AN EXAMINATION OF THE SUCCESS FACTORS OF AFRICAN AMERICA MEN

IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN

ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the success factors of five African American men serving in executive leadership positions in the state of Arkansas. Five men agreed to participate in the study which included a demographic survey and semi-structured interview. The interview questions were designed to gauge the participants' views on leadership, mentorship, spirituality, career, and personal development. The interview questions were semi-structured and open ended to allow the participants to share additional insights. Web content, magazine articles, and program flyers were also examined.

The research questions focused on the leaders' definition of leadership, their understanding of spirituality, the impact of mentorship, and the impact of their own personal upbringing and development. The findings included a common denominator among the leaders: strong supportive families that provided the necessary motivation for these leaders early on in life and set these men on a path to success. The leaders described how mentors and family members instilled in them a sense of responsibility toward aiding and assisting others. Finally, the leaders acknowledged how their spiritual/religious beliefs were a major factor in the motivation for the work they do as higher education executive level leaders.