakers of the importance of increased awareness and political and public support of girls from father-absent families to help them reach their full potential. This study's findings could also be useful to hiring managers when recruiting talent for their



organizations or continued training for individuals in leadership roles. Empirical implications concerning this study's findings also exist on how women leaders are still struggling with issues of trust in their working relationship. The current study uncovered opportunities where women from father-absent households identified areas of their life that were preventing them from living their best life. By sharing their personal experiences, appropriate recommendations may include offering leaders a training course not only to enhance their job performance but also their personal well-being. Selected State employees are being referred to the Leadership Excellence and Development program. This program is offered to supervisors, managers, directors, vice-presidents, or presidents. The course works in partnership with a professional management coach to identify specific goals, develop and build skills, and enhance professional and personal performance. The coaching is designed to enhance the performance and well-being of a manager who is not experiencing job performance issues, but rather who would like to grow and develop her skills. The areas of coaching include: (a) excelling under pressure, (b) thriving at work and home, (c) effective communication, (d) embracing different personalities, (e) transitioning from coworker to manager, (f) achieving through change, (g) team performance, (h) maximizing emotional intelligence, and (i) building leadership skills. This type of training could be beneficial to all women from father-absent families working in leadership roles.

### **Conclusion**

Using a qualitative method and a phenomenological design, I explored the lived experiences and perceptions of 10 women leaders working as a supervisor, manager,

director, vice president, and president purposefully selected from the public and nonprofit sector. The purpose was to better understand what helped or hindered women from father-absent families develop as leaders. I collected the data by conducting face-to-face, digitally recorded interviews. A modified van Kaam eight-step process (Moustakas, 1994) and Atlas.ti7 qualitative computer data analysis software assisted in organizing and analyzing the transcribed data for emergent themes. The key essence of the study shows that even though women that grew up in a father-absent families may have professional success, they are still dealing with issues of trust and the development of interpersonal skills that could make one a more effective leader. The study on women from father-absent families now serving in leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sector is an example of a socially relevant research responding to a long neglected social value, as suggested by Moustakas (1994).

The results demonstrate that though the women have overcome barriers and obstacles to become leaders, they are still struggling with hurt from not having their father present while growing up. A few participants contributed their own divorce from being a product of a father-absent family. Unlike prior research, this study did not seek to add statistics to the outcomes of being raised in a father-absent family instead the research provided data for support of these women that would aid them to reach their full potential and be successful in their role as an organization leader. Each of the women interviewed admitted that there are issues that they still are dealing with from the absence of her father.

The study results indicated that there is a need to support women from father-absent families. Resilience is a key attribute that all the participants shared. In the findings, I recognized the need for leadership training for women raised in father-absent families working in leadership roles. Interestingly, some of the women did not participate in a community program while growing up. Having the motivation to do better and be better catapulted the women in their current role. One participant does not like being in leadership but pursued the opportunity so that she could make enough money to support her single family. The presentation of resilience and the desire to be better despite their circumstance should be encouragement for other women from father-absent families to learn from the past and continue to strive to do better.

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## Appendix A: Introduction Letter

You are invited to take part in this research study if you grew up with fewer than five years of contact with your father and you now work in the nonprofit or public sector as a supervisor, manager, director, vice-president, or president. This study is being conducted [REDACTED], who is a doctoral student in the School of Public Policy and Administration at Walden University.

### **Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of women raised in father-absent families. These women are now in organization leadership positions in public and nonprofit sectors. I asked about any barriers or obstacles you may have faced in childhood and factors that you believe to be instrumental in your success.

### **Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Review the informed-consent form
2. Answer six qualifying survey questions
3. Participate in a face-to-face, in-depth interview session for about an hour

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that you can discontinue the interview at any time or you may skip any question that you feel is too personal.

### **Risks and Benefits**

Potential risks include recalling memories and emotions from the past that may be upsetting. A benefit is that your input could help understand what are the lived experiences of women raised in father-absent families that helped or hindered their development as leaders? Also, your participation could help in the creation of new policy that would benefit young girls or women who are raising their daughters without a father. If you become distressed as a result of participating in the study a brochure with a list of resources given to you with a counselor that are free or low cost to you in the event that you would like to contact a licensed counselor.

### **Compensation**

There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

### **Confidentiality**

Any information that is obtained during this interview will be kept confidential. I will not use your information for any purposes outside this research project and will not reveal your name or any other information that could identify you.

I appreciate your considering being a part of this study. Thank you.

Lauren N. Huff

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

My faculty advisor is Dr. Anne Hacker. If you have any questions later, you may contact me at XXXXXXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXXXXXX, or my faculty advisor by e-mail

XXXXXXXXXX. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you may call Dr. Leilani Endicott, who is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is XXXXXXXXXXXX.

## Appendix B: Qualification Questions

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR TH PURPOSE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION. THE INFORMATION WILL NOT BE USED IN ANY WAY TO IDENTIFY YOU. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FORM E-MAIL ME AT XXXXXXXXXXXX

1. Age: 18–25 \_\_\_ 26–35 \_\_\_ 36–55 \_\_\_ 56–65 \_\_\_ over 65 \_\_\_
2. What is your leadership position at your organization?( supervisor, manager, director, vice president, or president) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is your organization a nonprofit or public organization? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
4. Did you live with your biological mother growing up? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
5. How many years was your biological father involved in your life? \_\_\_\_\_
6. I would like to understand if you faced any obstacles/ barriers when growing up in an absent father family. For reporting purposes only, please check below if it applies:
  - (a) I had a negative contact with law enforcement \_\_\_ (b) I grew up in poverty \_\_\_
  - (c) I had a teenage pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_ (d) I used drugs and/or alcohol \_\_\_ (e) I was diagnosed with a psychological disorder \_\_\_\_\_
  - (f) I was sexually promiscuous (g) none of the above \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: In-Depth Interview Questions

THIS INFORMATION WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION AND WILL NOT BE USED IN ANY WAY TO IDENTIFY YOU. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FORM E-MAIL ME AT: XXXXXXXXXXXX

1. How do you feel your circumstance of growing up in a father-absent family has affected you in your personal life, work life, community, and leadership?
2. What role, if any, did growing up in a father-absent family, affect your ambition, insight, and wisdom?
3. What challenges did you face during childhood that may have been due to not having a father present in your life? How did you overcome these challenges?
4. Describe any community program that you were a part of at any point of your childhood that helped you cultivate your leadership skills. What is the name of the program and what are the services that it provided? What was the impact for you?
5. In your position as leader, describe how you handle trusting individuals who are on different skill levels?
6. How do you describe your leadership style? Explain how you feel you could improve your leadership style? What areas would you improve?
7. Describe a time, if any, that you had to change your leadership style to adapt to your subordinates' needs.

## Appendix D: Codebook

Codes	Secondary Code	Tertiary Code
Behaviour (B)	Encouragement (B-E)	Trust
Leadership (L)	Transactional (L-T)	Give Orders
Leadership (L)	Transformational (L-T)	Encourage
Leadership (L)	Situational (L-S)	Flexible; change depending on skill level of subordinates
r	Autocratic (L-A)	Control over subordinates, makes all decisions.
Leadership (L)	Laissez-faire (L-L)	Power to make decisions is given to subordinates
Spiritual Connection (SC)	Faith, God (SC-FG)	Strong belief in religion
Resiliency (R)	Overcome (R-O)	The ability to recover, ability to become strong

Appendix E: Frequency Table

Categories Code	Frequency of Occurrence during the interviews	Number of participants who mentioned the theme at least once
Lack of trust	27	6
Leadership	23	10
Community Programs	21	4
Failed relationships	10	10
Fear	8	2
Spiritual Connection	8	3
Transactional Leadership Type	5	5
Resiliency	4	4
Hurt	3	2
Self-esteem	3	3
Sees themselves as Successful	2	1
Makes poor decisions	2	2
Unstable	2	2
Feeling of abandonment	2	2
Transformational Leadership Type	1	1
Expressed a general lack of trust for subordinates	0	0
Situational Leadership Type	0	0
Path-goal theory	0	0