



# **The Journal of Education Research and Interdisciplinary Studies**



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## ☞ From the Office of the Executive Director and Founder ☞



Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2026 edition of the *Journal of Educational Research and Interdisciplinary Studies (JERIS)*. It is both an honor and a privilege to share this publication with you.

The purpose of JERIS is to provide high-quality educational research and thoughtfully developed practices that empower you, as a reader, to grow as a leader and practitioner. In addition, the journal seeks to support your role as an active agent of transformational change within your higher education institution.

JERIS is published quarterly, offering scholars and researchers ongoing opportunities to explore and present research across a range of academic disciplines. Through this work, the journal remains committed to advancing knowledge that supports improvements in instruction, leadership, teaching and learning, retention among administrators, faculty, and students, as well as student engagement. The journal also serves as a valuable resource for promoting diversity and multicultural education within higher education.

Finally, I invite you to support JERIS by sharing this publication with your esteemed colleagues. Encourage them to engage with the research and consider submitting their own scholarly work for publication.

Educationally yours,

*Jà Hon Vance*

Jà Hon Vance



## CALL FOR PAPERS for the Late Summer/Fall 2026 Issue

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Community College Student Retention  
Developmental Education  
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# Advancing Leadership in Urban Community Colleges: Mentoring, Onboarding, and In-boarding Strategies for New Deans and Professors

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Author: Henry T. Miller

## Abstract

Urban community colleges play a critical role in expanding access to higher education while serving diverse student populations. The success of these institutions depends heavily on the effectiveness of their leadership and faculty. This paper examines the importance of mentoring new deans and professors, with a focus on onboarding and inboarding practices that support professional success and institutional advancement. Drawing on current literature (2022–2026), the study explores how structured mentoring, leadership development, and organizational integration contribute to retention, effectiveness, and equity. A conceptual framework is presented to illustrate the relationship between mentoring, onboarding, and leadership outcomes. The paper concludes with recommendations for strengthening mentoring systems in urban community colleges.

## Keywords

Mentoring, onboarding, inboarding, community colleges, leadership development, higher education, faculty success

## Introduction

Urban community colleges serve as gateways to higher education for a diverse and often underserved student population. These institutions require strong leadership and effective faculty to meet the academic, social, and economic needs of their communities. New deans and professors entering these environments often face complex challenges, including navigating institutional culture, addressing equity issues, and managing resource constraints.

Mentoring, onboarding, and inboarding are essential strategies for supporting these professionals. Onboarding refers to the structured process of integrating new employees into an organization, while inboarding focuses on continuous development, adaptation, and long-term success within the institution. Without intentional support, new leaders and faculty may struggle to transition effectively, leading to decreased retention and organizational instability.

## Review of Literature

Recent research emphasizes the importance of structured onboarding and mentoring in higher education. Effective onboarding programs help new faculty and leaders understand institutional expectations, build relationships, and develop confidence in their roles (Wells, 2025). Similarly,

structured onboarding programs have been shown to improve job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Cooper & Slapak-Barski, 2023).

Mentorship plays a critical role in professional development. Mentoring relationships provide guidance, support, and opportunities for growth, particularly during transitional periods such as entering a new leadership role (Lara & Sapienza, 2025). Additionally, mentoring networks enhance social capital, which is essential for career advancement and institutional effectiveness. Leadership transitions in community colleges present unique challenges. New deans must navigate institutional culture, build trust, and understand the needs of faculty and students before implementing changes (Baule et al., 2023). Research also highlights the need for individualized onboarding support, particularly for leaders from underrepresented backgrounds who may face additional barriers (Sandoval-Lucero, 2025).

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study is guided by a conceptual framework that integrates mentoring, onboarding, and inboarding as interconnected processes that support leadership success.

- Mentoring provides relational support, professional guidance, and leadership development.
- Onboarding ensures initial integration into institutional culture, policies, and expectations.
- Inboarding focuses on continuous learning, adaptation, and long-term professional growth.

These three components operate within the broader context of organizational culture and equity-focused leadership. Effective mentoring and onboarding practices create a foundation for inboarding, enabling leaders and faculty to sustain success and contribute meaningfully to institutional goals.

### **Discussion**

First, mentoring is essential for building leadership capacity among new deans and professors. Mentorship provides a structured yet relational approach to professional development, allowing individuals to learn from experienced leaders while navigating complex institutional environments. In urban community colleges, where challenges such as equity gaps and resource limitations are prevalent, mentoring helps new leaders develop the skills needed to address these issues effectively.

Second, onboarding serves as the foundation for professional success. Structured onboarding programs that include orientation, training, and relationship-building activities help new faculty and leaders integrate into the institution. Research indicates that onboarding improves retention and fosters a sense of belonging, which is critical for long-term success (Wells, 2025). Without effective onboarding, individuals may struggle to understand institutional expectations and culture. Third, inboarding extends beyond initial onboarding by emphasizing continuous development and adaptation. Inboarding includes ongoing mentorship, professional development opportunities, and leadership training. This process ensures that faculty and leaders remain engaged, responsive, and effective throughout their careers. Institutions that prioritize inboarding create environments that support growth, innovation, and sustainability.

Finally, the integration of mentoring, onboarding, and inboarding contributes to organizational success. These practices enhance collaboration, improve employee satisfaction, and strengthen institutional effectiveness. In urban community colleges, where the mission includes serving diverse populations, these strategies are essential for promoting equity and inclusion.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study is limited by its reliance on existing literature rather than primary empirical data. Future research should examine the effectiveness of specific mentoring and onboarding models through quantitative and qualitative methods.

Additionally, more research is needed on inboarding as a distinct concept within higher education. While onboarding has been widely studied, the long-term processes that support sustained success require further exploration. Future studies should also examine the impact of mentoring and onboarding on diverse populations, particularly in urban community college settings.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Develop Structured Onboarding Programs**

Institutions should implement comprehensive onboarding programs that include orientation, training, and relationship-building activities. Structured onboarding improves integration and retention (Wells, 2025).

#### **2. Establish Formal Mentoring Programs**

Mentoring programs should pair new deans and faculty with experienced leaders. Mentorship supports professional growth and enhances leadership effectiveness (Lara & Sapienza, 2025).

#### **3. Evaluate and Improve Mentoring Programs**

Institutions should regularly assess the effectiveness of mentoring and onboarding programs to ensure they meet the needs of faculty and leaders.

#### **4. Foster Collaborative Institutional Cultures**

Leaders should create environments that encourage collaboration, communication, and shared governance. Strong relationships enhance organizational effectiveness.

#### **5. Implement Inboarding Practices for Continuous Development**

Institutions should provide ongoing professional development opportunities, including

leadership training and peer collaboration. Inboarding ensures sustained success and adaptability.

#### 6. Promote Inclusive Leadership Practices

Onboarding and mentoring programs should address issues of equity and inclusion, particularly for leaders from underrepresented backgrounds (Sandoval-Lucero, 2025).

### **Conclusion**

Mentoring new deans and professors in urban community colleges is essential for ensuring leadership effectiveness and institutional success. Through structured onboarding and ongoing inboarding practices, institutions can support the professional growth of their leaders and faculty. These strategies not only enhance individual success but also contribute to organizational advancement and equity.

As higher education continues to evolve, the importance of mentoring, onboarding, and inboarding will remain central to developing strong leaders and educators. By investing in these practices, urban community colleges can strengthen their capacity to serve diverse communities and achieve their educational mission.

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# Professional Civility and Kindness in Higher Education Leadership: Strategies for Organizational Advancement and Support



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Author: Otis M. Brown

## Abstract

In higher education, leadership effectiveness is increasingly measured not only by institutional outcomes but also by the quality of workplace culture. Professional civility and acts of kindness have emerged as essential leadership practices that influence organizational performance, employee engagement, and institutional reputation. This paper examines how leaders in higher education can implement professional acts of kindness to enhance internal collaboration and external stakeholder support. Drawing from recent research (2022–2026), the paper explores the role of caring leadership, relational practices, and organizational culture in fostering positive environments. Recommendations are provided to guide leaders in implementing sustainable strategies that promote kindness as a professional standard within higher education institutions.

## Introduction

Higher education institutions are complex organizations that require effective leadership to balance academic excellence, operational efficiency, and stakeholder engagement. In recent years, there has been growing recognition that leadership grounded in professional civility and kindness contributes significantly to organizational success. While higher education has traditionally emphasized competition and performance metrics, emerging research highlights the importance of fostering compassionate and relational leadership practices (Gosse, 2025).

Professional acts of kindness—defined as intentional behaviors that demonstrate respect, empathy, and support—are not merely interpersonal gestures but strategic tools for organizational

advancement. Leaders who model kindness contribute to improved workplace culture, increased employee satisfaction, and stronger institutional trust both internally and externally.

### **The Role of Kindness and Civility in Leadership**

Kindness in leadership is closely aligned with concepts such as caring leadership, servant leadership, and relational leadership. These approaches emphasize empathy, collaboration, and ethical responsibility. Research indicates that caring leadership significantly enhances organizational effectiveness and institutional success, particularly in higher education settings (Walid, 2025).

In addition, leadership rooted in kindness fosters psychological safety and trust among employees. When faculty and staff feel valued and respected, they are more likely to engage fully in their roles and contribute to institutional goals. Kindness has also been linked to improved well-being and increased motivation, reinforcing its importance as a leadership practice (Winkler et al., 2024, as cited in ).

However, higher education environments often present challenges such as competition, hierarchy, and limited resources, which can undermine civility. Leaders must therefore be intentional in cultivating cultures that prioritize respect and collaboration over competition (Gosse, 2025) .

### **Organizational Impact of Kindness-Based Leadership**

Implementing professional acts of kindness has a measurable impact on organizational outcomes. First, kindness enhances employee engagement and retention. When leaders demonstrate empathy and support, employees experience greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Monroe, 2025).

Second, kindness strengthens internal collaboration. Higher education institutions rely on cross-functional teamwork among faculty, administration, and support staff. Relational leadership practices that emphasize trust and communication improve collaboration and decision-making processes (Lasater & Pijanowski, 2025) .

Third, kindness positively influences external perceptions of the institution. Stakeholders such as students, parents, alumni, and community partners are more likely to support institutions that demonstrate ethical leadership and a commitment to human-centered values. In an era of increased accountability and public scrutiny, institutional reputation is closely tied to leadership behavior.

Finally, kindness contributes to resilience during times of crisis. Leaders who prioritize empathy and communication are better equipped to guide their institutions through uncertainty while maintaining morale and stability (Brown et al., 2023) .

## Strategies for Implementing Professional Acts of Kindness

To effectively implement kindness as a leadership strategy, higher education leaders must adopt structured and intentional approaches.

First, leaders should model kindness through their daily interactions. This includes active listening, respectful communication, and recognition of employee contributions. Leadership behavior sets the tone for organizational culture, and consistent modeling reinforces expectations.

Next, institutions should integrate kindness into leadership development programs. Training initiatives should emphasize emotional intelligence, communication skills, and relational leadership practices. Mentorship programs can also support the development of values-based leadership (Friedman et al., 2025).

More so, policies and practices should reflect a commitment to civility. This includes establishing clear expectations for professional behavior, addressing incivility, and promoting inclusive workplace environments. Organizational systems must align with leadership values to ensure consistency.

Lastly, leaders should create opportunities for engagement and connection. Regular meetings, forums, and collaborative initiatives allow employees to build relationships and share ideas. These interactions foster a sense of community and belonging.

## Recommendations

To advance the implementation of professional acts of kindness in higher education, the following recommendations are proposed:

### 1. Institutionalize Kindness as a Leadership Competency

Higher education institutions should formally incorporate kindness and civility into leadership competencies and performance evaluations. Research shows that caring leadership significantly contributes to organizational success and employee engagement (Walid, 2025). Embedding these values into leadership expectations ensures accountability and sustainability.

### 2. Expand Leadership Development and Mentorship Programs

Leadership training programs should emphasize relational and values-based leadership. Mentorship initiatives can help emerging leaders develop empathy, communication skills, and ethical decision-making practices (Friedman et al., 2025). Structured mentorship fosters a culture of support and continuous growth.

### 3. Strengthen Collaborative and Relational Practices

Institutions should prioritize relationship-building through team-based initiatives and cross-departmental collaboration. Strong relationships are foundational to effective leadership and organizational success (Lasater & Pijanowski, 2025). Leaders should create environments that encourage open communication and shared responsibility.

#### 4. Align Organizational Policies with Civility Standards

Policies should clearly define expectations for professional behavior and address issues of incivility. Creating a culture of respect requires both leadership commitment and institutional support (Gosse, 2025) . Clear policies reinforce organizational values and promote accountability.

#### 5. Promote Employee Well-Being and Psychological Safety

Leaders should prioritize employee well-being by fostering supportive environments that encourage open dialogue and reduce stress. Kindness-based leadership has been linked to improved well-being and engagement (Monroe, 2025) . Supporting employees enhances productivity and retention.

#### 6. Enhance External Engagement Through Ethical Leadership

Institutions should leverage kindness as part of their external engagement strategy. Demonstrating ethical and compassionate leadership strengthens relationships with stakeholders and enhances institutional reputation.

### **Conclusion**

Professional civility and acts of kindness are essential components of effective leadership in higher education. As institutions navigate increasing complexity and change, leaders must prioritize relational practices that foster trust, collaboration, and engagement. Kindness is not a passive trait but a strategic leadership approach that enhances organizational performance and sustainability.

By implementing intentional strategies and aligning institutional practices with values of respect and empathy, higher education leaders can create environments that support both internal success and external credibility. Ultimately, kindness serves as a foundation for advancing higher education institutions in a rapidly evolving landscape.

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## Why Do We Need Criminal Justice?

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~Commentary~

Author: Dr. LaContiss Briscoe



Criminal justice is a structured system where laws are enforced, individuals are held accountable for their actions and communities are restored. Without structure, communities would struggle to maintain order, have unfairness and unprotected rights. Most people believe criminal justice is about punishment, but it is mostly about public safety, individual rights and the pursuit of justice. One of the main goals of criminal justice is to maintain balance between the community, the victim and the offender. In understanding why we need criminal justice, one must examine its benefits, the role of public awareness, and the difference between widely held myths and the underlying truths.

One of the primary benefits of criminal justice is the protection of society. Laws are established to define acceptable behavior. Laws must be upheld through the criminal justice system. The main entities of criminal justice are police, courts and corrections. Law enforcement agencies work together with community leaders to prevent and respond to crime, while courts determine guilt or innocence. Correctional institutions carry out sentences. After all, people want to feel a sense of security for their communities. When people feel safe, they are more likely to build stronger social connections, engage in daily activities, and contribute to the economy.

Another important benefit of criminal justice is accountability. Criminal justice helps individuals who break the law to be held responsible for their actions. This accountability serves multiple purposes: it provides justice for victims, reinforces societal norms, and deters future criminal behavior. However, accountability is not solely about punishment. The criminal justice system was created to ensure fairness, due process, and the protection of individual rights. Justice must

be applied consistently to prevent abuse of power. Unfortunately, the phrase, “justice is in the eye of the beholder” is true as it pertains to individual opinion of fairness and justice.

Criminal justice also plays a significant role in rehabilitation. While punishment has traditionally been a central focus, many lawmakers believe that helping offenders reintegrate into society is more important. Rehabilitation programs, education, and counseling can address the root causes of unwanted criminal behavior, such as substance abuse, lack of education, lack of social activities, and mental health challenges. By focusing on rehabilitation, the criminal justice system can reduce recidivism and promote long-term public safety. This approach benefits not only individuals and society, but will most likely, reduce repeated delinquent behavior.

Awareness is key to criminal justice with respect to media representation, public interactions and education. That is, many people form opinions based on what they view on social media, TV and their personal experiences with the system. Many people do not fully understand the criminal justice system unless they have had direct interactions with it. Increasing public awareness helps individuals understand how the system operates, understand their rights and challenges within the system. Education and open dialogue can shed light on important issues such as wrongful convictions, sentencing issues, and the impact of socioeconomic factors on crime. When people are informed, they are better equipped to participate in discussions, advocate for improvements, and make decisions that influence public policy.

People fear what they do not understand. Public awareness can create trust. In today’s times, too many people mistrust law enforcement and legal institutions. Educating the public about criminal justice can help build stronger relationships with law enforcement and communities. Having trust between law enforcement and the public could help in preventing and solving crimes. When communities and institutions work together, the system becomes more effective and equitable.

Despite its importance, the criminal justice system is often misunderstood. This is why we have the spread of myths and misconceptions. As stated earlier, punishment is not the only reason why criminal justice exists. There are multiple reasons such as general and specific deterrence, rehabilitation, and the protection of individual rights. Make no mistake, punishment is the most effective way to achieve long-term safety.

Another misconception about criminal justice is that the system is fair and unbiased. Economic status, social inequalities and access to legal representation are barriers that aid to unfairness. Like any other system, criminal justice needs continuous evaluation to address these issues and improvements.

Contrary to what most people believe, harsher penalties do not reduce crime. Research often shows that certainty of being caught for the crime deters criminal behavior than stricter punishment. Effective crime prevention involves a combination of strategies that include education, community engagement through public forums and addressing social issues. Understanding the truth will give a healthy approach to understanding the existence of criminal justice.

In conclusion, criminal justice impacts everyone. Everyone wants justice even if it does not mean the same universally. Consider the victim who wants vindication. Consider the community who

demands safety and consider the laws that are created to maintain order. Educating the public will help them distinguish between the myths and truths. The more people are informed, the more they understand and support the role criminal justice plays in society. Criminal justice is essential in influencing everything from public safety to individual freedoms. Increased awareness about the system helps individuals to better understand their rights. “With liberty and justice for all” is stated in the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance ensuring that people want freedom, equality, and equal protection.

## Law, Media, and Marketing: Innovative Strategies for Men of Color



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### Abstract

The media and marketing industries remain highly competitive, technologically driven, and culturally influential sectors in which diversity, equity, and inclusion continue to be pressing concerns (Robinson & Dechant, 1997; Cox & Blake, 1991). Men of color encounter structural, institutional, and perceptual barriers that affect career entry, advancement, representation, and leadership opportunities (Page, 2007; Kalev et al., 2006).

This paper examines the intersection of law, media, and marketing and presents innovative, research-based strategies that support the professional development and upward mobility of men of color in television, radio broadcasting, and marketing. Emphasis is placed on self-evaluation, experiential learning, professional image, technical competence, mentorship, ethical leadership, portfolio development, and inclusive marketing practices.

The study also explores the role of legal and regulatory frameworks, including workplace equity, equal employment protections, and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) compliance in shaping career trajectories. Grounded in communication theory, leadership ethics, diversity in marketing education, and workforce development literature, this paper argues that culturally responsive professional preparation, continuous skill acquisition, and strategic personal branding are essential for long-term success (Hall, 1996; Giddens, 1991). Recommendations are offered for industry professionals, higher education institutions, and media organizations seeking to create sustainable and equitable pathways for men of color.

Keywords: men of color, media industry, marketing, diversity and inclusion, professional development, journalism, career advancement

## **Introduction**

The contemporary media landscape is defined by convergence, immediacy, and audience interactivity, driven by digital platforms, streaming technologies, and algorithmic distribution (Jenkins, 2006; Napoli, 2011). Digital platforms, 24-hour news cycles, and data-driven marketing strategies have transformed the competencies required for professional success (Katz & Aspden, 1997). These changes demand that media and marketing professionals possess not only technical expertise but also psychological resilience, cultural intelligence, and adaptive capacity (Earley & Ang, 2003).

Despite increased public attention to diversity, journalists and marketing professionals of color remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles (USA Today, 2020; Smith et al., 2018). These disparities are not solely the result of individual preparedness but are shaped by organizational cultures, implicit bias, limited access to mentorship, and inequitable professional networks (Ibarra et al., 2010). Men of color often face heightened scrutiny related to appearance, speech, credibility, and authority, which influences hiring decisions, promotion opportunities, and audience perception (Nelson et al., 2017).

Understanding the intersection of law, media, and marketing is critical because regulatory policies, employment protections, and institutional governance structures directly affect access, mobility, and professional sustainability (Bellow, 2003). This paper synthesizes interdisciplinary scholarship to identify innovative strategies that enhance professional success while simultaneously addressing systemic inequities (Block, 2018).

## **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

### **Critical Race and Organizational Equity Perspectives**

Structural inequities in media and marketing are sustained through institutional norms that privilege dominant cultural standards (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). A critical race perspective highlights how professional image, communication style, and leadership potential are often evaluated through racialized lenses (Crenshaw et al., 1995). These dynamics shape both opportunity and perception.

### **Human Capital and Career Mobility**

Human capital theory emphasizes the role of education, internships, certifications, and skill acquisition in increasing individual marketability (Becker, 1964). However, for men of color, human capital must be paired with social capital, mentorship, sponsorship, and access to professional networks to produce equitable outcomes (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001).

## **Professional Identity and Personal Branding**

Professional identity development is a continuous process shaped by self-evaluation, performance feedback, and audience engagement (Ibarra, 1999). In media environments, personal branding functions as both a career advancement tool and a form of narrative control (Hearn, 2008).

## **Diversity, Representation, and Structural Barriers**

Workforce data indicate persistent racial disparities in marketing and communications professions, with African Americans significantly underrepresented (Belton, 2023; Zippia, 2023). Underrepresentation affects:

- Hiring and promotion practices (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016)
- News framing and storytelling (Entman & Rojecki, 2001)
- Cultural authenticity in advertising (Kennedy, 2005)
- Audience trust and engagement (Napoli, 2011)

The American Marketing Association definition of marketing emphasizes value creation for society at large, reinforcing the ethical and economic necessity of diversity in professional practice (AMA, 2017). Inclusive marketing is not only a social imperative but also a strategic advantage that enhances brand credibility and financial performance (Luchs et al., 2010).

Higher education plays a foundational role in disrupting inequities. Integrating diversity and inclusion into curricula can produce a paradigm shift in how future professionals conceptualize audiences, markets, and organizational responsibility (Protopapa & Plangger, 2023).

## **The Role of Self-Evaluation and Personal Branding**

Self-evaluation is a core competency for media professionals. Reflective questions related to delivery, storytelling impact, audience connection, and vocal performance foster continuous improvement and career sustainability (Schon, 1983).

Personal branding extends beyond aesthetics to include:

- Credibility and subject-matter expertise (Labrecque et al., 2011)
- Digital engagement and analytics (Kietzmann et al., 2011)
- Audience trust and loyalty (Voorveld et al., 2018)
- Cross-platform visibility

Communication effectiveness is strongly linked to leadership emergence and organizational influence (Calota et al., 2015; Mumford et al., 2000). For men of color, intentional branding allows

for the redefinition of professionalism in ways that are both authentic and institutionally effective (Thomas & Plaut, 2008).

### **Experience, Skill Acquisition, and Operational Competence**

Media organizations increasingly seek multi-skilled professionals capable of performing diverse roles across platforms (Deuze, 2007). Cross-functional expertise in reporting, producing, editing, live broadcasting, and technical troubleshooting enhances job security and accelerates promotion. Operational knowledge also has legal implications. Understanding compliance requirements associated with FCC regulations, intellectual property, and workplace policies reduces institutional risk and positions professionals as indispensable organizational assets (Lessig, 2004). Internships and experiential learning serve as gateways to employment by:

- Providing newsroom socialization (Weber & Mitchell, 2004)
- Building professional portfolios (Sullivan, 2010)
- Expanding industry networks (Marchesani & Adams, 1992)
- Reducing onboarding time for employers

### **Mentorship, Ethical Leadership, and Career Mobility**

Mentorship is one of the most significant predictors of career advancement for underrepresented professionals (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Thomas, 2001). Mentors provide:

- Tacit organizational knowledge
- Performance feedback
- Advocacy and sponsorship
- Psychosocial support

Ethical leadership contributes to inclusive workplace climates and improved safety, trust, and performance outcomes (Chughtai, 2014; Brown et al., 2005). In media and marketing, where public credibility is essential, ethical decision-making enhances both individual reputation and organizational legitimacy.

### **Marketing Knowledge as a Strategic Career Tool**

Marketing literacy enables media professionals to understand audience segmentation, brand positioning, and revenue generation (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Marketing is not limited to promotion but encompasses value creation and strategic communication (McCarthy et al., 2019).

Men of color who possess marketing competencies can:

- Demonstrate measurable organizational impact

- Increase audience engagement
- Strengthen their personal brand
- Transition into leadership roles

Professional development through certifications and industry associations ensures continued relevance in a rapidly evolving field (PR Newswire, 2020).

### **Legal and Institutional Considerations**

Employment law, equal opportunity regulations, and media governance policies shape workplace access and advancement. Key legal dimensions include:

- Anti-discrimination protections (Title VII; EEOC, 2021)
- Equitable hiring and promotion practices (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016)
- Workplace harassment policies (Fitzgerald et al., 1997)
- Communications regulation compliance (FCC, 2021)

Organizations that align legal compliance with inclusive leadership practices create sustainable career pathways and reduce turnover (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

### **A Conceptual Model for Career Advancement of Men of Color in Media and Marketing**

- **Inputs:**  
Education, internships, mentorship, technical skills, marketing knowledge (Becker, 1964; Bourdieu, 1986)
- **Professional Processes:**  
Self-evaluation, personal branding, cross-functional competence, ethical leadership (Schon, 1983; Brown et al., 2005)
- **Institutional Factors:**  
Inclusive hiring, legal compliance, diversity initiatives, culturally responsive curricula (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)

Outcomes:

Career mobility, leadership representation, organizational innovation, audience trust

### **Implications for Higher Education**

Higher education institutions should:

- Embed diversity across media and marketing curricula (Protopapa & Plangger, 2023)

- Require portfolio-based assessment (Sullivan, 2010)
- Develop industry partnerships for internships
- Teach digital analytics and personal branding
- Establish formal mentorship pipelines (Ragins & Kram, 2007)

## **Implications for Media and Marketing Organizations**

Organizations should:

- Redefine professional image standards to be culturally inclusive
- Implement transparent promotion pathways
- Develop leadership incubators for men of color
- Link diversity initiatives to measurable performance outcomes (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016)

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Public policy and regulatory bodies should encourage:

- Workforce diversity reporting
- Equitable access to media ownership
- Funding for training and pipeline programs (FCC, 2021)

These initiatives strengthen democratic representation in media and ensure broader societal impact (Crenshaw et al., 1995).

## **Conclusion**

Men of color in media and marketing operate within complex professional ecosystems shaped by structural inequities and high-performance expectations (Cox & Blake, 1991). Career advancement requires a strategic combination of self-evaluation, technical expertise, marketing literacy, ethical leadership, mentorship, and personal branding. When supported by inclusive educational practices, equitable organizational policies, and responsive legal frameworks, these strategies not only enhance individual career trajectories but also increase innovation, authenticity, and public trust within the media and marketing industries (Hall, 1996; Hearn, 2008).

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