In Search of Conscious Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Postsecondary

Educational Leadership Practices

by

Valita Lynn Jones

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The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Dissertation of

Valita Lynn Jones:

In Search of Conscious Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Postsecondary

Educational Leadership Practices

_____
Caren Sax, Chair
Department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education

_____
Shaila Mulholland
Department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education

_____
John Colton
Colton Educational Consulting

_____
Approval Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of postsecondary educational leaders who are practicing what can be described as responsible and accountable leadership or conscious leadership. Eight senior postsecondary leaders participated in face-to-face interviews designed to identify conscious leadership qualities and practices. All of the participants took a Conscious Quotient Inventory to measure their global consciousness and awareness. Data from the interviews were used to answer four research questions designed to investigate what they were doing on a daily basis and why they have become more responsible and conscious leaders. A delimitation of this study was that the emphasis placed on using conscious leadership as a leadership framework was fairly new, thus educational leaders were not formally familiar with a conscious leadership practice. A limitation of this qualitative study is its ability to generalize the results to a larger population. Interviews were primarily conducted within the Western region, therefore limiting the generalization to differing perspectives nationwide. Findings suggest that participants incorporated a variety of conscious leadership practices into their daily practice. The leaders demonstrated an awareness of: (a) a social systems orientation or approach to leading; (b) patterns and themes that informed the work environment; and (c) the benefits of a shared or participatory leadership practice. Preparing postsecondary educational leaders to become more observant of their work environments as dynamic living systems, adds value, in the form of increased skills and can potentially aid leaders in creating meaning and bringing order to continuously transforming workplaces. Results

provided insight into responsible and conscious leadership practices and offers direction

for developing future conscious leaders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

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my Umi, Mattie Faye Autman, who along with God cultivated a beautifully human

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CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

In today's educational environment, enlightened leadership practices are needed

more than ever. Societal trends such as a failing global economy, uneven distribution of

wealth and opportunities, limited resources, political ineffectiveness, and shifting student

demographics have influenced the operational ability of many colleges and universities

across the nation (Anderson, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Collin & Hansen, 2011;

Penn & Zalesne, 2007). At the same time, technological advances are allowing

educational communities to emerge as more interconnected and networked (Allen &

Cherry, 2000; Li, 2010; Pink, 2005). Johansen (2009) noted that, "our global connectivity

is growing dramatically, which is creating new ways to organize ourselves" (p. 13).

These new ways of organizing are blurring formal boundaries and appear to be based

more on relationships (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar,

1994). Renesch (2002) noted that throughout modern history leadership has been

redefined many times. However, many of the redefinitions within leadership lack the

transformative content needed for modern times.

"Academic leadership is a highly social endeavor" (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p.

vii) and postsecondary educational institutions are naturally poised to operate as

connected and networked environments. Educational leaders who understand the need to

observe and master emotional dynamics of interconnected groups, can potentially offer a

new leadership model which can be viewed as much more effective and supportive of

interconnected work environments (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011;

Fullan & Scott, 2009). Moreover, it is suggested that change influenced within networked

organizations unfolds differently than how it unfolds within traditional non-networked

educational environments (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000; Youngblood, 1997; Zohar, 1994).

Although the potential to create, model, and practice news ways of leading is challenging, it is obtainable. Allen and Cherry (2000) noted, "New ways of relating involves the capacity to build and maintain effective cooperative relationships across the boundaries of an organization and between the organization and community" (p. 8). Student affairs divisions are examples within educational intuitions where we see more relational-based leadership practices that demonstrate this boundary crossing (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Furthermore, "new ways of influencing change involves more organic strategies that take into account the non-linear dynamics of the connected systems and its response to force" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 9). For example, fragmented and hierarchical leadership practices encompass an independent and separate orientation. Emphasis is placed on operating from a segmented perspective where parts and distinct boundaries are seen as important and change is incremental and appears to be more from a perceived controlled perspective. In contrast, networked orientations to leadership practices embrace a whole systems perspective. Boundaries become blurred, and working environments are dynamic and in flux. Emphasis is on not being linear and the leadership practice can be influenced; therefore, perceived control is not valued.

"We live in a divided world dominated by a fragmentary worldview that treats the wholeness of the human family, urban environments and social reality as inherently discrete, distanced and disconnected" (Rosado, 2008, p. 2075). Fragmented frameworks help to form habits of the mind which inform the mental constructs of an individual.

Fragmented frameworks also influence the behavior of an individual in a negative way (Goswami, 2001; Hayden, 2011; Laszlo, 2008; Rosado, 2008; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 1994). However, scientists are discovering that the world is not this fragmented, discrete, or distant place but is and always has been interconnected and networked (Goswami, 2001; Lama, 2005; Zohar, 1994). Lipton explained,

> Einstein revealed that we do not live in a universe with discrete, physical objects separated by dead space. The Universe is one indivisible, dynamic whole in which energy and matter are so deeply entangled it is impossible to consider them as independent elements. (2005, p. 71)

Fragmentation exists when content is devoid of context. Furthermore, context is defined as "the thinking patterns, levels of consciousness and value systems that are operational in a group and with individuals." (Rosado, 2008, p. 2077). Rosado (2008) suggested that context helps to shape content and provide meaning and direction. Therefore, a shift in paradigm is required in an effort to be congruent with an operational framework that is more holistic, integrated and relational, within an educational environment that is becoming more interconnected and networked (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Laszlo (2008), Zohar (1994), and Wheatley (2006) suggested that a shift from fragmented thinking to one of wholeness is informed by human consciousness, quantum physics and systems theory and could shed light on emerging patterns of transformation within human behavior (Goswami, 2001; Lipton; 2005; Rosado, 2008; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 1990).

Leadership and organizational scholars have written about the relational aspect of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Senge, 1990; Youngblood, 1997). For example,

Wheatley (2009) suggested "we need fewer descriptions of tasks and instead learn how to foster relationships, how to nurture growth and development" (p. 39). Moreover, Wheatley (2009) expressed that we need to learn how to listen, have conversations that are two-way, and respect each other's uniqueness because an understanding of these things will allow leaders to develop the ability to form strong relationships and connections with others. Mental acumen is critical. Therefore, leaders need to be cultivated, so they can embrace a leadership practice which supports their ability to become more thoughtful, intentional, and purposeful. Hill (2005) indicated that, "Leadership is an art requiring a mix of technical, conceptual, and human talents" (p. 3). Furthermore, Hill (2005) suggested that the concept of effective leadership is an elusive framework for many organizations. Yet, organizations within the business sector are beginning to adopt new ways of leading which is more supportive of working within an integrated and networked environment.

"Leadership in business and in education increasingly have more in common…."at the most basic level, businesses and schools are similar in that in the knowledge society, they both must become *learning organizations* or they will fail to survive" (Fullan, 2001, p. vii). Business leaders realize that in order for them to be successful and sustainable, they must develop a moral compass. Toward this end, leaders within the industry have been adopting new leadership approaches. (Fullan, 2001; Fullan & Scott, 2009; Hayden, 2011; Johansen, 2009; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 2006). Examples of these new leadership models have been applied within companies such as Whole Foods, The Container Store, Patagonia, Southwest Airlines, and Google (Sheth, Sisodia, & Wolfe, 2007). Organizational leaders from these companies have discovered that

leadership effectiveness and sustainability is connected to moral purpose and intentionality. In other words, they lead with a purpose, care about their employees, and build relationships. Hayden (2011) reported that we are entering an Age of Consciousness that is replacing the Age of Information. This shift has produced a need for leaders to become more aware and thoughtful, while change and transformation takes place. Having an understanding of the interconnectivity of things is important and facilitates the process for leaders to act out of a sense of responsibility to the whole.

Background of the Study

Many researchers in the field of leadership development and practices have recognized the growing interconnectivity of organizations and are calling for a shift in how we think about leadership practices (Gladwell, 2005; Johansen, 2009; Pink, 2005; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 2006). "In the first decade of the twenty-first century we faced a new reality, individually as well as collectively. Our reality is shifting because the human world has become unstable and is no longer sustainable" (Laszlo, 2008, p.1). This shift in reality is inclusive of the way we relate to each other and the way the world influences leadership relationships. Wheatley (2006) discussed how the new science assisted her in viewing leadership from a different perspective and says that it will help us navigate our worldview through times of chaos. She points out that we live in a universe that exists because of the interconnectivity between things and that relationships are primary for success. Wheatley (2006) notes that the new way of leading will require potential leaders to understand that they must become intentional, purposeful, and responsible for their leadership practices by developing personally as well as professionally. Daniel Goleman (1995) called this personal development becoming emotionally intelligent. He described

emotional intelligence as the ability to manage and be aware of one's own and other's emotions. His research addressed the degree to which human beings are unconsciously influenced by their emotions.

Emotions influence our cultural ways of being and shape our worldviews and perspectives. Although emotional intelligence gets at the core of personal development for leaders, a more focused effort is needed. Educational leaders need to recognize and understand the power of their thoughts, words, and actions on the people they are responsible for leading. Educational leaders who gain additional insight into themselves, and are aware of their role in a networked and interconnected environment will be more flexible and take an integrated and networked approach to leading, much like the systems approach that Allen and Cherry (2000) have described. For example, they proposed that when we engage institutional leadership, we use each of the new ways of acting in concert with each other to create an integrated approach to the practice of leadership. They call this new way of leading, systemic leadership, that is, leadership that "integrates and incorporates new ways of relating, influencing change, learning, and leading" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 122). The practice of systemic leadership encourages the leader to explain the world in different ways and better understand how working environments are organized as interconnected places.

"Higher education administration is demanding work that tests the mind, soul, and the stamina of all who attempt it" (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. vii). It is assumed that educational leaders who lead from a place of personalization incorporate relational leadership practices into their craft (Houston, 2002; Sandeen, 2001). Furthermore, it is acknowledged that postsecondary educational leaders, who are conscious of and

responsible for their thoughts, words, and actions, have journeyed through a personal transformation of self (Akbar, 2006; Amen, 1990). They have developed and subscribed to a particular self-concept. Matsumoto and Juang (2004) defined self-concept as "the way in which we understand or construe our sense of self or being" (p. 337). Self-concept gives way to self-knowledge. Akbar (2006) discussed the meaning of possessing self-knowledge as the foundation for developing leadership awareness, therefore allowing an individual to become more thoughtful, authentic, and accountable. Leaders who are self-aware are self-regulated by an internal conscience, one that insists that individuals act with consideration, compassion and concern. Akbar (2006) also notes, that "knowing ourselves is a fundamental aspect of assuming person power and effectiveness" (p. 24). Moreover, he declared that human beings are not born with knowledge of self and thus recommends that they be taught. This teaching of self- knowledge will ultimately lead to personal transformation and more informed responsible and conscious leaders (Akbar, 2006; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Komives, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Newly collaborative, networked, and integrated environments are a contributing factor to the need for leaders to begin practicing leadership in a very different way (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Eddy & Van Derlinden, 2006; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000). Although postsecondary educational institutions have always been interconnected and networked on some level, the leadership practices that have remained tend to be traditional and hierarchical (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000). Traditional leadership practices are not efficient to lead in a time where organizational environments are fluid, fast moving, and networked,

interconnected and systems oriented (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Lencioni, 2002; Studer, 2003; Wheatley, 2006). In 2000, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation captured the impact of this ongoing challenge. Their report focused on the current construct of leadership and implication for future leadership practices and advocated for a more relational and holistic leadership practice. The document noted that leadership should become more about fostering change and adopting a group process to the practice (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000). The work of Kouzes and Posner (2007) supports a similar claim for shared leadership practices. They discovered that effective leaders develop a practice that encompasses five exemplary leadership concepts: model the way; inspire a shared vision; challenge the process; enable others to act; and encourage the heart. Kouzes and Posner (2007) suggested that leadership opportunities are everywhere and not just tied to the positional roles of leaders. They also noted that leadership is about other personal qualities:

> To cope effectively and creatively with these emerging national and world trends, future leaders will not only need to possess new knowledge and skills, but will also be called upon to display a high level of emotional and spiritual wisdom and maturity. (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 1)

Postsecondary education leaders must become more adaptive, engaging, and prepared to provide creative solutions in an era of vagueness and uncertainty. As responsible leadership emerges as the norm for educational leadership practices, postsecondary educational institutions must assume some responsibility for the poor examples of current leadership practices and produce more qualified leaders (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos; 2011; Fullan & Scott, 2009; Martin & Samels, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

There is a gap in the literature on the use of effective leadership practices within postsecondary education, especially as they relate to leading and relating in a more responsible and accountable way. The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership practices of current postsecondary educational leaders and identify leadership practices that are intentional, purposeful, and responsible, within an increasingly integrated and networked educational environment. Emphasis will also be placed on investigating leader's practices and attitudes, relationships, how practices play out on a daily basis and how and why they have become more responsible and conscious as leaders. Finally, this research will examine the implications for applying a conscious leadership framework to a postsecondary educational leadership context. Information gathered from this investigation will be used to identify emerging and effective leadership practice for others to follow.

Emerging leadership practices differ from what are considered to be more traditional perspectives, primarily because they are relational and systems oriented. Examples can be found in *being-centered leadership, personal leadership, love-based leadership, open leadership, soul leadership,* and *conscious leadership* (Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Fry & Kriger, 2006; Hayden, 2011; Li, 2010; Schaetti, Ramsey, & Watanabe, 2008). Conscious leadership emerges as a strong framework for potential use within postsecondary education, because of the focus on personal awareness, environmental awareness, and emphasis on being responsible and accountable. Little information is known about its applicability within postsecondary higher education and warrants investigation.

The concept of conscious leadership is still relatively new; however, it can be seen practiced, within the business world, as leaders are encouraged to adopt more conscious business efforts (Hayden, 2011). One measure has emerged to more clearly identify and describe conscious leadership. Brazdua, a Romanian psychologist, offered a consciousness quotient theory, where an individual's awareness levels are measured through six primary dimensions and nine subcategories (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011). "A conscious leader's role is to optimize the health of this entire, complex interdependent system" (Hayden, 2011). As an emerging leadership theory in the business world, conscious leadership practices may be applicable within postsecondary education. This study is designed to examine the use of a conscious leadership framework to describe the leadership practices of postsecondary educational leaders who are practicing a conscious way of leading and relating within an integrated, networked and system orientated environment. More specifically, the applicability of conscious leadership practices to a postsecondary education setting will be explored.

Significance of the Study

This research study will examine the need for a leadership practice that is effective within an integrated and networked environment. Moreover, it will explore the application of a new conceptual framework for leadership within postsecondary education and will highlight leaders who have learned to become more aware, make better decisions, are conscious of their actions and are reflective, while focusing on the praxis of the practitioner, the person, and practices. Furthermore, this research will add to the literature on leadership within postsecondary educational institutions.

Postsecondary educational leaders need to have holistic perspectives and worldviews in order to adapt to working environments that are becoming more integrated, networked and systems oriented. Educational leaders who lead in a different way and adopt a relational leadership perspective will be able to shift their thinking and actions based on their surroundings, while problem solving, even in times of uncertainty, change, and transformation. Such leaders see the possibilities and the potential of things, and are open to, and accepting of, change and transformation. Leaders, who adhere to traditional leadership practices, bring with them a set of beliefs, values, perspectives and worldviews that are more hierarchical and fragmented, which do little to be effective in an interconnected, dynamic and transforming environment. In times of crisis within organizations, traditional leaders may see confusion and unsolvable uncertainty, while leaders who are more relational will see an underlying order to the confusion and be able to work with others to provide viable solutions (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 1994). Furthermore, the American educational system has a unique opportunity to model a leadership practice during times of change and transformation.

Conceptual Framework

A conscious leadership framework will be used to guide this qualitative investigation. Conscious leadership is a value-based philosophy borrowed from the business world (Hayden, 2011), and is defined by Brazdua's *Consciousness Quotients* (CQ) *Theory and Inventory.* The inventory is used to measure the awareness of an individual's ability to take in information, process it, and create meaning and understanding (Brazdau & Mihai, 2011). Conscious leadership can be thought of as a

transformative learning paradigm. "Since there are no fixed truths or completely definitive knowledge, and because situations and circumstances change, the human experience may be best understood as an ongoing effort to negotiate contested meaning" Gambrell, Matkin, & Burbach, 2011). In transformative learning situations, "values, beliefs, and assumptions compose the lens through which personal experience is mediates and made sense of" (Merriam, 2004, p. 61). "Research has shown that developing leaders' emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence competencies have been shown to predict effective leadership" (Gambrell et al., 2011, p. 313). Conscious leadership emphasizes contextual understanding and critical reflection, while concurrently validating meaning and developing reason. Conscious leaders are described as being self-aware and self-governed and can infer a universal standard for adequate leadership functioning. "Being more conscious gives you the capacity for deliberate choice over the things of which you are aware" (Hayden & de Jager, 2010). Conscious leaders perceive patterns in the environment, see the interconnectivity of multiple events, and subscribe to a participatory leadership style, which incorporates shared responsibility and collective problem solving. Conscious leaders have mastered self-knowledge (Akbar, 2006) and are aware of their relations to others, are conscious of their thoughts, words, and actions and they lead in responsible and accountable ways.

Consciousness Quotient theory describes the meaning of awareness or consciousness, while the Consciousness Quotient Inventory assesses the levels of awareness for an individual. Brazdua and Mihai (2011) explain that not having awareness limits a person's ability to function cognitively from a broader perspective and make effective choices. Brazdua's Consciousness Quotients Inventory (CQI) examines the

awareness level from six dimensions and nine sub-categories. The six primary dimensions are: physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social/relational, and self-conscious/self-awareness and the nine secondary factors include: internal state awareness, self-reflectiveness, mindfulness, autonomy, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life, verbal expression, and openness towards new experiences (Brazdau & Mihai, 2011).

> Some of us have a larger level of consciousness, described by a higher CQ, when they access and process plenty of information. Some of us have a lower CQ, and can access and process less information. Throughout the day the consciousness state may be different, but overall the general CQ is the same. In some moments we are more aware about our feelings, but less of our thoughts or our own being. Our CQ shows only the degree of what we are able to access simultaneously. In a regular state, increases in consciousness of one field, can only be obtained *stealing* consciousness resources from one side and offer more consciousness to another field. (Brazdau & Mihai, 2011, p. 246)

Like attention, the ability to focus on more than one element at a time may either be increased or decreased, dependent upon the level of awareness of the individual. Conscious leadership's primary philosophy is focused on empowering the individual leader to become transformative, collaborative, flexible and responsible.

Consciousness is not just about awareness; it is about accessing a vast field of possibility. It is about transformative learning, which demand that a higher cognitive functioning level present (Gambrell et al., 2011). This type of learning takes place through a deliberate process which mediates an epistemological shift, rather than a mere

change in behavior. The more conscious a leaders is, the more access they will have to information and resources, to better inform decisions and choices and therefore the leadership practice. "Conscious leaders experience a significant sense of oneness and interconnectedness with the world around them and as such are motivated to act responsibly" (Hayden & de Jager, 2010). Conscious leaders are holistic leaders who are aware of the fact that leadership is about *being* not just *doing*. Courage and commitment is needed to cultivate leaders who are responsible and conscious in their practice. Effective leadership development and practices are highly personal (Sandeen, 2001) and akin to the cultivation of the human consciousness. As conscious leaders, postsecondary educational leaders will be better prepared to view educational administration and leadership from a holistic perspective rather than a fragmented perspective (Allen & Cherry, 2000).

Research Questions

The concept of a sociology imagination suggested "We cannot separate our lives from the forces of society" (Rosado, 2008, p. 2078). Therefore, before we can begin encouraging practicing different leadership, we must first understand what influences are shaping the individual leader from a personal and environmental lens or framework. Rosado (2008) suggested that content informs context. If this is true, then a conscious leadership lens will assist in bridging the personal aspects of the leader with the sociological impacts from society, especially since it is assumed that educational environments are becoming more integrated, networked, and systems oriented. A reform of leadership preparation, development, and practices is necessary in order to connect leadership practices with the leaders' values and beliefs to make both elements congruent

(Fullan, 2001; Fullan & Scott, 2009). But first, learning some primary facts about how leaders become and practice as responsible and conscious leaders is warranted. Four research questions will guide the study:

1. How do postsecondary educational leaders make sense of conscious leadership?

2. How is conscious leadership demonstrated on a daily basis?

3. How does context influence conscious leadership practices?

4. What implications does a conscious leadership framework have for conscious leadership practices?

Accountability, self-awareness, and the understanding of quantum physics and systems theory are the basis of conscious leadership and form the foundation of this qualitative study. As new leadership practices are being considered for postsecondary education, emphasis will need to be placed on creating different and innovative ways of leading and relating to others, which support emerging interconnected and networked educational work environments (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). Educational leaders will also need to be exposed to the concept of leading authentically and from the inside out. Then, and only then, can postsecondary educational leaders claim to be better prepared to lead their organizations into the future (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Delimitations of the Study

A delimitation of this study is that the emphasis placed on using conscious leadership as a leadership framework is fairly new and may not be widely practiced in

postsecondary education. Therefore, interviewees may not be as familiar with the concept or practice.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this qualitative study is its ability to generalize the results to a larger population. Interviews will be primarily conducted within the Western region, therefore limiting the generalization to differing perspectives nationwide.

Organization of the Study

This chapter reviewed the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, conceptual framework, and research questions, and delimitations and limitations. Chapter Two reviews transformative leadership models and explains the meaning of quantum physics and systems theory. Chapter Three outlines the method of the research design by identifying the specific approach, participants, and data collection and analysis approach. Chapter Four presents the findings and results of the study and Chapter Five offers a discussion on the results, which includes conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Contemplating the epistemology of effective leadership practices is a continuous effort, embarked upon by many scholars within the field of organizational development and leadership studies (Lencioni, 2002; Northhouse, 2010; Senge, 1990). Recent discourse and reports reveal new and transformative approaches to leadership preparation, development, and practices (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Li, 2010; Piland & Wolf; 2003; Schaetti et al., 2008). Emphasis is increasingly placed on developing leaders who are more thoughtful, self-aware and conscious, and who themselves are accountable for their individual leadership practices (Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Fry & Kriger, 2006; Hayden, 2011, Wheatley, 2006). The literature review for this study investigates the conceptual theoretical framework for conscious leadership, which is informed by human consciousness, cognition and learning, quantum physics and systems theory, and provides examples of transformative leadership practices (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011; Goswami, 2001; Hayden, 2011; Zohar, 1994). Emphasis will be placed on identifying leadership practices for professionals working within postsecondary education. Moreover, the review will examine gaps in the literature for postsecondary leadership practices.

A Brief Overview of Leadership

Traditionally leadership practices have been housed within a behaviorist worldview or practice of control and hierarchy application (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Fullan & Scott, 2009; W. K.

Kellogg Foundation, 2000; Wheatley, 2006). Behaviorism refers to a scientific

investigation with an emphasis on overt behaviors that can be measured and verified

(Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2006). Measurement and verification is at the core of

hierarchical leadership practices and generally do little to create effective leadership

practices (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000). Leadership practices embedded in a

behaviorist approach require limited conscious thought or awareness and do not

necessarily emphasis the development of meaningful relationships, or adhere to a shared

responsibility in problem solving, or lead by relating within an integrated and networked

environment. Educational leaders (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Fullan & Scott, 2009) must

be able to self-reflect regarding their specific thought process and leadership styles. Self-

reflection will permit leaders to move towards a paradigm shift and become open to

alternative leadership practices and focus less on controlling behaviors. "With increased

self-reflexivity comes a shifting awareness not only of the individual self, but also the

relationship to others and the world" (Miller, Schlitz, & Vieten, 2010, p. 26). This in turn

will help leaders develop much more effective leadership practices.

Historically, leadership development and practices have been born out of

behaviorist approaches. "Although there are a number of leadership theories, more often

than not, researchers have focused on the scientific study of leadership, looking more at

the antecedents, traits, and behaviors than searching for the phenomenology of it"

(Gambrell et al., 2011, p. 313). For example, the leader is measured by succinct

performance indicators and tends to favor an organizational environment that embraces a

controlled, hierarchical, and authoritarian perspective. "The issue with this mindset is that

it creates a dichotomous framework that negates a fluid and evolutionary process, as well

as excludes discussion of how actual leadership development and change can occur"
(Gambrell et al., 2011, p. 313). Being task oriented is appreciated and supported and
there is little room or consideration for the idea of a shared leadership practice (Li, 2010;
Northouse, 2010; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000). Leadership practices that
incorporate behavioral approaches are now viewed by many as outdated, especially for
use in environments where uncertainty and transformation are the norm. Senge,
Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004), stated "Our leaders are more likely to be
technologists than philosophers, focused on gaining and using power, driving change,
influencing people, and maintaining an appearance of control" (p. 178). On the other
hand, Allen and Cherry (2000) observed that we are living in a world that is becoming
increasingly interconnected. The suggestion that working environments are becoming
increasingly connected and networked, is presenting a challenge for managing
organizational behaviors and applying effective leadership practices. "Two major shifts
occurring in the world are having a significant effect on how we work together, influence
change and lead our organizations" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 1). The shifts in thinking
have emerged from a fragmented worldview or perspective, and are now moving into a
more interconnected worldview of perspectives, while also moving from an industrial
area to a knowledge area. Each of these trends is fueled by the increased global
interconnectivity between economies, resources, and enhanced technological capabilities.
Moreover, these changes are dictating that new ways of relating and leading unfold,
creating a need to relate and interact with each other from a systemic perspective (Allen
& Cherry, 2000).

Transformative leadership practices have emerged as a result of organizations becoming more interconnected, networked, and integrated. Transformation requires an epistemological change in what one knows and how they know it. For the purposes of this study conscious leadership will serve as the conceptual framework, however, the intent of this literature review is to examine other transformative leadership models. The next section will provide examples of alternative leadership practices that are consistent with the concept of conscious leadership practices.

Models of Modern Transformative Leadership Practices

"Humans are predisposed to connect" (Miller et al., 2010, p. 27). They view connection as part of being human. For example, *Ubuntu* is described as humanness or humanity to others and is incorporated within the cultural thought and ideology of the Bantu people to promote community and communalism (Gianan, 2010). Humanity to others is one of the basic principles in Ubuntu ideology along with the cornerstones of unity, harmony, and balance. Cooperation is necessary to bring forth communalism and the ideology of Ubuntu provides a pathway for this to evolve through the shared experiences between and with any community or organization (Gianan, 2010). The philosophy of Ubuntu is not unique to the Bantu people. Gianan (2010) explains, "Confucius is one of those who advocated human-heartedness. This expression is also present in the Filipino philosophy of *loob*, which roughly refers to human good will, being human" (p. 90). Ubuntu not only provides a definition for what it means to be human but also offers an understanding of what it means to be human, conscious, responsible, and accountable from a systems and communal perspective.

The emphasis on creation and innovation is becoming a very important aspect of effective leadership practices in relation to being more thoughtful and conscious as a leader. For the most part, leaders respond to stimulus motivation within their respective environments. However, they do not necessarily act or lead from, a place of thoughtfulness and conscious awareness. Arntz, Chasse, and Vicente (2005) suggest, "We are so addicted to the external world and so addicted to the stimulus and response in the external world that the brain is beginning to work out of response instead of creation" (Arntz et al., 2005, p. 155). Most people are not able to change their behaviors or lives because they are chemically addicted to the emotions and behaviors. Again, the emphasis on behavioral approaches on effective leadership practices within an integrated and networked environment appears to be problematic. These particular leadership competencies are not supportive of leaders becoming conscious leaders. Once they become conscious they can begin to change the way they view reality.

Being-Centered Leadership

Being-centered leadership is described by Fry and Kriger (2006) as a leadership practice that is "based on *being* rather than *doing*" (p. 1668). Contrary to how this sounds, being-centered leaders are action oriented. They are leaders who are motivated by the context of situations in which they have to respond to and lead from within. Being-centered leaders place an emphasis on understanding their internal feelings and the feelings of others. The authors suggest that leadership is a complex and social process and that the leadership theories that have been put forth thus far, "have been based almost exclusively on behavior and interactions or traits, competencies or styles" (Fry & Kriger, 2006, p. 1668). "In proposing a being-centered approach to leadership, we take the view

that a human being dynamically resides in and responds to an ever-evolving open system of levels of being" (Fry & Kriger, 2006, p. 1686). However, some scholars in the area of leadership theories, development, and practices are beginning to embrace constructs of leadership, which are inclusive of embracing the influences of intuition, inner feelings, compassion, and thoughts on leadership practices (Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Hayden, 2011; Schaetti et al., 2008; Wheatley, 2006). Being-centered leadership embraces a multi-level ontology and attempts to offer new epistemology about the practice of leadership within a context. It offers a multi-level approach in shaping and providing context, so that leaders can respond and lead in appropriate ways. "Issues surrounding the larger ontology of the reality of leadership as a state of being appropriate to context and how a focus on being a leader from moment to moment may be essential for long-term group and organizational effectiveness" (Fry & Kriger, 2006, p. 1669). Being-centered leadership principles are grounded within six of the world religious ontologies: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism, which work to complement the five levels of described beings: non-dual awareness, awareness of spirit, awareness of the soul and content, awareness of images and imagination, and awareness of the physical world. The central idea behind the concept of being-centered is that "individuals have the potential to enter roles as needed to enact leadership in specific moment-by-moment situational contexts" (Fry & Kriger, 2006, p. 1686). This leadership approach allows the individual leader to shift from *having* and *doing* to *being*. Being-centered leadership is not only concerned with the individual leader's effective development as leader, but also how they develop, and how they understand their leadership qualities in context to everything in their life, the workplace, and from a global

perspective within the world. Being-centered leadership is about providing all potential leaders with a leadership framework that allows them to function within any situation or context effectively.

Personal Leadership

Personal Leadership is a fairly new leadership model, evolving out of a need to make a difference in the world. Personal leadership offers two principles and six practices to help leaders remain connected to being inspirational even in the face of adversity (Schaetti et al., 2008). The main premise is placed on gaining a greater internal understanding of self to promote learning and creativity. "It's about taking leadership of our personal experiences" (Schaetti et al., 2008, p. 3). The six core themes that guide personal leadership are: (a) leading from the inside out; (b) using difference as a creative resource; (c) emphasizing self-reflection; (d) choosing our internal state of being; (e) beginning with ourselves; and (f) committing to applied competence. These competencies for personal leadership indicate that leadership development is a very personal experience. Therefore, it is only natural to investigate theories that will help in the transformation of leaders within the professional realm.

Love-Based Leadership

Church (2010) describes her alternative leadership practice as Love-Based leadership. She claims that leadership is about leading from a place of love and inspiration, that, "leadership is the action of inspiring and motivating others towards a vision" (Church, 2010, p. ixx). She suggests that one can only do this by finding the leader within. Once leaders discover the leader within, then and only then, are they capable of leading with intent, and from a place of responsibility and accountability or be

able to transform and become masterful of self. She exclaims that if leaders do not find meaning, disillusion sets in and they lack motivation. Furthermore, leaders will begin to look for and find substitutes for meaningful experiences if they cannot find meaning in their work and practice (Church, 2010). Moreover, she suggests that the substitute leaders are unhealthy or destructive and segmented.

According to Church (2010), "The job of leadership today is not just to make money. It's to make meaning" (p. 5). She maintains that leaders want to leave a legacy of meaning. They want to find purpose in what they do (Church, 2010). This all leads to what she terms a Love-Based leadership practice. Unlike servant leadership, love-based leadership goes deeper into self-awareness and leading from a holistic approach. It "explores not just walking the talk, but takes into account layers to the depths of meaning in ourselves as leaders and helping those we lead find meaningful experiences in their own lives" (Church, 2010, p. 8).

To Church (2010), love is the core to being human; therefore, it seems only natural to become compassionate and loving in our relating to one another, regardless of the situation or context. Church (2010) believes leading and love are synonymous. There is no separation. And she reminds us that "Leading people in the wake of economic collapse requires a different model of leadership. What has worked for us in the past isn't working for us today and won't work for us tomorrow. We need to see with new eyes and an open heart, a new reality in leadership" (Church, 2010, p. 21). In love-based practices, leading and leadership is a personal experience, because you are interacting with people, not machines.

Open Leadership

Open leadership, emerged as a response to the ways social technology has been transforming leadership as we move into an increasingly interconnected world. Li (2010) suggests that being open, transparent, and authentic are the mantra and hallmarks of effective leadership practices. Furthermore, she is advocating that until leaders learn to let go of being the one in control, they will not be successful as leaders. Li (2010) suggests that openness is critical to effective leadership practices.

Open leadership is about building and fostering relationships, supporting the idea of shared leadership practices that is accountable and responsible. It is also congruent with the new way of leading and relating in a networked and integrated environment. Li (2010) describes leaders who practice open leadership as "having the confidence and humility to give up the need to be in control while inspiring commitment from people to accomplish goals" (p. 14). They respect that their employees have power, share in their leadership role in an effort to build trust, possess natural curiosity and are humble, which make them more open to being accountable and responsible. Open leadership followers understand that they must be forgiving of some failures from their direct reports, because the way to accountability is through forgiveness. However, it does not mean that failures are the accepted norm, rather it is acknowledged that failure happens and is understood (Li, 2010). All people want to be understood. Li indicates that there are ten elements to open leadership housed within two major categories, information sharing and decision making. The information sharing and decision making platforms includes explaining, updating, includes the acknowledgement that decisions are centralized, democratic and

the decisions must be self-managed and distributed. These ten elements help to provide

a viable metric for open leadership practices and make the approach easily adoptable.

Li (2010) declared that we live a new culture of sharing, brought on by increased

interconnectivity through social media technology such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and

Twitter. This makes it difficult for leaders to not be open and transparent. More people

are online and connecting to each other globally in a matter of minutes. Moreover, the

widespread use of social websites assisted with the adoption and increased use of

networking and connecting. This in turn, has caused a new culture of sharing to emerge

within organizations throughout the world. The acting of sharing is naturally ingrained

within human behavior, thus making hierarchical leadership practices outdated and

ineffective.

Soul Leadership

Soul leadership as described by Chopra (2010) pivots on being the symbolic soul

of the group. The leader's role "is to fulfill the needs of others and, when each need is

met, to lead the group on to fulfill ever higher needs, lifting the group's potential at every

step. The inspired leader's power base comes not from others but from her very being,

and the path she walks is guided by her own soul" (Chopra, 2010, p. 10). This supports

the construct that self-mastery is key to leadership transformation and practices,

especially since leadership is seen as a personal process for most individuals (Kouzes &

Posners, 2007). Chopra (2010) further states that when leaders change on the inside, they

no longer have to seek followers; the followers will naturally seek and follow them. The

internal process of gaining knowledge of self is a critical step for individual leaders.

Traditional definitions described leadership as belonging to only a few. However, Chopra (2010) indicates, "The old definitions of leadership exalt power, and the use of the power has always been directly linked to its abuse" (p. 11). In a networked and integrated world, the old way of relating and leading becomes an obsolete approach. Soul leadership is based on consciousness, compassion, and knowledge of self. The emphasis of the soul from a leadership perspective is not about any particular leadership practice per say, but as, Chopra highlights,

I believe the soul is an expression of an underlying universal field of consciousness. Your particular awareness, or soul, is like a wave in this boundless sea, unique for a brief moment in time before it falls back into the larger entity from which it emerged. At the soul level you are seamlessly connected with everything in the universe, to the silent domain from which all matter and energy spring. (2010, p. 12)

In this context the soul takes on the qualities of creativity, intelligence, organizing power, and love. Relating to others from a soul leadership perspective is complimentary to the new ways of relating in an integrated and networked world. Leaders, who lead from the soul, look and listen, develop emotional bonding, are aware, do and empower, are responsible and synchronistic (Chopra, 2010). They are conscious and understand that the uncertainty and potentiality of things in the world are not a challenge but an opportunity to provide creative and innovative answers to long standing old ways of relating and leading. The "ultimate ability to connect any need with an answer from the soul" is critical (Chopra, 2010, p. 15). That is what makes these soul leaders, soul leaders and synchronistic. He goes on to suggest that, "our souls offer the highest inspiration at

every moment" (Chopra, 2010, p. 16). This information is needed to become an

effective leader and lies within the leader, however, leaders need to be able access it, see

the patterns, and understand reality regardless of the chaos or uncertainty, which may

present itself as situations or life issues arise. Soul leadership is just that, leading from the

soul and seen as a viable leadership model and practice for an increasingly networked and

integrated society.

<div align="center">**Ideology, Worldviews, and Consciousness**</div>

It is often claimed that leadership practices are derived from cultural worldviews

or perspectives. "Worldviews inform human behavior in relationships and choreograph

individual and social reactions and actions every moment of the day" (Miller et al., 2010,

p. 19). These worldviews are shaped and informed by the cultural *asili* of the community

and people. The *asili* as described by Ani (1994) is the core of the ideology and assists

any individual or group in making sense of their reality. Ideology incorporates the

"beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values, and ideas to form a comprehensive model of

reality" (Ani, 1994, p. 19).

A worldview, in this context, refers to an accepted reality derived from the

construction of a conceptual framework. Frameworks act as roadmaps and assist with

interpretation, meaning-making, and understanding of reality. Worldviews affect

perceptions, which in turn, affect behaviors and how individuals and groups relate to and

respond to each other. Ideology, perspective and worldview assist in the formation of

consciousness. Consciousness is intentional focus and self-awareness (Miller et al.,

2010). For the most part, human consciousness is passively shaped outside of awareness

of biological, social, and cultural factors. Moreover, consciousness refers to ways of

being that provide belief structures and options for organizing perceptions and new experiences, regardless of the context of the environment. Social consciousness can be described as "conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others" (Miller et al., 2010, p. 21). In other words, it means that one is aware of how they are influenced by others, and how their actions may affect others.

Leaders influence others through their respective leadership practices and should possess and foster a healthy worldview and social consciousness, especially since it is assumed that consciousness in general shapes the ideologies, perspectives, and worldviews, while at the same time influences the way people understand, interact and engage with others in the world (Ani, 1994; Miller et al., 2010).

As people mature in their capacity to respond consciously to the physical and social world, further subtle and dramatic changes in worldview become possible, even in the face of contrasting social pressures. Social consciousness can develop within the understanding that a person's social system has a history, that it changes over time, and that through the cultivation of one's own awareness, an individual can participate in its dynamic unfoldment. (Miller et al., 2010, p. 26)

Social consciousness is believed to influence the behaviors and actions of people, along with goals and desires which shape perceptions, motivations, and values consciously and unconsciously. However, "worldviews can become quite rigid over time and resistant to change, even when new contrasting information is presented" (Miller et al., 2010, p. 9).

Knowledge and Learning: An Ancient Perspective

Capra (2010) advocates that there are two types of knowledge or consciousness: rational and intuitive. Furthermore, he states that rational knowledge is derived from our

experiences with objects and events, while intuitive knowledge can be identified as knowledge that transcends intellectual thinking and sensory perception, and is often labeled absolute knowledge. Intuitive knowledge can never truly be described by words and interacts with reality through direct experiences that are undifferentiated and indeterminate. Along these lines, Akbar (1998) notes, "Knowledge is the hallmark of civilized human life" (p. v). He suggested that the epistemology of knowing is humanity's process towards gaining insight and understanding of a particular reality and how that reality interacts and impacts their lives or ways of being.

> Knowledge is the capacity to know oneself, and have the ability to communicate that knowledge with others. Other animals have the capacity to learn behavior that is actually only habit of action without awareness. Human beings are capable of knowledge acquisition and this permits them to move above the level of habit and actually gain and transmit knowledge about themselves and the world that they live in, over generations. (Akbar, 1998, p. v)

Akbar (1998) defines consciousness as "the internal manifestation of knowledge (p. vi). It is suggested that this awareness of self and others, is the difference between being conscious individuals or not. He also acknowledged that human beings discovered that they could transmit information in the form of knowledge and create a specific cultural meaning of their world, to create a historical reference as to how to exist, thus making them more adaptable to change and transformation. It is this information that has sustained humanity's pursuit of self -awareness especially in relation to making-meaning and becoming more personally aware. Akbar (1998) explains that personal awareness "is the way by which we determine individual functioning" and that it is the "ultimate

instruction for man's growth and transformation" (p. vi). After all, consciousness is synonymous with humanity. Scientists (Capra, 2010; Goswami, 2001) are beginning to discover that a quantum physics perspective offers a different way of viewing humanity in relations to awareness and meaning-making. The next section will examine the principles of quantum physics as they relates to creating meaning for worldviews.

Quantum Physics: The Interconnectivity of Things

Quantum physics can offer a viable construct for understanding how living organisms exist in their respective environments, which are naturally integrated and interconnected. Moreover, it offers a deeper way to conceptualize the universe and our relations to it, which is, becoming more conscious and aware (Capra, 2010; Laszlo, 2008; Wheatley, 2006). "Most of what we encounter in our environment is alive. When we relate to our fellow human beings, to living nature around us, to human organizations, and to the economy, we are always dealing with living systems" (Capra, 2010. p. 7). Quantum physics offers a new way of envisioning reality and the world and incorporates context, which assists us in building frameworks for understanding and meaning-making. A quantum perspective has replaced a very narrow view of reality with a more holistic one.

The Greek root of the word physics means the *essential nature of things* (Capra, 2010, p. 20). To study physics is to study all things of matter and all living organisms (Capra, 2010; Goswami, 2001). For almost three centuries, Newton's physics provided a strong foundation for understanding the world as absolute and unchangeable. It was simple because it was linear in its conceptualization and based on absoluteness, separateness of things, and lack of ability to support change. Under the classic Newtonian

construct, the universe was described using a mechanical perspective, that is where all other living entities were thought to be composed of building blocks of solid matter and isolated, with no assumed relationship to any other living organism (Capra, 2010; Zohar, 1994). Newtonian ideology offered a preliminary understanding of reality for humanity by providing absolutes and concrete answers about human existence; however, it did not teach us much about our living environments or how all living things interact with each other. Capra (2010) suggested that a reality shift is taking place in the way we relate to each other, nature and the cosmos. The cosmos or cosmology means the study of order (Amen, 1990). Moreover, Capra (2010) claimed that "the new paradigm in science is not technological. It is the confirmation of something people have always felt but could not give a rational explanation for: our close connection to each other and to the cosmos" (p. 3).

Modern civilization has known about the relationship between all things but has failed to give much evidence of this perspective. Science can show a link between all living organisms through a different model of viewing the world, quantum physics. Understanding this view will require a paradigm shift. Laszlo (2008) suggests that quantum physics provides us with a fresh look at our *oneness*. He explains that quanta, atoms and molecules, can be instantly connected across space and time, offering all living organisms an opportunity to interact and connect with other living organisms and the cosmos. These interconnections and interactions enable humans to become conscious, to be human, and to practice humanness (Capra, 2010; Laszlo, 2008). Researchers in the field of consciousness show that human beings are indeed interconnected. It is suggested that they share a common ancestor through DNA, which connects them and their human

consciousness (Bynum, 1999). This shared human consciousness has immense implications and influence on how individual and group identities are formed and impact our psychological functioning. Quantum physics provides a lens for understanding global consciousness, as well as, the interconnectivity of relationships.

Wheatley (2006) expresses that quantum physics emphasizes relationships that are interconnected and interdependent and about interactions of potentiality. Moreover, she states "this world of relationships is rich and complex" (Wheatley, 2006, p. 35). Furthermore, Wheatley (2006) recommends that in relationships, we should give up the focus, predictability, and control and embrace the potential of things:

> Different settings and people evoke some qualities from us and leave others dormant. In each of these relationships, we are different, new in some way….If nothing exists independent of its relationship with others, we can move away from our need to think in terms of separate, polar opposites. For years I have struggled conceptually with a question I thought important: In organizations, which is the more important influence on behaviors-the system or the individual? The quantum world answered that question for me with a resounding "Both." There are no either/or. There is no need to decide between two things, pretending they are separate. What is critical is the relationship created between two or more elements. Systems influence individuals and individuals call forth systems. It is the relationship that evokes the present reality. Which potential becomes real depends on the people, the events, and the moment. (p. 36)

The new physics is being showcased as being more in line with understanding the world as it pertains to cultural thought and ideology, especially within integrated and

networked environments of humanity. Quantum physics is a new way for explaining

our social reality and way of being. However, in this new social reality, Zohar (1994) is

suggesting that certain features must be prevalent: a holistic perspective must be present;

that is plural, responsive, and supportive of an emergent and dynamic environment,

sustainable, spiritual, and collective. Furthermore, science must not be in opposition to

everything, but in collaboration within everything, because everything is interconnected.

This is really not new insight. These features can be readily found embedded within the

traditions of indigenousness societies. A quantum reality is intrinsically linked and

inherent to the human consciousness (Zohar, 1994).

In the past the world was thought to be isolated and separate. Capra (2010)

suggested "we have discovered that the material world, ultimately, is a network of

inseparable patterns of relationships; that the planet as a whole is a living, self-regulating

system" (p. 8).This evolution can be aligned to a cooperative dance between creativity,

innovation, and collaboration as they all work as drivers to scaffold change and

transformation. Capra claimed, from this perspective that emphasis is placed on

understanding the complexity, networks, and patterns of organizations, where the ecology

of relationships, connectedness, and integration matters. Human beings are intrinsically

valued and celebrated as one strand of the web of life (Capra, 2010). "This is a

philosophy that engenders a profound sense of connectedness, of context, of

relationships, of belonging" (p. 8). He implies these connections, relationships, and sense

of belonging are the essence of how humans learn to exist in the world; furthermore, he

sees no separation between the self and the world. Capra (2010) puts forward that

understanding modern physics would lead to a marriage between the mind and matter,

which had been separated with the emergence of the Descartes and Cartesian philosophies. Each of these ideologies is based on fragmented perspectives of things. He alludes to the fact that quantum physics, can replace the Descartes and Cartesian philosophy with a less fragmented perspective. The holistic perspective becomes even more critical as a new way of relating becomes increasingly apparent.

Quantum physics as described by Zohar (1994) is the potentiality of things in regards to our inner workings of everything we see and physically are. She suggested, "Quantum reality offers a new model for a new kind of thinking and thus, perhaps, for some new social vision" (Zohar, 1994, p. 65). Moreover, quantum processes are rooted in human consciousness and awareness. The brain is made up of quantum structures where energy is released in quanta. Quanta are emerging energy radiation (Capra, 2010). Furthermore, Zohar (1994) espouses that this construct provides us with a broader appreciation for the potential of thoughts and relationships. Thoughts and relationships are believed to cohabitate simultaneously in harmony in an effort to create balance and uniformity within the human experience (Zohar, 1994). Zohar advocated that quantum physics potentially assists with gaining an understanding of how individuals and relationships operate within a certain context, especially since context effects human consciousness, and human consciousness is tied to a quantum reality. "Perhaps more than anything else, quantum physics promises to transform our notions of relationships" (Zohar, 1990, p. 34), offering new ways to relate and form perceptions and worldviews. Furthermore, quantum physics supports an emphasis on systemic, integrated, and networked environments. "We must learn to re-experience this reality as an integrated whole" (Zohar, 1990, p. 29).

Others have supported this notion, including the Dalai Lama. "There is a group of scientists and philosophers who appear to believe that scientific thinking derived from quantum physics could provide an explanation of consciousness" (Lama, 2005, p. 128). Bohm's perspective on implicate order suggested that matter and consciousness originated from the same principles of physics, the principle of wholeness and understanding things from a holistic perspective or reality. Therefore, he suggests that it is not surprising that similarities between thought and matter have emerged (Lama, 2005). Laszlo (2008) recommends that humanity "Know thyself" as part of an interconnected rapidly changing world" (p. 3). An ancient Chinese proverb declares, "If we do not change direction, we are likely to end up exactly where we are headed" (Laszlo, 2008, p. 8). Thus, it is critical to understand and make-meaning of the rapid changes and transformations that are occurring in the world today. Uncertainty has become the norm and gaining insight into the context of situations and things is a must. No change in the way we exist as human beings and leaders will result in further breakdowns within society as a whole. Rosado (2008) recommended that context informs content. Content can be explained as "the thinking patterns, levels of consciousness and value systems that are operational in groups and individuals, "while content is described as "corresponding behaviors, observable data, and specific dynamics operative in daily life" (Rosado, 2008, p. 2077). This perspective provides a comprehensive view of the world because it provides a viable context for understanding reality.

In real social transformation, we are required to change our basic categories of thought, which may result in a shift in the whole intellectual framework. For quantum realities, thoughts are couched within our experiences and the knowledge that we have

gathered over time. Zohar (1994) explains that the demand to change the whole mindset will only assist humans in learning a new way of being. She further explains that potentiality and possibilities define the reigning theme. Our current way of being is heavily influenced by a mechanistic perspective. A quantum perspective shifts its reality according to the context. It is not locked into a linear and very static perspective. Capra (2010) advocates, "that the way-or Tao-of physics can be a path with a heart, a way to spiritual knowledge and self-realizations. The Akan people of West Africa called it "Kuugusa Mtima," which means "touch the heart" (Addae, 1996). To touch the heart, means one must be conscious of self and others. Laszlo (2008) suggests, "We must, and still can, head toward a timely shift in values, vision, and behaviors" (p. 16). But an adoption of openness to change and transformation within systems must first happen.

System Theory: An Integrated Approach

Most modern day philosophers and physicists tend to view the world as a system of dynamic, inseparable, and interchanging components, with the human being playing a critical role within the system. All living organisms naturally and cooperatively work within systems and are therefore interconnected and networked at unlimited levels. Smith-Acuna (2011) views systems theory as "a set of unifying principles about the organization and functioning systems" (p. 6). First developed as a theory by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1936, systems theory provided a powerful framework when faced with processes to integrate and structure things. Chen and Stroup (1993) have suggested that "systems theory is fundamentally an approach to intellectually engaging change and complexity" (p. 447). It has also been suggested that the principles of systems theory are the foundational building blocks for systemic thinking and systemic leadership (Allen &

Cherry, 2000; Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur, & Schley, 2008; Wheatley, 2006). As a universal principle, system thinking has emerged as an effective leadership practice within an environment where integration and networking is prevalent.

A system perspective is "an approach that sees human behavior as the outcome of reciprocal interactions of a person's operating within organized and integrated social system" (Hutchison, 2008, p.43). In short, its basic premise is seeing things from a holistic perspective and seeing the world as a dynamic, interconnected, and interdependent entity. Chen and Stroup (1993) suggested that "knowing and intentionality are aspects of systems theory" (p. 450). The inclusion of the observer is critical and a key strength of its construct. The observer for purposes of this theory is the human being or leader who can learn how to harness the people power to lead and relate to others in a very different way. Systemic leadership practices offer an appropriate post-industrial way to lead in a time of rapid change. It is the understanding of context that allows the leader to find meaning and develop relational skills for effective leadership competencies.

Brazdua's Consciousness Quotient: Measuring Awareness

Human beings have the ability to be aware of self and others, to be conscious. "The more conscious we become, the greater access we have to this limitless field of potential to use and create within our daily lives, whether this be for individuals or for organizations" (Hayden & de Jager, 2010). In 2008, Brazdua introduced the Consciousness Quotient (CQ) theory and inventory (Brazdau & Mihai, 2011). It was first presented in an academic setting at the 2009 Toward a Science of Consciousness Conference. Brazdau and Mihai (2011) defined Consciousness Quotient as the "level of

consciousness that is experienced in the morning, ½-2 hour after we are awake, after a refreshing sleep, without being exposed to any significant stimulus: coffee, TV, radio, music, talking etc." (p. 246). His primary goal was to investigate and identify measurable qualities of the conscious experience, while at the same time gain insight into the amount of information that individuals could take in and process simultaneously.

Brazdu and Mihai (2011) framed the Consciousness Quotient theory and inventory in a cognitive psychology framework. The inventory was validated and assessed in two preliminary research studies and one large study. In the large research study, data was collected and measured from 2,475 participants, whose demographic and character traits included high educational levels, high income levels, higher social statuses, and physical living location that would be considered middle to upper class urban environments. Brazdua hypothesized that those individuals with higher CQ levels have the ability to access and process information simultaneously at greater rates, while individuals with lower CQ levels accessed and processed information at lower levels (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011). Moreover, he suggested those individuals who are capable of processing and accessing greater amounts of information, simultaneously, are considered more cognizant of their choices and have a broader perspective and worldview (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011). Hayden (2011) declared, "More conscious leaders have a range over their less conscious peers, all of which can be turned into a business advantage."

Using the CQ Inventory provided insight into the level of consciousness of an individual based on six primary dimension and nine sub-categories. The primary levels of the CQ inventory include: physical, emotional, mental (cognitive), spiritual, social-relational and self-consciousness, are defined as follows:

1. Physical Consciousness: refers to the ability of being conscious of the body and organism, and of the physical elements of the environments

2. Emotional Consciousness; describes the ability of being conscious of your own emotions and feelings, and generally, to be conscious of any emotional feelings

3. Mental (Cognitive) Consciousness: refers to the ability of being conscious of your own ideas, of the mental stream generally

4. Spiritual Consciousness; refers to the ability of being conscious about yourself as a part of the universe, and describes the ability of being conscious about the multiple connections with the surrounding life

5. Social-Relational Consciousness: refers to the ability of being conscious about human relationships and the connection with people you interact with

6. Self-Consciousness: Consciousness of Self or Self-Awareness refers to the ability of being conscious about your own person, your own self; this factor describes the ability of the reflexivity of the human being, of being able to look upon itself in an objective way (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011, p. 246).

Along with the primary dimensions, the CQI captures nine secondary dimensions of consciousness. They are as follows: Internal State Awareness, Self-Reflectiveness, Mindfulness, Autonomy, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, and Purpose in Life, Verbal Expression, and Openness toward now experiences. Moreover, these nine sub-categories assist in providing enlightenment into a person's ability to be aware of their inner changes, to be reflective of who they are, how they look at themselves within an non-judgmental context, understand their level of autonomy, be aware of their

personal growth and transformation, are aware of their ability to form interpersonal

relations, have an understanding and knowledge of what it means to be purposeful in life,

are able to verbalize and communicate in a responsible and accountable way, and are

aware of their ability to be open to new information.

Conscious Leadership: The Conceptual Framework

Conscious leadership is grounded in the sociocultural knowledge of reciprocity,

which allows leaders to perceive patterns in the environment, see the interconnectivity of

multiple problems, and subscribe to a participatory leadership style, which incorporates

the idea of shared responsibility and problem solving. Conscious leaders are

transformative. They are able to identify problems, gain additional knowledge and

organize it in meaningful ways, plan, implement, reflect and lead within environments

that are interconnected, networked, and dynamic with change and complexity

(Youngblood, 1997; Wheatley, 2006). Hayden (2011) described conscious leaders as

being better decision-makers, flexible, authentic, and creative. She suggests that

conscious leaders act from a holistic perspective and are evolutionary.

> Conscious leadership is not offering simply another formula to apply to oneself
>
> that proclaims it is competitively better than all other formulas, but rather it
>
> represents the capacity to step outside of oneself, observe, see oneself in context,
>
> and have the power to choose what one wants to be and do next, which may
>
> follow any of the other popular leadership thinking models-if one so chooses.
>
> (Hayden, 2011)

Conscious leaders can observe their thoughts and emotions as they arise, and have

awareness and command over their actions. They are capable of creating peace, not

conflict, during times of stress and chaos and are able to recognize ineffective habits of the mind, and shift to a more positive paradigm. Conscious leadership is grounded in human consciousness and cognition, the principles of quantum physics and systems theory, where relationships, reciprocity, interactions, and interconnectivity inform the leadership practice and approach.

Rethinking Leadership Practices in Postsecondary Education

The "great man" style of leadership is phasing out (Eddy & Van Derlinden, 2006). The leadership model that embraces a "great hero" construct is outdated for leaders within postsecondary educational environments, and even more so in ones which are becoming more interconnected and networked. Eddy and Van Derlinden (2006) suggested that alternative leadership styles are emerging as a replacement to traditional leadership models within postsecondary education, specifically that the practice of leadership is changing from the leader as the hero and adapting to a more team approach to leadership. "We now live in a world dominated by the idea that leadership is one of the major factors - sometimes it seems the only factor - that will determine whether an education organization, be it a school, a college or a university, will succeed or fail" (Simkins, 2005, p. 9). The emphasis on becoming more strategic, thoughtful, self-aware, and conscious as a leader has evolved because of a need for leaders to be more responsible and accountable during these times of uncertainty, world-wide economic peril, limited resources and an increased use of mass communication and technology. Educational administrators at postsecondary educational institutes are finding that clear answers are no longer the norm for complex and ambiguous problems and they must learn how to relate to others and lead in a different way.

Globalization as it relates to postsecondary educational institutions require that they become more participatory, collaborative, dynamic, learning-centered, innovative, and competitive in the context of being able to provide access to a variety of tangible and intangible resources to an increasingly diverse and interconnected student population, "Interactions between students and personnel should provide opportunities for students to reinforce their global citizenship and professionals in the field need to be able to demonstrate competencies in the areas of global citizenship to best serve a growing and diverse global student population" (Bresciani, 2008, p. 1). Postsecondary education institutions are transforming; leadership practices must transform as well. Furthermore, postsecondary educational institutions that develop and create environments whose framework is inclusive of accountability and embrace cultural differences between and among the students and staff members will be much more effective and successful in providing a viable educational experience for students. These new and effective ways of leading and relating will be exciting and dynamic, while supporting working environments that are emerging as interconnected and networked, where human contact and interactions are welcomed.

Student Affairs Leadership Practices

Student Affairs offers a window into examples of postsecondary educational leaders who are more relational in their leadership practice. Student Affairs, a largely American phenomenon, has its roots in early 19th century colonial education (Barr & Desler, 2000). By the 20th century, the discipline had its foundation firmly planted within postsecondary educational institutions with a mission of assisting in the regulation of student behavior and advocating for students concerns (Barr & Desler, 2000). Over the

years, the profession has adapted to the needs of the institutions they served and the

professionals have attempted to understand and define themselves. For example, in 1937

and 1949 *"The Student Personnel Point of View,"* was published. This report described

the work of student affairs as delivering services which enhanced the educational

experiences of the college student, while meeting the institutional needs (Williamson et

al., 1949). With a long history of managing change and volatility, student affairs

divisions have provided examples of how invaluable they are and now have a rare

opportunity to model how to meet the demands of a diverse and globalize student

population (Blimling & Whitt, 1999; Jones, 2001). Therefore, it is only natural for

professionals within the student affairs occupation to offer a model of effective leadership

practices.

Allen and Cherry's (2000) work on systemic leadership practices offered insight

into a new way for leading and relating. "Our very beliefs about how we influence

change must change" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 47). Taylor (2008), suggests, "Systemic

leadership focuses on building human capacities so that leadership and the health of an

organization can be sustained over time, not just over the tenure of an individual" (p.

115). Because we live in an interconnected and highly complex living system, the way

change is influenced is always changing. Allen and Cherry's (2000) work in systemic

leadership practices within student affairs has begun to forge a new path for educational

leaders. "It is clear that current institutions are poorly prepared to operate within a

networked knowledge area" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 21), and are "designed to operate

as fragmented and hierarchical organizations" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 21).

Furthermore, "Systemic leadership integrates and incorporates new ways of relating,

influencing change, learning, and leading" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 119). They further suggested, "When we engage in systemic leadership, we use each of the new ways of doing things in concert with each other to create a seamless approach to the practice of leadership" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p.120). For example, they observe that postsecondary educational environments are becoming much more integrated and networked, therefore, requiring a leadership style and practice that is accommodating to educational environments that are fluid and are continuously transforming. In the end, they remark, "As the world becomes more and more connected and knowledge based, higher education will be challenged to develop students who can effectively contribute to this world" (Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 21).

The development of a new leadership practice that can respond to these changing ways of relating and organizing within educational environments is warranted. A conceptual framework of conscious leadership offers a valid construct for a starting point. The construct offers a way for acknowledging and understanding our new ways of organizing and offers a strong framework for developing effective leadership practices. Moreover, a leadership practice developed within these frameworks can assist postsecondary educational leaders in becoming more conscious and aware, gain self-mastery, and think relationally. Influencing how postsecondary education emerges within these dynamic, fluid, and changing educational environments is critical for effective leadership practices to unfold. If the impending issues facing the profession of postsecondary education are truly to be addressed, leadership consideration must be a serious part of the solution. Postsecondary educational leaders must become more adept in their leadership practices by developing improved leadership acumen.

Conclusion

As atomic matter, human beings naturally are networked and integrated by relationships with other human beings and living things. If the point is to have leaders gain knowledge of self, become more accountable and responsible, then it is critical for a transformational leadership practice to emerge. However, a more focused exploration is in order to understand the benefits of creating conscious leaders who lead from a holistic and connected perspective.

> Connectedness is the defining feature of the new worldview - connectedness as an organizing principle of the universe, connectedness between the outer world of manifest phenomena and the inner world frameworks of lived experience, and ultimately, connectedness among people and between humans and the larger world. (Senge et al., 2004, p. 188)

Specific literature on leadership practices in postsecondary education that focus on leaders being more conscious and responsible in their respective leadership practices remains limited. Previous studies tend to emphasize a focus on traditional hierarchical leadership models rather than sustainable leadership models, which will enable leaders to become more self-aware and learn how to manage change and transformation. Relational and networked oriented leadership models are emerging as viable alternative leadership practices, especially since they address the inquiry as to how to lead during times of uncertainty and continuous change, in educational environments that are becoming more integrated, networked, and systems oriented. Conscious leadership practices offer a potential viable framework for shaping leaders for the 21st century and beyond; leaders who are dynamic, flexible, responsible, and accountable. Chapter Three describes the

methodology that was used to examine conscious leadership among postsecondary

leaders.

CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to examine the leadership practices of postsecondary educational leaders who are practicing what can be described as responsible and accountable leadership or what has been defined in Chapter 2 as conscious leadership. Emphasis is placed on investigating what they are doing on a daily basis and how and why they have become more responsible and conscious leaders. Information gathered from this investigation is used to identify conscious leadership practices for others to follow and the path for attracting them. This chapter describes the methodology of the study, detailing research design, the sample population, data collection process, and the method of data analysis.

Research Design

Previous research on conscious leadership practices has yet to be firmly established. Limited information is available about conscious leadership practices within postsecondary education. However, there is some information about its use in the business world. Anecdotally conscious leadership practices have been described as being used by Google, Patagonia, The Container Store, Southwest Airlines, and Whole Foods (Hayden, 2011; Sheth et al., 2007). Their leaders are responsible and accountable, can perceive patterns in the environments, see interconnectivity of multiple events, and subscribe to a participatory leadership style. Furthermore, they incorporate a shared responsibility leadership approach and are collective in their movement towards problem solving. Quantitative studies have traditionally been employed to study business leadership practices.

Given that conscious leadership practice is an emerging and exploratory field, a quantitative research method would be somewhat premature given the availability of relevant literature. Therefore, the consciousness quotient framework was used to develop the questions for my interviews. Quantitative methods would not necessarily offer an opportunity to capture in-depth perspectives from participants, while assisting with building meaning and understanding. On the other hand, a qualitative research method, would offer a better opportunity to gain insight into the subtleties and dynamics of an emerging leadership paradigm. Postsecondary educational environments are emerging as networked and integrated work places, which is why qualitative methods are increasingly being used to investigate and understand developing phenomenon (Chavez, Guido, & Lincoln, 2010; Manning, 1992). Furthermore, a qualitative approach affords the opportunity for information to organically arise and an emerging paradigm can be defined and analyzed for understanding.

A General Perspective of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methods guided the design and execution of this study (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2011). Qualitative research is a way of exploring meaning for individuals or groups about a social or human issue (Creswell, 2009). With qualitative research, the unanticipated can be captured as information, resulting in rich and descriptive data that comes directly from the participant's perspective. Qualitative research does not seek to describe the norm but rather seeks to gain insight and knowledge, while also gaining meaning and understanding for those who may vary from what is considered the norm. This study meets the Yin's (2011) prescribed features of qualitative research. Yin (2011) suggests that if a research study; (1) seeks to gain insight

and meaning of people's lives; (2) is under real-live conditions, examines and represents the views and perspectives of the people in the study; (3) is considerate of the contextual lived experience of the participants being studied; (4) works to contribute to existing or emerging knowledge concerning human social behavior; (5) and employs the use of multiple sources of evidence to gather information, then the study would be better executed as a qualitative process.

This study captures an emerging paradigm within its natural context. Using interviewing and information from the CQ Inventory, this research describes and explains the interpersonal competencies of individual leaders, while depicting the leadership practices of a variety of postsecondary educational leaders. In a qualitative study, the researcher purposely inserts herself into the study, which helps in building relationships while collecting valuable and authentic data. Thus, importance is placed on telling the story about the emerging paradigm and gaining meaning and understanding. The information gathered from this study will be representative of the participant's perspective and will contribute to the understanding of what it means to be a conscious leader. The data will also be used to inform future leadership practices within the postsecondary education. The research questions that guided this study are derived from the conceptual framework of conscious leadership.

Research Questions

Four open-ended research questions were developed to aid the inquiry process. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do postsecondary educational leaders make sense of conscious leadership?

2. How is conscious leadership demonstrated on a daily basis?

3. How does context influence conscious leadership practices?

4. What implications does a conscious leadership framework have for conscious leadership practices?

Sample Population

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling strategy was used to identify candidates for the study. Patton (2002) and Merriam (1998) each noted purposeful sampling is conducted in an effort to provide insight into a phenomenon. This strategy is inclusive of data gathered due to convenience and criterion sampling. The sample size for the study was eight participants. Merriam (1998) quotes Patton (1990), in stating one must be flexible when assigning an amount to the number of participants in the study, "Specifying a minimum sample size based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study" (p. 64) is a limitation to the process of qualitative research. She also indicates that the researcher will need to be flexible because the number will be tentative. Merriam (1998) stated, "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). Criterion-based selection within purposeful sampling was used, a set criteria was developed to identify participants. The qualitative framework allows for theoretically driven sampling activity. Meaning, the criteria for conscious leaders emerged out of the conceptual framework. For example, postsecondary educational leaders who are more aware, purposeful, intentional, responsible and accountable in their leadership practices and are identified as conscious leaders. A

conscious leadership framework is grounded in the sociocultural knowledge of

reciprocity, which allows the leaders to perceive patterns in the environments, see the

interconnectivity of multiple problems, and subscribe to a participatory leadership style,

which incorporates the ideas of shared responsibility and problem solving. This study is

inclusive of those individuals who meet the criteria of a leader who is responsible,

accountable, has self-mastery, adheres to a shared leadership approach and understands

how to work within a networked and integrated system.

Participant Description

Eight postsecondary educational administrators who work in two and four-year

private and public colleges and universities were included as participants. Networking

and snowballing were used for specific purposeful sampling. "This strategy involves

asking each participant to refer you to other participants" (Merriam, 1998, p. 63).

Initially, the follow selection criteria were used to select potential participants:

1. The participants have been in leadership roles as senior postsecondary

   educational administrators for at least five years.

2. The participants self-identify as experiencing a transformation in their

   leadership style or practice that is more relational and systems oriented.

The researcher contacted potential participants initially through e-mail at their

respective colleges and universities. The e-mail introduced the researcher and the

research study. Interested participants were asked to respond to the researcher directly by

phone or e-mail. The researcher responded to all interested participants with an e-mail

confirmation. Included in this confirmation was information about the research study

purpose, confidentiality and consent procedures, and several potential dates for the actual

interview. After the desired number of participants was successfully identified, the

selection process concluded. All participants signed a research consent form before

beginning the interview process (see Appendix A). Sampling considerations are

described below. Included are descriptions of participants, information on the

confidentiality of the study, the use of consent forms, and research procedures.

Consent Procedures

Institutional research approval was obtained through the San Diego State

Graduate Research Affairs Department. The researcher completed the web-based training

and will submit the necessary paperwork for approval of the research with human

subjects.

Data Collection

Inquiry for this study was inclusive of in-depth semi-structured interviews and

information gathered from Brazdua and Mihai's (2011) Consciousness Quotient (CQ)

Inventory to investigate the leaders awareness levels. Interview questions were shaped

from the six primary dimensions of consciousness from CQ Inventory.

Interview Process

One in-depth interview was conducted with each of the eight qualified

participants to gain descriptive and detailed information about their leadership practices,

at two and four year postsecondary institutions. Creswell wrote, "Interviews involve

unstructured and generally open – open ended questions that are few in number and

intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (2009, p. 181). The purpose

of gathering data is to answer the research questions in a convincing manner (Bryant,

2004; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998). "There is an expectation that the study will seek

to objectively analyze data or information…There is an expectation that any

recommendations made…will spring from the data or information presented" (Creswell,

2009, p. 7). Furthermore, the researcher ensured that she possesses certain competencies

about the qualitative interview procedure. Bryant (2004) suggested that several factors

are important to keep in mind when gathering data:

1. Identifying subjects who are knowledgeable

2. Accessing the field

3. Earning the trust of subjects

4. Achieving adequate exposure to the field you want to study

5. Making sure to ask probing questions

6. Being strategic in how you build on exiting data

7. Recording information appropriately

Having a clear understanding of the above factors ensured that data were relevant

and comprehensive. It was important to make sure that the participants were

knowledgeable about leadership practices specific to postsecondary education

administration, be familiar with systems sciences, have an understanding of

consciousness, and cognition, and recognize what it meant to be cooperative and

collective as a leader. Finally, creating an environment of trust where participants felt

comfortable with the researcher was critical. A voice activated recording device was used

to tape the information. The researcher took notes. The researcher collected data until

point of saturation was reached and no new information was added. Data from the study

will be kept locked and secured for a period of five years (Bryant, 2004).

Consciousness Quotient Inventory (CQ)

Brazdua and Mihai (2011) believed that consciousness can be measured. In 2003, while in his doctoral program, he researched the levels of awareness of an individual's consciousness. Furthermore, Brazdua believed that consciousness was more of an experience than a phenomenon. He developed the *Consciousness Quotient (CQ) Theory and Inventory* using a cognitive psychology framework. The CQ inventory measures six primary dimensions of awareness: the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social/relational, and self-conscious/self-awareness and nine secondary factors: internal state awareness, self-reflectiveness, mindfulness, autonomy, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life, verbal expression, and openness towards new experiences. Moreover, he believed that consciousness was directly related to the amount of information that could be accessed, processed, and made meaning of throughout the day, but could change as the levels of consciousness changed. For example, a person may be more aware in the social/relational level but less conscious or aware in the emotional level. It would always be a balancing act. Brazdua and Mihai's (2011) CQ dimensions are important in explaining the conceptual framework of conscious leadership.

The *CQ Inventory* was used to gain a full understanding of the awareness levels of postsecondary educational leaders after they were identified. Participants were instructed to take the free online CQ inventory. A link to the website was e-mailed to the participants. Brazdua and Mihai's (2011) research with the consciousness quotient suggests that individual with higher CQ scores tend to be more apt at accessing and processing information a greater levels, therefore providing them with an increased opportunity to make better choices and decisions, and they tend to have broader

perspectives and worldviews. An individual with lower CQ levels tend to access and process less information, which in turns, limits their ability to make well informed choices, because they are not fully aware of all the options or necessarily have developed a broader perspective or worldview (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011). Data gathered from the CQ inventory will be used to provide insight into the cognitive processing abilities, socio-emotional and conscious awareness levels of the participating postsecondary educational leaders.

Data Analysis

"Choosing a qualitative research design presupposes a certain view of the world that in turn defines how a researcher selects a sample, collects data, analyzes data, and approaches issues of validity, reliability, and ethics" (Merriam, 1998, p. 151). Data analysis is the process of interpreting the information collected and the analysis actually begins with the first interview. Insight, hunches, and themes will begin to emerge and provide a pattern for gaining understanding and meaning. "Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed" (Merriam, 1998, p. 162).

"Qualitative research is designed to inductively build rather than to test concepts, hypotheses, and theories" (Merriam, 1998, p. 45). Recorded interviews were transcribed. The participant's transcripts were coded for ease of identification. During the transcription process, each participant was given a pseudonym for their name. The researcher used NVIVO software to assist in organizing the collected data and to assist in discovering patterns and themes. The researcher used coding to assist with creating themes and patterns for interpreting meaning. Narrative analysis was used to report the

data gathered from the patterns and themes that emerge. This perspective emphasizes the "structure of the narratives and its relationship to the social context" (Merriam, 1998, p. 158). With narratives, first person accounts form the basis of the context. Individual quotes from participants were used to insert the voice of the participant. Results were compared and reported to the research questions in an overall narrative summary.

Validity

The interpretation of the perceptions and rich descriptions served to provide validity to the study. Merriam (1998) noted, "Different strategies are used to persuade the reader of the authenticity of their findings" (p. 152). In other words, the researcher encouraged participants to be authentic and forthcoming. Moreover, Firestone states (as cited in Merriam, 1998) that "The quantitative study must convince the reader that procedures have been followed faithfully because very little concrete description of what anyone does is provided. "The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusion makes sense" (p. 152). In a qualitative analysis, the details make the difference and serve as the place for which to gain insight, perspective and understanding for meaning-making.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of the research design and method used to answer the questions regarding the application of conscious leadership within a postsecondary educational context. It also examines opinions and practices of how conscious leadership is practiced on a daily basis. The study follows a qualitative study approach and examines postsecondary professional's leadership practices. The results

will be compared to the pre-determined criteria for a conscious leader. The outcome

will be reported in Chapter Four and discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4—RESULTS

Introduction

The objective of this study was to examine the leadership practices of

postsecondary educational leaders who are practicing, what can be described as,

responsible and accountable leadership or conscious leadership. Emphasis was placed on

investigating what they were doing on a daily basis and how and why they have become

more responsible and conscious as leaders. This chapter describes the participant

characteristics, information on the data collection process and analysis and the findings

based on interviews. Results are presented in a narrative form, with evidence of the

participants responses, documented throughout the narrative. The data gathered from this

investigation were used to answer the following research questions:

1. How do postsecondary educational leaders make sense of conscious

    leadership?

2. How is conscious leadership demonstrated on a daily basis?

3. How does context influence conscious leadership practices?

4. What implications does a conscious leadership framework have for conscious

    leadership practices?

Participant Characteristics

This section describes the participant demographic and characteristic information.

Eight educational leaders from both two and four year colleges and universities were

identified as participants. The following demographics provided a general description,

while protecting each participant's identity: (a) generational age range, (b) highest

educational degree, (c) ethnic identification, (d) gender identification, and (e) work

locations. Invitations to participate in the study were sent via email to 45 senior level educational leaders, who served in leadership roles at both two and four year postsecondary institutions in Southern California. Eleven educational leaders responded with an interest to participate but three were unable to meet the interview timeline. One educational leader, who was not able to participate, requested to meet with the researcher after the data was collected to hear about the results. Each of the educational institutions where they work served a diverse population of students. Of the eight participants, each serves in one of the following roles: Director, Associate Dean, Dean, VP and President. Five of the leaders have taught in academia and have conducted research prior to moving to an administrative role. Each leader has been working within higher education institutions for more than five years and oversees departments within the divisions of student affairs or academic affairs. Four of the leaders worked at community colleges and the other four worked at universities. Of the eight educational leaders interviewed, four were females and four were males. The overall ages for the educational leaders ranged from Generational X to Baby Boomers, and range in age from thirties to sixties. Their ethnic make-up included African American and White. Attempts to recruit more diverse participants were unsuccessful. Of the three that were not able to meet the interview timeline, one was Indian American, and the other two were Latinos.

All of the confirmed interviewees were known to the researcher professionally, which may have encouraged their willingness to participate in the study. Three held Master degrees and the other five held doctoral degrees. Each leader has been assigned a numerical identification of 1 through 8, and will be identified as Leader 1, 2, 3, and so

forth. The next section includes information regarding the process for collecting the data from the interviews and online survey.

Data Collection Process

Information was collected from eight postsecondary leaders through two processes; first an online questionnaire and second, through face-to-face interviews. Each completed the online Consciousness Quotient Inventory (CQ) survey, which was designed to measure overall global consciousness. The self-scoring consciousness quotient served as a good metric to use in an effort to create a baseline for assessing the awareness levels of the individual leaders. The Consciousness Quotient Inventory examined awareness of six dimensions: physical consciousness, emotional consciousness, mental (cognitive) consciousness, spiritual consciousness, social-relational consciousness, and self-consciousness. The physical consciousness refers to the ability of being aware of one's body and of the actual elements of the environments. The emotional consciousness refers to the ability of being aware of one's emotions and feelings, of any emotional experience in general. The mental consciousness refers to the ability of being aware of one's own ideas and thoughts, of the cognitive flow in general. The spiritual consciousness refers to the ability of being aware that the humans are part of the Universe and also to the ability of being aware of the multiple connections with the life that surrounds us. The social relational consciousness refers to the ability of being aware of the relations and connections with the people around us. Self-consciousness refers to the ability of being aware of one's self and Ego (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011). The six domains that make-up what is known as the global consciousness provided a general metric of

overall awareness. Individuals who scored within the upper levels can be considered to have reached a certain level of maturation in their level of consciousness.

Consciousness Quotient Inventory (CQ)

After each participant responded via email that they agreed to participate in the study, a link to the Consciousness Quotient Inventory (CQ) was forwarded to them (see Appendix B). The leaders were asked to complete the online questionnaire and have it available for the researcher at the time of the interview. The inventory results were used to provide the researcher with information about the awareness level of each of the participants, from the perspective of the six dimensions of consciousness: (a) physical consciousness, (b) emotional consciousness, (c) mental (cognitive) consciousness, (d) spiritual consciousness, (e) social-relational consciousness, and (f) self-consciousness.

The consciousness quotient measures the global consciousness quotient of an individual. It incorporates the Ego into the analysis of the responses. This is important because we understand that Ego can be considered the center of the personality for most individuals. The literature suggests that more ego-centered forms of existence are directly tied to fragmented and separate forms of existence (Akbar, 1998; Ani, 1994; Brazdua & Mihai, 2011; Capra, 2010; Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Goswami, 2001; Lama, 2005). By using this scale the researcher was able to offers a baseline for at least one dimension of their leadership.

The CQ inventory reported findings in a quantitative percentage and a qualitative narrative summary. In an effort to provide context, it is important to note that consciousness quotient is defined as "the level of consciousness or the level of being conscious that is experienced in the morning, ½-1 hour after we awake, after a refreshing

sleep, without being exposed to any significant stimulus: coffee, TV, radio, music,

taking, etc." (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011, p. 246). In other words, your consciousness

quotient offers some indication of how aware you are as an individual throughout the

day, under regular life conditions (Brazdua & Mihai, 2011). Results from this inventory

will be reported in the next section. The CQ inventory was used in the study to provide

insight into the awareness levels of the participants and provide a summary of the results

from CQ inventory. This inventory was only used to provide context for the individual

leaders conscious awareness levels.

CQ Inventory Findings

Results from the inventory informed the level of conscious awareness levels for

each leader, taking into consideration the six domains of consciousness, as they are

expanded or contracted, dependent upon the amount of information being introduced and

processed. For example, how aware one is of their feelings and or thoughts at any given

time could be indicated by the responses provided on the instrument. This is valuable

data to possess because it speaks to the general cognitive capability of an individual and

serves as a reference point from which to measure a particular level conscious awareness.

The responses from the CQ inventory six dimensions of consciousness categories assisted

in providing structure and context during the development phase of the thirty-five final

interview questions. A summary of each leader's quantitative and qualitative results

follows. Leaders 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8's final summary and recommendation were

basically identical, thus allowing the opportunity to report out the findings from a

collective perspective. However, Leader 3's results were vastly different and needed to be

reported independent of the others. This participant's overall global consciousness score

was relatively low in comparison to the other participants and resulted in a dramatically different perspective for most of her domain and the overall global consciousness score.

The scores of seven of the leaders placed them in the upper category of the awareness interval, meaning that they are presumably very conscious people with strong connections with higher levels of access to their inner lives. Their Egos can easily access the information within their psyche and they also have a high potential for knowledge. They find it very easy to relate to the outer reality and manage various life situations. Their mental processes operate at an excellent level thus facilitating a high degree of self-knowledge and personal growth quality and quantity-wise. To sum up, their awareness levels are very high, which influences their health. In addition, the high level of emotional and cognitive awareness indicates that they are all well-rooted in reality and make decisions accordingly. They have high scores on the spiritual awareness, social awareness and self-awareness subscales, which show that they are goal-oriented people, who are cognizant of the effects of social relations and observant of their own inner life. High scores on this scale generally indicate a mature, very realist person and this aspect strongly impacts the quality of their lives.

Leader 3's score placed her in the lower section of the awareness interval meaning that the consciousness level is low with a limited degree of access to her inner life. The Ego can access information within the psyche with difficulty, therefore individuals who score in this range may not have a superior potential for knowledge. It is quite difficult to relate to the outer reality and manage various life situations. The mental processes operate at a low level which is why a high degree of self-knowledge and

personal growth, quality-wise, would require sustained and constant efforts. To sum

up, Leader 3's awareness level considered low and that influences her health. It is

suggested that if she paid a little more attention to her body it might be helpful. In

addition, the below average level of emotional and cognitive awareness suggests that she

might not be well-rooted in reality. The low scores on the spiritual awareness, social

awareness and self-awareness subscales indicate that she does not have a well-defined

purpose in life and may ignore the effects of the social relations and is limited in her

interest in her own inner life. Table 1 lists the leaders overall global awareness scores.

Table 1

Global Consciousness CQ Inventory Scores

Participant	Global Consciousness Quotient Score
Leader 1	92.1%
Leader 2	72.5%
Leader 3	2.9%
Leader 4	93.8%
Leader 5	95.4%
Leader 6	91.0%
Leader 7	83.3%
Leader 8	80.6%

In general, the reporting of the CQ Inventory scores and summaries were used to

assist in providing some context for the conscious awareness of each participant. In terms

of where the leaders would place on a continuum of awareness, Leader 3 scores indicated

that they are at the lower end of global awareness, while Leaders 2, 7, and 8 reflect a

developing awareness level and finally, those leaders who scored in the 90's reflected a

higher awareness level. Given that the interview questions were designed around the six

domains of consciousness from the Consciousness Quotient Inventory completing the

inventory introduced terminology that was reflective during the interviews.

The second method of data collection involved face-to-face interviews with each of the eight postsecondary educational leaders. Thirty-seven questions were originally developed, however, after beta testing; two of the original questions were disregarded, leaving the final count at thirty-five. The interviews took place over a period of six weeks. The majority of the interviews were conducted within a 60 minute time frame; however two of the interviews were completed within a 120 minute time frame. The questions were organized around the six dimension of the Consciousness Quotient Inventory (CQ) in an effort to provide alignment to the data collected from the online inventory. As responses were being recorded, attention was paid to identifying preliminary evidence of a conscious leadership context and applied practices. Additionally, examination of responses for indications of conscious leadership qualities and behaviors, such as self-awareness, clarity of focus and purpose, and heightened intuition, were taken into consideration. The next section describes the interview process and findings.

Facilitation of Interview Process

The in-depth interviews began by prompting responses to the thirty-five questions. Interviews were conducted at locations that were convenient for the interviewees (see Appendix C). Two of the participants were interviewed in their homes and the other six participants were interviewed in their offices. The interviews were recorded using Sony digital recording device and were stored within four separate digital folders. Data from the interview questions were transcribed using NVIVO 9, qualitative analysis software. Transcription of the data was completed by the researcher, in an effort to personally spend more time with it, and become familiar with potential patterns,

themes and codes. Transcription took place over a four week period of time. After the data were transcribed the researcher listened to the audio recordings several times, seeking additional insight and understanding. The next section discussed how the themes emerged.

Emergence of Themes and Codes

Five notable trends emerged and were developed into categories: (a) theoretical perspective; (b) epistemic practices of transformation and systems; (c) disposition; (d) socio-emotional/human consciousness capacity; and (e) cognition capacity. An iterative process assisted the researcher in identifying emerging themes and patterns as the data were analyzed and interpreted for meaning. All data were organized and coded using the themes and the interview question topics as a guide. A subset of codes emerged as a metric for evaluation and categorization purposes, as part of an in-depth analysis and understanding of the actual leadership practices.

Data from the interviews were analyzed with the use of the identified themes and codes. Six steps were completed in the data analysis: (a) managed the transcribed data by placing it in a word text document; (b) read and made notes; (c) developed the leadership rubric; (d) identified codes and sub-codes based on the interview questions; (e) used color coded note cards to organize, categorize and classified the responses from interview data; and (f) interpretation of the data. From the initial review of the data, five major themes emerged. Along with the themes and information from the literature review, a leadership rubric was developed to assist with the analysis of the data. Metrics from the rubric allowed the researcher to classify responses as either more aligned with having an awareness level that is undeveloped, developing, or conscious. Participant responses were

organized around the five themes and measured against whether a leader was exhibiting qualities that appeared to be indicators of their specific leadership development stage as it related to the leadership rubric.

A total of nineteen codes were established to organize the data:

1. Worldview or perspective on leadership

2. Integrated and networked environment

3. Transformational organization;

4. Role as a leader;

5. Innovative, creative, and collaborative partnerships

6. Shared leadership role

7. Get others to work together

8. Belief/value system

9. React to new situations

10. Manage weakness/strengths

11. Handle emotional employees

12. Feel after making a decision

13. Assess and analyze new situations

14. Self-knowledge

15. Learning

16. Making-meaning

17. Thoughts influence decisions and actions

18. Aware, accountable and responsible

19. Solve complex problems.

The codes assisted in creating meaning and context for the data, as well as, aided in the analysis and interpretation. The next section describes the process for the development of the leadership rubric and its purpose.

Data Analysis

The researcher developed a *Leadership Rubric* for purposes of assisting with the analysis and interpretation of the data. It was structured and organized around the research questions, information from the literature review, types of leadership styles presented such as traditional, transformative and conscious, and the noted themes, patterns and codes that emerged from the interviewee responses. The leadership rubric served as a way to measure leadership developmental stages. It was based on a continuum, that is, from a beginning stage to a more advanced stage of conscious leadership development. In other words, the responses from the interviewee's were categorized as either in a beginning developmental stage of conscious leadership or closer to a more advanced stage, based on the identified qualities of a conscious leadership framework. Conscious leadership is grounded in the sociocultural knowledge of reciprocity, which allows leaders to perceive patterns in the environment, see the interconnectivity of multiple problems, and subscribe to a participatory leadership style, which incorporates the idea of shared responsibility and problem solving.

Furthermore, the rubric assisted in further analysis and interpretation the data. Information from literature review and the five leadership themes and the codes helped to define the components. The rubric describes the leadership categories and includes an explanation of the qualities or indicators of leadership stage from beginning to conscious. For example, the *beginning* qualities described leaders who subscribe to a more

traditional fixed leadership approach that is more focused on control and is hierarchical

in nature. The *developing* stage offers evidence of a shift and adoption of a leadership

paradigm that is more transformative and open to change. Leaders in this stage notice the

importance of leading from a relational aspect and promote integration and connection as

the organizational culture. Leadership development styles that adhere to a more advanced

stage of the continuum are more aware, are critical thinkers, understand the

interconnectivity of things and people, have control over their thoughts and emotions and

have adopted a systems theory perspective. A sociocultural leadership practice is the

norm. Table 2 provides the leadership rubric continuum with examples of each level of

development.

Findings

This section is organized by the five categories from the leadership rubric used to

analyze the data: (a) theoretical perspective; (b) epistemic practice; (c) disposition; (d)

socio-emotional/human consciousness capacity; and (e) cognitive capacity. Nineteen

codes were established to organize the data:

1. Worldview or perspective on leadership

2. Integrated and networked environment

3. Transformational organization

4. Role as a leader

5. Innovative, creative, and collaborative partnerships

6. Shared leadership role

7. Get others to work together

8. Belief/value system

Table 2

Leadership Rubric Continuum

Leadership Themes	Beginning Qualities	Developing Qualities	Advanced Qualities
Theoretical Perspective	Behaviorist	Transformative Change Oriented Integrated and Networked	Sociocultural/Reciprocity Quantum Interconnectivity Systems Perspective/ Thinking
Epistemic Practice of Transformation and Systems	Reactive and Low Expectations	Nurture Change Responsive to Problems Follower Perspective	Have a Focus, Plan, Observe and Collect Info, Interpret, Translate, Cooperative and Collaborate Implement Shared Responsibility View Practice in Context
Disposition	Focuses on Fixed Behaviors, Traits, Competencies or Styles	Charismatic Intrinsic Motivation Inspirational/Motivational Influential/Social Architects	Flexible, Authentic and Creative and Innovative Intentional/ Purposeful Take a Holistic Perspective, Evolutionary/Transcendence Positive/Inclusive Have Spiritual Aspect
Socio-emotional/Human Consciousness Capacity	Outside Observers Not Aware of the Relationships Around You or Does Not Value	Affective/ Feeling Self-efficacy Some Self-knowledge Some Value Towards Relationships	Knowledge of Self Observe Thoughts as they Arise Inspirational Relational and interconnected to Universal Law/Nature
Cognition Capacity	Exertion to Lead or Develop Habits of the Mind	Learning from Experience Limited ability for New Thought Becoming a Critical Beginning to be aware of being aware	Use cognitive and Metacognitive Skills Reflective See Patterns and Themes in the Environment and use to Make Meaning Capacity for New Thought

9. React to new situations

10. Manage weakness/strengths

11. Handle emotional employees

12. Feelings after making a decision

13. Assess and analyze new situations

14. Self-knowledge

15. Learning

16. Making meaning

17. Thoughts influence decisions and actions

18. Aware, accountable and responsible

19. Solve complex problems.

The responses of the participants were not changed for grammatical purposes, so the data remained in its original form, which included run-on sentences, inaudible words, and some repetition. The next five sections described the finding of the five leadership themes.

Theoretical Perspective

This section described the overall responses of the participants' views on their theoretical perspective on leadership. Two codes: (a) worldview or perspective on leadership; and (b) integrated and networked environment were used to provide clarity and knowledge concerning the participants' theoretical perspectives. Answers to certain questions contributed to the interpretation of the leaders understanding of the theoretical perspective that was not included in the two codes listed above, such as the question on the organizational structure of each leader. However, this information was vital in

contributing to gathering a holistic perspective about the overall leadership perspective

of each leader. Frameworks assist us in understanding of the phenomena we are studying.

Mulholland and Shakespeare (2005) noted, "frameworks explain how different variables

may be interrelated and provide a common language that can be used to compare

variables such as conditions, actions, and outcomes across a number of different

situation" (p. 7). Although frameworks help us in the construction of important relational

aspects of a phenomenon that may be unfolding, they are most useful in the organization

process of the data and best help us in the development of context for emerging theory

(Mulholland & Shakespeare, 2005). Moreover, frameworks make the application of our

practices relevant.

One of the first interview questions inquired about the organizational structure of

their college or office. Organizational structures can often be illustrative of the type of

leadership practice in place. The formal organizational structures for each of the

postsecondary institutions were hierarchical in nature. Four of the educational leaders

who worked at two year institutions indicated that their organizational structure

subscribed to a shared governance setup. One leader described his college as giving the

appearance of shared governance and shared decision-making, but in reality, that was not

the case, "It was designed to be what we called shared governance, where individuals

have a say in everything that we do and it's not really. It's very much autocratic in my

world" (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012). The four year postsecondary

institutions were setup in a hierarchical authoritarian manner. Comments from Leader 5,

suggested that she reviewed her organizational structure as one of dictatorship, meaning

that there is one mind, one boss and supporters (personal communication, March 30,

2012). Leader 3 reported that her organizational in general, is hierarchical and chain-

of- command oriented, which she communicated as being very different from type of

organizational structure she is use to working within (personal communication, April 4,

2012). Coming from a research/academia perspective, she was used to more of a team

orientation and leadership approach. Moreover, she explained that in the research

environment, she had the luxury of automatically being cooperative and collaborative,

because the nature of what they were doing required such a setup (Leader 3, personal

communication, April 4, 2012). So, when she came to the administrative side of the

university, she found it much more difficult to get people to work together cooperatively

and in partnership with each other. Leader 3 also discussed her organization more in-

depth, and her solution to this challenge (personal communication, April 4, 2012). She

reported that encouragement of more collaboration across the board was recommended

(Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). She instructed her staff to build

relationships and partnerships with other unit areas within the office and across the

college campus (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Although still a work

in process, she indicated that it is working (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4,

2012). Understanding the dynamics of organizational structures is critical into gaining

insight concerning the epistemic practice of transformation and systems category.

Generally speaking, how an organization is organized can give some clues to the

leadership practice. Gaining insight into the interworking of the offices or departments

aided in understanding the tone of the office in terms of behavioral expectations for all

employees. For example, Leader 4 indicated that her specific leadership style within her

office was modeled after Kouzes and Posners' *The Leadership Challenge* (personal

communication, April 20, 2012). Leaders 1, 4, and 7 communicated that they subscribed to a shared or participatory leadership style, while Leader 2 commented that his leadership perspective more closely resembled one of an authoritarian practice. Leader 2's description of his leadership practice appeared to be rooted in a traditional behaviorist approach, based on the description and meaning explained in the leadership rubric (personal communication, April 18, 2012). For example he stated, "Leadership comes in so many forms and fashions, I still believe in the Colin Powell philosophy that leadership starts at the top" (Leader 2, personal communication, April 18, 2012). Leader 5's definition of his leadership perspective and examples of his practice seemed more in line with a conscious leadership framework. He noted he always takes a collective and shared approach, which can be considered as a systems orientation (Leader 5, personal communication, March 30, 2012). When asked about his particular leadership perspective, Leader 8 commented,

> I want to continue to try to have the larger vision and let my operational people do their jobs because they all do it well. What I preach all the time, there is not a single individual that works at this place that isn't critical….so we need to understand and appreciate and respect that. So, if you treat people that way, where they feel valued and they feel appreciated for what it is they do, they themselves will begin to believe that they are critical to the mission. You get morale, you get ownership. (personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Leader 7's remarks fell within the developing leadership stage. She stated, "I probably combine this new construct called critical leadership with transformative leadership and servant leadership" (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012).

The leadership perspectives communicated by each of the leaders represented a broad spectrum on the leadership rubric continuum. The next section examines epistemic practices of transformations and systems and continues to provide information regarding the individual leadership practices, while also providing evidence of whether the leaders stated leadership perspectives actual match their actually leadership practices.

Epistemic Practice of Transformation and Systems

This section reports on the participants' view on epistemic practice of transformation and system. Five codes shaped the interpretation of the data: (1) transformational organizations; (2) integrated and networked environments; (3) share leadership role; (4) get others to work together; and (5), innovative, creative, and collaborative partnerships. Research in the discipline of leadership models and practices has shed limited light on the actual practice of leaders (Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008). Leadership as a practice is much more powerful when matched to an actual conceptual framework. Practice is understood as the application of theory in an efficient and effective way, while transformation can be thought of as a noticeable change from one thing to another. Furthermore, a systems perspective is a holistic approach to organizing and reviewing information, which might initially appear as fragmented knowledge. Systems thinking allow us the opportunity to create meaning by examining patterns and themes of the information, thereby forming strategies for applications and practice. In examining the epistemic practices of transformation and systems of the educational leaders, several common underlining beliefs emerged.

All of the Leaders described a transformative organization as one that is changing based on drivers, demands and the needs of its clientele. Leader 6 shared that he believed

that leadership practices that were grounded in transformation were better suited for

changing environments (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Moreover, he

communicated that organizations were becoming more integrated and networked,

therefore he took a more cooperative and collaborative approach to managing his office.

Leader 4 discussed how she implemented a concept to get her staff and the student

involved in more community service activities (personal communication, April 20, 2012).

The idea was to give students a *pay it forward* mini-grant. Students would identify a need

within a local community and develop a project surrounding a service in a specific

neighborhood. Examples included setting up a tutoring service for underrepresented

children. Eight mini-grants were given out to students, with the understanding that the

Leader's staff assisted in managing the projects. Students conducted presentations

concerning the progress of the projects and really enjoyed the work because it provided

purpose, meaning, and relevance to their educational experience, from a tangible

perspective. When Leader 4 first introduced the concept to her staff, she was surprised by

the overwhelming support of the idea, but pleased that they thought it was a worthwhile

activity.

Overall, data revealed that several leaders were beginning to embrace a form of

transformative leadership practice. When asked to response with a definition of a

transformative organization, Leader 8 stated, "Transformative, well a transformative

organization I think is an organization that really puts continued learning of all elements

of the organization as kind of the primary goal" (personal communication, April 12,

2012). Moreover, he commented, "So the idea of a transformative organization I guess,

would be an organization that is well-balanced, gives consideration to the needs of its

employees" (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Furthermore, he suggested that leader "who views the people as being more important than the institutions and who has a sense of, I guess on some level, of morality on some level into the day-today of what we do" (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Leader 8's comments place him on the more advanced category on the leadership rubric continuum. Additional responses from the other seven leaders fell along the continuum. Leader 3's comments were placed with the beginning stage of leadership development, "I guess an organization that is aware of both the internal and external factors that both are opportunities and threats to the stability. So it is an aware organization" (personal communication, April 4, 2012). This falls within being a reactionary perspective, while Leader 7 stated that a transformative organization is, "Moving to different reporting structures in the university, so it's not like little change, it's the big upheaval" (personal communication, April 5, 2012). Although this statement appeared to be hierarchical in nature, there is an awareness of major change and transformation. The majority of the leaders were leading in some fashion from a systems perspective or through a change orientation.

All eight of the leaders admitted that they see their educational organizations becoming more integrated and networked, because of budget constraints and limited access to resources. All eight of the leaders shared that with shrinking budgets and limited resources, they have become more creative and innovative with how they get the daily work done. Leader 8 stated that his college is very understaffed but he has approached the challenge from a systems perspective. He stated,

I have been President for eleven years and not just in the most financial

meltdown. We've done a lot of consolidation of departments into larger school

units because we haven't had the resources to replace Deans when they retire. So

we are doing a lot of having one manager cover multiple programs just because

we just don't have the resources that we had before. And I think in some ways

that's good because it is certainly good professional development for the

managers to learn more about the institution. We are doing a bit more cross

pollination between instruction and student services, which I think is very healthy.

(Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

He investigated which offices could be consolidated and which of his Deans were

capable of managing more responsibility, in an effort to achieve the desired outcome, of

providing services to the students. He acknowledged that his educational institution is in

the business of changing lives and therefore, at the end of the day he wanted a satisfied

customer. This means that getting feedback from students and his employees was critical,

and potentially generated ideas and solutions about how to meet everyone's critical

needs. So, in retrospect he explained that he always approaches challenges from a

collaborative approach, which falls within the advanced category of the leadership rubric

continuum. Leader 3 indicated that since she became Dean, she required her staff to begin

working across units and departments (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Leader 2

saw the integration and networking within his organization as being in place for his use

stating, "I have an integrated work where all the pieces of the puzzle are right there for

my disposal" (Leader 2, personal communication, April 18, 2012). He indicated that this

is how his staff responded to his needs, in a reactionary fashion. Clearly he believed his

employees served his needs in the pursuit of him leading and meeting the mission of

the office. Leader 5's comments illustrated her low expectations from her office and staff,

> Integrated is everything is one, all the pieces really, they go together and they fit
>
> together. We don't have that in my office currently. Unfortunately, the folks who
>
> are working, they don't like the integrated approach, they resist it. They like to
>
> work more independent, more separate different silos and the more I try to
>
> introduce the concept of integration with this batch, it is very stressful and
>
> resistant. (Leader 5, personal communication, March 30, 2012)

This perspective tends to fall within the beginning leadership stage of development on the

continuum.

Many of the educational leaders spoke about the importance of empowering their

employees in essence sharing their leadership role. Leader 1 communicated that by

empowering his employees; he was acknowledging that their opinion matters (personal

communication, March 30, 2012). This approach laid the groundwork for getting buy-in

for future support. Because he worked to develop and build authentic relationship his

staff would be more willing to be supportive of assisting in achieving the organizational

goals. Leader 5 showed the least amount of interest in sharing her role. Although the

sharing of their leadership role seemed to be an important practice, several of the leaders

stated that it was most useful in getting others to work together. All but one of the leaders

expressed that they shared their leadership role. Their responses fell all along the

leadership rubric continuum. For example, Leader 2 stated, "I want to empower people. I

don't want to be the decision maker until it reaches my level, but at the same time, I want

them to keep me well informed" (Leader 2, personal communication, April 18, 2012).

This statement falls with the beginning leadership development stage on the leadership rubric. When Leader 6 was asked to respond to how he shared his leadership role, he indicated, "I guess it's communal to the extent that I want people to own their area. You tell me what the needs are in your area. That's your area of leadership, that's your ownership" (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Based on the rubric, this type of a statement indicates that the leader is developing on his perspective on sharing in his leadership role, based on the rubric. Leader 7's comments on sharing in his leadership role are in the more advanced stage, which could be considered more conscious. He stated, "I have no need to be in charge of things, I feel I am a framer. I am the person who holds the frame…I try to make sure that there are resources, time, talent, but I am the framer" (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012).

Although most of the educational institutions were set up in a traditional hierarchical structure, in terms of operational and reporting structures, many of the leaders understood the value of having a networked and interconnected work environment, thus, working vigilantly to create opportunities for all employees to work cooperatively and collaboratively, not only in their immediate spaces but across college and university campuses. All of the leaders understood the importance of getting others to work together. However, when asked to respond to how they got others to work together, Leader 5 stated, "I don't know, just try to motivate them. I talk to them, say this is to benefit you," (personal communication, March 30, 2012) which is very much in the category of beginning leadership development. In contrast, Leader 8 was able to accomplish this goal. First, he identified his educational institution as being very much student-centered, which set the tone and all activity would be focused around meeting the

students' needs. Leader 8 was successful in getting the instructional and student services side of the house together to collaboratively work towards implementing project. For example he made them responsible for developing and implementing a first-year support service program, which met the needs of "at risk" students. He and his team had gathered data on student equity. Leader 8's role was to garner resources in the form of funding and space. He was able to successfully secure outside funding to develop these special populations programs, turned his old library into a central student services center and marketed this idea for duplication. He shared information concerning the college projects and progress at regional and national conferences and with the other sister colleges in his district. Leader 6 echoed this perspective by explaining,

> I am a coach at heart you know, anything where we can get people to do some team building kinds of things and getting people to communicate their ideas, I think is important for trying to get people to see….We can do what we can to break down the barriers and notions of how articulate or academic you are supposed to be and let's just talk. Let's get together and see what we can do to effect change and work at something, without the big words and stuff, I guess. (personal communication, April 4, 2012)

Leaders 6's thinking concerning getting others to work together places him in the developing stage as he speaks about the necessity of having everyone feel that they are equal and valued. That everyone comes to the table with ideas, suggests, and resolutions. This is a part of the collective action oriented activity that falls within developing and advanced leadership stages.

All eight leaders shared that being innovative, creative, and collaborative were critical to their leadership practice, especially, since they are currently faced with limited resources in people power and money. Leader 8 displayed the most innovative and creative leadership practice. Furthermore, he subscribed to the philosophy that community colleges were in place to serve the community. This was demonstrated by the innovative work he and his employees were able to accomplish. With the assistance of select faculty and staff, he developed several new associates degrees and certificate programs that were designed to meeting the community needs of sustainability. The sustainability certificate and degree program captured the attention of a local community agency. The development of sustainability degrees and certificates served to mediate the process of a partnership between a local city agency and the college. Internally, this project was effective in getting faculty and administrators to work together, taking ownership of it and provided an opportunity for everyone to witness first-hand the impact of a collective activity. It also is providing an opportunity to demonstrate how their good works fit into the mission of the college and community needs. It was powerful for everyone to witness theory emerge into practice, while achieving invaluable results. Externally, this project strengthened and created new partnerships between the college and a local government agency, again demonstrating effective cooperative and collaborative works.

Leader 4 shared her perspective that being innovative, creative and collaborative was about listening. She explained,

Innovation and creation for me, I think the best examples that I have of innovation and creativity, through leadership have really been sparked by listening. Because I

think that often times as Administrators or Deans, we are constantly trying to

figure out what it is that we need to do and how we need to impart this wisdom,

this information of the masses. But a lot of times we are a couple of steps

removed from how the work is done. So I have some of my most innovative

moments by simply talking to staff, listening to students and then really taking

that and figuring out okay, there's something there and how it is that we can make

this grow and work. And those have been the most exciting things that have been

rooted in reality from someone who has had an idea. So, often times positive

innovation is not necessarily mine, but the ability to be able to act on that

information and to do something with it and to provide that avenue for that

innovation to actually come to life. And I think, as an Administrator, most often,

that is my role. Is to be able to create that environment where innovation can take

place. (Leader 4, personal communication, April 20, 2012)

This is very much a statement aligned with someone within a more advanced leadership

stage on the continuum, based on the fact that this perspective represents a systems

outlook.

Disposition

This section details information about the participants' dispositions. Two primary

codes were established and used to analyze data for this section: (1) self-knowledge; and

(2) role as a leader. Understanding the way of being of a leader can give some indication

into their potential leadership practice. All but one of the leaders indicated that

understanding who you were was critical to their leadership practice. The data revealed

that insight about how and what leaders thought about the idea of self-knowledge

provided the most valuable information, especially as it related to awareness levels. Leader 6 described the purpose of gaining self- knowledge meant getting to know one's self from a practical standpoint or spiritual perspective. He explained that this spiritual ecology or knowing assisted him in learning how to be an accountable and responsible leader. It helped him to be cognizant of his thoughts, words and actions. Leader 7 shared her perspective on self-knowledge as in the process of developing. Furthermore, she explained that as a leader her goal was to "empower, motivate, serve as an example, be a beacon of light to followers" (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012). She was learning and growing as a person, which placed her in the developing stage on the continuum. Moreover, she equated it to becoming more of an inclusive thinker, embracing the spiritual or metaphysical realm. Furthermore, she suggested that those individuals who were more self-aware were more open to viewing life experiences as a journey. However, Leader 3 expressed that she did not spend a lot of time thinking about how she was thinking or feeling, as it related to gaining self-knowledge (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Leaders 1 and 8 shared that they believed a person who is aware of self, is being conscious of self, and of their self in relation to their physical and emotional being. Furthermore, Leader 1 suggested that, "If you do not know yourself, how you can possibly know what you have to offer as a leader" (personal communication, March 30, 2012). Most of the leaders agreed that their beliefs and values were in some way attached to their level of awareness of self.

All but one of the leaders indicated they subscribed to some sort of spiritual ecological framework and they have incorporated it into their leadership perspective and practice. However, one leader acknowledged being an atheist, thus a spiritual ecology

was not of importance to her. Leader 4 acknowledged that her spiritual ecology

impacted how she defined herself in regards to being of integrity, ethical, and

representing how she carried herself professionally and personally (personal

communication, April 20, 2012). Her perspective demonstrated an emphasis on a higher

value of being, especially as a leader and she understood that as a leader she was always

going to be attached to her leadership role and practice within and outside the work

environment. In other word, her standards for being and relating to others were a valued

thing. She shared what kept her on track to be a good leader, "It's the reflection, and it's

the mindfulness. For me, I believe that although I am me, I represent something bigger.

Ultimately, I am a child of God. And I will take that on even other levels, so that as Dean

of Student Affairs, even on the weekends, I am Dean" (Leader 4, personal

communication, April 20, 2012). Overall, it was clear that disposition was important to

all of the leaders.

Socio-emotional/Human Consciousness Capacity

This section covers examples of the participants' overall socio-emotional/human

consciousness capacity. The codes established included: (1) handle emotional employees;

(2), feels after making a decision; (3) connect with other human beings; and (4), assess

and analyze new situations. Data revealed a consistent trend and pattern regarding

understanding the socio-emotional and human consciousness aspects of leadership, for

both the leaders and their staff. All but one leader shared that it was important to build

authentic and cooperative relationships with their staff. One leader shared her

unwillingness to connect with her staff. She stated, "How do I connect with them? Am I

supposed to connect with them?" (Leader 5, personal communication, March 30, 2012).

Yet, another leader shared, "My strengths are relatedness and connectedness. I think I connect with them more on an intellectual level than I do on am emotional level and that's just kind of a personal thing. I tend to be more insular" (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012). Leader 7 shared how she loved to read and connect, gathering information and data through the literature such as journals, articles and books (personal communication, April 5, 2012). She noted that she was less of an experiential learner (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012). She is a person grounded in facts, although she is not opposed to learning through experiences (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012). Many of the leaders disclosed that they prepared by reading, seeking counsel, and referring to past experiences when faced with uncertainty or solving complex problems. Overall, building those trusting, encouraging and supportive reciprocal relationships was apparent for seven of the eight leaders, based on their responses. For example, Leader 8 expressed, "I think humans are connected in two ways. One is socially. We are total social beings, probably the most social of all of the biological entities are human because we also have the ability to speak and we can reason" (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Furthermore, "We have the ability to speak; we can read and write; we can pass our culture down. There is so much to being human and all of that's social. So we are hugely social beings. I believe that people are all interconnected spiritually; we all have a piece of the grand life force" (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Demonstrating an awareness of sociocultural relationships and acknowledging their importance to his leadership practice, this falls into the advanced stage of the leadership continuum spectrum.

Being conscious and aware emotional status of others and themselves was reported as valuable to their leadership practice. Most of the leaders were discussed being very in touch with this perspective and articulated it as a core principle. Responses supported the idea that the majority of the leaders acknowledged the value of having insight into not only into their own personal perspective regarding emotions, but concerning their employees as well. The importance of humanness was also expressed. The basic acceptance of their employees and working environments as being more than just factories putting out widgets is relevant to the concept of humanness of being conscious of themselves and others. Leader 1 shared that people are connected whether they know it or not (personal communication, March 30, 2012). He explained that he recognized the humanness of his employees in some form or fashion (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012). Furthermore, he explained that he makes sure that his staff feels that he thought of his staff as being more a than mechanized piece of machinery, that they have humanity to them and a purpose for coming to work (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012). He insisted that you cannot have people feel like they are insignificant and that they don't matter (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012).

This social-relational construct of understanding people in the sense of human consciousness and socio-emotional perspective gained notoriety during the emergence of the emotional intelligence philosophy. Many of the leaders indicated that creating understanding required that they be in touch with their own emotions and aware of those of their staff. They all agreed that emotional capacity was critical to having a functional work environment. This belief originated around the conversation we engaged in

regarding relationships, relationships building, awareness of different emotional states, and cooperative and collaborative interactions. Leaders who were aware of, and responsive to, their emotional states appeared to be more skilled at navigating positive collaborative interactions between themselves and their staff; thus connecting and interacting with regards to emotions and human consciousness, were expressed as critical components of the leadership practice, which is more aligned with more advanced leadership stage development.

Cognition Capacity

This section includes participants' overall understanding of cognition and learning capacity. Six codes were established to assist in interpreting the data: (1) thoughts influence decisions and actions; (2) humans connected to each other; (3) learning; (4) making-meaning; and (5) solve complex problems. "We have not been taught the creative potential of our thoughts and emotions. Our thought patterns and emotional responses germinate those seeds that ultimately grow into experiences" (Vanzant, 1998, p. 58). Experience is best teacher, or so they say. Many of the educational leaders acknowledged that they believed their thoughts to have some influence over the words they speak and over their actions. When the leaders were posed this question the responses were across the board. Out of the eight leaders, seven indicated that they were mindful of their thoughts because they realized they had some influence on their decisions and actions as an individual and leader. This is an important point when trying to understand how leaders provide guidance and make decisions on a daily basis, where they realize that their decision may inadvertently affect the outcome for their employees and other stakeholders. So awareness was critical.

Leader 4 shared that she learned through assessing and reflection, and remaining open to the experience (personal communication, April 20, 2012). Leader 1 explained that learning within an academic setting actually constrained his learning, so he likes interfacing with the environment (personal communication, March 30, 2012). He explained that it facilitates his cognitive and learning process in a more holistic way for him (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012). In other words, it stimulated him to learn naturally. Leader 8 also stood firm on environmental stimuli and thinking and approaching issues from a systems thinking perspective (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Because conscious leaders are systems oriented, they have the ability to see patterns in the environment and understand how organizations are living systems and are interconnected and networked.

Conscious leaders have the ability to access and understand greater amounts of information, which would place them in a position to recognize that they have the potential to make better choices and generally are more aware of all the options. In line with the leadership rubric, they think of chaos or chaotic environments as having some underlying order. They can see the patterns and themes that emerge out of the disorder. Leader 8 expressed that he takes a systems approach to leading. He commented,

> Almost every problem, even the most complex ones, is made up of interacting components. So, you want to get your arms around that and see how those various components interact because they are operating as a system and them see where the gears are not meshing exactly right and get after the problem that way. Sort of break it down and address the individuals. (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

This statement places Leader 8 in the advanced leadership development stage, based on his perspective on a systems leadership approach. On the same lines, Leader 7 responded that, "There is always order to chaos and every time a new element is introduced a good organization say, what to do in this change? What do we keep? How do we explain? And that's all normal" (personal communication, April 5, 2012). It's normal because leaders in the more advanced stage of conscious leadership development are aware of the fact that there is always order to the chaos.

Seven of the eight leaders communicated that a spiritual ecology was paramount to their leadership practice, which speaks to the quantum physics aspects of conscious leadership. Quantum physics incorporates what many of the leaders referred to as the *great life force*. It examines the connection between emotions, stimulus, cognition, and actions, especially as it relates to the interconnectivity of things. Leader 6 spoke extensively of his role as a leader being in conjunction with spirituality or aligning his mental and cognitive thoughts with God (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Moreover, he communicated that knowing in general was tied to knowing and aligning your Divine essence to a life force that is greater than human beings. When Nobles (2006) describes consciousness, he indicated that it is, "Having an awareness of oneself as spirit, in turn, allows one to access realms of knowing that are not limited to just to cognition or perception. In other words, it connects knowing and awareness to both the perceivable (visible) and the unperceivable (invisible)" (p. 347). This perspective is important as educational institutions are faced with increasingly complex and unexpected challenges. Leaders will be expected to be more reflective, observant, intrinsically motived, engaged in outside counsel and accessing multiple formal and informal avenues

for gaining knowledge. Listening will also become emphasized because it helps with expanding cognitive capacity. For example, Leader 6 stated he learns more by not talking but by listening and reflecting (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Six of the leader provided examples of how they would create meaning and understanding within their organization by relying on the sociocultural perspective and systems orientation. The next section provides information on some additional patterns and themes, which emerged, but was not included as primary themes.

Additional Trends and Insight

While analyzing the data, several other trends and patterns emerged outside of the five primary leadership themes. This additional information is relevant and assists in providing a more holistic context and perspective. Two noticeable trends emerged related to (1) leaders' life purpose as it relates to leadership practice and impact as a leader; and (2) effective communication. First, the majority of the leaders stated their purpose in life was to be of service and help other's reach their potential. Leader 7 spoke extensively about this topic. It became apparent, that the idea of assisting others in reaching their potentiality, and couched it with understanding experiences of intuition. Leader 3 echoed the use of intuition to assist others (personal communication, April 4, 2012). For example, she stated that anything she is involved in any kind of search process, she would get specific feelings while listening to the individual being interviewed speak (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Over the years she learned to listen to her initial reaction to people, because generally her intuition was right (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). The interaction would set off alarms within her, so she would delve a little deeper, with specific probing question, until she got the

information she needed and could understand the perspective that the person was giving with clarity (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Additionally, all eight of the leaders voiced that they felt their impact as a leader was generally tied to their acts of being knowledgeable about their purpose in life and so, they generally incorporated their purpose and their staff into the vision and mission of the office. Leader 3 noted that this was expressed in the retention rates of the staff (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Several of the leaders noted that they believed their employees respected them as a leader and had a favorable opinion of them. Leader 6 commented that his employees tell him that he has a leader and they enjoyed working with him (personal communication, April 4, 2012).

Second, all eight of the leaders discussed the importance and value of effective communication, especially as relates to meeting the mission of the educational institutions. This speaks to the leadership practice. For the most part, each leader offered, that they subscribed to, a relational based communication style. For example, Leaders 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8 all highlighted cooperation and collaboration as a highly valued quality in their communication process. All the leaders agreed that it was important to have good communication with their staff, especially when trying to build consensus and show the value of the concept of reciprocity. Although many of the leaders generally communicated through formal approaches, such as executive councils and committees, several leaders admitted using a variety of other venues to communicate. For example, Leader 8 shared that his organization produced a newsletter (personal communication, April 12, 2012). This newsletter was distributed on a weekly basis and served to provided updates and important information to the general staff. Furthermore, the newsletter

highlighted activities, awards, and projects that the faculty and staff members were involved in. Leader 3 explained how she held cabinet meetings monthly with her unit heads and a classified staff representative (personal communication, April 4, 2012). This approach afforded her the opportunity to meet with her unit heads and other staff members to hear about specific departmental concerns. It also provided an opportunity for everyone to hear about what was going on within other units, thereby becoming more knowledgeable about the interworking of entire office. Additionally, Leader 3 communicated that is was important to build relationships with her staff, for communication purposes, so she established informal *Danish with the Dean* in her office once a month (personal communication, April 4, 2012). This provided a chance for any employee to come in and have dialogue with the Dean, and other employees. She indicated this provided the perfect relaxed environment for all staff members in an effort to get to know each other better. Several of the leaders stressed the importance of just dropping by different employee workstations and saying *hello*, asking questions to learn about them specifically and their families. Most of the leaders shared they did this because it was critical to having that human connection and to convey the message that they cared. Overall, communication emerged as a key ingredient in an effort to get operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Currently, leadership is beginning to be thought of as more than just theory but an emerging practice, therefore observing and discussing leadership practices with postsecondary educational leaders can prove to be very informative to the discipline. From a global perspective, all eight participants indicated that their institutions operated

within formal traditional hierarchal structures. At least two were clearly more traditionalist in regards to their leadership perspective, while the other six were either shifting in their leadership perspective or had adopted a new leadership perspective and practice. Reporting lines within the organizations were still top down; however, further analysis of the data revealed that at least six of the leaders were actually implementing a more cooperative and collaborative leadership practice, akin to a shared governance approach, within their immediate departments. Two followed the more traditional practices of leadership. However, evidence based on the data suggests, that although the organizational structures were formally set-up in a traditional hierarchy, a number of the leaders were practicing leadership in a very opposite way; more of a conscious leadership approach was being applied. Conscious leadership is an emerging framework, which serves as a conceptual theory, with the potential for application of practice. Thus, identifying leaders within educational institutions, who may be influenced by a context or framework of conscious leadership, is hopeful, as it relates to understanding emerging and dynamic ways of leading, especially during times of rapidly changing, networked, and interconnected organizations. Leading these educational organization through complex challenges will require leaders who can think critically, see patterns and themes within their environments and have the capacity to access and process greater amounts of data, in an effort to collectively to problem solve.

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION

This qualitative study focused on exploring the leadership practices of eight senior postsecondary educational leaders at both two year and four year colleges and universities. Learning how these educational leaders made sense of responsible leadership, i.e. conscious leadership, how it was demonstrated on a daily basis, and how context influenced their leadership practice provides a starting point into the understanding and practice of conscious leadership. Findings from this study offer insights into the applicability of a conscious leadership framework as practice, especially as it relates to educational environments, which are becoming increasingly integrated, networked and interconnected. Chapter Five is organized into four major sections: (1) addressing the research questions; (2) implications for practice; (3) recommendations for future research; and (4) conclusion.

Addressing the Research Questions

Understanding significance, within a defined context, is especially important as it assists with the creation of meaning. This study was based on four research questions which explored elements of conscious leadership practices and how they were embedded within current postsecondary educational leadership practices. Data were collected and analyzed from responses of one-on-one interviews in order to answer the four research questions. Five leadership themes emerged from the initial analysis of the data. The themes assisted in guiding the analysis and interpretation of the data: theoretical perspective, epistemic practices in transformative systems, disposition, socio-emotional/ human consciousness capacity, and cognition capacity. Moreover, the themes helped in

organizing and interpreting the multiple perspectives and streams of knowledge that emerged.

Nineteen codes were developed from the interview questions. Based on information from the literature review and the leadership themes a leadership rubric was developed to aid in providing context and meaning of the data. The rubric was designed to show a continuum of consciousness as it related to stages of leadership development. The rubric was developed with categories ranging from beginning to more advanced stages of consciousness. Participant responses were assessed for appropriate related developmental stages and comments were classified under one of the five leadership themes. In other words, the responses were organized according to the meaning of each leadership theme and developmental stage. The categories of the leadership stages were defined using information from the literature review and the emerging themes and codes.

All of the leaders were very forthcoming in providing concrete examples of their leadership practices, allowing for the identification of specific qualities and behaviors of conscious leadership practices. As explained in the previous chapter, the Consciousness Quotient (CQ) Inventory was used to provide insight into the awareness levels of the participants regarding their own leadership practices. Ultimately, identifying application of the conscious leadership framework was necessary in providing relevant answers to the research questions, thus defining conscious leadership was important. Conscious leadership is grounded in human consciousness and cognition, the principles of quantum physics and systems theory, where relationships, reciprocity, interaction, and interconnectivity inform the leadership practice and approach. Findings suggested that although the leaders had no formal idea of what conscious leadership looked like in

theory or practice, elements and qualities of conscious leadership were clearly incorporated into many of their leadership practices. Each of the research questions is discussed in the following sections along with supporting literature.

Question 1: How do Postsecondary Educational Leaders Make Sense of Conscious Leadership?

This research question focused on identifying and understanding how educational leaders made sense of practicing leadership in responsible and conscious ways. The following ways provide examples of how they made sense of conscious leadership as a practice: (a) recognizing the importance and role of awareness, consciousness and self-knowledge in a leadership practice; (b) identifying their theoretical leadership perspective and tying it to ideology and worldview; (c) being sympathetic of the influence of humanness and interconnectivity; and (d) developing an appreciation for reciprocity and sharing in their leadership role.

Awareness, Consciousness and Self-Knowledge

Prior studies have suggested that awareness and consciousness comes with gaining an understanding of knowledge of self and knowledge of self in relations to others (Akbar, 1998; Brazdua & Mihai, 2011; Capra, 2010; Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Goswami, 2001; Wheatley, 2006). "Consciousness is a construct that represents the ability of human beings to know, perceive, understand and be aware of self in relation to self and all else" (Nobles, 2006, p. 347). Akbar (1998) noted that conscious awareness assists individuals in creating meaning and purpose. The more aware an individual is, the better they are aware of all of the choices and options available to them (Arntz et al., 2005; Capra, 2010; Rosado, 2008). All of the leaders interviewed in this study

acknowledged that it was important to be aware and conscious as a leader. Results

from the CQ Inventory revealed that four of the Leaders scored within the upper

segments of awareness with percentages that fell above 90%, therefore indicating high

levels of access to their inner life. All but one of the Leaders subscribed to a higher *life

force*, and that they valued believing in something greater than themselves. They

acknowledged that they must answer to something greater than themselves or any other

human life force, thus indicating that they had a strong spiritual ecology and that this

ecology had been incorporated into their humanness potential. Furthermore, they have the

potential to access and use greater amounts of knowledge and operate from a perspective

that is grounded in reality. The Leaders who scored in the upper ranges displayed a high

degree of self-knowledge and personal growth, as it related to their overall global

consciousness scores. Leader 6 confirmed this idea explaining, "It is simply being in tune

with oneself in relation to a belief or idea that is greater than oneself. So, what I mean by

this is, I know who I am. I know the standards and the values. I know what the standards

of the God I serve are" (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Zohar (1994)

shared that this awareness and consciousness is rooted in a quantum process: "Quantum

reality offers a new model for a new kind of thinking and thus, perhaps, for some new

social visions" (p.65).

Three Leaders scored within the upper-intermediate segment of awareness with

scores ranging from 70% to 89%. Scores within this range indicated that the Leaders are

conscious with a significant level of access to their inner life. Furthermore, these Leaders

were thought to have a high potential for knowledge and find it relatively easy to relate to

outer reality and manage life situations. According to Brazdua and Mihai (2011),

designer of the CQ measurement, individuals who scores within this range have high levels of self-knowledge and were aware of their potential for personal growth. Lastly, one Leader scored within the lowest range or percentile, in comparison to the other Leaders. All scores below 70% are considered low and any individual who scored within this range is considered to have limited access to his/her inner life. Lower range scores suggest that an individual has a more difficult time relating to reality, does not have a superior potential for knowledge, and finds it difficult to manage various life situations. Consistent with these descriptions, results from the interview revealed that this Leader identified with being an atheist, which could be indicative of having lower access to their inner life. Keeping with rituals was another character trait expressed by this Leader, which indicated some hesitation in exhibiting confidence. This Leader shared, "I am always rehearsing things in my head and so, I would like that to stop. So on one level, I know that I have a tendency to shut it off and not listen" (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). This speaks to the limited ability to connect with the outer reality and manage various life situations that was highlighted in the Leader's CQ summary. When asked about the meaning of self-knowledge the Leader remarked,

> You know this is interesting because I think it gets back to some of these questions on this consciousness thing. Part of me feels that I don't spend a lot of time thinking about how I am thinking or how I am feeling or what I am doing. Part of that I think is a reaction to another tendency, which I think sort of goes back to saying that I am a pretty shy person at heart. (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012)

Perhaps, the inability to be reflective about self is connected to the lower overall global awareness level. The incorporation of a global consciousness allows the individual to view reality from a critical distance, rather than the localized personal perspective from which they may be operating. It incorporates a collective view, thereby allowing for the use of an individual's metacognitive thinking and analysis skills. This in turn allows for expanded mindfulness, where cognitive acts can be used to solve complex problems resulting in the individual making better decisions. The acknowledgement of the need for a global consciousness is quite relevant. Gangadean (2004) noted,

> Perhaps the single most powerful event facing humanity today is a great awakening on a planetary scale that has been millennia in the making. We humans are in the midst of a profound advance as a species to a higher form of global consciousness that has been emerging across cultures, religions and worldviews through the centuries. This awakening of global consciousness is nothing less than a shift, maturation, from more egocentric patterns of life to a higher form of integral and dialogic patterns of life. (p. 43)

Most of the Leaders indicated that being aware and having self-knowledge is an important quality, while at the same time, acknowledging that there currently exists a disconnect between awareness and leadership practices. Related to this is an indication that the disconnection indicates a lack of understanding of how ideology, worldview and consciousness help to organize and structure an individual or group way of being (Ani, 1994; Miller et al., 2010).

Theoretical Perspective, Ideology and Worldview

Understanding the influence of perspective, ideology, and worldview from a leadership practice is critical, because it provides the initial frame of reference to create understanding and meaning for an individual or group. Humans tend to understand their reality from their respective cultural perspectives. This viewpoint generally emerges from adopted ideologies and worldviews as they are socialized within their communities (Miller et al., 2010). The socialization process helps to shape both the human and social consciousness. The social consciousness is aligned with a global consciousness. Each of the leaders shared information confirming this fact, whether they were consciously aware of it or not.

Learning how leaders create meaning and understanding is an important construct. For example, Leader 1 shared,

I believe that you make meaning by references to frameworks of thought, the traditional concepts of schema and that kind of stuff. Because you're bombarded with, you know a huge amount of data. Meaning comes from interpretation of this data in some way and assigning some type of value to it, let's calls it. To me you create some framework that you're working from in your mind and then as you get new information, you compare that to the last set of information or that framework, to see if it corresponded or not. If it corresponds you throw it into that framework, if it doesn't then you have to figure out why it doesn't. That either leads you to modifying your framework or creates a new framework or whatever. (personal communication, March 30, 2012)

Most of the Leaders seemed to have the ability to access frameworks that had been

shaped by specific cultural ideology, perspectives and worldviews and applied these

beliefs to their leadership practices. For example, Leader 1 shared the following in

relation to his beliefs:

> Having grown up in this society as an African America person, my values are
>
> rooted in people. And I believe that the more you embrace who you are,
>
> individually and within the cultural context of who your people are, the stronger
>
> you become and the freer you are to share that with other people. (personal
>
> communication, March 30, 2012)

Culture, which is connected to individuals' perspectives and worldviews, provides a

general design for living and patterns for interpreting realities (Nobles, 2006). Ideology is

the matrix used to create collective consciousness or understanding for individuals and

groups, and deliberate choices rather than reactionary ways of being are much more

relevant in organizations that are emerging interconnected, and systems oriented.

Humanness and Interconnectivity

Recognizing the interconnectivity of things, especially in relationship to the

social-relational interactions within the organization, is the cornerstone and foundation

for leading in more responsible and conscious ways, and acknowledging the value of

shared leadership practices and collective problem solving processes (Allen & Cherry,

2000; Wheatley, 2006; Youngblood, 1997). Formally, each of the Leaders worked in

educational institutions that subscribed to a hierarchical perspective. However,

participant responses indicated that, for the most part, a systems orientation was actually

in place. For example, Leader 6 consistently framed his leadership practice around

interconnectivity and acknowledgement of a spiritual presence (personal communication, April 4, 2012). He explained that this philosophy, or spiritual ecology, directed how he engaged and interacted with his employees (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012). He stated that with his leadership practice, all people are equal and have a shared experience, which makes them much more committed to working together for a communal goal (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012).

Leader 6 noted that neither he nor his staff worked within a vacuum; therefore, it was natural for his organization to be integrated and networked (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Furthermore, he communicated that he believed that people typically start relying more on the collective group to have greater voice rather than an individual voice, which is less powerful (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Through their respective developmental leadership practices, they acknowledged that it was important to prepare their employees to do the work that was required of them. In other words, they understood that it was critical to provide a vision and focus, so that the organization could be self-determined, cooperative, and responsible. In the end, all eight of the educational leaders understood that they had to make the work experience relevant for themselves and their staff. They had to become adept in facilitating understanding for everyone's benefit, which was consistent with three other conscious leadership qualities, e.g., gaining knowledge and organizing it in meaningful ways, observing thoughts and emotions as they arise, and having an awareness and command of their actions to effect change. The educational leaders that were interviewed observed and spoke of this phenomenon and thus attempted to design creative working environments that recognized that work

organizations are sociocultural in nature, have patterns, are interconnected and allow

for a shared leadership approach.

Reciprocity and Shared Leadership

Responsible and conscious leaders lead from a place of reciprocity and

understand the social nature of working environments (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Wheatley,

2006). The literature review (Chapter Two) provided valuable information regarding

shared or participatory leadership styles, such as Love-based leadership, Open

Leadership, and Soul Leadership (Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Li, 2010). Each of these

leadership approaches requires the leader to be reciprocal, cooperative and collaborative.

Interview data revealed that several of the Leaders subscribed to a participatory or shared

leadership practice. Leader 1 shared:

> I believe in leading by inclusiveness, meaning I bring everybody along telling
>
> them what we are doing, how we are trying to do it and give them an opportunity
>
> to have input. That way when you get to a decision, people will more likely be on
>
> board about the decision and you don't have to worry about the excuses side.
>
> When they are not on board, you run into conflict. (personal communication,
>
> March 30, 2012)

Furthermore, findings suggested that many of the Leaders relied on collective

intelligence to problem solve. They developed trusting relationships which increased

positive engagement with their employees, thus, encouraging the emergence of a social

system, which is tied to both the leaders' and the employees' way of being. A system

orientation is "an approach that sees human behavior as the outcome of reciprocal

interactions of a person's operating within organized and integrated social systems" (Hutchinson, 2008, p. 43).

Leaders who were inclusive in their leadership practice had an easier time leading during times of uncertainty, ambiguity, and rapid change because they had embraced the uncertainty with trust in themselves and others and exhibited qualities of a conscious leadership practice. A conscious leadership framework offers a different way of leading, one that is holistic in nature, emphasizes awareness, responsibility, cooperation and collectivity, and uses social interaction to create balanced relationships.

Question 2: How is Conscious Leadership Demonstrated on a Daily Basis?

An important part of conscious leadership development is the practice of it on a daily basis. Indicators of how conscious leadership was practiced included: (a) promoting cooperation and collaboration in the work place; (b) supporting innovation, creativity and collaboration; (c) supporting change and transformation; (d) building harmonic and balanced relationships; and (e) applying and practicing a more thoughtful, responsible and intentional leadership approach. The Leaders offered concrete examples of responsible and conscious leadership practices, described in the following sections.

Cooperation and Collaboration in the Workplace

Wheatley (2006) suggested that organizations are emerging as quantum organizations, meaning that quantum physic principles should be incorporated into leadership practices to offer better leadership techniques. She shared that a leadership approach, which is inclusive of quantum physics ideas, emphasized relationships that are interconnected and interdependent, supporting interactions and potentiality. Allen and Cherry (2000) explained, "New ways of relating involve the capacity to build and

maintain effective cooperative relationships across the boundaries of an organization and between the organization and community" (p. 8). Leader 8 shared how he moved his college from a mechanical-orientated environment to a more cooperative and collaborative environment (personal communication, April 12, 2012). He began this process by first examining the equity of the services provided to students, from both the instructional and student services sides of the institution. After the analysis was complete, he worked to develop and implement programs to assist "at risk" students. Furthermore, he explained, that during this project all of the staff involved were cross-trained in other areas, thereby increasing their value and professional worth.

Leader 8 credits his professional training as a biologist for his ability to view the world from a systems orientation, providing him with the knowledge and awareness to build a much more cooperative and collaborative working environment (personal communication, April 12, 2012). As a self-proclaimed transformative leader, his responsible and conscious leadership practices have shaped and impacted the environment of his particular education institution for both the students and the employees. He proclaimed that his college is now more student-centered. Leader 8's wisdom for being successful as a responsible and conscious leader began by getting buy-in from the faculty and staff, which is consistent with facilitating cooperative and collective working environments.

Innovation, Creativity and Collaboration

Zohar (1994) explained that only the demand to change the whole mindset will assist humans in learning a new ways of being. Potentiality and possibilities define this type of construct and are supportive of a quantum perspective. Most of the leaders had

embraced their life's purpose and incorporated it into their leadership practice.

Leaders 1, 4, 7, and 8 were always thoughtful in their responses to the questions and offered up tangible examples of how they practiced responsible leadership. For example, Leader 4 discussed her idea of the "pay it forward" mini-grants (personal communication, April 20, 2012). This was a perfect example of a leader being innovative, creative and conscious. The idea was to create mini-grants for students to use in a community service project. After completion of the project, the students presented the results of their community service activity. Leader 4 communicated that when she initially shared this idea with her staff, they were simply "over the moon" with excitement (personal communication, April 20, 2012). She had so much buy-in from them, that it reenergized her leadership practice as well (Leader 4, personal communication, April 20, 2012). She was reminded that outside of the day-to-day tasks, she was responsible for and had the ability to practice being a transformative change agent (Leader 4, personal communication, April 20, 2012). Her staff volunteered to help in overseeing the project, worked with the students to find placements, and organized students in presenting their results, showing that allowing creativity and innovation to emerge was an excellent way for getting others to work together (Leader 4, personal communication, April 20, 2012).

Supporting Change and Transformation

The literature review provided information about creating and participating in real social transformation. Transformation requires an epistemological change in what one knows and how they know it, which requires a change to our basic categories of thought (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Chopra, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 1994). An epistemological change has resulted in a shift in

our whole intellectual framework. Leader 4 indicated early on that she subscribed to

a transformative leadership model as described in *The Leadership Challenge*, and that has

helped tremendously in her practice (personal communication, April 20, 2012). The

demonstration of a conscious leadership practice was apparent by such innovative and

creative initiatives that were also instrumental in using the interconnectivity of things to

successfully implement a project, such as the "pay it forward" grant.

Leader 5 offered this about what she thought represented a transformative

organization, "Well, that's when you can go from a hierarchy….transforms and moves

into a team approach and a different type of leadership style" (personal communication,

March 30, 2012). While Leader 2 viewed a transformative organization as being

supportive of him (personal communication, April 18, 2012). Yet, his comment

concerning the *look* of a transformative organization was consistent with the team

approach, in which Leader 5 shared. He stated, "One that has accessibility, especially for

me. I have to have quick access to my staff, especially my Associate Vice Presidents.

That means an awful lot and having all the people in the right places to deal with all the

day-to-day stuff" (Leader 5, personal communication, March 30, 2012). Overall,

responsibility to the whole and not just the few was a prevalent theme with all of the

Leaders.

Building Harmonic and Balanced Relationships: Collective Decision Making

Allen and Cherry (2000) described being systems oriented as having a

cooperative and collective aspect to the leadership approach. The authors suggested that

educational institutions departments such as student affairs divisions are naturally

relational-based and student affairs divisions demonstrated this by crossing boundaries.

"New ways of influencing change involve more organic strategies that take into

account the non-linear dynamics of the connected systems and its response to force"

(Allen & Cherry, 2000, p. 9). Unfortunately, a fragmented and linear process or approach

remains in place when it comes to making decisions in many institutions. Interview data

revealed that within the individual Leaders' office or department, the value of a

cooperative and collective decision-making process was present.

> Leader 8 sees his information sharing and decision making process as inclusive:
>
> I like to hear all sides of issues and I like to make where a decision can be made
>
> by consensus. I really do strive to do that. Find middle ground, almost always you
>
> can find ways to compromise a little bit and everybody can win…I am opposed to
>
> making the decision where you have to choose between one outcome for some
>
> people and another outcome for other people. (Leader 8, personal communication,
>
> April 12, 2012)

Furthermore, he stated,

> I don't stand on hierarchy at all. I do know that I am the President, I have a
>
> responsibility for this institution and I am accountable to my Board and my
>
> Chancellor, but I am very much a person who believes in participation and
>
> encourages it. (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Lastly, he commented that he "encourages decision making at the lowest possible level of

the organization" (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012). He shared that

effective decision do not always have to be made at the top, they can be made right where

the problem is because those folks will have to be the ones to deal with the outcome

(Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012). It will affect them the most, besides

it gives them a sense of empowerment. A collective decision making process for this

Leader and his employees were more appropriate for his postsecondary educational

intuition. Allen and Cherry's (2000) work supports these findings.

Applying a Practice of Thoughtfulness and Intentionality

Traditional leadership models tend to focus on identifying a leader's

competencies (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Carroll et al., 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2007;

Northhouse, 2010). A competency paradigm is not adequate for leading in challenging

and complex organizational environments, which have become integrated and networked

(Allen & Cherry, 2000; Wheatley, 2006; Youngblood, 1997). "One source of that

complexity is the reality that academic institutions are inhabited by people and are

designed to foster creativity and development, which means that all the mysteries of the

psyche, human relationships are central to the everyday world of academic

administrators" (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 2). Postsecondary educational institutions

have always been networked and integrated to some degree (W. K. Kellogg Foundation,

2000).

When asked about being intentional and purposeful in their leadership practice, all

of the Leaders shared different ways in which they thought they did this. Leader 4

commented on paying attention, realizing that you have good employees and

communicating effectively with them on a daily basis (personal communication, April

20, 2012). Leaders 1 and 3 discussed empowering their employees. They described being

inclusive and protecting them, while at the same time providing them the necessary

resources to complete their job. Leaders 7 (personal communication, April 5, 2012) and 8

(personal communication, April 12, 2012) shared that it was important to connect with

their employees and garner resources for them. Each of these Leaders saw themselves as part of a cooperative collective. Leader 2 shared it was important to be aware, responsible and accountable to yourself, your employees and the educational institution as a whole (Leader 2, personal communication, April 18, 2012).

Question 3: How does Context Influence Conscious Leadership Practices?

Conscious leadership practices reflect several importance dimensions. Context is but one, yet is it an important aspect to understand. Leaders demonstrated the importance of understanding the influence of context in the following ways: (a) understanding organizational structure and ethos; (b) identifying themes and patterns in the environment; and (c) facilitating communication and engagement. Each is described in the following sections.

Organizational Structures: Networks and Integration

Capra (2010) and Laszlo (2008) suggested that interconnections and interactions enable humans to become conscious, to be human, and to practice humanness. Bynum (1999) suggested that humans share a common ancestor through DNA, which connects them and their human consciousness. Furthermore, he explained that this shared human consciousness has immense implications and influence on how individual and group identities are formed and impact our psychological functioning. With this in mind, a beginning understanding may be shaped as to how quantum physics provides a lens for making meaning of global consciousness and interconnectivity of relationships.

All of the Leaders recognized that formally they worked within the confines of traditional hierarchical structures, but recognized that within their own office or space, they had the opportunity and power to implement a different organization structure. For

example, Leader 3 discussed the importance of making sure that all of her staff had voice and felt validated (personal communication, April 4, 2012). She noted that it was crucial to make a concerted effort to improve on her listening skills, so that she could become better at interpreting the needs of her staff (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Leader 3 believed that it was critical to communicate with her staff and used a variety of venues to establish communication (personal communication, April 4, 2012). For example, she would stop by their workstations and check on them in person, she made a point of allowing for time during the office staff meetings for them to share their concerns, and she prided herself on being very responsive to emails that required an answer (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). She explained that she always responded within a 24 hour period (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Each of these characteristics is consistent with qualities of a conscious leader; that is, one who is flexible, observant, authentic, proactive and diligent.

In the context of this discussion it is important to point out that the literature review provided evidence to suggest that traditional leadership practices are housed within a behaviorist worldview or practice of control and hierarchy (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Chopra, 2010; Fullan & Scott, 2009). Prior research suggested that measurement and verification is at the core of hierarchical leadership practices and generally does little to create effective leadership practices for integrated and networked environments. Furthermore, Fullan and Scott (2009) and Bolman and Gallos (2011) suggested that leadership practices embedded in a behaviorist approach required limited thought or awareness and do not necessarily set tone doe the development of meaningful relationships or collective leadership practices.

Identifying Themes and Patterns in the Environment

Understanding the nature of human beings is sometimes a difficult charge. Akbar (1998) noted, "Knowledge is the capacity to know oneself, and have the ability to communicate that knowledge with others" (p. v). If that knowledge is incomplete and is made up of assumptions, a person's reality can be limited. Postsecondary educational leaders cannot afford to be bound by constructs of knowledge that are inappropriate for the environment in which they lead; thus, a thought based leadership may be more relevant. Although human beings have common qualities and norms, these can often be culturally bound; therefore, it is critical to understand the norms of a group of people. Rosado (2008) suggested that context informs content. Context can be explained as "thinking patterns, levels of consciousness and value systems that are operations in groups and individuals, while content is described as corresponding behaviors, observed data, and specific dynamics operative in daily life" (Rosado, 2008, p. 2077). All eight of the leaders were already aware of the fact that leadership often unfolds under situations or within a context. Meaning the Leaders understood that it was their responsibility to provide clarity and create understanding, especially as it related to assisting with the process of bringing awareness to the organization concerning different challenges and creating processes for collective problem solving.

The feel of an organization is set by the ethos of the leader. Leader 1 recognized that his employees were more than just mechanized machinery. He expressed that he tries to relate to his staff from the perspective of being human (personal communication, March 30, 2012). He also noted that it was critical for his staff to feel comfortable in their work environments, so his leadership style focused on being inclusive, collaborative and

caring. Understanding the social process of leadership may be just as impactful to leadership theory and practice as the competency paradigm model. The old operating system which embraces a mechanical leadership perspective is no longer valid (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Pink, 2005).

Facilitating Communication and Engagement

It can be said that it is not enough to be aware and conscious as a Leader. A Leader must also have the capacity to take action and problem solve, once they become aware (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Akbar, 1998; Capra, 2010; Laszlo, 2008; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 1994). Leader 1 shared that his personal office space was organized to reinforce particular philosophical themes, human rights, civility, and social justice (personal communication, March 30, 2012). He described having African American artifacts, pictures from the Civil Rights Movement, a picture of President Obama, and African warrior motifs (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012). He explained that often he has an opportunity to converse with students, one-on-one, who are not doing the things they are supposed to be doing in life (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012). Moreover, his office serves as a reminder of all of the sacrifices that have been made for them to have the freedom to obtain an education. Furthermore, Leader 1 commented that his office serves as a reminder for himself and his staff and of the reason why they work in an educational environment (personal communication, March 30, 2012). The problems that organizations are faced with today require a different approach. Wheatley (2007) wrote:

> There is a simpler way to organize human endeavor. I have declared this for many years and seen it to be true in many places. The simpler way feels new, yet it is

the most ancient story there is. It is the ancient story demonstrated to us daily

by life, not the life we see on the news with its unending stories of human grief

and horror, but what we feel when we're in nature, when we experience a sense of

life's deep harmony, beauty, and power. It is the story of how we feel when we

see people helping each other, when we feel creative, when we know we see

people helping each other, when we feel creative, when we know we're making a

difference, when life feels purposeful. (p. 1)

Leaders must be conscious and aware but also able to act upon critical knowledge

and information to effect change. In this case, a conscious leadership approach offered a

way to understand how application of a viable practice assisted in achieving

transformative results, and demonstrated the use of cooperative works and responsibility.

Organizing our work places in harmonic and balanced ways leads to create cooperative

organizations that support a reciprocal environment that is sociocultural in nature.

Question 4: What Implications does a Conscious Leadership Framework have for

Conscious Leadership Practice?

Conscious leadership is grounded in the sociocultural knowledge of reciprocity,

which allows leaders to perceive patterns in the environment, see the interconnectivity of

multiple problems, and subscribe to a participatory leadership style. This way of

leadership incorporates the idea of shared responsibility and problem solving.

Understanding this conceptual framework is critical to developing leaders who are

thoughtful, intentional, responsible and aware. Gaining knowledge about the environment

of the working organization seems appropriate in helping to understand this framework.

Therefore, a conscious leadership framework is described in the following ways: (a)

systems oriented; (b) practice-based and sustainable; and (c) embracing reflective learning.

Systems Orientation

Societal trends such as failing global economies, uneven distribution of wealth and resources, political ineffectiveness, and shifting student demographics have influenced the operational abilities of colleges and universities nationwide (Anderson, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Collin & Hansen, 2011; Penn & Zalesne, 2007). A new tendency for ways of relating within our working environments requires us to move from a traditional static existence to more of an integrated and networked social-relational way of being. Along with this change and transformation, employees are sharing their changing expectations for the work place. They want to work in a place where they have a purpose. They want to be included in the operational decisions and practices, especially if the outcomes affect them directly. They want to personally connect to the people and the work they are doing. For example, Leader 8 shared that he encourages everybody to be a leader everywhere and encourages them to exercise those leadership skills (personal communication, April 12, 2012).

Research scholars noted that people are more intrinsically motivated than they are externally motivated (Pink, 2005). Admittedly, this is a challenging construct to embrace, because most of the current leadership literature agrees that external rewards act as mediators of motivation (Kotter, 2008; Northouse, 2010; Pink, 2005). However, Wheatley (2006) suggested it is the humanness factor that is not taken into consideration and leaves us with misunderstandings, not only about human behavior, but about overall organizational leadership practices (Fry & Kriger, 2006; Laszlo, 2008; Wheatley, 2006).

Smith-Accuna (2011) defined systems theory as "a set of unifying principles about the organization and functioning systems" (p.6). A systems perspective offers an excellent opportunity to approach change and complexity intellectually (Chen & Stroup, 1993). This orientation provides the foundational thinking for developing conscious leaders. A shared responsibility to leading and problem solving in an interconnected environment are qualities of conscious leadership practice. Leader 8 indicated that he used a systems orientation in his leadership practice, especially when it came to solving problems. He stated,

> Almost every problem, even the most complex ones, is made up of interacting components. So, you want to get your arms around that and see how those various components interact. Because they are operating as a system and then see where the gears are not meshing exactly, right, and get after the problem that way. Sort of break it down and address the individuals. (Leader 8, personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Leader 7 discussed how her strengths are relatedness and connectedness, which is valued aspect of a systems orientation. She declared, "I am really interested in the potential," meaning everyone has potential and when people are not manifesting that potential or living their potential, they are not empowered and are not part of the collective activity of the organization (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012). She sees this perspective as systemic and a part of the spiritual ecology of humanity (Leader 7, personal communication, April 5, 2012). Leader 7 (personal communication, April 5, 2012) believed that all organizations are spiritual organizations which fit in line

with Wheatley (2006) and other scholars who study the quantum nature of organizations (Laszlo, 2008; Senge, 1990; Youngblood, 1997).

Practice-based and Sustainable

Competency and behaviorist leadership paradigms were never really relevant, especially in organizations that were naturally networked and integrated. The use of competency or behavioral models can be reduced by examining leadership practices that are responsible and have conscious leadership practitioners in place. A practice - theory approach incorporates a social theoretical construct within its framework. Practice theory is the result of blending social theory and leadership theory and practices (Carroll et al., 2008). Being-centered leadership is an example of a practice theory leadership model. Described by Fry and Kriger (2006) as a leadership practice that is action oriented, leaders who embrace this form of leadership are motivated by the context of situations.

Being-centered leadership, discussed in Chapter 2, is focused on embracing the inner thought and feeling of themselves and others. In contrast, a conscious leadership framework incorporates a holistic systems orientation, is practice-based, requires reflection of the leader and embraces interconnectivity and reciprocity as a collective. Conscious leaders are transformative. They are able to identify problems, gain additional knowledge and organize it in meaningful ways, plan, implement, reflect and lead within environments that are interconnected, networked, and dynamic with change and complexity (Youngblood, 1997; Wheatley, 2006).

Leaders who can make meaning within complex systems are able to provide viable solutions for challenging issues they may face. Leader 8 used a student equity plan to gain knowledge and insight about the needs of his student population (personal

communication, April 12, 2012). Through this process, he was able to identify areas of need and the challenges in obtaining them. He used a cooperative and collaborative approach to examining and coming to viable solutions. His effective practice of incorporating data from a student equity plan was instrumental in secure funding and developing resources and assistance for his special populations. This particular institution has a very diverse student population with a wide range of instructional and student support service's needs. Programs and services such as tutoring, disability supports and services, and learning communities resulted as of this practice. Many examples were shared by the postsecondary educational leaders that demonstrated a leadership methodology which embraced the qualities of conscious leadership practice. Further insight is needed to expand these practices into the general educational community in order to remain sustainable.

Reflective Learning Perspective

A conscious leadership framework offers a different way of leading, i.e., one that is holistic in nature, emphasizes awareness, responsibility, cooperation and collectivity, and uses social interaction to create balanced relationships. Reflection is an essential quality of conscious leaders and assists them in creating meaning within context. It is important to understand the mental qualities of responsible leaders because responsible leaders need to be able to recognize ineffective habits of the mind, control rising emotions, so that they are able to think clearly and make effective decisions. Furthermore, they have an awareness and command over their actions, are able to promote harmony and balance, while at the same time neutralizing conflict in times of stress and chaos.

When asked if they believed their thoughts influenced their decisions, all of the leaders agreed. For example, Leader 6 shared, "My thoughts influence my actions all the time, because I try to be a person who manages through thought rather than feeling" (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012). He added,

Feeling is very important. It gives you a sense and tells you what's going on, but if you make decisions based upon emotions, often times you either overreact or underreact to something. So the first thing I try to do is make an assessment of what I am feeling. How and why I am feeling this way and think about what those feelings are actually telling me about the situation. What is literally going on and try to see it from the other point of view. (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4, 2012)

Reflective leaders can observe their thoughts and emotions as they arise and have an awareness and command over their actions. Reflective leaders are conscious, knowing and aware. Nobles (2006) stated,

Consciousness functions as both retentive and residual knowing and awareness. As retentive energy, consciousness allows for the remembering or retention of all previous information experience and ideas. As residual energy, consciousness provides a conduit for tapping into the residue of human knowing and awareness thereby, and creates new knowing and awareness. (p. 347-348)

This knowing or awareness makes for better leaders because they are able to access greater amounts of information, make meaning from it, and provide viable solutions to a complex and challenging leadership practice, which is relevant to the organizational needs of the institution. The educational leaders made sense of conscious

leadership in several ways, as illustrated by their comments. However, social and institutional renewal can only happen if leaders begin by nurturing harmonic and balanced work environments. Conscious leadership practices will guide humanity into a sustainable future. Conscious leadership offers a methodology and practice which supports living systems to be reflective learning organizations.

<div align="center">**Implications for Practice**</div>

Today's rapidly changing postsecondary educational environments are inclusive of society's social and economic ills (Fullan & Scott, 2009; Pink, 2005; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2000). In a knowledge-driven society, leaders who subscribe to a practice oriented leadership are seen as highly-skilled and valuable. The implications from this study have the potential to be wide ranging and critical for improving leadership models and practices within postsecondary educational environment. This study provided evidence of conscious leadership incorporated into practice. Three implications for practice are addressed in this section: (a) preparing conscious leaders; (b) applying conscious leadership practices within changing postsecondary educational environments; and (c) the meaning of a conscious leadership framework to postsecondary educational environments.

Preparing Conscious Leaders

Preparing leaders to be responsible and conscious is critical, especially as it relates to responding to continuous change and transformation. Postsecondary educational leaders need to be flexible and adaptive enough in order to make decisions and solve real-life problems, as they develop the skills needed to lead within living organizations. "Life's processes work everywhere, no matter the culture, group, or

person, because these are basic dynamics shared by all living beings" (Wheatley, 2007, p. 1). In providing responses to the interview questions, participants used some of the language from the conscious leadership framework and the Consciousness Quotient Inventory reflecting their awareness of these concepts. For example, Leader 8 spoke extensively about his leadership practice being systems oriented in nature and acknowledged that his institution was a living system (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Preparing postsecondary educational leaders to become more observant of their work environments as dynamic living system adds value in the form of increased skills and can potentially aid leaders in creating meaning and bringing order to a workplace that is changing. Researchers in the field of leadership studies can begin to study how dynamic systems emerge, and how both the leaders and employees navigate and create meaning as they work in changing environments. This information can serve as a point of reference for preparing leaders to think differently about working within educational organizations that are continuously changing.

Our thinking about current leadership practices lag in terms of leading within unpredictable and complex environments. For centuries, we have been practicing leadership as if it happens in isolation, when in fact, it is a shared process grounded within interconnected systems perspective (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Wheatley, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Wheatley (2007) stated, "Leaders use control and imposition rather than self-organizing processes" (p. 2). Leader 6 confirmed this idea, when he shared that his college's formal leadership philosophy was one of shared governance, but in reality his immediate supervisor embraced an autocratic leadership approach (personal communication, April 4, 2012). According to the 2000 W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Report, discussed in Chapter Two, traditional leadership practices for postsecondary

educational institutions regarded leaders and followers as machines, that is, leadership

practices were process oriented. Hierarchal structures and linear ways of relating were

acceptable, while integration and collaboration was not valued. In contrast, Allen and

Cherry's (2000) work suggests that postsecondary educational institutions are becoming

more integrated and networked inside of a sociocultural living system, which embraces

and supports relational-based ways of being. Leader 2 often referred to his employees as

a team (personal communication, April 18, 2012). In fact, he shared that when he first

arrived to his position, he meaning for the T.E.A.M, *Together Everyone Achieves More*,

thereby setting the tone for his leadership practice and department expectation, an ethos

of inclusion and responsibility for and to each other (Leader 2, personal communication,

April 18, 2012).

Emphasis is increasingly being placed on developing leaders who are more

thoughtful, self-aware and conscious, and who themselves are accountable for their

individual leadership practices (Church, 2010; Chopra, 2010, Fry & Kriger, 2006;

Wheatley, 2006). Leader 4 discussed the importance of paying attention and listening so

she would be able to understand and meet the needs of her employees and the

organization as a whole (personal communication, April 20, 2012). But Leaders will need

to be formally trained on how best to become more thoughtful, self-aware and

accountable leaders. Knowledge such as that shared by Leader 4, is critical to the

development of an educational leadership curriculum, which embraces the foundational

constructs of a conscious leadership practice. It will be important for educators to adopt

an evolutionary perspective about the value of a conscious leadership curriculum,

especially as it relates to preparing leaders to develop their self-awareness, understand the potentiality of social capital in a leadership practice, and learn how to see the value of a conscious leadership practice within increasingly interconnected and networked environments. Therefore, it is imperative for researchers and educators to identify and gain knowledge about conscious leadership practitioners, as they emerge within today's postsecondary educational institutions.

Outside of an individual's family, educational institutions have the greatest influence on socializing humans (Anderson, 2008; Ani, 1994; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Nobles, 2006; Rosado, 2008). Socialization describes the process of how humans internalize social norms, rules and cues and it is where individuals and groups learn how to understand reality within a particular context (Ani, 1994; Hutchinson, 2008; Miller et al., 2010). Thus, postsecondary educational institutions can become much more aggressive in cultivating conscious and responsible leaders. Building leadership development programs that incorporate a conscious leadership framework can aid in appropriately preparing leaders for complex and rapidly changing organizations. Important also is the emphasis being placed on training and developing viable pools of individuals to move into critical leadership roles who see the potentiality of living social systems, and are able to see patterns and themes in unpredictable and complex environments. Leader 8 shared,

> I have started a bunch of new instructional programs. Some of them are unique in California. We are offering an associate degree in Peace Studies; we are offering associate degree in Future Studies. I have a program ready to launch next fall that is on Mediation and Conflict Resolution….We are developing a program on

Borders Studies, we will be able to offer an associate degree in Border studies.

We have sustainability, we now have a full associate degree in Sustainability

Studies and five certificate programs on Urban Agriculture and we put an organic

farm in on campus, we established six years ago as a way to kind of serve as a lab

for student to learn how to sort of use sustainable methods, in this case, grow

food. (personal communication, April 12, 2012)

This information shared by Leader 8, indicated that he learned to respond to future

educational needs and demands by examining emerging trends, seeking patterns and

themes that seek to inform about the emerging needs of the community in which he

serves. The sustainability program was critical in aided the Leader in building a

collaborative partnership with within the city to assist them in developing urban gardens.

Results from this study provided evidence to suggest that formal exposure to a

conscious leadership curriculum would be beneficial and assist in developing a

community of conscious leaders. A conscious leadership curriculum for educational

leaders would include courses, which are inclusive of the five themes that emerged to

form the rubric highlighted in Chapter Four: theoretical leadership perspectives,

epistemic practices in transformation and systems, understanding the disposition of

leaders, socio-emotional/ humanness capacity, and cognitive capacity. In addition, a

conscious leadership curriculum would be inclusive and interdisciplinary. For examples,

courses would be developed around topics such as cross-cultural human development,

cultural personality development, intercultural communication, foundations of human

consciousness, quantum physics, systems thinking, mindfulness, principles of meditation

and yoga, conscious business practices, social entrepreneurship, cultural competency, and

leadership coaching. In developing a conscious leadership curriculum, educators and researchers can study conscious leader practitioners and gain valuable insight into the many way conscious leadership frameworks are applied and practiced within a diverse postsecondary educational environments. The implications of observing this emerging and dynamic phenomenon are invaluable to educators, as curriculum is outlined and developed.

Conscious leaders are transformative, planners, effective decision-makers, flexible, authentic, creative, innovative, and cooperative. They are capable of identifying problems, implementing plans of actions and change, gaining additional knowledge and organizing that knowledge in meaningful ways, leading within environments that are interconnected, networked and dynamic with complexity, recognizing ineffective habits of the mind, and observing thoughts and emotions as they arise. Moreover, they have an awareness and command over their actions, which make them more responsible and accountable. Conscious leaders are practice oriented, which makes them highly skilled professionals. Efforts should be made to create a community of educational leader practitioners, who can model the practice effectively. In creating communities of conscious leaders, models of responsible leadership practice are offered as effective leadership practices, as these leaders effectively deal with real world challenges and issues. All of the Leaders from this study demonstrated these qualities, expressed as a continuum within a variety of leadership developmental stages. Findings suggest that conscious leadership practices are a common phenomenon unfolding among the eight participants, which implies that there is an opportunity for researchers to study the phenomenon of conscious leadership in an effort to contribute to the literature gap

concerning effective leadership practice within increasingly changing postsecondary educational institutions. Data collected about this topic would be beneficial to educators and practitioners and could aid each of them in preparing a conscious leadership curriculum for graduate programs and workplace professional development.

Conscious Leadership Practices within Changing Postsecondary Educational Environments

Social changes are setting the stage for transformation and change within postsecondary educational institutions (Penn & Zalesne, 2007). The implication of sustaining conscious leadership practices within postsecondary educational institutions is related to understanding educational organizations as interconnected and living systems. This interest provides researchers with an excellent opportunity to study an emerging leadership framework being applied as a practice, which has the potential for researchers to identify different ways of leading that is relational based and social in nature. Moreover, researchers in the field of leadership studies can discover and gain valuable data which further validates the importance of a practice oriented and participatory leadership style. The knowledge gained through the process of interviewing the eight participants highlighted how each of them embraced qualities of conscious leadership and made sense of and practiced conscious leadership on a daily basis. The study assisted the researcher in gaining insight into the potential influence of context on conscious leadership practices and discovering the implications of applying a conscious leadership framework for practice.

Cooperative work and responsibility was a theme incorporated into the leadership practice of all eight of the Leaders. As more postsecondary educational institutions are

being continually affected by budget constraints and limited resources, creativity and innovation have become standard requirements and the expectation for all employees including formal and informal leaders. Employees want to be purposeful and intentional in the work that they do. Leaders 1, 4, 6, 7, and 8 all shared how it was important to empower their staff and have them understand that their work was invaluable to the effective functioning of the office or department. Pink (2005) suggested that employees typically look for purpose and want to be self-determined within the workplace, because they have an authentic and intrinsic need to matter. Their expectations as employees mimic their own personal beliefs and values, and they require a working environment that is inclusive and supportive. Leaders want to derive meaning about the needs of their institution and employees. In an effort to foster and support this orientation toward change, emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the context of the educational institution leadership practices.

Working together to achieve the mission of the educational institutions is valued and therefore educational institutions are seeking leaders who can guide their organizations in very different ways that incorporate a quantum reality (Wheatley, 2006; Youngblood, 1997; Zohar, 1994). All eight of the Leaders expressed that their respective working environments were rapidly changing and that being transformative, cooperative and collaborative was necessary to achieve their department goals. Leader 3 shared that she requires all of her employees to work collaboratively and cooperatively within the office and across the university campus (personal communication, April 4, 2012). For example, she explained that her office hosts a collaborative meeting every year with the Graduate Student Coordinators of each educational department to discuss outreach and

recruitment initiatives and provide insight into new policies and procedures for graduate students (Leader 3, personal communication, April 4, 2012). In this way, she creates meaning, makes use of the interconnectivity and reciprocity naturally occurring within organizations, and describes the quantum reality that Zohar (1994) spoke of in the literature review. The quantum physics aspect of the practice emphasizes the human interconnectivity and the development of the spiritual essence of a person and a systems orientation (Capra, 2010; Laszlo, 2008 & Wheatley, 2006). A quantum perspective aids in growing the emotional intelligence of an organization (Arntz et al., 2005; Goleman, 1995; Goswami, 2001; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 1994). Moreover, it encourages compassion and care toward all constituents. Service to others within organizations promotes harmonic and balanced relationships, an orientation toward adopting systems thinking and encourages the social-relational ways of being, which are indicative of the way emerging interconnected organizations are forming (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Brown & Isaac, 2001; Fullan & Scott, 2009; Pink, 2005; Senge,1990; Smith-Acuna, 2011; Studer, 2003;Wheatley, 2006; Youngblood, 1997). A conscious leadership practice acknowledges and embraces the quantum principles and systems orientation of organizations. Opportunities for expanded research can prove viable in creating meaning about how the influence of a quantum physics and systems perspective is critical to a conscious leadership perspective. Practitioners and educators have the capacity to observer these dynamic interworking in action as an effective leadership practice, thereby using this information to mediate a paradigm shift for change and transformation, and more improved workplace professional development.

Conscious leadership assists us in transforming our educational institutions to reflect our highest values, those that embrace interconnectivity, networking and sociocultural ways of being. Leaders who see the value in those naturally integrated and networked environments can build on it to create a cooperative and collaborative working environment that is solution driven from the use of collective action. However, Leaders must first begin to reorient how they think about leadership as a practice, which will require a paradigm shift. Leaders who are developed as conscious leaders demonstrate the acceptance of a paradigm shift in their daily leadership practices. All eight of the Leaders demonstrated this perspective by acknowledging they personally incorporated and supported a more interdependent, cooperative and collective leadership practice within their offices and departments. By acknowledging a systems orientation in their educational institutions, several of the Leaders were moving toward a conscious leadership practice. A conscious leadership practice works in collaboration with the emerging integrated and networked structures of postsecondary educational institutions and is supportive of social-relational ways of being. "There is a simpler way of organizing human endeavors" (Wheatley, 20007, p. 1). The participants who scored in the highest level of the CQ inventory indicated an agreement with this construct and appeared to optimize the value and power of creating harmony and balance within the workplace.

Development of a Conscious Leadership Framework

Prior to conducting this research, limited information existed about the potentiality of applying a conscious leadership framework to postsecondary educational practices. Additionally, little information was known about how current Leaders

practiced leadership, whether traditional or transformative, especially within educational institutions that have become increasingly interconnected and networked. From a researcher's perspective, it would be critical to gain additional insight into the application of a conscious leadership framework on a broader scale. The data analyzed offered evidence that elements of conscious leadership are currently being practiced by some postsecondary educational leaders. For example, Leader 1 described how he was purposeful and intentional in his efforts to connect with his employees. He stated,

> As an effective leader, you have to be able to build some kind of relationship with your people and that has to be not just work related. That has to be a little bit beyond work, where you're a human being. I am a human being and I recognize your humanness in some way, shape or fashion. (Leader 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012)

Leader 1 understood that having the ability to connect with his employees on a personal level was beneficial and assisted him in developing authentic cooperative and collaborative work relationships. This example is supportive of the elements of a conscious leadership framework. As described in Chapter One, a conscious leadership framework is grounded in sociocultural knowledge and reciprocity, shared leadership and humanness.

A conscious leadership model is inclusive of change and transformation and provides leaders with a flexible leadership framework, assisting them in leading in a different way. The application of conscious leadership practices suggests that when a crisis arises, conscious leaders begin by assessing the uncertainty and challenge. First, the Leaders examine the issue at hand, determine the facts, and identify the social construct

that may be guiding the uncertainty and challenge. Second, they began working with their employees to find a collective solution. During this development stage, collective activity is utilized to facilitate creative possibilities. This co-creation process stimulates the spiritual synergy of the organization and is tied to the organization's highest values, which incorporate an unseen spiritual ecology. Imagination and innovation is encouraged as leaders rely on the counsel of advisors to assist them in making an informed cooperative and collective decision. The potential of arriving at a collective decision ensures buy-in and ownership of all and supports large scale collaboration, learning and organizational change. Third, once a collective decision has emerged, the leader moves to implement, evaluate, and adapt, if needed.

As the solution is applied, Leaders are looking to make sure that the potential decision makes sense. If not, adjustments are made. Reinforcement of the conscious leadership practice works well within organizations where integration and interconnectivity has created social and institutional renewal for postsecondary educational organizations. A conscious leadership practice enables us to become attentive of naturally interconnected and networked ways of being. The implications for educators are to adequately prepare students to develop as responsible and conscious leaders. Thus, the curriculum must be inclusive of a leadership framework that cultivates leaders to become more thoughtful, purposeful and intentional in their leadership practice.

Educators and researchers have an opportunity to become framers and facilitate the process of developing more responsible and conscious leaders who are more self-aware, reflective, and have the capacity to create meaning and understanding during any challenge or situation. They can complete this task by adopting a conscious leadership

framework, as described in this research, to develop a conscious leadership curriculum. Working with practitioners and educators, researchers have the ability to observe a conscious leadership framework and publish the findings.

A conscious leadership framework is critical for leaders. Conscious leaders learn how to become reflective of their own actions and use collaboration and cooperation to effectively meet the goals and mission of their organizations. The ambiguities leaders are faced with today require that they develop a new level of self-awareness. Leaders will need to learn how to be creative, innovative and develop collaborative relationships, while creating conditions that empower and enable others to become responsible leaders at all levels within the organization; thereby, producing leaders who can engage their employees based on evaluating the behavioral patterns that are emerging within the organizational environments. Conscious leaders are critical thinkers and therefore they are not defined by a particular leadership style. The emphasis to conform to a particular leadership style is not as important in a conscious leadership practice; it is more critical that the leader becomes more aware and conscious and able to lead regardless of the situation. Becoming a conscious leader means that the leader is consistent and aware about who they are, and uses that information while they learn and lead. Moreover, they become more reflective as they make decisions about how their daily leadership practice unfolds; thereby, creating communities and models of effective leadership practices and a supportive team who can serve as mentors and model the behavior of a conscious leader.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research served as a pilot study for gaining insight into the practicality and relevance of applying a conscious leadership framework to postsecondary educational

environments. Three recommendations for future research are offered: (a)

investigating the deeper meaning of a conscious leadership practice; (b) conducting

research studies on a larger scale and across diverse environments; and (c) examining the

impact of conscious leadership practitioners as mentors and coaches.

Understanding Conscious Leadership as a Practice: A Deeper Meaning

Leadership development should unfold with an understanding that the context and

practice is a critical ingredient for effective leadership approaches. Delving into the

deeper meaning and impact of a conscious leadership practice is important. Thus,

expanding the study to observe conscious leadership practices over a longer period of

time would be a first step in securing additional information. Naturally occurring human

exchanges are evolving within organizations and the old hierarchical leadership practices

are no longer relevant. Leader 6 recognized this ineffective process within his educational

organization (personal communication, April 4, 2012). He shared that although his

educational institution promoted a shared governance approach, the reality resembled a

leadership practice of autocratic governance, which embraced the old traditional

leadership model of command and control (Leader 6, personal communication, April 4,

2012). The inability of a Leader to recognize a gap between the desired leadership needs

and the practice being applied is troubling, to say the least. Conscious leaders have the

ability to recognize the incongruence, and then adapt and change as they are guided by a

conscious leadership framework. Practitioners who embrace a conscious leadership

framework have developed a sense of self-mastery and awareness and can lead within

networked and integrating work environments.

Through practice, what is relevant is learned (Carroll et al., 2008). A practice orientation has been introduced as a way to make the leadership approach relevant and congruent. Carroll et al. (2008) suggested that a practice ontology, epistemology and methodology would offer a different way to analyze and create meaning for leadership practices. A conscious leadership practice can be classified as being practice oriented. An account of the epistemic practices confirms this assumption and revealed that the Leaders interviewed were incorporating responsible and conscious leadership qualities within their respective leadership methods. For example, when Leader 6 was asked to comment on what she believed is her core value, she responded by saying "potentiality" (personal communication, April 4, 2012). Conscious leaders understand the potentiality of all things and how all things are interconnected through that potentiality.

There is a lack of knowledge currently available that provides insight from the practitioner's perspective. Giving voice to Leaders who are incorporating conscious practices is imperative to understanding how these Leaders make sense of conscious leadership practices. By further investigating this phenomenon, researchers, educators and practitioners have an opportunity to learn more about these Leaders; that is, if they are aware of being and acting as conscious leaders and how they incorporate conscious leadership practices within diverse environments. Observing conscious leaders as they practice, and interviewing those who are impacted by a conscious leadership practice, is critical. Moreover, this type of information is significant for educators interested in developing a conscious leadership curriculum and professional training programs. This is especially important as educators work to create curriculum which aids in shifting the current leadership paradigm from traditional leadership practices to more transformative

leadership practices. A conscious leadership framework requires leaders to be flexible, adaptable, and think critically. Conscious leaders have the disposition and cognitive skills to lead within any situation, including complex change and chaos. Therefore, conscious leaders are more than just competent.

Conscious Leadership Practices across Diverse Environment

Anderson (2008) suggested that diversity and globalization is driving change within postsecondary educational environments. "The readiness of a college or university to confront its 21st century responsibilities is directly correlated with the degree to which it has embedded diversity and globalism concerns into the basic philosophy and infrastructure of the institutions" (p. 1). Examination of conscious leadership practices on a larger scale is needed, especially as it relates to pluralistic educational environments. Cleary, this research study supports the idea of further observations of conscious leadership practices. Leader 8 commented about working within a postsecondary educational institution that is increasingly diverse, both in its student and employee population (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Human beings are shaped and influenced by their respective ideologies, perspectives and worldviews. This is significant in light of the fact that these factors aid in the shaping of human consciousness and how one understands their respective realities. Therefore, it becomes critical to gain insight and knowledge into the process conscious leaders take, when applying a conscious leadership framework to diverse educational environments. Moreover, it would be instructive to understand how conscious leaders lead and unify all human capital, especially since they may all subscribe to a variety of worldviews and perspectives. Leader 7 shared that he generally tried to unify his employees by finding commonality

among everyone and treating everyone as equals (personal communication, April 5, 2012). "As we understand how living systems operate, we develop skills we need: we become resilient, adaptive, aware, and creative" (Wheatley, 2007, p. 1). Exploring the multi-dimensions of leadership practices within increasingly diverse and global focused environments can be useful in understanding how leaders practice as situations arise, and leaders learn how to move away from practicing leadership from a reactionary perspective. Conscious leaders understand how to get their employees within the organization to stop being reactionary to uncertainty and circumstances, embrace the uncertainty and become collective problem solvers. The collective action creates a harmonic balance and allows the creativity and innovation to approach complex problems. This process involves assessing the uncertainty as the problem arises, moving into collective action to share knowledge and ideas for potential solutions, then applying the solution and evaluating the effectiveness. This approach ensures buy-in and ownership and gives everyone purpose. All eight of the Leaders described actively incorporating cooperative and collective activity within the workplace to problem solve, thereby, promoting balance and harmony. Further examination of the actions of the Leaders and their staff on a larger scale would be extremely beneficial to adding to the leadership literature gap concerning leading within diverse, interconnected and transforming educational environments.

Impact of Conscious Leadership Coaching

Becoming responsible and conscious leaders requires a shift in the thinking concerning their leadership paradigm and an acknowledgement that self-mastery is significant. All of the Leaders described how they were aware of the fact that their

thoughts had an influence on their decision and actions. Moreover, each explained that it was critical to get clear in their thinking by removing emotions from the decision making process, which seemed to aid in reducing a reactionary response. The impact of having access to a conscious leadership coach or mentor could prove to be important, especially as it relates to obtaining increased knowledge about developing conscious leaders. Mentors and coaches would likely be beneficial in providing support to emerging communities of conscious leaders, and advocating for the adoption of a conscious leadership framework and practice. Increasing the knowledge about the impact of conscious leadership practitioners and training opportunities will require additional research. Exploration into the psychological and cognitive disposition of the leader should be observed and documented, as a way of understanding how to transmit insight and usefulness of a conscious leadership practice within emerging integrated and networked postsecondary educational environments.

Observing the leader on a daily basis in practice would accomplish this goal, and providing the leader with a conscious leadership coach would aid in learning about the impact and effects of conscious leadership practice in depth. Case study research in which observations of developing conscious leaders, within a systems oriented environment are captured would lend insight as to how they are mentored and coached. Intel from such a study would have the potential to demonstrate the value and relevance of a conscious leadership practice and note the effects of the coaching on developing conscious leaders. Exploring the ideal of multiple qualitative case studies would be instrumental in collecting data while discovering what it takes to support a conscious leadership practice.

Conclusion

The culture of leadership has historically been tied to hierarchical and authoritarian perspectives. Qualities such as purpose, meaningful work, personal growth, and reciprocity in relationships were not considered as relevant. However, educational environments are now finding that educational leaders need to become more purposeful, intentional, thoughtful, and responsible as leaders. Postsecondary leaders will not only need to be more aware in order to achieve these goals, they but will need to understand how to bring awareness, understanding, and order to their respective environments, which may be emerging as chaotic and rapidly changing (Wheatley, 2006; Youngblood, 1997; Zohar, 1994). Furthermore, they will need to know how to become better decision makers based on the recognition of all of their options.

Limitations to applying a conscious leadership framework will decrease as more research and practice offer more evidence as to its efficacy. Although definitions are beginning to emerge about conscious leadership, it is a relative new phenomenon. There are common descriptors about what conscious leadership is but each researcher or leadership scholar explains it slightly differently. Therefore, a standardized definition will need to be developed in an effort to create common understanding and meaning.

Already noted, is the fact that emerging societal trends such as a failing global economy, uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities, limited resources, political ineffectiveness, and shifting student demographics are influencing the operational ability of many colleges and universities across the nation (Anderson, 2008; Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Collin & Hansen, 2011; Penn & Zalesne, 2007), while at the same time, technological advances are allowing educational communities to emerge as more

interconnected and networked (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Li, 2010; Pink, 2005), which contributes to the complexity of being a leader within 21st century postsecondary educational institutions. Although complexity has become the norm, further in-depth examinations of postsecondary educational leadership practices will need to be made to understand the variety and multi-dimensions of current leadership practices.

A conscious leadership practice has an impact. The impact that a leader has on colleagues is positively influencing the ethos, efficiency and effectiveness of the work environment because of its systems orientation and quantum realities (Laszlo, 2008; Zohar, 1994). Conscious leaders are better at developing healthy authentic relationships with their employees and other leaders, especially as they are now more than ever able to work collaboratively and in partnership with other employees outside of their departments. Students who are training to become future leaders are impacted by a conscious leadership curriculum as they begin to shift their leadership paradigm and become more inclusive of different ideologies, worldviews and perspectives about leading in integrated and networked environments. Furthermore, students being trained under a conscious leadership framework learn how to become more self-aware, be critical thinkers, and control their thoughts and emotions as they create meaning while sharing in a collective leadership process. Conscious leaders are aware and knowledgeable, and have shifted their current paradigm or lens (framework), while holding social value in highest regard. A conscious leadership framework is better suited for a post-industrial age of being, because it is relational based and supports the changing and transformative workplace environment. The overall benefits from the implementation of a conscious leadership practices results in Leader-Practitioners who are thoughtful, intentional,

responsible and accountable and are purposeful. Moreover, a conscious leadership

practice becomes a value added benefit because it is inclusive and not exclusive as a

practice.

Conscious leaders are willing to approach and practice leadership in a diverse and

unique way. A conscious leadership practice is a sustainable leadership practice and can

assist in creating organizational practices where leaders embrace the chaos, and by

observing the patterns and the themes in the environment, create order through the use of

relational ways of being. Conscious leaders become responsible and create communities

of practice, which serve as viable models of practice for others to follow. Conscious

leaders use dialogical inquiry where strategic questions are posed to gather collective

insight in an effort to provide viable solutions to real-life challenges, all through

collective activity and sharing their leadership practice.

More emphasis needs to be placed on gathering living knowledge about

innovative leadership practices. Continued focus on developing only the standard

competencies of leaders will do very little to empower or prepare responsible and

conscious leaders. This study calls into light the need to focus on practice oriented

leadership frameworks and models, which expand on the intellectual capital already

documented concerning the topic of leadership (Allen & Cherry, 2000; Bolman & Gallos,

2011; Chopra, 2010; Church, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2007,

Lencioni, 2002; Li, 2010; Northouse, 2010; Schaetti et al., 2008; Senge, 1990).

The act of leading is relational and reciprocal, which is different from the

traditional behaviorist approach to leadership. Leaders who embrace the webs of human

interactions, which have emerged as networks within living systems, use collective

wisdom and resources already in place within their organizations and have learned

how to build communities of practice, that are flexible, authentic, and evolutionary.

Conscious leadership is not a leadership practice of obligation. It is a leadership practice

of thought and balanced spiritual ecology, not only for the leader but the organization and

employee as well. Conscious leaders have a sense of inner and outer well-being and exist

as a cultural democracy. It is and does require a complete paradigm shift, from the

traditional trait-based leadership model to a relational paradigm, where context is

important and cooperation and collaboration are the norm. "We can't expect success as

long as we stay wedded to our old approaches" (Wheatley, 2007, p. 3).

     The process of life is relational. The process of leadership is relational. A

conscious leadership framework can be a great strategy to improving overall leadership

congruence in leadership practice, but only if we are conscious, purposeful, and

intentional in our works. Conscious leadership is a renewal of indigenous knowledge and

embedded in the cultures of ancient humanity. A conscious leadership model can assist

with ushering in the social and institutional renewal that is needed. We have always been

social in our communication and actions; therefore, it only makes sense to practice a

leadership model that is inclusive, cooperative, and collective in nature. A conscious

leadership practice is just that, a practice. After all, practice leads to mastery.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

January 24, 2012

Dear Esteemed Leader,

My name is Valita Jones and I am a doctoral candidate in the San Diego State University Educational Leadership program with a concentration in Community College and Postsecondary Education. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study entitled *In Search of Conscious Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Postsecondary Educational Practices*.

The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership practices of current postsecondary educational leaders and identify those who may be practicing leadership that is intentional, purposeful, and responsible, within an increasingly integrated and networked educational environment. Information gathered from this investigation will be used to identify emerging and effective leadership practice for others to consider.

You have been identified as a potential participant for this study because you are considered a conscious leader, you are responsible and accountable in your leadership practice and you practice leadership within a postsecondary educational institution. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your experiences as a postsecondary educational leader during a one-one interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. Your interview will be audio-recorded for the purposes of data collection and analysis. You will also be asked to complete an online questionnaire about your conscious awareness. The online questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

You may experience some discomfort while disclosing your past and present leadership practices during the interview and answering questions about yourself during the online survey. Your interview will be audio taped, which may create some anxiety or discomfort for you. If you feel uncomfortable for any reason you may discontinue your participation either temporarily or permanently without any negative consequences.

You may not directly benefit from this study; however, the potential benefits of the study include the possibility to contribute to an emerging paradigm within its natural context that will describe and explain the interpersonal competencies of individual leaders, while depicting the leadership practices of a variety of postsecondary educational leaders.

The interview will be audio taped and transcribed for data analysis and writing reports of the findings of this study. To protect your confidentiality, the audio recording and transcript will be stored under password protection on the researcher's computer to prevent access by unauthorized personnel. Once the audio tape is transcribed it will be deleted after the study is complete. The transcript will be maintained under password protection on researcher's computer for up to three years after the end of the project.

A pseudonym will be used in any publications that result from this study and any other identifying information you provide will be coded to further protect your confidentiality. The code book for this study will be stored separately from the transcripts in a locked file cabinet with the researcher. Any identifiable information that is obtained from this study will remain confidential and your identity will be revealed only with your permission or as required by law.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to ask. You may contact me by phone at (619) 253-2606 or via email: valitajones@yahoo.com.
If you have additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact an IRB representative in the Division of Research Affairs at San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Valita Jones
Doctoral Candidate
San Diego State University
Educational Leadership Program

APPENDIX B

Consciousness Quotient Inventory

http://www.consciousness-quotient.com

62 item Likert Scale

(a) Totally disagree; (b) Disagree; (c) Partially Agree; (d) Moderately Agree; (e) Highly Agree; (f) Totally Agree

Personal Data	Physical CQ	Emotional CQ	Mental/Cognitive CQ	Spiritual CQ	Social CQ	Self CQ

1. Research Code

2. E-mail

3. Age

4. Sex

5. Weight

6. Height

7. Country

8. Education-The highest degree

9. Marital Status

10. Net personal income (monthly)

11. Social Grade

12. Do you do spiritual practices/ religious/ self-awareness/ personal development

    techniques frequency?

13. If yes, how often?

14. If yes, please offer us more details about the techniques?

Physical Consciousness

1. Generally I am conscious about the changes in my body/ organism

2. I quickly notice when there is a physiological change in my body (e.g. a scratch, stomach indispositions etc.)

3. I am generally aware of the moment when I get hungry or thirty

4. It is easy for me to describe my body and its physiological changes

5. I am quick to notice when my body requires me to eat or drink some specific food

6. It happens that I eat various snacks, but only realize this after a period of time

7. It happens that I break or split things because I am not paying attention, or I am thinking of something else

8. I am usually the first who reads a sudden event: when a telephone rings or someone suddenly asks a question

Emotional Consciousness

1. Generally I am conscious of my inner feelings and emotions

2. I am quick to notice when a change occurs in my emotions and feelings

3. I feel deeply involved when some very emotional scenes are on TV

4. It is easy for me to talk about my emotions and feelings and I frequently express them when talking to my close friends

5. Generally I know the difference between sexual attraction and emotional attraction

6. It happened often that I experience strong emotions but I am not aware of these until something later

7. Generally I am conscious of my feelings and emotions only when they become intense

8. I consider myself to be a sentimental person

9. I feel compassion when I see homeless person

10. When I am talking with someone, I can feel his/her emotional state

Mental (Cognitive) Consciousness

1. I am generally conscious of my thoughts and how they are changing

2. I am quick to notice when my thoughts, my mental vigilance changes

3. It is easy for me to ask about my thoughts and ideas, generally I easily express my thoughts

4. I know how my mind works when I solve a problem

5. I often find myself daydreaming with opened eyes

6. I am constantly examining my own ideas and perspectives about various things

7. It happens frequently to me that I lose awareness of what is happening around me when I am thinking of something important

8. I often have moments of insights, when all of a sudden my mind become clear and I see the solution

9. Generally I analyze a situation from a number of perspectives (what if this….what if that…)

Spiritual Consciousness

1. Generally I am conscious that I am a part of the Universe

2. I am quick to notice when my spiritual balance with nature/ universe suddenly changes

3. It is easy for me to talk about/ to express in words how I see God and what is the purpose of humankind

4. I often think about humankind and its destiny

5. Generally I am interested to find out what is my purpose in life

6. I enjoy every day as it is, without worrying to much about the future

7. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them

8. Generally I feel as if I've done all there is to do in life for my years

9. I often feel connected to the present moment, to here-now energy

10. I often experience moments of inner peace

11. I am able to smile when I realize sometimes how much I complicate simple things

12. I often think about how complex life is

13. Generally I am curious and open to exploring new experience, even if I do not like some or many of them that much

Social-Relational Consciousness

1. Generally I am aware of my effects my friends have upon me

2. I am quick to notice when some changes appear in my relationships with my friends or colleagues

3. It is easy for me to talk about my friends and my social connections

4. Generally I am curious what is happening with the person I am talking to (facial expressions, body positions etc.)

5. It is easy for me to maintain close relationships with my friends

6. I have experienced a number of warm and trusting relationships with others

7. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others

8. I am conscious of what I like and what I don't like about the people I interact with

9. I generally know what are the needs and wishes of my close friends

Self-Consciousness

1. I am generally conscious of my own self and my personality as a whole

2. I am quick to notice changes in my own attitudes toward myself

3. It is easy for me to talk openly about myself, even if I am with persons I do not know very well or I do not trust

4. I am constantly thinking about reasons for doing things

5. I often daydream about myself, about how I wish to be and how I would like to act

6. I often analyze my actions and attitudes

7. I always try to understand why I act in a specific way in specific circumstances

8. I sometimes try to look at myself from outside, asif I were an external observer, in order to analyze myself more clearly

9. I tend to let myself be influenced by people with strong opinions, and which I think have solid arguments

10. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are different from the way most people think

11. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the others' value, or by what others think is important

12. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world

13. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing and growth

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. Please describe the organizational structure of your office/ college.

2. What does a transformative organization look like to you?

3. Please describe to me what an integrated and networked work environment looks like?

4. Please describe to me how you work as an innovative and creative leader, especially when working collaboratively and/or in partnership with others.

5. How do you communicate with your employees?

6. How do you implement policies and procedures within your office/college?

7. Please describe what it means to be efficient?

8. Please describe what it means to be effective?

9. How do you connect with other human beings?

10. How do you handle an employee who becomes very emotional?

11. How do you feel after you make difficult decisions?

12. How do you manage your strengths or weaknesses?

13. How do you manage others strength and/or weaknesses?

14. What is the meaning of self-knowledge to you?

15. Do you believe it to be the basis of all knowledge and why?

16. How do you analyze or assess a new situation?

17. How do you react to new situations?

18. How do you learn?

19. What is your process for making-meaning of information?

20. Please describe the process that you go through to make decisions.

21. What is your approach to solving complex problems?

22. Please tell me how think your thoughts influence your actions and the decisions that you make?

23. What do you believe to be your purpose in life and how are you intentional in achieving your purpose?

24. How do you believe humans are connected to each other?

25. Please tell me about an experience when you acted off of intuition.

26. Please describe your communication style?

27. How do you connect with other human beings?

28. How do get others to work together?

29. Please describe how you share your leadership role with your employees.

30. How do you empower your employees?

31. What do you believe is your role as a leader?

32. What is you specific worldview or perspective on leadership?

33. Please describe to me how you are aware, responsible, and accountable as a leader.

34. Please tell me about your own belief and/or values system?

35. What kind of impact do you believe you have on your employees and staff as a leader?