Women Leadership in Academia:
Barriers, Mentoring, and Resiliency among Different Ethnic Groups
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Introduction

Barriers to leadership opportunities are a global phenomenon where women, when compared to men, are disproportionately concentrated in lower-level and lower-authoritative leadership positions (Northouse, 2010). Diehl et al. (2020) provides an overview of the literature regarding the historical development of understanding workplace gender bias and examples of the widespread range of barriers faced by women. As women attempt to move up the ladder to leadership positions, they are faced with barriers that are often described as a glass ceiling, racism and sexism, a concrete wall, a sticky floor, and a labyrinth (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). Although white women face issues while attempting to climb the leadership ladder, there are clear differences in the issues they face and those faced by women of color. White women face many barriers at work because of sexism, but they still have their whiteness in common with most of the white men in positions of power. As for women of color, they may "experience triple jeopardy because of the multiple stereotypes associated with gender, race, and ethnicity that they trigger in others" (Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2007, p. 171). To support women of color's leadership development in academia, it is necessary to examine the barriers they face, the leadership skills they possess and those that they would like to cultivate, and their current sources of mentoring support. The purpose of this study is to develop new dimensions of barriers and self-efficacy in women's leadership and discover the differences of the women in leadership variables (i.e., barriers, self-efficacy, mentoring, resiliency, and spirituality) among the ethnic groups.

Theoretical Background

This study draws on the grounded theory process. Grounded theory approach is a design of data collection and data analysis which allows for theme generation that provides an explanation and conceptualization of a phenomena (e.g., women, women of color) that is generally left out of the research sampling process. The attraction of grounded theory stems from the need for theory to develop creative perspectives, generate insights into human interaction and business practices, and to explain new and even well-researched complex social phenomena (Mello & Flint, 2009; Glaser & Straus, 1967). As within the Human Resource Development (HRD) theories, the researchers seek to expose hidden aspects of workplace inequities such as the assumption that men are the standard, suggesting that men are better leaders than women (Bierema & Callahan, 2014; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Fenwick, 2014).

Methods
The items in this instrument were developed from previous research and the experiences of a sample of African American, and white women who were/are still in some type of leadership position in academia. Each participant was interviewed by telephone at a date and time convenient to them. The items were then established in a survey type format, and experts in the field of human sciences were asked to evaluate the survey questionnaire. The evaluation conducted by the experts included face validity, wording, and ease of completion (Dumas & Redish, 1999; Diehl et al., 2020). Using the ground theory approach, the researchers defined five (5) leadership constructs, which are barriers, self-efficacy, mentoring, resiliency, and spirituality. The authors sent the research request to three organizations whose members were affiliated with the human sciences. The request specified that women who hold some type of faculty leadership position in academia were the targets for the study. A total of 103 leaders in academia participated in the study. Using exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, the researchers defined underlying dimensions for Barriers and Self-Efficacy because the items that belong to these dimensions are more than 15 each. The Barriers dimension includes Negativity, Networks, Women in the Workplace, Confidence, Cultural Sensitivity, and Discrimination. Leadership Self-Efficacy includes Delegation, Goal Management, Relationship Management, and Self-Confidence. The dimensions of Mentoring, Spirituality, and Resilience were confirmed using reliability tests.

Results & Discussion
To test group differences, the researchers employed multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests. The collected data had six different ethnic groups (i.e., African American, Asian, Hispanic, Multi-racial, and white). However, the Hispanic, and Multi-racial groups had only two and three respondents, respectively. Therefore, the researchers compared three groups which were African American, Asian, and white American women.

Barriers The results showed that there is significant difference among groups in Networks ($p = 0.098$), Cultural Sensitivity ($p < 0.001$), and Discrimination ($p < 0.001$). In terms of Cultural Sensitivity, African American ($m = 2.31$, $p = 0.006$) and Asian ($m = 2.53$, $p < 0.001$) groups experienced Cultural Sensitivity as a barrier more than white Americans ($m = 1.68$). In addition, both African American ($m = 1.96$, $p < 0.001$) and Asian ($m = 1.79$, $p < 0.001$) groups experienced Discrimination as a barrier more than white Americans ($m = 1.15$) in their leadership role.

Self-Efficacy. The results indicated there are two significant subgroups that exist in all variables. In terms of delegation, the African American group ($m = 3.31$) was significantly higher than the Asian American ($m = 2.69$, $p= 0.23$) group. The African American group is more confident than the Asian American group in delegating roles and responsibilities to their members. For Goal Management, African Americans ($m=3.15$) are more confident than the Asian ($m=2.65$, $p = 0.05$) and white ($m=2.68$, $p= 0.02$) groups. For Relationship Management, African Americans (m

= 3.5) are significantly more confident than Asian (m = 2.86, p = 0.09) and white Americans (m=3.01, p = 0.02). In addition, the African American (m = 3.54) group is more confident than the white group (m = 3.13, p = 0.03) in overall Self Confidence.

Mentoring, Resiliency, & Spirituality. The mentoring variable explores how much mentoring provides the respondents with encouragement and help in their lives. The Resiliency variable tests the respondents' ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune. The Spirituality variable was used to test how much the respondents depend on their spiritual foundations. Only spirituality showed significant differences among the groups. The result indicated that the African American group (m = 3.71) is more dependent on their spiritual foundations than white group (m = 2.81, p =0.002)

The research findings revealed meaningful insights that are being employed to propose and implement a leadership development and mentoring program at the researchers' institution, which is geared toward addressing the unique barriers faced and skills possessed by a diverse cohort of women leaders in academia.

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