

Addressing basic need insecurities during the COVID-19 pandemic: A multi-case study of
administrators at three community colleges in Texas

by

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B.S., Texas A&M University, 2003
M. Ed., Texas Tech University, 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Basic Need Insecurities often impact the ability of community college students to persist and complete their goals. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated BNI for students' forcing administrators to respond to and address BNI. This study will highlight administrators' responses toward BNI and focus on the changes and/or services administrators implemented to support students and address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the changes and/or services that were implemented to support students during this time. The findings from this study could provide value to leadership preparation programs and provide insight into community colleges addressing BNI.

Due to the context of this research, the chosen methodology for this study was a qualitative multi-case study design comprised of interviews with administrators from three community college campuses in Texas in addition to document reviews. Additionally, interviews were semi-structured to allow the researcher to use structured questions to guide the interview and provide an opportunity to use probes and spontaneous questions to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the topic (Wilson, 2014).

This study explored competencies administrators in Texas used to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and identified changes and services implemented to support students' BNI. Demonstrating compassion and care was reported to be critical to supporting students during the pandemic. Creating open communication that was clear, concise, and constant and encouraging

collaboration was vital to successfully leading and supporting students BNI. Empowering employees with the knowledge and tools to support students during the pandemic was also an essential competency to successfully leading and supporting students BNI during the pandemic.

Many changes and services were implemented during the pandemic to support students' BNI; most revolved around adding BNI services, including food pantries and emergency aid. The most impactful implementation, however, was the addition of a one-stop shop where wrap-around services are provided to address BNI, including mental health, food pantries, clothes closets, personal hygiene products, childcare, transportation, emergency aid, and housing assistance.

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Approved by:
Major Professor
Dr. Robert Exley

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Dale, and our two boys, Will and Ethan. Thank you for always supporting and caring for me throughout my doctoral and dissertation journey and always. Your love and support mean more to me than you know. I could not have done it without you.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my mom and dad, James and Peggy Carter, for instilling in me a strong work ethic and a never-quit attitude. Those qualities have proved to be invaluable to my success.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Community colleges are unique in their potential to generate social mobility. Community colleges enroll and graduate students from low-socioeconomic families; their benefits change lives for generations by educating people and providing access that rarely exists at 4-year colleges and universities (Goldrick-Rab & Cady, 2021). Although community colleges are tremendously important institutions in the higher educational landscape, enrolling 39% of all undergraduate students, they face diminishing budgets and limited funding due to lower enrollment, lack of retention, and budget cuts from the government (Yuen, 2020).

Juggling multiple priorities while also striving to earn a higher education degree complicates things for students who face challenges in meeting their basic needs (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). According to Blankstein and Wolff-Eisenberg (2020):

Due to community colleges' open admissions policies and primarily non-residential offerings, community colleges more often reflect the demographic composition of their local community and contain a more diverse student body, including older students, student parents, those employed full- or part-time, and a larger share of students from historically underserved groups. (p. 4)

Students' basic needs include access to sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene; and childcare and related needs (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice [THCCCJ], 2021).

THCCCJ is an action research center focused on transforming higher education using various tools focusing on students' basic needs. Basic need insecurities (BNI) are a structural characteristic affecting students, where there is no ecosystem to ensure students' basic needs are

met. According to THCCCJ, the COVID-19 global pandemic has resulted in BNI becoming increasingly visible and exacerbated. Research conducted early in the pandemic during the Fall of 2020 reinforces this assertion, indicating nearly three in five students lacked adequate access to food or housing (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Research on the human hierarchy of needs has been done since 1943, beginning with Maslow (1943). Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs through a theory of human motivation, better known as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), which suggests humans are motivated to fulfill their basic needs before focusing on more advanced needs.

Focused research on BNI on college and university campuses has been conducted since 2013. THCCCJ began in 2013 in Wisconsin as the Wisconsin HOPE lab when the higher education community began to focus on challenges students faced that affected their persistence and completion. By 2015, Wisconsin HOPE labs transitioned to THCCCJ, and researchers discovered that food and housing insecurities adversely affect students' persistence and completion. THCCCJ has helped lead the effort in collecting and sharing information on college students' basic needs insecurity on college campuses nationwide by administering student surveys each Fall.

Background of the Problem

Financial struggles, food insecurity, and the lack of access to education often go hand in hand. According to THCCCJ (2021) data gathered from the Fall 2020 survey administered from September 24 to October 31, 2020, 31% of food-insecure students chose to pay for food over education. In addition, 48% of students faced housing insecurities, 14% were homeless affected, 39% of students faced food insecurities, and 67% of students in Texas have struggled

with depression and anxiety since the pandemic began. More than 195,000 students from 130 2-year colleges and 72 4-year colleges and universities responded to the survey.

Students' well-being and academic success often depend on first meeting their basic needs (Goldrick-Rab, 2021; Holdera et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2017; Trawver et al., 2020). Furthermore, students whose basic needs go unmet are more likely to have lower GPAs, higher levels of mental health issues, and poorer health (Hejl, 2021). If students face just one of these factors, it can influence their success, but a combination of them is reported to be likely to damage their academic success. Additionally, BNI can affect students' ability to remain enrolled, ultimately threatening their long-term financial stability and overall success. Overcoming barriers to student success can be complex; it often involves assessing and then addressing the learners' needs. According to Lampard-Dennis and Osterholt (2011), students are best served when they are placed in the center of multiple existing campus services. This process can most successfully happen with a holistic approach.

Although many surveys and studies have been completed on BNI and providing wrap-around services through a holistic approach, few studies have been focused on understanding BNI from administrators' perspectives on community college campuses in Texas during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the changes and/or services that were implemented to support students during this time.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

According to Roberts (2010), “A theoretical framework provides the boundaries, or scaffolding for your study” (p. 129). Halkias et al. (2022) explained:

theoretical frameworks provide four dimensions of insight for qualitative research that include: (1) focus and organization to the study, (2) expose and obstruct meaning, (3) connect the study to existing scholarship and terms, and (4) identify strengths and weaknesses of the study. (p. 14)

The theoretical framework used to inform this study was Maslow’s theory of human motivation, also known as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) states that basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency or influence. Additionally, physiological needs (e.g., food and water) are the most prepotent of all needs; if those needs are not met, humans cannot focus on more advanced needs, such as obtaining self-actualization. The researcher used this perspective to better understand the needs of students during the COVID-19 global pandemic, which contributed to exasperating BNI.

A conceptual framework explains the main concepts to be studied and their presumed relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The two conceptual frameworks that informed this study were the Crisis Leadership Model (2022) and Kotter’s (1996) eight-step process of change

model. The Crisis Leadership Model's (2022) seven constructs, also referred to as competencies throughout this study, crucial to crisis leadership include compassion and care, openness and communication, adaptiveness, resilience and courage, decisiveness, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment.

Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) provided a framework for evaluating change through implementing services at the institution. Kotter's Eight-Steps include (a) establishing a sense of urgency, (b) creating the guiding coalition, (c) developing a vision and strategy, (d) communicating the change vision, (e) empowering broad-based action, (f) generating short-term wins, (g) consolidating gains and producing more change, and (h) anchoring new approaches in the culture.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) provided a theoretical framework for informing the research questions and methodology of the study. The Crisis Leadership Model (2022) and Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) provided the lens through which to conduct the literature review, conduct the research, and inform the data analysis.

Alignment Table

Appendix A, Alignment Table, provides an overview of how Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) theoretical framework and the conceptual frameworks—the Crisis Leadership Model (2022), with Churchill's leadership characteristics as a subset, and Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) are aligned with the methodology of this study, the research questions, and the interview questions.

Methodology

The researcher used a multi-case study design to explore, identify, and interpret responses, challenges, and/or services leaders from three institutions used to address BNI during

the COVID-19 pandemic (Sadvandi & Halkias, 2019). Case study research allows researchers to perform an in-depth study of participants' perspectives on an issue in its natural context (Halkias et al., 2022).

The researcher used two sources of data: interviews with administrators from three community college campuses in Texas, in addition to a document analysis. Interviews were semi-structured to allow the researcher to use structured questions to guide the interview and provide an opportunity to use probes and spontaneous questions to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the topic (Wilson, 2014). The document analysis was performed on both public and personal data.

The community college campuses include colleges participating in the Texas Guided Pathways Initiative (TGPI). The TGPI is a comprehensive, statewide strategy to assist Texas community colleges in implementing structured academic and career pathways (Texas Success Center, n.d.). The TGPI assists colleges in establishing four pillars: (a) connect—clarifying paths to student end goals, (b) enter—helping students choose and enter a pathway, (c) progress—helping students stay on their pathway, and (d) succeed—ensuring students are learning.

Additionally, it is critical that each site be identified as a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI; U.S. Department of Education, 2022). The COVID-19 global pandemic disproportionately burdened Hispanic students. For many Hispanic students, educational plans over the past two years have taken a backseat to family responsibilities and meeting their basic needs (Brown, 2022).

Schools included one small college in located North Texas and two medium-sized colleges, one located in Southeast Texas and one in South Texas. The small college has an enrollment of approximately 2,300 students, the medium-sized college located in Southeast

Texas has an enrollment of approximately 5,700 students, and the medium-sized college located in South Texas has an enrollment of approximately 8,200 students.

Delimitations and Assumptions

This study incorporated insights from administrators at three Texas community colleges. A small number of administrators were interviewed at each college. The study did not include students. The timeframe researched and referred to as during the COVID-19 pandemic was limited to March 2020 to May 2022.

The assumptions in this study included two main points of focus. First, the researcher assumed all interviewees answered truthfully and transparently. Second, the researcher assumed administrators responded to and implemented changes and/or services to address BNI of students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Significance of the Study

Basic need insecurities often impact the ability of community college students to persist and complete their goals. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated BNI for students' forcing administrators to respond to and address BNI. This study will highlight administrators' responses toward BNI and focus on the changes and/or services administrators implemented to support students and address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study was designed to contribute to the body of knowledge that exists both on addressing BNI and critical leadership strategies and competencies in community college settings. Additionally, findings from this study could provide insight into how community college leaders can implement changes and/or services that will support students holistically during times of crisis.

Definitions of Terms

Basic needs include access to sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene; and childcare and related needs (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2021).

Basic need insecurities refer to a structural characteristic affecting students where there is no ecosystem in place to ensure students' basic needs are met (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2021).

Crisis is an event that affects or has the potential to affect the whole organization (I. Mitroff, 2004).

Crisis leadership is a set of actions undertaken by a leader to bring about immediate change in people's behavior and beliefs as well as to achieve needed outcomes (Alkharabsheh et al., 2014).

Hispanic serving institutions are institutions defined as having an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a framework for understanding that humans have basic needs that must be met, including biological and psychological, safety, belongingness and love, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

Texas Guided Pathways Initiative is a comprehensive, 5-year, statewide strategy to assist Texas community colleges in implementing structured academic and career pathways (Texas Success Center, n.d.).

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice is an action research center focused on transforming higher education using various tools focusing on students' basic needs (Goldrick-Rab, 2019).

Underserved students refers to students of color, first-generation, and low-income students (Green, 2006).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 of this study introduces the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, and the significance of studying the strategies and competencies leaders used to respond to BNI and changes and/or services administrators implemented to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Chapter 1 includes the theoretical and conceptual frameworks being used, the methodology selected, delimitations and assumptions, and definitions of terms needed to fully understand the study's concepts.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of the dissertation presents an overview of the study's background and its significance. Chapter 2 will provide a detailed review of the literature that informs the study. Focus areas of the literature review include (a) theoretical framework, (b) basic need insecurities in higher education, (c) the impact of COVID-19 on BNI, (d) conceptual frameworks, (e) organizations in crisis, (f) leadership during turbulence, and (g) reflection during crisis. Chapter 3 will detail the research methodology used for this study. Chapter 4 will discuss the data collected and analyzed and the key findings from the study. Chapter 5 reflects on the findings and concludes the study with implications and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the changes and/or services that were implemented to support students during this time. The literature review was conducted to provide context to the study. The documents were discovered through searches in Kansas State University databases, including ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, JSTOR, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), and Psychology and Behavioral Science Collection, in addition to Google Scholar, Google Book Search, and the Brown County Library. Sources include peer-reviewed journals, professional reports, dissertations, and books.

Examination of the literature led to the literature review being organized into seven significant themes: (a) theoretical framework, (b) basic need insecurities in higher education, (c) the impact of COVID-19 on BNI, (d) conceptual frameworks, (e) organizations in crisis, (f) leadership during turbulence, and (g) Reflection during crisis.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides an overarching worldview from which to view a study. Additionally, the framework helps define the research problem and structures the writing of the literature review (Roberts, 2010).

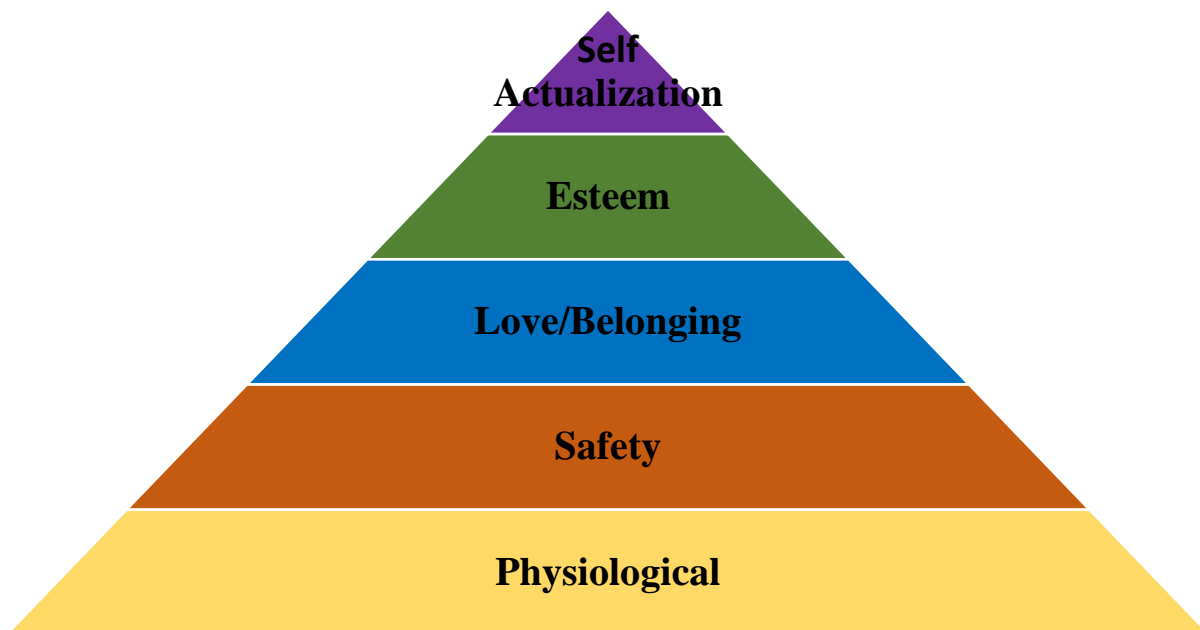
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) was selected for this study. Abraham Maslow began studying the theory of human motivation in the 1940s and fully developed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by 1943. Maslow believed motivation is determined by both internal and external factors. He held a holistic view of human motivation and considered an individual as

more than the sum of its parts (Maslow, 1943). Human motivation is a complex construct that is not easily understood; however, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) provides a solid framework to understand why understanding basic human needs is essential to this study's development.

According to Maslow, five goals fall under basic needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. These five goals are interrelated and dependent on each other but are categorized and arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency. The most prepotent means the most powerful or influential goal will monopolize the organism's consciousness and limit the organism's ability to focus on anything else (Maslow, 1943). As seen in Figure 2.1, the levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) from the base includes physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

Figure 2.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Note: Adapted from A Theory of Human Motivation by A. Maslow, 1943.

This study focused on how leaders' addressed Maslow's physiological and safety goals. Physiological is the most prepotent of Maslow's five goals; it includes breathing, food, and water. Safety is the second most prepotent goal and includes security of: the body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, and property. The overarching concept of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), when applied to higher education, is that if a student does not have access to sufficient food, shelter, and water, in addition to a safe atmosphere, the student will never be able to focus on achieving a higher goal or meeting self-actualization, in higher education, this would be a certificate or degree. The conceptual frameworks that guided this study will be addressed later in the chapter.

Basic Need Insecurities in Higher Education

According to Martinez (2021), "While basic needs is an established concept, it is relatively unfamiliar and understudied in the context of higher education" (p. 818). There is limited data on food, and housing insecurity among college students, specifically community college students; however, heightened awareness was brought to BNI in higher education in 2015 when The Hope Center for Community, Colleges, and Justice (THCCCJ) conducted the first nationwide study that explored BNI. Prior to this survey, colleges individually gathered information, but progress was not extensive. THCCCJ's first survey included 4,300 students at community colleges who participated in the survey.

Focus on BNI in Higher Education

The survey's primary focus was financial hardships, emotional challenges, and food and housing insecurity. In 2019 the survey was expanded to include the exploration of basic needs, including transportation, childcare, stress, and mental health. From 2015 to 2019, participation in the survey rose to over 167,000 students from over 227 institutions. Participants include public

and private 2-year and 4-year institutions (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). The participation rate varies yearly and ranged from 4.5% to 9% from 2015–2019. Focusing on food and housing insecurity and homelessness at 2-year institutions over this time, rates are persistently high, ranging from 40% to 60%; however, the data demonstrate the level of BNI fluctuates with what is happening in the world around the student.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is the inability to access nutritionally adequate and safe food in an acceptable way (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019). Food insecurity is a common challenge on college campuses, and students’ experiences range immensely (Broton & Cady, 2020).

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2022), there are four categories of food insecurity:

- High food security: no reported food-access problems or limitations.
- Marginal food security: anxiety or worry over food sufficiency or food shortage, including concerns that food will not stretch to the end of the month or next paycheck.
- Low food security: reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet, including substituting low-cost, lower-quality food items for higher-cost, higher-quality food items.
- Very low food security: multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake, including skipping or cutting the size of meals, which is often associated with hunger. (p. 1)

Community college students facing food insecurities often report food is the first thing sacrificed when faced with instability (Broton & Cady, 2020). According to THCCCJ’s survey conducted in the Fall of each year from 2015 to 2019, at 2-year institutions, rates of food insecurity among students ranged from 42% to 56%.

Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

Housing insecurity covers many challenges, including the inability to pay rent and utilities and frequently moving; homelessness refers to the lack of a place to live that may result in the student living in a car or abandoned building (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). According to THCCCJ's Fall surveys from 2015 to 2019, rates of housing insecurity among students ranged from 46% to 60, and homelessness rates ranged from 12% to 18%.

Transportation

Transportation often serves as another challenge for community college students. According to AACC (2021), 28% of community colleges nationwide offer housing, but only 1% of students use the housing opportunity. The cost of transportation to and from campuses results in a significant expense. Clay and Valentine (2021) stated, "Transportation is especially crucial for community college students, nearly all of whom commute" (p. 1). According to College Board, in 2021–2022, the average commuter student could expect to spend about 11% of their total living expenses on transportation costs.

Childcare

Student-parents constitute one-third of community college students across the nation. Sallee and Cox (2019) stated, "The conflicting demands they face as they navigate academic, financial, and family responsibilities can be overwhelming" (p. 621). Childcare is often one of the most significant factors that affect a student parent's ability to be successful while pursuing a certificate or degree (Dayne et al., 2021). Sallee and Cox (2019) stated, "Despite the fact that many live on the margins, student-parents are often ignored by the college itself" (p. 623). Studies have shown student-parents are often left out of physical spaces and policies in higher

education, leaving them struggling and often failing to meet their goals (Moreau & Kerner, 2012).

Affordable Technology

Affordable technology, also referred to as digital equity, has always been an issue but is not often discussed. According to Schaffer et al. (2019), “low-income families, people of color, and rural residents are the most likely to report not having access to high-speed internet and/or a computer at home” (p. 11). The lack of access to technology can often lead to educational “opportunity gaps” (Schaffer et al., 2019).

Before the pandemic, the lack of technology in higher education was not as noticeable because students could go to campus and get access to the library or anywhere on campus. However, studies on students ages 6–17 shed light on the issue. According to Anderson and Perrin (2018), data analyzed by the Pew Research Center from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates 15% of school-age students did not have a high-speed internet connection at home, and 17% stated they could not finish their homework due to the lack of internet. Additionally, 35% of lower-income households with school-age children did not have a broadband internet connection at home.

Mental Health

The transition into adulthood is the most prominent time for young people between 18 and 24. In most studies, roughly 50% of all lifetime mental disorders start by the mid-teens and 75% by the mid-20s. Basic need insecurities are often associated with physical and mental health struggles (Coakley et al., 2022). Prior to the pandemic during the academic year 2020, more than one-third of college students across the country were diagnosed by mental health professionals for having at least one mental health symptom (American College Health Association, 2020).

Depression and anxiety are two of the most common mental health issues on a college campus (Francis & Horn, 2017). Bundy and Benschhoff (2000) found over 70% of community college students stated access to personal counseling would be helpful for them. The consequences of untreated depression and anxiety include poor academic performance, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbance, low self-esteem, mood dysregulation, and relationship problems (Baez, 2005).

The Impact of COVID-19 on BNI

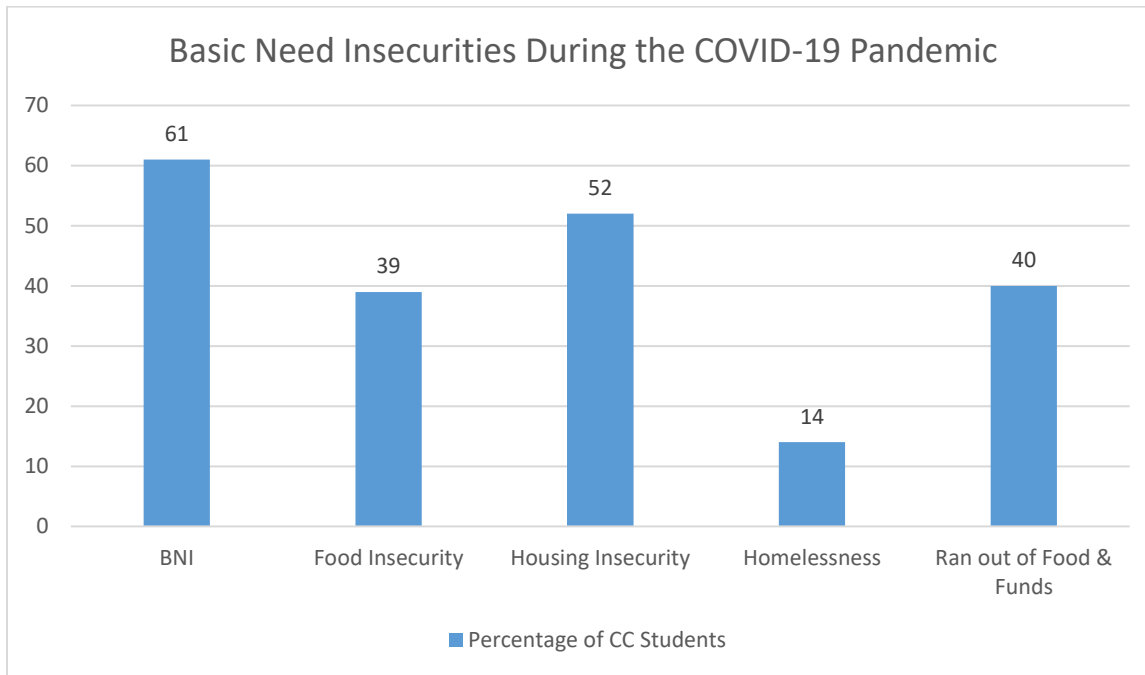
COVID-19 changed students' lives throughout higher education and substantially disrupted their education practically overnight (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). Additionally, BNI increased during the global COVID-19 pandemic due to students not being on campus (Hodara et al., 2021). Outreach and support became a significant issue, and collecting student data was much more complex and time-consuming. According to U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona (2022), "In speaking with students from across the country at all different types of higher education institutions, I have heard consistently that the pandemic has exacerbated challenges in meeting students' basic needs, from housing to food to transportation and more" (p. 1).

From March 6 to 13, 2020, over 300 colleges and universities closed their doors to students and went strictly to online learning. The closing of institutions led to students losing access to food and housing provided on campus and essential support services (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020).

According to a survey done by the THCCCJ from April 20-May 15, 2020, of over 30,000 community college students in the 30 days prior to the survey, 61% faced BNI, 39% faced food

insecurity, 52% faced housing insecurity, 14% faced homelessness, and 40% of students ran out of food and the funds to support their families (see Figure 2.2).

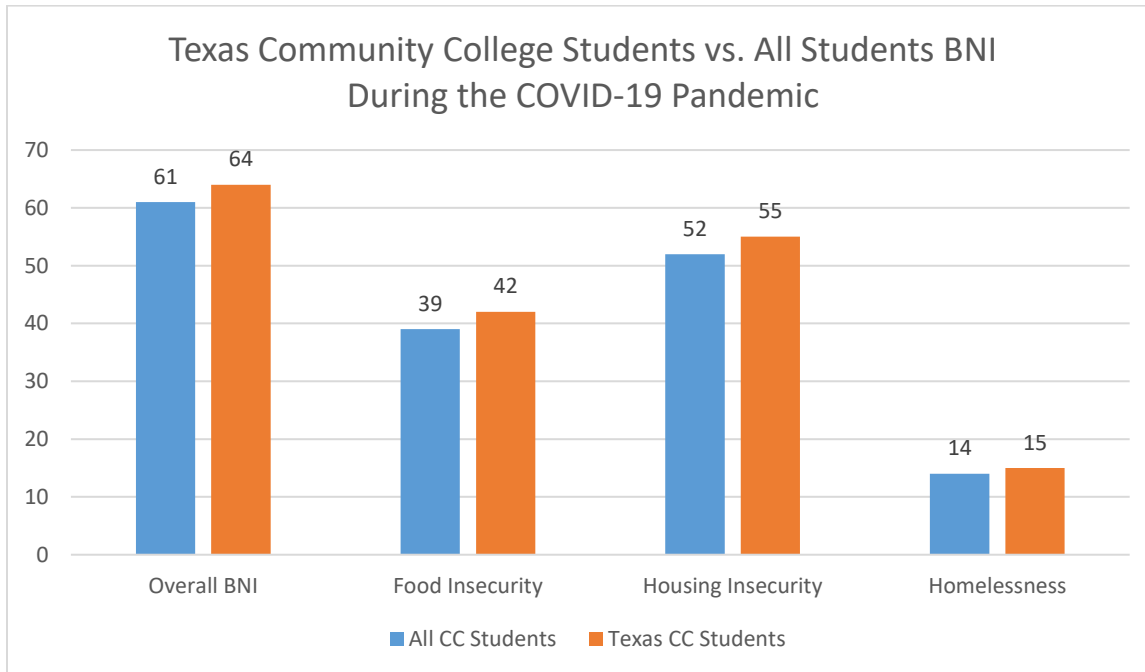
Figure 2.2. BNI during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Note: Adapted from #REALCOLLEGE During the Pandemic: New Evidence on Basic Needs Insecurity and Student Well-Being by S. Goldrick-Rab, V. Coca, G. Kienzl, C. Welton, S. Dahl, S. Magnelia, 2020. The Hope Center. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Hopecenter_RealCollegeDuringthePandemic.pdf.

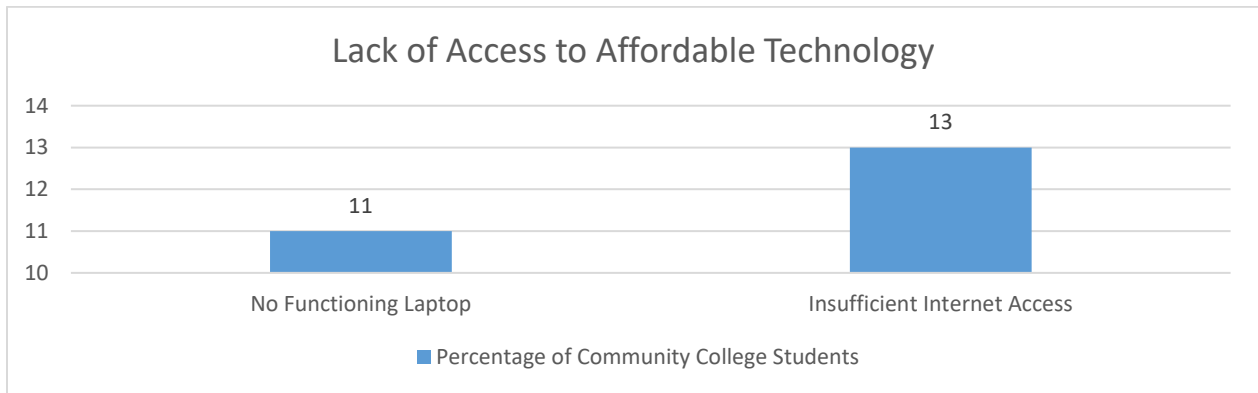
According to THCCJ, in Texas, community college students were affected by the pandemic at an even higher rate than the overall college student population (see Figure 2.3). Sixty-four percent of students faced overall BNI compared to 61%, 42% faced food insecurity in comparison to 39% overall, 55% faced housing insecurity in comparison to 52% overall, and 15% faced homelessness as opposed to 14% overall.

Figure 2.3. Texas Community College Students Versus All CC Students BNI During the COVID-19 Pandemic



According to the Pew Research Center, approximately one-quarter of American adults do not have access to broadband internet. COVID-19 turned homes into classrooms overnight; due to the digital divide, students who lost access to the internet and technology on campus were left behind. Many students used restaurants with free internet access to complete homework and attend classes. According to Goldrick-Rab et al. (2020), 11% of community college students had no functioning laptop, and 13% had insufficient access to affordable technology (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. Lack of Access to Affordable Technology

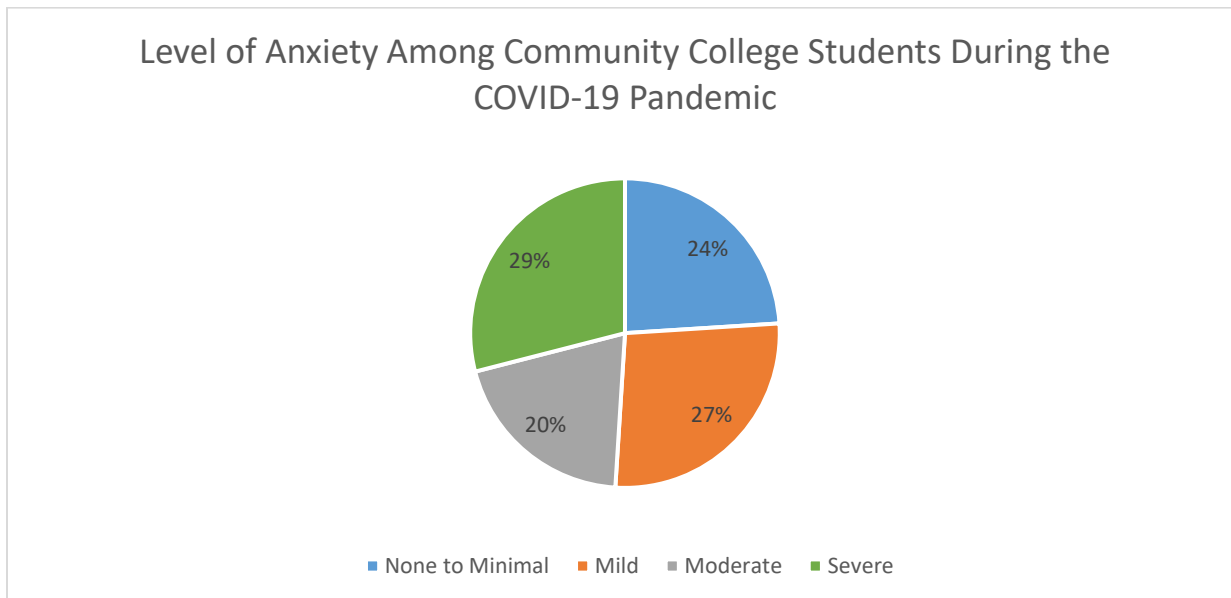


Note: Adapted from #REALCOLLEGE During the Pandemic: New Evidence on Basic Needs Insecurity and Student Well-Being by S. Goldrick-Rab, V. Coca, G. Kienzl, C. Welton, S. Dahl, S. Magnelia, 2020. The Hope Center. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Hopecenter_RealCollegeDuringthePandemic.pdf.

Young adults in college are susceptible to increased rates of mental health challenges resulting from psychological distress (Liu et al., 2019). COVID-19 exacerbated those mental health issues. “According to a survey conducted by Rise, a college affordability advocacy group, 75% of college students reported feeling higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress during the pandemic” (p. 7).

COVID-19 has had substantial psychological impacts on the mental health of university faculty, staff, and students, including increased depression, anxiety, perceived stress, and loneliness. Anxiety levels of community college students during the COVID-19 global pandemic are shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5. Anxiety Levels of Community College Students During the COVID-19 Global Pandemic



Note: Adapted from *#REALCOLLEGE During the Pandemic: New Evidence on Basic Needs Insecurity and Student Well-Being* by S. Goldrick-Rab, V. Coca, G. Kienzl, C. Welton, S. Dahl, S. Magnelia, 2020. The Hope Center. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Hopecenter_RealCollegeDuringthePandemic.pdf.

According to Goldrick-Rab et al. (2021), 24% of students experienced none to minimal anxiety during the pandemic, 27% experienced mild anxiety, 20% experienced moderate anxiety, and 29% of students experienced severe anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating mental health challenges were a significant issue for many students during this time.

The Impact of COVID-19 on BNI for Hispanic Students

Brown (2022) stated, “After two decades during which Hispanic students have been the fastest-growing demographic group enrolling in college, the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened that progress” (p. 1). Underserved students, including Hispanic students, have experienced a disproportionate burden of the pandemic (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). According to

the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2021), enrollment from 2019 to 2021 dropped by 7% for undergraduate Hispanic students.

According to a study of 588 Hispanic students conducted by the University of Houston in the Spring of 2021, 69% experienced stress during the pandemic that caused distractions from their academic work, and 59% agreed remote classes were more challenging and stressful than face-to-face classes. Additionally, 46% were worried about paying for regular necessities, 61% were concerned they would not be able to pay for school for the upcoming semester, and 41% experienced mental health issues ten or more times in the 30 days prior to the administration of the survey, demonstrating the COVID-19 pandemic presented immense challenges for Hispanic students.

Changes in BNI Service Offerings During COVID-19

There have been few studies done on BNI service offerings during the COVID-19 pandemic, but according to a study conducted by Zottarelli et al. (2022) at the University of Tennessee and the University of Texas at San Antonio:

There were no changes in service offerings in many areas. Few colleges subsidized meal plans, and there was no change between the two-time points. Additionally, some program areas were decreased during the pandemic. On-campus food pantries and food banks were reduced by 16.6%. Preschool and after-school childcare services were reduced by 19.2% and 4.2%, respectively. Programming directed at supplying students with business-style clothing decreased by 19.2%, and everyday clothing decreased by 4.2%. Training programs directed at financial budgeting and training decreased by 8.3%, and meal budgeting and training decreased by 3.8%. (p. 6)

Data collection was conducted in Texas between October 22 and December 8, 2020; only administrators who were likely to oversee student services were contacted, and only 24 of 49 public community college institutions responded to the survey, all of which were Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Reflecting on BNI and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, psychological and self-fulfillment needs cannot be met if basic needs, such as the need for nutritious food and safe housing, are not met. Applying this to higher education settings, like community colleges, BNI are associated with poor academic outcomes (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). Students experiencing elements of BNI have been reported to struggle concentrating, completing courses, and staying on track to graduate.

Although BNI have always been an issue on community college campuses, shutting down institutions of higher education in the middle of the semester due to COVID-19 brought BNI to the forefront of many community colleges because of the services like food pantries and other assistance students typically would have received were shut down.

Although the average percentages of students facing food insecurity (i.e., 39% in 2019 and 39% in 2021), housing insecurity (i.e., 46% in 2019 and 48% in 2021), and homelessness (i.e., 17% in 2019 and 14% in 2021) did not increase much, if at all, from the 2019 #REALCOLLEGE survey to the 2021 #REALCOLLEGE survey, the number of students completing the survey did, meaning that more students were facing these securities than previously. In 2019, only 167,000 students completed the survey; in 2021, more than 195,000 students completed the survey (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2021).

Conceptual Frameworks

A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied (i.e., the key factors, constructs, or variables and the presumed relationships among them; Roberts, 2010). Connecting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) to conceptual frameworks will guide this study in explaining fundamental concepts and will aid in informing the problem. The conceptual frameworks used in this study include the Crisis Leadership Model (2022) in the context of COVID-19 for Research Question 1 and Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) for Research Question 2.

Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change

Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) provided a solid framework for exploring institutional changes. Kotter's model was used to address Research Question 2. Change can be stalled for several reasons, including a lack of teamwork, leadership, trust, and the fear of the unknown. Implementing change is never easy, and crises add to the anxiety and stress of the situation, but using Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) can alleviate many barriers leaders face during times of crisis and change. Kotter's Eight-Steps were cultivated over four decades of Dr. Kotter's observations of countless leaders and organizations trying to transform or execute their strategies (Kotter, 1996). Kotter's Eight-Steps in Figure 2.6 provides the framework for implementing organizational change.

Figure 2.6. Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change



Note: Adapted from *Leading Change* by J. Kotter, 1996. Harvard Business School Press.

Kotter (1996, p. 21) detailed the Eight-Steps of creating significant change as follows:

- *Establishing a sense of urgency*—Examining the market and competitive realities and identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities.
- *Creating the guiding coalition*—Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change and getting the group to work together like a team.
- *Developing a vision and strategy*—Creating a vision to help direct the change effort and developing strategies for achieving that vision.
- *Communicating the change vision*—Using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies and having the guiding coalition role model the behavior expected of employees.

- *Empowering broad-based action*—Getting rid of obstacles, changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision, and encouraging risk-taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions.
- *Generating short-term wins*—Planning for visible performance improvements, or “wins,” creating those wins, and visibly recognizing and rewarding people who made the wins possible.
- *Consolidating gains and producing more change*—Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that do not fit together and do not fit the transformation vision, hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision, and reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents.
- *Anchoring new approaches in the culture*—Creating better performance through customer- and productivity-oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective management, articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success, and developing means to ensure leadership development and succession.

Successful change typically goes through all Eight-Steps and is usually in order; however, organizations typically operate simultaneously in multiple phases. Skipping steps or moving too far ahead often leads to problems or failure (Kotter, 1996). When applying Kotter to this study, the nature of the pandemic has already created a sense of urgency; therefore, the researcher will be paying close attention to the initial steps of Kotter’s model, increasing the urgency and creating the guiding coalition.

Crisis Leadership Model

The Crisis Leadership Model (2022) was the conceptual framework used to address Research Question 1. There is no available and widely recognized theoretical framework or measurement model of crisis leadership; however, a study completed by Balasubramanian and Fernandes (2022) provided a framework based on the COVID-19 pandemic from which to follow. The framework provides seven crisis leadership competencies: (a) compassion and care, (b) openness and communication, (c) adaptiveness, (d) resilience and courage, (e) decisiveness, (f) consultation and collaboration, and (g) empowerment (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7. Crisis Leadership Competencies



Note: Adapted from “Confirmation of a Crisis Leadership Model (2022) and its Effectiveness: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic,” by S. Balasubramanian & C. Fernandes, 2022, *Cogent Business and*

Management, 9(1), p. 11. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2021.2022824>). Copyright 2022 by S. Balasubramanian & C. Fernandes.

Care and compassion create a sense of togetherness during a crisis. During a crisis, the emphasis should be on making a connection rather than correction (Kaul et al., 2020). Leaders can be more effective if their policies and decisions are informed by empathy with others (Haslam et al., 2021). Leaders must demonstrate humility to listen to a wide range of concerns and act with empathy, concern, and understanding of what their stakeholders face (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022). Mutch (2015) found “developing a sense of community, engendering loyalty, and fostering collaboration” (p. 192) are successful traits of crisis leaders.

Communication is a critical part of addressing a crisis. Communication creates a shared vision and guidelines for moving forward during the crisis. Openness and communication can be defined broadly as the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Boin et al. (2013) pointed out communication is “one of the main sources of problems . . . as communication often breaks down . . . in the midst of a crisis” (p. 85). According to Urick et al. (2021), “Leaders who maintain open, two-way, transparent, and ethical communication can prevent and reduce threats” (p. 8). Leadership is a communication endeavor; botched communication can severely affect how a crisis operation is perceived (Boin et al., 2013). According to Wooten and James (2008):

What elevates a leader’s competency in communicating effectively during a crisis is his or her ability to connect emotionally and psychologically with an audience and influence the latter’s opinion of the organization in such a way that opinions are the same or more favorable in the midst of and following a crisis than they were at pre-crisis times. (p. 17)

Adaptiveness requires the leader to learn and adjust to the crisis situation continuously.

During a crisis, leaders should make sure to incorporate an agile and adaptive mindset into decision-making and operational thinking (Dirani et al., 2020). The leader's ability to be flexible and agile is often critical to successfully using crisis leadership. Leaders who are adaptive make decisions quickly based on the information before them. Crisis leaders must be able to manage the rapid flow of information and changing evidence and make decisions to move the organization forward.

Resilience and courage are essential competencies of leaders during a crisis. Fear of failure should not be a barrier to decision-making during a crisis. Resilient leaders must view failures as temporary setbacks they can recover from quickly (Stoller, 2020). "Hard decisions and sacrifices are required to preserve strategic direction during the crisis" (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022, p. 7). Smith and Riley (2012) asserted "crisis leadership . . . should include attributes such as authenticity, agility, resilience, foresight, self-mastery, intuition, and creativity" (p. 65). Effective crisis leadership contributes to resilient organizations enabling them to quickly recover from setbacks and mistakes.

Decisiveness is often crucial to leadership during a crisis. Leaders who take a more direct, strong, take-charge approach tend to have more success during times of crisis (Forster et al., 2020). A decisive leader during a crisis understands delayed decisions or lack of action can often lead to worse outcomes (Kaul et al., 2020). Additionally, leaders must demonstrate a sense of urgency to address emerging concerns during a crisis, not hesitating to make complex, rapid, high-impact decisions. "Quick implementation during a crisis is paramount" (Stroller, 2020, p. 2).

Consultation and collaboration during a crisis are often critical to an organization's ability to thrive and survive. A crisis often results in the leader facing decision-making from

outside their area of expertise with no time to learn more about the area of concern. The ability to collaborate and consult with others with knowledge and expertise in that area is often critical to making decisions that will support the organization and move it forward. It is essential to reach out to those outside the organization and tap into the collective leadership potential and knowledge of those in the organization, including employees, customers, and suppliers (Kaul et al., 2020). Ulmer (2012) “emphasizes collaboration with stakeholders, open communication processes and honesty and timeliness in providing information about the crisis” (p. 531). Stoller (2020) stated, “A successful response to a crisis is the ultimate team effort because all team members must be aligned in service of a common goal” (p. 2).

Empowering employees during times of crisis enable organizations to act and respond quickly to emergencies and critical situations. Empowering employees emphasizes communication, collaboration, and trust-building (Coleman, 1996). Employees should be provided the support to feel comfortable sharing creative ideas to address unforeseen circumstances. Quick implementation of action during a crisis is essential. Employees must be allowed to experiment, take risks, and learn from their failures to solve problems quickly and effectively (Stoller, 2020).

Organizations in Crisis

As previously mentioned, the definition of *crisis* for this study is “an event that affects or has the potential to affect the whole organization” (Mitroff, 2004, p. 63). Crisis often calls into question the survival of an institution and can result in both positive and negative outcomes for an organization. Additionally, the trauma of the crisis can also provide the organization with the opportunity to learn and change (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Often, organizations in crisis take in, process, and act on information differently than they would in normal situations (U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services, 2019). Morgan (2006) stated, “The universe is in a constant state of flux, embodying characteristics of both permanence and change” (p. 241), and crisis can either accelerate or hinder that change. The structure and atmosphere of an organization impact how efficient an organization is when addressing a crisis and the changes that take place to ensure the success of the organization (Hardt, 2014). Although Kotter’s Eight-Step process of change was selected for this study, many models can be used when facing change.

Lewin’s Three-Step Model

According to Cameron and Green (2004), in 1951, Kurt Lewin developed his ideas of organizational change by suggesting a way of looking at the overall process of making changes. Lewin’s three-step model uses the metaphor of organizations as organisms, meaning they are living, adaptive systems. As living, adaptive systems, organizations function best in homeostasis, meaning they have the natural tendency to adjust to a normal steady state (Cameron & Green, 2004). Lewin’s three steps include unfreeze, move, and refreeze (see Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8. Lewin’s Three Step Model



Note: Adapted from *Making Sense of Change Management* by E. Cameron & M. Green, 2004.

The unfreeze step of Lewin’s three steps is initiated upon awareness of a crisis event or “the change toward a higher level of group performance” (Lewin, 1947, p. 34). After the awareness step, organizations then enter the change phase. During this phase, resources are

identified and used to create the desired change. The last step of the process is the freeze step; the change is perpetuated at this time and becomes the new norm for the company (Grant, 2016). Although Lewin's approach seems ideal for addressing change quickly, it fails to identify a plan to enact the change, which can often lead to failure (Cameron & Green, 2004).

Carnall's Change Management Model

According to Cameron and Green (2004), Carnall's change management model combines many perspectives on change. Carnall's change management model focuses on the manager's role during the change process. Carnall's model significantly focuses on managing transitions effectively, dealing with organizational cultures, and managing organizational politics (Cameron & Green, 2004).

A manager who can assist people as they learn to change and create an open atmosphere will create a more adaptable culture. Additionally, a manager who understands politics and can build internal and external coalitions is critical to the change management approach (Cameron & Green, 2004). According to Carnall (1990), a manager skilled in managing the transition will create an atmosphere of creative risk-taking and help people learn as they implement change. This, in turn, achieves organizational change. Although Carnall's approach is beneficial and provides a guide for managers, it lacks a focus on the actual change process, which can lead to unsuccessful plans when implementing change.

Emergent Change Model

Liebhart and Garcia-Lorenzo (2010) stated, "Emergent change is described as unpredictable, often unintentional, can come from anywhere, and involving relatively informal self-organizing" (p. 50). The emergent approach to change starts from the assumption that

change is not linear nor cyclic but open-ended and unpredictable, adjusting and readjusting to an organization's changing environment (Burnes, 2009).

According to Stacey (2005), organizations often operate at the edge of chaos and far from equilibrium, leaving stability and instability challenging to separate. To be successful, organizations must learn to operate in this chaos. When organizations become too rigid, they cannot respond quickly and adequately to change (Stacey, 2001). Although the emergent change model provides flexibility and the ability to act quickly, it is unpredictable and does not provide an organization with a deliberate strategy to address change (Maes & Van Hottengen, 2011).

Leadership Styles During Turbulence

Leadership is complex and challenging to define. For this review, leadership will be defined as influencing people by providing them with purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish a mission and improve the organization (Northhouse, 2004). Turbulence is a term taken from air travel that describes flight conditions caused by changes in air pressure; turbulence can cause extreme anxiety, stress, and fear among passengers depending on the severity of the turbulence or crisis (Urlick et al., 2021). Leaders in all organizations experience turbulence. However, little emphasis has been put on supporting and instructing leaders on crisis leadership (Powley & Taylor, 2014).

Crisis Leadership

According to Haslam et al. (2021), "The emergence of a common enemy creates a sense of common fate that motivates a sense of shared identity and a desire for unity of both understanding and action" (p. 35). A crisis can be defined in many ways; for this study, Mitroff's (2004) definition will be used: "A crisis is an event that affects or has the potential to affect the whole organization" (p. 6).

Crisis leadership is a relatively new concept developed from crisis management failures. The concept of crisis leadership moves beyond the mechanical role of a leader during a crisis and focuses on one that is systematic, proactive, and extensive. Crisis leadership encompasses prevention and management, consistency and clarity, trust and transparency, and communication during each crisis phase (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022). Mutch (2015) indicated crisis leadership also includes “maintaining a vision of what was and what could be” (p. 188).

According to Mitroff (2004), crisis management is reactive, but crisis leadership is proactive; additionally, crisis management is centralized and bureaucratic, but crisis leadership is integrated and adhocratic. In examining crisis leadership and management, Liou (2015) suggests “traditional approaches to crisis management often fail to address such crisis situations due to a typical maldeveloped crisis plan that is generally featured by linear, routine, and comparatively uninformative simulation exercises” (p. 248). Firestone (2020) stated:

While crisis management and crisis leadership may appear similar, the differences are apparent when you see that crisis management is more concerned with the immediate recovery effort, while crisis leadership looks at the enduring role of a leader before, during, and after the crisis has ended. (p. 19)

Differentiating between management and leadership can lead to successfully navigating a crisis situation.

According to Mitroff (2004), crisis leadership is much more than reacting to a crisis; it encompasses actions taken before, during, and after a crisis. Table 2.1 demonstrates the four significant variables involved in crisis leadership.

Table 2.1. Factors of Crisis Leadership

Actions	Before: Establish precrisis capabilities	During: Enact capabilities	After: Reexamine and revamp crisis capabilities
Crisis types	Formulate a broad and diverse crisis portfolio.	Anticipate further crises.	Reexamine crisis portfolio.
Crisis mechanisms	Design and implement signal detection, damage containment, business recovery, and crisis learning mechanisms.	Implement damage containment and business recovery functions.	Reexamine signal detection, etc. mechanisms
Crisis systems	Form and train a crisis leadership team; implement a crisis leadership reward system; identify and overcome organizational defense mechanisms.	Activate a crisis learning team.	Reexamine and reevaluate the crisis leadership team.
Crisis stakeholders	Formulate a broad and diverse set of crisis stakeholders.	Respond to anticipated and unanticipated crisis stakeholders.	Reevaluate crisis stakeholders.

Note: Table of Factors of Crisis Leadership. Adapted from *Crisis Leadership: Planning for the Unthinkable* by I. Mitroff. John Wiley & Sons.

Crisis types can be broken into seven categories: economic, informational, physical, human resources, reputational, psychopathic acts, and natural disasters. Every type of crisis can happen to an organization, and leaders should prepare for the simultaneous occurrence of multiple crises; therefore, leaders should think about the unthinkable as much as the crisis itself and identify the interconnections between the types of crises. Crisis leadership is systemic and will require the leader to depend on the whole organization to overcome the crisis (Mitroff, 2004).

Mechanisms are strategic decisions to limit damage produced by crises in a specific way. Crisis mechanisms are the capabilities of the organization to address crises. Mechanisms that are

important to Crisis leadership include: anticipating, sensing, reacting to, containing, learning from, and redesigning effective organizational procedures for handling crises (Mitroff, 2004). Crisis systems include creating teams and processes to address crisis situations; the teams should be aligned to address each part of a crisis. Crisis stakeholders include both internal and external stakeholders who have the potential to be impacted by the crisis. Stakeholders often have conflicting interests, needs, values, and expectations; open communication is critical to the success of organizations addressing a crisis.

Winston Churchill's Leadership During Turbulence

Winston Churchill was appointed Prime Minister of Britain in 1940, at the height of World War II; his character during times of turbulence set him apart from ordinary leaders. Churchill's leadership was, in essence, transformational. Mathis and Roueche (2019) said, "Transformational leadership requires courage, candor, and collaboration" (p. 258). Four aspects of his character that stand out and align well with transformational leadership are his candor and plain speaking, decisiveness (i.e., ponder then act), the ability to balance a view of the whole scene with attention to detail, and a historical imagination that informed his judgment (Hayward, 1997). Churchill's courage was also a prominent aspect of his character. According to Meachum (2018), "Churchill liked to quote Aristotle, who said that courage was the most important virtue, for it guaranteed all the others" (p. 3).

Churchill's leadership approach was to take charge and assume total responsibility. He felt a leader should assume responsibility for the outcome of whatever events were set in motion. He also used a simplified organizational structure emphasizing responsibility and discipline. Churchill's solution to collective decision-making dynamics was to couple responsibility with direct power of action. He noted, "administrative structure must be clear and precise with

functions divided and responsibility assigned” (Hayward, 1997, p. 51). Another critical point of Churchill’s leadership was flexibility. He was not bound by any arrangements he had set in place and often violated his structures.

Organizational structure and discipline are insufficient to create a successful administration. Churchill’s decision-making ability, communication ability, calmness under stress, loyalty as a team player, and kindness completed his arsenal of virtues for effective leadership (Hayward, 1997). Churchill’s ability to select and manage personnel was astute. His selection process was to start at the top, seek big personalities, have a plan, establish trust, give clear directions, and back your people through thick and thin. It was essential to keep them fully informed, stick to priorities, and have a consistent method and discipline. According to Churchill, one should “seek to proceed by design through crisis to decision” (Hayward, 1997, p. 78; see Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9. Churchill’s Do’s and Don’ts of the Thought Process

- Always concentrate on the broad view and the central features of the problem at hand.
- Factor in risk and chance by keeping things in proper proportion.
- Keep open to changing your mind in the presence of new facts.
- Be careful not to look too far ahead.
- Avoid excessive perfectionism.
- Don’t make decisions for decision’s sake.

Note: Adapted from Churchill on Leadership by S. Hayward. Prima Publishing.

“Of all the talents bestowed upon men, none is so precious as the gift of oratory. . . Abandoned by his party, betrayed by his friends, stripped of his offices, whoever can command this power is still formidable.”

--- Winston S. Churchill, 1897

Hayward (1997) said, “Churchill’s communication skills resulted from hard work and determined deliberation” (p. 111). According to Hayward (1997), lessons learned from

Churchill's communication include remembering effective language: diction, rhythm, accumulation of argument, and analogy, conducting all important matters in writing, and keeping the message concise.

John W. Gardner On Leadership

John W. Gardner entered World War II as the head of the Latin American section of the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, and then in 1943, he joined the Marine Corps. After the war ended, he joined the Carnegie Corporation, becoming its president in 1955; he also led the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Gardner served as a great leader as a presidential advisor, engineer, coalition builder, supporter, and advocate until he died in 2002 (Gardner, 2003).

According to Gardner (1990), leaders have always dealt with conflict and crisis. They are faced with immensely threatening problems every day. Additionally, he stated that “the probability is greater than chance that leaders in one situation will be leaders in another situation, and the importance of the attributes to effective leadership varies with the situation” (p. 48).

Attributes Gardner found to be critical to leadership success include: physical vitality and stamina, intelligence and judgment-in-action, willingness to accept responsibility, task competence, understanding of followers/constituents and their needs, skill in dealing with people, need to achieve, capacity to motivate, courage, resolution, and steadiness, capacity to win and hold trust, capacity to manage, decide, and set priorities, confidence, ascendancy, dominance, and assertiveness, and adaptability, and flexibility of approach.

Although Gardner's attributes were broken down into smaller bits of information, they align with and support both crisis leadership and Churchill's leadership characteristics. All three

leadership experts focused on courage, quick response, willingness to accept responsibility, and strong communication skills.

Reflection During Crisis

According to Mutch (2015), addressing a crisis successfully requires leaders to reflect and focus on their leadership strengths and weaknesses. As leaders build their capacity to reflect on and learn throughout a crisis, they are more apt to be prepared for challenges both during and after a crisis (Mutch, 2015). The American Association of Community Colleges Leadership Competencies, in alignment with the Crisis Leadership Model's (2022) seven competencies and Churchill's leadership characteristics, provides a tool for reflecting. The importance of the competencies and characteristics will vary with each situation or crisis. Although leaders need to possess many of these, it is not critical that they possess all of them. Building a solid team to fill in where the leader lacks is essential to the success of leadership.

AACC Leadership Competencies

The AACC (2018) provides a guideline for leaders in the college to reflect on their competencies. Focus areas for reflection and growth are provided for faculty, mid-level leaders, senior-level leaders, aspiring CEOs, new CEOs, and current CEOs. It is important to note the AACC competencies were not developed to be a reactive tool but to provide guidance for reflection and the ability to be proactive while assessing their strengths and weaknesses in their leadership competencies.

According to the AACC's Competencies, there are 11 focus areas to use proactively to make improvements: (a) organizational culture; (b) governance, institutional policy, and legislation; (c) student success; (d) institutional leadership; (e) institutional infrastructure; (f) information analytics; (g) advocacy and mobilizing/motivating others; (h) fundraising and

relationship cultivation; (i) communications; (j) collaboration; and (k) personal traits and abilities. Aligning the 11 competencies with the Crisis Leadership Model's (2022) seven competencies and Churchill's leadership characteristics can provide a foundation for preparing a leader to be successful during a crisis.

Organizational culture requires a leader to embrace the community college's mission, vision, and values and acknowledge the past while planning its future; its competencies include the mission, vision, and values of the community college and culture of the institution, and the external community; it aligns well with *compassion, care, decisiveness, and adaptiveness* in the Crisis Leadership Model (2022) and Churchill's *historical imagination and decisiveness*.

Governance, institutional policy, and legislation require the leader to be knowledgeable about the institution's governance and policies; its competencies include the college's organizational structure, governance structures, college policies, procedures, and board relations; it aligns well with *adaptiveness and decisiveness* and *the ability to concentrate on the broad view and the central feat and decisiveness*.

Student success requires a leader to support student success and embraces opportunities to improve access, retention, and success; its competencies include student success, consistency between the college's operation and student-focused agenda, data usage, program/performance review, and evaluation for improvement; it aligns well with *compassion, care, empowerment, resilience, and courage*, and Churchill's *courage and communication*.

Institutional leadership requires the leader to understand the importance of interpersonal relationships and management skills; its competencies include being an influencer, supporting team building, performance management, leading by example, problem-solving techniques, conflict management, advocating for professional development, customer service, and

transparency; it aligns with *consultation, collaboration, and empowerment* and Churchill's *candor and plain speaking, back your people, and communication*.

Institutional infrastructure and information analytics align well with *adaptiveness and decisiveness* and *ponder then act decisiveness*. Institutional infrastructure requires a leader to be fluent in developing strategic plans, financial and facilities management, accreditation, and technology; its competencies include strategic and operational planning, budgeting, prioritization and allocation of resources, accreditation, facilities master planning and management, and technology master planning. Information analytics requires a leader to understand how to use data to make decisions; its competencies include qualitative and quantitative data and data analytics.

Motivating others requires that a leader be a champion for the institution its competencies include community college ideals, stakeholder mobilization, media relations, and marketing and social media; it aligns well with *openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment* and *have a plan, establish trust, give clear directions, and back your people through thick and thin*.

Communications require that a leader demonstrate strong communication skills and be the spokesperson for the institution; its competencies include presentation, speaking and writing, active listening, global and cultural competence, strategies for multigenerational engagement, email etiquette, fluency with social media and emerging technologies, consistency with messaging and crisis communication. Communications align well with *openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, empowerment, candor, and plain speaking and communication skills*.

Collaboration requires that a leader develop relationships internally and externally, to sustain the community college mission; its competencies include interconnectivity, working with supervisors, institutional team building, and collective bargaining. Collaboration aligns well with *consultation and collaboration and have a plan, establish trust, give clear directions, and back your people through thick and thin and communication.*

Fundraising and relationship cultivation requires a leader to cultivate relationships to support the institution; its competencies include fundraising, alumni relationships, media relationships, legislative relationships, public relations, and workforce populations; it aligns well with *resilience and courage, consultation and collaboration, and openness and communication and courage and keeping your people fully informed.*

Personal traits and abilities align well with all seven competencies of the Crisis Leadership Model (2022) and Churchill's leadership characteristics. Personal traits and abilities require a leader to possess certain traits to promote the community college agenda; its competencies include authenticity, emotional intelligence, courage, ethical standards, self-management, and environmental scanning, time management and planning, familial impact, forward-looking philosophy, and embracing change. According to Smith and Riley (2012), "Crisis leadership . . . should include attributes such as authenticity, agility, resilience, foresight, self-mastery, intuition, and creativity" (p. 65). Additionally, Wooten and James (2008) found crisis leadership "demands an integration of skills, abilities, and traits that allow a leader to plan for, respond to, and learn from crisis events" (p. 2).

Aligning and applying the AACC competencies with the Crisis Leadership Model's (2022) seven competencies and Churchill's leadership characteristics provides a solid foundation

to explore leadership characteristics contributing to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. As demonstrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. AACC Competencies Alignment with the Crisis Leadership Model & Churchill’s Leadership Characteristics

AACC competencies	Crisis Leadership Model seven constructs/competencies or strategies	Churchill’s leadership characteristics
Organizational culture	Compassion and care; decisiveness; adaptiveness	Historical imagination; decisiveness
Governance, institutional policy, and legislation	Adaptiveness; decisiveness	Ability to concentrate on the broad view; central feat; decisiveness
Student success	Compassion and care; empowerment; resilience and courage	Courage; communication
Institutional leadership	Consultation & collaboration; empowerment	Communication; back your people; candor and plain speaking
Institutional infrastructure	Adaptiveness; decisiveness	Ponder then act decisively
Information analytics	Adaptiveness; decisiveness	Ponder then act decisively
Motivating others	Openness and communication; consultation and collaboration; empowerment	Candor and plain speaking; back your people; communication
Communications	Consultation and collaboration	Candor and plain speaking; communication
Collaboration	Consultation and collaboration	Have a plan; establish trust; give clear directions; back your people; communication
Fundraising and relationship cultivation	Resilience and courage; consultation and collaboration; openness and communication	Courage; communication; keeping your people fully informed
Personal traits and abilities	All seven competencies	All of Churchill’s leadership characteristics

Summary

The literature review provided research on both BNI and leadership during a crisis; however, it highlighted gaps in the body of knowledge that exists both on how BNI was addressed during the COVID-19 pandemic and the leadership strategies and competencies that influenced those decisions. The researcher will use the Crisis Leadership Model (2022),

the AACC leadership competencies, and Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) to address filling these gaps.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Chapter 3 contains a review of the purpose of the study, the addressed research questions, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in the study. The methodology and rationale for selecting the methodology are discussed, followed by the research design, study settings, participants, and the instrumentation. Lastly, the researcher reviews the type of data collected and sources used, data analysis, study quality, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to basic need insecurities (BNI) during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the changes and/or services implemented to support students during this time.

Research Questions

Two primary questions guide this study:

1. What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs was the theoretical framework chosen to guide this study. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests humans are motivated to fulfill their basic needs before focusing on more advanced needs. This study focused on physiological and safety needs. Maslow's theory was used as an overarching worldview to focus the study on BNI.

The conceptual frameworks used in this study were Balasubramanian and Fernandes' (2022) Crisis Leadership Model and Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996). The Crisis Leadership Model (2022) was used for data collection and analysis for Research Question 1. This model provided a framework for analyzing leadership strategies and competencies that influenced how administrators addressed BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) was used for data collection and analysis for Research Question 2. This model provided a framework for exploring changes and services implemented to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alignment Table

An alignment table (see Appendix A, Alignment Table), was created to provide an overview of how Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs theoretical framework and the conceptual frameworks: the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022), with Churchill's leadership characteristics as a subset, and Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996) were aligned with the methodology of this study, the research questions, and the interview questions.

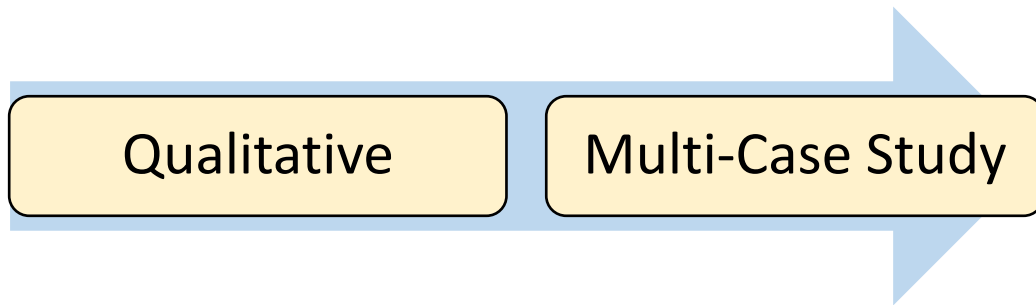
Research Design

This study was a qualitative multi-case study focused on leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to the way administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and what changes and/or services leaders implemented to address students' needs during this time. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research facilitates an in-depth, detailed study of an issue. Creswell (2013) stated, "This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by

what we expect to find or what we have read in literature” (p. 48). Qualitative research produces detailed descriptions of participants’ feelings, opinions, and experiences; and provides an interpretation of their actions and their meanings (Denzin, 1989).

Case studies provide value in their context, and their rich detail makes them transferable to other contexts. Having multi-cases produces a more substantial effect in justifying the researcher’s choice for the case (Yin, 2009). A multi-case study method was chosen to provide a more compelling and overall robust study (Herriot & Firestone, 1983).

Figure 3.1. Methodology Figure



Study Setting

Three Texas community colleges were used for this study. The sites were intentionally chosen based on two criteria. The first criterion was their participation in the Texas Guided Pathways Initiative (TGPI). According to the Texas Success Center (n.d.), as mentioned in Chapter 1, the TGPI is a comprehensive, 5-year, statewide strategy to assist Texas community colleges in implementing structured academic and career pathways. The TGPI assists colleges in establishing four pillars: (a) connect—clarifying paths to student end goals, (b) enter—helping students choose and enter a pathway, (c) progress—helping students stay on their pathway, and (d) succeed—ensuring students are learning. Many of the pillars shed light on students’ struggles with BNI and provide guidance in addressing those issues (Texas Success Center, n.d.). The

second criterion was that each site was a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). HSIs must have an undergraduate enrollment of at least 25% Hispanic full-time equivalent students (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Focusing on HSI institutions was critical because Hispanic students faced a disproportionate burden from the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a 7% decline in their enrollment in undergraduate programs since the COVID-19 pandemic began (Brown, 2022; National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2021).

Study Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to collect data for this study. According to Patton (2002), “Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (p. 230). Four administrators from each of the three community colleges who participated in implementing changes and services to meet student BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic were selected. This allowed 12 administrators to be interviewed. The researcher consulted with leadership from each of the institutions to identify key participants (see Appendix C, Introductory Email to President). According to Patton (2002):

There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources. In-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich. (p. 244)

Administrative positions interviewed ranged from the president to vice-presidents and deans and they were involved in the decision-making about BNI at various levels and times throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instrumentation

In qualitative research, the researcher is an instrument (Xu & Storr, 2012). In this study the researcher performed and interpreted the results of the interviews in addition to performing a document analysis on both public and personal data shared with the researcher. Interviews are often the most common form of data collection for qualitative research (Saldaña, 2011). Due to the nature of this study, the researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data collection, and a document analysis was conducted as a secondary instrument. Interview questions were open-ended to provide participants with the ability to respond without the constraints of the researcher's perspective or bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi-structured interviews are designed ahead of time but can be modified for each participant by using probing questions (Adler & Clark, 2008). Additionally, this type of interview allowed the researcher to gather rich, robust qualitative data from the interviewee. Xu and Storr (2012) stated, "The depth and complexity of the interpretation are determined by the effectiveness of the researcher as an instrument" (p. 15).

The questions in the interview were developed based on the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian and Fernandes, 2022) for Research Question 1 and Kotter's (1996) eight-step process for change model for Research Question 2. The document analysis was conducted using Kotter's eight-step process for change model as a guide.

Data Collection and Data Sources

Before conducting the study, the researcher completed the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, including obtaining IRB approval (see Appendix B, IRB Approval). It was determined that each participating institution's IRB process was unnecessary.

A letter of introduction was sent to each participating institution's president, requesting institution participation in the study and requesting the president to identify participants who would most benefit the study (see Appendix C, Introductory Email to President). After potential participants were identified, an introductory email was sent with an informed consent form asking all participants to agree to audio and video recordings of their interviews (See Appendix D, Introductory Email/Informed Consent to Participants).

The researcher used two data sources for this study: participant interviews and a document analysis; the two data sources will be discussed in that order.

The primary data for this study were collected from participant interviews.

⁹See Appendix E, Interview Protocol, for the interview protocol and questions.

Prior to conducting interviews, outside consultation with a methodologist provided direct feedback that the interview questions directly supported the research questions. The researcher could have strengthened the instrumentation by taking those same questions and performing mock interviews to determine if, across the board, the participants heard the questions the same way. However, consistency came from the researcher ensuring initial interview questions were all asked identically. Leaders were asked initial questions followed by probes from the researcher to gather relevant data from each participant. Each interview lasted between 45-75 minutes in duration.

The interviews were conducted using Zoom, an online video platform. Using Zoom software allowed the researcher to produce verbatim transcripts to review and code for themes using the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian and Fernandes, 2022). The researcher used member checking and triangulation of sources during data collection to ensure trustworthiness of

the data. All recordings will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive and in a secure location for five years. After five years, the data will be destroyed by overwriting the data.

The secondary source of data collection was a document analysis. The document analysis was done by reviewing and analyzing public documents, including email correspondence, memorandums, agendas, written reports, archival materials, board minutes, policies, social media, and websites (Yin, 2009). The researcher allowed unexpected themes to emerge as data were collected and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The researcher used Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) as an overarching worldview to focus the study on BNI but it was not explicitly used in the data analysis. Charmaz (2001) described coding as the "critical link" between data collection and their explanation of meaning. All data were coded using the conceptual frameworks aligned with the research questions. The semi-structured interviews were aligned with the research questions and then coded based on the conceptual models selected to guide the study. Interview questions aligned with Research Question 1 were coded using the Crisis Leadership Model's (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) eight competencies: compassion and care, openness and communication, adaptiveness, resilience and courage, decisiveness, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment.

During coding, the researcher identified words identical to and with similar meanings to the competencies and steps defined in the conceptual models. The interviews and documents were color-coded by the conceptual models during the coding process. Following the color-coding of the models, the researcher used tables to document the number of times the competencies and steps from each conceptual model were noted in each participant's interviews. In addition, the researcher compiled the data by institution within the tables.

Interview transcripts, audio files, and video files were reviewed for patterns. Initially, the researcher planned to use NVIVO, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, to aid the coding and analysis process. However, the researcher opted to code by hand due to the complexity and additional training required to use the software. Interview transcripts, audio files, and video files were reviewed for patterns. Themes outside the conceptual models emerged and were coded as other.

For Research Question 2, the researcher analyzed public documents (i.e., email correspondence, memoranda, agendas, written reports, archival materials, social media, and websites), to identify changes and services offered to students during this time. Research Question 2 was addressed using Kotter's (1996) eight-step process of change: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains, and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture. Saldaña (2016) stated, "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3).

Study Quality

The researcher used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative criteria to determine the study's trustworthiness. According to Lincoln and Guba, trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility provides confidence in the truth of the findings; to establish credibility, the researcher used member-checking. Motulsky (2021) stated, "Member checking, also known as respondent or participant validation, is the

process of soliciting feedback from one's participants or stakeholders about one's data or interpretations" (p. 389).

Transferability shows that the findings can be applicable in other contexts. To establish transferability, the researcher used thick description. Thick description was described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of achieving a type of external validity. Ponterotto (2006) shared, "A thick described qualitative interview report successfully merges the participants' lived experiences with the researcher's interpretations of these experiences, thus creating thick meaning for the reader as well as for the participants and researcher" (p. 545). The researcher demonstrated transferability by showing the findings from the study were transferable to other settings.

Dependability shows that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability can be established through an auditing process (Creswell, 2013). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), external audits involve having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and product of the research study. The purpose is to evaluate the accuracy and evaluate whether or the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data. The researcher established dependability through an external audit to foster the accuracy and dependability of the study. The researcher consulted with a member from a nonparticipating institution to perform the external audit after the data were collected and analyzed.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not by the researcher's bias, motivation, or interests. The researcher established confirmability by using triangulation of sources. As a multi-case study, the researcher used three community colleges to gather data and examine the

consistency. Information shared with the researcher for the document analysis varied from institution to institution. Some institutions were more open to sharing personal documents; at other institutions, the researcher had to rely primarily on publicly accessible documents. To retain the anonymity of the institutions, in-depth details of the documents are withheld.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher applied for and received institutional review board (IRB) approval from Kansas State University. Saldaña (2011) stated, “The purpose of an IRB is to ensure that its institutional representatives are conducting research with humans in an ethical manner and in compliance with governmental and legal regulations” (p. 86). Additionally, the researcher ensured that informed consent forms (see Appendix D, Introductory Email/Informed Consent to Participants) were signed by each participant and that participants understood their participation was entirely voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were protected from harm throughout the study, and privacy was maintained throughout the study. All institutions and individual participants’ identities remained confidential by assigning numbers to the institution and letters to the individuals. All data collected will be kept confidential and will be housed on an external hard drive that will be kept in a secure location for a minimum of five years.

In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument; as such, the study should include some information about the researcher (Patton, 2002). It is imperative for the qualitative researcher to be fully aware of how their biases and positionality could influence the research (Xu & Storr, 2012). Providing information about the researcher helps to identify potential biases. To do this, the researcher provided a reflexivity statement to improve the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. According to Lochmiller and Lester (2016), “Reflexivity is the process

of intentionally accounting for your assumptions, biases, experiences, and identities that may impact any aspect of your research study” (p. 95).

Reflexivity Statement

As the researcher, I am a first-generation college student who grew up in a low-socioeconomic family of five. Neither of my parents completed high school and often struggled to make ends meet throughout my childhood. I deeply understand the struggles students face with BNI because we often faced them in our family. While attending college, I worked a full-time job in an attempt to support myself and make ends meet while also completing 18 credit hours a semester. Additionally, I was an administrator during the COVID-19 global pandemic and served on the COVID-19 pandemic team that focused on BNI during this time.

Limitations

One limitation that could have affected the findings of this study is the small sample sizes. This study only included administrators from the state of Texas. Only three community colleges and 12 administrators, four from each community college, were included. Due to the small sample size, generalizability is not an option, but transferability is possible.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify changes and/or services implemented to support students during this time. This chapter detailed the research methodology using Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs as a theoretical framework and the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) and Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model as conceptual models to guide the study, identify the study setting and participants, provide the

instrumentation and inform the data collection and analysis. Additionally, the chapter also included a discussion of the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 includes the study's findings through the conceptual frameworks, and Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 4 - Research Findings and Analysis

This chapter contains an analysis of the data collected and the research findings using the conceptual framework lenses chosen for this study. The chapter begins with the research questions and a review of the theoretical and conceptual models. The researcher then presents the study methodology, participant demographics, and findings related to each research question by the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) and Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Questions

This study was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies contributing to how administrators responded to basic need insecurities (BNI) during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify changes and/or services implemented to support students during this time. Two research questions guided this study:

1. What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Within the Institutions

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs guided this study as an overarching worldview. According to Maslow, five goals fall under basic needs for individuals: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. These five goals are interrelated and dependent on each other but are categorized and arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency, physiological, and safety, falling at the base of their needs (Maslow, 1943). This study focused on the bottom two of the pyramid physiological and safety. To understand the answers provided by participants in

interviews, background information and a context of how each institution/participant viewed BNI had to be obtained. Table 4.1 identifies what each institution defined as BNI and what level of Maslow’s the supports fell under. It is important to note what BNI services were offered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic at each institution. Table 4.2 provides this information.

Table 4.1 Institution-Identified BNI

Institution	BNI Identified	Level of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
1	Food, technology, transportation, housing, childcare, and mental health	1 and 2
2	Food, housing, clothing, mental health, technology, and personal hygiene needs	1 and 2
3	Food, childcare, technology, transportation, and social networking	1 and 2

Table 4.2 BNI Services offered Pre-COVID-19

Institution	BNI Services Offered Pre-COVID-19
1	Small food pantry with personal hygiene supplies and a clothing closet
2	Counselors, a small food cabinet at one location, and reduced-cost childcare at one location
3	Counselors, emergency funds, hygiene baskets, reduced-cost childcare

Conceptual Frameworks

Two conceptual models guided this study: Balasubramanian and Fernandes (2022) Crisis Leadership Model and Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model. Each conceptual model provided a framework to code data gathered during the study.

The Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) guided Research Question 1: What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic? The seven competencies used and identified in the Crisis Leadership Model (2022) are compassion and care, openness and communication, adaptiveness, resilience and courage, decisiveness, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment.

Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model guided Research Question 2: What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic? The Eight-Steps of Kotter's process (1996) include: establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher used two sources of data: (a) interviews with administrators from three community college campuses in Texas and (b) a document analysis. Data were coded using the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) and Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model to identify key leadership competencies and discover changes and/or services offered to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The interviewer conducted 12 participant interviews. All interviews were one-on-one, contributing to the participant's ability to be open and honest. Each interview was conducted using Zoom audio and video recording, with permission of each participant.

One-on-one interviews allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions customized to each participant. In addition to the semi-structured interviews, a document analysis was performed to gather supporting data. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix E, Interview Protocol.

The document analysis consisted of reviewing websites, social media posts, emails, syllabi, board and committee meeting minutes, and other documents shared by participants. Some institutions were willing to share large amounts of personal data, but others shared only small quantities. As a result, some institutions' data came primarily from publicly accessible information.

To analyze the data, the researcher identified words identical to and with similar meanings as the competencies and steps defined in the conceptual models. The researcher also documented additional competencies and steps identified beyond these two frameworks. Interview transcripts were color-coded by the conceptual models during the coding process and documents were also analyzed using a color-coding scheme based on the conceptual model. Following color-coding, the researcher used tables to document the number of times competencies and steps from each conceptual model were noted in each participant's interviews and to identify any documents that supported the steps and interviews in the document analysis.

Participant Demographics and Institution Descriptions

As described in Chapter 1, sites were intentionally chosen based on two criteria. The first criterion was their participation in the Texas Guided Pathways Initiative (TGPI). According to

the Texas Success Center (n.d.), the TGPI is a comprehensive, 5-year, statewide strategy to assist Texas community colleges in implementing structured academic and career pathways.

The second criterion was that each site was identified as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). HSIs must have an undergraduate enrollment of at least 25% Hispanic full-time equivalent students (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). This was important because Hispanics were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Institutional descriptions are presented to keep institutional names anonymous; institutions selected for this study included a small institution in North Texas and two medium-sized institutions, one in Southeast Texas and one in South Texas. The small institution had an enrollment of approximately 2,300 students, the medium-sized institution located in Southeast Texas had an enrollment of approximately 5,700 students, and the medium-sized institution in South Texas had an enrollment of approximately 8,200 students.

The researcher interviewed 12 leaders from these three institutions. To maintain the confidentiality of each institution and participant, each institution was identified by numbers (i.e., 1-3) and each participant was identified by a number and a letter (i.e., 1-4 for the institution and A-D for the participant).

Participants were purposefully selected by the presidents of each institution and ranged from presidents and vice-presidents to deans (See Table 4.3). Participants must have been involved in the decision-making for supporting students' BNI and making changes to policies or procedures at various levels and times throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.3 Participant Roles by Institution

Institution	Presidents	Vice-presidents	Directors
1	1	1	2
2	1	2	1
3	0	3	1

The participant pool included two presidents, two vice presidents of student services, one vice-president of instruction, one vice-president of information technology, one vice-president of administrative services, one vice-president of strategic initiatives, one executive director of the foundation, one director of college and career paths, and two directors of advising and counseling. Figure 4.1 shows 33% of participants served in the president role, 50% of participants served in the vice president role, and 17% served in the director role. Figure 4.2 shows 50% of the participants were female and 50% were male.

Figure 4.1 Roles of Participants

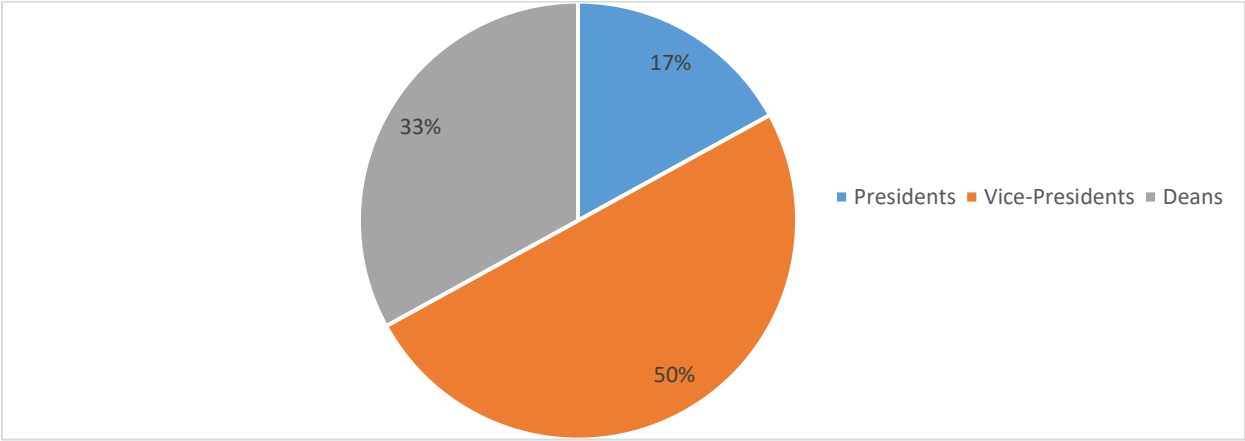
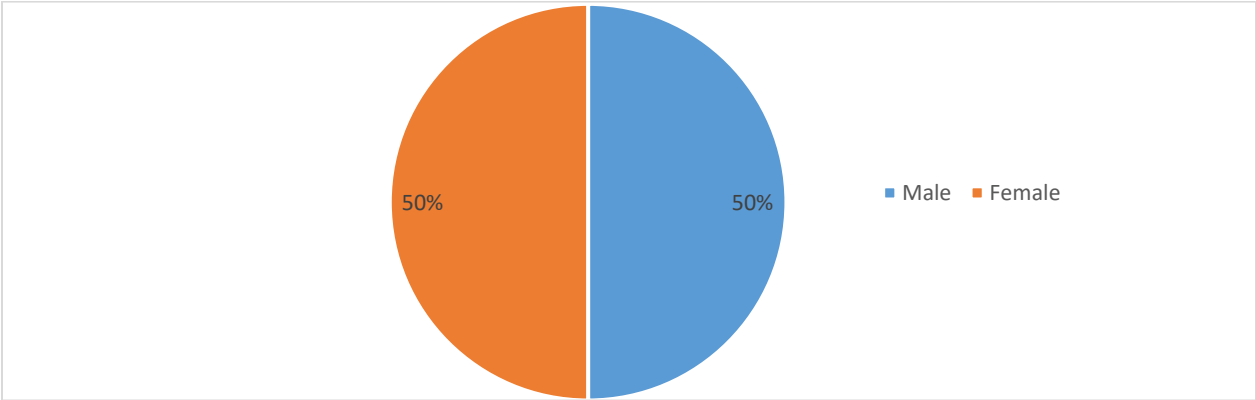


Figure 4.2 Gender of Participants



Findings for Research Question 1

This section includes an analysis of the research data related to Research Question 1. Findings are presented by competencies found in Balasubramanian and Fernandes’ (2022) Crisis Leadership Model. The researcher presents data by crisis leadership competencies within the three institutions. Tables depicting each institution and quotes from participant interviews are

provided. Two additional competencies identified by the researcher during the study are also described.

Institution 1

Institution 1 participant interviews, revealed all seven competencies of Balasubramanian and Fernandes’ (2022) Crisis Leadership Model, as shown in Table 4.4, Institution 1 Findings by Competency.

Table 4.4 Institution 1 Findings by Competency

Crisis Leadership Model Competencies	Number of Participants That Identified Competency	Number of Times Competency was Identified
Compassion and care	4	13
Openness and communication	4	12
Adaptiveness	4	6
Resilience and courage	1	1
Decisiveness	4	7
Consultation and collaboration	4	20
Empowerment	4	10

Compassion and Care

Within compassion and care, Institution 1 focused on the care of students and faculty by listening and providing care and support where students needed it most. The competency of compassion and care was the second most prominent competency identified at Institution 1.

For some participants, the focus was on student BNI. As participant 1B stated:

[Faculty and staff] took the time to listen to students and provide them care where they needed it most. For some, that was technology; for some, it was additional food to help support children at home 24 hours a day; and for some, it was providing that extra mental health support.

For other participants, the focus was on students' and faculty's mental and physical health, and the impact that not meeting those needs would have on their students' success. Participant 1C stated, "It was critical to our institution that we provide care and support to our faculty and staff; the lack of support for their mental and physical health would have had detrimental effects on our students and their success."

Participant 1D commented, "Providing our students with care and compassion allowed them to navigate successfully through the turbulent times of the COVID-19 pandemic." This focus allowed Institution 1 to provide care to students, enabling them to overcome the overwhelming barriers they faced throughout the pandemic.

Openness and Communication

Openness and communication at Institution 1 centered on working with the leadership team to ensure their communication plan was thorough and was used effectively. Participant 1A stated, "We had to completely revisit how we communicate our messaging to students and all the different resources. Additionally, we had to issue norms on communicating in writing and verbally." One critical aspect of communication at Institution 1 was that the director of marketing communications was at every meeting about supporting students during the pandemic. He served on the Guided Pathways team that focused on BNI, providing a foundation to help guide the communication plan.

During the pandemic, institutional leaders also developed a plan to communicate with outside stakeholders about the needs students faced and to raise additional money to support the students. As participant 1A explained:

We developed a profile for our typical student, and that's when we got real about understanding that our student is a 27 year-old Hispanic female. She's a parent; she grew

up in our region. She grew up in generational poverty, and her name is Mary. We worked very intentionally on framing the messaging so that it resonated not just with employees but with community members, stakeholders, and potential donors.

Participants also focused on how communication was delivered to students about BNI. Participants also felt weekly communication was vital to keeping all stakeholders informed. Participant 1C stated, “We communicated through our portal and through our marketing department, and they sent out text messages and emails.” Participant 1D added:

We started using radius [a texting software] a lot to send out text messages, and we put it in our Canvas shells; the message was pushed once a week to once every other week as the pandemic continued.

Adaptiveness

Adaptiveness was not a competency highlighted often throughout the interviews at Institution 1. All four participants mentioned adaptability but only focused on it a few times. Participants said as information changed and was received by the institution, they adapted quickly to meet students' needs. Participant 1C focused on the fact that as new information came in, leaders would immediately adjust and make the needed changes to meet the needs of whoever it was students, faculty, staff, or administration.

Institution 1 participants discussed how they could adapt quickly to the changes in funding and support. Participant 1D stated, “We were funneling resources as fast and furiously as possible to help meet our students' needs. We started making changes with technology money and with those HEERF funds to assist our students.”

Resilience and Courage

Resiliency and courage was not a prominent competency found at Institution 1. Only one participant identified resiliency as a competency. Participant 1C discussed the resiliency of the administration, faculty, and students throughout the ever-changing circumstances that the COVID-19 pandemic brought about. Participant 1C explained:

I was humbled by the strength and resiliency of our students through a very difficult time and the strength and resilience of our faculty because it was extremely hard on the faculty and the administration's resiliency to keep pushing through with every change that came our way.

Decisiveness

Decisiveness was identified at Institution 1 by all participants but was only mentioned seven times. Their decisiveness emphasized the importance of making decisions quickly to care for students. As participant 1D stated, "There was no time for hesitation; there was no time to be to have any self-doubt; you just had to move forward."

Institution 1 participants focused on the importance of having the right people at the table to make decisions quickly to support students' BNI. Participant 1C commented, "We had a well-rounded team that could make those immediate decisions. We needed those people that directly had access to those wrap-around services to make the decisions quickly."

Consultation and Collaboration

Consultation and collaboration were the most prominent competencies identified at Institution 1. Participants concentrated on cross-campus collaboration between departments and teams to meet the needs of students. Participant 1B commented, "The cross-campus collaboration was essential in supporting faculty and staff; having everyone communicate what each department had to offer to those in need allowed us to provide help swiftly."

Institution 1 participants also focused on outside collaboration with external stakeholders to provide services to support students' BNI. Participant 1A discussed the collaboration between the institution and external partners, saying, "When we learned our students were struggling with health care, we quickly collaborated with our local county hospital and created a partnership; we started a clinic on campus at no cost to the college."

Empowerment

Empowerment was another prominent competency at Institution 1. Participants discussed the importance of leadership communicating and ensuring employees would be supported to assist students with their needs throughout the pandemic. Participant 1B commented, "Leadership emphasized to everyone that no idea was bad if it supported students; being at an institution without constraints and empowering you by supporting your ideas allowed you to be much more open-minded and student-focused."

Institution 1 participants focused on the importance of leadership, listening to employees' ideas, and empowering them to act. Participant 1A stated, "It was our job to be smart enough to listen and understand that ideas come from all different directions, and it's our job to recognize those ideas and empower employees to complete them to support students."

Institution 2

Institution 2 participant interviews, revealed all seven competencies within the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022), as demonstrated in Table 4.5, Institution 2 Findings by Competency.

Table 4.5 Institution 2 Findings by Competency

Crisis Leadership Model Competencies	Number of Participants That Identified Competency	Number of Times Competency was Identified
Compassion and care	4	14
Openness and communication	4	13
Adaptiveness	4	9
Resilience and courage	1	1
Decisiveness	4	6
Consultation and collaboration	4	17
Empowerment	4	10

Compassion and Care

As shown in Table 4.5, compassion and care competencies were the second most prominent competencies identified at Institution 2. Leaders reiterated the importance of taking care of the people in the campus community on a regular basis. Participant 2D commented, “The constant message from leadership was to leave no stone unturned in caring for and helping those in need.”

Institution 2 participants focused on the care and support of students and employees throughout the pandemic. As participant 2B stated:

Everyone stepped up to support each other; crockpot meals were made for students with food insecurities, money was donated to support students and employees facing financial hardships, and everyone went out of their way to ensure the needs of our students and co-workers were met. The care that was demonstrated throughout the pandemic was indelible.

Participants made many statements about the way all stakeholders found ways to support and care for students and employees during the pandemic. Participant 2C said, “During COVID,

people really went out of their way to support students and employees; it was evident that everyone really cared and helped each other.”

Openness and Communication

Openness and communication were other prominent competencies identified by participants from Institution 2. Participants discussed intentional phone calls to students to ensure they received the support they needed to succeed. Participant 2B explained:

Everyone was involved in communication during the pandemic; when the pandemic began, we assigned everyone (faculty, staff, and administration) a list of students they were required to contact each week to determine how they were doing and what their needs were. It was a way of building that relationship, understanding what those students needed to be successful during that time, and communicating with them what we had to support them.

Institution 2 participants focused on the frequent postings and distribution of information throughout the institution and to all stakeholders. Participant 2A commented, “We regularly communicated through our website, emails, and text messages and had individuals call weekly to check on students and their needs.”

Adaptiveness

Participants at Institution 2 agreed the adaptability and flexibility of all stakeholders were needed to meet the needs of students and employees. Participant 2C stated, “You had to adapt, as situations would arise that you'd never thought of before; you had to adjust to whatever it was and be flexible.” Participant 2A described it like this:

Changes were made week to week, day to day, and sometimes hourly because the needs changed. We could almost instantaneously make changes because we are small. And

that's something that's good about being in a small college. Flexibility was crucial, and we were all flexible to the thoughts and concerns of each other and through each department because we all had different needs.

In relation to all the changes happening due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Center of Disease Control's ever-changing guidelines throughout the pandemic, participant 2B stated, "Flexibility and adaptability were vital; we didn't know what was coming next, but when it came, we immediately had a meeting and decided what would be best for our students and our employees."

Resilience and Courage

Only one participant at Institution 2 identified resilience and courage as essential competencies for leading during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 2D discussed the resiliency of everyone at the institution, commenting on how they all found a way to support each other and push through the difficulties that continually arose throughout the pandemic. Participant 2D said:

It was amazing how leaders, faculty, staff, and even our students kept pushing through; each time something came up, we all found a way to get through it and be stronger. We never knew what everyone was facing, but we just kept reinforcing to fight your way through it; we are here to support you and get you through these challenging times.

Decisiveness

Decisiveness was identified by participants at Institution 2, but it was not a prominent competency. Institution 2 participants focused on the importance of making a quick decision with the information they had even if they knew it could change within the hour so students' needs could be met. Participant 2C stated, "The pandemic was a unique situation, the target was

constantly moving, and you just had to use your best judgment with the information you had to make the best decision quickly.” Participant 2D commented, “We figured out what we wanted to do as situations arose, and then we executed; you just kind of live with the knowledge that things could change, but you do the best you can with the information you have.”

Consultation and Collaboration

Consultation and collaboration were the most prominent competencies identified by participants at Institution 2. The participants focused on the importance of collaboration to support students and lead the institution throughout the pandemic. Participant 2B stated, “Collaboration was key to deciding what we needed to do and what would be best for our students and employees, which was essential to our success throughout the pandemic. Collaboration is what allowed us to help our students fully.”

Collaboration among faculty, staff, and administration was also a vital point identified by participants from Institution 2. Participant 2D commented, “Faculty, staff, and administrators were all partners in supporting our students; we collaborated throughout the whole situation. You could shout out a question to someone in administration and immediately get help with the situation, or I could go to an instructor for something; it kind of just depended on the circumstance.”

Empowerment

Institution 2 participants focused on how leadership from the top down empowered them to do whatever was necessary to support students in need. Participant 2D commented:

Our President sent an email stating to leave no stone unturned to help students. That email to me was a good thing. It didn't give a specific way to do it; he just said, “Hey, do

what you can to make things work.” I feel like everybody knew the urgency and responded in the best way possible.

Participants from Institution 2 focused on all stakeholders taking ownership of issues and stepping up to solve them because senior leaders empowered them to do so. Participant 2A stated, “Employees were empowered from everywhere. We just did what we had to do to support students. I think we were supportive of everyone and rallied around each other. People really just took ownership, and they were given that ownership.”

Institution 3

Institution 3 participant interviews only revealed six of the seven competencies of the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022), as demonstrated in Table 4.6, Institution 3 Findings by Competency.

Table 4.6 Institution 3 Findings by Competency

Crisis Leadership Model Competencies	Number of Participants That Identified Competency	Number of Times Competency was Identified
Compassion and care	4	15
Openness and communication	4	19
Adaptiveness	4	9
Resilience and courage	0	0
Decisiveness	4	5
Consultation and collaboration	4	22
Empowerment	4	11

Compassion and Care

Compassion was essential to leading at Institution 3 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants from Institution 3 highlighted the discussions held at the weekly meetings encouraging employees to be compassionate and supportive of all needs that might arise during the pandemic. Participant 3A explained:

We had weekly meetings with our directors to discuss what our students and employees were going through. We also discussed ways to be compassionate and supportive of all their needs during the pandemic. We needed to be compassionate to the challenges that they were each facing. Providing support and care during this time was critical, especially considering all the mental health issues faced by people dealing with isolation, sickness, and death.

Institution 3 participants emphasized the importance of leaders taking care of their employees and students but also practicing self-care. Participant 3B described it like this:

Our team went above and beyond in helping and caring for students; additionally, we met frequently to ensure that we were taking care of each other and ourselves. It was critical that we be in a good place so that we could help and care for others.

Openness and Communication

Within openness and communication, Institution 3 participants focused on the sheer amount of communication used during the pandemic. Participants reiterated the number of meetings and communication in the institution to all stakeholders. As participant 3A stated:

We had daily meetings because needs kept evolving as the timeline extended. We reached students through email; some instructors were making phone calls. Our marketing department created the Pod, a kind of home-based dashboard that our students, faculty, and staff have. It was kind of a one-stop shop. They could also check the website for CDC updates and wi-fi information requests for hotspots and laptops at their house.

Institution 3 participants also discussed how they gathered information from students and used that to communicate what supports and changes were put in place during the pandemic.

Participant 3B stated, “We used any digital media we had available to us email, text messages, social media and then we updated a page on our internet portal.”

Participant 3C emphasized the importance of communication within the institution, stating:

Communication was just huge. There were constant meetings and check-ins that had to happen, and it also had to make sure that everything went down and up through the chain of command. It was so important that you couldn't have a department over here doing their own thing.

Adaptiveness

Institution 3 participants identified the adaptability of faculty and staff to adjust to the ever-changing needs of the students. According to participant 3D:

We would address things as soon as they popped up and adapt to the situation. We needed to make sure that we were providing the students some flexibility and understanding and making sure we were supporting them in being successful.

Participants also highlighted the importance of the institution's adaptability to quickly changing issues and concerns. Participant 3B focused on adapting procedures and worrying about policy changes later, stating:

We were more worried about the immediate need and being able to continue to serve those students as they continued with their classes rather than let's go through this structured policy change. So, we were a bit more adaptive and flexible in that arena.

Resilience and Courage

Participants at Institution 3 did not focus on resilience and courage in their interviews; although there may have been times leaders demonstrated them during this time, there was no

reference to resilience and courage during participant interviews. During the document analysis, the researcher could not locate any data sources to support resilience and courage.

Decisiveness

Participants identified decisiveness at Institution 3 as a competency needed to lead their institution successfully, but it was one of the least identified competencies across interviews.

Participant 3C commented on the importance of making a decision quickly and communicating clearly so there would be no question about what leaders wanted regarding their direction.

Participants from Institution 3 also discussed the importance of gathering all the information that impacted a situation and making a decision quickly and clearly so that the institution could move forward swiftly to support students. Participant 3D explained:

We had to think through it [the many issues] on the spot and figure out what the timelines were and how to pull people from across the board [student services, instruction, financial aid] to make a quick decision to help our students and faculty.

Consultation and Collaboration

Consultation and collaboration was the most cited competency at Institution 3. Some participants focused on the cross-collaboration on campus. According to participant 3C:

Multiple units on campus came together to help in any way possible. Our academic departments donated technology. Anybody on campus that could sew made homemade masks on campus to give out to students. Thousands and thousands of masks were made. And then, one of our technical programs had a 3D printer, and they were actually printing the components for the N95 masks that had the filtration pieces.

Another facet of collaboration at Institution 3 was the external partnerships with community organizations, schools, and 501c3s. Participant 3A stated, “We had partners who

helped us get laptops and iPads so we could lend them out and helped us design a map for students to know where hotspots were located and placed them around the campus.” Participant 3D discussed the importance of collaborating with outside stakeholders to help support the students and their children:

We needed to link with the school district to find out what the school district had to offer to supplement IT and food needs. We had to determine who better fit the gap. Was it us? Do we have quicker access than the school district? Can it be a collaborative effort? And then move quickly to support our students and their children.

Empowerment

Institution 3 participants identified empowerment as vital to their ability to go above and beyond to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 3D stated:

We were made aware of information, what tools we could offer, and what support we could offer. We were also empowered to know if something unique came up and we needed to advocate for that student; we were permitted to advocate for that student, even if it meant bending the rules.

Participants also reiterated that leaders provided them the confidence to support their students. Participant 3B said, “We were empowered to do whatever we thought was best for our students. I’ll say that my team went above and beyond in addressing that.”

Cross-Case Findings from Three Participating Institutions for Research Question 1

Cross-case findings by competency from all three participating institutions, are presented in Table 4.7 and demonstrates the overall findings from the three institutions using the competencies from Balasubramanian and Fernandes’ (2022) Crisis Leadership Model.

Table 4.7 Cross-Case Findings by Competency from Three Participating Institutions

Crisis Leadership Model Competencies	Number of Participants That Identified Competency	Number of Times Competency was Identified
Compassion and care	12	42
Openness and communication	12	44
Adaptiveness	12	24
Resilience and courage	2	2
Decisiveness	12	18
Consultation and collaboration	12	59
Empowerment	12	31

By analyzing the data gathered from the interviews, the researcher found that all seven competencies of crisis leadership were found at two of the three institutions, and six of the seven were found at the third; however, four competencies were overwhelmingly stated by participants at all three institutions: compassion and care, openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment.

Additional Competencies Found Within the Institutions

In addition to the competencies identified in the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022), participant interviews revealed two additional competencies: a) active listening and b) trust. Although not every participant mentioned these competencies, at least 50% of participants from each institution discussed them in their interviews (See Table 4.8, Additional Competencies Identified by Participants).

Table 4.8 Additional Competencies Identified by Participants

Competency	Number of participants who identified competency	Number of times competency was identified
Active Listening	8	15
Trust	8	13

Active Listening

Participants in this study focused on the importance of active listening, emphasizing that communication is only successful if active listening is involved. In 8 of 12 interviews, participants discussed how active listening was critical to the institution's success throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participant 1A discussed the importance of finding a way to listen to both students and faculty to determine if there was a serious need for support in certain areas and to determine what support they could offer stating:

For all of the challenges [employees and students] brought, we started listening and created ways for our team members and outside members to share their concerns. We had an anonymous suggestion box that allowed everyone to share their concerns. The leadership team then met weekly to review those concerns. It really allowed us to listen to our people and support them where they needed it most.

Participant 2D focused on the importance of accepting that you do not have all answers, and it is critical that you listen to the expertise of others so that you can help to move forward positively, stating:

To lead successfully, you must understand that you do not know everything; you must be willing to listen to people with different areas of expertise. I learned about the business processes, what they do, and some of the different departments. I learned much more personally than I ever have because we took the time to listen to each other and what our departments do. It really broadens our scope in so many different ways. But I think we all learned a lot from all the different departments that played a role in the decision-making.

I learned so much that I would never have even known I needed to know to deal with the instances from the COVID-19 pandemic, just because I was willing to truly listen.

Participant 3C focused on the importance of listening to help reduce the amount of fear and anxiety students and employees were facing throughout the pandemic saying:

Listening was extremely important. Trying to alleviate fear. There was a lot of fear at that time. Just trying to keep a consistent message and keep all those levels of understanding from going to extremes either way by listening to everyone involved and truly trying to understand what they were going through.

Trust

Participants discussed how critical it was for leaders to trust that faculty, staff, and administrators were doing their job and taking care of students. Seven of the 12 participants discussed the importance of relying on and trusting everyone as a crucial aspect of successfully leading the institution throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participant 1D stated:

You have to give your employees a little trust that they're going to make things happen, and until you find otherwise, you have to let your teammates do their thing and trust that they're going to do the right thing.

Participant 1A discussed how she had to learn to delegate and trust that things would be taken care of to support students saying:

COVID-19 required me to let go and to trust; I had to lean on my team to address the issues, I couldn't handle everything on my own, so I had to trust that they would gather the information and take care of our students.

Participant 2C discussed not only the importance of trusting others to do their job but also

focused on the importance of students and employees trusting him. He focused on the importance of building relationships with students and employees alike so that they trusted him and would come to him for help, commenting:

Building relationships and earning people's trust was essential to leading during the pandemic, not just for the employees but also for the students. It was important so they would feel okay about coming to me and asking for help.

Findings for Research Question 2

This section contains an analysis of the research data for Research Question 2. Findings are presented by competencies found in Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model. The researcher presents data from each step of the change model across the three institutions. Tables depicting quotes from the interviews and documentation from the document analysis from each institution are provided.

Institution 1

Institution 1 participant interviews and document analysis revealed all eight steps within Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model, (See Table 4.9, Institution 1 Findings by Steps). Institution 1 provided limited personal documents for the document analysis; most data were collected from public documents, including the institution website, syllabi, and social media posts.

Table 4.9 Institution 1 Findings by Steps

Kotter’s eight-step process of change model	Number of participants who identified step	Instrumentation	Documentation
Establishing a sense of urgency	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Creating a guiding coalition	3	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Developing a vision and strategy	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Communicating the change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Social media Website Flyers
Empowering broad-based change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Generating short-term wins	4	Semi-structured interviews	Social media
Consolidating gains and producing more change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Website Syllabi
Anchoring new approaches in the culture	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Flyers

Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Many participants from Institution 1 responded there was an immediate sense of Urgency during the pandemic. Participants focused on the immediate BNI of technology but then discussed how as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, other BNI arose and had to be addressed. Participant 1C stated, “Addressing BNI was an immediate concern. Technology was the first thing that emerged, but as that was addressed, mental health and food insecurity arose.”

Participant 1A reiterated the emerging changes in urgency as the pandemic went on, stating, “Part of BNI urgency was immediate; over time, other things emerged. We learned on a deeper level about the struggles our students face. Technology was the first immediate need, but other things emerged as the pandemic continued.”

The document analysis provided the researcher additional support for Kotter's (1996) first-step, establishing a sense of urgency. Participants shared five emails between employees and administrators sent to students, faculty, and staff identifying the urgency of supporting BNI during the pandemic. The emails shared with faculty the immense need for technology for students to complete coursework. As the pandemic continued, the messages noted students' changing needs, including mental health and food.

Creating a Guiding Coalition

Although only three of the four participants mentioned creating a coalition at Institution 1, it was clear a guiding coalition was leading the charge to address students' BNI. Many teams were already in place to address student needs, but, as the issues became compounded, other teams were created to help resolve and move the institution forward to support students. Participant 1D stated, "Our administrative team met as often as needed to discuss new issues. Then, each member would meet with their teams to share and gather information to support our students. We created new teams as needed to help address new student needs that came up."

Participants specifically focused on the creation of an emergency aid team. This team was created to address students' emergencies immediately. The team met three times a week during the shutdown. Participant 1B described it like this:

We used that team to pull all the college resources. Whether that be mental health, clothing, food, transportation, or any of those kinds of things, we pulled it all together into that team because all the decision-makers were in the room, and we could address it immediately for our students.

The document analysis provided additional data through emails to support Kotter's

(1996) second-step, creating a guiding coalition. Participants from Institution 1 shared five emails supporting the data from the interviews. Most of the emails were follow-up emails from the committee meetings held. The emails contained information about decisions made and updates to procedures being put in place. The executive leadership team, and the institutions guiding coalition shared most of the emails.

Developing a Vision and Strategy

Developing a strategy was essential at Institution 1. Participants focused on the teams that worked and helped develop the strategies to support students' BNI during the pandemic in conjunction with the forms they used to help them determine where they needed to focus their support. Participant 1D explained:

We became much more deliberate and much more institutionalized about supporting our students' BNI. We created new teams as needed to help address new student needs that came up. Our administrative team met as often as necessary to discuss new issues, and then each member would meet with their teams to share and gather information from the forms and phone calls to support our students.

Institution 1 participants concentrated on how the information was gathered to help guide their strategies. Participant 1C commented, "We sent out a form to every student through our portal to gather information on their needs; once we started getting those back, they were used in our leadership meetings to determine how to move forward."

The document analysis revealed numerous emails supporting Kotter's (1996) third-step, developing a vision and strategy, and 10 emails were shared with the researcher. Many commonalities were found between the emails documenting the guiding coalition and developing a vision and strategy.

Communicating the Change

Communication was vital to ensuring all stakeholders were aware of the changes that had been instituted to support students' BNI. Institution 1 participants discussed how changes and updates were communicated through committee and team meetings, as mentioned previously, and then distributed through their website, portal, text messaging, and emails. Participant 1C explained:

We created a link on our website and communicated through our portal messaging. Our marketing department also sent out some text messages and emails to students. Once we had our form ready to go, we sent that out to every student. The form allowed students to ask for help and provided employees with the information to support them.

Participants reiterated the importance of frequent and consistent communication about the changes to address students' BNI. As participant 1D stated, "To communicate clearly and often, we sent out text messages to students, posted to social media, and put messages on our canvas shelves to let students know what was available to them."

During the document analysis, the researcher was able to locate 28 social media posts communicating about BNI and opportunities for students and employees to access support. The institution website had three pages providing information about the changes and opportunities available to students and employees. Many emails communicated additional information, and a flyer was located advertising their one-stop shop to support students' needs holistically.

Empowering Broad-Based Change

Institution 1 participants focused on empowering employees to do their job and step up and be leaders. Participants described how empowering their employees helped them identify

leaders and to “grow their own” leaders moving forward. Participant 1A described how this process evolved, stating:

We had to empower [faculty and staff] not just to do their jobs but more, we had to empower them to step up. We could see people coming to the table with ideas, those who brought problems who also brought solutions. As a result, we are now creating a leadership academy as an official, formal structure that will help grow that next level into actual leadership positions.

The document analysis revealed six emails supporting Kotter’s (1996) fifth-step, empowering broad-based action. Two emails discussed the institution's new “grow your own” program, and four emails provided data to support employees' willingness to bring new ideas to the leadership team.

Generating Short-Term Wins

Institution 1 focused on building relationships with outside stakeholders and receiving donations during the pandemic to support students' and employees' needs. Participant 1A commented on accepting more donations:

We learned how to speak out in the community, more focused on students and their struggles, and now, all of a sudden, it wasn't just about us asking for money; it became compelling. We would ask somebody for fifty thousand dollars. They would write a check for one hundred thousand.

Participants also commented on tremendous new partnerships created to support students' needs. Participant 1D commented on new partnerships that evolved to support students during this time, stating:

For food insecurities, we worked with the Local Food Bank and partnered with the university next door; we opened our pantries to students at both schools. For technology, we were able to ramp up better computers, and we put Webex in every classroom, so faculty could come to their office and teach through Webex and every classroom on campus. We found that as faculty started working with students, they became more aware of how many of our students didn't have what they needed at home. Additionally, the offices that didn't work directly with students were hearing more about what was going on, and it was just a tremendous amount of involvement, and everyone stepped up.”

During the document analysis, the researcher identified very little supporting Kotter's (1996) sixth-step, generating short-term wins. The limited supporting documentation included social media posts, advertisements for the food pantry, and technology support.

Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

Institution 1 participants concentrated on new processes that were created, new supports that were added, new partnerships that were developed, and building a unique one-stop shop for students' wrap-around services. Participant 1B described it like this:

We formalized our emergency aid process, which means we can address our students quicker and more efficiently than ever. We have a counselor dedicated only to emergency aid or insecurities that a student might face. We have a food pantry now that's front and center for students to use. We have a clothing closet, and we have outside resources that come in that can help with just about every insecurity our students face. We're also building a whole student center conference to serve as a one-stop shop with all the wrap-around services under one roof.

Participants also mentioned several times their new voucher system to support

students. Participant 1D explained:

We started vouchers, and faculty hand out vouchers if they see a student in need. We received a grant for a counseling center to increase our students' mental health assistance. And we've created a partnership with citizens to start just a health clinic on campus. We keep finding more ways to help and keep our students here.

During the document analysis, the researcher was able to locate two different data sources to support Kotter's (1996) seventh-step, consolidating gains and producing more change. The researcher was able to locate voucher information on the institution website. The researcher also reviewed course syllabi and found within those syllabi, a link for students to access BNI supports.

Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

Institution 1 participants concentrated on how the COVID-19 pandemic brought students' BNI to the forefront and how it impacted the institution's focus and willingness to support students with wrap-around services. Participant 1B commented:

Never in a million years would I have ever imagined we would have had all this stuff [food pantries, clothes closets, emergency aid, and more] to address BNI, nor do I think at the time it would have been accepted, but it is now. So, it completely changed how we think as an institution.

Participants also focused on how caring has become embedded in their culture and that students' needs outside of classroom are now a primary focus. Participant 1D explained it this way:

COVID changed everything, and everyone became much more student-focused, and we already were student-focused, but everyone became hyper-focused on what more we

could do. Caring across our campus, just ramped up, and recognizing that our students have all kinds of needs and that they will not go away just because COVID has gone away. This is their lives, and we just didn't know it.

The document analysis revealed two data sources supporting Kotter’s (1996) eighth-step, anchoring new approaches in the culture. The data sources included four emails and a flyer discussing the new one-stop shop supporting students' BNI.

Institution 2

Institution 2 participant interviews and document analysis revealed all eight steps of Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model, (See Table 4.10, Institution 2 Findings by Steps). In addition to many personal documents being generously shared from Institution 2 publicly accessible documents provided significant data for the document analysis.

Table 4.10 Institution 2 Findings by Steps

Kotter’s eight-step process of change model	Number of participants who identified step	Instrumentation	Documentation
Establishing a sense of urgency	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Text messages
Creating a guiding coalition	2	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Committee Meeting minutes
Developing a vision and strategy	3	Semi-structured interviews	-
Communicating the change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Text messages Social media Website
Empowering broad-based change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Generating short-term wins	4	Semi-structured interviews	Call logs
Consolidating gains and producing more change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Syllabi
Anchoring new approaches in the culture	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails

Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Participants at Institution 2 stated they established a sense of urgency when the COVID-19 pandemic began. Participants focused on the immediate BNI of technology when the institution shut down after spring break in 2020. Participant 2C commented that urgency for BNI occurred immediately when everything shut down, saying, “BNI’s were urgent when everything shut down, and students didn’t have the technology; you would have students that couldn’t log in to the class or do their work.”

Many participants discussed that urgency was immediate with technology, but as the pandemic was prolonged, other issues emerged and became urgent. Participant 2A stated, “[BNI became urgent] immediately with technology, the after that kids didn’t have proper food, and they were getting hungry, so we addressed that need, and then we had mental health because of isolation, it just kept changing and evolving.”

The document analysis revealed much documentation to support Kotter’s (1996) first-step, creating a sense of urgency. Twenty-two emails and 37 text messages were shared with the researcher to document the urgency of addressing BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many emails addressed pursuing partnerships to meet the needs of students, including technology needs (e.g., laptops and hotspots) and locating partners to help the demand in food needs. The researcher also found seven social media posts on Facebook or Instagram, providing information to students and staff about immediate support for BNI specifically, technology and food.

Creating a Guiding Coalition

Only two of four participants at Institution 2 identified a guiding coalition within their interviews. Those who identified a guiding coalition focused on the role of executive leaders in providing guidance to address BNI during the pandemic. Participant 2A commented:

We didn't have a diagram of how to handle a global pandemic, so our needs changed very fast, and it was the work of a group of people in our executive leadership team that said, "We've got to have another meeting, and this is what just happened." So, it changed as this group of individuals dedicated to helping serve the needs of the students determined it needed to. We could almost instantaneously make changes because we are small.

Participants also commented on the back-and-forth leadership flow in a small setting, allowing them to find and implement solutions quickly. Participant 2D described the process like this:

It started at the top, with the executive leadership team, and then it came down to our individual departments. Still, I think for those of us that do instruction which I also do, if we saw a problem, we could talk to our department head or someone else who was a VP and say, "Hey, here's a problem." It would go back up and then come back down with some guidance to help us move forward, but it was a quick movement like usually it was addressed by the end of the day the issue would come up.

The two participants who did not mention an overall guiding coalition noted each person led the charge to address student needs and would direct students to the best place to receive help. According to participant 2C:

Depending on the problem, we would try to divert that in specific directions. If it was like a mental health thing and they needed counseling, we would send them to counselors and

try to help them that way. If it were financial or food, we would send them through our student services assistant, and he would try to use her people capital to get help.

The document analysis provided additional data to support Kotter's (1996) second-step, Creating a guiding coalition. Participants from Institution 2 shared 15 emails documenting the meetings held by the leadership team. Minutes from the meetings were also shared with the researcher. These minutes confirmed the formation of smaller teams that helped manage BNI.

Developing a Vision and Strategy

Three participants at Institution 2 focused on developing a vision and strategy, reiterating how everyone was assigned a group of students to contact each week to help them determine what needed to be addressed next. Participant 2B stated, "When the pandemic began, we assigned everyone [faculty, staff, and administration] a list of students they were required to contact each week to determine how they were doing and what their needs were."

After needs were gathered, they were brought to the leadership team, meetings were held, and the leadership team made a decision about how to move forward to best support students, faculty, and staff. Participant 2A explained:

The current vice-president of administration, vice-president of instruction, vice-president of student services, and some of the counselors and directors met on at least a weekly basis by Zoom to gather information from the calls that were being made and the information that was being gathered to figure out how to resolve some of these issues.

The researcher found no evidence of additional information during the document analysis to support Kotter's (1996) third-step, developing a vision and strategy.

Communicating the Change

All four participants at Institution 2 commented on the importance of communication changes during the pandemic. Many comments were made about the executive leadership team's role in facilitating two-way communication about any and all changes implemented during the pandemic. Participants also discussed creating a webpage on the institution website, sending emails and text messages, and making individual calls to all students. Participant 2A described it like this:

We had an updated COVID policy and procedure website that addressed not only COVID-19 procedures but also BNI information. We sent out messages through our emails and text messages. We had individuals calling to see how people were doing and providing them with updated information.

For the document analysis, Institution 2 participants shared 29 emails and 36 text messages documenting the communication of supports and changes put in place to support BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. The institution website also provided multiple pages supporting the communication. The researcher also located eight social media posts communicating the changes and supports available to students and employees addressing BNI.

Empowering Broad-Based Change

Institution 2 participants focused on empowering their employees to support everyone (i.e., students, faculty, and staff) and helping them take ownership of solving problems and supporting BNI. Participant 2A stated, "Employees were empowered from everywhere. We just did what we had to do to support students. I think we were supportive of everyone and rallied around each other. People really just took ownership, and they were given that ownership."

Many commonalities were identified in the empowerment section of Research Question

1. This comment by participant 2D was particularly poignant:

Our President sent an email stating to leave no stone unturned to help students. That email to me was a good thing. It didn't give a specific way to do it; he just said, "Hey, do what you can to make things work." I feel like everybody knew the urgency and responded in the best way possible.

The document analysis provided limited data to support Kotter's (1996) fifth-step, empowering broad-based action. Institution 2 participants shared five emails documenting empowerment. The email from the president was one of the five emails.

Generating Short-Term Wins

Institution 2 participants highlighted short-term wins as building relationships between employees and students to support students as quickly and efficiently as possible and providing the services students needed to succeed. Participant 2C described it like this:

I think it says a lot about the family at Institution 2 that we had so many people who were caring and willing to find support for students and each other. Building relationships and earning the people's trust helped us move quickly to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building those relationships allowed students and employees to feel okay about asking for help, and they received it quickly. Participant 2B commented:

Developing relationships encouraged everyone to help the students through the COVID-19 time. The phone calls made to students encouraged students and allowed them to receive help quickly. There wasn't a single need brought to our attention that couldn't be addressed somehow.

The document analysis provided limited data sources to support Kotter's (1996) sixth-step, generating short-term wins. However, call logs were provided to support participant 2B's comment that developing relationships through contacting students was essential to supporting students.

Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

For Institution 2, consolidating gains and producing more change focused on creating a one-stop shop to support students' needs. Participant 2A commented, "We're taking steps to create a one-stop shop for wrap-around services. We recognize those individuals with basic insecurity needs, not just students, but students, faculty, and staff, and are developing ways to support them."

Recognizing and genuinely supporting mental health awareness and support was also a focus of participants from Institution 2. Participant 2B stated:

We recognize mental health as a need and are addressing it. We're teaching our employees to recognize it. We're teaching our students to recognize it, and we purchased a mental health app that allows them to access a therapist at no cost through meta-teletherapy.

The researcher's document analysis led to the location of syllabi with BNI statements and links to additional student supports.

Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

For participants from Institution 2, anchoring new approaches in the culture focused on the awareness of BNI and its effect on student success. Participants discussed their work toward developing a culture of "care." Participant 2B shared this observation:

Faculty and staff have bought into the “caring” culture our president has begun implementing. We are ensuring that all of our students’ BNIs are addressed and that we provide them the resources to go and get help if we can not offer it on campus. We've looked at different avenues to fund BNIs because we've realized that students will not succeed without these needs. A couple of months ago, a drive allowed employees to donate to the wrap-around services program to support students’ basic needs. The participation was phenomenal.

Participants also discussed ensuring that all students' BNI continue to be addressed and that, as an institution, they were now more sensitive to the student's needs as a whole. Participant 2C said:

Regarding basic needs, our awareness is much more heightened than before the pandemic. We are much more aware and focused on supporting our students, faculty, and staff. We have the wrap-around services program we've implemented and are moving forward in full force. And so, while they're with us, we’ve got to try to take care of them and make sure that they have access to this type of support. But I think we've noticed the need for it. I believe that if you talk about any benefits from the pandemic, that's got to be it.

The document analysis for Institution 2 provided several emails supporting Kotter’s (1996) eighth-step, anchoring new approaches in the culture. Participants shared 27 emails, and 20 of those emails documented the formation of the institution's new one-stop shop to support students' BNI.

Institution 3

Institution 3 participant interviews and document analysis revealed all eight steps of Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model (See Table 4.11, Institution 3 Findings by Steps). Institution 3 participants shared a limited amount of personal information with the researcher for the document analysis; the data sources provided were limited to emails and the survey used to gather student information. The researcher located additional documentation through publicly accessible data, including social media posts, the institution's website, regent board meeting minutes, and syllabi.

Table 4.11 Institution 3 Findings by Steps

Kotter’s eight-step process of change model	Number of participants who identified step	Instrumentation	Documentation
Establishing a sense of urgency	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Social media
Creating a guiding coalition	3	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Developing a vision and strategy	3	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Survey
Communicating the change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Social media Website
Empowering broad-based change	4	Semi-structured interviews	-
Generating short-term wins	4	Semi-structured interviews	-
Consolidating gains and producing more change	4	Semi-structured interviews	Flyers Job descriptions
Anchoring new approaches in the culture	4	Semi-structured interviews	Syllabi Website Board meeting minutes

Establishing a Sense of Urgency

Institution 3 participants homed in on the immediate BNI of technology. There was discussion about the unpreparedness to address those needs and how leaders immediately began finding ways to support the students at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 3B stated:

[BNI became urgent] immediately. We recognized that there would be a need, especially in the technology arena, for many of our students. We're in a rural area, and the internet is not always the strongest in many places. I don't think we were prepared for the BNI of technology because before the pandemic, they had computer labs or somewhere they could come.

There was also a focus on the emerging changes in urgency at Institution 3. Participant 3D stated, “[BNI became urgent] pretty much immediately. At first, it was the technology, and then the demand for mental health increased as well.”

The document analysis provided multiple data sources supporting Kotter’s (1996) first step, creating a sense of urgency. Participants from Institution 3 shared six emails supporting the data found in the interviews. The researcher also found nine social media posts on Facebook or Instagram providing information to students and employees about immediate BNI support.

Creating a Guiding Coalition

Three of the four participants at Institution 3 revealed creating a guiding coalition in their interviews. Participants discussed how teams were immediately created to help guide the process of addressing student needs. Participant 3C described the process, stating:

Teams were created from the top down. We had an executive leadership team, which some institutions call the president’s cabinet, with all our vice presidents. And then, those

results filtered down into our instructional leadership team. That's the team I was on, so that included the VPI, and then all the instructional deans, and then from that, from those results in those meetings, we carried those messages down into our individual departments or units.

Participant 3A's comment reiterated the created teams and what was discussed to assist students during the pandemic, as they stated:

We had the ELT or executive leadership that would have their meetings, and then the vice president of instruction at the time would meet with our ILT, instructional leadership team, and the deans. We would talk about issues we were hearing from our faculty, directors, and department chairs about students' concerns and needs. And then, we would relay that information or devise a plan.

The document analysis provided one data source supporting Kotter's (1996) second-step, creating a guiding coalition: emails. Participants from Institution 3 shared three emails documenting meetings among the executive leadership team (ELT) and three emails sent to individual departments recapping the information from the ELT meetings.

Developing a Vision and Strategy

Three of four participants from Institution 3 discussed creating a vision and strategy by using a survey designed to collect information from students. Participants then discussed how they created teams to meet and analyze the information about students' needs. After those meetings, each member would meet with their teams, and those teams would take the plan or strategy down to the individual departments. Participant 3B commented, "We immediately created a survey for students to complete about BNI; this provided our teams with the information to make the best decisions to support students."

Two data sources (i.e., emails and a student survey) were located to support Kotter's (1996) third-step, developing a vision and strategy. Participants from Institution 3 shared the survey they used to guide their decisions and actions in supporting BNI and three emails with discussions about how the institution would support BNI.

Communicating the Change

Institution 3 participants commented that communication was shared often and used many different avenues. Participant 3D stated, "We used email, social media, and webpages to communicate, for the most part letting students and employees know how to access what they needed. We also developed a COVID-19 website with all the information on there."

Participant 3C supported other participants' statements, including the syllabi changes to communicate supports that had been added to assist students, stating:

We communicated through email and calls to check on students and employees, updated our syllabus for students' technology needs and all the basic needs services, and put it in our LMS. We blasted it out on our social media accounts. And then we also added links to our intranet that students log into.

During the document analysis, the researcher identified three data sources (i.e., emails, social media posts, and the institution's website) to support Kotter's (1996) fourth-step, communicating the change. Institution 3 participants shared multiple emails documenting the communication described in the interviews, and the researcher was able to locate 50 social media posts supporting the communication. The institution's website also had three links to communication about BNI and support changes.

Empowering Broad-Based Change

Participants at Institution 3 concentrated on empowering employees with information to make decisions and help students in their interviews. Participants also focused on encouraging employees to be advocates for their students.

Participant 3D discussed what senior leaders did to empower everyone to step up and support students, stating:

We were made aware of information and what tools we could offer, and what support we could offer. We were also empowered to know if something unique came up and we needed to advocate for that student; we were permitted to advocate for that student, even if it meant bending the rules.

The researcher was unable to locate data sources for the document analysis to support Kotter's (1996) fifth-step, empowering broad-based action.

Generating Short-Term Wins

For Institution 3 participants, short-term wins focused on the community coming together, creating new partnerships, and meeting students' needs quickly. Participant 3A commented, "I'm proud of the community; it did pull together to care for each other. Our partners helped us get laptops, hot spots, and iPads. As an institution, we also became more technologically savvy to support our students.

Participant 3C described the breadth of support, stating:

Pretty much every student that came to us, we were able to help. Our partners, both new and old, really came through to support our students. The local food bank and the county Meals on Wheels helped us provide food and meals. Our internet provider donated wi-fi hotspots for connectivity. And our foundation received external money and funneled a bunch of money into our basic services.

The researcher was unable to locate data sources for the document analysis to support Kotter's (1996) sixth-step, generating short-term wins.

Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

Institution 3 participants focused on changing student service offerings and building community partnerships to help support students' BNI. Participant 3A shared the following:

We're doing so many different things in our student services department to help with student needs. We've got the dress for success closet now where they can get clothes, and we have a resource list for students to help locate support for any basic needs or insecurities. We have partnered with the community to provide "Blessing Boxes," which are food boxes for students with food insecurities.

Participants also discussed restructuring departments to assist the ever-growing need to support mental health. Participant 3D described some of these changes, stating:

We have more access to mental health support on campus. We just restructured organizationally, so we now have institutional positions dedicated to mental health. We built community partnerships and brought awareness to our student's needs; it's one thing to get them to the door; it's another thing to keep them through the door.

The document analysis revealed two data sources (i.e., flyers and job descriptions) supporting Kotter's (1996) seventh-step, consolidating gains and producing more change. The researcher located flyers advertising the Blessing Boxes for students and identified job descriptions noting counselors dedicated to mental health specifically, supporting the restructuring of the organization mentioned by participant 3D.

Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

Institution 3 participants concentrated on the shift to the awareness of students' needs. Participants discussed creating an environment that levels the playing field for all students and supports addressing all BNI. Participant 3A described this shift:

We have become more in tune with the needs of students and our role and responsibility to help them overcome those nonacademic barriers to success in providing wrap-around services. And that goes with getting that playing ground equal. We are attempting to identify these students even more so that we can help them get to that fair playing field and minimize those gaps. We're not waiting till they're already failing a class. We identify them at the beginning as much as possible. A lot of times, it is because of basic need insecurities. It is hard; we're trying.

Other participants commented on the budget and identifying permanent funding for BNI initiatives in the institution's budget. Participant 3B discussed this need, stating:

We started looking at the budget process as Spring 2020 was progressing when the pandemic first started. We looked to see if we could move some money around. Our budget changed from our initial draft in the spring of 20, and we did the same thing in the fall. Then in the 2021 cycle, we just looked and said, "Are there any monies we can permanently allocate for BNI?" As a college, we realized this was critical to our student's success. I think COVID-19 just helped us become more sensitive to our student's needs, which has stuck even now.

The document analysis provided three sources of documentation (i.e., syllabi, the institution's website, and board meeting minutes) to support Kotter's (1996) eighth-step, anchoring new approaches in the culture. Data included (a) syllabi for each course providing a BNI statement for students, (b) many links to the website providing information to

support BNI, and (c) board meeting minutes documenting the institution's changes to support students' BNI.

Cross-Case Findings from Three Participating Institutions for Research Question 2

Using the steps from Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model, cross-case findings by step across institutions are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Cross-Case Findings by Steps from Three Participating Institutions

Kotter’s eight-step process of change model	Number of participants who identified step	Instrumentation	Documentation
Establishing a sense of urgency	12	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Text messages Social media
Creating a guiding coalition	8	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Committee meeting Minutes
Developing a vision and strategy	10	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Survey
Communicating the change	12	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Social media Website Flyers Text messages
Empowering broad-based change	12	Semi-structured interviews	Emails
Generating short-term wins	12	Semi-structured interviews	Social media Call logs
Consolidating gains and producing more change	12	Semi-structured interviews	Website Syllabi Flyers Job descriptions
Anchoring new approaches in the culture	12	Semi-structured interviews	Emails Flyers Syllabi Website Board meeting minutes

Additional Findings from Research Question 2

As indicated in the Table 4.12, all eight steps of Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model were found across the interviews and the document analysis provided supporting data documenting each step identified in the change model. No additional steps were discovered during the data analysis; however, additional findings were noted, including new services added to support students’ BNI.

Table 4.13 documents the services available at each institution before COVID-19 and identifies the changes implemented during or after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.13 Before and During/After COVID-19 Changes at Three Participating Institutions

Institution	BNI services pre-COVID-19	BNI implemented during/after COVID-19
1	Small food pantry with personal hygiene supplies and a clothing closet	One-stop shop includes a food pantry, clothes closet, counseling, transportation assistance, mental health assistance, emergency aid, and housing assistance
2	Counselors, a small food cabinet at one location, and reduced-cost childcare at one location	Food pantry, clothes closet, mental health app, emergency grants for students, and implementation of a one-stop shop with counselors, childcare, and tutoring
3	Counselors, emergency funds, hygiene baskets, reduced-cost childcare	Counselors, emergency funds, hygiene baskets, blessing baskets (food), and reduced-cost childcare

By analyzing the data gathered from the interviews and the document analysis, the researcher identified many changes implemented during the pandemic to support students’ holistic needs. Following all eight steps of Kotter’s (1996) model, though unintentionally, the institutions built upon the services already being offered and implemented changes. These

changes included, counseling, emergency funds, and one-stop shops providing various wrap-around services for students and employees.

Summary

This chapter began with a review of the research questions, the theoretical and conceptual models, the data collection method and participant and institution demographics. The researcher then presented an analysis of the data from the multiple case study on leadership strategies and competencies administrators used to respond to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes and/or services implemented to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were organized using the conceptual frameworks guiding this study; Balasubramanian & Fernandes (2022) Crisis Leadership Model and Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model. The study revealed all seven crisis leadership competencies at two of the three institutions and two additional competencies unique to the community colleges in this study. The Eight-Steps of Kotter's (1996) Process of Change Model were present at all three institutions. The researcher identified no other steps, but additional findings for services offered to address students' BNI were discovered. Chapter 5 provides further analysis of the data relative to the research questions, implications of the findings, recommendations for further research, and the summary.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter begins with a review of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding this study. These sections are followed by a discussion of the study methodology and data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with the study findings, implications, future research recommendations, and the researcher's conclusions.

Problem Overview

Financial struggles, food insecurity, and the lack of access to education often go hand in hand. According to The Hope Center for Community, College, and Justice (2021) data gathered from the Fall 2020 survey indicated 31% of food-insecure students chose to pay for food over education. In addition, 48% of students faced housing insecurities, 14% were homeless affected, 39% of students faced food insecurities, and 67% of students in Texas struggled with depression and anxiety since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 195,000 students from 130 2-year colleges and 72 4-year colleges and universities responded to the survey.

Students' well-being and academic success often depend on first meeting their basic needs (Goldrick-Rab, 2021; Holdera et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2017; Trawver et al., 2020). Furthermore, students whose basic needs go unmet are more likely to have lower grades, higher levels of mental health issues, and poorer health (Hejl, 2021). If students face just one of these factors, it can influence their success; but a combination of factors is likely to damage their academic success. Basic need insecurities (BNI) can affect students' ability to remain enrolled, ultimately threatening their long-term financial stability and overall success. Overcoming barriers to student success can be complex; it often involves assessing and then addressing

learners' needs. According to Lampard-Dennis and Osterholt (2011), students are best served when they are placed in the center of multiple existing campus services. This process can most successfully happen with a holistic approach.

Although many surveys and studies have been completed on BNI and providing wrap-around services through a holistic approach, few studies have been focused on understanding BNI from administrators' perspectives on community college campuses in Texas during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the changes and/or services that were implemented to support students during this time.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study:

1. What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs was the theoretical framework chosen to guide this study. Maslow suggested humans are motivated to fulfill their basic needs before focusing on more advanced needs. This study focused on physiological and safety needs, and Maslow's theory was used as an overarching worldview to focus the study on BNI.

The conceptual frameworks used in this study were Balasubramanian and Fernandes' (2022) Crisis Leadership Model and Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model. The Crisis Leadership Model was used for data collection and analysis for Research Question 1. This model provided a framework for analyzing leadership strategies and competencies that influenced how administrators addressed BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model was used for data collection and analysis for Research Question 2. This model provided a framework for exploring changes and services that were implemented to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

The researcher selected a multi-case study design to explore, identify, and interpret responses, challenges, and/or services leaders from three institutions used to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sadvandi & Halkias, 2019). Case study research allows researchers to perform an in-depth study of participants' perspectives on a phenomenon in its natural context (Halkias et al., 2022).

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher used two sources of data for this study: (a) participant interviews and (b) a document analysis.

The primary data for this study were collected from participant interviews. The interview protocol and questions are found in Appendix E, Interview Protocols. The researcher used semi-structured questions to guide the interviews in addition to probes and spontaneous questions to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the topic (Wilson, 2014). Leaders were asked initial questions followed by probes from the researcher to gather relevant data from each participant.

Each interview lasted between 45-75 minutes in duration. The interviews were conducted using Zoom, an online video platform.

Using Zoom software allowed the researcher to produce verbatim transcripts for further review and for coding themes using the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022). Initially, the researcher planned to use NVIVO software for data analysis, however, due to the complexity and additional training required to use the software, the researcher opted to code by hand. To analyze the data, the researcher identified words identical or similar to the competencies and steps defined in the conceptual models. The interviews and documents were color-coded according to the conceptual models during the coding process. Following the color-coding of the models, the researcher used tables to document the number of times the competencies and steps from each conceptual model were noted in each participant's interview. The researcher also compiled the data by institution within the tables.

The secondary source of data collection was a document analysis. The document analysis was done by reviewing and analyzing public documents and personal information shared by participants. The documents included email correspondence, text messages, agendas, board minutes, policies, social media, and institution websites (Yin, 2009). The researcher acknowledged unexpected themes as they emerged while the data were collected.

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs was used as an overarching worldview to focus the study on BNI but was not explicitly used in the data analysis. Charmaz (2001) described coding as the critical link between data collection and their explanation of meaning. All data were coded using the conceptual framework aligned with the research question. The semi-structured interviews were aligned with the research questions and then coded based on the conceptual models selected to guide the study. Interview questions aligned with Research Question 1 were

coded using the Crisis Leadership Model's (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) eight competencies: compassion and care, openness and communication, adaptiveness, resilience and courage, decisiveness, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment. Interview transcripts, audio files, and video files were reviewed for patterns. Themes outside the conceptual models emerged and were coded as "other."

Interviews and a document analysis were used to analyze Research Question 2. Kotter's (1996) eight-step process of change was used to code the data: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains, and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture. According to Saldaña (2016), "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3).

Discussion of Findings and Related Literature

In this study, the researcher explored leadership competencies and strategies used during the COVID-19 to address BNI through Balasubramanian and Fernandes' (2022) seven competencies in Crisis Leadership Model. The researcher also viewed the changes and/or services that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic to support BNI through Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996). Findings include competencies essential to leading an institution during a crisis and what steps and supports are critical to supporting students' BNI during a crisis. The findings of this study are discussed and organized by research questions and relevant literature.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic? Leading during a crisis can be challenging, but possessing certain competencies can lessen the challenge and help leaders successfully guide their institutions through difficult times. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with administrators at three Texas institutions to determine what competencies and strategies assisted them most in addressing students' BNI throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The knowledge gained from this study significantly supports the Crisis Leadership Model (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022) and the competencies critical to leading during a crisis; however, the researcher discovered that four out of seven competencies emerged more frequently across the 12 participants' interviews.

The research identified four competencies that leaders most used during the COVID-19 pandemic include compassion and care, openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment. A closer look at these four competencies gave the researcher a deeper understanding of the critical skills needed to lead during a crisis.

Compassion and Care

According to Klann (2003), "A sincere interest and genuine concern for others go a long way toward meeting the emotional needs of people experiencing a crisis" (p. 15). During a crisis, employers should not focus on employees' mistakes but rather provide extra support and care to instill confidence and empower them (Kaul et al., 2020). Leaders can be more effective when their decisions and policies are seen to be made with empathy and understanding (Haslam et al., 2021).

All 12 administrators in this study reported compassion and care were essential in leading and supporting students and employees BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. Compassion and care were noted 42 times across the semi-structured interviews, demonstrating their importance. During the pandemic, administrators saw a shift from focusing on students and employees completing assignments or duties to being responsive to their needs as a whole.

The overwhelming outpouring of support in donations of time and money to students' and employees' needs was inspiring. It was critical that everyone took care of each other and were compassionate to the challenges everyone faced. The importance of leading with compassion and care during a crisis is supported by the research of Wooten and James' (2008), who found relationships and caring are critical to leading during a crisis, and Gardner's (1990), who concluded successful leaders need to possess the ability to understand their constituents and their needs.

Openness and Communication

According to Balasubramanian and Fernandes (2022), A well-honed communication strategy is essential and critical to any organization before, during, and after a crisis situation. Communication during a crisis needs to be clear and consistent, but it also needs to be quickly adaptable to the situations that arise. Klann (2003) wrote "Leaders can also sharpen personal communication skills to make themselves more effective in those situations" (p. 13).

As administrators reflected on the competencies they used during the pandemic, communication was near the top of the list; all 12 administrators highlighted communication noting it 44 times across the interviews. Every participant concentrated on the importance of communicating clearly, consistently, and constantly.

The institutions used many modes of communication, including emails, text messages, websites, telephone calls, social media posts, and posts in the learning management systems (e.g., like Canvas and Blackboard). Many of the literature findings supported the importance of communication, including American Association of Community College's (2018) *Competencies for Community College Leaders* and Hayward's (1997) *Churchill on Leadership*. This study also supported what Boin (2013) indicated was crucial regarding communication and the perception of how the crisis is addressed.

Consultation and Collaboration

Addressing challenges in a crisis requires leaders to be collective and inclusive when making decisions (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022). It is critical to establish collaborative roles across stakeholders. Collaboration works well when a leadership team guides the work and committees implement the work (National Education Association, 2020).

Consultation and collaboration were reported to be the most valuable competencies for leaders during a crisis. All 12 participants commented on collaboration, and it was noted 59 times in the interviews. Many participants focused on the importance of cross-campus collaboration. Participants specifically noted that successfully addressing BNI required many departments to work together to meet the different insecurities, including (a) financial aid to assist with financial difficulties, (b) the IT department to garner additional laptops and hotspots, (c) the marketing department to help manage the website and social media communication, and (d) student services to help gather food and clothes. Participants also reported collaborating with outside stakeholders was essential to building partnerships that would provide additional support, including funding for financial assistance and food banks to fill the pantry. These findings

support the research of Ulmer (2012), who emphasized that collaboration with stakeholders is essential to leading successfully during a crisis.

Empowerment

Employee empowerment is critical to the effectiveness of an institution (Said, 2015). Empowering employees and promoting creative thinking is key to implementing problem-solving quickly and effectively during a crisis (Forster et al., 2020).

Through this study, participants emphasized that empowering employees was critical to leading during the COVID-19 pandemic. All 12 participants commented on empowerment, which was noted 31 times in the interviews, making it clear empowering their employees with information and support to do whatever was necessary to support students and each other during the pandemic allowed the institutions to address BNI quickly and succinctly.

All three institutions ensured employees that no idea was bad if it supported students. Empowering employees and team members relate to many of the literature findings, including Hayward's (1997) and Coleman's (1996) research emphasizing the importance of providing employees the tools to communicate and collaborate effectively to build trust and feel empowered to act during a crisis.

Beyond the four most used competencies, the researcher noted many competencies within the context of crisis leadership are solid fundamental leadership traits that should be used at all times. However, a few of the competencies decisiveness, adaptiveness, and resilience and courage, are not competencies that are necessarily focused on consistently during normal circumstances but are required at a heightened level during a crisis.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic? Change is difficult and complex and usually takes a substantial amount of time. The COVID-19 pandemic assisted institutions in making changes at an accelerated rate. The researcher used semi-structured interviews with administrators and a document analysis at three Texas institutions to determine what changes and services administrators implemented to address students' BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. By analyzing the data gathered from the interviews, completing the document analysis using Kotter's (1996) Eight-Step Process of Change model, and assessing the literature, the researcher found all eight steps at the three institutions and identified changes implemented to support BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from this study support Pauchant and Mitroff's (1992) findings, indicating a crisis can help an organization change. Although no participants specifically noted Kotter's (1996) model as their framework for making changes, the findings revealed all three institutions unintentionally followed Kotter's steps. The researcher also noted some institutions took the steps out of order, but all of them were taken. The researcher did not identify any additional steps taken by the institutions.

The researcher also noted addressing BNI during the pandemic was unavoidable, and the steps of Kotter's (1996) change model were accelerated due to the urgency created by the pandemic. The researcher also concluded the leaders did nothing of substance to create a sense of urgency; they did, however, capitalize on the crisis to emphasize the urgency.

During the study, the researcher noted steps the participants identified most frequently in their interviews and within the document analysis. The interviews identified the actions, but the

document analysis provided evidence of the actions were carried through, validating the participants' narratives. The most frequently recorded steps from the interviews and document analysis included (a) communicating the change, (b) consolidating gains and producing more change, and (c) anchoring the new cultural approaches. The steps were vital to the institution's ability to provide support quickly and enabled them to ensure the support for BNI would continue after the pandemic subsided.

Communicating the Change

Leaders who successfully lead change use all existing communication channels to communicate the strategy and transformation or change (Kotter, 1995). Aligning people by communicating the future direction through words and deeds and gaining acceptance and commitment helps move an institution forward (Goin, n.d.).

All 12 participants discussed how they successfully communicated the changes, supports, and procedures implemented to address BNI during the pandemic. The interviews and document analysis demonstrated communication was two-way and distributed using various avenues (i.e., email, social media, syllabi, text messages, and college websites). This communication enabled the organizations to quickly implement changes and support students' BNI.

Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

According to Kotter (1995), "Leaders of successful efforts use the credibility afforded by short-term wins to tackle even more significant problems. They go after systems and structures inconsistent with the transformation vision and have not been confronted before" (p.139).

Gains and producing change looked different at each institution. All 12 participant interviews and the document analysis supported consolidating gains and producing change as key to successfully implementing institutional change. Changes brought to the forefront of all

three institutions' plans included providing mental health support and wrap-around services to students. Providing laptops was "low-hanging fruit" that allowed the institutions to support students' initial BNI. However, finding ways to help students with additional BNI (e.g., food and housing insecurity and mental health support) was critical to ensuring students' success during the pandemic.

Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

According to Kotter (1995), "Change sticks when it becomes 'the way we do things around here,' when it seeps into the bloodstream of the institution" (p. 18). Leaders must personify the change they want to make. To anchor change, it must be rooted in the institution's shared values and embedded in the culture (Kotter, 2012). Interviews and document analysis from all three institutions supported that change had been anchored within their culture and institution. Many participants described how institutional culture had changed to be more open and centered around students' needs more holistically.

Practical Implications

Through this qualitative multi-case study, the researcher aimed to understand the competencies leaders used that contributed to how they responded to BNI during the COVID-19 global pandemic and to identify changes and/or services institutions implemented to support students' BNI during this time. This study gave the researcher a deeper understanding of the competencies essential to leading during a crisis and the services critical to supporting students' BNI.

One implication identified by the researcher was that leaders take time to build relationships with employees. Looking at Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, the pyramid's foundation is physiological and safety. However, this study revealed it took competencies within

the third level of the pyramid—love and belonging—to create relationships to address students’ BNI successfully during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Of the seven competencies in crisis leadership, four were most used by the leaders in the study, and all four essential competencies fell under building relationships. The combination of the four competencies (i.e., care and compassion, openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment) most used by leaders in this study indicates how imperative it is to build relationships to be effective and to lead successfully during a crisis.

College leaders were aware of students’ nonacademic barriers, but they had no idea of the issue’s complexity. The COVID-19 global pandemic forced leaders to accept the severity of BNI’s impact on students and employees. Acknowledging and accepting that impact assisted leaders in successfully building relationships within their institutions. The competencies used during the pandemic enabled institutional leaders to build the relationships needed to exude care and compassion, openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment to support students’ BNI during the pandemic.

The researcher discovered building relationships during the pandemic enabled leaders to make informed decisions more quickly to support students’ BNI. As the pandemic continued, relationships strengthened with the compassion and care shown, resulting in increased communication, collaboration, and empowerment.

Creating a culture that exudes compassion and care is vital for leaders when addressing a crisis and implementing change. When compassion and care are demonstrated to students and employees alike, trust and relationships build rapidly, change can happen quickly, and support can be provided promptly and succinctly to those in need.

The researcher also found communication is vital to leading during a crisis. This study highlighted how the pandemic forced organizations to change how their teams communicate and collaborate quickly. Findings suggest many modes of communication must be used to communicate changes and services available to those who need them most. Leaders at two of the three institutions created a new communication plan to aid in addressing issues quickly during a crisis. Encouraging collaboration can positively impact the culture of an institution and can provide an immense amount of support to students and employees. Additionally, empowering employees and providing them with the tools and support to assist action during the crisis allows support, services, and changes to be implemented more quickly.

The second implication of this study is that leaders should always be ready to capitalize on a crisis. The findings from this study indicate a crisis can highlight other crises and create change at an accelerated rate, lending to the saying, “Never waste a good crisis.” A crisis generates the urgency to create buy-in and support from all stakeholders. It also provides the foundation for developing a strategy to address change quickly. A crisis also enables an institution to use many modes of communication about the transitions; it allows leaders to empower employees to support the change by providing them with information and supporting their decisions. A crisis allows short-term wins to be identified quickly and provides the foundation to anchor the change in the culture after the crisis has ended.

Although all three institutions implemented various changes to support students’ BNI, two of the three institutions created one-stop shops. These shops included food pantries, clothes closets, childcare centers, emergency aid access, mental health support, and vouchers for transportation and other needs. Many participants noted they were met with resistance when

addressing BNI before the pandemic; but, since the crisis, support has been easily found due to the evidence and data gathered during the pandemic.

During the initial part of the pandemic, institutions focused on making changes to procedures that allowed students to be helped quickly. Since then, all three institutions have begun making changes to policies, including how aid is distributed to students and how budgets are aligned with students' nonacademic needs.

Last, findings imply pursuing and obtaining additional funding to support BNI aids institutions in anchoring change into the institutional culture. Two of the three participating institutions have received grants, including the Hispanic Serving Institution Grant and the Title Five Grant to support their BNI initiatives. However, the researcher notes that follow-up to determine whether institutional funds were dedicated to these initiatives after the grant funding ends would be critical to determining if the initiatives were truly embedded in the institution's culture.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides a starting point for understanding leadership competencies critical to leading during a crisis and provides a framework for changes that could be made at institutions to support students' BNI during and after a crisis. There are many opportunities for additional research focused on the impacts of BNI, the support of BNI for students and employees, and leadership during a crisis.

Future studies could focus on whether BNI will remain a permanent fixture in community college culture. Is it possible the response this study uncovered is similar to the response after a natural disaster? Will the support only be temporary as institutions rallied around students during

the pandemic, or will the supports remain post-pandemic? A longitudinal study could be performed 3–4 years later to determine if supports remained after the pandemic.

Across many interviews, participants mentioned that employees, similar to students, faced BNI during the pandemic. Community colleges have employees on the lower end of the pay scale who face BNI every day; however, minimal conversation or research has been done on a large scale to understand BNI and community college employees. A phenomenological study could be performed with community college employees to guide leaders on effective ways to support employees who face BNI.

Although the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted community colleges around the United States, the impacts differed from state to state. Replicating this study at community colleges in other states could be very beneficial. Completing a replication study in various states could provide additional leadership strategies essential to leading in a crisis and add to the number and kinds of services offered to support BNI during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

This study was qualitative and from administrators' perspectives; a more extensive quantitative study using surveys could be conducted to assess if students used the services offered by the institutions and if it affected their persistence and success throughout the pandemic. Quantitative studies on the impact of addressing BNI on student retention, graduation rates, and student performance could also be performed.

Future studies could be conducted to explore the different types of leadership styles leaders used during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Although this study focused on crisis leadership, many other leadership styles and theories could be used during a crisis. Examples to explore include democratic, visionary, transformational, and adaptive leadership. Additionally,

qualitative studies looking at the differences in leadership styles during a crisis based on gender and length of leader tenure could be performed.

Researcher's Conclusions

Revisiting the purpose of the study, the researcher found several leadership competencies critical to lead institutions through a crisis. The four most prominent competencies (i.e., care and compassion, openness and communication, consultation and collaboration, and empowerment) to successfully leading an institution during a crisis all centered around building relationships.

Findings from this study also provided insight into how community college leaders can implement changes and/or services during a crisis that will support students holistically and enable the institution to anchor that change after the crisis has subsided. The researcher concluded the pandemic created an urgency for the leaders; however, participants had to capitalize on that urgency to find ways to change services offered to support students' BNI. Leaders accomplished this by communicating quickly and often throughout the pandemic about the BNI students were facing.

Leaders also focused on the gains made during the pandemic to help them attempt to institutionalize supporting BNI. Gains included, but were not limited to, (a) providing technology to students without access to computers or wi-fi, (b) establishing food pantries and clothing closets, and (c) providing mental health support. The strategies to institutionalize change included applying for and receiving grants to fund the BNI initiatives and developing one-stop shops to provide wrap-around services to all students.

Summary

In this study, the researcher explored competencies that administrators in Texas used to address BNI during the COVID-19 global pandemic and identified changes and/or services

implemented to support students' BNI. Participants reported that demonstrating compassion and care was critical to supporting students during the pandemic. Creating open communication that was clear, concise, and constant and encouraged collaboration was vital to successfully leading and supporting students' BNI. Empowering employees with the knowledge and tools to support students during the pandemic was also an essential competency to successfully leading and supporting students BNI during the pandemic.

Many changes and services were implemented during the pandemic to support students' BNI; most revolved around adding BNI services, including food pantries, mental health support, and emergency aid. The most impactful implementation, however, was adding a one-stop shop to provide wrap-around services to address BNI, including mental health, food pantries, clothes closets, personal hygiene products, childcare, transportation, emergency aid, and housing assistance.

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Appendix A - Alignment Table

Literature findings	Interview questions/ documents reviewed	Research questions	Theoretical/ conceptual framework	Methodology
<p>Leadership during turbulence (Balasubramanian & Fernandes, 2022)</p> <p>Leadership during turbulence (Hayward, 1997)</p> <p>AACC competencies (AACC, 2018)</p>	<p>SS Interview Questions: 6,8 a and b, nine a,b, and c, and ten a and b</p> <p>(See interview protocol and questions)</p>	<p>RQ 1.</p> <p>What leadership strategies and competencies contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>Maslow's theory of human motivation</p> <p>Crisis Leadership Model (2022)</p> <p>Churchill's leadership characteristics</p>	<p>Qualitative: Multi-case study</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>
<p>Changes in BNI services during COVID-19 (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2021)</p>	<p>Website, emails, memos, media (social and news)</p> <p>SS Interview Questions: 1,2,3 a and b,4,5 a and b, and seven a</p> <p>(See interview protocol & questions)</p>	<p>RQ 2.</p> <p>What changes and/or services did administrators implement to address BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>Maslow's Theory of human motivation (1943)</p> <p>Kotter's Eight-Step Process of Change Model (1996)</p>	<p>Qualitative: Multi-case study</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Document analysis</p>

Appendix B - IRB Approval



TO: Robert Exley
Educational Leadership

Proposal Number: IRB-11358

FROM: Lisa Rubin, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 10/11/2022

RE: Proposal Entitled, "Addressing basic need insecurities during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond: A multicase study of administrators at three community colleges in Texas."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written - and currently on file with the IRB. Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR §104(d), category:Exempt Category 2 Subsection ii.

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

Electronically signed by Phill Vardiman on 10/13/2022 10:53 AM ET
On Behalf of IRB Chair

Appendix C - Introductory Email to President

Dear President _____,

My name is Dayna Prochaska, and I am a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership program at Kansas State University. I would like to invite (name of college) to participate in my research study. I want to learn about how (name of college) addressed Basic Need Insecurities (BNI) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also request that you select the appropriate people at (name of college) to participate. In addition to you, I would like to interview four to six leaders that were involved in the implementation of changes and services to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each individual interview will be a 60–90 minute audio and video recorded semi-structured format.

I am attaching the introduction email with the informed consent that will be sent to the leaders that you select to participate. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about my study or the invitation.

I am hopeful that you will agree to participate, as we know this was and is a significant issue that is critical to our students' success. I look forward to discussing this with you. Please reply with your availability or the email of the person I should talk to schedule time with you.

Thank you for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Dayna Prochaska
Doctoral Student
Kansas State University

Appendix D - Introductory Email/Informed Consent to Participants

Dear _____,

My name is Dayna Prochaska, and I am a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership program at Kansas State University. You have been selected by the leadership at (the institution) as a key individual that could contribute to my doctoral research study. As a result, I am inviting you to participate in a research study about how (the institution) addressed students' Basic Need Insecurities (BNI) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether or stop participating at any time. Your information will not be shared and will remain anonymous and confidential throughout the entire study. There are no penalties for participating or refusing to participate in the research study.

I am hopeful that you will agree to participate, as your knowledge and experience will be valuable in helping us to support students' BNI moving forward.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you agree to completing a 60–90-minute audio and video-recorded semi-structured interview with me.

Please indicate below if you choose to participate in my study or not.

I have read the above, and I choose to participate in this study by completing an audio and video-recorded semi-structured interview with the researcher.

I choose not to participate in this study.

If you choose to participate in this study, please print and sign this consent form below and reply with your availability to schedule an interview, or let me know a convenient time to call you to discuss your availability.

Participant Signature

Date

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Dayna Prochaska
Doctoral Student
Kansas State University
dprochaska@rangercollege.edu

Please return this form to: dprochaska@rangercollege.edu

Appendix E - Interview Protocol and Questions

Interviewer: _____

Date/Time of interview: _____

Location: _____

Participant and Institution #: _____

Before the start of the interview:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview for my dissertation study. No identifying names of participants or institutions will be included in the study. Please know that you can withdraw your consent at any point in the interview.

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership strategies and competencies that contributed to how administrators responded to BNI during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the changes and/or services that were implemented to support students during this time. The findings from this study could provide value to leadership preparation programs.

The interview will take between 60–90 minutes. I would like to video and audio record this interview. You will have the opportunity also to review this transcript to ensure the accuracy of your responses. All recordings will be kept confidential and in a secure location. Are you ok with recording this interview?

What questions do you have before we begin?

Do you agree to participate in this interview and study?

Interview Questions

Basic Information Questions:

- 1.) What is your position at your institution?
- 2.) How long have you been in this position?
- 3.) What was your role during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. Are you currently in the same role?

Semi-structured In-Depth Questions:

- 1.) There are several issues within basic needs insecurities (BNI); what do you categorize as BNI at (your institution)?
- 2.) Tell me about the support and services (your institution) offered to address BNI prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.) What was your institution's process to learn about student needs and concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. How did you use that to address the issue?
 - b. Who all was involved?
- 4.) From your perspective, when did addressing BNI become urgent?
- 5.) Tell me how you let people know the way that (name of school) was addressing BNI:
 - a. How often?
 - b. To whom?
- 6.) How did (name of college's) decisions and actions about addressing BNI change throughout the process?
- 7.) Who were the external partners involved in the process, if any?
 - a. How were they involved?

- b. Were there other internal partners you want to mention?
- 8.) How were employees encouraged and empowered to specifically support students with BNI during the pandemic?
 - a. Were you able to observe that help being offered?
 - b. Who stepped up during this time?
- 9.) What leadership traits or strategies do you think helped you through the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. Were there any specific traits or strategies you needed to strengthen during the pandemic?
 - b. What was your biggest lesson learned during that time?
 - c. How do you think you have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 10.) As you look back on the whole experience of addressing students' BNI during COVID-19, tell me about any promising practices you think (your institution) implemented during the pandemic.
 - a. Has anything become permanent?
 - b. How are you funding it?

Probing Verbiage:

- 1.) Please tell me more.
- 2.) Please explain in more detail.
- 3.) Elaborate more on this, please.
- 4.) Why?