AN EXPLORATION OF THE ACQUISITION OF SELF-MONITORING BEHAVIORS THROUGH SEXUAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND DISCLOSURE, AND THE APPLICATION OF THOSE BEHAVIORS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

There was a lack of qualitative research that sought to understand how gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals’ disclosure processes affect their success in organizational contexts. This basic qualitative study aimed to unearth common themes that exist between a person’s identity development process, and their ability to use self-monitoring skills in the workplace. Six gay, lesbian, or bisexual identifying leaders (in positions of authority with more than three people structurally beneath them) were chosen to participate in this study through criterion sampling. Each participated in an intake call, and one ~45-minute interview, during which they responded to open-ended questions that allowed for them to articulate their early childhood experiences, their leadership experiences, their sexual identity development and disclosure process, as well as their perceived usage of self-monitoring behaviors in the workplace. Study findings include broad themes of: (1) early leadership, (2) disclosure process development, (3) self-monitoring at work, and (4) career integration and synthesis of identity. The themes that were uncovered are relevant for managers and administrators, as well as theorists and researchers who seek to better understand identity development, identity management, and organizational dynamics. Findings also provided insight into the skill sets of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons in positions of leadership.

Keywords: self-monitoring behaviors, leadership, sexual identity development, GLB, disclosure.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

Research on organizational diversity has historically focused on visible identities such as race and ethnicity. Invisible social identities remain relatively underexplored, despite their known effects on workplace dynamics (Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005). Clair et al. (2005) suggest that invisible social identities tend to be intentionally disclosed when necessary or advantageous, on a situational basis. As Mehra, Kilduff and Brass (2001) suggest, persons who are in an ongoing decision-making process regarding disclosure tend to be at a social advantage in the workplace, in situations both related to and also unrelated to the disclosure of their identity. These cognitive-based actions are known as self-monitoring behaviors (Snyder, 1974). Mehra et al. (2001) assert that persons who exhibit a high level of self-monitoring – known to be the chameleons of the social world – seem to look like the prototypical person examined or featured in sociological research related to organizational dynamics and mobility. In other words, high self-monitors tend to adjust their social interactions to meet the demands of the particular circumstance, thereby presenting a more customized response and, perhaps, being better able to navigate organizational dynamics and structures. This research sought to expand the body of literature on self-monitoring behaviors by exploring a person’s ability to translate his or her skills from being sexual identity disclosure-specific to functionally advantageous, in general, within organizational contexts. Previous research has not explored the applications of the sexual identity and disclosure process.

Significance Statement
This research was significant because it examined three variables that had not yet been examined together. Self-monitoring behaviors are understood to be leadership traits, and persons who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual are known to be high self-monitors, but the connection between gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development and an application of those skills within a leadership context had not been explored. Examining how people translate their own sexual identity development into self-monitoring behaviors in the workplace seemed to be worthy of examination because there appeared to be an opportunity to broadly conceptualize what it means to reframe one’s minority status, and use it to one’s advantage. Exploring these topics also expanded the literature, and the collective understanding of how self-monitoring behaviors can impact career trajectory, upward mobility, and a person’s ability to navigate challenging workplace dynamics.

Research Question

The question that guided this research was: “Do gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons develop self-monitoring skills through their identity disclosure processes that can be applied advantageously in other organizational settings?”

Positionality Statement

In all research, it is important for the researcher to critically examine and acknowledge his or her personal biases related to a topic. It is equally important to enter into research without the expectation of a particular result.

In this basic qualitative study, the researcher sought to understand the lived experiences of gay, lesbian, or bisexual leaders, and how they have come to understand their own development, both personally and professionally. While the research question was
developed through the process of personal reflection, and the results could be both personally and professionally useful, it was important that the researcher remember that her own personal experiences might not be universal, and that all participants might not uniformly associate their leadership development with their sexual identity development.

While the researcher does not use her own sexual identity as a primary descriptor of her identity, she does identify with the community under study. The researcher certainly advocates for equitable treatment for all persons, but does not engage extensively with the community, particularly where advocacy is concerned. The researcher primarily defines herself by her work, her avocation, and her relationships with others. Because her sexual identity is not a primary way that the researcher defines her self, she has rarely experienced any negativity surrounding her identity. Her experience as a Southern member of the community was not as ostracizing as it could be or has been for others. The researcher also identifies as a White, middle-class, Southern cisgender woman, which situates her in a position of privilege, and in a group of people who have traditionally not understood the lived experiences of marginalized groups. As a result, it was the role of the researcher to acknowledge her various identities, and willingly seek to understand identities that are different than her own.

The researcher also approached this research, acknowledging her natural preference for persons who are able to self-monitor. As a person born into a family of advertising executives, the researcher has a heightened awareness of messages that are customized to a particular audience, and believes that tailored messages are the best, most engaging way to ensure a team or audience receives a message clearly. It was important for the researcher to understand that participants in the study would have varying levels of success in self-
monitoring, and attribute their successes in this area as they see fit. It was equally important for the researcher to not utilize guiding questions, and instead allow the participants to respond organically and draw their own conclusions.

**Theoretical Framework**

This research was guided by Pachankis’ Cognitive-Affective-Behavioral (CAB) model (Pachankis, 2007). Pachankis (2007) offers the CAB model as one way to explain motivation of human behavior. This model attempts to predict the cycle that one would likely encounter as he or she concealed a stigmatized identity. Importantly, “the influence of concealing a stigma extends beyond the influence of global personality traits” (Pachankis, 2007). Essentially, the process of withholding information about one’s identity has consequences for a person’s overall personality and expression. Through both cognition and affect, behavior is shown to be changed by identity non-disclosure.

The CAB model was a particularly appropriate choice for a guiding framework in this research because the model was created to help users to better understand the ramifications and implications of concealing a stigma. Figure 1.1 below contains a visual representation of Pachankis’ CAB model. This study’s research question sought information from all three realms. Background questions allowed the researcher to understand a person’s levels of preoccupation and vigilance with regard to his or her identity disclosure process (cognitive). Questions about self-monitoring behaviors and career progression allowed the researcher to understand the degree to which a participant is managing his or her impressions and taking in feedback from their environment (behavioral). Finally, questions about each participant’s
disclosure process allowed the researcher to explore the feelings of anxiety, shame, and hostility that participants might feel as they navigate the disclosure process (affective).

**Figure 1.1**

*Pachankis’ Cognitive-Affective-Behavioral Model*
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Self-monitoring behaviors are a set of skills that one employs to adapt to situational needs (Snyder, 1974, 1987). This literature review explored sexual identity development as well as self-monitoring behaviors, and then attempted to unearth connection points between the two topics. It was the primary goal of this literature review to better understand self-monitoring behaviors as a set of advantageous leadership skills, and also to understand gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development and the possibly associated cultivation of self-monitoring skills.

Early work on self-monitoring behaviors focused on general self-regulation. According to Bandura (1991), self-regulation mediates the effects of most external influences, allowing the individual to be in control of his or her role within a particular situation. According to Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass (2001), these regulatory behaviors are concerned with the construction of a “public self.” When one considers the works of Bandura (1991) and Mehra et al. (2001) in tandem, it is possible to see that there are both internal and external components to self-monitoring; a person is able to construct oneself while simultaneously being able to have influence over his or her environments. However, not all people are equally equipped with the ability to self-monitor. As Snyder (1974) stated, there are “striking individual differences in the extent to which individuals can and do monitor their self-presentation, expressive behavior, and nonverbal affective display” (pp. 526-527).

This literature review considered gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity development as one possible way for a person to develop self-monitoring skills. Literature on sexual identity
development, and literature on self-monitoring skills, was fairly exhaustive. However, research exploring sexual identity’s connection with the development of self-monitoring behaviors was limited, and it seemed that a connection might exist. This literature review strived to bring together literature on both of these topics, providing an opportunity to see connections among sexual identity development, self-monitoring behaviors, and career progression.

In addition to exploring and possibly better understanding the literature that already existed, this literature review sought to uncover gaps in the literature, which could serve as starting points for future research projects. While much research has been conducted to understand the lived experiences of gay, lesbian, or bisexual persons, there is only a small amount of information in the literature about the potentially positive traits one might acquire through the process of identity disclosure. This literature review attempted to explore these possibilities.

**Sexual Identity Development and Disclosure**

Scholarship on organizational diversity has historically focused on visible identities. Invisible identities are more challenging to identify and are, perhaps, as a result relatively underexplored. However, invisible identities seem to play a pivotal role in forming and altering workplace dynamics (Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005). Studies have suggested that experiences differ in the workplace for individuals with invisible identities, versus those that do not (Clair et al., 2005). Clair et al. (2005) suggested that employees experience their environments differently if they have not disclosed a part of their identity that they perceive as important. One invisible categorization is a person’s sexual identity. And, at present, this invisible identifier remains institutionally stigmatized and unprotected by law. While legally
sexual identity is unprotected, the world is becoming increasingly engaged in conversation on the topic. As Strauss and Connerley (2003) suggested, the increasingly global world requires us to better understand our employees’ differences, and the interconnected systems in which we work. As such, the leadership of an organization might take responsibility for understanding the many visible and invisible identifiers that are coming together in their organizational context, and work to navigate their synergy productively.

While some people choose to not disclose their sexual identity in all situations, a growing number of people feel it important to disclose. The process by which a person discloses his or her sexual identity is a decision-making process that happens on an ongoing basis; as a person meets someone new or is put in a new situation, they decide when and whether to disclose. Ward and Winstanley (2005) argued that it is entirely possible for a person to be living openly, but still opt in certain situations to not disclose his or her sexual identity. Ward and Winstanley (2005) shared that a person’s choice to not disclose in a particular situation is not problematic, since disclosure and identity formation are separate processes. Ward and Winstanley (2005) further asserted that disclosure could be important, but that identity formation is critical for the development of a healthy self-esteem. The choice to disclose or not is one that depends on a variety of factors, including potential discrimination and retaliation, and may or may not be important to a person’s ability to perform to his or her full potential on the job. In contrast, social identity theory would suggest that identity congruence is important, and that a person would have to be developmentally advanced enough to understand the difference between knowing oneself and the ability (or inability) to share this information (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).
There are many reasons that a person might choose not to disclose their sexual identity. Perceived or possible hostility is often reason enough for people to choose to not disclose. In contrast to other, visible identities (race, ethnicity, certain ability statuses, etc.), sexual identity is not visibly known (though speculation is common), and therefore allows for the choice of disclosure (King, Reilly, & Hebl, 2008). King et al. (2008) suggested that while disclosure is known to alleviate some of the psychological strain associated with hiding one’s identity, there is also great risk in intentionally associating oneself with a stigmatized group. The choice to disclose or not is one in which a person has to understand the sociopolitical landscape of the organization, and weigh that against his or her own desire to live authentically. As more organizations adopt inclusive, comprehensive nondiscrimination statements, however, employees may feel an increased sense of protection and comfort in choosing to disclose. In terms of productivity, retention, and contentment in the workplace, it would seem that the ability to disclose freely would be important, and a consideration for managers and leadership (Day & Schoenrade, 1997).

**Understanding Self-monitoring Behaviors**

To understand self-monitoring behaviors in the workplace, and possible connections to gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity formation, it was first important to explore the theoretical understandings and literature surrounding the topic. Higgins (1987), in his theory of regulating self and affect, argued that discrepancies can and do exist between cognition and affect, and that the choices that are made to create non-congruence are often related to perceived discomforts that people are likely to experience. Higgins went on to suggest that self-discrepancy is more than simply dissonance of belief, because there is an emotional component. Higgins (1987) offered more than earlier theorists on personality non-
congruence by considering the emotional discomfort that may be associated with belief incompatibility.

Wood and Bandura (1989) enhanced the foundational literature on self-monitoring behaviors by analyzing organizational functioning from a social cognitive perspective. Specifically, Wood and Bandura (1989) found that a cycle exists between a manager’s self-schema and his or her understanding of their own efficacy. A manager’s own self-perceptions, over time, allowed them to better understand their own success. Bandura (1991) furthered the conversation by discussing that human behavior is not only motivated by, but also regulated by, the ongoing exercise of self-influence. In addition to understanding motivation, Bandura offers some of the literature’s first substantive data on self-monitoring. According to Bandura (1991), self-monitoring is relative to one’s behavior, its determinants, as well as its effects. Essentially, self-monitoring is the “judgment of one’s behavior in relation to personal standards and environmental circumstances… and affective self-reaction” (Bandura, 1991).

The developing theoretical ideas presented by Higgins (1987), Higgins and Wood (1989), and Bandura (1991) pointed toward the study of planned behavior, and the need to study who a person is in addition to how a person is in a given situation. That is, early work on self-monitoring seemed to begin with the acknowledgment that who a person is, and how a person is, could differ contextually. Ajzen (1991) discussed the theory of planned behavior, which is the idea that we can understand and predict behaviors through sets of norms, and behavioral controls. It is as important to understand that behavior is calculated, as it is to understand how one might predict the behaviors. Acknowledging the duality of planned behavior is helpful insofar as we recognize the reasons one might act as a
“chameleon” in the work place. Some employees may approach work in this way because of their environment, whereas some employees may approach work in this way because of hidden identities, or unspoken personal dynamics.

Ryan and Deci (2000) discussed self-determination theory and the facilitation of motivation, development, and well-being. The authors explained self-determination theory in such a way that they allowed the reader to understand that which is not in their control, and then move into a discussion about how to facilitate motivation, which is within their control. Ryan & Deci (2000) made it clear that there are people who are authentically motivated, and also those for whom motivation is externally controlled. Neither is categorically better than the other, but employees in both circumstances should likely be approached differently. Managers who seek to understand true workplace dynamics, to the extent that that is possible, might benefit from entering into their learning with a knowledge of self-monitoring behaviors – what they are, where they come from, and how they impact the work environment.

Self-monitoring Behaviors in the Workplace

Self-monitoring behaviors are understood both biologically as well as socially. When considering ways to improve upon one’s ability to self-monitor, it is important to consider that some people are naturally more inclined to self-monitor (Beer, John, Scabini & Knight, 2006). Beer et al. (2006) discussed that the brain’s orbitofrontal cortex is associated with interpersonal interaction and social emotions, which are linked closely with self-monitoring behaviors. However, beyond the biological underpinnings of self-monitoring behaviors is
the conversation surrounding a person’s ability (or not) to learn these advantageous leadership skills that are functional for emerging leaders and managers.

Nelson and Hayes (1981) studied the idea of reactivity, in which a person would be recorded in the performance of a particular action, and would then watch the recording, and re-perform the action. Nelson & Hayes’ work showed that self-monitoring procedures at the response of a cue – in this case, the observation of a past performance and being given the opportunity to try again – allowed recorded persons to become more self-aware, and to make adjustments (Nelson & Hayes, 1981). In addition, Nelson and Hayes (1981) explored the role of external monitoring, and found that if an external observer was present during the performance, that a reactive effect would exist, akin to self-monitoring behaviors. The authors concluded that environmental factors, such as social and power dynamics, both can serve as a catalyst for, and can also implicate, changes in behavior (Nelson & Hayes, 1981).

DiGangi, Maag and Rutherford (1991) expanded upon the work of Nelson et al. (1981) and applied the knowledge gained to an exploration of academic performance. DiGangi et al. (1991) employed self-graphing procedures with two students with learning disabilities. Both students, using a self-monitoring technique, improved their academic performance significantly. The findings of DiGangi et al. (1991) suggested that self-monitoring can serve as an effective intervention tool, and can aid students in focus, and their ability to remain on-level with their peers.

In addition to their use as an effective intervention mechanism, self-monitoring behaviors can also be helpful in mitigating conflict. According to Baron (1989), high self-monitors had an overall lower level of conflict in organizational environments, when
compared against their lower self-monitoring counterparts. It is important to also note that high self-monitors tend to be drawn to boundary-spanning positions – in which reporting lines are less clear, and more responsibility is shared – which tend to be more conflict laden and / or role-conflict laden (Mehra & Schenkel, 2008). This finding suggests that high self-monitors are possibly better able in handling positions or work that involve less clarity, and possibly more conflict. Managers and leaders – whether naturally proficient in self-monitoring or not – need to be able to handle conflict, so it is important to consider a leader or manager’s natural tendencies and individual leadership characteristics when working to create comprehensive, applicable models for assessing and intervening in situations of organizational conflict (Baron, 1989).

One of the individual characteristics mentioned by Baron (1989) was role assumption, as it relates to power dynamics, which is the idea that a person assumes a role and becomes that position. Role assumption can be important when considering group dynamics, as a person defines (or re-defines) himself or herself to meet the needs of the position. Certainly, structural placement within an organization is important. Ibarra and Andrews (1993) explored a person’s network centrality – the role and a rank a person occupies, and their connectedness with their colleagues, and persons of power – and the employee’s perceptions. Ibarra et al. (1993) found that informal networks of interaction have a fairly significant impact on perceptions, meaning the people with whom you associate can impact perceptions of your role. This finding suggests that self-monitoring can be a mutually beneficial process; self-monitoring (by knowing which situations or groups to involve oneself in) can help a person rise to a higher network position, and can also help to pave the way to a chosen perception among colleagues.
Managing colleague perceptions, and the more general idea of impression management, are critical components of self-monitoring. According to Caldwell and O’Reilly (1982) and Schwalbe (1991), high self-monitors are often engaging in impression management, particularly in situations of “high stakes” or perceived or assumed failure. The authors suggested that people who are especially conscious of social cues and power dynamics may also be more likely to manage and deliver messages in ways that are customized to their audiences. This echoes what is known about high self-monitors, and leaders of organizations who are concerned with the crafting of targeted messages per constituency (Caldwell et al., 1982); it is often how a message is delivered, and not the message itself, that affects the perceptions of both the person as well as the message.

Research on leadership indicated that certain social skills more greatly enhance the success of leaders than others. For example, according to Baron and Markman (2000), social skills play a role in the success of entrepreneurs. Social skills, defined by Baron et al. (2000) as “specific competencies that help them interact effectively with others,” are known to greatly influence the quality and effectiveness of social interactions. The authors described particular social skills as being advantageous, such as “the ability to read others accurately…[and to] adapt to a wide range of social situations” (Baron & Markman, 2000). The link between entrepreneurial success and self-monitoring behaviors (here defined as “social skills”) is made by Baron et al., and is noted as important because social skills are known to be advantageous. Baron et al. also acknowledged that these skills can be enhanced through trainings and, thus, entrepreneurs (or leaders) can be the authors of their own growth and purposeful development.
Until the 1990s, self-monitoring behaviors in the workplace had not been a focus of research. It was understood that high self-monitors tended to rise to positions of leadership, but very little research had empirically examined this phenomenon. Cronshaw and Ellis (1991) advanced the literature on self-monitoring behaviors as a leadership skill by conducting experiments that demonstrated the value of the theory on self-monitoring, and by enhancing the understanding of how a person emerges as a leader within a group. According to Snyder (1987), high self-monitors emerged as leaders in groups because “they are sensitive to, and act on, social cues regarding appropriate leader style, whereas low self-monitors emerge as leaders as a function of favorable attitudes toward leadership.”

**Linking Sexual Identity Development with Self-monitoring Behaviors in the Workplace**

Clair et al. (2005) examined self-monitoring behaviors through the lens of managing invisible social identities. The research focused on persons with chronic illness, and those who identify with racial and ethnic minority groups. Clair et al. (2005) discussed sexual identity, but not extensively. Instead, Clair et al. (2005) emphasized the importance of future research delving more deeply into this topic, as it relates to one’s social identity management. Clair et al. (2005) discussed how, in particular, information management is a central issue for individuals with invisible social identities. The work also stated that there is an ongoing dissonance between an individual’s desire to not face social stigma, and to exist in an authentic way in all realms of life. While Clair et al. (2005) described their work as examining the management of a person’s social identity; in different terminology their work highlighted self-monitoring behaviors, and a person’s ability or choice to disclose hidden identifiers.
According to Mehra et al. (2001), there are three models that help to frame the conversation on self-monitoring: the Mediation model, the Interaction model, and the Additive model. The most relevant model for the current paper was to be the Additive model, which asserts that there are a number of predictors of success in the workplace, but that they operate independently of other variables. This model seemed most appropriate when examining sexual identity and self-monitoring behaviors, together, as a result of the complexity and “additive” nature of the variables. That is, because people have the opportunity to decide about their disclosures, sexual identity could be seen as additive information. However, Mehra et al. (2001) did not understate the importance of this information, in particular because they linked high levels of self-monitoring with higher performance at work. Mehra et al. (2001) asserted that there is a direct correlation between an individual’s self-monitoring score and higher performance at work. This assertion suggests that there is a positive relationship between high levels of self-monitoring, and an ability to add additional situational variables without problem. Of particular importance is the idea that Mehra et al. (2001) presented in the discussion section:

The theory and results we present in this article suggest that high self-monitors, the chameleons of the social world, resemble the prototypical person featured in sociological research on social networks. In sociological research, individuals tend to take on the attributes and ideas of their associates rather than relying on their own inner beliefs and values. According to sociologists, people strive to occupy central positions in social networks in order to advance their careers (p. 141).
This quote suggests that persons who are known as high self-monitors may morph and adapt to their situation, which could ultimately provide career advantage, and possible upward mobility.

When considering the disclosure of one’s sexual identity, there is not always a perceived advantage associated with disclosure, beyond increased feelings of authenticity for the individual. However, this should not imply that disclosure is exclusively negative. Ward and Winstanley (2005) argued that there are three main reasons a person decides to disclose: honesty and integrity, significant known benefits in building open relationships at the professional level, and an ability to educate colleagues on sexual minorities to create broader social awareness and sensitivity. Another reason that a person might or might not choose to disclose is the social commitment of sharing this information in the workplace; Valentine and Skelton (2003) asserted that the social commitment factor influences a person’s decision to disclose or not, particularly in the workplace such that, once a person is known to be ‘out,’ that person cannot retract this identity.

Despite the outlined reasons one might choose to disclose at work, Ward et al. (2005) discussed the concerns surrounding disclosure. Much of what the authors suggested about disclosure is in relation to a person’s identity formation through interaction and socialization with others; the more a person is integrated with co-workers, the more likely it is that that person would choose to disclose (except in cases where the employee learned of a hostile and unreceptive work culture). It seems intuitive, yet important to articulate, that being a part of a minority group – visible or invisible – creates an added dimension of stress for employees (Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black, & Burkholder, 2003). It seems particularly imperative for
managers to understand what their employees may be experiencing in their work environments; the pressure of deciding whether or not to disclose is likely amplified by the risk associated with disclosing and then, potentially, facing ramifications that are tied to financial stability. On the other hand, a lack of authenticity at work could create the unnecessary stress that often leads to poor (or distracted) performance.

Ward et al. (2005) advanced the conversation on the disclosure of one’s sexual identity by offering that disclosure is a performative act where, in speaking the words, a person is performing the action. This seems to be a level of congruence that a person might seek, but that could potentially be at odds with promotion, amicability among colleagues, etc. Ward et al. (2005) added to the conversation by discussing the repetitive, iterative process of ‘coming out,’ which is an important consideration. Past disclosures and past reception influence the degree to which a person might self-monitor in the present. Because a person does not disclose his or her sexual identity only once, there is an ongoing process of reading situations and persons to determine the safety, costs, and benefits of disclosure. It is important to remember that a person (if they so choose) has to disclose his or her sexual identity not once, but many times. And, with structural shifts or leadership changes, there are new persons to whom one might have to disclose. Changes in leadership could possibly create another layer of stress for employees with invisible identities.

It was apparent in reviewing the literature that minority status (invisible and visible) creates additional stress in the workplace (Bowleg et al., 2003). Because this additional stress exists, but is not always articulated, it seems viable that managers could misinterpret and improperly analyze poor performance. Moving beyond performance, Madera (2010) provided a
solid foundation for understanding the effects of hiding one’s sexual identity in the workplace by asserting that, “LGB employees might engage in regulating their verbal and nonverbal behaviors that they believe can reveal their sexual identity.” It seems critical to understand this connection, as it seems likely that gay, lesbian, or bisexual employees might engage in a greater level of self-monitoring behaviors, which could be both advantageous as well as disadvantageous with regard to organizational culture and success.

Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass (2001) further explained the factors that might influence work performance, and discussed work networks, and an employee’s structural position within an organization. It is interesting to consider the self-monitoring behaviors of employees at various levels: are higher-level employees less or more concerned with concealing their sexual identity? Is it possible that it is easier to disclose at lower levels, or easier to disclose when first hired as opposed to after a lengthy period of tenure with an organization? Mehra et al. (2001) also asserted that “research on structural position has emphasized the importance of being in the right place, but has neglected both the possibility that the network positions occupied by individuals might be influenced by their psychology, and the possibility that personality and social network position might combine to influence important outcomes such as work performance” (p. 142). This statement indicates that there is, perhaps, a difference in the degree to which one self-monitors and his or her social network position within an organization. Acknowledging the possibility for these differences could have important implications for supervisors at varying levels.

Disclosure of sexual identity has not previously been linked directly to self-monitoring behaviors in the literature. However, it does seem possible that a link would
exist, as the two processes have similar components of identity management and vigilance. A person who has chosen to not disclose their sexual identity would likely have a greater tendency to, and perhaps a stronger motivation to, self-monitor. As Mehra et al. (2001) suggested, a high self-monitor might ask, “Who does this situation want me to be and how can I be that person?” It seems possible that this question would be in the mind of a person who is trying to decide whether or not to disclose his or her sexual identity in a given situation. The ability to choose disclosure or not is impacted greatly by a person’s ability to read situations and understand when it is safe to be fully his or herself. It is important to remember that invisible identities do not only exist when a person discloses. Rather, the invisible identities are always existent, and managers should operate with the awareness that they cannot see and know all.

Clair et al. (2005) suggested that invisible social identities – such as a person’s identity as a sexual minority – tend to be hidden and then disclosed at times when it seems necessary, or even advantageous. As Mehra, Kilduff and Brass (2001) suggested, persons who constantly find themselves considering whether or not to disclose their identity tend to be at a social advantage in the workplace. Because these persons spend additional time considering their audience, and the perceptions that might exist in each situation, they may be better equipped to mobilize their skills in self-monitoring in all situations.

The purpose of this literature review was to further examine the connection between sexual identity disclosure and self-monitoring behaviors, and better understand the implications of this possible connection in relation to leader emergence. After reviewing the literature in the areas of self-monitoring behaviors, as well as on sexual identity development, it seemed that a connection could exist. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons – falling into one of many invisible
demographic categorizations – do appear to have developed a set of skills through their
disclosure processes that could be classified as self-monitoring skills. Self-monitoring skills are
known to be an advantageous set of skills to have as a leader within an organization. This
research examined the acquisition of this set of skills, and also the application of these skills in
other organizational contexts.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This research sought to better understand the cultivation and application of self-monitoring behaviors in various contexts. This research explored the lived experiences of persons who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and sought to uncover any connection between identity development and the use of self-monitoring skills. The following research question guided the study:

“Do gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons develop self-monitoring skills through their identity disclosure processes that can be applied advantageously in other organizational settings?”

This research question seems to fit within the interpretive constructionist paradigm. The interpretive constructionist paradigm explores how individuals experience and interpret their world, and how they make meaning and define reality (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Because this research was reflective in nature, this paradigm seemed appropriate for understanding individual reflection. Research on this topic sought to understand how a person attributes the cultivation of their self-monitoring skills, and therefore fit comfortably in the interpretive constructionist paradigm.

Research Approach

This research was conducted as a basic qualitative study. As is true for most basic qualitative studies, interviews were conducted to seek understanding about a particular topic. The researcher recorded the conversations and used the interview transcripts to uncover themes and relevant quotes. These quotes and themes were used as accounts and perspectives on the lived realities of the interview participants (Creswell, 2007). A basic study was chosen because
that particular methodology allows a researcher to examine lived realities, and to produce results that could be immediately useful to the participants. The projected outcome of this basic study was that information gathered from participant interviews would be able to connect directly back into Pachankis’ CAB model (Pachankis, 2007).

Interview questions were constructed to seek information about each participant’s lived experience, as well as the meaning he or she ascribed to his or her experiences. Additionally, participants were asked to consider their skill sets out of context, and applied to new contexts. Questions were open-ended, allowing participants to draw their own connections and conclusions between the variables being examined.

**Participants**

This research engaged persons who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, who may or may not be out in all situations, but are out to at least one person. Participants also were required to be in a leadership role of some type. Leadership roles, for the purposes of this research, were defined as roles in which a person is at a level with more than 3 direct reports (likely a Director position or higher).

Every attempt was made to locate participants that were as categorically diverse as possible, by way of educational experience, geographical origin, and age. As Creswell (2007) noted, his preference was to employ “maximum variation” to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented. Therefore, the researcher attempted to locate participants who could possibly attribute their self-monitoring skills to various aspects of their development and circumstance, and not exclusively their identity disclosure process.
A group of six participants from a variety of career levels and occupations were chosen from across the United States. Despite attempts to more fully diversify the applicant pool, only one individual who responded to the Call for Participants (Appendix B) identified as black/African American. All other participants identified as white/Caucasian. The participants were split evenly by gender with three male and three female participants.

It is important to acknowledge that this study intentionally chose to focus on gay, lesbian, and bisexual identifying persons and not transgender participants. While future research might involve transgender participants, the current research focused on the lived experiences of individuals who have had to disclose a singular identity – their sexual identity (and not in addition to their gender identity).

**Recruitment and Access**

Participants were recruited by way of a ‘Call for Participants’ (CfP) using electronic listservs. The gay, lesbian, or bisexual population is not visibly identifiable, so the researcher relied on gay, lesbian, or bisexual community-specific list-servs to identify possible participants. The CfP provided a brief overview of the study, including the specific criteria being used for participant selection. Interested persons were asked to call the researcher for additional information. During the brief intake call (which was not recorded) the researcher asked criteria-based questions, and took notes by hand. Once the researcher had sufficient information to determine a participant’s qualification for the study, the researcher informed the potential participant that they met the criteria for the study, and began detailing the requirements and process for moving forward.
The researcher utilized snowball sampling (Creswell, 2007) by asking if the individual knew of any other qualified potential participants. Snowball sampling was used to ensure the researcher had an adequate participant pool, and to ensure that persons who would not self select to be a part of gay, lesbian, or bisexual community list-servs were not unable to participate. Three of the study’s participants were confirmed to be a part of this study as a result of snowball sampling.

Informed Consent

The researcher was responsible for informing all participants of the research process. Each participant was sent an unsigned Consent to Participate in Research form (Appendix E) via email after a successful intake call. Each participant was asked to read over the form before the formal interview call. At the start of each formal interview call, the researcher read over the consent form, and asked for verbal agreement from the participant (which was recorded). After consent was given, the researcher continued with the interview protocol.

Ethical Considerations

Any research that includes participants who are a part of a minority group needs to be conducted in a way that is mindful of both ethics and participant comfort. The Consent to Participate in Research form addressed discomfort, specifically, by stating, “If you feel uncomfortable replying to any of the questions that are asked, you are free to decline from answering. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.”

Beyond the consent form, there were additional ethical considerations. The researcher did everything possible to maintain participant confidentiality by using pseudonyms as well as
password-protected files. The researcher also worked to build trust and rapport in the intake call with regard to how information would be collected, analyzed, and utilized.

Data Collection

Prior to the formal interview call, but after the intake call, participants were sent a copy of Lennox and Wolfe’s (1984) Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Appendix F). Participants were asked to complete the scale and return it via email before their scheduled formal interview time. This information was used as a reference to see real versus perceived levels of self-monitoring in each participant. According to Lennox and Wolfe (1984), this scale measures the extent to which a person consciously employs impression management strategies in the context of social interactions. This scale provided useful, supplemental information, and encouraged participants to think about this particular skill set in advance of their scheduled interview.

Participants were formally interviewed on the phone. The interviews varied in length, but took approximately 45 minutes to complete. Interview questions progressed linearly to encourage participants to think about their own development. Questions were centered on the perceived connectivity between self-monitoring behaviors, gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development, and leadership development. These questions were open ended. The researcher conducted the research, exclusively. The researcher employed the recording capabilities of an iPhone (using the application TapeACall), as well as a desktop computer (using the program GarageBand) to ensure data was captured accurately and reliably.

Because this research hoped to better understand the implications of the disclosure that happens in the context of sexual identity development, it was important and appropriate to choose a methodology that allowed participants to draw connections and answer questions
freely. By carefully crafting broad questions, participants were able to see connections between the three variables under examination.

**Data Storage**

Each research participant was assigned a pseudonym. The list of names and pseudonyms were kept in a secure drawer in the researcher’s office. Interviews took place on an iPhone that was password protected. Once an interview had been transcribed, the digital recording of that interview was erased. Tangible copies of interview transcripts were stored in a secure drawer in the researcher’s office. No one other than the researcher had access to the secure drawer. Electronic copies of each transcript are stored on the researcher’s personal computer, at her home. The personal computer is password protected, and exclusively accessible to the researcher. Physical copies of transcripts were destroyed once this dissertation was accepted by Northeastern University.

The protocol by which all data was collected and stored is presented in the appendices.

**Data Analysis**

After interviews were transcribed, they were coded and analyzed by utilizing the qualitative data analysis software program, *Nvivo*. A thematic analysis (Moustakas, 1994) was utilized, identifying recurrent themes and patterns, as well as word frequencies.

While this was not a phenomenological study, Moustakas’ (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method of analysis of phenomenological data provided a good model for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data, and was partially employed in this study. The steps utilized from this process are listed below:
1. Listing and preliminary grouping (horizontalization)
2. Reduction and elimination
3. Clustering
4. Constructing a description of themes and personal experiences

At the completion of the first three organizational steps, the researcher constructed a description of themes and personal experiences using narrative inquiry. The anecdotal material provided the researcher with 6 narrative accounts that were analyzed and compared using Labov’s thematic organization method (Labov, 1972). This method is considered useful for “understanding major events in the narrative and the effects those events have on the individual constructing the narrative” (Labov, 1972). Since this research was framed by the CAB model which explores not only a person’s story, but the framework for the person’s story, Labov’s method seemed particularly helpful as the researcher evaluated what each participant’s story was about, what the complications were, what the results were, and how each participant was living his or her story today.

**Trustworthiness**

The following steps were taken to ensure researcher trustworthiness, and to solidify the merit and integrity of the research findings:

**Clarifying researcher bias:** The researcher’s positionality and identity were disclosed to research participants at the beginning of the research, during the interviews, and as a part of the final communications that took place, to be certain any assumptions would be expressed and acknowledged up front. Additionally, the researcher made use of *bracketing* and *epoche*, which
are the words that capture the task of sorting out the experiences and qualities that belong to the researcher’s own experience (Drew, 2004).

**Member checks:** Member checking involves taking data back to the participants for review and verification. In this research, participants were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts prior to data analysis. Individual transcripts were emailed directly to each participant at their preferred email address within one week of their formal interview, and participants were encouraged to provide any insights and feedback with regard to validity. All participants were empowered to request alterations, which enhanced the trustworthiness of the research. All participants responded, and only a few participants had feedback to offer (generally, minor grammatical or phrasing edits).

**Additional Considerations to Ensure the Protection of Human Subjects**

Before any data were collected, a detailed Doctoral Thesis Proposal (DTP) and an Application for Approval for Use of Human Participation in Research was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northeastern University. Approval granted by the IRB indicates adherence to research standards and ethics and the protection of human subjects in research. Research involving human subjects did not take place for this study until after IRB approval had been granted.

In an effort to mitigate feelings of vulnerability and attrition in participation, this research included the following measures and precautions:

- Participants opting to be interviewed were given the choice to be interviewed in person (where possible, geographically), via Skype (or other electronic medium), or via phone.
• Any names or identifiers provided in the interview were changed to pseudonyms or generic pronouns for the purposes of data analysis and presentation.

• All interviews utilized the same series of questions, with the only variation being any follow-up questions asked due to responses.

• All transcription data was sent to the participant’s preferred, secure email address. Each participant was given one week to respond with any additions, clarifications, or corrections.

• Each interview began with a research statement, and a question asking for the participant’s informed consent. All participation in this research was voluntary, and participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the interview process at any time.

• Each participant was asked to read and agree to a ‘Consent to Participate in Research’ form (Appendix E), which restated information offered in the first minutes of the interview experience. This form allowed participants the opportunity to agree/disagree with participation in the study.

This approach was chosen to ensure that participants would feel comfortable participating, due to the provision of options. Participants were informed that they could remove themselves from the process at any time.

Vulnerable Population

The gay, lesbian, and bisexual populations are vulnerable because -- as yet -- they are not a part of a protected class. Equal opportunity employment policy and anti-discrimination laws largely exclude these populations at the federal level (and in some states). As a result, disclosure
of one’s identity can still be very much a concern, and the participation in a survey / research interview could potentially make one feel vulnerable. As a result, the researcher did everything in her power to assure participants that information shared would be handled with utmost respect and confidentiality, and that data would be presented in such a way that there would be no real names utilized.
Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter reports the findings that emerged from six interviews with leaders who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The first part of this chapter offers an overview of each participant’s story. Each story includes a basic biographical overview, as well as salient points relative to the participants’ sexual identity development and their early leadership experience and career trajectory. The second part of this chapter presents a description of the major themes and sub-themes that emerged, offering insight into the lived experience of gay, lesbian, and bisexual leaders, relative to the skill set of self-monitoring. Figure 4.1 contains the participants’ basic information.

Figure 4.1

Participant Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Family Unit</th>
<th>Church Background</th>
<th>Early Leadership</th>
<th>Score on SMS</th>
<th>Age of Disclosure</th>
<th>SM Advantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manny</td>
<td>Raised as an only child.</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>Sports and school governance.</td>
<td>Very high.</td>
<td>Late childhood.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Youngest of four; parents married until father died.</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>School governance.</td>
<td>Very high.</td>
<td>Mid- to late-twenties.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Background Information**

**Participant: Becca**

Becca is in her late twenties and lives in the Northeast. Becca grew up in the South as the oldest of three girls, with parents who remain married. Becca spent her earliest years playing sports and participating in activities at the church. Becca found herself being invited into church leadership positions at an early age, where she flourished. Becca’s family denomination was more progressive than the affiliation of her middle school, so she found herself being exposed to various ideas during this time. Becca, in contrast to her family, drew closer to the evangelical aspects and found herself leaning towards becoming a pastor during her high school years. With this goal in mind, Becca enrolled in a small, private, liberal arts school in the South, intending to major in religion. At the time, Becca assumed that this degree would be the undergraduate equivalent of a bible study. Becca quickly learned that this major was more comparative in nature. This opened her eyes to a lot of the positive things that can happen in the world when religions are together in conversation, rather than in judgment. Becca’s ministerial pull changed, but intensified, during her undergraduate years.

After Becca completed undergraduate work, she came out as a lesbian. She reflects upon her coming out process positively, sharing that it provided a framework for her earlier struggles. However, because she knew that her denomination would not allow openly gay leadership, she took a brief break from her pastoral plans, working in non-profits for six years. During this time, Becca met the woman who ultimately became her wife.

After Becca’s time in the non-profit world, she found herself trying to reconnect with her path of becoming a pastor. Becca enrolled at a seminary in the North that affiliates with a liberal
sect of Christianity. Having now graduated from seminary, Becca serves a church that claims two separate denominations. She is not “out” in her role at the church, even though she used pronouns to describe her wife within the context of her interview. Becca admits, however, that she would be honest with anyone who asks her sexual orientation directly.

**Participant: James**

James was raised in a small town in South Georgia, as the youngest of three kids. James’ parents remain married after 40 years. James grew up in the Southern Baptist church and was extensively involved in children’s ministry, youth ministry, and the music ministries. By all accounts James’ family was a very healthy unit, often taking trips together and singing together. James reflects that his family was always supportive and encouraged James early on to explore his passions, specifically within the church.

After graduating from high school, James enrolled in a small, private college in North Georgia, where he majored in music education. During James’ undergraduate years, he got involved with the Baptist Student Union, and worked at a Christian church camp each summer, all summer. During this time, James was also involved as a staff singer at a local church. Essentially James’ undergraduate years were supplemented with church-related involvements and little else. However, being a music major did expose James to a different kind of art: classical art. Coming from South Georgia, James did not have a lot of exposure to theater or to orchestral music, or to classical choral music. During James’ undergraduate years he got to experience this new kind of art, with a tightly knit core group of friends.

After James completed his undergraduate work, he did a brief stint at a Midwestern, large state institution, but ultimately decided it was not a good fit. James landed at a Southeastern
Baptist seminary, which he felt was a better fit. James notes that he was the first person in his family to have a four-year degree, so decisions about graduate education were self-guided.

James describes his graduate experience as intensely focused on theology and very conservative values. While James was happier in some ways with his choice of graduate school, he was also increasingly discontent with his choice as he was struggling with his sexual identity. Within the context of his denomination, James did not believe he was allowed to be gay.

James’ struggle continued as he left his graduate program and moved into his first career in church music. James ended up being recruited to lead music at a large mega-church in a large city in the South. James loved (and continues to love) the church, so it was a natural next step for him to take this job, even as he continued to explore his sexuality. Ultimately, however, repressing his inner feelings became too much to handle – particularly as members of the congregation would try to “set him up” – and he found his way into a role in development at his undergraduate alma mater. James worked there for only nine months, as that university was undergoing some major philosophical shifts.

After being terminated, James found his next development position at a large, private institution in the South, where he worked successfully for a number of years until he was recruited to his current position. James currently works as a development director for a major arts-related non-profit.

**Participant: Joshua**

Joshua was born and raised in a small, rural town in central Ohio. Joshua is the youngest of four kids, and was raised in a single-parent home by his mother. Joshua graduated from high
school and enrolled in a Historically Black College and University in the Northeast. He went on to receive his Masters in the Northeast as well.

Joshua’s first job was in HIV / AIDS education and outreach where he worked for six years. At the end of this work experience, Joshua began his career in higher education. His first job at a university was in enrollment management. Joshua spent three years learning the world of enrollment management before segueing into working with the GLBT populations on campus. At present, Joshua serves as a Director of a GLBT Resource Center at a large, public institution in the South.

**Participant: Kimberly**

Kimberly was born and raised in the Northeast with her brother. Her parents remain married. She was raised in the Presbyterian Church, and attributes her earliest leadership experiences to her roles within the church, and the church’s presbytery structure. Early on, Kimberly was sent to general assemblies as a representative of her church, and counts this as a formative, early leadership experience. Kimberly was also a student athlete and was a team captain in both high school and college.

Kimberly is a first-generation college student and did her undergraduate work at a small, private, liberal arts school in the Northeast. She went on to complete her Masters and Doctoral work in higher education administration and college student personnel. Kimberly began her higher education career as a live-in hall director. Her career path took her involved working in various parts of the country. She now works as Director of Residence Education and Housing Services at a large, research institution in the North. She oversees one of the largest housing operations in the country, and a budget of ~$300 million. Kimberly also teaches classes at the
university in the Student Affairs graduate program. When Kimberly is not at work, she spends time with her wife.

**Participant: Manny**

Manny was born in the South, but was almost immediately moved to the Northeast, where he spent his early years. Manny was raised in a predominantly Jewish community, where the second largest religious group was Catholic. While Manny had a number of religious influences, he was raised Methodist. Manny left high school early to enroll early at a large, private institution in the South. He spent only three years at that institution, finishing early so as not to accrue substantial debt.

Immediately after college, Manny had a brief stint in corporate banking, before leaving that industry due to a lack of fit. Manny went on to earn his Masters degree from a large, research institution in the Southeast, in higher education administration. After completing his Masters, Manny began his first professional job on the East coast. This job was short-lived as an opportunity came about to get back to the North to work at an engineering school. From there, Manny moved south, yet again, to work with Athlete Services for the Olympics. This position with the Olympics translated into a number of opportunities in the South, ultimately helping Manny land a position where he could create a program at a medium-sized university. Manny has moved up in the ranks at the same institution, while it also gained regional and national attention for growth and change. Manny serves as a Dean at that institution, and teaches part-time at other institutions. Manny lives with his partner.

**Participant: Tiffany**
Tiffany grew up in a small town in the Northeast as the youngest of four children. Tiffany’s parents were married her entire life until recently when her father passed away. She was raised in a strong Catholic family and describes her mother as devout. Tiffany earned her undergraduate degree in her home state, and did her graduate work out of state. Until Tiffany was 23 years old, she lived in the same general location as her parents.

Tiffany ultimately moved to the South, and has spent the last thirty years working in academia at various levels. Tiffany began her career as a professor, and worked her way up and into high-level administrative ranks. She currently serves in a governance role in higher education.

Themes

When examining the collective participant experience, certain themes emerged as common truths. Participants seemed to share in their experiences with leadership development, identity disclosure, self-monitoring behaviors, and career integration. This part of the findings chapter will provide a description of the common themes.

Leadership Theme: “YEAH. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE TYPE OF PERSON WHERE IF I'M IN THE ROOM AND THERE'S NOT ORDER, I WILL ESTABLISH ORDER” - James

Each participant acknowledged that he or she was identified as having leadership potential early on. Some participants found themselves in early leadership with the church, while others found themselves in leadership roles at school or in sports. However, all participants acknowledged confidently that they “always knew” they were leaders. These skills seemed to be intrinsic for some, and encouraged for all. Many participants expressed that
parents and teachers “were” encouraging of their leadership development, and that they seemingly did not have a choice but to lead.

**Leading in sports.** One way to develop leadership skills is to participate in a sport. Kimberly identified that her most organic, early experiences in leadership were during her time as a student athlete. Kimberly was a team captain in both high school and college and, by holding a ‘titled’ position, she had responsibilities that separated her from her peers and put her in contact with those older than her. Kimberly recalled feeling as though people older than her needed something from her, and this helped her to develop some of the earliest underpinnings of her ultimate philosophy of leadership: service. Similarly, Becca reflected that her time as a student athlete was formative in her development as a leader. Becca realized early on that she did not have to be the best player on the team. Instead, she could have this “other role” that still felt fulfilling and also helped out the team. There was an acknowledgment from James in a similar vein; just as practice makes perfect on the court, so too does practice make perfect in handling people.

**Leading in church.** Another avenue for leadership development that was common to participants was church involvement. Nearly every participant noted church as a primary venue for his or her leadership development. Kimberly served as a youth advisory delegate for the church. This is a position that Kimberly described as one that was highly selective; you have to apply, be selected, and trained to participate in the synod. Joshua was involved in his church at a statewide level, having been elected to serve on the young people’s division committee.

James did not seek out positions of leadership within the church; they seemed to seek him out. James shares that he “grew up” in the church. It was in this context that he learned to lead
other people, and learned to lead worship music. James learned from an early age what it meant to be in front of people as the “face” of a message.

**Leading at school.** Leadership also seemed to be developed through roles in student government. Manny seemed to have an early sense that he was a leader and began to run for formal leadership roles (e.g., class senates, etc.) in junior high. As he moved into college, Manny shared that he always got involved and tried for leadership positions. It was equally natural for Tiffany. Tiffany always served as a class officer, and often found herself in a position to organize events and situations.

In general, all participants seemed to feel naturally drawn to, and immediately encouraged in, pursuits of leadership. Whether the participants explored their leadership development through church, sports, or school governance (or a combination), it was clear in their reflection that their earlier leadership experiences helped to position them as opinion leaders later on in their careers. Their early public exposure also seemed to help them contextualize their disclosure processes, and provided for the participants and understanding of group dynamics.

**Disclosure Theme:** “YES. WHEN I FIRST REALIZED AND I WAS AT A POINT WHERE I WAS GOING TO COME OUT TO PEOPLE, I DID SORT OF A CALCULATION.” - Tiffany

Every participant went through a process where he or she realized they might be gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and engaged in a process where they decided who and when to tell, if anyone. For most participants, the process was quite similar. Participants commonly expressed
their concerns over rejection, differential treatment, and lack of control in the process, and ultimately moved through the process in a deliberate manner.

*When I first realized.* For most participants, they always knew there was something different about them. Most, however, admitted that they did not have the words to describe their feelings until many years later. For Tiffany, she was unable to put a name to her feelings until she was in her mid-twenties. For James, he realized he had same sex affections long before he was a teenager. While it felt ostracizing at the time, and he was not able to act on those feelings until much later, it never felt anything other than “normal” to him. A common experience for most participants was that their attraction to the same sex felt instinctual from early memory, even if the words and actions came years or decades later.

*Should I come out?* Most participants shared that their disclosure process has evolved over the years. When participants first were deciding to whom and when to disclose, they had a sort of “safety check” process. Tiffany describes:

I did sort of a calculation. I thought about what I had heard them say about gay people before, or how I had heard them talk about people in general. But, very specifically, had I ever heard them say anything good or bad about gay people? I had a best friend in high school who, somewhere in my early twenties, she came out to me… and so I talked with people about her so I had a very specific kind of benchmark. If I hadn’t already, I knew how people responded when I told them that Diane was gay.

Joshua and Manny had similar processes early on. They both were able to assess that their mothers would respond positively, so they were able to be out at home in junior high school. Their maternal support helped them to navigate the disclosure process at an earlier age.
Disclosure decisions. For most participants, the process of disclosure became easier over time. After participants disclosed their sexual identity to close family and friends, they found the process of additional disclosures to be much simpler and, as Becca stated, “in her court.” The decision now felt like it was hers, and that the world’s opinion on her life did not seem to matter so much. However, for one participant, his feeling of wholeness depends on their being open and honest in all realms. Disclosure decisions tend to relate to ones internal feeling of what is right, which may or may not be at odds with their sense of what is necessary.

Who to tell, and who not to tell? While one participant sees it as mandatory to disclose to all people in all situations, most participants are not out in all situations. Often decisions of disclosure are made based on how important it is to disclose, what the ramifications might be, and what the advantages might be. Most participants do not see their sexual identity as a primary descriptor of their being, so they do not feel it necessary to disclose as a default. James sums up a common sentiment well, saying, “I don’t choose to disclose it a hundred percent of the time… and I likely never will. I don’t think it’s an important enough ratio of my personality that it needs to be something I actually talk to people about.” Similarly, Becca shares that there are instances where her sexual identity could harm her or help her, and she continually is evaluating which is which:

In a work setting, if I’m with people, especially – hierarchically – who have decision-making power who are above me… I know that those are situations not to out myself, because then they have decision-making power over my future and my current job. If I’m speaking with someone who’s either at the same level that I’m at… or who might be somebody not in a leadership role of a ministry setting who’s looking for, let’s say,
resources… or they’re trying to figure out their own coming out process… sometimes sharing that with them is positive in building trust and rapport.

Kimberly has also considered how disclosure works to her advantage domestically versus internationally, as she often engages in travel. Kimberly is largely out in her work setting, which works to her advantage, she believes. However, the respect she gains on campus, domestically, affords her the opportunity to travel abroad, where she handles decisions of disclosure very differently:

   My partner comes with me to all events on campus… but I do a lot of international work, in countries where [homosexuality] is illegal. I could be personally harmed for being a lesbian. For example, I’ve gone to both Saudi Arabia and Botswana in the last ten years. In both of those cases I – neither place – I wasn’t there to talk about my personal life… so I chose… my partner did not go with me.

Manny has found that disclosure decisions are easier in today’s climate. He served as a student leader in college in a gay and lesbian student organization. Manny reflects that the yearbook pictures taken for that student group always had the organization banner covering the members’ faces, to ensure their anonymity and safety. Today, thankfully, Manny recognizes that his decisions of disclosure do not have to be so related to physical safety, but rather to relevancy. His questions now tend to be, “Is there a relevancy to the nature of the setting or conversation? How will this information help all people involved?”

   While early disclosure was challenging for some participants, for most participants today, disclosure decisions center on relevancy. Most participants admit that they have found ways to navigate around their identity, or to use their identity to their advantage.
Self-Monitoring at Work Theme: “I'M VERY HYPERAWARE OF MY
SURROUNDINGS AND THE PEOPLE IN THEM, AND I'M ALSO VERY AGILE
IN HOW I PORTRAY MYSELF.” - James

Most participants felt that they were hyperaware of, and proficient in, their ability to construct their own image. Commonly, participants would share that they felt they were almost always aware of their surroundings and the social dynamics at play in a given situation, and that this was not a particularly common ability among their peers.

*I choose places to work based on my identity.* In a couple of instances, participants shared that they select work locations based on their identity. Joshua chose to work within advocacy fields so that he would not have to worry about disclosure decisions. For many other participants, their line of work has not been dictated by their identity in the same way, but many did share that as they choose a place to work, they consider how “out” they could be. Kimberly feels that all decisions about her work have to be considerate of her wife, so she does research on, and applies to, institutions that may be more liberal leaning.

*Self-monitoring one’s sexual identity at work.* For all participants, self-monitoring of one’s sexual identity takes place at work. Participants vary, however, in where and how often they choose to self-monitor. James shares that he is out with his co-workers, but infrequently discloses his identity with donors because, as a fundraiser, it is important to be able to remain neutral:

For me in fundraising, I have to be a completely neutral party, and so I’m not afforded the luxury of developing a flamboyant personality or developing a very hard-nosed personality… like either direction. I’m not allowed to be anything… and so I think self-
monitoring is absolutely foundational to the kind of work I do at the level that I do it, because of those parameters. You have to be willing to take the conversation in any direction, depending on the donor you’re sitting in front of or the leader you’re in front of…

Even within the same work experience, James shares that the identity component can be shared to differing degrees.

Manny admits that while he’s mostly out at work, he does a lot of self-monitoring by silence or omission. He mentions that he often has to participate in the pronoun game, and has – at times – allowed others to make assumptions and draw conclusions about him and has simply not corrected their misperceptions. He reflects that it is sometimes easier, and also useful, to do this to move the conversation along without stopping needlessly for personal details that are largely irrelevant.

Becca is in a situation where “lying by omission” feels contrary to her work in the ministry, which makes it challenging for her to self-monitor. Becca is out when she is not at work, but her ministerial co-workers “know but don’t know.” Becca explains that when she was interviewing she used female pronouns to describe her partner, so that churches could “know but not know” and move their process along regarding her candidacy, based on the assumptions they could make from her choice of language.

A common theme that emerged was that all participants learned when to be silent and to listen. Kimberly sums up this theme most accurately, saying, “As I’ve advanced my career, I’ve learned to be more silent. I’ve learned to listen more. I think we all do, in a lot of ways, but I also think that being a lesbian… I learned to not always share all of the facts with everyone.”
Career Integration Theme: “I THINK I'M PROBABLY A MASTER ABOUT HOW TO CODE SWITCH.” - Joshua

Participants each reflected on their ability to self-monitor in situations (and on topics) unrelated to their sexual identity. Each participant was able to speak to an ability to “be a chameleon” in various contexts. Most resoundingly, there was a commonality of knowing what to say and when, and a general awareness of their surroundings. And, on the whole, participants reflected that they developed this skill, in part, as a result of their process of learning how to disclose their sexual identity. Kimberly states:

There’s a patience that comes. There’s good and bad that comes from your coming out process, whatever that might be. People have had such horrible, negative experiences from that, but people finding their true self and being authentic… there’s positives that come from that, as well. I think that there is an understanding that comes with that, particularly as our institutions become more global and are facing continual challenges about diversity. I think that there’s a patience and a maturity that comes from struggle.

Kimberly seems to feel she has learned how to navigate her work world with more patience and with better listening skills as a result of her coming out process.

*I know what to say and when.* A common self-monitoring skill is the ability to know what to say and when. All participants acknowledge having facility with this skill. Tiffany reflects that there are times when it is important to speak up, and times when it is important to listen. This has been helpful to her in receiving job offers, and positioning herself for promotion throughout her career. One of her recent experiences using self-monitoring was in a job interview:
I was in a job interview and the President of the college was asking me questions that were inappropriate. They were the kind of questions you don’t ask a job candidate. Was I married? Did I have a boyfriend? Did I plan to have children? He ran the gamut… and I could tell he was doing it because that is a power issue. In another situation, I may have called him on it, but I could tell he was just asking those questions as a person meeting someone… and I made the call that he wasn’t asking them for illegal reasons. So, I did not say anything.

Tiffany shares that she tends to know the right place and time to speak, and that it has been advantageous to her. She admits that she thinks much of the reason she has been selected for positions for many of her years (within the same organization) is that she generally knows when it is appropriate to say something, and when it is not. She shared:

I certainly have colleagues where it’s like when it crosses their mind it’s bam, bam, bam here it is… or, they’ll run you over in a conversation. I’m always thinking… is this the appropriate time to say this? There may be times when you should say something… but you’re kind of thinking through the situation and you don’t. I think a lot about when it’s appropriate to say something and how I should say it.

Manny believes that he has learned how to employ a particular level of strategic communication that helps him to navigate what and when to share. Manny shares:

I have learned to self-monitor through strategic communications. While for some people it is probably unnecessarily stressful, I think for those of us who can manage the stress of doing that work – to be able to put on the appropriate face, so to speak, for the audience – I think that becomes an incredibly useful skill as you move up in leadership.
Joshua believes his experience navigating the disclosure process, as well as his experience being a black man, has helped him to learn how to “code switch.” Joshua shared, “I think African-Americans or people of color… they talked a lot about code switching and about how you talk white.” In different terms, James shared the same idea – he learned to talk the lingo and “use the right Bible verses” to find his place into the in circle. James suggests that in these moments he was his most hyper vigilant about the image he was portraying. A commonality for all participants is that they sought to fit into the organizational culture from the inside before they made decisions about whether or not to disclose their identities with co-workers.

I am aware of my contexts. All participants talked about being hyper aware of situations, contexts, and dynamics. Joshua credits his formative years with his awareness; he was taught how he should sound, look, and act, and whether those ways felt organic to him or not, he was expected to conform. Joshua has chosen contexts that allow him to be who he is, completely and authentically. Manny has chosen a different path in that he often allows his settings to dictate his behaviors.

James shares that context often drives his behaviors and words. Specifically, as a development officer, he is looking for points of connection, and tends to listen more than he speaks to find ways to engage the interests of the potential donor. In the context of his office, he discloses because the field is very “gay friendly,” and it provides him an “in” with many in the field. However, for James, his work context was much different when he was working (even in the same field – development) at a more conservative, religiously-affiliated institution. While there, he felt he had to “constantly hide [his] true personality… and constantly put on a façade that [he] knew they wanted to see as a leader.”
Joshua, who self-selected an occupation in which he could be “out,” finds himself aware of his contexts, too. Joshua shares that, “if the president of the university is there, there may be a conversation or a tone in my conversation that may not be the same as if I’m speaking in front of other people.” Joshua reflects that these are not moments where he feels his most authentic, but feels they are necessary to position himself for success within his organization.

Moving up the career ladder. Often, participants credited their career progression with their ability to self-monitor. In fact, all participants felt they had developed a skill through the process of disclosure that set them apart from other co-workers.

Tiffany shares that her career has progressed, even within the same organization, because she has been identified as a person who is careful and parsimonious:

I don’t think I’ll ever be the person that will say, or that people will say, “Tiffany never shut up during that meeting.” I’m never going to be the person that a governing body creates a rule so that they can shut me up after three minutes. I’m going to think about what I say before I say it… so I think it’s unlikely that I’m going to say something that’s going to hurt someone’s feelings or insult someone… and if I do I try to correct it right away.

Tiffany acknowledges that there are differentiating behaviors that have set her apart from other co-workers during her tenure at work. She has consciously thought about how her behaviors differ from others’. In particular, she has seen the consequences of not self-monitoring, and has noticed the behaviors she employs that are markedly different from those of some of her peers. Upon reflection, Tiffany credits some of her success and upward mobility within her organization to these behaviors.
Kimberly also believes her career path has been greatly impacted by self-monitoring behaviors. She shares that these skills are a part of her “tool belt” and she is keenly aware that not everyone has them. She can be in a situation and competently navigate it due to the practice she’s had in other contexts. Manny echoed that self-monitoring behaviors have helped him advance in his career, but that there are also often careers that seem immediately appealing to members of the community:

“I started reflecting on some of the stereotypical careers that people in the community might choose to pursue… and people often joke about how, well, gay people are really such actors and there’s a part of me that wants to say, “well, of course they’re great actors… they’ve been acting their whole lives. They’ve had to learn to be somebody else to the public from the time they often were very young.” In my mind, I’ve had a sense of that… but I don’t know if I’d put it all together…”

Manny felt drawn to the work of higher education because he knew there would be a certain level of assumed acceptance of who he was as a person. In the safety of the world of higher education, he has learned how to put on the face of leadership that others are comfortable with, so that he could be entrusted with additional leadership opportunities.

A common experience of all participants was a need for each person to develop trust and relational capital in his or her organizational contexts so that they could become leaders and agents of change. Becca admits that she feels proud of the work she is able to do from inside the church to change the conversation about gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, and she does not feel as though she would be invited to the table if she was not in her position of authority. For most participants, there is an element of learning the context, understanding the dynamics, working to
fit into the structure, and then seeking ways to broaden the conversations and make change. Interestingly, for many participants there was also an acknowledgment that, while helpful, it would be nice for future generations to not have to self-monitor so extensively.

**Summary of Findings**

*A common development.* All participants seemed to have similar stories to share regarding their early development, leadership experience, disclosure process, and, ultimately, the synthesis of their self-monitoring skill set. However, a few additional commonalities exist.

Each participant spoke specifically to his or her early experience in the church. All participants seemed to enjoy being raised in the church, and most shared that this was a primary venue for early leadership development. Often, participants felt that their places of worship recognized them early for their contributions, and additional responsibilities were given again and again.

Participants also shared common stories about their process of learning to disclose. While two participants felt able to disclose their identity at an earlier age than the other participants, all participants experienced a preoccupation with what others might think about their identity. For most participants, learning to disclose took a number of years, and the process has become simpler. Yet, for many participants, there are contexts in which they are still not fully open about their identity.

It also seemed common to all participants that their sexual identity is not a primary identifier, even if their environments seem to categorize them as such. That is, for most participants, their sexual identity is merely one facet of their being, and the decision to disclose is integrated into a larger picture of their identity.
**An ability to use self-monitoring skills in all contexts.** This research sought to understand whether self-monitoring skills were gained through the process of disclosure, as well as whether or not those skills could be applied successfully in other contacts. Overwhelmingly, participants shared stories that substantiated this notion. All participants, without hesitation, could draw upon multiple examples of how they feel better equipped than their peers to self-monitor in organizational (and other) contexts.

All participants not only self-identified in their interviews as high self-monitors, they also all scored high on the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1974). All participants except one received perfect scores on this scale. The one participant who did not score extremely high on the instrument specifically addressed the scale in their interview, sharing that it was challenging to complete the scale because of the language, and how she thought the researcher would interpret the data:

I think I totally self-monitor, because I think context is very important to everything. However, I think the self-monitoring scale – because I think semantics are very important – I struggled with some of the word choices on the scale. For example, there was one that used something to the effect of “in any situation.” Well… any situation is like saying “all situations.” I don’t monitor in all situations.

This seemed a fitting response for a person who went on to detail the degree to which they self-monitor in various contexts.

Additionally, some participants shared that they had managed their own careers so that they would not have to self-monitor so extensively in the workplace. While they admitted to customizing their career choices and paths so they would not have to self-monitor, the
participants who did this still recognized their ability to use this skill set, and how they use it in ways not relating to their sexual identity.

*An acknowledged advantage.* All participants recognized that self-monitoring can be (and often is) advantageous. Most participants specifically referenced that they believed they were selected for positions because of their ability to know what to say, when to say it, and to whom they should say it.

While most participants had not previously considered the connections proposed in this research (at least not in these specific terms), all participants with the exception of one use self-monitoring to their advantage, knowingly. Most see these skills as an integrated part of who they are in group settings, or in meeting new people.

*Cognitive-Affective-Behavioral model.* This research utilized the Pachankis’ CAB model (2007), which argues that in a given situation, individuals use cognition, affect, and self-evaluation (in addition to feedback) to mediate and decide upon behaviors. Ultimately, each participant shared stories that confirm the validity of this model, and specifically the applicability of this model to identity disclosure in the workplace.

As participants reflected, self-monitoring regarding their sexual identity takes place on a case-by-case basis. Participants take in feedback and regulate accordingly as they decide whether or not to disclose information in a particular context. Participants also shared that their process is similar in other contexts in which they are simply trying to weigh the costs and benefits of sharing information.
Specific to identity development, most participants reported that there was a clear cognitive process that they used when deciding whether to disclose their identity. In alignment with the model shown in Figure 4.2, participants often felt preoccupied by their identities, and experienced a high level of vigilance with regard to not being “found out.” Participants often shared that this preoccupation and vigilance contributed to a self-evaluative process.
According to Pachankis (2007), such self-evaluative processes guide whether feelings of preoccupation and vigilance translate into affective implications, disclosure, or non-disclosure. According to this model, behavior is the result of thought and feeling. Participants in the current research seemed to have given, and continue to give, a sizable amount of thought to the realities and perceptions that are possible in any instance of disclosure. It seemed evident that each participant uses a process similar to the one described in this model to evaluate his or her identity disclosure on a case-by-case basis.

**A changing world. A changing process.** As society’s feelings about gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons has changed, participants acknowledged that the process of disclosure has become significantly easier. A common theme that developed was both that participants find it easier to disclose currently, and also that participants find it less necessary to do so. Due to a downshift in perceived stigma for identifying with the gay, lesbian, or bisexual communities, participants seemed more comfortable with disclosure.

A few participants seemed to reflect on how being a part of the gay, lesbian, or bisexual communities could be advantageous in and of itself. That is, there is an “in group” mentality that some participants referenced that would suggest that being a part of the community actually helps one along in their career.

**Situation dependent.** Participants universally reflected that their self-monitoring changes depending on the situation. For most participants, the default pattern was to assess the situation, weigh the costs and benefits, and then to make a decision about disclosure. Half of the participants mentioned that they consciously chose jobs intentionally so that they either could, or did not have to, comingle their identities. For Joshua, it was important to be able to be authentic:
I chose to work in fields where I would not have to hide. When you begin to hide who you are… it becomes easy to hide all kinds of aspects about yourself. When I was younger… I was much more private about these parts of my identity. Eventually… I had just become completely private, which manifest itself in isolation, which I did not find to be helpful for me. So, I decided I’d always work in a place where I could be authentically me.

By contrast, for James, the choice was to leave a work situation that forced him to integrate his personal life:

My self-monitoring capabilities greatly affected my career path, and then also affected my personal life, too, because… at the same time as I stopped self-monitoring 24/7 in the workplace, I stopped doing it in my personal life, too… because, before… my personal life was inextricably tied to my professional life as a full-time minister. Now I can… I’ve made very deliberate choices so that my professional life would be 100% separate from my personal life… until I wanted to comingle it.

For both Joshua and James, the choice to be open or not in the workplace dictated their line of work, and also their career trajectories.

Another commonality for participants who see self-monitoring behaviors as advantageous was how quickly they were promoted to high levels of administrative leadership. All participants are in positions that involve the management of other people, are responsible for outcomes from a unit, and that move their teams forward (either programmatically, or financially). Participants did not see this as random. Rather, participants saw how and why they have moved up their organizational ladders:
I think [self-monitoring behaviors] are very advantageous. I know people who do not have that skill and they could not – I mean I’m not saying they couldn’t last in a leadership position if they got one – but I think that why I’ve been selected for positions for many of my years in the same organization is partly because I generally know – not that I don’t make mistakes and misread things sometimes – but I generally know when it’s appropriate to say something and when it’s not and when a particular behavior is appropriate and when it’s not in a given situation. I would say this has helped me to move up the ladder more than other field-specific skills.

**I wish I wasn’t so good at this.** A final commonality for participants was their reflection that it is a shame that they are so proficient in self-monitoring. Joshua shared that he had challenges even calling self-monitoring a skill:

I thought that scale you had us fill out was interesting because – first of all – I don’t know if I want to call this a skill… if that’s a way in which to monitor oneself and one’s actions or behavior… they I think that may be appropriate, but at the end of the day I believe in authentic leadership. You should be showing up how you are and who you are… I think that’s the best way to proceed on that.

Similarly, Manny reflected:

What I will say is philosophically I struggle with how much I allow myself to buy into [self-monitoring behaviors], because I feel like I’ve had too many situations where people who are closer to me have said, “Well, we appreciate the fact that you can be yourself, but you don’t act gay.” I struggle with that because there’s a part of me that wants to say… so, number one, you’re making assumptions about – and negative ones –
about what it means to be gay, and then what it means to act in a manner… and then essentially all the stereotyping that goes along with it.

Overwhelmingly, participants had awareness of their tendencies to self-monitor. And while they had some philosophical and ethical struggles about what it means to parse out pieces of themselves in particular contexts, participants universally acknowledged that there have been advantages to having this skill set.
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This doctoral study aimed to answer the question, “Do gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons develop self-monitoring skills through their identity disclosure processes that can be applied advantageously in other organizational settings?” This research differs from most previous work on identity development and disclosure, in that it sought to derive positive components from an individual’s experience with a traditionally negative process. This research sought to take the sexual identity disclosure process and find the applications that might be positive or advantageous. Overwhelmingly, participants reflected that they had developed facility with self-monitoring behaviors through their disclosure processes, and that these skills have served them each well as they navigated their career paths.

Contributions to Research

This research examined one way that self-monitoring behaviors might be acquired (i.e., gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity development and disclosure), and how these behaviors might be applied more broadly in organizational contexts. Overwhelmingly, participants acknowledged this to be their reality. This acknowledgment contributes to research on organizational behavior by showcasing self-monitoring behaviors as an advantageous skill set to acquire for upward mobility. This also augments previous research on sexual identity development, by having participants consider (and, ultimately, acknowledge) the advantages of their identity development on their career paths.

Divergent Findings

No earlier studies were found examining this topic, so no findings in this study contradicted findings from any other study. However, there were some surprising themes. For
example, the sadness in the participants’ voices as they reflected on their mandatory self-monitoring was unexpected. For participants who had been open about their identity for a significant period of time, it was challenging for them to reflect on how agile they are in shaping their identities to situations. There was a sense of remorse and sadness expressed by the participants over how proficient they were at managing their “self.”

It was also surprising to see how carefully people constructed and managed their identities in various contexts. The researcher was expecting to hear participants share how they either chose to largely not disclose, or chose to largely disclose, but was not expecting to hear that participants relied on situational cues so extensively to decide whether or not to disclose. The researcher was surprised to find – although it is not inconsistent with other studies – that disclosure decisions are situation-dependent, and not categorical.

**Similar Findings**

As in other studies, participants talked about their of disclosure in terms that were consistent with other models for identity development and exploration. For example, one of the foundational theories of gay and lesbian identity development is the Cass Model (Cass, 1979). Additional theories have added to our collective understanding of identity development, but the core of the Cass Model still resonates with, and was articulated by, the participants in this study. The Cass Model is a stage model including the following stages: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, and Identity Pride. Most participants detailed a process in which they were unsure about their identity, moved through phases of whether or not they felt they would be able to choose their authentic selves and, ultimately, a phase where sexual identity became just one of many identity components.
The current research also revealed findings that substantiated D’Augelli’s (1994) Model of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Development. This model, in comparison to Cass’ linear stage model, offers interactive processes that a person goes through non-sequentially. These processes include exiting heterosexual identity, developing a personal lesbian/gay/bisexual identity status, developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual social identity, becoming a lesbian/gay/bisexual offspring, developing a lesbian/gay/bisexual intimacy status, and entering a lesbian/gay/bisexual community. D’Augelli’s model acknowledges the varying degrees with which someone might choose to engage in these processes over time. This model seems to be reflective of the participants’ stories, in which participants make decisions – daily – about how to engage with their world and their identities. Rather than being situated in a particular stage, participants seemed to express that processes were ongoing.

This research’s findings were also consistent with Pachankis’ CAB Model (Pachankis, 2007). Pachankis (2007) discussed that there are psychological implications when one conceals a stigma, and offers the CAB model as a visual representation of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral loops. Pachankis offered that, “the ambiguity of social situations combined with the threat of potential discovery makes possessing a concealable stigma a difficult predicament for many individuals” (Pachankis, 2007). This speaks directly to the participants’ experiences in developing a disclosure process that is adapted on a case-by-case basis.

**New Discoveries**

This research resulted in two new discoveries, or two new ways to think about identity development, disclosure, and self-monitoring behaviors. The first discovery was that that participants do seem to be able to translate the skills gained through their sexual identity
disclosure processes into other contexts. Participants shared that they find it easy to know what, when, how, and to whom they should deliver messages and ideas, and that they attribute their ability to do so to their disclosure processes.

The second discovery was that participants self-reflect upon their ability to self-monitor, and saw themselves at a place of advantage, particularly when they consider moving up their respective career ladders. Not only does there appear to be a link between the participants’ scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale and their success in the workplace, there was a strong tendency for participants to link their success in the workplace to their ability to self-monitor.

Contributions to Theory

This research provided a different lens with which to examine the identity disclosure process. No previous research had looked at a disclosure process in a way that sought to understand whether skills gained through the process that might be applicable to other situations. As a result, research on identity development and disclosure might now include an additional component regarding the possible applications of identity development and disclosure processes.

In short, this research validated the Cass Model (1979), D’Augelli’s Model (1994), and the Cognitive Affective Behavioral Model (2007). It also provided a new way to consider how disclosure and identity development, over time, impacts an individual in organizational contexts.

Contributions to Practice and Practical Implications

As Cronshaw and Ellis (1991) found, self-monitoring behaviors are a known leadership skill. According to Snyder (1987) high self-monitors tend to emerge as leaders in groups, naturally, because they pay attention to, and form their behavior around, social cues. As a result,
new information on the development of and facility with self-monitoring behaviors would be useful for a manager, as well as an employee.

One practical application of the findings exists on an individual level. That is, individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual could have the language necessary to articulate the advantage of their self-monitoring skills, positioning themselves for promotions and upward mobility (it could also be effective to highlight these skills on one’s resume, or to discuss them as a strength in the context of an interview). To a person who does not identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, this information could be valuable for the recognition of an important leadership skill set. And, while this research focused on one way that a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person cultivates self-monitoring skills, there could be other ways to develop them.

This research is also beneficial for managers, or leaders of other leaders. If self-monitoring is an important skill for leaders, then managers should be aware of how to develop those skills in themselves, and how to encourage employees to do the same. It might also be good for managers to share that self-monitoring is a workplace (or leadership) value, and communicate the importance of it through practical trainings. Departments of human resources or continuing education might offer workshops on these topics to help employees to position themselves for success.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this research was the potential for self-selecting bias. It is possible that prospective participants felt drawn to this study because they had a positive
experience to share about their own career progression. It was also possible that participants who were in leadership roles were better able to see the skills they have developed over time.

As can be the case in qualitative research, the small sample size limited generalizability to the broader community. While each interview provided rich data, it will be important for future research to follow this study with either additional interviews, or with the creation of a quantitative instrument that could survey a large, more representative sample and gauge the extent to which these findings generalize to other people and other situations.

A third limitation to this research was that it did not include the “T” from the traditional “LGBT” acronym. This research sought to explore the lived experiences of people who were able to choose when they could and could not disclose their identity, and including the “T” might have precluded this. This study was also designed to study disclosure of one’s identity in relation with another person, not in isolation. However, because persons who identify as transgender were not a part of this study, it could be possible that additional research is needed to understand if the findings are applicable to persons with a gender identity AND a sexual identity that has to be disclosed.

A final limitation was that there was not an exploration of bisexuality. Since a person who is bisexual may be in a romantic relationship with someone who has the same OR different biological sex from their own, it might be possible for that person to have experienced a different kind of disclosure decision making process.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

As a result of the aforementioned limitations of this study, it would be the suggestion of the researcher to explore bisexuality more exhaustively to uncover any differences in identity
development, or disclosure processes. It seems likely that the disclosure process would be even more of a decision for someone who identifies as bisexual, so additional research might help to clarify the nuances between someone who is gay or lesbian, and someone who identifies as bisexual.

Due to the small sample size, one suggestion for future research would be to create a quantitative instrument based on this study’s findings to establish whether or not this experience is common to members of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities. It would be interesting to know if this is an isolated pattern found due to each participant being a highly successful leader, or whether the findings would be true for any member of the community.

It would also be interesting to explore other invisible identities that a person might have to learn to disclose over time. Some examples might be persons with invisible disabilities, persons with parents who are divorced, etc. It is highly probable that persons who have anything to disclose that is highly personal would cultivate self-monitoring skills. It would be interesting to delve deeper and see how these disclosures impact people more widely.

**Conclusion**

This study sought to understand if gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons develop self-monitoring skills through their identity disclosure processes, and whether those skills can be applied advantageously in other organizational settings. Resoundingly, the answer from all participants was “yes.” Each participant articulated how he or she learned to disclose information about their identity, and how this process helped them to fine tune their skills of self-monitoring in other contexts, or related to other topics.
In addition, the interviews for this study were all strikingly similar, and each interview provided additional insights and contexts for each other interview. The testimonies of a disclosure process were all largely similar, though each participant ultimately decided the degree to which they wanted to be open about their various identities in a given situation. For most participants, the set of interview questions were welcome. Many participants reflected at the conclusion of their interviews that they had never had a word or phrase to describe this phenomenon, and they were pleased to have a language for this set of behaviors. In summation, this study provided an outlet for the participants share their stories, and to translate their disclosure processes into the language of an advantageous skill set.
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Appendix A

Terminology

Coming Out / Disclosure – When someone discloses to other people an aspect of their identity that was previously unknown or hidden.

LGB / LGBT / GLBT / GLBTQ – A set of acronyms to describe the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community. Often, different sets of acronyms are used to capture, for example, populations a particular office might serve.

Self-Monitoring Behaviors – Self-monitoring behaviors (or self-monitoring skills) are those behaviors that a person employs that help them to customize themselves in a given context, or with a specific person or persons.

Cisgender – The opposite of transgender (i.e., non-transgender); when one’s gender identity is in alignment with the sex one was assigned at birth.
Appendix B

Call for Participants

Are you a GAY, LESBIAN, OR BISEXUAL-identified person who is in a leadership role?

Consider taking part in this study!

A study is being conducted to gain more information on how a person can cultivate a known leadership skill: self-monitoring. Through a qualitative study, the researcher hopes to better understand how a person perceives his or her own development of self-monitoring skills.

In order to participate, individuals must be proficient in English. Participants must be in a leadership role (Director level or higher, with more than three supervisees), and identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (and be “out” to at least one person). All qualified individuals are encouraged to apply, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, religion, ability status, or national origin.

The study consists of filling out one brief survey instrument, and participating in one phone interview. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. Participants who complete both the survey and the interview will receive one $25 gift card to Starbucks, Amazon.com or iTunes.

If you or someone you know would like to participate in this study or learn more, please email Baida.a@husky.neu.edu or call 678.524.1252. Selection for the study is not guaranteed, but will be determined during a brief 5-10 minute intake call.

Confidentiality is guaranteed, and participants’ names will never be shared with others or used in the published results.

This study is conducted by Ana Baida, an Ed.D. doctoral candidate at Northeastern University. This study has been approved by Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board for research ethics (IRB# -----).
Appendix C

Application for IRB Approval

For NU IRB use:

Date Received: ___________________________ NU IRB No. ____________

Review Category: ___________________________ Approval Date ______________

Application for IRB Approval

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL FOR USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Before completing this application, please read the Application Instructions and Policies and Procedures for Human Research Protections to understand the responsibilities for which you are accountable as an investigator in conducting research with human participants. The document, Application Instructions, provides additional assistance in preparing this submission. Incomplete applications will be returned to the investigator. You may complete this application online and save it as a Word document.

If this research is related to a grant, contract proposal or dissertation, a copy of the full grant/contract proposal/dissertation must accompany this application.

Please carefully edit and proof read before submitting the application. Applications that are not filled out completely and/or have any missing or incorrect information will be returned to the Principal Investigator.
REQUIRED TRAINING FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Under the direction of the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, Northeastern University is now requiring completion of the NIH Office of Extramural Research training for all human subject research, regardless of whether or not investigators have received funding to support their project.

The online course titled "Protecting Human Research Participants" can be accessed at the following url: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php. This requirement will be effective as of November 15, 2008 for all new protocols.

Principal Investigators, student researchers and key personnel (participants who contribute substantively to the scientific development or execution of a project) must include a copy of their certificate of completion for this web-based tutorial with the protocol submission.

A. Investigator Information

Principal Investigator (PI cannot be a student) __ Dr. Kristal Clemons _____

Investigator is: NU Faculty __x__ NU Staff__ Other ________________________

College _____ Northeastern University College of Professional Studies

Department ______ Education (EdD Doctorate Program)__________________

Address __________ 20 BV College of Professional Studies, Boston MA 02115

Telephone _______ Email __________ k.clemons@neu.edu

Is this student research? YES_X__ NO___ If yes, please provide the following information:

Student Name ____Ana Baida____ Undergrad ___ MA/MS ___ PhD _x_ (EdD)

Mailing Address _____
Anticipated graduation date: April 2015

Telephone _______ Primary Email _______ baida.a@husky.neu.edu _______

Cell phone __678.524.1252__ Secondary Email __abtovah@gmail.com__

B. Protocol Information

Title _A qualitative study of the effect of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development on the cultivation and application of self-monitoring behaviors and leader emergence in organizational contexts_

Projected # subjects _6-10_

Approx. begin date of project _November, 15, 2014_ Approx. end date _Dec. 30, 2015_

It is the policy of Northeastern University that no activity involving human subjects be undertaken until those activities have been reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

- Anticipated funding source for project (or none) _______ NONE ____________

Has/will this proposal been/be submitted through:

- NU’s Office of Research Administration and Finance (RAF) ___no___
- Provost ___no___
- Corp & Foundations ___no___
C.

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<th>Will Participants Be:</th>
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<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Children (&lt;18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern University Students?</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized persons?</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prisoners?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitively Impaired Persons?</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>Non or Limited English Speaking Persons?</td>
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<tr>
<td>People Living outside the USA?</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women/Fetuses?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other? (Please provide detail)</td>
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<th>Does the Project Involve:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blood Removal?</td>
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<td>Investigational drug/device?</td>
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<td>Audiotapes/videotapes?</td>
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Please answer each of the following questions using non-technical language. Missing or incomplete answers will delay your review while we request the information.

D. What are the goals of this research? Please state your research question(s) and related hypotheses.

The goal of this research is to better understand if gay, lesbian, and bisexual leaders attribute their ability to self-monitor to their sexual identity development. The guiding idea is that the process of ‘coming out’ may help a person to better understand how to self-monitor in other situations as well, unrelated to their sexual identity.

The following question guides the direction of this study:

“What do gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons develop self-monitoring skills through their identity disclosure processes that can be applied advantageously in other organizational settings?”
The hypothesis is that there will be some correlation acknowledged between a person’s sexual identity development and subsequent disclosure, and their ability to self-monitor in other settings.

E. Provide a brief summary of the purpose of the research in non-technical language.

Most gay, lesbian, or bisexual identifying persons have worked to understand the art of disclosing their identity at the “right” time. As a result, a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identifying person may be using that same understanding in other realms. The purpose of this research is to find out if this process of self-monitoring is, indeed, enhanced in all realms by the process of disclosure relative to sexual identity development.

F. Identify study personnel on this project. Include name, credentials, role, and organization affiliation.

*Principal Investigator – Kristal Clemons Ph.D; Northeastern University faculty located in Northeastern University College of Professional Studies – will have minimal access to data

*Student Researcher – Ana Baida, M.S.; Interim Director of the Career Services Center at Kennesaw State University, and doctoral (EdD) student in Northeastern University College of Professional Studies.

*Professional Transcriptionist – To be confirmed. Each time interview transcription is mentioned in the study, the possibility of utilizing a professional transcriptionist is also mentioned. If used, the professional transcriptionist will be asked to sign a “Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study” Form (Appendix A).

G. Identify other organizations or institutions that are involved. Attach current Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals or letters of permission as necessary.

While the Student Researcher (Ana Baida) is an administrator at Kennesaw State University, the Call for Participants (Appendix B) will not go out through Kennesaw State University, therefore IRB approval is not required from the employing university.

H. Recruitment Procedures

Describe the participants you intend to recruit. Provide all inclusion and exclusion criteria. Include age range, number of subjects, gender, ethnicity/race, socio-economic level, literacy level and health (as applicable) and reasons for exempting any groups.
Describe how/when/by whom inclusion/exclusion criteria will be determined.

Participants must speak English proficiently and identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (and be “out” to at least one other person). Participants must also be in a position of leadership (defined for the purposes of this study as a Director or higher, with more than three direct reports).

The Call for Participants (Appendix B) states the criteria, and includes the statement: “Selection for the study is not guaranteed, but will be determined during a brief 5-10 minute intake call.”

During the intake call, the Student Researcher will give a brief overview of the project, and then ask criteria-based questions (self-recording the participants’ answers). After determining if the individual would be an adequate candidate, the Student Researcher will state whether or not the individual qualifies for the study.

Describe the procedures that you will use to recruit these participants. Be specific. How will potential subjects be identified? Who will ask for participation? If you intend to recruit using letters, posters, fliers, ads, website, email etc., copies must be included as attachments for stamped approval. Include scripts for intended telephone recruitment.

Targeted recruitment (via a Call for Participants, Appendix B) will take place with the assistance of organizations and groups that have gay, lesbian, or bisexual membership. List-servs that will be used are: Human Rights Campaign Atlanta, CampusPride, GLSEN, the NASPA LGBT Knowledge Community, and the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC).

If willing to do so, the Call for Participants will be sent out by the above organizations electronically (via email to their respective listervs). It is also possible that some of these organizations might post the information on their website.

Administrators will receive an email (containing the CfP) from the student investigator, simply asking them to forward the CfP to members of their respective institutions, should their organization’s policies allow them to do so.

The Call for Participants gives a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, participant criteria, compensation, and contact information.
What remuneration, if any, is offered?

A $25 gift card to either Starbucks, Amazon.com, or iTunes (participant’s choice) will be offered to participants who complete the study.

I. Consent Process

Describe the process of obtaining informed consent*. Be specific. How will the project and the participants’ role be presented to potential participants? By whom? When? Where? Having the participant read and sign a consent statement is done only after the researcher provides a detailed oral explanation and answers all questions. Please attach a copy of informed consent statements that you intend to use, if applicable.

If your study population includes non-English speaking people, translations of consent information are necessary. Describe how information will be translated and by whom. You may wait until the consent is approved in English before having it translated.

I will be interviewing English speaking people.

As stated in section H (Recruitment Procedures), the researcher will give a detailed oral explanation of the scope of the project and the role of the participant during the intake call.

I will use an unsigned consent form. Participants will receive the unsigned consent form prior to the interview. At the start of the interview, we will go over the form. I will answer any questions the participant may have. I will then ask them to verbally consent on the recording.

If your population includes children, prisoners, people with limited mental capacity, language barriers, problems with reading or understanding, or other issues that may make them vulnerable or limit their ability to understand and provide consent, describe special procedures that you will institute to obtain consent appropriately. If participants are potentially decisionally impaired, how will you determine competency?
If incomplete disclosure during the initial consent process is essential to carrying out the proposed research, please provide a detailed description of the debriefing process. Be specific. When will full disclosure of the research goals be presented to subjects (e.g., immediately after the subject has completed the research task(s) or held off until the completion of the study’s data collection)? By whom? Please attach a copy of the written debriefing statement that will be given to subjects.

Qualitative data will be collected through interviews conducted by the Student Researcher over the phone.

After the initial intake call (approximately 5-10 minutes), each participant will be asked to complete the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox and Wolfe, 1984), which is a short questionnaire that assesses self-monitoring behaviors. Each participant will send this form back to the student researcher prior to the interview. Each participant will participate in a 45 minute interview with the student researcher.

The transcripts and initial data codes/interpretations from the interview will be emailed to a secure email address provided by the participant within two weeks after the interview. The participant will then have one week to review the information and provide any feedback in regards to the validity, or make requests for alterations.

A thank you card and the $25 gift card will be mailed to each participant two weeks after the interview is complete (and the member checking period has lapsed).
Who will conduct the experimental procedures, questionnaires, etc? Where will this be done? *Attach copies of all questionnaires, interview questions, tests, survey instruments, links to online surveys, etc.*

The interviews will be conducted by the Student Researcher (Ana Baida) via phone. For confidentiality purposes, the Student Researcher will conduct all interviews in the secure settings of either her work or home office, and the participant will be asked to also be in a location where privacy and concentration can be maintained.

The script for the Intake Call, Interviews #1 & #2 (which include the interview questions) is attached (see Interview Protocol Form, Appendix D).

**K. Risks**

Identify possible risks to the participant as a result of the research. Consider possible psychological harm, loss of confidentiality, financial, social, or legal damages as well as physical risks. What is the seriousness of these risks and what is the likelihood that they may occur?

Appropriate measure will be taken to ensure confidentiality (see Section L: Confidentiality). As participants will be discussing personal details about their life, there is the slight chance of potential (non-physical) discomfort, but the risk of this is minimal.

Describe in detail the safeguards that will be implemented to minimize risks. What follow-up procedures are in place if harm occurs? What special precautions will be instituted for vulnerable populations?

Participants will be informed that if they feel uncomfortable replying to any of the questions that are asked, they are free to decline from answering. They will be also told both verbally and in the Consent Form (Appendix C) that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Every effort possible will be made to protect participant confidentiality, and no other risks (financial, social, physical, etc.) seem likely based on participation in this study.


L. Confidentiality

Describe in detail the procedures that will be used to maintain anonymity or confidentiality during collection and entry of data. Who will have access to data? How will the data be used, now and in the future?

Any information that is obtained in connections with this study and that can be identified with an individual will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the participant’s expressed request/permission or as required by law. No names will be associated with any interview information; any information that could be used to identify a participant will be altered to protect their confidentiality; the recording of the interview will not be labeled with the participant’s name, but rather a pseudonym; should a professional transcriptionist be used, a Transcriber Confidentiality Statement (Appendix A) will be used; all data files will be encrypted and password protected, and only the Principal Investigator (Professor Kristal Clemons) and Student Researcher on this project (Ana Baida) will have access to the files.

The data will be used for the Student Researcher’s doctoral thesis project, and potentially for future journal articles, books, presentations, or research. Even in these potential instances, confidentiality will be kept for all participants.

Information regarding confidentiality will be shared with all participants prior to the interview process, both in the Consent Form and verbally.

How and where will data be stored? When will data, including audiotapes and videotapes, be destroyed? If data is to be retained, explain why. Will identifiers or links to identification be destroyed? When? Signed consent documents must be retained for 3 years following the end of the study. Where and how will they be maintained?

Each interview will be audio-recorded by an electronic application called “TapeACall” on two separate devices (the Student Researcher’s MacBook Air and iPhone) to ensure the audio is captured. TapeACall has no limit to audio-length, and electronic recordings can be transferred to a computer as .mp4 or .wav files.

The electronic recordings of the interviews and all other electronic documents will be downloaded and then saved to the Student Researcher’s personal external hard drive, and online DropBox account. All files will be encrypted and password-protected.

Interviews will be transcribed by one of two methods:
1) Directly by the student researcher, with the assistance of the computer software program “Dragon Dictate,” or
2) By a professional transcriptionist who will be required to sign a “Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study” (Appendix A).

Transcripts will be saved in the same secure manner as the electronic recordings. The only other person who would have access to original files and actual names would be the Principal Investigator (Dr. Clemons), should there be a need.

Any written documents will be kept in the locked desk drawer at the home of the Student Researcher (2362 Jomarc Way, Marietta, GA 30062) during the period when the investigation is taking place. After the thesis project is complete, any hard-copy materials containing confidential interviewee information will be destroyed, and any electronic documents saved on the online DropBox account will be deleted. All remaining electronic data stored on the student researcher’s external hard drive will remain untouched, and kept in a locked safe in the home of the Student Researcher. These remaining data and documents will be destroyed 5 years following the completion of the study.

M. If your research is HIPAA-protected, please complete the following;
   Individual Access to PHI

Describe the procedure that will be used for allowing individuals to access their PHI or, alternatively, advising them that they must wait until the end of the study to review their PHI.

N/A

N. Benefits

What benefits can the participant reasonably expect from his/her involvement in the research? If none, state that. What are potential benefits to others?

Participant: A $25 Starbucks, Amazon.com, or iTunes gift card, which will be mailed to the individual two weeks after the second interview is completed. Otherwise, no direct benefits to participating in this study.
Society: Potential benefits to society include a better understanding of how a person’s sexual identity development disclosure provides benefit in other contexts.

Student Researcher: Successful completion of this study will allow the Student Researcher to complete the Ed.D. (Doctor of Education) program at Northeastern University.

O. Attachments

Identify attachments that have been included and those that are not applicable (n/a).

ApxB Copy of fliers, ads, posters, emails, web pages, letters for recruitment *
ApxD Scripts of intended telephone conversations*
ApxC Informed Consent or Informed Consent and Health Information Use and Disclosure Authorization*
ApxD Copies of IRB approvals or letters of permission from other sites
ApxC Debriefing Statement*
ApxD Copies of all instruments, surveys, focus group or interview questions, tests, etc. (emailed/faxes)
ApxE NIH Human Subject Training Certificate(s) (required if not already on file at HSRP)
ApxA Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

*(Approved forms must be stamped by the IRB before use)*

P. Health Care Provision During Study

Please check the applicable line:

____x____ I have read the description of HIPAA “health care” within Section 3.0 of the Policies & Procedures for Human Research Protection. I am not a HIPAA-covered health care provider and no health care will be provided in connection with this study.

_____ I am a HIPAA-covered health care provider or I will provide health care in connection with this study as described in Section 3.0 of the Policies & Procedures for Human Research Protection. This health care is described
above under “Study Procedures,” and the Informed Consent and Health Information Use and Disclosure Authorization form will be used with all prospective study participants.

If you have any questions about whether you are a HIPAA-covered health care provider, please contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection at n.regina@neu.edu or (617) 373-4588.

Please return the completed application to:

Nan C. Regina, Director
Human Subject Research Protection
960 Renaissance Park
Northeastern University
Boston, MA 02115-5000
Tel: 617.373.7570; Fax: 617.373.4595
n.regina@neu.edu

The application and accompanying materials may be sent as email attachments or in hard copy. A signed Assurance of Principal Investigator Form may be sent via fax or in hard copy.
Appendix D

Interview Protocol Form

Interview Protocol Form

Institution: Northeastern University; 360 Huntington Avenue; Boston, Massachusetts 02115
Interviewee: _______________
Interviewer: Ana Baida
Date: _______________

Intake Call

Thank you for calling and expressing interest in this study. My name is Ana Baida, and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University. This research project is my doctoral thesis project, and the goal of the study is to explore self-monitoring behaviors as a leadership skill, and see how a person’s gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity formation may or may not relate to these behaviors in other contexts.

As the Student Researcher, I am also the person who will be conducting the interviews as well as the intake calls, like the one we are doing right now.

Today, I’d like to ask you just a few criteria-based questions, to determine if you qualify as a participant, and if so, I’ll give you a more detailed explanation as to the scope of this project. At that point, if you’re interested in proceeding, we can talk about setting up the interview time. Sound good?

1. Understanding that you found out about this study via a gay, lesbian, or bisexual community list-serv, or through a friend, is it safe to assume that you identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual? **IF YES proceed to next question.**
2. This research relates to disclosure. To how many people have you disclosed your identity? **IF MORE THAN ONE proceed to the next question.**
3. This study also calls for persons in positions of leadership. Could you please let me know the nature of your work, and how many people you supervise? **IF MORE THAN THREE DIRECT REPORTS proceed to the following script.**

Excellent. It looks like you meet the criteria for this study. Let me tell you a bit more about it. This is a basic qualitative study that looks to examine the relationship between three variables: self-monitoring behaviors, leadership, and gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development. A good bit of research has been done connecting self-monitoring behaviors to both leadership and gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development, individually, but never with all three variables at once. I chose to do this research for a few reasons. First, I am just interested in it; I am interested in a possible “positive spin” that could be put on a traditionally known negative process of ‘coming out.’ Second, I am interested as a self-identified lesbian in a leadership role, and would like to better understand how others see their own development in the areas of self-monitoring and leadership.
That is a very brief overview of the rationale of the study. The process would involve your filling out a Self-Monitoring Scale and returning it to me, and then participating in one 45 minute interview. All responses will be kept anonymous – identifying information would never be published. Participants who complete this process will receive a $25 gift card. Participants can choose between cards from Starbucks, Amazon.com, or iTunes.

That is a very brief overview of the study’s process. Do you have any questions in regards to the research itself?

With that said, are you interested in proceeding as a participant in this study? **IF YES proceed.**

Fantastic, what I’d like to do now is set up your interview time. What times work for you?

Great. I’m going to email you an electronic copy of the Consent to Participate Form, which tells you a bit more about the study and answers some common questions people often have in regards to research. I ask that you please read it over before our formal interview. If you have any questions or concerns, you are of course free to contact me. Does that work?

Thank you. Before we wrap up this call, I’d just like to ask you to consider if you know of any other gay, lesbian, or bisexual-identified persons who are serving in leadership roles who might be interested in participating in this study? If so, I would definitely appreciate it if you tell them about this study, and give them my contact information should they wish to participate.

Great, so that is it for now. I look forward to our interview on ___. I will plan call you at this time, should I use the same phone number? I am looking forward to it...have a wonderful day!

**Formal Interview**

**Part 1: Introductory Protocol**

Thanks for reviewing the consent form, as well as returning the Self-Monitoring Scale. I really appreciate it.

As you know, you have been selected to participate in this research because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about the experience of a leader who happens to identify as a part of the gay, lesbian, or bisexual community.

As a reminder, this research project is looking at self-monitoring behaviors as a leadership skill, and seeing if there is any connection to gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development. Through this study, we hope to gain more insight into how persons who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual attribute their growth and development in the areas of leadership and self-monitoring skills.

Because your responses are important and I want to be sure I capture everything you share, I will be audiotaping our conversation today. I will also be taking notes as you speak. Only I (and possibly a professional transcriptionist) will have access to the audio files. If a transcriptionist IS used, that person will be required to sign a confidentiality statement, and will only be able to associate audio files with a pseudonym. Essentially, if a transcriptionist is used, they will never
have access to your name. The audio files will be destroyed within two weeks after they are transcribed. I can assure you, your responses will be kept confidentially, and all data, once transcribed, will only be associated with a pseudonym. Will this be alright?

To meet our human subjects requirements at the university, participants have to read and sign (by acknowledgment) the Consent to Participate Form, which was provided to you prior to this interview. Thank you for having already done that. Just to review, this document which you signed states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Do you have any questions or concerns about the interview process or this form?

We have planned for this interview to last approximately 45 minutes. Today, I have several questions that I would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning. Do you have any questions at this time?

**Part 2: Interview Introduction**

Today’s interview will ask you to reflect upon your lived experience. I will ask you a series of questions, and you will be allowed to answer freely, and draw conclusions as you wish.

Are you ready to begin?

**Part 3: Questioning**

**Leadership History**

I’d like to start by asking you some basic questions in regards to your biographical background and leadership history. This part should only take between 5-10 minutes.

1. Please share with me a brief overview of your background. I would love to know where you were born, the composition of your family, your race and ethnicity, your sexual orientation, your religious background, and perhaps a bit about your educational experiences, and your work history. At least insomuch as you’re willing to share…
2. As a person in a leadership role, when did you first know you were a leader? What were your earliest leadership experiences?

**Leadership History in Relation to Self-Monitoring Behaviors**

I am now going to ask you questions focused on the topic of self-monitoring behaviors. Self-monitoring behaviors are those behaviors you employ that help you customize yourself in a given context, or with a specific person or persons.

1. To what degree do you believe you self-monitor? Was the self-monitoring scale that you completed in advance of this interview helpful to you in recognizing a skill you use?
2. To what degree do you believe self-monitoring skills are advantageous in a leadership context?
3. Have you ever used self-monitoring behaviors in a specific context to your advantage in a work setting, or relative to leadership?

Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Identity Development

I am now going to ask you to talk a bit about your sexual identity development.

1. IF NOT ALREADY SHARED - When did you first think you might be a member of the gay, lesbian, or bisexual community?
2. Knowing that you’re out to at least one person, can you tell me about how you come to the decision to disclose that information? What’s your process?
3. In what contexts are you fully or partially out? Are there contexts in which you choose not to disclose, even now? How has that impacted your leadership – positive or negative?

Self-Monitoring and Disclosure

I am now going to ask that you consider your leadership and self-monitoring abilities as they may or may not relate to your own gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development.

1. In what ways has your sexual identity development, and your decisions of disclosure, led to your ability to self-monitor in other settings? Has it? Has it not?
2. When you consider your sexual identity development, and your learning when and when not to disclose, how do you think you are better off (if you believe you are) in the workplace as a result?
3. Before this interview, had you considered this connection before?

Part 4: Wrap-up

That concludes the questions for today’s interview. Before we wrap up, do you have any questions for me, or final reflections?

I want to express sincere gratitude for participating in this research with me. I will send you the transcription of your interview within two weeks, so that you can verify that the information is accurate. Again, thank you for your time, and I’ll be back in touch as soon as I am able.
Appendix E

Consent Form

Northeastern University, Department of Education

Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Kristal Clemons (Principal Investigator), Ana Baida (Student Researcher)

Title of Project: A qualitative study of the effect of gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development on the cultivation and application of self-monitoring behaviors and leader emergence in organizational contexts.

Request to Participate in Research

We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of this research is to understand the development of self-monitoring skills, and to see if those skills could be attributed to gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The study will take place exclusively on the telephone and will take about one hour, total. If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you complete a Self-Monitoring Scale (document), and participate in one interview (conducted by Ana Baida) about your leadership history and reflections on your gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity development, and your use of self-monitoring skills.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help us to learn more about the realities associated with being a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identified leader.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use pseudonyms, and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time.

You will receive a $25 gift certificate to one of the following three companies upon completion of this research process: Starbucks, Amazon.com, or iTunes.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Ana Baida (Tel: 678.524.1252, Email: Baida.a@husky.neu.edu), the person primarily responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Kristal Clemons (Northeastern University, Boston, MA, Email: k.clemons@neu.edu), the Principal Investigator.
If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

You may keep this form for yourself.

Thank you.

Ana Baida
Appendix F: Revised Self-monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1974)

The Lennox-Wolfe Self-Monitoring Scale (TRUE / FALSE)

_______ In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel something else is called for.

_______ I am often able to read people’s true emotions correctly through their eyes.

_______ I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them.

_______ In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I’m conversing with.

_______ My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others’ emotions and motives.

_______ I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly.

_______ When I feel that the image I am portraying isn’t working, I can readily change it to something that does.

_______ I can usually tell when I’ve said something inappropriate to someone by reading it in the listener’s eyes.

_______ I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.

_______ I have found that I can adjust my behavior to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in.

_______ If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person’s manner of expression.

_______ Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.

_______ Once I know what the situation calls for, it’s easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.