

**TITLE** The Leadership Practices of African American Women and their Lived Experiences as Tall Poppies

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**OBJECTIVE** The primary purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify the leadership practices of African American women leaders.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The participants interviewed for this study were selected using snowball and purposive sampling methods based on a targeted audience, resulting in identification of 22 possibilities, of which 10 African-American women agreed to participate. Each participant needed to have been employed at least one year in a leadership position, held at least a master's degree from a regionally accredited university, had a work-related experience of TPS (tall poppy syndrome), and had developed effective strategies in fostering positive workplace relationships; and five met these criterion. In addition to semi-structured interviews, participants completed the LPI.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

Encourage and Model were the leadership practices with the highest average frequency, followed by Enable, Inspire, and Challenge; and all five scores were in above the 80% percentile in the Kouzes Posner normative database. Themes related to Encourage and Model were evident in 80 percent of the interviews with participants.

The author notes:

The first theme from CRT [critical race theory] counter-stories of African American women leaders and their lived experiences as TPs was their understanding that there was a (2a) fundamental lack of respect for the African American woman leader by way of questioning her abilities and authority both publically and privately. The second theme from CRT counter-stories was the participant's experience of (2b) personal attacks while maligning the reputation of the TP in conjunction with sabotaging the credibility of the African American women leader (p. 110).