PROFILES OF A NON-PROFIT STATEWIDE COLLEGE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM'S EFFECTIVENESS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this intrinsic, multiple case study has been to describe the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program, Leading Edge Institute, through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. The study participants included key stakeholders: members of the organization's faculty, staff, and alumnae. The theory guiding this study was the transformational theory of leadership (Burns, 2010; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Caldwell, McConkie, & Licona, 2014; Kendrick, 2011), as it appreciates the individualization of diversity that informs different perceptions of reality (ontological philosophical assumption) and considers how social context helps those individuals develop personal values (social constructivism interpretive framework). The research questions for this study were (a) How do stakeholders describe the contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation?; (b) To what extent do the organization's stakeholders attribute these experiences to their current application of transformational leadership?; and (c) How do the perceptions of members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae align regarding the organization's impact on their leadership opportunities? Data were collected using interviews, observations, and organizational documents and records. Data were analyzed through reading and memoing, open coding, and interpreting the data.

Keywords: assessment, effectiveness, intrinsic case study, multiple case study, women's leadership training

Dedication

This work is dedicated to many people I appreciate but cannot name, either for privacy concerns or for fear of leaving someone out. More than anything, I want to thank my family and the study participants who made this publication possible. My family's patience and encouragement throughout this process have been inspiring beyond my expectations. The women who participated in this study know who they are, but I want them to also know that I sincerely love and respect each of them more than words can express. I can never thank these people enough. "We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers…your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, NIV). I dedicate this work to my family and the current study's participants because their spirits breathed life into these pages as much as their persons bolstered me to press on to finish well. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3, NIV).

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List of Abbreviations

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness (IRPE)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

Leading Edge Institute (LEI)

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA or the Y)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Many faces have championed feminism over the years, from the Women's Suffrage Movement of the mid-19th and early 20th centuries to recent discourse of women leaning into their power positions in the workplace and of men supporting women's ambitions (Sandberg, 2013). In line with the remonstrated need for more women leaders in today's society, Liberty University has initiated a partnership with women's leadership proponent Christine Caine to "empower women to lead more effectively" (Liberty University News Service, 2014). The need for women leaders and effective training of those women leaders has been the backbone of the current research study focusing on profiles of the effectiveness of Leading Edge Institute, a statewide non-profit college women's leadership training program.

This introductory chapter includes relevant background information regarding the issue of women's leadership training effectiveness and the problem of assessment being needed for this issue. The researcher's situation to the study is overviewed briefly, and statements of the study's problem, purpose, and significance are provided. The research questions and the research plan are introduced, and key terms are defined.

Background

Numerous scholars and journalists in recent years have addressed the need for women in leadership positions (Catalyst, 2014; Sandler, 2014; Shriver, 2014). Research shows positive correlations between a high number of women leaders in organizations and improvement to their communities' business environment, societal and cultural development, technology, and political freedom (Bullough, Kroeck, Newburry, Kundu, & Lowe, 2012; Matsa & Miller, 2013). Plagued by poverty, illiteracy, poor health, and other challenges, the State of Alabama within the United

States is in particular need of the proven improvements that correlate positively to having more women in positions of leadership (Alabama Women's Initiative, 2002). Within the broader efforts to see more women in leadership positions, a more specific effort is also underway to track advancement of women of color (Pace, 2018). Diversity of both gender and of race and ethnicity is needed to achieve parity, though. An acknowledged need for more women leaders is insufficient to fill the gender inequality gap in Alabama leadership positions; appropriate and effective training is also necessary as well as assessment of those efforts to prove their effectiveness.

Appropriate and effective leadership training requires a relevant theoretical foundation, which can be found in the transformational leadership theory, "a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems" (Kendrick, 2011, p. 14). Leadership traits and skills are stereotypically recognized as more appropriate for males than for females (Alexander, 2011). Additionally, coeducational groups are likely to see female members withdraw from the spotlight (Clarke, 2011). For these reasons, female-only leadership training groups can be an effective means to change female attitudes regarding the masculine nature of leadership traits and skills and to change those females' attitudes regarding their own leadership potential (Alexander, 2011; Clarke, 2011).

Researchers have suggested models for determining leadership training program effectiveness (Harjo, Riyanto, & Riyanto, 2013; Hassan, Fuwad, & Rauf, 2010), but a significant gap in the literature exists specific to the effectiveness of women's leadership training. Herein lies the problem of the current study. The problem is intentional assessment of Leading Edge Institute's program and activities, as measured by its self-reported perceived impact on its stakeholders, is needed to clarify how the organization has been effective in accomplishing its mission and specifically how stakeholders have been impacted by their LEI affiliation. LEI's impact on the State of Alabama, and its greater reach through its potentially effective training of women leaders for the state, has had the potential to change the historical, social, and theoretical context that surrounds the current study.

Historical Context

As a society, and perhaps because the American Bible Belt is clearly situated within the South, the American South has a highly patriarchal history that has endured to the present era (Burton, 2013). In true Southern fashion, then, Alabama maintains a strong patriarchal nature despite its growing urban centers in Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, and Huntsville. Alabama is still a primarily rural farming state in which industry of any kind might be considered an exceptional vocation, and even the state's largest cities maintain patriarchal attitudes reminiscent of decades past, with enduring "exaggerated stereotypes of masculinity" and their inverse ideal of "passively beautiful…southern belles" (Burton, 2013, p. 16). Alabama's patriarchal nature, with its emphasis on the white man over others, has plainly presented itself in each age of American history, from the days of plantation slavery, through the Civil War and Civil Rights conflicts, to the persisting racial polarization of the American two-party political system (Burton, 2013). Not surprisingly, as a result, diversity of organizations and geographic areas continues to be a topic of concern. The concepts of patriarchy and diversity will be explored further in chapter two.

Social Context

The Alabama Women's Initiative (2002) has sought to identify the tangible issues that need resolution in the State of Alabama. That group's foundational report, *The Status of Women in Leadership in Alabama*, showed that Alabama has historically ranked among the bottom ten states on quality of life indicators such as per capita income, the percentage of citizens living in poverty, low birth weight, and child health. Hess, Milli, Hayes, and Hegewisch (2015) have provided updated data on the status of women in the nation, highlighting the fact that Alabama tied with Mississippi as the worst state for women and ranked among the bottom ten states including the District of Columbia on four of six updated indicators of women's status. Alabama's rankings on these indicators will be explored in greater detail in chapter two. The updated statistics suggest that little progress has been made in Alabama's socioeconomic standing nationwide since the 2002 Alabama Women's Initiative report. Women need effective training to become the leaders that Alabama needs to see this progress come to fruition.

Theoretical Context

The theoretical context of the current study is one in which most leadership theories are either masculine in nature or gender neutral (Harrison, Leitch, & McAdam, 2015). Although recent studies abound focused on gender and leadership, more female-focused study is necessary to further the literature (Harrison, Leitch, & McAdam, 2015; Leitch & Stead, 2016; Rincón, González, & Barrero, 2017). The current study has sought to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on how Leading Edge Institute has pursued its mission, as perceived by the organization's key stakeholders (Creswell, 2013; Yin 2014).

Situation to Self

The researcher's beliefs and values have helped to shape the current qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). As a direct result of the researcher's beliefs and values, the study's theoretical framework is based on an ontological philosophical assumption and social constructivism interpretive framework. The researcher is keenly interested in studying the nature of reality and how that shapes individual values. As an advisor to students who have participated in the college women's leadership training program that frames this case study's subject, the researcher has had the opportunity to help strengthen the previously existing relationship between her employer institution and the non-profit organization Leading Edge Institute (LEI). In early 2014, after two years in this advisory role, the researcher found herself asking why this relationship was flourishing and how the non-profit organization was continuing to impact Alabama's college women, their advisors, and their campuses. Despite significant changes to LEI's internal leadership and a full revision of the program's curriculum, the organization continued to produce burgeoning young female leaders as alumnae.

As a female native of the State of Alabama, the researcher has a vested interest in seeing her state thrive, and anecdotal evidence of positive impact points to the efforts of organizations such as LEI. In addition to this native loyalty, the researcher is motivated by her biblical worldview, based firmly in Matthew 22:37-40, to encourage others to succeed and help them tell their success stories in order to inspire more people to strive toward their goals. The researcher presently invests significant time learning about, evaluating, and working to improve assessment practices in her professional role at her employer institution, so the current research study seemed an organic opportunity to unite her storytelling desire and assessment interests.

Problem Statement

According to the foundational work of the Alabama Women's Initiative (2002) and the ongoing efforts of the Women's Economic Development Council (2013), Alabama needs more women leaders. More women leaders are needed to help balance policy decisions against gender, racial, and ethnic biases in all aspects of public life. LEI has attempted to cultivate more young women to be authentic and transformational leaders who can positively impact the state. Authentic and transformational leadership are vital to this organization's mission for at least two reasons. Because authenticity to oneself aligns to a sense of purpose, authentic leadership necessitates leaders' appreciation of the reasons behind their actions (Creswell, 2013). As a companion to building authenticity through leadership training, transformational leadership requires leaders to be ethical, moral, service-minded, and value-oriented (Caldwell et al., 2014). Research has shown that leadership training programs designed exclusively for women have an increased ability to address gender roles and expectations, which may conflict with women's professional roles and expectations as leaders in their organizations (Ionescu, 2012). Gender norms in leadership and related concepts may be best explored within the context of women-only leadership training programs such as LEI (Leitch & Stead, 2016). The problem is that intentional assessment of LEI's program and activities, as measured by its self-reported perceived impact on its stakeholders, is needed to clarify how the organization is effective in accomplishing its mission and specifically how stakeholders are being impacted by their LEI affiliation. The current research has sought to accomplish this intentional assessment.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this intrinsic case study is to describe perceptions of the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program Leading Edge Institute (LEI), based upon organizational records and the perceptions of key stakeholders. This multiple case study seeks to profile an organization's alumnae and other stakeholders, utilizing embedded data sources within a broader, relevant context that is not clearly distinguishable from its individual stakeholders (Yin, 2014). As an organization of individuals, the physical setting of LEI has transcended the physical address of its offices. The setting for the current case study varied based upon the location of formal organizational events and the preference or convenience of its stakeholders.

At this stage in the research, effectiveness will generally be defined as an organization's degree of success in accomplishing a stated goal or mission. The theory guiding this study has been the transformational theory of leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 2010; Caldwell et al., 2014; Kendrick, 2011), as it appreciates the individualization of diversity that informs different perceptions of reality (ontological philosophical assumption) and considers how social context helps those individuals develop personal values (social constructivism interpretive framework).

Significance of the Study

Empirical Significance

Though perennially relevant, leadership is a broad and varied discipline. Beneath this larger umbrella, the related topics of leadership training, leadership training effectiveness, and women's leadership continue to develop as important disciplines. Nevertheless, the literature shows a significant gap regarding women's leadership training effectiveness and the means by which women's leadership training achieves this effectiveness (Harjo et al., 2013; Hassan et al., 2010). The current study has attempted to help fill this gap with an in-depth intrinsic multiple case study of an organization's stakeholders' perceptions of effectiveness as it has claimed to train women for leadership in a highly conservative, patriarchal society.

Theoretical Significance

The degree to which this organization has been effective in accomplishing its mission is important, but even more vital is a review of how the organization has pursued its mission, as perceived by the organization's key stakeholders (Creswell, 2013; Yin 2014). By collecting and presenting this information, the current study has sought to further the research in this area of women's leadership training effectiveness. The current study has also provided a replicable model despite its anticipated lack of generalizability. Furthering the research in this specific area of study and production of a replicable research model are the basis of the current study's theoretical significance.

Practical Significance

The current study has also provided sufficient details about an organization claiming to successfully perform this mission, which may prove beneficial for practical replication of the study regarding similar organizations (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013). Target audiences for this research include leadership scholars and practitioners, stakeholders in leadership training organizations such as the one under study, women seeking leadership training opportunities for themselves, or male or female leaders seeking leadership training opportunities for the female subordinates in their organizations. Ease of replicability has practical significance for the target audiences of this research.

Research Questions

The current study has sought to understand how the statewide non-profit college women's leadership training program Leading Edge Institute (LEI) accomplished its mission. The organization's webpage has showcased its mission as inspiring, preparing, and empowering "the women of Alabama to lead our state to a more equitable and prosperous future" (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.). Stakeholders are integral to determining how LEI served to inspire, prepare, and empower Alabama's women leaders. The research questions for this study follow brief discussion of how each is appropriate, based on the literature.

Relevant research has been conducted to suggest models for determining leadership training program effectiveness (Harjo et al., 2013; Hassan et al., 2010). Chrislip and O'Malley (2013) have suggested that effective leadership training should "balance…experiential, cognitive, and reflective learning processes to engage the whole person" through the various learning domains (p. 6). Elliott (2011) has emphasized "self efficacy [*sic*] [and] personal strengths optimisation [*sic*]" as important aspects of leadership-coaching psychology (p. 49). For the sake of the current study, the effectiveness of the overall leadership training program was not explored. However, elements of the effectiveness models suggested above proved beneficial to highlight individual stakeholders' experiences with the program. Whether LEI has been effective in accomplishing its mission is not as important for this study as the potential ways in which the organization has positively or negatively impacted its stakeholders and their individual development of transformational leadership. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977, as cited in Todaka, 2013). Strengths are areas of aptitude that can be leveraged for success (Rath, 2007, as cited in Varkonyi, 2013). These elements of an effective leadership training program will be explored further in the research collection and analysis stages of the current study.

RQ1: How do stakeholders describe the contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation?

Kendrick (2011) has defined *transformational leadership* as "a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems" (p. 14). Transformational leadership seeks to improve the commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction of followers as they work toward an aspirational goal, whether that goal is singularly tangible or ongoing in an organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Effective transformational leaders have been found to improve followers' "motivation, satisfaction, [and] performance" (Balwant, 2016, p. 20). Transformational leaders recognize that focusing on their followers' individual development and awareness will help those followers to be more productive in accomplishing the organization's goals (Burns, 2010). The

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) can be used to measure the existence of transformational leadership. Modeled after the work of Burns (2010), the MLQ includes the following factors: “idealized influence (attributes and behaviors), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, as well as the use of contingent reward, management-by-exception (active and passive), and laissez-faire leadership” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 21). The MLQ’s transformational leadership behavior subscales also provide value for participants by highlighting strengths and identifying areas for prospective leadership growth (Hemsworth, Muterera, & Baregheh, 2013).

RQ2: To what extent do the organization’s stakeholders attribute these experiences to their current application of transformational leadership?

While public leadership roles such as corporate executive positions and political offices are more traditionally recognized as leadership opportunities, these public roles are not women’s sole source of leadership opportunities. Women certainly seek and attain these traditional public leadership roles, and the percentage of women who occupy these roles in Alabama public companies has risen slightly (Women’s Economic Development Council, 2013), but alternative leadership opportunities are worth consideration as well, such as affiliation with various community-based groups and projects. Arguably, women may also fill leadership roles within the ranks of typical members of those organizations in which they participate (Bligh & Kohles, 2012). Beyond explicit examples, women may lead quietly within their chosen careers, as needed in their churches and communities, or within their homes, or they may seek leadership roles in grassroots advocacy or activist roles for social change (Chrislip & O’Malley, 2013).

RQ3: How do the perceptions of members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae align regarding the organization's impact on their leadership opportunities?

The research questions build upon one another and invoke the specific planned data collection and analysis methods to address the study's problem statement of holistic, intentional assessment of LEI (Yin, 2014). Additionally, utilization of the online self-assessment, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, as an established assessment model provides a vehicle for future replication of the study (Creswell, 2013). Yin (2014) has suggested that interviews with and direct observation of study participants help to establish a realistic and holistic view of the case under study. The researcher has sought key stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's impact on their leadership preparation, leadership opportunities, and the existence of transformational leadership in their practical leadership styles. The data collection and analysis processes were designed to highlight whether or not the different types of stakeholders agree upon the organization's effectiveness, but this research question also necessitates participation in the current research study from at least one of each type of stakeholder identified: members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae.

Definitions

Key terms pertinent to the current study are defined below with support from recent relevant literature. Each term is italicized at the beginning of its definition.

Authentic leadership is leadership performed with honesty, transparency, and personal values (Champy, 2009). Authentic leadership is heartfelt and passionate (Kerfoot, 2006) as well as responsible and virtuous (Cameron, 2011).

Effectiveness is an organization's degree of success in accomplishing a stated goal or mission. Bers (2011) has defined institutional effectiveness as “an ongoing, integrated, and systematic set of institutional processes that [an organization] uses to determine and ensure the quality” of its programs and services (p. 63).

Leadership has as many definitions as there are scholars to study it, but for the purposes of the current study, leadership will be considered a process that “involves influence, occurs within a group context, and involves goal attainment” (Harris & Leberman, 2012, p. 30).

Social capital is “connectedness with others” that serves as a resource for professional and personal wealth, regardless of a factual economic situation (Madara, 2012, p. 145).

Transformational leadership is “a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems” (Kendrick, 2011, p. 14).

Women’s leadership training programs, in theory, are an effective means to change female attitudes regarding the masculine nature of leadership traits and skills and to change those females’ attitudes regarding their own leadership potential (Alexander, 2011; Clarke, 2011; Debebe, 2011).

Summary

This introductory chapter has included relevant background information regarding the issue of women’s leadership training effectiveness. The researcher’s situation to the study has been overviewed briefly. The problem of the current study is intentional assessment of Leading Edge Institute’s program and activities, as measured by its self-reported perceived impact on its stakeholders, is needed to clarify how the organization is effective in accomplishing its mission and specifically how stakeholders have been impacted by their LEI affiliation. The purpose of this intrinsic case study is to describe perceptions of the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program Leading Edge Institute, based upon organizational records and the perceptions of key stakeholders. The research questions and the research plan were introduced, the study's significance was discussed, and key terms were defined based on relevant literature reviewed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The following literature review begins with the theoretical framework and highlights relevant sub-categories of literature relevant to the current study. The theoretical framework outlines the researcher's ontological philosophical assumption and social constructivism interpretive framework; this section also situates the study within the transformational theory of leadership, which appreciates the individualization of diversity that informs different perceptions of reality and considers how social context helps those individuals develop personal values. The review of related literature seeks to explain the following topics' relation to the current study: issues in Alabama, Alabama's patriarchal nature, authentic leadership, the need for women in leadership, women's leadership training, and assessment. Other relevant topics are also explored in this chapter to further explain the context and the issues of the current study and its participants. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the literature in relation to the research topic.

Theoretical Framework

Leading Edge Institute (LEI) was founded on the idea that women are underrepresented in leadership positions across all professional sectors (e.g., manufacturing, government, and education) in the State of Alabama. This organization's founding was accompanied with the goal of increasing the proportion of women in decision-making positions in order to balance equity in policies developed by those decision-making entities. The National 2014 *Shriver Report* reinforced beliefs held by individuals affiliated with LEI: women can help progress more equitable national priorities and policies, women make up a majority of the potential American voice as family breadwinners and as voters, and women deserve equal pay for equal work

(Shriver, 2014). These national issues are representative of Alabama's specific issues. Alabama's citizens historically include the poorest, most illiterate, and least healthy population in the nation due in part to the state's large proportion of rural farm land as well as the significant lack of women in leadership positions across the state (Alabama Women's Initiative, 2002).

The purpose of the current intrinsic, multiple case study is to describe the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program, Leading Edge Institute, through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. The ontological philosophical assumption informs this topic of research. The nature of reality is critical in the present study, and the nature of reality is the primary question posed by the ontological assumption (Creswell, 2013). Individuals associated with LEI appear to represent diverse ethnicities, cultures, and experiences. This apparent diversity helps these individuals to appreciate different perspectives of reality and to collectively present multiple approaches to solving social problems identified through their participation in LEI activities.

The social constructivism interpretive framework has helped to shape the concept of this study. Individual values must be acknowledged in leadership training activities. Reasons and perceptions typically are highly personal to the individuals providing them, and these reasons and perceptions can only be fully appreciated through the interpretation of social constructivism (Creswell, 2013). LEI has sought to individualize instruction for the organization's established leadership training program to meet the needs and address the interests and relevant backgrounds of each college woman participant. A participant from the early 2000's is the founding director of the Foundation for Inner-City Enrichment in Birmingham, Alabama, which helps cultivate vegetable gardens in food-poor urban neighborhoods (Archibald, 2017). A 2012-2013 participant worked with the City of Tuskegee, Alabama, to plan a playground made with "reclaimed post-consumer materials" (Leading Edge Institute, 2014). A 2014-2015 participant from Selma, Alabama, worked with a group of other local students to collect signatures to petition to change the name of Edmund Pettus Bridge, site of the Civil Rights Movement's historic "Bloody Sunday" on March 7, 1965, which bears the name of a Confederate general who was also a notable member of the Ku Klux Klan (Hatter, 2015). These examples demonstrate how participants have been encouraged to pursue sustainable leadership action projects during their program participation that expand individuals' social networks through collaboration and build upon existing interests to make a difference in Alabama communities.

Transformational Theory of Leadership

Transformational leadership is a cross-disciplinary concept, applicable to various professional sectors and academic disciplines (Balwant, 2016). The transformational theory of leadership works with an ontological philosophical assumption and social constructivism interpretive framework to situate a study of the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training organization LEI. The transformational theory of leadership appreciates the individualization of diversity that informs different perceptions of reality, and the theory also considers how social context helps those individuals develop personal values. This appreciation for individuality and consideration of social context will be reflected below in brief discussion of a tool for determining the existence of transformational leadership.

Burns (2010) has been the foremost scholar on transformational leadership, which is leadership that inspires change in an organization or community through evoking the dedication of its members to achieving group goals. More pointedly, Kendrick (2011) has defined transformational leadership as "a leadership approach that causes a change in individuals and social systems" (p. 14). Transformational leadership seeks to improve the commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction of followers as they work toward an aspirational goal, whether that goal is singularly tangible or ongoing in an organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). While leaders need to have productivity in mind, focusing only on the task at hand does not maintain happy and productive followers. A dual focus on both the task and the people involved in accomplishing that task is ideal. Effective transformational leaders have been found to improve followers' "motivation, satisfaction, [and] performance" (Balwant, 2016, p. 20). Transformational leaders recognize that focusing on their followers' individual development and awareness will help those followers to be more productive in accomplishing the organization's goals (Burns, 2010).

Bass and Riggio (2006) have gone so far as to suggest that although men have been more representative of transformational leaders, "women might be more likely to engage in transformational leader behaviors and be more effective transformational leaders than men" (p. 112). Transformational leadership, in its ability to inspire followers, requires an emotional connection between leaders and their followers. Not only do women stereotypically have more ability to build that requisite emotional connection, but they also tend to be more relational and democratic than their male counterparts (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

True to either sex, transformational leadership also requires a leader to be ethical, moral, service-minded, and value-oriented (Caldwell et al., 2014). Caldwell et al. (2014) have noted that transformational leadership requires charisma, humility, and dedication to contribute to new meaning. Plato (360 BC) has suggested that knowledge must be discovered rather than created, and that ultimate versions of Good and Truth exist; this idealism encourages transformational leaders to establish a moral compass in relation to self, followers, goals, and the greater context of community. Therefore, social responsibility is a key aspect of transformational leadership.

Acknowledgement of the importance of transformational leadership is not enough, but the ability to measure the leaders' use of transformational leadership would be greatly beneficial. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) can be used to measure the existence of transformational leadership. Modeled after the work of Burns (2010), the MLQ includes the following factors: "idealized influence (attributes and behaviors), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, as well as the use of contingent reward, management-by-exception (active and passive), and laissez-faire leadership" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 21). These factors help questionnaire administrators determine the nature of leader-follower relationships to identify the existence of transformational leadership at play. Hemsworth et al. (2013) have tested the MLQ's psychometric qualities (i.e., reliability and validity) with a sample of government officials. That study found the questionnaire to be "reliable and valid within the examined population" (Hemsworth et al., 2013, p. 860). Although inter-related, the instrument's transformational leadership behavior subscales (factors listed above) individually provide value for questionnaire participants by highlighting strengths and identifying areas for prospective leadership growth (Hemsworth et al., 2013). Another potential measurement structure utilizing a modified version of the MLQ involves peer ratings based on group performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This variation might be less applicable in most work environments, but has its own value, particularly when a group of current or potential leaders is being educated and trained together to develop transformational leadership.

Related Literature

A review of related literature is necessary for the current study of the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training organization LEI, clearly situated within the transformational theory of leadership. The following review of related literature seeks to explain, among others, the following topics' relation to the current study: issues in Alabama, Alabama's patriarchal nature, authentic leadership, the need for women in leadership, women's leadership training, and assessment.

Issues in Alabama

The Alabama Women's Initiative (2002) has sought to identify the tangible issues that need resolution in the State of Alabama. That group's report, *The Status of Women in Leadership in Alabama*, has highlighted a perceived positive correlation between economic conditions and the number of women in leadership positions. The same report identified Alabama's low rank in national comparison on quality of life indicators such as per capita income, the percentage of citizens living in poverty, low birth weight, and child health. According to this foundational 2002 report, Alabama has ranked among the bottom ten states on each of these items. Hess, Milli, Hayes, and Hegewisch (2015) have provided updated data on the status of women in the nation. In that update, Alabama tied with Mississippi as the worst state for women and ranked among the bottom ten states, including the District of Columbia, on four of the six updated indicators of women's status. Alabama's ranking on these four indicators was as follows: 41st on political participation, 46th on employment and earnings, 45th on poverty and opportunity, and 50th on health and well-being (Hess et al., 2015). Alabama never ranked in the top half of states in the 2015 data; regarding the other two indicators of women's status, Alabama ranked firmly in the bottom third in the nation on both the work and family (39th) and the reproductive rights composite indices (40th) (Hess et al., 2015). These updated statistics suggest that little progress has been made in Alabama's socioeconomic standing nationwide since the 2002 Alabama Women's Initiative report.

LEI, as an Alabama-based non-profit organization, has intentionally designed its mission to address needs within the state. Each class has experienced a week-long summer intensive portion of the program that includes a service-learning day in the poverty-stricken Blackbelt area of the state, so named because of its dark, fertile farming soil (Howell, Christian, & Fraser, 2014). Following various team-based service projects, the full group gathered to discuss the day's activities and to reflect on how the experience has helped to shape individual perspectives of the state's needs. While this single day of service-learning has not been fully representative of all social, economic, and education issues in the state, the goal of the day was to expose the potentially privileged program participants to the specific issues that persist in the state's more rural areas (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.).

Alabama's Patriarchal Nature

Although some researchers may argue that the term *patriarchy* is outdated and insufficient to describe the complex nature of gender differences in various contexts (Patil, 2013), traditional patriarchy can generally be defined as a system in which men lead before women. Further, for the purpose of the present study and due to Alabama's racially controversial past, white men lead before all others (Nash, 2009). As a society, and perhaps because the American Bible Belt is clearly situated within the South, the American South has a highly patriarchal history that has endured to the present era (Burton, 2013). In true Southern fashion, then, Alabama maintains a strong patriarchal nature despite its growing urban centers in Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, and Huntsville. Alabama is still a primarily rural farming state in which industry of any kind might be considered an exceptional vocation, and even the state's largest cities maintain patriarchal attitudes reminiscent of decades past, with enduring "exaggerated stereotypes of masculinity" and their inverse ideal of "passively beautiful…

southern belles" (Burton, 2013, p. 16). Alabama's patriarchal nature, with its emphasis on the white man over others, has plainly presented itself in each age of American history, from the days of plantation slavery, through the Civil War and Civil Rights conflicts, to the persisting racial polarization of the American two-party political system (Burton, 2013). Not surprisingly, as a result, diversity of organizations and geographic areas continues to be a topic of concern.

The term *diversity* is commonly used in relation to the variation among citizens of a specified geographic area regarding race, ethnicity, and culture, but the term may also be used in relation to variance in age, gender, sexuality, religion, and other such discrete identity factors (Coleman, 2012; Ho, 2015). Chrislip and O'Malley (2013) have written about the impact of diversity in American social revolutions since the 1960s: "These provocative movements…threatened traditional power structures, radicalized and mobilized unheard or disenfranchised voices" (p. 4). As evidenced by the social revolutions Chrislip and O'Malley have referenced, diversity in civic engagement challenges patriarchal leadership models, and gender diversity in leadership has been a growing trend in leadership scholarship for at least a generation (Coleman, 2012).

Researchers have also explored the feminine perspective of this patriarchal leadership dichotomy (Liu, 2014; Richards, 2013; Tatar, 2015; Tsakiropoulou-Summers, 2013). Despite the progress of women's rights and equality in the home and workplace, women leaders cannot seem to shed the gender qualifier that inevitably remains tied to their professional titles. As demonstrated by the current discussion, although patriarchy is not as overtly dominant in modern culture, it has lingered in the collective consciousness, particularly in geographic areas such as Alabama, which are most ruled by tradition and the morality of a bygone era.

In response to Alabama's patriarchal nature, since its founding in the year 2001 and with few exceptions, the Alabama non-profit organization Leading Edge Institute (LEI) has annually gathered a group of college women from across the state for focused, individualized, and collaborative learning. The targeted purpose of these activities has been to help the women of each cadre become authentic leaders in their current and future arenas of influence. Alumnae of the organization who hold prestigious leadership positions within their chosen professions have been perceived as strong advocates for social change in the state. Although the organization has not been able to directly increase ethnic and racial diversity among participants, the organization's staff members have encouraged partner institutions to select representatively diverse participants from their respective campuses. Participants and alumnae have been encouraged to network for social capital gain throughout their association with the organization, and the organization typically has facilitated such networking opportunities multiple times within a given year. According to the organization's website, LEI's stated mission was "To inspire, prepare and empower the women of Alabama to lead our state to a more equitable and prosperous future" (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.).

LEI was founded on the idea that women are underrepresented in leadership positions across all professional sectors (e.g., manufacturing, government, and education) in the State of Alabama. This organization's founding was accompanied with the goal of increasing the proportion of women in decision-making positions in order to balance equity in policies developed by those decision-making entities. The National 2014 *Shriver Report* has reinforced beliefs held by individuals affiliated with LEI: women can help progress more equitable national priorities and policies, women make up a majority of the potential American voice as family breadwinners and as voters, and women deserve equal pay for equal work (Shriver, 2014).

These national issues are representative of Alabama's specific issues. Alabama's citizens historically include the poorest, most illiterate, and least healthy population in the nation due in part to the state's large proportion of rural farm land as well as the significant lack of women in leadership positions across the state (Alabama Women's Initiative, 2002).

Rural Brain Drain

The concept of *brain drain* and its opposite, *brain gain*, are typically used in a global sense and associated with an epidemic loss (or drain) of a developing country's best and brightest young citizens to the gain of other, more developed nations that offer better and more employment opportunities (Barnhill, 2012). As Chepurenko (2015) has established, although brain drain has been cited as an elusive problem to define in exact terms, the effects of brain drain on the geographic sources of those highly skilled citizens as well as on their destinations have been explored in numerous studies over the years.

While the United States as a whole is typically a destination that benefits from brain gain in the global sense, primarily rural areas such as those across Alabama experience a similar loss to larger metropolitan areas within the same country. As is the case in developing nations, when native Alabamians develop marketable skills and acquire higher education, many of these young professionals turn their job searches to markets outside the state. Reasons for such exodus may include these skilled professionals' consideration for future generations' opportunities as much as consideration of their own expanded opportunities in a more diverse and larger metropolitan area (Chepurenko, 2015). As previously discussed, Alabama's overall economic situation is less than ideal. The economic situation, along with the state's social, educational, and healthcare issues, may have significantly contributed to the factors that motivate young professionals to seek opportunities elsewhere. This loss of human resources in turn negatively impacts the state's economy, education, and healthcare (Hebblethwaite, 2013). Rural brain drain represents a vicious cycle for the State of Alabama.

Brain drain notably impacts the place of origin for these skilled professionals economically, educationally, and socially, to the point that "small [rural] towns are either extinct or on the verge" (Barnhill, 2012, p. 152). Additionally, although brain drain is usually replenished in well developed, urban centers, seeing skilled professionals return home with greater education levels and more skills, brain drain from the least developed areas is seldom reversed (Barnhill, 2012). Even though cities like Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, and Huntsville are still growing, because Alabama is primarily rural farming land, brain drain continues to impact a large proportion of the state.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is inexorably tied to effective transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) and can be defined as leadership performed with honesty, transparency, and personal values (Champy, 2009). Leadership is a process that "involves influence, occurs within a group context, and involves goal attainment" (Harris & Leberman, 2012, p. 30). Authentic leaders have a great understanding of their own preferences and strengths, as well as how those individual indicators relate to others. Authentic leaders, therefore, have an appreciation of the reasons behind their actions, as authenticity to self directly aligns to a sense of purpose (Champy, 2009; Creswell, 2013).

Two assessments that have been assigned for LEI participants during each recent active year are the MBTI and StrengthsFinder. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality assessment developed by mother and daughter team Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, based on Carl G. Jung's studies (The Myers & Briggs Foundation, n.d.). The

MBTI can be used not only to help an individual recognize his own personality preferences concerning others, but this knowledge can also lead to greater acceptance of the differences between this individual and those around him, therefore leading to better and more authentic leadership application. The StrengthsFinder assessment is based on years of Gallop research and is a tool to help individuals identify specific aptitudes to develop into strengths, which are defined as “consistent near perfect performance in an activity…[from which one] derive[s] some intrinsic satisfaction” (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001, p. 25-26). Discussion of this strengths-based assessment’s results has helped facilitate further conversation about positive differences among a collaborative group and how this diversity has created a “well-rounded group” that may potentially “fill [the group’s] blind spots” as they work together to make good decisions (Farrington, 2011, p. 2). This focus on personal preferences and strengths has set the stage for participants to learn about authentic leadership in a positive context and then to immediately put this new information to work in the week-long intensive part of the LEI program.

Authentic leadership is heartfelt and passionate (Kerfoot, 2006) as well as responsible and virtuous (Cameron, 2011). In other words, authentic leaders should demonstrate care and compassion, find meaning in their work, and exhibit integrity, respect, and gratitude (Cameron, 2011). These traits are consistent with the Platonic ideal referenced above regarding transformational leadership theory. Virtue, or responsibility, allows leaders to assign a moral compass to guide behavior, decisions, and leadership style.

Similarly, the roles of leader and follower represent relational significance for authentic leaders. At any given time, a leader may embody the role of both leader and follower, depending on the situation and context (Baker, 2007). Authentic leaders strive to be effective followers when that role is required, and they sincerely value their followers when they are truly serving in the leadership role.

Community, significance, and excitement are essential values of authentic leaders (Goffee & Jones, 2009). Authentic leaders must establish a vision for their followers to focus on a common good for all involved; empathy and a sense of community will help connect actions to the ultimate vision (Hanold, 2011). They must recognize and encourage followers' efforts toward achieving that vision, and they must energize and motivate those followers to maintain their efforts in the face of otherwise discouraging results. Because women score higher than men on transformational leadership scales when rated by their subordinates and by external researchers, research and authorities on the subject suggest that a transformational leadership model is inclined to be authentic leadership for women (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Zeinabadi, 2013).

An Expanded Definition of Leadership

As previously mentioned, the concept of leadership has as many definitions as there are scholars to study it, but for the purposes of the current study, *leadership* will generally be considered a process that "involves influence, occurs within a group context, and involves goal attainment" (Harris & Leberman, 2012, p. 30). This broad definition is applicable to both traditional leadership roles as well as other, alternative leadership opportunities. Although this research study has been rooted in the transformational theory of leadership, with special attention given above to authentic leadership within the transformational model, an expanded definition of leadership based on relevant literature is appropriate to provide context to the present study.

During the 20th century, leadership study evolved through a series of concepts, including emphases on the study of traits, skills, behaviors, the relationship between a leader and his followers, and the process of leadership (Northouse, 2016). The main division of leadership theory in 1978 was between concepts of transactional and transformational leadership models. *Transactional leadership* is leadership in which leaders and followers gain something valuable without much emphasis on relationship sustainment between the said leaders and followers (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013). *Transformational leadership* is leadership in which leaders and followers build a mutually beneficial relationship as they work toward improved conditions for all involved (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013). Also during the 20th century, leadership grew "as an academic discipline...[and] spread throughout the" world (Burns, 2005); leadership theory has become much more than an informal discussion of great men and the examples they provided for future leaders to study.

Leadership is certainly not a concept that is easily defined by a set of characteristics or attributes, and often a leader must emerge as a leader of self before he can compel any followers to take up his charge. While leaders can be described by their skills and abilities, what makes one leader good and another great is more likely something difficult to explain than it is something quantifiable or easily understandable. Over the course of time, leadership scholars have generally accepted the idea that leadership can be learned rather than only inborn. However, scholars continue to debate the differences between the concepts of leadership and management, a debate whose basis might be explained by the sometimes overlapping concepts of transformational and transactional leadership (Northouse, 2016).

Checkland (2014) has described leadership and management as unique roles, in that leaders must have followers, while a manager might only work with policies and procedures. With this perspective of necessary relationships between and among people, the concept of leadership becomes specialized along a continuum of what takes precedence in the leader-follower relationship. *Transformational leadership* is most concerned with motivation to meet needs (Northouse, 2016). *Authentic leadership* focuses primarily on the leader's genuine nature (Northouse, 2016). *Servant leadership* places emphasis on the leader's service and empathy toward followers (Northouse, 2016). *Adaptive leadership* focuses on how leadership actions may need to change, depending on the situation (Northouse, 2016). In each of these four leadership styles, leaders may seek to empower and develop followers to become leaders themselves, but the means to accomplish this purpose vary greatly depending on the focus of the leaders' methods.

Chrislip and O'Malley (2013) have suggested an alternative concept of leadership "as an activity or process that energizes or mobilizes others to make progress…detach[ed]…from position and authority" (p. 8). This perspective does not exclude the broad definition of leadership employed by the current research study, and it does open leadership opportunities to less traditional roles than might have been considered otherwise. Leadership, in this sense, is responsible citizenship, which might potentially lead to further discussion of follower-centric leadership and the ways by which followers contribute to organizational vision and innovation (Bligh & Kohles, 2012). As previously mentioned, authentic leaders ethically engage their followers in various aspects of the leader-follower relationship to achieve organizational goals, and so this concept of leadership as *good citizen* aligns well with an authentic and follower-centric leadership model.

Leadership as a concept may also vary depending upon the environment. Leadership in corporate business, government, the military, and education is highly dependent upon the leader's position, while leadership in a less structured community setting might be less dependent upon position. In a formal education environment, leaders may be as equally likely to hold a specific position as not. In fact, leadership manifests in practically any position in an educational institution, and educational leadership is almost equal parts leadership and management. For example, superintendents and principals lead their schools. Teachers lead their classrooms, and their sustained demonstrated leadership ability is likely to mark them as leaders of other teachers in a training or departmental sense. Various school support staff also lead their own respective areas. Although responsibilities differ, each level is no less filled with leaders.

Traditional leadership that is tied to position seems to be more likely confused with management. Although leaders are not necessarily managers, those leaders who are managers tend to be more concerned with maintaining a level of performance. However, leaders who are not managers or leaders who are change agents are less likely to accept the status quo. Community leaders, of all those mentioned above, tend most to seek to facilitate change, and so these leaders are the least likely to be confused with managers in the business sense.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) have emphasized that leadership is for everyone, and not just for those people commonly recognized as leaders. Exemplary leadership requires a high degree of commitment and builds upon the idea that leadership is a relationship above anything else. Leadership does not exist without challenges and without other people involved. Rather, "a relationship characterized by mutual respect and confidence will overcome the greatest adversities and leave a legacy of significance" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 24). Without a positive relationship with followers, leadership holds no tangible meaning.

As a community-focused non-profit organization, LEI seems to have striven to develop leaders who are not tied to position, who are not easily confused with managers, and who have a healthy understanding of the importance of relationship between leaders and followers. While prestigious positions are certainly not unattractive to LEI alumnae, their experience in the LEI program should have taught them that their future positions are merely an outward expression of the leadership skills they have developed prior to that achievement being manifested. Just as teachers may be given greater leadership responsibility after they demonstrate their sustained ability to lead, demonstrated ability to lead can be translated to other facets of professional possibility. If the program is successful in preparing an individual college woman for future leadership opportunities, she will demonstrate prolonged leadership achievement in other arenas of life. Individual LEI alumnae should acquire greater leadership responsibility such as prestigious positions represent.

This discussion regarding an expanded definition of leadership is certainly not all-inclusive of the leadership field of study. Only a very limited selection of leadership theory has been explored here. This expanded definition should provide a broader context for the transformational theory of leadership, which is the theoretical framework of the current study. This expanded definition should also demonstrate the extensive nature of the study of leadership theory and the related variability of definitions for leadership as a concept. Although transformational leadership has been of specific interest to the current study, other aspects of leadership theory were anticipated to surface during data collection, as these varying aspects may be considered more relevant to individual study participants. Leadership is, after all, a multifaceted and multidisciplinary field of study, applicable in all aspects of public life.

Need for Women in Leadership

Advances in a community's business environment, societal and cultural development, technology, and political freedom have all been found to be positively related to women's participation in political leadership (Bullough et al., 2012). These findings signify a reciprocal relationship. As female participation in a community's political leadership increases, so do that community's economy, society, etc. and vice versa. These findings have been challenged and corroborated by other research in recent years (Ionescu, 2012; Kirton & Healy, 2012).

Despite evidence of the benefits of women in leadership positions, research continues to show that underrepresentation of women in leadership persists (Catalyst, 2014; Madsen, 2012; Sandler, 2014). In 2014, women made up 46.8% of the U.S. workforce and 51.4% of management and professional positions (Catalyst, 2014). The percentage of women in the highest positions is increasingly smaller: women are 14.6% of executive officers, 16.9% of board seats, 8.1% of companies' top earners, and 5.0% of chief executive officers (Catalyst, 2014). If the positive correlation referenced in the previous paragraph is satisfactory, then these U.S. business statistics are unacceptable. Racial parity is also lacking. Black women continue to be underrepresented at senior levels, even though they are "more likely to aspire to hold a powerful position with a prestigious title than white women" (Pace, 2018). The above research suggests that without greater representation of women in leadership positions, the state of the American economy will continue to wane, while the nation's educational and healthcare crises will continue to rise (Catalyst, 2014; Madsen, 2012; Sandler, 2014).

The need for more women as leaders has a softer side, as well. Because women are different from men physiologically and psychologically, women tend to employ a different form of leadership: "women tend to be better listeners, more empathic, less political, more conscientious, more protective of their teams and more oriented to collaborative working than their male counterparts" (Sandler, 2014, p. 63). This different bent towards leadership orientation may explain how greater numbers of women in leadership positions can help balance equity in policies developed by the decision-making entities such as corporate boards of directors on which they serve. Women bring a different way of thinking about how policies will affect diverse constituents to the decision-making table. The same research referenced above that demonstrates a reciprocal relationship between women involved in political leadership and improvements to various aspects of society also suggests that greater numbers of women in political leadership are also positively related to more streamlined paperwork processes and more user-friendly technological interfaces (Bullough et al., 2012).

Other research has sought to demonstrate how women in leadership roles within labor unions, in advocacy groups, and in politics can improve the democratic process overall (Shaw, McCormick, Hartmann, & Gault, 2013). Such statements certainly do not imply that women themselves in leadership positions make all the difference; rather, among the myriad variables that contribute to such improvements, women's presence in decision-making discussions changes group dynamics so that the group more appropriately considers alternative resolutions to issues in question (Smith-Doerr, Kemekliene, Teutonico, Lange, Villa-Komaroff, Matthiessen-Guyader, & Murray, 2011).

Traditional and Alternative Leadership Opportunities

While public leadership roles such as corporate executive positions and political offices are more traditionally recognized as leadership opportunities, these public roles are not women's sole avenue for leadership opportunities. Women certainly seek and attain these traditional public leadership roles, and the percentage of women who occupy such roles in Alabama public companies has risen slightly in recent years, from 8.3% of directors and 9% of executive officers in 2010 to 10.4% of directors and 11.3% of executive officers in 2013 (Women's Economic Development Council, 2013). Alternative leadership opportunities are also worth consideration.

The broad definition of *leadership* employed by this study reflects the way that the organization under study has sought to prepare participants to lead in all aspects of life.

Although public leadership roles are more recognizable and therefore more easily tracked and measured, women also find opportunities to lead in social and civic groups, in volunteer work and advocacy programs, and in other collaborative projects with subtle impact to improve their communities' quality of life. In fact, Hertneky (2012) has discussed the need for an alternative perspective on career and leadership development for women, who do not follow traditional, linear career development paths, due to family, social, and educational obstacles; rather, various metaphors for women's career development paths might be considered relevant, including a labyrinth, kaleidoscope, or spider web. Hertneky has suggested Bateson's 1989 work, *Composing a Life*, as a basis for an alternative "improvisational art form that recognizes and celebrates complex lives with new ways of thinking about the personal development of women and men" (Hertneky, 2012, p. 143). Hertneky (2012) has encouraged recognition of leadership development's complexity and potential ambiguity. Career and life experience are not required to follow a set course in order to reach a certain point. Mentorship has been proven useful in the leadership development process for either a linear or nonlinear career path. In a sense, women's leadership opportunities are more conducive to qualitative study because strict quantification would neglect the less measurable, yet practical alternative leadership roles women may pursue, either intentionally or as a result of life experiences.

Alternative leadership opportunities that Alabama women might pursue include affiliation with various community-based groups and projects. The Girl Scouts of America, the American Women's Auxiliary, and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) are national and global examples of organizations that provide leadership opportunities outside the spotlight of traditional public leadership roles. These women's groups, in addition to other formal groups such as nationally-recognized sororities and honor societies, incorporate leadership into their purpose without making leadership training their primary mission. For example, both Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta sororities, the two oldest historically black sororities, focus heavily on the development of their members into servant leaders to help their communities (Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, n.d.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., n.d.). Ella, a previous advisor for her university with Leading Edge Institute and participant in the current study, has also been an advisor for her sorority, and she said the following about leadership training for sorority women:

> I also was a sorority advisor and so anytime our women did leadership training...on a national level, you know, whether it be like a state day or something like that then we participated in those leadership opportunities as well (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Arguably, women may also fill leadership roles within the ranks of typical members of those organizations in which they participate (Bligh & Kohles, 2012). Beyond explicit examples, women may lead quietly within their chosen careers, as needed in their churches and communities, or within their homes, or they may seek leadership roles in grassroots advocacy or activist roles for social change (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013).

Women's Leadership Training

With the need for women in leadership established, and with the clarification that women may fill either traditional or alternative leadership roles provided, the topic of women's leadership training arises. The results of a simple web search showed that many chambers of commerce across the State of Alabama offer community-based, coeducational leadership training programs for local citizens with proven leadership abilities, and some chambers of commerce extend and differentiate this leadership training for local high school students, who may also benefit from participation in coeducational Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership affiliate programs (Ray, 2016). Institutions of higher education commonly acknowledge that leadership is an essential part of a student's college or university experience, but because leadership is difficult to narrowly define, many institutions leave leadership training outside the classroom or restrict it to a specific set of courses (Alexander, 2011). Similarly, formalized leadership traits and skills are stereotypically attributed to being more appropriate for males than for females, and coeducational groups are likely to see female members withdraw from the spotlight (Alexander, 2011; Clarke, 2011). However, female-only leadership training groups can be an effective means to change female attitudes regarding the masculine nature of leadership traits and skills and to change those females' attitudes regarding their own leadership potential (Alexander, 2011; Clarke, 2011; Debebe, 2011).

Women-only leadership training programs have an increased ability to address gender roles and expectations, which may conflict with women's professional roles and expectations as leaders in their organizations (Debebe, 2011; Ionescu, 2012). Such an environment, although inauthentic without men for practical reasons, establishes safety for women's transformative learning to take place (Debebe, 2011). While women-only leadership training programs have been found to be more effective than coeducational programs for women to learn about and practice leadership, these formal training programs alone do not ensure that the women trained by the programs rise to leadership positions (Clarke, 2011). As relational beings, women have been found to receive greater benefits from social capital gains; networking and engaging in mentoring relationships, especially for psychosocial support throughout these women's careers, seems to be potentially more effective for women's career advancement than leadership training alone (Clarke, 2011; Harris & Leberman, 2012).

A strengths-based approach to women's leadership training has also been found to be highly successful; when women focus on their strengths and talents rather than their weaknesses or areas in which they lack talent, they are more positive and more successful at meeting established goals (Garcea, Linley, Mazurkiewicz, & Bailey, 2012). As previously discussed, participant discovery and their resulting self-awareness of individual strengths has featured prominently in the week-long intensive portion of the LEI experience. While the LEI experience may not have been a participant's introduction to strengths-based leadership training, this strengths-based focus within a women-only environment was likely a unique experience for many of the participants. This strengths-focused curriculum was then the basis for the beginning of community for many LEI alumnae. Furthermore, this environment is prone to be a highly impactful leadership training experience for these college women.

For comparison purposes, the researcher conducted a brief review of other women's leadership training opportunities within the State of Alabama. While LEI's focus is college women statewide, the organization's nine-month leadership training model is not unique. The Alabama Youth Leadership Development Program, with chapters in Birmingham and Cullman, targets both male and female high school juniors and seniors for nine monthly educational meetings in addition to community service projects (Alabama Youth Leadership Development Program, n.d.). Leadership Alabama is a nine-month statewide training program for "established leaders" of both genders "to help our state reach its full potential" (Leadership Alabama, n.d.); as previously mentioned, local chambers of commerce across the State of Alabama offer community-based coeducational leadership training programs for local citizens with proven leadership abilities, which seem to have been based on the Leadership Alabama model, focusing on local issues such as economic development, education, and healthcare (Leadership

Montgomery, n.d.). Momentum's nine-month leadership programs are targeted toward "executive and early-career" professional women in the state, and the Birmingham-based organization also hosts a biennial leadership conference and ongoing mentorship programs (Momentum, n.d.).

Other women's leadership groups that promote civic leadership across the state have less formal structures and curricula. For example, United Way of Central Alabama, which serves the greater Birmingham metropolitan area, launched a "women's affinity group" called Women United to "promote the critical work women lead" in the area, which "is one of 160 [such groups] across the globe" (United Way of Central Alabama, n.d.). Similar efforts are underway in Alabama's various regions to build collaboration among local women leaders, but LEI has stood out as the unique statewide organization focused on training college women to lead positive change in the state.

Assessment

Potential confusion regarding the definition of assessment requires historical perspective (Lum, 2012), a common vocabulary (Manning, 2011), and identified elements of assessment (Weiner, 2009). Assessment is no longer utilized solely for "prediction, comparison, and selection," but is rather more concerned with what students can do and "what they know" (Lum, 2012, p. 589). Lack of common language regarding assessment understandably leads to frustration on the part of those individuals involved in the assessment process (Weiner, 2009). On the other hand, clarity in language when discussing assessment can bring more stakeholders into a productive discussion of assessment data and results that can inform continuous improvement of a program being assessed.

Relevant to the current study, assessment refers to an intentional review of an organization's programs and services to determine how the organization is fulfilling its stated mission and goals. Assessment requires proactive efforts, including planning expected outcomes, gathering data and information, reviewing the results of that gathered data, and revision of expected outcomes to make those planned expectations stronger. Reactive changes through trial and error are beneficial to program success but are not indicative of a well-established assessment cycle.

In other words, deliberate assessment "can truly promote student learning and teaching excellence" (Chaplot, 2010, p. 42); these deliberate efforts' results may come after much hard work and difficulty, but they are valuable. Although the current study does not involve a single formal educational setting, the concept of teaching and learning is relevant for leadership training. Similarly, discussion of strategic planning, goal tracking, and measurement may also be utilized in the same manner as this concept of deliberate assessment efforts for such a non-profit organization.

Assessment is commonly associated with accreditation processes, and much research has been done to encourage stakeholder buy-in to such assessment processes (Middaugh, 2009; Volkwein, 2010; Weiner, 2009). Moving beyond accreditation efforts, though, the purpose and importance of assessment must be clear to the individuals involved in the assessment process on a personal level (Jorgensen, 2008). Jorgensen (2008) has said, "If you care about students, how can you argue against knowing what you expect your program's impact to be on students, checking to see how well they did, then making adjustments as needed?" (p. 9). The purpose of assessment must not be focused only on accreditation, but rather must primarily be related to the organization's individual internal stakeholders and their personal missions to help the college women who progress through the program. Beyond alumnae completion of the program, their reflection on how the program impacted their leadership potential will benefit future program participants. The inclusion of other stakeholders in the current study may also demonstrate the organization's greater impact on the State of Alabama.

Institutional Effectiveness

Effectiveness may be a more appropriate term for the type of assessment planned for the current research. Bers (2011) has defined *institutional effectiveness* as "an ongoing, integrated, and systematic set of institutional processes that [an organization] uses to determine and ensure the quality" of its programs and services (p. 63). Assessment is certainly an appropriate component in an institutional effectiveness model, but assessment as a cycle of measurable improvement does not consider the holistic review of institutional processes required to tell the story of how an organization is fulfilling its stated mission.

Assessment of educational programs is required for regional accreditation for institutions of higher education. According to *The Principles of Accreditation* of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), assessment of institutional "effectiveness in achieving [the institution's] mission" is dependent upon a thorough review of "the quality and effectiveness of all its programs and services" (2018, p. 2). The Commission on Colleges expects an educational institution to report the effectiveness, or the measured success, of the many facets of its mission (educational programs, administrative support services, and academic and student support services). For this reason, the administration, faculty, and staff of an institution must all work together to ensure the institution is effective and to provide evidence that will make the case to prove the institution is effective. Individual faculty members' loyalties can be astoundingly complex even within an institution (Clark, 1989). For example, a single faculty member may associate with one discipline among several in a single department, which in turn belongs to a specific school or college within the larger institution; these multiple loyalties pull the faculty member's attention depending upon needs or projects underway. The quest for institutional effectiveness seeks to navigate those existing multiple loyalties and interwoven relationships to produce a bureaucratic answer regarding the institution's approach to quality for regional education accreditation agencies like SACSCOC.

Although LEI is not an institution of higher education, the non-profit organization does partner with such institutions to train their selected female students for authentic leadership. Application of regional accreditation standards may not be a far reach for the non-profit organization LEI, which is already so closely partnered with SACSCOC-accredited institutions. This indirect connection places LEI in close proximity to partnered entities that utilize the SACSCOC model to assess their effectiveness.

Not only is assessment a necessary part of affirming institutional effectiveness, but it is also a transformative learning process to facilitate systematic organizational improvement. Assessment is not, however, the most appropriate term for the measurement necessary to describe an organization's overall effectiveness. While in a sense, the terms *assessment* and *effectiveness* may appear interchangeable, the current discussion has sought to differentiate the two terms to demonstrate that *assessment* is a vital process involved in the larger system known as *effectiveness*.

Leadership Training Effectiveness

Relevant research has been conducted to suggest models for determining leadership training program effectiveness (Harjo et al., 2013; Hassan et al., 2010). An action-learning model, in which hands-on instruction leads trainees to complete practical problem-solving activities, is commonly used in on-the-job training as well as formal education settings (Harjo et al., 2013). Chrislip and O'Malley (2013) have suggested that effective leadership training should "balance…experiential, cognitive, and reflective learning processes to engage the whole person" through the various learning domains (p. 6). Another leadership training effectiveness model involved a pretest-posttest with control group design (Hassan et al., 2010). In this experiment, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) identified earlier in this literature review was utilized at both pretest and posttest stages to determine attitudinal outcomes of subordinates. The results showed a positive, significant relationship between the implemented leadership training program and subordinates' attitudes toward their supervisors (Hassan et al., 2010).

Elliott (2011) has emphasized "self efficacy [*sic*] [and] personal strengths optimisation [*sic*]" as important aspects of leadership-coaching psychology (p. 49). Although relevant, the effectiveness of the overall leadership training program has not been explored in the current study. However, elements of the effectiveness models suggested above proved beneficial to highlight individual stakeholders' experiences with the program. Whether LEI has been effective in accomplishing its mission is not as important for this study as the potential ways in which the organization has positively or negatively impacted its stakeholders and their individual development of transformational leadership. *Self-efficacy* is confidence in one's ability to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977, as cited in Todaka, 2013). Strengths are areas of aptitude that can be leveraged for success (Rath, 2007, as cited in Varkonyi, 2013). These elements will be explored further during the research collection and analysis stages of the current study.

Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria for performance excellence have been selected as an established assessment framework on which to base some of the current study's interview questions (see Appendix D). The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 established the Baldrige criteria for performance excellence (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013). These criteria address the areas of leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, workforce focus, operations focus, and results while considering the organization's management of measurement, analysis, and knowledge (see sample language in Appendix K). The Baldrige criteria have been used nationally for more than 25 years to improve organizations' competitiveness in the business, healthcare, education, non-profit, and government sectors.

Despite periodic revision of the Baldrige criteria to maintain industrial relevance, research has established the empirical validity of the Baldrige criteria as both a theoretical model of organizational quality and as a measure of organizational performance (Jayamaha, Grigg, & Mann, 2011). These criteria, based on "normative performance improvement requirements" for internal and external relations, have proven especially useful over the years for organizational self-assessment and strategic planning (Asif, Raouf, & Searcy, 2013, p. 3095). With their emphasis on concepts such as leadership, succession planning, and transfer of knowledge from departing or retiring workforce members, the Baldrige criteria for non-profit organizations have specifically been found useful as an internal measure for improving non-profit organizational sustainability in an unstable economic environment (Al-Tabbaa, Gadd, & Ankrah, 2013). Al-Tabbaa et al. have suggested that some adaptation of the Baldrige criteria might be necessary for optimal usefulness, as non-profit organizations tend to demonstrate marked distinctiveness even within the non-profit sector. D. Lee and Lee (2013) have found that the Baldrige criteria have been adapted for use around the world to determine organizational quality in various industries, including the non-profit sector. Of particular interest in the literature regarding the Baldrige criteria, however, is the suggestion from Jayamaha et al. (2011) that future research should consider the "holistic nature" of the Baldrige criteria and how the seven categories of the criteria are used to support and inform one another (p. 30).

The findings referenced above help to establish the Baldrige criteria as an appropriate model for collecting stakeholder perceptions of and for describing LEI's effectiveness in accomplishing its mission. In addition, these research findings present a body of empirical evidence that the Baldrige criteria have been so utilized in previous research. These findings also substantiate that any new application of the Baldrige criteria to a non-profit organization is the basis for a unique study, whether the criteria are utilized in their original form or an appropriately adapted form.

Application of the Baldrige criteria in the present study should have culminated in a holistic explanation of why LEI, the organization being researched, has been effective in accomplishing its stated mission. This is, after all, the ultimate question of the current study: to assess how the organization has effectively accomplished its mission and to what extent there has been alignment among an organizational review based on the Baldrige criteria, organizational records, and stakeholder perceptions of this effective accomplishment. Although the Baldrige criteria are not expected to be the primary source for interview questions during the data collection stage of the current research study, the criteria's practical and recognizable design will help to inform and systematize the utilized interview questions.

Non-Profit Organizations and Their Leadership

By their very nature, non-profit organizations do not operate in the same way as for-profit organizations. The purposes of non-profit organizations may vary greatly, a fact that is reflected by their differing organizational structures, but in general, they seek to serve a greater good than simply financial gain, as "their missions are socially and educationally driven" (Andjelkovic & Boolaky, 2015, p. 125).

Examples of non-profit organizations include churches, colleges and universities, museums, and charities. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has listed Leading Edge Institute on its public website as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity "eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions…[of up] to 50% of [an individual donor's] adjusted gross income" (Internal Revenue Service, n.d.). "Although they are exempt from income taxation, exempt organizations are generally required to file annual [income] returns [with the IRS]" (Internal Revenue Service, n.d.). Even though organizations like LEI are not required to pay taxes on their income, they are subject to tax auditing and run the risk of losing their tax-exempt status if they fail to comply with IRS requirements.

Because non-profit organizations are typically dependent upon the support of philanthropic donations for budgetary funds, small non-profit organizations are particularly susceptible to the whims of their potentially unstable environments. Additionally, non-profit organizations are subject to the competing interests of their various stakeholders (Dainelli, Manetti, & Sibilio, 2013). A broad range of interests and expectations are likely represented by a non-profit organization's internal and external stakeholders. These interests and expectations, for example, influence the non-profit organization's strategic direction significantly differently than a for-profit organization's majority shareholders might outweigh the opinions of those with a less quantifiable stake in the organization.

The non-profit workforce is made up of both paid employees and volunteers, but non-profit organizations may see a drastic variation in workforce numbers as well as relatively high turnover among these human resources throughout their years of operation (Todea & Mihaltan, 2013). Run by their boards of directors, non-profit organizations typically maintain few paid employees, not always including professional managers, while depending heavily upon volunteers (Thomsen, 2014).

Alabama State Law provides direction for the establishment and conduct of non-profit organizations in Ala. Code §§10A-3-1–10A-3-8 (2015). Before a non-profit organization can seek tax-exempt status, it must be established as a non-profit organization within its home state. A new non-profit organization in Alabama must file a "certificate of formation with the judge of probate" in the county where the organization will have its primary address; upon completion of this filing, the organization shall be considered incorporated (Ala. Code §10A-3-3.03, 2015). Consistent with Thomsen's (2014) review of non-profit governance, a new non-profit organization in Alabama is minimally required to have established bylaws that set the organization's number of directors (including the initial board's names and contact information) and that explain the organization's objectives.

The leadership of a non-profit organization is heavily dependent upon its purpose and organizational structure. While a non-profit organization does not seek financial gain, the organization's leader(s) must maintain a carefully balanced focus on both the mission of the organization and the business of running the organization, i.e., paying the employees and controlling other operational costs (Prudzienica & Mlodzinska-Granek, 2014). This maintenance of a potentially competing dual-focused balance may often create challenges for a non-profit leader's attention and priorities. Understanding leaders of a non-profit organization requires some understanding of the organization as a whole, including its specific mission, its products or services, and its governance structure.

The non-profit organization's board of directors is responsible for financial management as well as all major operations and reporting decisions for the organization. Further, members of a non-profit organization's board of directors serve as both decision-makers and human capital resources for the organization, utilizing their experience and expertise to guide the organization (Arshad, Bakar, Thani, & Omar, 2013). Reporting requirements for non-profit organizations are typically less stringent than those for-profit organizations face, so the importance of transparency in operations for a non-profit is at the same time difficult to grasp and crucial to the organization's success (Arshad et al., 2013). Non-profit organizations depend upon fundraising and grant awards to operate, while stakeholders, including current and potential donors, depend upon a non-profit organization's transparency to encourage their support and participation (Arshad et al., 2013).

Financial auditing within non-profit organizations is growing in importance in the United States (Vermeer, Raghunandan, & Forgione, 2013). This is particularly true for non-profit organizations that depend upon government-funded grant programs to supplement their budgets since audit requirements are reasonably tied to those funds. A financial audit report is affected by the auditor's perception of an organization's leadership structure, just as the propensity to submit to financial auditing is dependent upon leaders' acceptance that such reporting is necessary for continued operations.

Transparency, then, as facilitated by accountability measures, can be separated into two categories: *hierarchical accountability* and *holistic accountability* (Dainelli et al., 2013). *Hierarchical accountability* encompasses measures such as financial auditing for funding sources, as referenced above (Dainelli et al., 2013). *Holistic accountability* demonstrates a deeper commitment to transparency among an organization's various stakeholders, including the organization’s community, its workforce, its customers, and the environment as a whole (Dainelli et al., 2013). The Baldrige criteria described in the previous section can be utilized for holistic accountability, as they address all of these aspects of non-profit organizations’ stakeholders, including leaders, customers, the workforce, and environmental impact (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013).

LEI’s small non-profit nature has established a unique environment in which the organization operated. Alabama’s economic status limits the support base for organizations of this kind and keeps them teetering on the edge of inactivity, constantly adjusting “to the existing resources to preserve stability” (Felício, Gonçalves, & Gonçalves, 2013, p. 2144). Funding sources and accountability measures have impacted the curricular content provided by LEI, so maintaining long-term managing staff members has proven difficult.

The fact that LEI has made an impact on Alabama’s college women at all is remarkable, but the organization’s focus makes LEI’s success expected. As previously mentioned, social capital is “connectedness with others” that serves as a resource for professional and personal wealth, regardless of a factual economic situation (Madara, 2012, p. 145). LEI’s emphasis on a social capital gain during networking events has been all the more important for stakeholders within such an economically challenged geographic area as the State of Alabama (Felício et al., 2013). If LEI alumnae find success as a result of their leadership training, then that success should translate to better financial support for the program.

Summary

Alabama needs more women leaders to help balance policy decisions in all aspects of public life. Leading Edge Institute (LEI) has attempted to cultivate more young women to be authentic and transformational leaders, to positively impact the state. The professional development opportunities of LEI alumnae, coupled with the targeted leadership training of each class of college women, has appeared to be a successful model for accomplishing the organization's mission. The focus on personal preferences and strengths has helped the college women participants to develop authentic leadership skills as well as the confidence to exercise those skills. Profiles of the organization's key stakeholders can help clarify how the organization has accomplished its mission, "To inspire, prepare and empower the women of Alabama to lead our state to a more equitable and prosperous future" (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The current intrinsic, multiple case study seeks to describe the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program, Leading Edge Institute, through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. Interviews, observations, and organizational documents and records have been the means of data collection in preparation of stakeholders' profiles. This methods chapter presents the current study's procedures, research design, and analysis and provides details of the study's execution. The contents of this chapter are vital to potential future replication of the current study.

Design

An intrinsic case study was proposed of a concrete entity utilizing an established assessment model, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality award criteria for non-profit organizations' performance excellence. The study is considered a multiple case study due to the ultimate development of profiles of the organization's stakeholders. A case study is an appropriate method for this study because the researcher has hoped to gain "an in-depth understanding" of LEI's effectiveness (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).

Research Questions

Three primary research questions drove this qualitative case study. Each question builds upon the last. These questions are the following:

RQ1: How do stakeholders describe the contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation?

RQ2: To what extent do the organization's stakeholders attribute these experiences to their current application of transformational leadership?

RQ3: How do the perceptions of members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae align regarding the organization's impact on their leadership opportunities?

Setting

Because the case under study is an organization whose work has not been conducted in a single location, the setting of the research study was subject to change throughout the data collection phase. The primary setting for this case study was video conferencing or various public meeting locations within the State of Alabama that proved convenient for participants. A secondary setting could have been the college campus that has served as host to the week-long summer intensive portion of the program. The organization is inactive and not currently accepting new participants, so the week-long summer intensive portion did not take place during the timeframe of the current study. Two locations have been used previously for the week-long summer intensive, in separate years, and both have been private, faith-based, four-year institutions with convenient access to either the rural service project locations or the State Capitol meeting locations utilized during the week: Judson College in Marion, Alabama; and Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama. A different location for this week-long portion of the program has been possible, but with consideration of the convenience to the week's activities, such a move would be unlikely.

Beyond the noted unlikely week-long intensive setting, alternate settings might have included the organization's Birmingham offices, predetermined group meeting locations, the host location of graduation weekend, and various locations of participants' leadership action projects or alumnae meetings. Because the week-long portion of the program was not conducted during the data collection period of the current study, alternate locations were negotiated with consideration of participant convenience, such as college campuses across the state, individuals' professional offices, or public meeting locations such as coffee shops noted as convenient to participants' college campuses or professional offices.

Participants

The researcher planned to interview and observe 10 to 12 members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae. After seeking organizational leadership permission, a call for participants in the form of an invitation to complete the online-administered Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was posted on the organization's Facebook page and distributed via email. Potential participants chose to complete the advertised MLQ, and informed consent information was provided to qualified potential participants via email following their completion of the web-based MLQ. Study participants were a self-selected convenience sample who volunteered for the study through their informed consent completion following their MLQ conclusion (Coleman, 2015).

In order to build a holistic perspective of the organization (Yin, 2014), those individuals selected for participation in the study may have represented multiple roles, as some alumnae have also served on the board of directors and as members of the organization's faculty and staff. These potentially dual or collective viewpoints would have been beneficial in gathering sufficient data regarding the broadest possible cross-section of stakeholder perceptions in the smallest number of individuals. These individuals might have varied in age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. However, the individuals selected for interview and observation were entirely female. The researcher included demographic clarification during member checks to attempt to show that individuals selected for interview and observation were representative of the LEI stakeholder population. The diversity of age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background for individuals associated with LEI helps these individuals to appreciate different perspectives and should have provided a holistic view of the organization. The context for interviews and observations was dependent upon participant availability; the researcher attempted to interview and observe participants within their varying natural locations.

Procedures

Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was sought and acquired prior to any collection of data. Upon securing IRB approval, the researcher recruited participants for the study in collaboration with LEI's most recent executive director, who was aware and supportive of the study. The inactive nature of the organization has prevented collaboration with current staff.

Individual participant interest was explored in preliminary email and telephone conversations utilizing email addresses and telephone numbers provided by recent LEI staff members or secured via the Leading Edge Institute's Facebook page. Participant recruitment did not begin earlier, as this preliminary correspondence may have revealed stakeholder perceptions that might have been useful to the study and so might have been construed as data collection. Participants were asked to sign consent forms outlining the study and reminding them that their participation was voluntary and could be voluntarily withdrawn at any time; see Appendix B for a copy of the participant informed consent form. The researcher assigned pseudonyms to participants to maintain confidentiality at the time of consent form receipt. Interviews and observations were also scheduled at this time, to take place on a later date over the upcoming one to three months. The inactive nature of the organization prevented interviews or observations from being conducted during the organization's summer activities when the greatest concentrated number of stakeholders would have been most accessible.

Collection and analysis of organizational documents and records began during the participant recruitment time frame; assistance of recent LEI staff and board members was requested but not available. In this way, recruitment time could be maximized as much as possible. Further detail regarding data collection and analysis methods as well as the establishment of the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations are provided below.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher has recently served Leading Edge Institute as an advisor for one of several partner universities, which happens to be her alma mater and her current employer. In this advisory role, the researcher sustained interaction throughout the year with the organization's staff, those female students representing her institution, and key administrators of her institution's ongoing involvement in the program. The researcher has been personally invested in maintaining and nurturing the partnership between this organization and her employer institution of higher education, and this personal investment did lend some potential bias to the researcher in her hopes of seeing the case successfully demonstrate effectiveness. Nevertheless, the researcher believed from the outset of the current research study that her dedication to truthfulness in reporting the data and her dedication to the interests of her alma mater outweighed her potential bias toward the current case study's subject. The organization's inactivity during the timeframe of the current study helped to prevent bias as well. Any potential bias was further prevented through employment of an audit trail and external auditing during the data collection and analysis stages of the study.

The researcher serves her alma mater, a recent partner of the current case study subject, as director of assessment and compliance in the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness (IRPE). As such, the researcher is directly involved with reviewing assessment of program-level student learning outcomes, consulting with faculty members regarding institutional assessment efforts, and writing letters and reports to the institution's regional accreditation body. The researcher's employer institution is a public four-year university located in a moderately rural area of Alabama, classified as a master's degree level, regional university by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The institution consists of four campuses located within the state as well as several instructional and recruiting locations across the southeastern United States and in Southeast Asia. In addition to her full-time professional role with IRPE, the researcher also serves the institution as a member of several standing committees and workgroups and as an occasional adjunct instructor of undergraduate leadership and developmental English. The researcher professes to love God and love people (Matthew 22:37-40), and she seeks to prove herself helpful in all situations; her personal goals center around her faith and family, while her professional goals include greater responsibility in connection to her current roles at her institution, both administrative and in the classroom.

Data Collection

According to Yin (2014), *data triangulation* occurs when a research finding is verified by several information sources. Data triangulation was achieved for the current study through multiple rounds of stakeholder interviews, with periods of direct and participant observation and review of organizational records between interviews. Subsequent interviews were used to confirm observations and to gain further input regarding findings from organizational records.

Interviews

Interviews with 10 to 12 members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae were proposed to develop a holistic view of the organization's effectiveness. This data collection process should have successfully gathered these stakeholders' multiple perceptions of the organization's products and processes, leadership, results, and relationships to stakeholders. One-on-one interviews were conducted in an environment that was identified as comfortable for each participant. The primary setting for interviews was video conferencing or various public meeting locations within the State of Alabama that were preferable or convenient for participants and which provided a suitably confidential environment. For example, an individual's office or a familiar classroom or meeting room might have provided a sufficient level of comfort for that participant during an interview. Following the model implemented by Al-Tabbaa et al. (2013), interview questions were adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Baldrige criteria (see Appendix K).

1. Please introduce yourself and your connection to Leading Edge Institute.
2. What is your current leadership position?
3. Please describe for me your leadership preparation process, including any formal or informal training you received.
4. Let's take a few minutes to consider the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.
5. How do you understand your Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results?
6. How would you describe your personal experience with Leading Edge Institute, including your introduction to the organization?
7. How did your experience with Leading Edge Institute help you to recognize issues faced by the population of Alabama?
8. How would you describe Leading Edge Institute's core competencies and key stakeholders?
9. How do you understand the leadership structure of Leading Edge Institute?

10. Would you please describe your relationship to Leading Edge Institute or its leadership in the time since your introduction to the organization?
11. Would you please elaborate on how your connection to Leading Edge Institute has opened doors for you in your professional life?
12. To what extent would you say that your Leading Edge Institute experience helped prepare you to hold leadership positions in your life?
13. Please describe your leadership experience prior to your involvement with Leading Edge Institute. Did you hold any leadership roles before LEI?
14. As a result of your Leading Edge Institute experience, what have you achieved as a leader? How has life changed since LEI?
15. What else would you like to add to our conversation today?

As previously stated, the above list of interview questions is adapted from the MLQ and the Baldrige criteria. Questions one and two seek to establish rapport between interviewer and interviewee, while they also seek to secure identification of the participant and her pre-existing relationship to LEI. The third question seeks to identify the traditional and alternative leadership roles held by the interviewee, as well as the route followed to those roles (Hertneky, 2012; Bligh & Kohles, 2012; Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013). Questions four and five invite participants to reflect on MLQ results (Burns, 2010; Bass & Riggio, 2006). The sixth and seventh questions strive to connect earlier reflection to cognitive and social gains directly related to the participant's LEI experience (Clarke, 2011; Harris & Leberman, 2012). Questions eight and nine are adapted directly from the Baldrige criteria (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013; Jayamaha et al., 2011). Questions 10 through 14 are included to frame participants' experience before, during, and after their introduction to LEI, and question 15 allows participants to add anything they deem relevant to the conversation.

Interview questions were reviewed by experts in the field of leadership training and were piloted to ensure clarity with a small sample outside the research population prior to their use in the field. Although these questions could have been disaggregated or reworded for the different stakeholder types based upon content validity (Yin, 2014), disaggregation did not prove necessary. For some exceptional stakeholders who moved into leadership roles within the organization after completing the program themselves, an overlap in stakeholder type might have existed among the current study's participants but would have been rare. No such overlap occurred among the current study's participants.

Observation

The researcher also observed the study participants she had interviewed in various settings, expectedly both in conjunction with and separately from gathering data during one-on-one interviews (Yin, 2014). Individual participants and groups of participants who were not interviewed but who signed consent forms could also have been directly or participant-observed during structured activities of the organization, such as during formal training activities, action-learning activities, and social activities. These structured activities might have included the week-long intensive summer portion of the program, fall group meetings, students' leadership action projects, and spring graduation activities. The interaction between current students, alumnae, board members, and faculty and staff would have been noted, to include the degree of familiarity in demeanor, level of positivity and negativity present in comments made, and features of mood and posture utilized in varying situations. The organization's inactivity prevented this plan from being followed.

Alternately, observations could have been conducted during participants' typical daily activities to confirm findings reported in connection to the MLQ. This option would have potentially isolated study participants from one another and prevented observation of interactions between students, alumnae, board members, and faculty and staff. However, observation during participants' typical daily activities would have proven to be a more authentic source of transformational leadership in action than strictly LEI-organized activities might have provided.

Observations may have been most useful in corroborating the information gathered from interviews and organizational records to establish the organization's workforce, operations, and customer focus based on the Baldrige criteria (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013; Yin, 2014). The researcher anticipated conducting observations as a passive participant or peripheral member of the group under observation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). See Appendix E for a copy of an adapted blank field notes template, Figure One, used during this data collection process (May, 2011).

Records

A review of organizational records was included in the data collection stage. Organizational documents, to include any existing strategic plan, historical documentation, and third-party reports, were requested to help define the organization's current state. Previously audio and video-recorded sessions were also requested in order to be transcribed for analysis. Such activities would have been representative of the organization's ongoing and special events and would have proven useful in documenting the organization's customer focus (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013). If demographic data would have been included in organizational records, this information would prove invaluable to demonstrate LEI stakeholder diversity. Access and permission to view organizational records were dependent upon LEI staff assistance and board approval. See Appendix F for a letter to Leading Edge Institute's responsible parties requesting permission and access to these records. This request for permission and access was not formally accepted, so the researcher focused on publicly accessible records regarding Leading Edge Institute, including documents accessible from the Alabama Secretary of State website, Leading Edge Institute social media posts and YouTube videos, and other web-based public records.

Data Analysis

Reading and Memoing

Reading and memoing is an analysis process that includes annotating margins while reading through the full text of data in each of its forms (Creswell, 2013). At each stage of the data collection process, the researcher read data in full, making notes in the margins to form initial codes. The researcher also took handwritten notes during interviews and observations that helped to inform theme development. From these marginal and other handwritten notes, the researcher created a group of potential initial codes and then winnowed those down to a reasonable number. Case study research expert Yin (2014) has suggested that memoing should begin during the data collection stage and continue into data analysis. This early and ongoing practice maintained the researcher's focus to analyze collected data and contributed to an auditable trail throughout data collection and analysis for the study.

Open Coding

This data analysis process includes organizing data into overarching themes and looking for patterns in the data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher used codes that were suggested or developed during the reading and memoing data analysis process, and while rereading the hardcopy printouts of the data in full, the researcher highlighted and color-coded instances of each code, which allowed the researcher to note all occurrences of each theme. The researcher did not use qualitative data analysis software but did use a combination of handwritten notes and word processing software to document this stage of data analysis.

Yin (2014) refers to this analysis strategy as "working your data from the 'ground up'… leading you farther [*sic*] into your data and possibly suggesting additional relationships" among the data (p. 136-137). Although Yin (2014) cautions novice researchers that lack of experience with this analysis strategy may delay relevant connections, the researcher's use of validated instruments in developing interview questions for data collection helped facilitate overcoming such challenges in this multiple case study. The researcher recognized the importance of continual bracketing of her own beliefs and experiences throughout the data analysis process to prevent contaminating the data while maintaining an appropriate level of engagement (Fischer, 2009).

Interpreting the Data

This third data analysis process includes the development of lessons learned from the data and the themes and patterns identified throughout the data analysis processes. The researcher developed "naturalistic generalizations" from the identified themes and patterns, relating these individual themes and patterns to one another (Creswell, 2013, p. 200). This process allowed the researcher to use themes and patterns identified in the earlier analysis to better describe the case. Themes were expected to build on topics explored in chapter two of this current study, which is an accurate description of theme development.

Trustworthiness

Credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability measures were utilized to establish the study's trustworthiness. Triangulation in data collection and analysis methods helped to establish credibility. Use of an audit trail and an external auditor helped to establish dependability and transferability. Member checks contributed to both credibility and confirmability. These measures to ensure trustworthiness are discussed below in further detail.

Credibility

Credibility is defined as "the degree to which the research represents the actual meanings of the research participants" (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016, p. 2). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have identified credibility as the qualitative equivalent to "internal validity" (p. 300). Credibility for the current study was established through triangulation of both data collection and analysis and through member checks.

Creswell (2013) has described triangulation as the "use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" (p. 251). The current study has demonstrated triangulation not only in its data collection but also in its data analysis. The data collection methods were interviews, observations, and records. The data analysis methods have been reading and memoing, open coding, and interpreting the data. Consistency among data sources and through data analysis has greatly improved the trustworthiness of the current study. In addition, as Yin (2014) has emphasized, research findings are more conclusive and precise when they are based on data collected from multiple sources and analyzed in various ways.

The researcher also proposed member checks in this study, which include having study participants review and suggest revisions to the developing case study in order to confirm the previous analysis. In line with the current study's social constructivist interpretive framework, the researcher allowed study participants to review and approve their individual descriptions and comments to be included in the current study. Member checks may enrich the data collection process further than initial interviews and observations (Koelsch, 2013). The data collection and analysis procedures described above were expected to take place within a limited timeframe. The limited timeframe helped improve the accuracy of member checks. Therefore, member checks have increased the study's credibility, as this process confirms the researcher's interpretation is accurate, as confirmed by the participants whose perceptions are being portrayed in the case study.

Dependability and Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified dependability and confirmability as the qualitative equivalents to "'reliability,' and 'objectivity'" (p. 300). Dependability is defined as "the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented," while confirmability is defined as the demonstration "that the results are clearly linked to the conclusions in a way that can be followed and, as a process, replicated" (Moon et al., 2016, p. 2). The dependability and confirmability of the current study were established through an audit trail and external auditing in addition to the member checks described above.

An audit trail and external auditing were employed to ensure dependability. The researcher kept detailed notes regarding procedures followed throughout data collection and analysis. This audit trail process increases the transferability of the study because it facilitates future replication of the study. The researcher also proposed employment of an external reviewer to examine the research process and the product before final editing and preparation for publication. This external auditor process was expected to increase the reliability of the study because it would bring in an unrelated individual to confirm that the final product is supported by the data. An audit trail and external auditor have both been required to work together as a single factor for trustworthiness in the current study.

Transferability

Transferability is the qualitative equivalent to external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300) and is defined as "the degree to which the phenomenon or findings described in one study are applicable or useful to theory, practice, and future research" (Moon et al., 2016, p. 3). The audit trail and external auditing process described above were also used to establish transferability of the current study, particularly in regard to its future replicability. Replicability would prove difficult without the detailed records that are required to create an audit trail and complete an external audit.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, the researcher sought approval of Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB approval letter for the current study is provided as Appendix A. Confidentiality was addressed through the use of pseudonyms for all participants; this should help alleviate concerns regarding potential risk to individuals. Any information shared "off the record" was so noted and deleted from collected data during analysis. The researcher declined to share personal details during interviews, which may otherwise have served to skew information participants would share. Interviews focused on participants' perceptions. When possible and appropriate, notes collected during direct and participant observation were confirmed as accurate through follow-up discussion with participants who had been observed. Ideally, a second round of interviews would have been scheduled with participants to manage member checks and to therefore confirm ethical treatment of participant-supplied information; member checks were instead managed via electronic mail. Copies of relevant organizational records and all collected data have been stored electronically on a password-protected external hard-drive.

Summary

Alabama needs more women leaders to help balance policy decisions in all aspects of public life. Leading Edge Institute (LEI) has attempted to cultivate more young women to be authentic and transformational leaders to positively impact the state. The professional development opportunities of LEI alumnae, coupled with the targeted leadership training of each class of college women, appears to have been a successful model for accomplishing the organization's mission. The organization's focus on personal preferences and strengths has helped the college women participants to develop authentic leadership skills as well as the confidence to exercise those skills. Intentional assessment of the organization's program and activities has helped clarify the organization's effectiveness in actually accomplishing its mission, "To inspire, prepare and empower the women of Alabama to lead our state to a more equitable and prosperous future" (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.). Assessment of the organization was expected to demonstrate the organization's effectiveness. With a clear demonstration of the organization's effectiveness, program improvements might have been made more seamlessly and support for the organization's program and activities could have been more expressly solicited. In addition, assessment of the organization's effectiveness should have provided the organization's faculty, staff, partners, and other stakeholders a greater sense of accomplishment. The inactivity of the organization has prevented both improvement and a sense of accomplishment, but the active network of alumnae and other stakeholders has likely been encouraged by participation in this research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of the current study has been to describe the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program, Leading Edge Institute, through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. The study's findings are presented in this chapter, beginning with profiles of the study's self-selected participants. Theme development and answers to the study's research questions follow the participant profiles. This chapter represents the substance of what has been gleaned through data collection and analysis, and while this chapter is useful for potential replication of the study, it also presents the individualized perspectives of the participants in the current study.

Participants

The participants for the current study were entirely female, varied in age from their early 20s to their late 30s, and represented limited ethnic diversity (i.e., black and white women). Although this sample was not entirely representative of the larger population of Leading Edge Institute alumnae, faculty, staff, and board members, this was the self-selected sample that chose to participate in the current study. No board members chose to participate, but the sample includes alumnae, faculty and staff. The larger population in question would include a great deal more diversity in age, ethnicity, and professional career paths. Profiles of each participant of the current study are provided below.

Worth noting here is the fact that during the participant recruitment process, approximately two months prior to conducting the first interviews for the current study, the researcher discovered documentation that Leading Edge Institute had been dissolved as a business entity in the State of Alabama. Documents downloaded from the Alabama Secretary of

State website showing LEI's formation, legal name change, and dissolution are attached as Appendices G, H, and I. This discovery played an important role in the interviews conducted for the current study.

Andrea

Andrea is black, in her mid-20s, and practices law as an assistant district attorney in a small town, focused primarily on juvenile issues. She is an alumna of Leading Edge Institute. Andrea is a new mother who was on maternity leave when the researcher interviewed her and had just returned to work after maternity leave when the researcher observed her. She credits her LEI experience, particularly the networking opportunities that participation in the program afforded her, for helping her narrow her chosen career path.

Briana

Briana is white, in her early 20s, and practices social work with a Department of Human Resources office in the same district where she serves as a part-time children's minister in her local church. She is an alumna who returned to Leading Edge Institute as a volunteer staff member. She attended a small college and had several friends participate in LEI during her undergraduate studies. She attributes her participation with both LEI and 4-H to her leadership development and the confidence she demonstrates to lead based on her strengths.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is white, in her early 30s, and serves as a copywriter for a business publication in a metropolitan area. She is a former faculty/staff member of Leading Edge Institute who served as an advisor for participants from one institution. Before leaving higher education for her current career, she worked as an advisor for leadership scholars at a public four-year university. She is a proud Alabama transplant who speaks positively about her city and her desire to remain in the state. She partially credits LEI for her fierce loyalty to her adopted city and state, and she gives full credit to LEI for introducing her to several close friends.

Ella

Ella is white, in her late 30s, and works in an administrative office of a public four-year university, dealing primarily with student issues and directing a small staff of college students and professional adults. She is married and is the mother of one small child under the age of five. She is a former faculty/staff member of Leading Edge Institute who served as an advisor for participants from one institution. Ella brought information back to her institution from her LEI experience to enhance the curriculum for a living-learning community at her university that promotes women's leadership development.

Jane

Jane is white, in her mid-30s, and works in an administrative office of a public four-year university, dealing primarily with faculty and staff reporting and training. She is married and is the mother of a teenager. She is a former faculty/staff member of Leading Edge Institute who served as an advisor for participants from one institution. She talks enthusiastically about general plans to reinvigorate the LEI alumnae network via social media.

Kendra

Kendra is white, in her mid-20s, and works in an unlisted protected shelter for battered women in a suburban area. She is an alumna who returned to Leading Edge Institute as a volunteer staff member. She is married, and she is currently pursuing a master's degree to improve her career opportunities in the area of counseling. The nature of her workplace did not allow observation for the current research study, but notes from her one-on-one interview included some relevant comments regarding behaviors and mannerisms to support the current study's theme development.

Leigh

Leigh is white, in her mid-20s, and has worked in school-based counseling. She is currently a therapist pursuing licensure and working primarily with youth and their families. She also volunteers with a local LGBT youth support group. She is an alumna who returned to Leading Edge Institute as a volunteer staff member. Leigh's observation date had to be shifted to accommodate a death in her extended family, which was still very much on her mind the day of her observation.

Mae

Mae is white, in her early 20s, and manages a craft sandwich shop in a medium-sized city. She is an alumna who returned to Leading Edge Institute as a volunteer staff member. She had recently married at the time of her interview and observation. She has not yet completed her baccalaureate degree, but she thrives in food service management. She attributes LEI with her increased confidence and willingness to take advantage of leadership opportunities that come her way, and she calls herself a democratic leader who leads differently than her fellow managers.

Martha

Martha is white, in her mid-20s, and coordinates youth activities with a metropolitan YMCA. She also volunteers with several service organizations in her area, including the American Cancer Society and the American Association of University Women (AAUW). She is an alumna who returned to Leading Edge Institute as a volunteer staff member. Although her career aspirations have changed since her time as a participant with LEI, she credits the organization for helping her recognize issues faced by the population of Alabama, and she maintains connections forged during her time with LEI.

Valerie

Valerie is black, in her early 30s, and manages a workforce development program for computer science professionals in a metropolitan area. She is married and is the mother of two small children under five years of age. Valerie is a previous staff member of Leading Edge Institute. She served with AmeriCorps prior to her time on staff with LEI, and she attributes a great deal of her leadership development to her AmeriCorps experience. She emphasizes the importance of not differentiating leadership development by gender; she says, "A good leader is a good leader is a good leader," and the only difference women need to understand is the context of their leadership, particularly in Alabama's conservative environment.

Results

Leading Edge Institute alumnae perceptions showed that the most common results of the LEI experience for college women participants were increased confidence in their ability to lead, increased self-awareness of their strengths, and improved understanding of the issues faced by the population of Alabama. Additionally, networking connections have been confirmed as highly beneficial in the perspective of the organization's various stakeholders. The major themes of *increased confidence in leadership ability*, *increased self-awareness of strengths, improved understanding of Alabama's issues,* and the *importance of networking connections* are explored further below with relevant subthemes and evidence to support their development.

Theme Development

Early codes emerged during the data collection stage in the form of common keywords the researcher noted in her handwritten notes made during one-on-one interviews. Interviewees called their LEI experience “empowering” and “a big experience” full of fond or unique memories. They noted that LEI placed emphasis on authenticity, diversity, and networking or making connections. They attributed their LEI experience with increased confidence and a changed personal outlook on life. One interviewee worded her perception of a changed outlook as follows:

> I will say that LEI does dictate a lot of where...how I feel about things now. And where my...maybe where my view point comes from. Like, it was very eye opening for me in a lot of different ways…it challenged my political beliefs, it challenged my faith in a lot of different ways. And so, I think that I am better for that, because of this experience (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Initial codes were corroborated through reading and memoing the interview transcripts following one-on-one interviews and while notetaking during observation of the interviewees. The researcher often noted in her observations how the current study participants’ held themselves through physical posture, dress, or gestures. These women were neatly dressed in primarily professional clothing, depending upon their workplace expectations. They made good eye contact when speaking directly to another individual and used appropriate hand gestures to emphasize their points. They generally demonstrated confidence in their abilities and projected a courteous, professional persona.

The initial codes noted above were grouped to form themes and subthemes for the current study, as follows in Table One. Codes were grouped with related codes to inform subthemes, which in turn informed major themes. Most codes first appeared as keywords in the researcher’s handwritten notes from one-on-one interviews, but others emerged during observation and review of organizational records.

Table 1: *Theme and Subtheme Development*

Codes	Subthemes	Themes
Ask the right questions Authenticity Confidence Different Dress (neat/professional) Empowering Gestures (appropriate) Good eye contact Posture	• Authenticity, self-confidence, and personal empowerment to lead	**Increased confidence in leadership ability**
Changed outlook Democratic Emotionally engaging Implement balance Out of comfort zone Self-awareness Shared vision Strengths	• Being pushed out of one's comfort zone • Emphasis on leading with individual strengths • Implementing balance	**Increased self-awareness of strengths**
Context Courteous Diversity Equality Founder's syndrome Optimism Privilege Sad LEI is gone Service Stay in Alabama Want change	• Concepts of founder's syndrome and privilege • Reflections of optimism and service • Shared desire to see change happen in the State of Alabama • Sadness that LEI has been dissolved as a business entity in the State of Alabama	**Increased understanding of Alabama's issues**

Big experience Develop others Fond memories Good experience Making connections Met mentor Networking Pour into others Unique memories	• Developing or pouring into others	**Importance of networking connections**

Subthemes that emerged throughout the data collection process were reflections of optimism and service, a shared desire to see change happen in the State of Alabama, and an emphasis on leading with individual strengths. The emphasis on leading with individual strengths might also be interpreted as improved self-awareness towards authenticity, self-confidence, and personal empowerment to lead, and this interpretation of leading with individual strengths seems to directly reflect the initial codes noted above. Past Leading Edge Institute advisor Ella was especially proud of her strengths, which were her top five strengths as revealed by Gallop's StrengthsFinder during her initial LEI experience; these were displayed prominently on her desk where she could see them regularly throughout the workday.

Analysis of organizational records, which was unfortunately limited to materials the researcher could access in the public domain online and in her own files, reiterated the organization's emphasis on authenticity, strengths, service, and staying in Alabama. In her one-on-one interview, Andrea articulated the emphasis on staying in Alabama as follows:

> It really made me want to stay in Alabama, which is one of the focuses of the program, because so many people who are considered leaders in this area, they usually leave to go seek other opportunities in other states. But I really loved the focus of LEI, which was

> staying here and how can you effectively implement change here, and I think it takes leaders...especially younger people who are coming up to stay in this area, to make it more effective and more efficient for the generations that are coming up (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

One YouTube video documented a 2013 television interview with then program director Suzanne Martin and LEI participant Maegan Gladden, in which Martin described LEI as a non-profit organization “all about developing women to be leaders in Alabama” by equipping them with practical knowledge regarding “the challenges that face the state and…how [women] can make a difference” through their chosen professions and passions (Carl Brady TV, 2013). Even this dated television interview confirmed the current study’s theme development was consistent with the Leading Edge Institute activities toward achieving its mission.

A few unexpected subthemes that emerged during data analysis were the concepts of founder’s syndrome and privilege, being pushed out of one’s comfort zone, developing or pouring into others, implementing balance, and sadness that LEI has been dissolved as a business entity in the State of Alabama. Founder’s syndrome was a new concept for the researcher, and she sought more information to help her define it as “the tendency of a founder to subvert the aims of their organization” (Ceaser, 2018, p. 459). During her one-on-one interview, previous LEI staff member Valerie said, “I think Leading Edge had a lot of potential; I think things don’t get done when the concern is who gets the credit” (personal communication, January 16, 2019). Such disruption or sabotage of the organization’s mission due to an individual’s ego seems to have led to the demise of many non-profit organizations such as Leading Edge Institute (Ceaser, 2018). Another detrimental fact that Valerie shared was that LEI had “six or seven executive directors” in the span of about ten years of the 15 that the organization existed as a business entity in Alabama (personal communication, January 16, 2019); this frequent turnover could not have been helped by the perceived existence of founder's syndrome in the organization.

Although privilege was a concept briefly mentioned during the current study's literature review, the researcher did not expect to see it emerge as a noteworthy subtheme during data analysis. Being pushed out of one's comfort zone might have been an anticipated subtheme, and it aligns with the codes of increased self-confidence and changed outlook. Developing or pouring into others as a leadership subtheme was an unexpected pleasant surprise that emerged during data analysis; this concept suggests that leadership development is a sustainable practice among women who can in turn work to develop others. Likewise, implementing balance was a concept not too far outside the themes and other subthemes of the current study, but its emergence was unexpected just the same. Sadness that LEI has been dissolved as a business entity was a subtheme that both confirms the organization was at least partially effective at accomplishing its mission and emotionally engaging for the women who interacted with the organization. The current study's participants seemed unanimous in their agreement that LEI's dissolution is a sad fact.

Increased confidence in leadership ability. This major theme of the current study was echoed by almost every interviewee and confirmed during observation. The subtheme of authenticity, self-confidence, and personal empowerment to lead lends some detail to this theme, but authenticity was a particularly strong point of emphasis during the interviews. Leigh said the following regarding her leadership training process:

> Authenticity and being really honest about your situation and where you're at in your leadership is really important, and just taking inventory of what am I trying to do all the time. What is my goal that I've been trying to accomplish? And taking stock in that.

> But of course, LEI was a huge part of that as well in a very formal way. Putting terms to things that I never really understood. Or I did on some level, but not being able to articulate it as well… I think what [LEI] did really well is gave space for you to be who you are. There wasn't a cookie cutter expectation of what a female leader looks like. And I really do appreciate that we had the room to kind of breathe and grow into who we envisioned ourselves to be (Leigh, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Mae shared the following in regard to owning her own leadership style:

> I definitely noticed that it was very different, and I experience that even with my management team at my job, I approach things very differently than everyone else. I'm very people centric where most people are very rule oriented. So, I think a lot of my leadership comes from that. I definitely put the person first, and I know that's not a great thing all the time, especially in a business setting, but I definitely see a difference in my management style versus my co-manager's styles (Mae, personal communication, December 19, 2018).

Recognizing differences and accepting them as valid is certainly an important aspect of increasing one's confidence in her leadership ability while building authenticity. Before confidence can grow, though, individuals must recognize their leadership ability.

Briana said that LEI was a catalyst to proving her leadership ability at her university: "Leading Edge was one of those ways for me to say I have leadership ability that nobody else was really seeing" (personal communication, February 19, 2019). Briana also said, "My experience with Leading Edge was a great experience…it was an empowering experience and encouraging that I knew that I have the ability to make change and be change" (personal communication, February 19, 2019). Briana has effectively called LEI an empowering catalyst for recognizing one's leadership ability, which can be a process of stunted growth for women.

Elizabeth said, "I loved that [LEI] was geared towards women because [we live] in a state and in a country and in a world where women are still in 2018, sadly, often not [recognized as] leaders" (personal communication, November 30, 2018). Elizabeth went on to say the following about LEI's focus on equality for women as leaders:

> Obviously, I think one of the things is parity… I remember we talked about Lilly Ledbetter, and parity among women and men in the leadership sphere and all others, pay, treatment, empowering women, giving women a voice and a platform to make a difference (Elizabeth, personal communication, November 30, 2018).

Past advisor Jane shared her reflections on how LEI helped improve college women's confidence in their leadership ability. She said the following in her one-on-one interview:

> It was cool to see how [the students] grew over the course of that week that we had summer institute. And over the course of the nine months, the students that I worked with at my university, it was great to see when they would come out of their shell a little bit. When they would sort of start to own their leadership. So, it was always a very positive experience for me (Jane, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Kendra commented that her LEI experience significantly improved her self-confidence:

> I didn't expect how much of an impact it would have on me… Even other people told me that there was a change in my demeanor and stuff afterwards, that I was more confident in myself… I think [LEI did] really well for encouraging young college age women to step into leadership roles, and nurturing that sense of, maybe entitlement's not quite the

> right word, but nurturing that in you, like you're allowed to be in leadership roles (Kendra, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

Kendra went on to say, "One of the biggest things [I learned] was confidence. That's something that I think a lot of women struggle with when it comes to leadership. Knowing that you can do it and being more sure [*sic*] of yourself" (personal communication, January 15, 2019). Leigh echoed this sentiment when she said, "I think before [LEI] I was just more likely to flounder because of my lack of confidence and competency, whereas now, it's more solid, it's more foundational, it's something to keep building upon" (personal communication, December 4, 2018). Mae added the following:

> Leading Edge definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone, and I have not stopped talking since then. Definitely. It definitely helped me become more outgoing, more social. It helped anxiety a lot for me. It definitely was beneficial for me… I was very, very shy, very sheltered. I was scared of a lot of things. So, it definitely helped me push myself out there. Even in my own college whenever I came back, I was able to make more connections and things like that… I was so timid and so shy before, [but LEI] definitely helped me open up (Mae, personal communication, December 19, 2018).

Such improved self-confidence was a common topic of conversation throughout the interviews, but some difficult lessons learned through the experience were also shared. Past LEI staff member Valerie shared the following:

> I do not work for non-profits with small budgets anymore. I will never do that again. I know what questions to ask now, which I think is super important in leadership. Just so you can be able to find the holes, gauge integrity, know if it's something you want to do.

> Leading Edge definitely indirectly taught me to ask more questions before embarking on any role (Valerie, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Learning to ask the right questions is an important leadership lesson to learn, and one must acknowledge a level of confidence in order to ask those questions.

Based on the data collected in the current study, LEI participation helped the current study's participants to be able to say the following:

> [Leading Edge Institute] has been a big thing for me in saying, "Hey, I have leadership ability. I know how to use my leadership ability… I'm going to use [my leadership ability] if you give me the opportunity…" Leading Edge helped me to be able to have that confidence to say, "I can do this. I can lead this way" (Briana, personal communication, February 19, 2019).

Such sentiments are encouraging for Alabama women leaders, but observations of these women in their various places confirmed that their actions backed up their words. During Andrea's observation, the researcher noted that she was polite, precise on the phone, and appreciative when she had questions answered. Briana's observation took place during a Wednesday night children's church service, and Briana exhibited a calm and patient demeaner as well as good, authoritative control of a classroom of ten fourth through sixth graders. During her observation, Elizabeth spoke confidently to a room full of medical school candidates about her city and what enjoyments the candidates could anticipate if selected for the program. These women demonstrated confidence in action in various contexts.

Increased self-awareness of strengths. This major theme of the current study was supported by the subthemes of being pushed out of one's comfort zone, emphasis on leading with individual strengths, and implementing balance. Andrea said that LEI "helped to broaden my horizons in basically how I looked at things…taught me more about myself when it came to leadership, and so, sometimes I like to reflect back on the things that I learned" (personal communication, January 11, 2019). Andrea also said the following about how LEI participation helped prepare her to hold leadership positions in her life:

> It made me aware of the different leadership styles, and how just because one leadership style may work for me, you may need to implement multiple leadership styles, [for] other people that you're working with or the people that you're serving. There's really no such thing as one leadership style, I would say. And so, for me, it helped me learn and how to implement an effective balance with the people that I work with, and the children that I see on a daily basis (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

Briana said this about learning to lead with her strengths through Leading Edge Institute:

> It was more like defining what your strengths were in order to lead. One of my things was learning that it's okay for me to not always be in the front, which I don't prefer to be in the front anyway. I would prefer to do everything behind the scenes and then let somebody else get up in front of everybody. But it took some time for me to say, "You know what, I don't need to be the front person. Somebody else might need that opportunity." And that was my big thing that I had learned through LEI was that I don't have to be in the front. That I can do all the behind the scenes and let somebody else get up there and I'm okay with that (Briana, personal communication, February 19, 2019).

Leigh talked about strengths in a different way when she shared the following:

> So even though we all have these leadership qualities, it's like, okay, what makes you unique among this group of fabulous women? And certainly, I've always kind of identified myself as a bit of the oddball, even amongst the [LEI] group…something that

> can be your greatest strength can also be kind of your greatest weakness, in a sense, if it goes too far and out of bounds. And for me, my rebellion is a huge strength of mine, my willingness to not accept things. But also, I have to learn etiquette. And I need to learn how to pick up a spoon, and learn how to dress the part, and learn how to get my foot in the door when I have conversations with important people. And that was a hard lesson for me (Leigh, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Previous staff member Valerie said LEI's goal was to help college women to "[tap] into [their] leadership potential as an individual" (personal communication, January 16, 2019). During her observation, Andrea demonstrated that she leads with her strengths in that she was quick to ask questions of colleagues via the telephone when she felt she needed more information or had been given "things I feel is over my head these days" (personal communication, January 16, 2019). Admitting that one does not have all the information is a clear demonstration of recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses.

Previous advisor Ella said that LEI's focus on strengths was her biggest take-away from her Leading Edge experience. She articulated this sentiment as follows:

> One of the biggest things that I took away from LEI was [Gallop's] StrengthsFinder. It is very much a huge part of who I am. I still have my [top] five on my desk in front of me. I see them every day, and we implemented it with our [student] staff (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

The physical placement of her top five strengths in her office was confirmed on the day of Ella's observation; not only were Ella's strengths in sight, but she seemed to work to her strengths throughout the afternoon as she interacted with colleagues both in person and over the telephone. Other participants of the current study similarly emphasized self-awareness of strengths. During her one-on-one interview, Jane said, “I do think that the sort of self-awareness exercises that were part of the curriculum helped me to, you know, lean in to who I am and how I do things and how I lead” (personal communication, February 4, 2019). Valerie said, “Being able to do some of the same assessments that the students did, you know, helped me realize what my strengths and my weaknesses were, so that absolutely was a plus” (personal communication, January 16, 2019). Representatives of LEI’s faculty, staff, and alumnae all reported that LEI impacted their recognition of personal strengths.

LEI’s focus on strengths was also evident in a review of accessible records. The final year’s schedule (see Appendix J) showed that significant portions of two days of the week-long summer institute were dedicated to self-assessment and reflection for the college women participants. Personal preferences were explored via the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, strengths were identified via Gallop’s StrengthsFinder, an introduction was provided to leadership styles, and a discussion was held regarding the role gender plays in leadership development. Taken altogether, this evidence seems to highlight the fact that LEI worked diligently to increase stakeholder self-awareness of strengths.

Improved understanding of Alabama’s issues. This major theme of the current study was underscored by numerous pages of collected data. Subthemes that informed this major theme were the concepts of founder’s syndrome and privilege, reflections of optimism and service, shared desire to see change happen in the State of Alabama, and sadness that LEI has been dissolved as a business entity in the State of Alabama.

In reflecting on how sad LEI’s dissolution has been and how she has described the program to other people since the organization’s dissolution, Briana said, “I did this leadership thing that was just women in the State of Alabama that impacted the community that I was in at the time, and I can see where it has impacted other communities, not just the community that I was in" (personal communication, February 19, 2019). Jane said that she is "a little sad that LEI's gone… I definitely miss it" (personal communication, February 4, 2019). Kendra said, "If it was still as active as it was, I feel I would still try to volunteer, donate money or something… I would be involved because I think it's a really great program" (personal communication, January 15, 2019).

The current study's participants seemed to be in agreement in this point of missing LEI. Briana went so far as to assert the following:

> I think if Leading Edge was still going, that I would have a different... I feel that I would have a different role in it. I would try to be involved with it, but because it's not there, it's kind of hard to be involved when there's not that program there… Let's bring LEI back… [we just need] the funds and the resources and the time (Briana, personal communication, February 19, 2019).

Jane seemed to further this point when she commented the following during her interview:

> It would be amazing if we could ever have some kind of an alumni event. And I don't know, get behind some of the efforts to improve the State of Alabama. I'd like to do more, but I think everybody's just really busy in general. And with no organization and no involvement from past leadership, it would be really difficult unless it's a grassroots kind of event where we pull together on the Facebook group and say, "Hey, let's do something." That would be awesome. Maybe one day (Jane, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Past LEI staff member Valerie said, “I think it would be great if [LEI] still existed, especially in this climate, a lot of money could be raised, it would be great” (personal communication, January 16, 2019). Former LEI advisor Elizabeth said the following about LEI’s dissolution:

> I loved Leading Edge, and I was extremely upset when it disbanded… I would still find a way to do it today somehow, even though I don’t even work in higher education anymore. If it still existed, I would find a way to do it… I’m still so sad that it’s not there anymore… I remember thinking at the time, “What a shame that people aren’t fighting harder for this because this really matters…” But I feel like in this situation, the executive team and board really did not see eye to eye a lot, and I think that’s, ultimately, what the cause of the demise was, but I really don’t know (Elizabeth, personal communication, November 30, 2018).

Elizabeth’s comments above might be perceived as alluding to founder’s syndrome as a contributor to LEI’s dissolution if the organization’s founder was still involved in the organization’s governance model. The final roster of LEI board members was not accessible during the review of organizational records. Elizabeth went on to say the following:

> LEI was extremely transformative, and I think...Alabama is less because there is no LEI anymore or something like it. If there is something like it, I’ve not heard of it. I hope that something in the same vein as LEI will come back... If it added tremendous value to my life and I’m someone that’s literally been studying leadership since I was 18 years old, then I can’t imagine how much value it added to a 19-year-old’s who is just starting her leadership journey. So, it added tremendous value to my life (Elizabeth, personal communication, November 30, 2018).

Other participants of the current study made similar comments. Ella shared her own insight into LEI organizational history that may have contributed to the organization's eventual dissolution:

> I have seen several different executive directors. Going back to even... I was supposed to take over LEI [advising at my university] long before I actually did… But they took a break… And so, then they picked up like two years later, I think… But they took a break, so there's been lots of turnover since then, and I think that's been part of the problem is there's not been a steady person… I don't know what happened at the end. We were never told, and so that's kind of my only thing that I wish there would have been like, an announcement or something like that, a formal announcement, because I do think it is a valuable program and I hate that we're not still sending women to it (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Ella has referred to a gap in activity at the organization's height, which may or may not have resulted from the founder's syndrome problem, but certainly prevented the organization from flourishing as much as it might have without a break in activity. Additionally, the inconsistent leadership of the organization cannot have contributed to its success. Valerie put it this way:

> What I found about the organization was that it had changed hands very often… And so, for that reason there was a lot of confusion in the community. Each person of course has a different vision for how it would look. So, it never was able to really get legs, the legs it deserved, I think… There were challenges… I feel like our board was very much, you know, whatever you want to do, you can do it to an extent, [but] there were some challenges there. And as far as donors, I think that's where it got tricky. As far as the stakeholders that took a lot of finessing, there was [*sic*] also some roadblocks because Alabama's very conservative and it was an organization focused on women's leadership

> development. And not every woman in that group was conservative; not every woman in that group was extremely progressive… That leadership for women, the only thing that I think should be distinct about training women to be leaders is making them aware of the context they'll be in… When they go outside your doors, putting them on notice of what they can face, and have them navigate those things. But as far as how you lead, there is no male, female. A good leader, is a good leader, is a good leader (Valerie, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Context is certainly an important aspect of leadership development, and personal privilege may be worth consideration in framing the leadership context.

The current study's participants had a few comments regarding the concept of privilege. Ella said the following:

> [LEI] helped reframe my decision-making process. I definitely see things from a lens of privilege now. And so, I'm cognizant of that, when making decisions at work… I'd like to think that I'm a much more open person now and... I feel like it made me aware of many different social justice issues, that were even [happening] on my campus that I had no idea about (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Past advisor Jane shared these reflections regarding privilege:

> I do know that the education that I got as sort of a peripheral member of the organization helped me recognize things and be more open to help and to just recognize how I can use my own... What's the word? Privilege. How I can use my privilege to help other people. That...opened my eyes to opportunities (Jane, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Based on these comments, one might assert that awareness of personal privilege helps individuals work to advocate for less-privileged people within their spheres of influence, and based on information shared in chapter two, Alabama is statistically home to many under-privileged people.

Interviewees discussed the ways in which their participation with Leading Edge Institute improved their understanding of the issues faced by the population of Alabama. Andrea said this about her LEI experience:

> It really helped me open my eyes. Some of the stuff that I didn't know that was going on, especially going and spending time in the Black Belt, which we did, which is a part of the program. That opened my eyes into different areas, and the different problems that each area within the state has, and how we can try to pool resources to help those areas (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

Other interviewees made similar comments. Briana said, "Leading Edge really politics-wise helped me understand [civil rights issues] a little bit better" (personal communication, February 19, 2019). Elizabeth articulated the issues LEI exposed her to in this way:

> When I went to Leading Edge the first time, I had only lived in Alabama…five months, and so I didn't really know much about the state, and... I can remember…hearing someone speak over the lunch hour about the poverty rate and how Alabama has 67 counties and how so many of them are impoverished, and we covered the gamut at Leading Edge about issues. We talked about everything. We talked about healthcare, we talked about poverty, we talked about racism, we talked about everything (Elizabeth, personal communication, November 30, 2018).

Previous advisor Ella indicated the transformative nature of her LEI experience like this:

> I didn't know that there were parts of Alabama that didn't have running water. You know, you hear about third world countries that don't have running water but then our own state, there are parts that don't have running water… Just seeing it first hand, seeing the Black Belt and seeing Perry County and being in Selma, and being aware of, you know, voting rights and... Because I'm not from Alabama originally, so I [didn't] really know a whole lot about the history of Alabama until I went to LEI, and was a campus advisor, and had the opportunity to go and see the Edmund Pettus Bridge and all these different places. And so, it [was] just like suddenly really eye-opening, because I think I was probably like a lot of our students for many years in that I believed what I believed because my parents believed that way. And then once I saw it first hand and had my eyes opened to, you know, women's issues and things like that and how they were affecting us in the state and where we stood as a state... That was really, really impactful for me (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Likewise, previous advisor Jane shared similar reflections regarding increased awareness of issues in Alabama. She said the following:

> I'm from Alabama, so I felt like I should have known these things. But then when we were thrust into this almost...I don't want to say it's like a third world country. But there are parts of Alabama that are like that. And I didn't really realize that. I was very sheltered growing up. Even though I didn't grow up that far away from where we did summer institute, the first two summers I was involved. Greensboro, Alabama, is very, very rural. And lots of poverty in the local community. So being there and seeing firsthand was a lot more than just hearing about what issues the state has. I mean we all hear on the news about the education budget being a problem or there are always new

> taxes to consider when it's time to go vote. But I never really put two and two together as much as I did that first couple of summers in Greensboro [and] Marion, Alabama. It definitely helped me recognize the issues faced by the state (Jane, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Kendra reflected on how LEI encouraged college women to stay in the state to help improve Alabama. She said the following:

> [LEI] also really shaped sort of my career path a little more because I spent my whole life growing up thinking about how I was going to get a degree and go to college and then leave Alabama, and then Leading Edge was like, "Hey, all the really smart people keep leaving and we need people to stay…" That's something that I became more passionate about after Leading Edge… Staying in Alabama or the need for advocates and leadership in Alabama especially by women, or people that are going to change things. We talked a lot about some racial issues and poverty issues in Alabama that I wasn't always aware of, and I remember one of the statistics was—the first time I ever heard it—was that most of Alabama is a medically underserved population when it comes to mental health… I've always been passionate about mental health, but now I'm more passionate about advocating to get better health care in Alabama, and sending more people into the mental health care fields and for them to stay in Alabama (Kendra, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

LEI seems to have intentionally designed its mission to address needs within the state. Each class has experienced a week-long summer intensive portion of the program that includes a service-learning day (see Appendix J). Following various team-based service projects, the full group gathered to discuss the day's activities and to reflect on how the experience has helped to shape individual perspectives of the state's needs. While this single day of service-learning has not been fully representative of all social, economic, and education issues in the state, the goal of the day was to expose the potentially privileged program participants to the specific issues that persist in the state's more rural areas (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.). Additionally, a day of LEI's summer institute has been dedicated to advocacy issues, in conversation with political leaders at the Alabama State House and in exploring the Southern Poverty Law Center's educational exhibits (see Appendix J). Leigh shared the following about how LEI helped educate her regarding Alabama's issues:

> I think I was really ignorant on the politics of everything and how taxes were done. You know that video we had to watch, that *It's a Thick Book*? That was really eye opening for me… I think before [LEI] I was very politically unaware. I think that's really shifted for me now where I'm more aware, both on a local scale and at a country scale, what government looks like. And being aware of that is really important (Leigh, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Martha shared the following regarding her perspective of LEI opening her eyes to Alabama's issues:

> I love that it was at Judson [College] the year I did it because you're in the Black Belt and you learned more about the impoverished areas in Alabama and then the other non-profits they brought in to talk to us, it kind of opened my eyes that even now with my job and we do service projects, I kind of think outside the box of different areas we can do service and stuff ,and so it definitely provided me with a lot of information (Martha, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

Even past LEI staff member Valerie was impacted by LEI's efforts to increase understanding regarding Alabama's issues:

> It was always interesting to…actually see there are parts of Alabama that look like, operate like developing countries. And so that definitely shaped my perspective of the state. And also, understanding how much history plays in our state and our inability sometimes to move the needle. It's very much not a person thing, it's very hard to undo decades, centuries of aggressive policies. And, it almost felt sometimes, it would feel futile, the work we were doing. Because you can, it's weird, you can develop these leaders, and they may be great, but they're faced with this system that is just so aggressive (Valerie, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Although seeking change in the State of Alabama is undoubtedly a huge undertaking, overall, the current study's participants were unanimous in agreement that their LEI experience helped them to be better informed about Alabama's issues and were mostly positive about continuing to pursue change for the better in the state.

Regarding the subtheme of a shared desire to see change happen in the State of Alabama, Briana said that LEI involvement helped her recognize that "something has to change. Something has to be done and how can I be a part of that change" (personal communication, February 19, 2019). Similarly, Andrea said the following:

> There was so much information, and I think personally that once I left LEI [summer institute], I thought about things that affected everyone and not things that only affected me, the people around you. It made me want to think about things differently… I'm more involved in my community, in the communities that I've lived in as a result (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

The career choices of these women also reflected a shared desire to see change happen in Alabama. Among the women who participated in the current study are attorneys, therapists, social workers, and educators whose jobs are geared toward improving things within their spheres of influence.

Based on the data collected during the current study, the concept of improved understanding of Alabama's issues was a primary goal of Leading Edge Institute. Study participants described LEI's core competencies, or what the organization primarily focused on or sought to do well, as follows. They focused on "giving back to the community, serving others, becoming the best woman that you could be to affect change" (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019). Briana said, "Leading Edge gave me the ability to see things differently [and] helped me to open my eyes…people that have things going on that need you to see that they've got things going on and that they need help with things" (personal communication, February 19, 2019). Ella said, "they [did] a really good job with bringing to light a lot of issues that are relevant to young women" (personal communication, January 16, 2019). Past advisor Jane articulated LEI's core competencies in this way:

> Core competencies were really helping women recognize the issues in the state, how they could be catalysts for change if they were to stay in the state and try to make it a better place. Some other core competencies were just helping these young women feel like they could and should lead. And helping them to have ownership of that ability (Jane, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Martha articulated LEI's core competencies this way:

> I think the things they focused on was [*sic*], I think, empowering women in the State of Alabama to go and make a difference in whatever field. Nothing specific but just to

> empower them, and then another goal is to inform the women on the issues facing the state of Alabama. They also focused on, depending on what degree you're pursuing, you might leave the state, but how even if you leave to diversify yourself, you should come back to Alabama. So, like, not saying you have to stay in Alabama forever but go and learn stuff abroad but bring the information you learned back to Alabama to make it a better state. I think that's [*sic*] the things that they really focused on (Martha, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

Perceived agreement among the current study's participants regarding LEI's core competencies is encouraging, but the focus on improving understanding of Alabama's issues cannot be complete without some discussion of diversity among the leaders who seek change for Alabama.

Participants in the current study also stressed the importance of diversity in increasing their understanding of Alabama's issues. Andrea said this about how she perceived diversity as contributing to her improved understanding:

> The people behind Leading Edge, they brought so many people who thought differently, who came from so many different backgrounds, different political backgrounds, …different economic statuses or whatever, and I mean, each one of those different categories brought something different, and I think everyone had to learn how to say, "Hey, I never looked at it that way" (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

Briana also emphasized the importance of diversity in this way:

> It's okay to not have the same opinion as everybody else when it comes to things that are going on. Leading Edge was good for a lot of people. I think that helped open the

> students that went through it, their eyes to things that were going on (Briana, personal communication, February 19, 2019).

Ella worded LEI's emphasis on diversity as follows:

> I think just asking the questions that needed to be asked. I think that is probably one way that they succeeded, because regardless of whether you agreed with what they were teaching on or instructing or whatever, giving a seminar on or whatever, it at least got you thinking (Ella, personal communication, January 16, 2019).

Leigh described her understanding of LEI's emphasis on diversity, and how her life has been impacted by this emphasis, in this way:

> What's changed is just it's a sense of self that is just so secure that I don't have to define my work by everyone around me and that being different is okay. I really don't need anybody else's approval. There's [*sic*] all these other women, and all these other leaders, and all these walks of life. And they do it their way. And my way is just as valid, even though it's not conventional, it's valid… I think the reason it's unique, and maybe especially in Alabama, it doesn't use conservative women's roles to define women leadership. And I think, for me, that's the biggest piece of why it worked for me. Because you're free to believe whatever you want to believe, and for me I don't identify with those conservative beliefs (Leigh, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Based on the current study's participant perspectives, diversity was clearly a vital facet of how Leading Edge Institute worked to accomplish its mission, "To inspire, prepare and empower the women of Alabama to lead our state to a more equitable and prosperous future" (Leading Edge Institute, n.d.).

Importance of networking connections. This major theme of the current study was informed by the subtheme of developing or pouring into others, which implies that LEI stakeholders understand the importance of becoming mentors as well as seeking them. Andrea touched on this point several times during her interview. As an assistant district attorney focused primarily on juvenile issues, she described her work as "pretty much working with children in that area, and directing them, and trying to lead them on the right paths" (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019). In describing her leadership style, she said, "It's hard to look at myself like that [as a leader]… I just kind of look at myself as pouring into other people" (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019); although Andrea's hesitance to see herself as a leader is disheartening, this concept of pouring into others is a reasonable representation of mentorship. Andrea also commented on networking as lateral connection with peers as much as development of mentorship relationships:

> I loved my experience with LEI. I've met some really awesome people, some really awesome mentors, which [even until] this day, I still keep in touch with half of the people that was [*sic*] in my class, that went with us. It's not talking every day, but somehow, we find a way to reach out to one another (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

The concept of networking and making connections was emphasized by other participants during their one-on-one interviews. Briana said the following about helping to develop other leaders:

> Sometimes you have to say, "Hey, I know this person has that leadership ability, and they need to see that they have that leadership ability and to use that leadership ability." And that was the big thing for me was going and saying, "I know I'm a leader, but I know this

person's also a leader and that they need to lead in their way" (Briana, personal communication, February 19, 2019).

Elizabeth said that her LEI experience helped her to build her professional network:

> One of my very best friends…was a fellow advisor. She's from [another local university], and I met her there. That's where we met. …and I met, really, a cadre of women who are so inspirational to me… I feel like when you spend a week like that with someone, like Leading Edge [summer institute] was, you don't soon forget them, and you don't want to lose them from your life… I've spoken to [another LEI faculty/staff member] since then, who I met at LEI, and when I knew that I was pretty unhappy in higher [education], I went to her, and she gave me some really good advice. Every interaction you have, big or small, opens doors, even if you can't see it at the time, for the next step in your life (Elizabeth, personal communication, November 30, 2018).

Elizabeth has referenced the week-long summer intensive activities that LEI used as the beginning of the nine-month program. This week included self-assessment, lecture, service learning, and reflection, as demonstrated in the provided agenda from the final active year (see Appendix J). The fall of that same academic year found students back at their respective institutions of higher education, completing LEI coursework separately from their academic studies. The nine-month program culminated with a winter summit conference in which the college women gathered again to report on what they had learned over the course of their participation in LEI. These activities promoted networking both amongst the college women, with their institution-specific advisors, and with other LEI stakeholders. Jane said the following about the networking connections she made during her LEI experience:

> I think that the networking connections that I made with other women who are part of the organization really helped prepare me to own that leadership and helped me to want to stay in the state…to stay and help the state. Because Alabama needs good leaders… But just the connection to people, the networking possibilities have really been important to me. There's [*sic*] a few Facebook groups where LEI ladies keep in touch. And so that's been valuable, even though it's not been a terribly active presence... It's nice to know that those people are out there (Jane, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Martha shared her experience with gaining a mentor via her LEI experience:

> One of my mentors now, [named specifically], I actually met at the… We had to pick a project for a year, and her and I are still close to this day, and I don't think I would have ever met her if it wasn't for Leading Edge [because] I met her through [my project with] AAUW, and so it just opened so many doors for me, and I just thought it was a very meaningful program… It's just a great opportunity for all sorts of women in the college setting (Martha, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

Mentorship is undeniably an important aspect of leadership development, and mentorship is a wonderful outcome of networking efforts. Networking and mentorship can also help college women determine the trajectory of their future careers.

Andrea attributed LEI and the organization's emphasis on networking for helping her determine her career path. She said this about how participation in LEI helped open doors for her professionally:

> I met a lot of people who were interested or who had been effective in the field I wanted to go into. I knew I kind of wanted to go into maybe politics somehow or be an attorney. And I met so many different people on both sides of those spectrums through LEI, which

> I think, honestly, if it wasn't for those connections, I probably wouldn't be where I am today. So, I would contribute a lot of it to networking. Networking is key, sometimes, to getting where you want to be in life. And I do believe that LEI played a great deal in that… It really gave me that motivation to keep going, and it put me in contact with those people that encouraged me along the way (Andrea, personal communication, January 11, 2019).

Kendra reinforced LEI's emphasis on networking when she said the following:

> [LEI] helped me to be more outgoing in meeting people and making connections with people. That was something that I've always been scared of and hated. And so, it helped me not just realize the importance, but it's given me the skills to help me do that (Kendra, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

Leigh described the network that she has built as a result of her LEI experience in this way:

> We had such camaraderie. This wanting to see each other succeed and do well. There was this level of optimism, I think, that was really apparent… And it's really nice to see whenever somebody does something well, and it's always a huge cheerleading kind of supportive thing. And that was really unique and special (Leigh, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Martha said, "Overall [LEI] helped me just get more connections with people" (personal communication, January 15, 2019). Based upon data collected in the current study, networking and making connections, also known as building social capital, were unquestionably primary focus areas of Leading Edge Institute.

Observations of the current study's participants helped to confirm this assertion. Mae demonstrated pouring into others during her observation at work, managing the craft sandwich shop, where she seemed to lead her staff by example; she accomplished tasks with a cheerful spirit and stayed accessible to both staff and customers throughout a busy afternoon. She greeted several customers as if they were regulars, whether they actually were or not, and she spoke with kindness and consideration to everyone who approached her. Martha also demonstrated pouring into others; during her observation, she had friendly interactions with colleagues both face-to-face and on the telephone, and she commented that her job is "heavily focused on coaching, developing people, and preparing for others" (personal communication, January 15, 2019). As Mae and Martha proved during their observation, even when pouring into others is used generally in public relations and not directed at specific individuals, one's network can still be broadened in the process.

Research Question Responses

Qualitative case study seeks to dive deep rather than gather wide information (Yin, 2014), and therefore, data collection for the current study focused heavily on individual research study participants and their personal experiences and reflections regarding the organization under study. The current study sought to answer questions regarding how the organization was effective at accomplishing its mission, as perceived by the organization's various key stakeholders. Although no previous board member elected to participate in the current study, the alumnae, faculty, and staff members who participated in the current study provided rich descriptions of their perceptions of LEI's effectiveness. Data analysis, especially from the participant interviews, informed the following answers to the current study's research questions.

RQ1: How do stakeholders describe the contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation?

Overall, the current study's participants described a marked contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation. While study participants who had experienced the program as college students attributed more of their leadership preparation to LEI, even the faculty and staff who participated in the current study attributed at least indirect contributions. Alumnae of the program talked about how their LEI experience helped them to gain confidence in their leadership abilities, improved their professional networking skills, helped them appreciate the issues faced by various marginalized populations of Alabama, and encouraged them to seek alternate ways to lead within their own spheres of influence. Previous faculty and staff talked about their LEI experience as a piece of a larger whole that made up their leadership preparation process, but each faculty and staff member also indicated sincere disappointment that Leading Edge Institute has been dissolved as a business entity in the State of Alabama (see Appendix I).

RQ2: To what extent do the organization's stakeholders attribute these experiences to their current application of transformational leadership?

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results for the current study's body of potential participants showed a higher self-assessment rating for transformational leadership factors than for transactional leadership factors. On a scale of zero to four, the group's results for passive/avoidant leadership factors were less than one. In interviewing and observing the study's participants, the researcher found that individual responses to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire were largely reflective of the participants' chosen career paths. The following table presents the aggregate results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire campaign launched in support of this research study.

Table 2: *LEI Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Campaign Results*

MLQ Factors	Group Average Results	U.S. Self-Rating Norm
Idealized Influence (Attributes)	2.98	40th percentile
Idealized Influence (Behaviors)	3.28	70th percentile
Inspirational Motivation	3.50	80th percentile
Intellectual Stimulation	3.45	70th percentile
Individualized Consideration	3.47	60th percentile
Contingent Reward	2.97	50th percentile
Management-by-Exception (Active)	1.93	60th percentile
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0.89	40th percentile
Laissez-Faire Leadership	0.93	70th percentile
Extra Effort	3.33	80th percentile
Effectiveness	3.41	60th percentile
Satisfaction	3.40	60th percentile
Transformational Leadership Indicators	3.33	
Transactional Leadership Indicators	2.53	
Passive/Avoidant Leadership Indicators	0.91	
Leadership Outcomes	3.36	

Note: Normed percentages are based on percentiles for individual scores based on self ratings in the U.S. as provided in the copyrighted MLQ manual (Avolio & Bass, 2004), to include both men and women. Group average results in the table above reflect the simple average derived from individual participants' self-rating scores on a group of questionnaire items. Each item was scored on a self-assessment based on the following frequency: 4=frequently, if not always; 3=fairly often; 2=sometimes; 1=once in a while; and 0=not at all.

Ten individuals completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, and three additional individuals accessed the assessment but did not complete it. Table Two is shaded to group factors and to assist with these results' readability. The four final lines of the table above include aggregate results of the factors previously listed in the same table; the four final lines have no normed percentile score associated with them. The first five factors inform the overall transformational leadership score of 3.33, while the next two factors inform the overall transactional leadership score of 2.53, the subsequent two factors inform the overall passive/avoidant leadership score of 0.91, and the final three factors with national norm percentiles inform the overall leadership outcomes score of 3.36 (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Although the aggregate score of 3.33 is only a slightly higher score than 2.53, the collective results for each MLQ factor with normed percentile scores indicate that the group is more transformational than the norm but not necessarily less transactional than the norm (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Both styles of leadership can be evident in an individual because leaders may adapt their leadership approach to a given situation, and these styles of leadership fall along a continuum, as depicted by the following figure (Northouse, 2016).

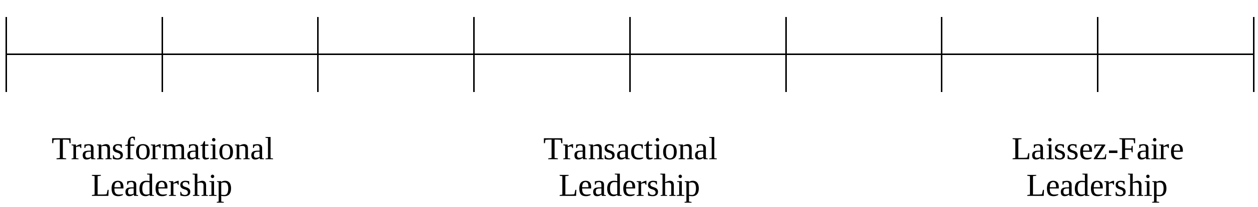

Figure 2. Continuum from Transformational to Laissez-Faire Leadership (Northouse, 2016, p. 166).

The LEI group who completed the MLQ seems to have scored along this continuum, with their results most firmly on the transformational leadership end of the spectrum. Again, the group scores were 3.33 regarding transformational leadership indicators, 2.53 regarding transactional leadership indicators, and 0.91 regarding passive/avoidant or laissez-faire leadership indicators.

Study participants were asked during their interviews, “How do you understand your Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results?” During most interviews, discussion around this question often included clarification that the population on which the normed percentile scores have been based would have included both men and women. In some cases, opinions were shared regarding women’s stereotypical hesitance to self-assess as highly as men might. At this point in her interview, Martha said the following:

> Just because being a woman in our society, we’ve slowly gotten better in some of these areas, but I feel like a lot of us, I can’t speak for everyone, but I know me personally sometimes I step back a little bit rather than take risks. So, I feel like that kind of reflects our society as well…we don’t give ourselves as much credit as where men are like, “Yes. Yes, I did that” (Martha, personal communication, January 15, 2019).

The general consensus of the interviewees was that self-assessment is difficult, and women are especially prone to be critical in self-assessment. Although the group did self-assess fairly highly in some areas of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, and they do appear to be more transformational than the norm, the group also agreed that being rated by other individuals rather than self-assessing might have been a more valid measurement of their application of transformational leadership.

RQ3: How do the perceptions of members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae align regarding the organization's impact on their leadership opportunities?

Although no former member of the organization's board of directors elected to participate in the current study, perception of members of the organization's faculty, staff, and alumnae aligned regarding the positive impact of Leading Edge Institute on their leadership opportunities. Former advisor Ella took what she learned through her experience with LEI to enhance the curriculum of a co-curricular program for women's leadership at her university, in which female students both enroll in a leadership course with learning objectives and share a living space to build community outside the classroom. Ella serves as a particular example of how LEI impacted the leadership opportunities of its faculty and staff. All but one of the alumnae participants in the current study returned to volunteer as interns with LEI the year after they completed the program, and these individuals attribute both their student experience and their intern experience to increased leadership opportunities, particularly with regard to professional networking and career path selection. While alumna Kendra referred to her current work situation as "not necessarily a leadership role," she also referenced leadership experiences in the years immediately following her initial LEI participation (personal communication, January 15, 2019); for example, she worked outside of her natural comfort zone to lead a small group for a collegiate religious organization, of which about half of those small group members went on to become leaders in that same religious organization.

Conclusive alignment of key stakeholders' perceptions is not possible without the participation of past board members, but the current study's participants were positive overall regarding LEI's impact on their leadership opportunities. The researcher could only speculate regarding reasons for the lack of board member participation. At least three former LEI board members were specifically and individually invited to participate in the current study, and their lack of response to the study invitation may be indicative of a deeper issue with LEI leadership or it might only suggest that these individuals were far too busy to respond. Regardless of the reasons behind the lack of board member participation, this missing piece of LEI stakeholder representation is a clear limitation of the current study.

Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the current study. Although the study's participants did not represent the full range of diversity of the greater population of Leading Edge Institute stakeholders, the data collected served to answer the research questions. Profiles of the study's participants have been presented in this chapter along with study results, with particular focus on theme development and research question responses. Major themes that have been explored are *increased confidence in leadership ability*, *increased self-awareness of strengths*, *improved understanding of Alabama's issues*, and the *importance of networking connections*.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The current intrinsic, multiple case study has sought to describe the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program, Leading Edge Institute, through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. This final chapter presents a summary of the study's findings, discussion of the findings related to relevant literature and the theoretical framework, methodological and practical implications of the study, an outline of the study's delimitations and limitations, and suggests recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Alumnae, faculty, and staff members who participated in the current study provided rich descriptions of their perceptions of LEI's effectiveness. Data analysis informed the following answers to the current study's research questions.

RQ1: How do stakeholders describe the contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation?

Overall, the current study's participants described a distinct contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation. Participants reflected on positive experiences that at least indirectly increased their leadership development. Alumnae indicated more direct experiential contributions than did faculty and staff. Study participants described their LEI experience as empowering and outlook-altering.

RQ2: To what extent do the organization's stakeholders attribute these experiences to their current application of transformational leadership?

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results for the current study's body of potential participants showed a higher self-assessment rating for transformational leadership factors than for transactional leadership factors. These results can be interpreted to suggest that the group is more transformational than the norm but not necessarily less transactional than the norm (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Participant interviews, especially of alumnae, revealed surprise that any passive/avoidant leadership indicators were present in the group; Briana expressed the sentiment as follows:

> I always didn't feel that there was that much of that passive leadership, like the passive/avoidant leadership with our group…because most of the people that were with my group, it was what change can they do? ...they were about the change (Briana, personal communication, February 19, 2019).

Without fail, alumnae described increased confidence in their ability to lead, increased self-awareness of their strengths, and improved understanding of the issues faced by the population of Alabama. These women described hopes of making an impact on the State of Alabama for the better, and while at least one does plan to leave Alabama in the future, they are each working to make a positive impact in their communities.

RQ3: How do the perceptions of members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae align regarding the organization's impact on their leadership opportunities?

Although no former member of the organization's board of directors elected to participate in the current study, perceptions of members of the organization's faculty, staff, and alumnae aligned regarding the positive impact of Leading Edge Institute on their leadership opportunities. If only impacted by increased social capital through improved networking skills or connections made with other women from across the state, the current study's participants generally agreed that their involvement with Leading Edge Institute increased their knowledge and self-awareness, opened their eyes to issues in the state, or helped them take ownership of their leadership abilities.

Discussion

Literature supported the current study's purpose, importance, and methodology. The study's findings do confirm previous research in some ways, while these findings also contribute to a gap in the literature specific to the effectiveness of women's leadership training. This noted gap in the literature established the current study's problem that intentional assessment of LEI's program and activities, as measured by its self-reported perceived impact on its stakeholders, is needed to clarify how the organization has been effective in accomplishing its mission and specifically how stakeholders have been impacted by their LEI affiliation (Creswell, 2013; Yin 2014). The current study extends on previous literature by exploring in-depth how specific key stakeholders of a women's leadership training program perceived the organization's effectiveness. The how identified by the current study's participants is a novel contribution to the field. Detailed discussion follows regarding the empirical and theoretical literature previously presented in light of the current study's findings.

Empirical Literature Discussion

Themes that emerged during data collection and analysis for the current study were informed by the empirical literature presented in chapter two, but these themes also add to and further the discussion. For example, following participant Valerie's interview, the researcher sought further literature to help define the concept of founder's syndrome, which adds to the discussion but also aligns with literature regarding non-profit organizations and their leadership. As previously discussed in chapter two, the purposes of non-profit organizations may vary greatly, as reflected by their differing organizational structures, but in general, they seek to serve a greater good than simply financial gain, since "their missions are socially and educationally driven" (Andjelkovic & Boolaky, 2015, p. 125). According to Appendices G and I, LEI was in existence for 15 years. LEI's small non-profit nature established a unique environment in which the organization operated. Alabama's economic status has limited the support base for organizations of this kind and keeps them teetering on the edge of inactivity, constantly adjusting "to the existing resources to preserve stability" (Felício, Gonçalves, & Gonçalves, 2013, p. 2144). Evidently, the strong persistence of founder's syndrome also contributed to the organization's eventual dissolution as a business entity in Alabama, a fact that has saddened key stakeholders and left them craving continued community among the connections they forged through their LEI experience.

Another concept that emerged in the current study was LEI's emphasis on encouraging women to stay in Alabama to seek change for the improvement of the state. This concept was both informed and confirmed by the concept of brain drain discussed in chapter two. Although brain drain has been cited as an elusive problem to define in exact terms, the effects of brain drain on the geographic sources of those highly skilled citizens as well as on their destinations have been explored in numerous studies over the years (Chepurenko, 2015). Primarily rural areas such as those across Alabama experience loss to larger metropolitan areas within the same country. Native Alabamians who develop marketable skills and acquire higher education are not unlikely to turn their job searches to markets outside the state. Such exodus may be explained by these skilled professionals' consideration for future generations' opportunities as much as consideration of their own expanded opportunities in a more diverse and larger metropolitan area (Chepurenko, 2015). Alabama's overall economic situation is less than ideal. The economic situation, along with the state's social, educational, and healthcare issues, significantly contribute to the factors that motivate young professionals to seek opportunities elsewhere. This loss of human resources in turn negatively impacts the state's economy, education, and healthcare (Hebblethwaite, 2013). Rural brain drain represents a vicious cycle for the State of Alabama, but as evidenced by the concept under discussion, organizations like Leading Edge Institute have attempted to encourage young professionals to stay to help improve the state. While the organization's encouragement of alumnae to stay and help Alabama may now seem hypocritical following LEI's dissolution, the organization's demise may also be considered a symptom of ongoing brain drain in the state.

Participants in the current study called their LEI experience "empowering" and noted that LEI placed emphasis on authenticity, diversity, and networking or making connections. These concepts were also informed and confirmed by the literature reviewed in chapter two. Leading Edge Institute seems to have worked to empower women leaders by helping them build self-awareness and lead with authenticity. Authentic leadership is inexorably tied to effective transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) and can be defined as leadership performed with honesty, transparency, and personal values (Champy, 2009). Authentic leaders have a great understanding of their own preferences and strengths, as well as how those individual indicators relate to others. Authentic leaders, therefore, have an appreciation of the reasons behind their actions, as authenticity to self directly aligns to a sense of purpose (Champy, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Authenticity also appreciates diversity and facilitates networking. Diversity in a group setting helps to establish a "well-rounded group" that may potentially "fill [the group's] blind spots" as they work together to make good decisions (Farrington, 2011, p. 2). In this context, then, an emphasis on networking for social capital is invaluable toward building authentic leaders who seek positive change for the State of Alabama through improved resources for professional and personal wealth, regardless of a factual economic situation (Madara, 2012).

Theoretical Literature Discussion

Transformational leadership, which established the current study's theoretical framework, is a cross-disciplinary concept, applicable to various professional sectors and academic disciplines (Balwant, 2016). The transformational theory of leadership works with an ontological philosophical assumption and social constructivism interpretive framework to situate a study of the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training organization LEI. The transformational theory of leadership appreciates the individualization of diversity that informs different perceptions of reality, and the theory also considers how social context helps those individuals develop personal values.

The current study's findings include evidence that key stakeholders of Leading Edge Institute are more transformational than the norm but not necessarily less transactional than the norm (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Both styles of leadership can be evident in an individual because leaders may adapt their leadership approach to a given situation (Northouse, 2016). Observation of the current study's participants seemed to confirm that Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results, which are the basis upon which this discussion of transformational leadership evidence is founded, were heavily informed by individual's chosen career paths, and individual results were appropriate for those women.

Given the racially divisive history of Alabama, one might assume that participation with the Leading Edge Institute might improve race relations at least among the organization's stakeholders. Participants in the current study certainly implied improvement of race relations and awareness of the fact and importance of diversity to continue to improve economic and social conditions in Alabama. White people are the historic majority in Alabama, whether their numbers maintain an actual majority of the population or not, and the white participants of the current study reported a more significant experience than did the black participants regarding awareness of diversity in the state. Black participants have likely always been more aware of the importance of diversity than their white classmates and coworkers, so no significant increase in their awareness is to be expected. However, increased awareness among the white participants as a result of LEI involvement can be perceived as a positive learning gain for these members of the historic majority.

Participants in the current study attributed their LEI experience with increased confidence and a changed personal outlook on life. The Leading Edge Institute might be perceived as having operated on the foundation of the transformational leadership theoretical framework because key stakeholders reported personal transformation as a result, either directly or indirectly, of their LEI experience. Such transformative experience can be life-altering and not easily forgotten.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The current study's theoretical implications focus on furthering the research in this specific area of study and production of a replicable research model. The degree to which this organization was effective in accomplishing its mission is important, but even more vital is a review of how the organization pursued its mission, as perceived by the organization's key stakeholders (Creswell, 2013; Yin 2014). By collecting and presenting this information, the current study has sought to further the research in this area of women's leadership training effectiveness. The current study has also provided a replicable model despite its anticipated lack of generalizability.

Empirical Implications

The literature showed a significant gap regarding women's leadership training effectiveness and the means by which women's leadership training achieves this effectiveness (Harjo et al., 2013; Hassan et al., 2010). The current study has attempted to help fill this gap with an in-depth intrinsic multiple case study of an organization's stakeholders' perceptions of effectiveness as it has claimed to train women for leadership in a highly conservative, patriarchal society. Though perennially relevant, leadership is a broad and varied discipline. Beneath this larger umbrella, the related topics of leadership training, leadership training effectiveness, and women's leadership continue to develop as important disciplines. These empirical implications further the research on a limited basis.

Practical Implications

The current study has also attempted to provide sufficient details about an organization that has claimed to successfully perform this mission, which is beneficial for practical replication of the study regarding other such organizations (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2013). Target audiences for this research have included leadership scholars and practitioners, stakeholders in leadership training organizations such as the one under study, women seeking leadership training opportunities for themselves, or male or female leaders seeking leadership training opportunities for the female subordinates in their organizations. Potential future study replication or replication of the organization under study, which are probable valuable practical implications, additionally builds upon the relevant literature to improve the empirical implications of such research. Taken into consideration together, these practical implications further establish the value of qualitative case study research.

Implications for leadership scholars and practitioners. Implications for leadership scholars and practitioners based on the current study are future replication as well as suggestions for future research, which are provided later in this chapter. Leadership scholars and practitioners may be particularly interested in seeking more information about how women self-assess on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire as opposed to how they are rated by others using this same instrument.

Implications for stakeholders of Leading Edge Institute and similar organizations. LEI stakeholders may be delighted to learn that they share an interest in reviving the organization, while stakeholders of similar organizations can learn from the mistakes that led to LEI's dissolution as a business entity. Founder's syndrome is apparently a very real threat to non-profit organizations, and organizations with missions to train leaders can benefit from the cautionary tale of Leading Edge Institute's dissolution. Interested parties might question what LEI could have done differently to be successful and continue to train women for leadership. Although a review of the characteristics of a successful non-profit organization were decidedly outside the purview of the current study, stakeholders may find value in chapter two's discussion regarding non-profit organizations and their leadership. Because non-profit organizations are typically dependent upon the support of philanthropic donations for budgetary funds, small non-profit organizations are particularly susceptible to the whims of their potentially unstable environments. Additionally, non-profit organizations are subject to the competing interests of their various stakeholders (Dainelli, Manetti, & Sibilio, 2013). A broad range of interests and expectations are likely represented by a non-profit organization's internal and external stakeholders, and balance of these differing expectations must be sought for a non-profit to succeed. Founder's syndrome cannot be allowed to persist.

Implications for women seeking leadership training opportunities for themselves, or male or female leaders seeking leadership training opportunities for the female subordinates in their organizations. Implications for individuals seeking women's leadership training opportunities include the confirmation that women are better served by women-only leadership training programs, but that such organizations can fall prey to the same threats as other well-intentioned organizations. Individuals seeking leadership training would be well advised to consider their options carefully and to invest more than financial resources into the organization they determine will best serve their needs. LEI would have benefitted from more sustained support from stakeholders beyond financial gifts; in essence, where LEI lacked in continued leadership at the top, they might have made up with continued grassroots leadership from among the ranks of faculty, staff, and other supporters.

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations of the current study include limiting participants to females over the age of 18 who had been involved with the Leading Edge Institute in Alabama. While some men have been involved in the organization's board of directors, the researcher, in consultation with her dissertation chair and committee, determined that an all-female pool of participants would provide the best source of rich data to describe this statewide college women's leadership training program. Following the discovery that the organization had been dissolved as a business entity in the State of Alabama, and lacking a response from the last board chair regarding permission to proceed with the study on a now non-entity, the researcher utilized social media as the primary means of participant recruitment. The decision to rely on social media for participant recruitment further limited the pool of study participants to those individuals who both had relevant social media accounts and who were active in relevant groups on Facebook where recruitment materials were posted.

Limitations of the current study focus principally on the non-representative sample of self-selected study participants. The ten individuals who volunteered to participate in the current study fell between the ages of 23 and 38. These women were either black or white. Six had been participants in the organization's college women's leadership training program, and five of those had returned to volunteer as interns the year after their initial participation. Three women had been advisors from various institutions of higher education across the state. One had been a staff member of the organization. None were former members of the organization's board of directors, and no current study participants reported dissatisfaction with the training they received from LEI. Six have been or still are married, of which two are each married to a man of a different race, and four are mothers. Most have completed at least one college degree, while several have completed or are working toward completion of a graduate degree. Most reported involvement in other leadership-focused organizations either before or after their LEI involvement (e.g., participation in 4-H programs, academic coursework, sororities, and other social organizations), and so their LEI experience cannot be credited as the sole source of these women's leadership preparation.

These women provided rich perspectives of the organization's effectiveness, but they cannot be considered to have fully represented the greater population of LEI stakeholders. Even the final active years of Leading Edge Institute showed photographic evidence on social media of greater age diversity and more inclusive racial and ethnic diversity than the current study's participants represent. For example, the organization's Facebook posts from June 2014 and

February 2015 show photographs of women who appear to be in their 20s through their 60s, to include those of Hispanic and Asian descent. The organization's earliest alumnae would now be no younger than their mid-30s, and past LEI board members, faculty, and staff might now be in their 70s or 80s at most. Black and white women in their 20s and 30s might represent a majority of LEI's recent alumnae, but the current study's participants do not represent the whole of LEI's population of stakeholders.

Leading Edge Institute was a thriving organization at the onset of the current study, and provisional access to organizational records had been offered following the researcher's IRB approval. Unfortunately, the organization was dissolved as a business entity prior to IRB approval, and so dissolution of the organization removed the researcher's provisional access to records. The organization's inactivity and dissolution became a limitation during data collection and analysis.

Recommendations for Future Research

Specific to the current organization under study, future research might explore further stakeholder perceptions via more in-depth interviews with a greater number of LEI stakeholders that better represent the broader population and include dissatisfied alumnae who can report on their LEI experience. The current study's findings would certainly assist with interview question development for a follow-up study of this type. Use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire beyond the self-reported scores, to include supervisors and subordinates of study participants reporting on those individuals, would help to triangulate the results of that instrument for the women involved with Leading Edge Institute. An exploratory quantitative survey to determine the generalizability of themes that emerged during data collection and analysis in the current study might also be beneficial. Such proposed studies would further add to the gap in the literature discussed throughout the current study.

Beyond Leading Edge Institute, however, future research might focus on seeking the how behind other leadership development organizations, to compare between organizations or to help establish a model leadership development program or other related best practices. A study utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire as pretest and posttest to correlate the intervention of experiential service learning to the application of transformational leadership in a specific situation or within a certain context would also add to the relevant literature; such a study would need to include a control in place of the service learning intervention, such as lecture-based instruction only. Additionally, replicated study of other women-only programs such as sororities and service organizations might focus on leadership development effectiveness, even if leadership development is not the primary focus of the organization, to determine the means of effectiveness such organizations employ to prepare women to lead in their spheres of influence.

Summary

This chapter has presented a summary of the current study's findings, including a discussion of the findings related to relevant literature and the study's theoretical framework. Methodological and practical implications of the study have been briefly presented as well as an outline of the study's delimitations and limitations. The chapter concluded with recommendations for future research. The purpose of this study has been to describe the effectiveness of the non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program, Leading Edge Institute, through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. Despite the current study's limitations, the unique nature of this organization and its context have made it relevant to fill the identified gap in the literature. Although the fact of the organization's dissolution as a business entity in the State of Alabama proved to be a stumbling block to the completion of this study, this fact has also united stakeholders to maintain relationships amongst themselves. Networking connections have been confirmed as highly beneficial in the perspective of the organization's various stakeholders. The most common results of the Leading Edge Institute experience for college women participants seems to have been increased confidence in their ability to lead, increased self-awareness of their strengths, and improved understanding of the issues faced by the population of Alabama. This program was a valuable part of its stakeholders' leadership development process, and the current study's participants unanimously agreed that they would like to see it revived in some fashion.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 19, 2018

Wendy Grey Huckabee Broyles
IRB Approval 3329.071918: Profiles of a Non-Profit Statewide College Women's Leadership Training Program's Effectiveness

Dear Wendy Grey Huckabee Broyles,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.
Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
7/19/2018 to 7/18/2019
Protocol # 3329.071918

CONSENT FORM

Profiles of a Non-Profit, Statewide, College Women's Leadership Training Program's Effectiveness
Wendy Grey Huckabee Broyles
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study to describe stakeholder perceptions of Leading Edge Institute's effectiveness. You were selected as a possible participant because you are 18 years of age or older and a female stakeholder of Leading Edge Institute (member of the organizations' board of directors, faculty, staff, or alumnae). Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Wendy Broyles, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to describe perceptions of Leading Edge Institute's effectiveness at accomplishing its mission to train college women to be leaders within the State of Alabama. Women who have been trained or involved in supporting the training through this organization (i.e., stakeholders) will be interviewed and observed following their completion of a web-based leadership questionnaire. The study features three research questions: 1) How do stakeholders describe the contribution of their Leading Edge Institute experience to their leadership preparation?; 2) To what extent do the organization's stakeholders attribute these experiences to their current application of transformational leadership?; and 3) How do the perceptions of members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae align regarding the organization's impact on their leadership opportunities?

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a one-on-one interview and supply relevant archival data, if applicable (approximately 60 minutes); interviews will be audio/video recorded with your consent. For example, archival data may include previously recorded audio or video footage of Leading Edge Institute activities, written reports regarding Leading Edge effectiveness, agendas or documentation from past LEI events, or copies of past strategic planning documents.
2. Member-check interview transcript (approximately 45 minutes)
3. Allow observation to be conducted during regularly scheduled activities, including any necessary introductions or explanations to non-participants in the vicinity, and supply any additional archival data, if applicable (approximately 4 hours); audio/video recording and/or photography may be employed during observations to supplement field notes.
4. Member-check observation notes (approximately 60 minutes)
5. Member-check relevant case study analysis (approximately 60 minutes)

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

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Review Board has approved
this document for use from
7/19/2018 to 7/18/2019
Protocol # 3329.071918

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include potential lessons learned about how a women's leadership training organization accomplishes its mission, as this may lead to the replication of such training in other communities.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive. A combination of web-based software systems that utilize two-step authentication will be used to transfer manuscripts for member checks. Data may be used in future presentations or publications. All data and files will be destroyed after the federally required three-year retention period. Raw data will be redacted for personal information before hardcopy documents are shredded and electronic files deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- While I will do everything in my power to ensure and protect data confidentiality, I cannot guarantee that data will not be lost or stolen, which would lead to a breach in confidentiality.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Wendy Grey Huckabee Broyles. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (334) 372-3365 or wgbroyles@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Veronica Sims, at vsims3@liberty.edu.

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
7/19/2018 to 7/18/2019
Protocol # 3329.071918

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record/photograph me as part of my participation in this study.

____
Signature of Participant Date

____
Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX C

Permission to Use Copyright Material and Sample Items: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

mind garden

www.mindgarden.com

To Whom It May Concern,

The above-named person has made a license purchase from Mind Garden, Inc. and has permission to administer the following copyrighted instrument up to that quantity purchased:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The three sample items only from this instrument as specified below may be included in your thesis or dissertation. Any other use must receive prior written permission from Mind Garden. The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.
Sample Items:

As a leader ....

I talk optimistically about the future.
I spend time teaching and coaching.
I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating.... .

Talks optimistically about the future.
Spends time teaching and coaching.
Avoids making decisions

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself and your connection to Leading Edge Institute.
2. What is your current leadership position?
3. Please describe for me your leadership preparation process, including any formal or informal training you received.
4. Let's take a few minutes to consider the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.
5. How do you understand your Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire results?
6. How would you describe your personal experience with Leading Edge Institute, including your introduction to the organization?
7. How did your experience with Leading Edge Institute help you to recognize issues faced by the population of Alabama?
8. How would you describe Leading Edge Institute's core competencies and key stakeholders?
9. How do you understand the leadership structure of Leading Edge Institute?
10. Would you please describe your relationship to Leading Edge Institute or its leadership in the time since your introduction to the organization?
11. Would you please elaborate on how your connection to Leading Edge Institute has opened doors for you in your professional life?
12. To what extent would you say that your Leading Edge Institute experience helped prepare you to hold leadership positions in your life?
13. Please describe your leadership experience prior to your involvement with Leading Edge Institute. Did you hold any leadership roles before LEI?

14. As a result of your Leading Edge Institute experience, what have you achieved as a leader? How has life changed since LEI?
15. What else would you like to add to our conversation today?

APPENDIX E

Adapted Field Notes Template

Time:
Place:
Social Circumstances: Number of Study Participants (if more than one is present):
Language:
Intimacy:
Social Consensus:
General Observations:

Figure 1. Adapted Field Notes Template

APPENDIX F

Letter Requesting Permission to Access and Review Leading Edge Institute Records and to Access and Utilize Stakeholder Contact Information

Dear ____________________:

My name is Wendy Broyles, and I am a recent advisor of Leading Edge Institute participants from _________ University. I am also a doctoral candidate of Liberty University pursuing the doctor of education in educational leadership. In partial completion of my Ed.D. program, my dissertation "Profiles of a non-profit statewide college women's leadership training program's effectiveness" is an intrinsic, multiple case study, whose purpose is to describe the effectiveness of the Leading Edge Institute through profiles of the program's key stakeholders. I am defining LEI's key stakeholders here as members of the organization's board of directors, faculty, staff, and alumnae.

I am writing to request your permission and assistance to access information that will prove vital to the completion of my research study. Data will be collected using interviews, observations, and organizational documents and records. I would like to gain access to organizational records and to contact information for LEI's key stakeholders. Organizational documents, to include any existing strategic plan, historical documentation, and third-party reports, may be utilized to help define the organization's current state. Previously audio and video-recorded sessions also may also be transcribed for analysis. With your permission, I would like to post a call for study participants on the organization's Facebook page and via email. Potential participants will be invited to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, a survey instrument used to measure the existence of transformational leadership, and they will receive an opportunity to join the research study at its conclusion. Interviews and observations will be scheduled for participant convenience, member checks will be employed to confirm accuracy in reporting findings, and stakeholders' time and privacy will be honored throughout the research process.

I would appreciate your permission and assistance as requested above. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Wendy Broyles

APPENDIX G

Leading Edge Institute Certificate of Formation

COPY

0554438
Posted by: CS
Checked by:

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
LEI, INC.

2 0 0 1 0 4 / 4 9 3 6

For the purpose of forming a nonprofit corporation under the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act and any act amendatory thereof, supplementary thereto or substituted therefor (hereinafter referred to as the "Act"), the undersigned do hereby sign and adopt these Articles of Incorporation, and, upon the filing for record of these Articles of Incorporation in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Jefferson County, the existence of a nonprofit corporation (hereinafter referred to as the "Foundation"), under the name set forth in Article I hereof, shall commence.

ARTICLE I.

NAME

1.1 The name of the Foundation shall be LEI, Inc.

RECEIVED
APR 20 2001
SECRETARY OF STATE

ARTICLE II.

PERIOD OF DURATION

2.1 The duration of the Foundation shall be perpetual.

ARTICLE III.

PURPOSES AND POWERS

3.1 Subject to the limitations set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 below, the purposes for which the Foundation is organized are:

(a) The Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue law (the "Code") including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following specific purpose: to engage in and carry on the business of providing a leadership development program for young women across the State of Alabama exposing emerging women leaders to skill development, mentoring relationships, community challenges and the critical role women can play as leaders.

00652915.1/8083-1

(b) In connection with the foregoing actively to solicit, accept, receive, maintain and disburse contributions, and income therefrom, and to apply for, accept and expend grants in accordance with their requirements.

(c) To engage in any other charitable or educational activities, or any lawful act or activity for which a corporation may be organized under the Act, provided that such act or activity is one permitted by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and the regulations promulgated thereunder (the "Regulations").

3.2 The Foundation shall be subject to the following restrictions and limitations, notwithstanding any other provisions of these Articles:

(a) The Foundation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and the Regulations, or by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Code and the Regulations as the same now exist or as they may be hereafter amended from time to time.

(b) No substantial part of the activities of the Foundation shall be carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and no activities of the Foundation shall be participating in, or intervening in (including the publication or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

(c) No part of the net earnings of the Foundation shall inure to the benefit of any private person, director, or officer of the Foundation, or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the Foundation affecting one or more of its purposes).

(d) If the Foundation should be classified as a private foundation within the meaning of § 509 of the Code, the officers of the Foundation shall:

1. Distribute all income of the Foundation at such times and in such manner as not to subject the Foundation to tax under § 4942 of the Code.

2. Refrain from causing the Foundation to engage in any act of self dealing as defined in § 4941(d) of the Code.

3. Refrain from retaining any excess business holdings as defined in § 4943(c) of the Code in a manner that would subject the Foundation to tax under § 4943(a) of the Code.

4. Refrain from making any investments in such manner as to subject the Foundation to tax under § 4944 of the Code.

5. Refrain from making any taxable expenditures as defined in § 4945(d) of the Code.

3.3 Upon the liquidation or dissolution of the Foundation, whether voluntary or involuntary, no private person, director or officer shall be entitled to any distribution or division of its remaining property or its proceeds, and the balance of all money and other property received by the Foundation from any source, after the payment of all debts and obligations of the Foundation, shall be used and distributed to the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham to be used exclusively for the support of young women's leadership development across the State of Alabama and within the intendment of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and the Regulations as the same now exist or as they may be hereafter amended from time to time.

ARTICLE IV.

MEMBERS

4.1 The Foundation shall have no members or shareholders and shall not issue any shares of stock or certificates or any other evidence of membership; provided, however, that if at any time there are no directors of the Board of Directors, or if the Board of Directors has been unable to obtain a quorum during the immediately preceding twelve (12) month period, the then current registered agent of the Foundation shall, at such time and for the following purposes only, constitute the sole member of the Foundation and shall have the power (a) to remove any directors of the Board of Directors who have not attended a meeting of the Board of Directors during the immediately preceding twelve (12) month period, and (b) if there are no directors on the Board of Directors (even if such situation exists as the result of the registered agent's removal of directors), to appoint a director to the Board of Directors, which director shall then, pursuant to Section 10-3A-36(a) of the Act, appoint other directors to the Board of Directors as needed to conform with the Act, these Articles, and the Bylaws of the Foundation.

ARTICLE V.

REGISTERED OFFICE AND REGISTERED AGENT

3.0 The street address of the Foundation's initial registered office shall be 3509 River Bend Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35243.

3.1 The Foundation's initial registered agent at such office shall be Martha Warren Bidez, Ph.D.

ARTICLE VI.

INITIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

6.1 The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors shall be twelve (12).

6.2 The names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as directors until the first annual meeting of directors or until their successors are elected and qualify are:

DIRECTOR	ADDRESS
Martha Warren Bidez, Ph.D.	3509 River Bend Road Birmingham, Alabama 35243
Natalie Davis, Ph.D.	Box 549007 Birmingham, Alabama 35254
James Pratt, Esq.	3904 Seven Bark Circle Birmingham, Alabama 35243
Ann Florie	4244 Caldwell Mill Road Birmingham, Alabama 35243
Sue McInnish	P.O. Box 1549 Montgomery, Alabama 36102-1549
Caroline Novak	P.O. Box 4443 Montgomery, Alabama 36103
Tommie Cummings, CPA	2201 Hidden Ridge Circle Birmingham, Alabama 35243
David Potts, Ph.D.	302 Bibb Street Marion, Alabama 36756
Barrie Stokes, Esq.	2801 Highway 280 South Birmingham, Alabama 35223
Amanda Hiley Vaughan	1250 Grove Park Auburn, Alabama 36830

Carol Ann Vaughn, Ph.D. — Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama 35229

Cameron Vowell, Ph.D. — 2625 Crest Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35223

ARTICLE VII.

INCORPORATORS

4.0 The names and addresses of the incorporators are:

NAME	ADDRESS
Martha Warren Bidez, Ph.D.	3509 River Bend Road Birmingham, Alabama 35243
Amanda Hiley Vaughan	1250 Grove Park Auburn, Alabama 36830

ARTICLE VIII.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The following provisions for the regulation of the business and for the conduct of the affairs of the Foundation and the directors thereof are hereby adopted:

8.1 The initial bylaws of the Foundation shall be adopted by the Board of Directors. The power to alter, amend or repeal the bylaws or adopt new bylaws shall be vested in the Board of Directors, except to the extent otherwise provided in the bylaws, which power may be exercised in the manner and to the extent provided in the bylaws. The bylaws may contain any provisions for the regulation and conduct of the affairs of the Foundation and the directors not inconsistent with the Act or these Articles of Incorporation.

8.2 All corporate powers of the Foundation shall be exercised by or under authority of, and the business and affairs of the Foundation shall be managed under the direction of, the Board of Directors. The number of directors comprising the initial Board of Directors shall be twelve (12). Directors shall be elected in the manner provided in the bylaws. The number of directors of the Foundation shall be fixed from time to time by the bylaws, or, in the absence of such a bylaw provision, the number of directors shall be three. The number of directors may be increased or decreased from time to time by amendment to the bylaws or in the manner provided for therein, provided that the Board of Directors shall consist of not less than twelve, and that no decrease shall have the effect of shortening the term of any incumbent director. The term of each director in office shall be one year and until his or her successor shall have been elected and qualified.

8.3 Any contract or other transaction that is fair and reasonable to the Foundation and is in furtherance of the Foundation's exempt purpose, between the Foundation and one or more of its directors, or between the Foundation and any corporation, partnership or other entity of which one or more of its directors are shareholders, directors, officers, partners, members or employees, or in which they are financially interested, shall be valid for all purposes, notwithstanding the presence of the director or directors at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Foundation or any committee thereof that acts upon, or in reference to, the contract or transaction, if either the fact of such interest shall be disclosed or known to the Board of Directors or such committee, as the case may be, and the Board of Directors or such committee shall, nevertheless, authorize or ratify the contract or transaction. The interested director or directors shall not be counted in determining whether a quorum is present and shall not be entitled to vote on such authorization or ratification. This paragraph shall not be construed to invalidate any contract or other transaction that would otherwise be valid under the common and statutory law applicable to it. Each and every person who may become a director of the Foundation is hereby relieved from any liability that might otherwise arise by reason of his or her contracting with the Foundation for the benefit of himself or herself or any corporation, partnership or other entity in which he or she may be in any wise interested.

8.4 In amplification and not in limitation of the provisions of applicable law:

(a) Pursuant to Sections 10-11-1 et seq., and 6-5-336 Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, all non-compensated directors, trustees, members of governing bodies, officers and other eligible volunteers of the Foundation shall be immune from suit and shall not be subject to civil liability arising from the conduct of the affairs of the Foundation except when the act or omission of such person that gives rise to the case of action amounts to willful or wanton misconduct or fraud or gross negligence.

(b) The Foundation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed claim, action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, including appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the Foundation), by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Foundation, or is or was serving at the request of the Foundation as a director, officer, partner, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with such claim, action, suit or proceeding, unless he or she acted intentionally or willfully against the best interests of the Foundation. The termination of any claim, action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person acted intentionally or willfully in a manner that was opposed to the best interests of the Foundation.

(c) The Foundation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed claim, action or suit by or in the right of the Foundation to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Foundation, or is or was serving at the request of the Foundation as a director, officer, partner, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit if he or she acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Foundation and except that no indemnification shall be made with respect to any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for intentional or willful misconduct in the performance of his or her duty to the Foundation unless and only to the extent that the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses which such court shall deem proper.

(d) Any indemnification under subsections (b) and (c) (unless ordered by a court) shall be made by the Foundation only as authorized in the specific case upon a determination that indemnification of the director, officer, employee or agent is proper in the circumstances because he or she has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in subsections (b) and (c). Such determination shall be made (1) by the Board of Directors by a majority vote of the directors who were not parties to, or who have been wholly successful on the merits or otherwise with respect to, such claim, action, suit or proceeding, or (2) if a majority of disinterested directors so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

(e) Expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred in defending a civil or criminal claim, action, suit or proceeding may be paid by the Foundation in advance of the final disposition of such claim, action, suit or proceeding upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the director, officer, employee or agent to repay such amount if and to the extent that it shall ultimately be determined that he or she is not entitled to be indemnified by the Foundation as authorized in this Section. Such undertaking shall be an unlimited, unsecured general obligation of the officer of the Foundation and shall be accepted without reference to his ability to make repayment.

(f) The indemnification authorized by this Section shall not be deemed exclusive of and shall be in addition to any other rights to which those indemnified may be entitled under any statute, rule of law, provision of articles or certificate of incorporation, Bylaws, agreement, vote of disinterested directors or otherwise, both as to action in his or her official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director, officer, employee or agent and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person. No amendment, modification, or repeal of this Section shall diminish the right to indemnification with respect to any claim, cause, or matter in any then pending or subsequent proceeding that is based in any material respect on any alleged action or failure to act prior to such amendment, modification or repeal.

(g) The Foundation shall have power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Foundation, or is or was serving at the request of the Foundation as a director, officer, partner, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him or her and incurred by him or her in any such capacity or arising out of his or her status as such, whether or not the Foundation would have the power to indemnify him or her against such liability under the provisions of this Section.

8.5 The Foundation reserves the right from time to time to amend, alter or repeal each and every provision contained in these Articles of Incorporation, or to add one or more additional provisions, upon a vote of a majority of the directors in office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, witness the hand and seal of the undersigned incorporators on this the 30th day of March, 2001.

[redacted]
Martha Warren Bidez
[redacted]
Amanda Hiley Vaughan

State of Alabama - Jefferson County
I certify this instrument filed on:
2001 MAR 30 P.M. 15:11
Recorded and $ Mtg. Tax
Deed Tax and Fee Amt. 26.00
and $ 26.00 Total $
$ MICHAEL F. BOLIN, Judge of Probate
200104/4336

State of Alabama
Jefferson County

I, the Undersigned, as Judge of Probate in and for said County, in said State, hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the instrument with the filing of same as appears of record in this office in vol. 200104 page 4336.
Given under my hand and official seal, this the 30th day of March, 2001.

[redacted]
Judge of Probate

State of Alabama
Jefferson County

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

OF

LEI INC

The undersigned, as Judge of Probate of Jefferson County, State of Alabama, hereby certifies that ____________ Articles of INCORPORATION duly signed and verified pursuant to the provisions of Alabama NONPROFIT Corporation Act, have been received in this office and are found to conform to law.

Accordingly the undersigned, as such Judge of Probate, and by virtue of the authority vested in him by law, hereby, issues this Certificate of INCORPORATION of LEI INC and attaches hereto a copy of the ____________ Articles of INCORPORATION

Given Under My Hand and Official Seal on this the 30TH day of MARCH, 2001.

[redacted]

Judge of Probate

APPENDIX H

Leading Edge Institute Legal Name Change

2 0 0 1 0 9 / 9 5 8 2

#554-438

Posted by: Checked by:

JF

ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT TO THE
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
LEI, INC.

For the purpose of changing the name of the nonprofit corporation, LEI, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "Organization") under the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act and any act amendatory thereof, supplementary thereto or substituted therefor, the undersigned Organization hereby signs and adopts these Articles of Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation, and, upon the filing for record of these Articles of Incorporation in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Jefferson County, the name of the Organization shall be the name set forth below.

FIRST: The name of the Organization is LEI, Inc.

SECOND: In order to change the name of the Organization, Article I of the Organization=s Articles of Incorporation is hereby deleted in its entirety and the following is substituted therefor:

"ARTICLE I.

NAME

1.1 The name of the Organization shall be Leading Edge Institute."

THIRD: The Organization has no members entitled to vote on this Amendment. The above amendment was adopted and approved by a majority of the Board of Directors of the Organization at a meeting held on June 22, 2001.

RECEIVED
AUG 2 0 2001
SECRETARY
OF STATE

689084

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, witness the hand and seal of the undersigned officer of the Organization on this the 2i day of July, 2001.

LEI, INC., an Alabama nonprofit corporation

By: [redacted]
Amanda Hiley Vaughan, President

00688666.1

VERIFICATION

The undersigned, being the President of the Organization, does hereby verify and certify that the Board of Directors of the Organization approved the amendment contained in these Articles of Amendment pursuant to the provisions of the Alabama Code of 1975, as amended, and the amendment contained in these Articles of Amendment was also approved in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation of the Organization.

This the 26 day of July, 2001.

[redacted]

Amanda Hiley Vaughan, President

ATTEST:

[redacted]

Ann Florie, Secretary

State of Alabama - Jefferson County
I certify this instrument filed on:
2001 AUG 06 P.M. 14:39
Recorded and $ Mtg. Tax
and $ Deed Tax and Fee Amt.
$ 11.00 Total $ 11.00
MICHAEL F. BOLIN, Judge of Probate
200109/9582

State of Alabama
Jefferson County
I, the Undersigned, as Judge of Probate in and for said County, in said State, hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the instrument with the filing of same as appears of record in this office in vol. 200109 page 9582.
Given under my hand and official seal, this the 6th day of AUGUST, 2001

[redacted]

Judge of Probate

00688666.1

State of Alabama
Jefferson County

CERTIFICATE OF AMENDMENT

OF

LEI, INC.

The undersigned, as Judge of Probate of Jefferson County, State of Alabama, hereby certifies that __________ Articles of AMENDMENT

duly signed and verified pursuant to the provisions of Alabama NONPROFIT Corporation Act, have been received in this office and are found to conform to law.

Accordingly the undersigned, as such Judge of Probate, and by virtue of the authority vested in him by law, hereby, issues this Certificate of AMENDMENT

of LEI, INC.

and attaches hereto a copy of the __________ Articles of AMENDMENT

Given Under My Hand and Official Seal on this the 6TH day of AUGUST, 2001.

[redacted]

Judge of Probate

APPENDIX I

Leading Edge Institute Articles of Dissolution

STATE OF ALABAMA

DOMESTIC NONPROFIT CORPORATION
ARTICLES OF DISSOLUTION

County Division Code: AL040
Inst. # 2016132865 Pages: 1 of 2
I certify this instrument filed on
12/21/2016 2:59 PM Doc: NPDIS
Alan L.King, Judge of Probate
Jefferson County, AL. Rec: $63.00

Clerk: SKIPWITHH

(For County Probate Office Use Only)

PURPOSE: In order to dissolve a Nonprofit Corporation under Section 10A-1-9.11 and 10A-3-7 of the Code of Alabama 1975 these Articles of Dissolution and the appropriate filing fees must be filed with the Office of the Judge of Probate in the county where the corporation's Certificate of Formation was recorded. **The information required in this form is required by Title 10A.**

INSTRUCTIONS: Mail one (1) signed original and two (2) copies of this completed form and the appropriate filing fees to the Office of the Judge of Probate in the county where the corporation's Certificate of Formation was recorded. Contact the Judge of Probate's Office to determine the county filing fees. Make a separate check or money order payable to the **Secretary of State for the state filing fee of $100.00** and the Judge of Probate's Office will transmit the fees along with a certified copy of the Articles of Dissolution to the Office of the Secretary of State within 10 days after the filing is recorded. Once the Secretary of State's Office has indexed the filing, the information will appear at www.sos.alabama.gov under the Government Records tab and the Business Entity Records link – you may search by entity name or number. You may pay the Secretary of State fees by credit card if the county you are filing in will accept that method of payment (see attached). Your dissolution will not be indexed if the credit card does not authorize and will be removed from the index if the check is dishonored.

This form must be typed or laser printed.

1. The name of the corporation as recorded on the Certificate of Formation:

   LEI, Inc.

2. Alabama Entity ID Number (Format: 000-000): 554 - 438 **INSTRUCTION TO OBTAIN ID NUMBER TO COMPLETE FORM:** If you do not have this number immediately available, you may obtain it on our website at www.sos.alabama.gov under the Government Records tab. Click on Business Entity Records, click on Entity Name, enter the registered name of the entity in the appropriate box, and enter. The six (6) digit number containing a dash to the left of the name is the entity ID number. If you click on that number, you can check the details page to make certain that you have the correct entity – this verification step is strongly recommended.

This form was prepared by: (type name and full address)

Kathryn Dietrich Perreault 4149 Cliff Rd Birmingham, AL 35222

RECEIVED

DEC 2 7 2016

SECRETARY OF STATE

DNP Corp Dissolution - 7/2011 page 1 of 2

(For SOS Office Use Only)

Alabama
Sec. Of State

Entity Change
554-438 DNP
Date 12/27/2016
Time 12:20
161227 3 Pg

File	$100.00
Ackn	$.00
Exp	$.00
Total	$100.00

06/005

DOMESTIC NONPROFIT CORPORATION ARTICLES OF DISSOLUTION

3. The Statement of Intent to Dissolve was filed in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Jefferson County County, Alabama on 12 / / 2016 (format MM/DD/YYYY).

4. ☑ No plan of distribution was adopted. **or** ☐ The plan of distribution adopted is attached.
One of these options must be checked.

5. The nonprofit corporation certifies that all debts, obligations, and liabilities of the nonprofit corporation have been paid and discharged or that adequate provisions have been made thereof.

6. The nonprofit corporation certifies that the remaining property and assets of the nonprofit corporation have been transferred, conveyed, or distributed in accordance with the provisions of Title 10A, Alabama Business and Nonprofit Entities Code, Chapter 3.

7. The nonprofit corporation certifies that there are no suits pending against the nonprofit corporation in any court, or that adequate provision has been made for the satisfaction of any judgement, order, or decree, which may be entered against it in any pending suit.

8. The Articles of Dissolution are effective on the date the document is recorded in the Office of the Judge of Probate and a certificate of dissolution is issued. Revocation of voluntary dissolution is possible after the date of filing the Statement of Intent to Dissolve and prior to the date the certificate of dissolution is issued by the Office of the Judge of Probate. The nonprofit corporation cannot revoke or reinstate once this Articles of Dissolution document is recorded by the Office of the Judge of Probate.

12 / 20 / 2016
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

[redacted]
Signature of President or Vice President (10A-3-7.05)

Kathryn Dietrich Perreault, Chair/President, Board of Directors
Typed Name and Title of Above Signature

ALL THREE (3) SIGNATURES ARE REQUIRED UNDER 10A-3-7.05.

[redacted]
Signature of Secretary or Asst. Secretary (10A-3-7.05)

William Smith, Secretary
Typed Name and Title of Above Signature

[redacted]
Signature of Officer Verifying – not one of above (10A-3-7.05)

Carole G. Miller, Director
Typed Name and Title of Above Signature

Jefferson County

I, the Undersigned as Judge of Probate in and for said County in said State, hereby certify that the foregoing is a full true and correct copy of the instrument with the filing of same as appears of record in this office in vol 2016132865

Given under my hand and official seal, this the 21 day of December, 2016.

[redacted]

Judge of Probate

APPENDIX J

LEI Class XIII: Summer Institute Student Track Agenda

Leading Edge Institute – Summer Institute

Student Track

Deciding to Lead

Day 1	Sunday, June 22nd
Type:	Deciding to Lead
Tool:	Me
Purpose:	Making the decision to lead.

Sunday Evening, June 22nd

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- **What do you need to know to feel oriented to Summer Institute?**
- **What do you need to feel comfortable and open in dialogue with your LEI community?**
- **What do your Myers Briggs results have to do with who you are as a leader?**
- **How can you begin forming lasting relationships within your LEI community?**

Outcomes

- Gain a clear picture of your strengths and developmental needs.
- Learn to collaborate with people who have different personalities and work styles.
- Set group boundaries for open dialogue.
- Get to know each other, and become oriented to Summer Institute

Sunday:

10:00 to 11:30	**Student and Advisor Check-in**	**(Harris Dorm)**
12:00 to 1:00	**Lunch and Introductions**	**(Cafeteria)**
1:15 to 2:30	**MBTI Workshop** Shannon Ammons, Director of Knowledge and Impact Assessment Blackfish *Identifying your Personality Type* *Understanding your Personality Type*	**(Bible 112 & 117)**
2:30 to 3:00	**Break (with snacks)**	
3:00 to 4:30	**MBTI Workshop** Shannon Ammons, Director of Knowledge and Impact Assessment Blackfish *Identifying your Personality Type* *Understanding your Personality Type*	**(Bible 112 & 117)**
5:00 to 6:15	**Welcome Reception**	**(Bible Atrium)**
6:30 to 7:30	**Roadside Dining: Dining with Friends**	**(Cafeteria)**
7:45 to 8:15	**LEI Summer Institute: The Road Trip Tools, Tips, & Expectations** Ashley Gilbert, Executive Director	**(Jones Law, 180)**
8:15 to 8:45	**Welcome from Alumna**	**(Jones Law, 180)**

LEADING EDGE

Leading Self

Day 2	Monday, June 23rd
Type:	Leading Self
Space:	Self
Purpose:	Aligning who you are with what you do. Developing a leadership philosophy and personal brand.
Alabama Issue:	Poverty

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- **What are your strengths?**
- **How do others see your actions?**
- **What kind of leader will you be?**
- **How will you use your influence at school, at work, at home, and in your community?**
- **Who are leaders you admire and why?**
- **How might being female affect your leadership journey?**

Outcomes

- Continue gaining a clear picture of your strengths and developmental needs.
- Learn how to lead with authenticity, clarifying your personal values and how they fit within different cultures.
- Discuss various leadership styles and theories and determine your leadership "brand".
- Learn strategies for networking and using your leadership style more effectively.
- Develop a better understanding of gender and how it will affect your leadership.

LEADING EDGE

Monday:

7:15 to 8:15	**Breakfast**	
8:30	**Strengths Finder** LEI Staff and Guests Identifying your 5 strengths	**(Bible 112 & 117)**
10:00 to 10:20	**Break (with Snacks)**	
10:30	**Developing a Personal Leadership Philosophy** Introduction to Various Leadership Styles *Covey, Maxwell, Collins, Goleman, and Greenleaf	**(Jones 180)**
12:00 to 1:00	**Lunch and Learn**	**(Cafeteria)**
1:15	**Developing a Personal Leadership Philosophy** Introduction to Various Leadership Styles *Covey, Maxwell, Collins, Goleman, and Greenleaf	**(Jones 180)**
2:30 to 2:50	**Break with Snacks**	
3:00	**Gender: What is it, and what does it have to do with leadership?**	**(Bible 112 & 117)**
5:00 to 5:30	**Personal Time**	
5:30 to 6:30	**Learning Cohort Meeting**	**(Dorm)**
6:30 to 7:30	**Dinner with Learning Cohort** Begin to define your leadership style, philosophy, and goals.	**(Outside)**
7:45 to 9:30	**MissRepresentation**	**(Freeman Tower)**

LEADING EDGE

Leading Others

Day 3	Tuesday, June 24th
Type:	Leading Others
Tool:	Authority
Purpose:	Learning to appreciate differences, resolve conflict, and work in teams.
Alabama Issue:	Health Care

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- **How do you gain consensus and respect while honoring differences?**
- **How do you build a cohesive team?**
- **How does power work within the systems in place?**
- **How do you deal with a cultural misstep?**

Outcomes

- Understand how your own behavior contributes to team performance.
- Learn how to make trust and open dialogue a shared responsibility of each team member. Quickly bring to the surface and resolve conflicts and differences among team members.
- Gain appreciation and understanding of differences in cultures, approaches, and individual styles.
- Build sustainable relationships and leverage the power of conflict.
- Influence others by connecting their motivations and needs to the needs of the work
- Develop the leadership skill of giving and receiving constructive feedback.
- Explore dynamics of power, and how these dynamics can be influenced by the systems in place
- Learn how to effectively market your skills and strengths.

LEADING EDGE

Tuesday:

7:15 to 8:15	**Breakfast**	**(Cafeteria)**
8:30	**How to Have Difficult Conversations** Allyson Cornelius Black, President and CEO Blackfish *Common mistakes and how to overcome them*	**(Jones 180)**
8:30	**Learning to Work with People Not Like You**	**(Bible 112 & 117)**
10:00	**Break with Snacks**	
10:30	**Conflict** Shannon Ammons, Director of Knowledge and Impact Assessment Blackfish	**(Bible 112 & 117)**
12:00 to 1:00	**Lunch**	**(Cafeteria)**
1:15	**Repeat 8:30**	
2:30	**Break with Snacks**	
3:00	**Star Power** Kristin Harper A Look at Systems and How They Work	**(Bible 112 &117)**
5:00	**Personal Time**	
5:30 to 6:30	**Learning Cohort Meeting**	**(Dorm)**
6:45 to 9:30	**Creating Your Brand**	**(Bible 112 & 117)**

LEADING EDGE

Leading Through Advocacy

Day 4	Wednesday, June 25th
Type:	Leading Through Advocacy
Tool:	Advocacy & Influence
Purpose:	Learning how to organize, impact, and advocate for your community.
Alabama Issue:	Alabama Constitution

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- **What does public leadership look like?**
- **What is advocacy? Why does it matter?**
- **What do you believe in advocating for?**
- **What is like to be a woman leader in Alabama?**

Outcomes

- Discovering how laws and public leaders affect social justice.
- Learn to practice leadership through advocacy and public action.
- Explore different ways of framing solutions to the challenges that face our state's future
- Further your understanding of what it is like to be a woman leader in Alabama.
- Real-world advice and strategies for positioning yourself as an advocate leader.

LEADING EDGE

Wednesday:

7:15	**Meet with Group to Leave for Supreme Court**	**(Harris Dorm Lobby)**
8:15	**Visit the Alabama Supreme Court**	**(Alabama Supreme Court)**
9:30	**Visit the State House** Meet the leaders that are getting it done everyday *What are the obstacles they had to overcome?* *What were their biggest failures?* *How did they bounce back?*	**(State House of Representatives)**
10:30	**Pictures at the State House**	**(State House of Representatives)**
12:00	**Alabama Women Fishbowl** **Leadership Lessons: Alabama women share lessons on personal challenges.**	**(State House of Representatives)**
2:30	**Southern Poverty Law Center** *How has the SPLC affected you?*	**(SPLC)**
2:30	**Advocacy, Why does it matter?** *What is advocacy and why does it matter?* *Meet political leaders creating change in Alabama to discuss what they do and why you should care?*	**(State House of Representatives)**
3:30	**Switch and Repeat 2:30**	
5:00	**Personal Time**	
5:30 to 6:30	**Learning Cohort Meeting**	**(Dorm)**
6:30 to 7:30	**Dinner**	**(Cafeteria)**
7:45 to 9:30	**"It's a Thick Book" by Lewis Lehe**	**(Jones 180)**

LEADING EDGE

Servant Leader

Day 5 Thursday, June 26th
Type: Servant Leader
Tool: Stewardship
Purpose: Understanding sustainable social change is community driven.
Alabama Issue: Education

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- **What does it mean to be a servant leader?**
- **What is the impact of your leadership on your community?**
- **What is the impact of your leadership on the least privileged in society?**
- **Are those you are serving becoming healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to themselves become servants?**

Outcomes

- Learn how to address community needs using community resources.
- Exposure to models for addressing community needs.
- Learn about issues affecting communities in the Blackbelt.
- Exploring how your passions can be used for social change.

LEADING EDGE

Thursday

7:30	**Meet with Group to Leave**	**(Dorm)**
9:30	**Rural Studios tour** Alex Henderson, Architect Recent Auburn University Graduate *See first hand how a group of students has impacted the lives of Alabamians*	**(Newbern, Greensboro)**
12:30	**Sack lunch at Lyons Park, Service Learning Pre-Reflection**	
2:00	**Service Learning** *enriching the learning experience through community service*	**(Marion/Greensboro)**
6:00	**Follow Their Footsteps**	**(Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma)**
7:00	**RATCO, Dinner and the Theater** Learning Cohort Meeting	**(RATCO, Selma)**
9:00	**Return to Campus**	

Leadership in Practice

Day 6 Friday, June 27th
Type: Leadership in Practice
Tool: LEI Team
Purpose: Prepare to practice leadership on your campus and in your community.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

- **What does it take to really create change in the world?**
- **What do you need to know to go back and practice leadership?**
- **What resources do you have as support for your leadership journey?**

Outcome

- Develop the "next step" plans for the year at Leading Edge Institute

LEADING EDGE

Friday

7:15 to 8:15	**Breakfast**	**(Cafeteria)**
8:30	**Overview/Housekeeping** Developing a personal plan for The year. How to get the most out of the year.	**(Jones 180)**
10:00	**Break with Snacks**	
10:30	**Learning Cohort Meeting**	**(Dorm)**
12:00 to 1:00	**Lunch, Staying in Touch**	**(Cafeteria)**
1:15 to 2:45	**Closing and Dismissal**	**(Steps/Outside Bible Building)**

APPENDIX K

Baldrige Excellence Builder

(Adapted from the 2013-2014 Criteria)

Preface: Organizational profile

P.1 Organizational description: What are your key organizational characteristics?

a. Organizational environment

(1) *Product offerings.* What are your main product offerings? What is the relative importance of each to your success? What mechanisms do you use to deliver your products?

(2) *Mission, vision, and values.* What are your stated mission, vision, and values? What are your organization's core competencies, and what is their relationship to your mission?

(3) *Workforce profile.* What is your workforce profile? What recent changes have you experienced in workforce composition or your workforce needs? What are

- your workforce or employee groups and segments,
- the educational requirements for different employee groups and segments, and
- the key drivers that engage them in achieving your mission and vision?

What are your organized bargaining units (union representation)? What are your organization's special health and safety requirements?

(4) *Assets.* What are your major facilities, technologies, and equipment?

(5) *Regulatory requirements.* What is the regulatory environment under which you operate? What are the key applicable occupational health and safety regulations;

accreditation, certification, or registration requirements; industry standards; and environmental, financial, and product regulations?

b. Organizational relationships

(1) *Organizational structure.* What are your organizational structure and governance system? What are the reporting relationships among your governance board, senior leaders, and parent organization, as appropriate?

(2) *Customers and stakeholders.* What are your key market segments, customer groups, and stakeholder groups, as appropriate? What are their key requirements and expectations of your products, customer support services, and operations? What are the differences in these requirements and expectations among market segments, customer groups, and stakeholder groups?

(3) *Suppliers and partners.* What are your key types of suppliers, partners, and collaborators? What role do they play

- in your work systems, especially in producing and delivering your key products and customer support services; and
- in enhancing your competitiveness?

What are your key mechanisms for two-way communication with suppliers, partners, and collaborators? What role, if any, do these organizations play in contributing and implementing innovations in your organization? What are your key supply-chain requirements?

P.2 Organizational situation: What is your organization's strategic situation?

a. Competitive environment

(1) *Competitive position.* What is your competitive position? What are your relative

size and growth in your industry or the markets you serve? How many and what types of competitors do you have?

(2) *Competitiveness changes.* What key changes, if any, are affecting your competitive situation, including changes that create opportunities for innovation and collaboration, as appropriate?

(3) *Comparative data.* What key sources of comparative and competitive data are available from within your industry? What key sources of comparative data are available from outside your industry? What limitations, if any, affect your ability to obtain or use these data?

b. Strategic context – What are your key strategic challenges and advantages in the areas of business, operations, societal responsibilities, and workforce?

c. Performance improvement system – What are the key elements of your performance improvement system, including your processes for evaluation and improvement of key organizational projects and processes?

1 Leadership

1.1 Senior leadership: How do your senior leaders lead the organization?

(1) How do senior leaders set your organization's vision and values?

(2) How do senior leaders' actions demonstrate their commitment to legal and ethical behavior?

(3) How do senior leaders' actions build an organization that is successful now and in the future?

(4) How do senior leaders communicate with and engage the entire workforce and key customers?

(5) How do senior leaders create a focus on action that will achieve the organization's mission?

1.2 Governance and societal responsibilities: How do you govern your organization and fulfill your societal responsibilities?

(1) How does your organization ensure responsible governance?

(2) How do you evaluate the performance of your senior leaders, including the chief executive, and your governance board?

(3) How do you anticipate and address public concerns with your products and operations?

(4) How do you promote and ensure ethical behavior in all interactions?

(5) How do you consider societal well-being and benefit as part of your strategy and daily operations?

(6) How do you actively support and strengthen your key communities?

2 Strategy

2.1 Strategy development: How do you develop your strategy?

(1) How do you conduct your strategic planning?

(2) How does your strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation?

(3) How do you collect and analyze relevant data and develop information for your strategic planning process?

(4) What are your key work systems?

(5) What are your organization's key strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?

(6) How do your strategic objectives achieve appropriate balance among varying and potentially competing organizational needs?

2.2 Strategy implementation: How do you implement your strategy?

(1) What are your key short- and longer-term action plans?

(2) How do you deploy your action plans?

(3) How do you ensure that financial and other resources are available to support the achievement of your action plans while you meet current obligations?

(4) What are your key workforce plans to support your short- and longer-term strategic objectives and action plans?

(5) What key performance measures or indicators do you use to track the achievement and effectiveness of your action plans?

(6) For these key performance measures or indicators, what are your performance projections for your short- and longer-term planning horizons?

(7) How do you establish and implement modified action plans if circumstances require a shift in plans and rapid execution of new plans?

3 Customers

3.1 Voice of the customer: How do you obtain information from your customers?

(1) How do you listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain actionable information?

(2) How do you listen to potential customers to obtain actionable information?

(3) How do you determine customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement?

(4) How do you obtain information on your customers’ satisfaction with your organization relative to other organizations?

3.2 Customer engagement: How do you engage customers by serving their needs and building relationships?

(1) How do you determine product offerings?

(2) How do you enable customers to seek information and support?

(3) How do you determine your customer groups and market segments?

(4) How do you build and manage customer relationships?

(5) How do you manage customer complaints?

4 Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management

4.1 Measurement, analysis, and improvement of organizational performance: How do you measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance?

(1) How do you use data and information to track daily operations and overall organizational performance?

(2) How do you select and effectively use comparative data and information?

(3) How do you use voice-of-the-customer and market data and information?

(4) How do you ensure that your performance measurement system can respond to rapid or unexpected organizational or external changes?

(5) How do you review organization's performance and capabilities?

(6) How do you share best practices in your organization?

(7) How do you project your organization's future performance?

(8) How do you use findings from performance reviews (addressed in question 5) to develop priorities for continuous improvement and opportunities for innovation?

4.2 Knowledge management, information, and information technology: How do you manage your organizational knowledge assets, information, and information technology infrastructure?

(1) How do you manage organizational knowledge?

(2) How do you use your knowledge and resources to embed learning in the way your organization operates?

(3) How do you verify and ensure the quality of organizational data and information?

(4) How do you ensure the security of sensitive or privileged data and information?

(5) How do you ensure the availability of organizational data and information?

(6) How do you ensure that hardware and software are reliable, secure, and user-friendly?

(7) In the event of an emergency, how do you ensure that hardware and software systems and data and information continue to be secure and available to effectively serve customers and business needs?

5 Workforce

5.1 Workforce environment: How do you build an effective and supportive workforce environment?

(1) How do you assess your workforce capability and capacity needs?

(2) How do you recruit, hire, place, and retain new workforce members?

(3) How do you organize and manage your workforce?

(4) How do you prepare your workforce for changing capability and capacity needs?

(5) How do you ensure workforce health, security, and accessibility for the workforce?

(6) How do you support your workforce via services, benefits, and policies?

5.2 Workforce engagement: How do you engage your workforce to achieve a high-performance work environment?

(1) How do you foster an organizational culture that is characterized by open communication, high performance, and an engaged workforce?

(2) How do you determine the key drivers of workforce engagement?

(3) How do you assess workforce engagement?

(4) How does your workforce performance management system support high performance and workforce engagement?

(5) How does your learning and development system support the organization's needs and the personal development of your workforce members, managers, and leaders?

(6) How do you evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of your learning and development system?

(7) How do you manage career progression for your organization?

6 Operations

6.1 Work processes: How do you design, manage, and improve your key products and work processes?

(1) How do you determine key product and work process requirements?

(2) How do you design your products and work processes to meet requirements?

(3) How does your day-to-day operation of work processes ensure that they meet key process requirements?

(4) How do you determine your key support processes?

(5) How do you improve your work processes to improve products and performance, enhance your core competencies, and reduce variability?

(6) How do you manage for innovation?

6.2 Operational effectiveness: How do you ensure effective management of your operations?

(1) How do you control the overall costs of your operations?

(2) How do you manage your supply chain?

(3) How do you provide a safe operating environment?

(4) How do you ensure that your organization is prepared for disasters or emergencies?

7 Results

7.1 Product and process results: What are your product performance and process effectiveness results?

(1) What are your results for your products and your customer service processes?

(2) What are your process effectiveness and efficiency results?

(3) What are your emergency preparedness results?

(4) What are your supply-chain management results?

7.2 Customer-focused results: What are your customer-focused performance results?

(1) What are your customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction results?

(2) What are your customer engagement results?

7.3 Workforce-focused results: What are your workforce-focused performance results?

(1) What are your workforce capability and capacity results?

(2) What are your workforce climate results?

(3) What are your workforce engagement results?

(4) What are your workforce and leader development results?

7.4 Leadership and governance results: What are your senior leadership and governance results?

(1) What are your results for senior leaders' communication and engagement with the workforce and customers?

(2) What are your results for governance accountability?

(3) What are your legal and regulatory results?

(4) What are your results for ethical behavior?

(5) What are your results for societal responsibilities and support of your key communities?

(6) What are your results for the achievement of your organizational strategy and action plans?

7.5 Financial and market results: What are your financial and marketplace performance results?

(1) What are your financial performance results?

(2) What are your marketplace performance results?