2023

Resiliency Perceptions of Women in Organizational Management

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Resiliency Perceptions of Women in Organizational Management

by

Brandi DeHart

MPhil, Walden University, 2020

MSM, Kaplan University, 2017

BS, DeVry University, 2015

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

February 2023

Abstract

Exploring the perceptions of women managers involving effective strategies to remain within their roles is essential to further understand resiliency. A literature gap exists regarding the resilience strategies of women managers to stay in leadership roles. The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units was to explore perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management regarding how they remained resilient throughout their careers. The overarching research question was developed to address the purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units. Qualitative data were collected from semistructured interviews with nine women managers, archival data, and reflective journaling notes to address the study's research problem and purpose. This study was framed using Shafique et al.'s *a*ntecedents of women managers resilience model, which consists of three significant areas: gendered biases, experiences of women managers, and perceptions of women managers on resilience. Thematic analysis of data from interviews revealed 12 themes and four conceptual codes that emerged: (a) women's entry into management roles, (b) gendered biased experiences by women managers, (c) women's strategies for resiliency in a management role, and (d) closing the gender gap in management roles. As organizational leaders learn more about methods and strategies women use to remain resilient, they can focus on promoting environments that positively enhance these strategies and increase the number of women managers within the workforce.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Josh, who constantly supported and encouraged me throughout this journey. I also dedicate this to my children: Tyler, Heather, Chaselynn, and Joshua. I hope this shows them that anything is possible if you believe in yourself. To my mother, who passed away when I was 24, I know you have been with me, helping me persist through my educational success, and to my father who taught me how to be persistent and not to give up. I am a first-generation graduate of all levels of education, which was no easy feat over the last eight and half years. The sacrifices made affected not only myself but my family as well. Without their love and support, I would not have been able to accomplish this.

Table of Contents

iii

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Gender disparity in management roles within organizations remains a focus globally (Shafique et al., 2019). As of 2018, women made up only 5% of CEO positions, even though the number of women in the workforce is closer to 45% (Kubu, 2018). Despite equal education opportunities and experiences, women are passed over for these roles due to gendered biases and assumptions (Shafique et al., 2019). This inability to significantly increase the number of women in leadership roles is a phenomenon often referred to as the glass ceiling (Durbin et al., 2020).

Women who ascend into management roles face challenges that create obstacles through gendered biases and assumptions (Stokes et al., 2019). Women often adapt using strategies to remain within their roles (Gipson et al., 2017). Shafique et al. (2019) identified resilience as the ability to remain within management roles. This study involved learning the perceptions of female leaders with at least five years of experience in management roles and how they remained resilient in their careers. Knowledge learned from this study can contribute to retaining seasoned women managers to serve as agents of positive change. Knowledge from this study will contribute to aiding women to continue to break the glass ceiling.

In Chapter 1, a background of the study is provided. I address the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research question. I examine the nature of the study, definitions of key terms used throughout the study, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations. This chapter also includes a discussion of the study's conceptual framework.

Background of the Study

Samuelson et al. (2019) said women had a higher turnover rate while trying to advance into leadership roles due to tokenism and current organizational practices related to male-dominated mentalities. Stokes et al. (2019) identified resilience in leadership as a capacity to conquer challenges by cultivating individual and team organizational capacities. Further, Walsh et al. (2016) identified a need to consider further studies that focus on supporting female careers by developing a long-term commitment to organizations as they ascend to top leadership roles.

The desire to increase women in leadership roles is vital to many organizations looking to become more diverse (Walsh et al., 2016). Women who desire to move into managerial positions are often concerned with negative consequences. Fritz and van Knippenberg (2018) found that these negative consequences are expected, and women find these consequences discouraging to try and advance into managerial roles. Further, Gils et al. (2018) said biases and gendered assumptions faced during their attempts to attain management roles do not cease once they are achieved. Stokes et al. (2019) said these gendered biases and assumptions do not disappear once women attain management roles.

Organizations are promoting diversity backed by legislation to afford women the same opportunities as men, yet women persist as minorities in managerial or decision-making roles (Babic & Hansez, 2021). Unseen biases that cause barriers preventing women from obtaining higher status roles within organizations contribute to what is known as the glass ceiling phenomenon (Cotter et al., 2001). The need exists within

organizations to abdicate male dominance within management roles, yet the ability to do so remains a challenge. Studies persist on various aspects of breaking the glass ceiling relating to the overall goal of more women holding higher managerial roles. Once a female moves into a management role, it is assumed that efforts are made to retain them, though little literature supports this.

Shafique et al. (2019) said that investigating resilience among female leaders can further contribute knowledge from a different perspective in breaking this glass ceiling phenomenon. With the existing knowledge base focused on moving women into managerial roles, this study was focused on female leaders with at least five years of experience in management roles and their perceptions of what keeps them resilient.

Resilience among women managers is a significant factor in terms of increasing the number of women in managerial positions (Shafique et al., 2019). Scholars continue highlighting the benefits to organizations with female leadership and ongoing struggles for women to obtain leadership roles. Little research exists regarding what strategies female leaders perceive as effective to remain resilient in management roles. Female leaders are crucial in establishing support systems that empower other women to continue their journey into leadership roles (Carbajal, 2018). This study was focused on perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level and how they remain resilient in their careers.

Understanding how women leaders remain effective in their roles is vital in creating opportunities to increase the number of women in management roles and more female role models. Thus, there is a crucial need to explore the perceptions of women

managers on effective strategies to remain within their roles. There is an essential need to understand the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience regarding how they remain resilient within their careers.

Problem Statement

There is an expectation of increasing diversity goals in today's workforce, but organizations find reaching these goals challenging (Karim et al., 2019). Women in the United States make up close to half the current workforce, yet only about 15% of corporate officers and 5% of CEOs are women (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016). Exploring what female leaders perceive as useful strategies to remain resilient can decrease this gap. Samuelson et al. (2019) said women had a higher turnover rate while moving into leadership roles due to tokenism and current organizational practices related to male-dominated mentalities. The social problem is a persistent gender gap involving managerial roles favoring men over women.

Understanding women leaders' perceptions of staying resilient within their roles is vital in contributing to opportunities to increase the number of women in management roles and female role models. Stokes et al. (2019) said resilience in leadership is the capacity to conquer challenges by cultivating individual and team organizational capacities. Further, Walsh et al. (2016) identified a need to consider further studies supporting female careers by developing a long-term commitment to top leadership roles. Bossler et al. (2020) said female managers tend to hire more female leaders, thus perpetuating an increase of women in management roles. There is a need to explore perceptions of women managers involving effective strategies to remain within their

roles. Shafique et al. (2019) said a literature gap exists involving exploring resilience among female managers. There is a lack of literature on strategies to maintain women in leadership roles. The specific management problem is that little is known about female managers' perceptions of how they remain resilient in their careers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units was to explore perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level in terms of how they remain resilient throughout their careers. Halkias and Neubert (2020) said qualitative research is essential when exploring leadership and management problems. Using the case study design allowed for the collection of holistic data involving perceptions of female leaders regarding how they remained resilient in their careers. This study involved conducting semi-structured and open-ended interviews with nine participants. Via a qualitative case study design, this study generated data on strategies women employ to remain in management roles. Exploring ways to maintain women in management roles is crucial to shortening the gap between the numbers of male and female managers. Therefore, it is essential to understand the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level about how they remain resilient throughout their careers.

Research Question

What are the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level in terms of how they remained resilient throughout their careers?

Conceptual Framework

The study is framed by Shafique et al.'s (2019) *Antecedents of Women Managers Resilience*. Shafique et al. (2019) stated that the women managers' resilience model (see Figure 1) consists of three significant areas: gendered biases, experiences of women managers, and perceptions of women managers on resilience. Shafique et al. (2019) identified a relationship between resilience, career advancement, and breaking the glass ceiling.

Women experience biases, assumptions, and challenges when attempting to climb the corporate ladder. Understanding gendered differences between men and women without biased viewpoints is challenging in the corporate world. Navigating challenges and achieving results provides opportunities for growth among female leaders (Smith & Suby-Long, 2019). Despite advantageous conditions, women are withheld from achieving management roles because of unseen biases (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016). Further, biases and gender assumptions remain for women in management roles, and they do not cease to be visible once a management position is attained (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Resilience is a characteristic that can play an integral part in ascending to and maintaining leadership roles. Resilience is the ability to persevere and overcome in the face of adversity. Stokes et al. (2019) characterized resilience in leadership as a capacity to conquer challenges by cultivating individual and team organizational capacities. Smith and Suby-Long (2019) said women had courage and resilience when reviewing their stories relating to their leadership, career, and decision-making in leadership. Shafique et

al. (2019) said attrition of female managers could be positively influenced by resilience, thus contributing to higher numbers of female managers in organizations.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

Nature of the Study

This study used a qualitative single case study approach with embedded units to explore perceptions of female managers with at least five years of experience within their roles and how they remain resilient in their careers. This study used a single case study design allowed for examining various environments (Stake, 2013). Yin (2018) identified a case study as an appropriate form of research when a study is focused on determining how, what, or why questions. The study was focused on the perceptions of female leaders with at least five years of experience in management and how they remain resilient.

I interviewed female managers with at least five years of experience. Halkias and Neubert (2020) stated that a case study used in leadership and management studies generates thorough depictions and thematic analysis to compare previous literature data. Using a case study approach allowed for the collection of holistic and meaningful data involving perceptions of real-life experiences concerning remaining resilient in their careers. Themes, relationships, and concepts emerge from data analysis via literature reviews, conceptual foundations, and interviews in case studies (Yin, 2018).

I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with subject matter experts to collect data about perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management, involving how they remained resilient throughout their careers. Study participants were selected using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is used when a researcher targets specific populations that may have direct knowledge of the topic being addressed and seek further recruitment via word of mouth of those participants (Yin, 2018). Data from this study includes information gathered from respondents' answers to interview questions regarding perceptions of how they remained resilient throughout their careers and sources of evidence like archival documents and field notes.

After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed using an online transcription program Temi. I reviewed transcripts and then sent them to participants to confirm that what was said was captured accurately in transcription. After transcriptions were completed, transcripts were analyzed by identifying themes. The process of analysis was completed by conducting thematic coding. Saldaña (2016) described coding as breaking data down from codes to categories and themes. Themes are derived and then used to formulate conclusions about the research topic (Saldaña, 2016).

Definitions

Resilience: The capacity to conquer challenges and adapt to outcomes when experiencing adversity (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Stokes et al., 2019.)

Glass Ceiling: Barrier preventing women from ascending into management and leadership roles (Cotter et al., 2001).

Unconscious Bias: Unconscious bias refers to prejudicial biases that women are less capable or not suited to roles or tasks based on gendered assumptions or expected gendered roles. These biases happen below the level of awareness (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016).

Gendered Bias: Negative or inhibiting assumptions, biases, or prejudices involving capabilities or skills based on gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kubu, 2018). In this study, gendered biases are described in the context of happening or occurring toward women.

Stereotyping: Generalizing behavioral characteristics of a person or group of people and applying them to all other individuals or groups (Okimoto & Heilman, 2012).

Manager/Leader: The terms manager and leader are used interchangeably within this study to identify a person with a traditional organizational role. Further, this role is held by a person who controls business dealings.

Management/Leadership: The terms management and leadership are used interchangeably within this study to define roles or positions involving responsibility for controlling aspects of business dealings.

Antecedents: A preceding event, condition, cause, and a model or stimulus for later developments (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

Assumptions

When conducting a qualitative research study, certain assumptions need to be considered. Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) stated that researchers need to recognize and state all assumptions accurately. The first assumption is that participants reflected on

and spoke about their perceptions regarding how they remained resilient in their careers

and provided accurate accounts of their experiences. Yin (2018) said qualitative

interviewing involves inviting those to detail their experiences and recreate realities for

the researcher. Participants provided genuine and personal accounts of their experiences,

adding depth and realism to the knowledge obtained.

The second assumption is that participants identified as female and had at least

five years of experience in management roles. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) said a

researcher conduct interviews to gain specific knowledge and insights from participants

that contribute significantly to the study.

Next, I assumed I conducted this study without bias and unconscious beliefs. Yin

(2018) identified unconscious biases as threats to the trustworthiness of a study.

Following ethical guidelines was necessary. This study was conducted with oversight

from an internal review board (IRB) to ensure ethical boundaries were maintained, and

this study was free from researcher biases.

Additionally, I collected data through audio recordings of participant interviews,

took field notes, and ensured that transcripts of interviews accurately reflected what was

said. Last, I assumed that coding for themes in qualitative data was adequate to accurately

capture the information needed to address this study's purpose adequately.

Scope and Delimitations

I conducted this study to focus on female managers with at least five years in

management and their perceptions regarding how they remained resilient in their careers.

Resilience involves adapting, overcoming, and persevering through any obstacles. Stokes

et al. (2019) stated resilience in management is the ability to overcome and conquer challenges consistently. According to Shafique et al. (2019), female managers' attrition rates can be positively affected by increasing the number of women in management positions. Shafique et al. (2019) also identified the need to study perceptions of women in management positions related to their resilience.

I recruited only female participants with at least five years of experience in management positions. I aimed to learn from women in mid-level and executive-level positions. I used purposeful sampling to recruit participants for this study. I selected participants based on study criteria. This qualitative single case study with embedded units includes data collected by interviewing participants who met the following study criteria:

1) Participants were employed women working in management roles within an organization.

2) Participants worked in their roles for at least five years.

3) All participants were at least 18 years of age.

4) Participants signed the study consent form agreeing to be interviewed and have information obtained from interviews used in this study.

5) Participants were open and honest in terms of sharing their experiences and perceptions regarding remaining resilient in their managerial roles.

Limitations

I conducted this research study expecting some limitations. Yin (2018) defined limitations as weaknesses or shortcomings related to the study design, researcher's skill,

or participant engagement. One potential limitation of this study was the difficulty involving recruiting participants. There would not have been enough rich data to contribute to a meaningful conclusion with too few participants. Stake (2010) identified the number of participants needed in a case study as between five and 20. Purposeful sampling allowed for recruitment of participants through word of mouth and recommendations from other participants, which led to the desired number of study participants.

Another potential limitation of this study was the primary focus on female leaders' resiliency in organizational management. There were no male participants; all participants were female. Removing all male perspectives was necessary as the study focused on women managers and their perspectives. Future studies could incorporate male insights to provide different perspectives about how female managers remain resilient in their roles as observed by their male peers.

Limitations to financial funding for the study were also considered. The study did not include any financial incentives for participants as a way to thank them for dedicating time to the study. I used recruiting options and personal workplace connections for study participant referrals, as well as the professional networking site LinkedIn as an alternative to ensure an adequate number of participants was obtained.

Lastly, there was a potential limitation involving my skill level with conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with participants and completing data analysis. These limitations were essential considerations when conducting this research study. Saldaña (2016) said a new researcher would not use the first several interviews conducted in most

instances due to them not being sufficient or consistently in-process, and therefore these are considered practice interviews. Saldaña (2016) also identified the need to analyze the first several interviews to determine the effectiveness of the research study. By doing this, I became proficient in interviewing and data analysis.

<div align="center">**Significance of the Study**</div>

I focused on perceptions of women involving how they remain resilient within their roles. This study was significant for professional practice, theory, and social change. Significance to practice included benefits of organizations having women in management roles as well as increasing diversity within their organization. Significance to theory includes learning how to formulate more effective strategies to increase diversity, further helping to shatter the glass ceiling.

Lastly, this study contributes to social change by helping mitigate gender disparities within management roles and understanding how this can occur by addressing female leaders with at least five years of experience in management roles. Women managers in organizations remaining resilient may enable a combined approach with current research to increase the number of women in management roles via retention and recruitment.

Significance to Practice

Organizations are evolving as social pressures are increasing to ensure diversity occurs. Despite the number of women in professional fields, female leaders must employ unique leadership practices to ensure positive results related to metrics, financial performance, and attrition, just like their male counterparts (Kubu, 2018). In today's

workforce, corporate management makes reaching goals more challenging for women (Karim et al., 2019). Women comprise about half of the U.S. workforce but fewer than 15% of corporate officers and 5% of CEOs (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016).

Organizations can benefit by increasing the number of women holding management roles. Turesky and Warner (2020) said one benefit of having female leaders is increasing overall inclusion and reward structures within organizations. Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018) said gender diversity, particularly with women in higher management roles, enhances shareholder approvals based on achievement of metrics. Company leaders have challenges ensuring cultural diversity within their organizations.

Significance to Theory

This study assisted in identifying themes that may contribute to understanding how female leaders remain resilient within their careers. Women remain underrepresented in management roles even with an emphasis on efforts to increase the hiring of women in management roles (Gipson et al., 2017). Turesky and Warner (2020) said women face barriers in terms of professional interactions even when they feel respected by peers. Findings of this study can lead to social change to improve other women leaders' experiences in male-dominated environments.

Gender differences are not a new research topic among scholars. There is an innate desire to differentiate or prove that one gender is better than the other regarding organizational effectiveness in research.

Significance to Social Change

Organizations are evolving as social pressures are increasing to ensure diversity occurs. As female leaders, multicultural organizations are no different from their male counterparts. In today's diverse workforce, organizational management makes attaining goals more challenging (Karim et al., 2019). Findings of this study contribute to knowledge that may help organizations retain female leaders in management roles more effectively. Findings of this study combined with an existing knowledge base involving breaking barriers when hiring women managers can lead to the overall number of women in management continuing to increase.

Shafique et al. (2019) also identified resilience as a critical factor in terms of enhancing and supporting women to help remaining in leadership roles. As organizational leaders learn more about methods and strategies women use to remain resilient, they can focus on promoting environments that positively enhance these strategies.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 1, I presented the background of this study. My focus was on exploring perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management regarding how they remain resilient throughout their careers. I used Shafique et al.'s conceptual framework on women managers' resilience as the foundation for the study. Chapter 1 also included information about the qualitative single case study design. This study's potential limitations and assumptions were identified and addressed. Lastly, I addressed the significance of this study to theory, practice, and social change.

In Chapter 2, literature review search strategies are presented. Additionally, I include a literature review related to this study's focus.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study involved reviewing the specific problem involving female leaders and what they perceive as practical strategies to remain resilient to decrease gender disparities in management. Gender gaps in managerial roles remain a global issue (Shafique et al., 2019). With many studies focused on increasing the numbers of women in managerial roles, understanding perceptions of what helps female managers remain resilient is essential to help maintain women currently in management and is identified as an area of study (Shafique et al., 2019). Walsh et al. (2016) identified a need to consider further studies that focused on supporting female careers by developing a long-term commitment to organizations as they ascend into top leadership roles. Resilience among managers is the capacity to conquer challenges by cultivating individual and team organizational capacities (Shafique et al., 2019).

This qualitative single case study with an embedded literature review involved exploring perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management in terms of how they remain resilient throughout their careers. Studies continue to focus on why the gendered disparity remains and how to help women move into leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Further, there is a lack of literature on strategies to maintain women in leadership roles. Analyzing resilience among women leaders as a focus for research is needed (Shafique et al., 2019).

In this chapter, I explained the search strategy I used to obtain literature to support this study. I analyzed Shafique et al.'s (2019) study on Antecedents of Women Managers' Resilience: Conceptual Discussion and Implications for HRM and how this

provided the conceptual framework for my study. Lastly, this chapter includes an in-depth review and analysis of literature that contained information about my study's problem, purpose, and background.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy for this study started with using critical databases to obtain scholarly peer-reviewed literature. Databases used in this study were accessed via the Walden Library and were EBSCO Host, Emerald Insight, and SAGE Journals. Further, Google Scholar was used to find articles outside the library's offerings. I used the following search terms: *social role theory*, *role-congruity theory*, *resilience*, *female management strategies*, *women or female leaders*, *female managers*, *gendered biases in management*, *gendered biases in leadership*, *glass ceiling*, *glass ceiling phenomenon*, *female or women leadership management strategies*, *female or women resilience strategies*, *resilience in the workplace*, and *women or female workplace obstacles*. These terms were used in various combinations within databases to generate articles for review and use in the study.

All sources came from peer-reviewed journals that were published between 2018 and 2023. Seminal literature was used to provide fundamental and historical contributions to the study. Published books related to the study methodology and interviews were also used.

Conceptual Framework

Gender gaps in management remain a focus of importance globally, with resilience among female managers a key consideration contributing to the breaking of the

glass ceiling (Shafique et al., 2019). Shattering the glass ceiling can occur by continuing to appoint new female managers in open positions. Further, in addition to appointing new female managers, those already in leadership roles should be retained. Shafique et al. (2019) determined that interactive engagement with work environments, career adaptability, positive HRM interventions, and personal resilience traits are the core antecedents of women managers' resilience. Future research is needed on resiliency strategies among female managers (Shafique et al., 2019).

on human resource management and organizational behavior (Shafique et al., 2019). Further, these studies Despite women having a statistically higher level of work-related stress and pressures to prove their worth (Shafique et al., 2019), there has been a lack of research involving resiliency among women leaders. Additionally, studies have not explicitly focused on resilience's role in women managers' career progression.

Shafique et al. (2019) said, "Engagement with the work environment positively influences women managers' resilience in an organization" (p. 18). The framework contributes to career counseling for women to build resiliency in organizations. A link between career adaptability and resiliency is advantageous for women managers' organizational roles (Shafique et al., 2019).

Shafique et al. (2019) said, "Career adaptability positively influences women managers' resilience in an organization" (p. 19). The limited number of women represented in leadership positions creates the need to be resilient (Shafique et al., 2019). Resilience is a capability that can be developed and enhanced (Bardoel et al., 2014). Through experience, women develop the resilience to continue conquering their

obstacles. Training and development are key contributing factors to help strengthen

resilience (Giordano, 1997). Training provides methods that can be used to improve

performance. Organizations that provide training to women managers do not improve

their resilience but provide them with the skills to improve their abilities (Shafique et al.,

2019).

Through improving career adaptability, women are building resilience. Career

adaptability is defined as making decisions regarding career paths through adjusting to

new circumstances (Shafique et al., 2019). Career counseling adds to women's ability to

build resilience and career adaptability (Shafique et al., 2019). Further, access to career

counseling within organizations allows women to handle career-related stressors more

quickly and confidently (Shafique et al., 2019).

Women develop inner strength by overcoming barriers and working harder and

smarter as they progress into leadership roles (Shafique et al., 2019). Further, developing

resilience among women leaders assists in terms of their ability to maneuver and handle

gender stereotyping while continuing to push through the glass ceiling (Shafique et al.,

2019). Women develop personal and professional gains when work-based educational

initiatives increase personal resilience (Shafique et al., 2019).

According to Shafique et al. (2019), "Positive HRM interventions positively

influence women managers' resilience in an organization" (p. 21). Women managers face

unique types of stress generated due to prejudices regarding their performance as

exhibited by their male counterparts (Nair, 2011; Shafique et al., 2019). Resilience can

protect against the adverse effects of work-related stress caused by prejudice related to

the glass ceiling. Resilience moderate's burnout caused by work stress, thus helping women break the glass ceiling in organizations (Shafique et al., 2019).

Shafique et al. (2019) said, "Women managers' resilience positively influences the ability towards breaking the glass ceiling in organizations" (p. 22). All women have a potential for resilience, and a personal capability to determine the depth of resilience that is developed (Shafique et al., 2019). The following antecedents were identified as being as having a direct impact on resiliency for women managers: career adaptability, work environment engagement, and HRM interventions that are positive (Shafique et al., 2019). External and internal factors were considered variables that impacted women managers' resilience.

Figure 2

Shafique et al.'s Conceptuel Framework
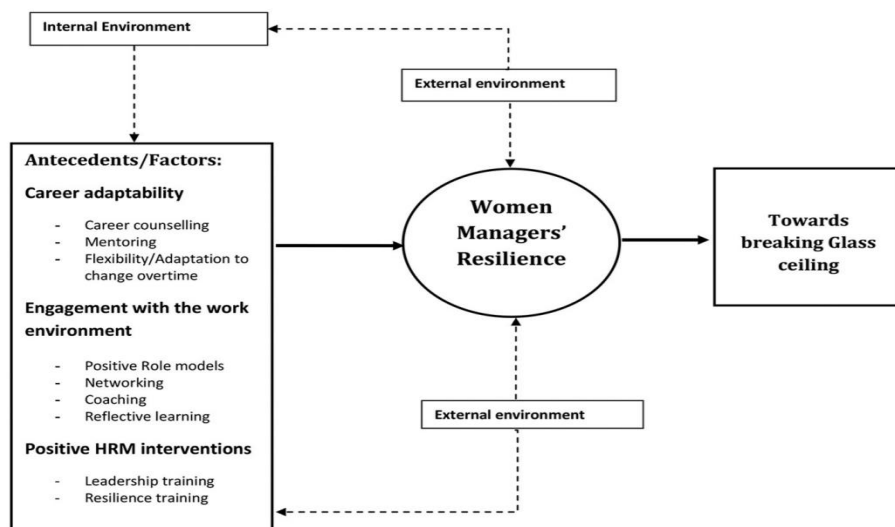
Note: A dashed arrow ——> indicates moderating influences

Shafique et al. (2019) concluded for women to develop resilience, there are key support tactics that human resource managers can provide. First, Shafique et al. (2019)

found that organizations should offer career counseling in order to assist women in coping with career-related stress. Second, offering mentorship to women increases resilience (Shafique et al., 2019). Third, to combat workplace discrimination because of gender, women who surround themselves with other strong women through the creation of networks find support and build personal resilience (Shafique et al., 2019). Additionally, Shafique et al. (2019) said due to facing challenges and overcoming hurdles, there is a need for reflective learning workshops be offered to assist in terms of seeing experiences through the lens of learning. Like mentoring, when organizations offer supportive coaching, women learn to navigate challenging times by building confidence (Shafique et al., 2019). Women who participate in resilience training learn interventions to improve mental health, psychosocial functioning, and subjective wellbeing (Shafique et al., 2019).

Shafique et al. (2019) said organizations could benefit significantly from building resilience among female managers. Shafique et al. (2019) identified the need to further study resilience in female managers. This study will utilize Shafique et al.'s framework to research strategies that female managers utilize to remain resilient in their careers. This framework helps support the current study by identifying traits of resiliency.

Literature Review

Leadership Challenges for Women

Challenges are common in organizational management, and achieving results allows for growth among female leaders (Smith & Suby-Long, 2019). Women in management roles apply their styles to remain effective. By applying unique styles within

leadership, development of respect for their leadership, higher effectiveness, and recognition for their achievements (Smith & Suby-Long, 2019). Women who push to excel in their organizations by moving into higher leadership roles face challenges that further develop inner strength and resilient behaviors (Shafique et al., 2019).

Several theories are applied to gendered assumptions, discriminations, and biases toward women. Two of the most prevalent gendered assumptions and biases are role congruity theory and social role theory, illustrating the negative gendered assumptions and perceptions towards women. Role congruity theory is a lack of belief in women being capable of leadership roles because of gendered assumptions on what capabilities or traits women are perceived to have (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory demonstrates that because women are seen as softer, less forceful, and not as aggressive as men, they are incapable of effectively being in charge.

A theory that aligns closely with the role congruity theory in terms is Eagly's social role theory. Social role theory dictates assumptions of what roles women should assume based on social expectations related to gender (Eagly & Wood, 2011). The social assumptions of women are to be caretakers, nurturers, and motivators; therefore, they are not equipped to be managers (Eagly & Wood, 2011). Expected societal roles of men and women can impede a woman's desire to progress into higher levels of management. This impediment is due to subconscious biases on their expected roles within the social role theory that do not align with the characteristics needed to be seen as an effective manager (Eagly & Wood, 2011).

Within all areas and levels of the workforce, women experience biases based on gender. These biases vastly make up the basis of the glass ceiling phenomenon (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Unique challenges are presented when women face biases or criticism based on gender. Overcoming these challenges can help build resilience and confidence in one's capabilities (Shafique et al., 2019).

Role Congruity Theory

The role congruity theory is grounded in social role theory but further extends the theory to show congruity between gender and leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The two theories are tightly linked due to the assumptions and biases related to a female's effectiveness in management based on categorizing them as a female. Role congruity theory perceives women as less of a leader than men (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The perceptions are due to deeply ingrained assumptions of a woman's expected role to be aligned closely related to homemaking roles like caring, kind, gentle, and encouraging. Women are not seen as an appropriate choice for a leadership role and, therefore, are not promoted based on the role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

There are two main areas of bias that women experience in the workforce: (a)less favorable evaluations of their ability to assume leadership roles because of male-centered stereotypes for that role and (b)less favorable assessment of their actual behavior as a leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Further, Eagly and Karau (2002) stated that gender is directly tied to relevancy due to the assumptions perceived based on gender. Women are considered feminine and less assertive, perceived as not strong enough to be in a leadership role where confrontation can occur. Therefore, women are often passed over

for promotion into management roles, and if given a management role, they are not given great evaluations of their capabilities.

Gender is a personal characteristic that allows people to easily categorize groups (Eagly & Karau, 2002), meaning society will categorize or separate populations based on whether you are a female or a male. The ease of categorizing based on gender also triggers gender stereotypes to become activated both intentionally and unconsciously (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The activated gendered stereotypes are often negatively expressed toward the capabilities of women to lead and the positive praising of a man's ability to lead. Additionally, the role congruity theory states that when individuals are in a leadership role, there is an assumption of gendered roles influencing organizational settings (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Gender further affects women in leadership roles due to stereotypes of how men and women behave. Eagly and Karau (2002) said leadership abilities are typically associated with male stereotypes. The association with male stereotypes creates expectations that women operate within these stereotypes. Further, women who express stereotypical male behaviors as leaders are considered less favorable (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Women acting like men is not ideal since role congruity states their role should be more feminine than masculine. The incongruity between the female gender and leadership roles results in prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002) in attaining and maintaining women's leadership roles.

Women who lead with traits assumed to be masculine (assertive, dominant) are seen as less desirable as these behaviors stray from socially assumed female attributes

(Eagly & Karau, 2002). Mediocre performance reviews are perpetuated further by these non-conforming behaviors resulting in demotions or a lack of promotion (Eagly & Carli, 2003). A lack of promotion into more senior leadership positions and less favorable reviews on performance overall further contributes to the ongoing struggles to increase the numbers of women in management roles.

Prejudice based on perceived limitations associated with gender (Eagly & Carli, 2003) can limit the beliefs of others in a female's capabilities to be a leader. Perceptions based on gender contribute to biases and prejudices against women wanting to obtain a management role and being seen as effective in a management role. Women who fulfill management roles get undesirable reviews as this behavior does not align with the norms of a female role. Biases and perceptions often result in lower-ranking positions within an organization for women (Eagly & Carli, 2003). The lower-ranking positions create an additional inability to move past a certain level of responsibility, further contributing to the glass ceiling effect.

Social Role Theory

Closely related to the role congruity theory is the social role theory. Social role theory argues that differences and similarities in behavior reflect beliefs in gender roles which create perceptions among people of what proper social roles are within the society they live in (Eagly & Wood, 2011). For example, men are more likely to be employed in an authoritative position. In contrast, women are employed in a more caretaking role at home or in an organization. These expectations are carried over when considering women's acceptable leadership choices. Men are considered more assertive, dominant,

and masterful, while women are friendly, unselfish, and emotional (Eagly & Wood, 2011). These traits are considered stereotypical and inaccurately dominant due to the continued pressures to conform to expectations (Eagly & Wood, 2011). Women's social and emotional aspect creates a perception of softness and ineffectiveness in times of conflict.

Differences in labor are associated with physical attributes from the socialization processes (Eagly & Wood, 2011). This is demonstrated by women's ability to reproduce and men's general size correlating to strength and dominance (Eagly & Wood, 2011), perpetuating the biases towards a woman's ability to be an effective leader, given the duties associated with motherhood. Additionally, Eagly & Wood (2011) found that others will only praise women when they are seen as acting within the socially expected roles. Men are praised for their leadership roles and successes related to socially expected roles (Eagly & Wood, 2011). Women who perform well at work and engage in leadership behaviors are not aligned with what society accepts as proper behavior for them; therefore, they are not rewarded. Further, men have not switched roles domestically at the same level as women (Eagly & Wood, 2011). While men have transitioned into homemakers, there is more prevalence with women taking on leadership roles.

The social role theory for this study is associated with the current male-to-female division in the workforce. Ongoing societal views and perceptions of a woman's role contribute to biases within the workplace. People possess attributes appropriate for gender-specific roles, and these assumptions become beliefs in what role a female can attain in the workforce (Van Lange et al., 2012). Further, society promotes skills to equip

men and women for their expected employment roles based on gendered assumptions (Van Lange et al., 2012). Women are considered the primary caregivers and homemakers even when employed, and their roles within the workplace are expected to sustain caring, nurturing, and supportive gendered assumptions. Social Role Theory contributes to women's challenges in management roles as they are not seen as strong and effective leaders due to being female. Men feel women are easily distracted by family obligations and, therefore, unable to handle a management role effectively (Shrader et al., 2020).

As stated, women are expected to be the family's primary caregivers in society and often need to step away from work to handle these obligations. Women also lack the toughness and assertiveness needed to lead a company (Shrader et al., 2020). The physical and emotional attributes society has of women (social role theory) contribute to toughness biases within management roles. Further, Shrader et al. (2020) stated that men disapprove of women in top management positions and therefore men deter or prevent appointments from occurring. The disapproval is related to the expectation that women are not meant to lead a company but manage the household.

These societal expectations of a woman's role have contributed to the difficulties for women seeking a leadership role and being seen as effective within a leadership role. Women are less selfless and concerned about others while men are deemed assertive and motivated to achieve (Carte et al., 2010). The ability to see women as wanting promotions can be clouded. Further, the differential treatment between men and women promotes biases within the belief of their abilities as societal leaders (Eagly, 1997).

Gender-Based Biases

Gendered biases and assumptions are studied in research as contributing to the glass ceiling (Carbajal, 2018). Gendered biases occur for women in the workforce, from performance reviews, promotions, lack of acknowledgment, or perceived limitations because of their gender. Specifically, female leaders experience negative assumptions when their peers, subordinates, and other executives (Kubu, 2018). When women face such negative assumptions creating challenges to demonstrate excellence and gain acceptance as a leader. Times have started to change, and gender roles are becoming more blended. However, history's ingrained assumptions remain regarding expected gendered roles and effectiveness outside those roles (Kubu, 2018; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Women are perceived as tied up in their personal life when leaving work to tend to a child's needs, and men are seen as great family-oriented people when they tend to a child's needs (Gipson et al., 2017). Assumptions from historical times were that women cared for the home or took on feminine roles, such as a midwife or nurses, and men were the primary workers and breadwinners. Work patterns in organizations are built around historical times when roles were vastly different among men and women, thus creating an implicit gendered bias on what a female can do (Kubu, 2018).

Women are expected to act and perform more aligned with masculine behaviors, but they will face backlash and criticism, so Women in management roles often face being held to a double standard (Carbajal, 2018; Kaiser & Wallace, 2016). This double standard can be related to the expectation that women tend to all family-related needs. When a man takes time off to assist with an aspect of a family need this is

seen as outside the norm for the gendered expectations and therefore becomes worthy of praise. Women must find a way to portray agentic behaviors without violating gender stereotypes (Gipson et al., 2017). When referring to what makes a good leader, the identified traits mentioned correlate strongly with known masculine characteristics (Gipson et al., 2017). These masculine-dominated standards create difficulties for women to be recognized for their value, abilities, and success in the corporate world.

Women leaders excel in developing others, inspiration, motivation, and building relationships. Despite these positive qualities, they have not considered leadership skills and are not rated as high-priority skills in a managerial role (Kubu, 2018). There are mentions that those qualities are seen as soft and pliable. The article "Equal Footing" (2020) stated that peers considered women leaders as likable or competent but scarcely both. Traits typically associated with men are valued higher, contributing to unconscious and conscious biases toward women managers (Rincón et al., 2017).

Adverse effects on a woman's performance evaluations, considerations, and efficacy are often altered based on cultural biases (Turesky & Warner, 2020). Cultural biases can formulate a stronger belief in social role expectations for both women and men, creating a more challenging obstacle for women to overcome. Cultural biases exist within an organization, acting as a foundation for negative influences based on gender (Al-qahtani, 2020). When cultural biases are worked into the organization's foundation, an environment where female leaders are not accepted persists. Followers of female managers are reluctant to accept them as true leaders because they do not conform to a leader's traditional images (Hoyt, 2010).

Having biases built into creating an organization adds another difficulty in breaking expected norms. Organizations that have engrained gendered biases were cultivated as early as the company's conception, with two stereotypes occurring: descriptive and prescriptive (Al-qahtani, 2020). Descriptive stereotyping occurs when negative expectations are formed regarding a woman's performance while leading (Al-qahtani, 2020). Alignment between the leadership role based on a masculine ideal and the societal one based on a feminine ideal creates incongruity for female leaders.

Prescriptive stereotypes occur when behaviors expected of a woman do not occur (Al-qahtani, 2020). Women in managerial roles are expected to emulate their male counterparts as equal leaders (Al-qahtani, 2020). This expectation contributes to increased role incongruity, further adding to the biases toward women's effectiveness. Experiencing role incongruity can create obstacles for women to maintain their managerial roles and attain new ones. The inequalities caused by this stereotype contribute to gender segregation in the workplace (Al-qahtani, 2020). Gender segregation occurs when men and women are separated into specific positions because of gendered biases regarding their roles.

Thomas et al. (2020) highlighted that women's pressures in senior-level positions are more than men, partly due to higher performance standards and increased blame for failed tasks. Further, the authors identified that women are 1.5% more likely to consider changing careers or leaving the workforce due to failed tasks and pressures to succeed. Women in managerial roles work harder to praise a successful job than men and often experience harsher consequences for failed projects. Shafique et al. (2019) found that

women are at a higher rate than men to experience work-related stress due to the pressures of working harder and experiencing biases and discrimination in the workplace.

Women's approach to leadership styles is no less practical than that of a man, nor are women less motivated to perform functions associated with higher managerial positions (Hoyt, 2012). Though women are considered less effective due to family interference, Hoyt's (2012) findings show that women can perform the job duties as well or better than men. In addition to their assumed homemaking roles, women leaders perform at the same level as their male counterparts. Women's careers are like a kaleidoscope where they constantly turn and adjust aspects of their lives to accommodate their careers (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2018). Adaptability and flexibility can be seen as an asset in a managerial role where a constant need for change occurs. Further, men and women demonstrate the same commitment to their job (Rincón et al., 2017). Having the same level of commitment and skills as their male counterparts yet having more adaptability and flexibility creates an advantage for women in leadership roles.

The value placed on exhibited traits is more often positively associated with men than women (Rincón et al., 2017). Thus, women who do not exhibit masculine traits are not seen as assets. Women are not provided with challenging and high-risk organizational tasks or seen as capable of performing them if given (Shrader et al., 2020). When not provided with a chance to tackle high-risk tasks or complex needs for the organization, there is little to show for accomplishments when wanting to move into managerial roles. Women are disadvantaged in being seen as effective because perceptions are based on

masculine traits (Rincón et al., 2017). Attaining a promotion is often based on evaluations for effectiveness, value to the organization, and task achievements.

Having an education is a trait that many employers look for when hiring and is often listed in the job posting as a requirement. Women earn 60% of the world's master's degrees and 50% of the world's doctoral degrees (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). Women are also found to hold 50% of managerial and professional-level jobs but are still withheld from higher-level leadership positions like president or CEO (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). In theory, the higher education rates paired with experience would make women more qualified for managerial roles. Nevertheless, a lack of promotion still occurs due to gendered stereotypes that lead to poor performance reviews (Eagly & Kubu, 2002) and a lack of acceptance among male peers (Durbin et al., 2020). Women having a superior education indicates a waste of resources, abilities, and human capital. These are the key areas organizations need to succeed in when they are excluded from decision-making roles (Rincón et al., 2017).

Progression through the Glass Ceiling

Female leadership is not a new interest to researchers. Studies persist on female leadership views, including gender differences in effectiveness, glass ceiling phenomena, and biases in the workplace (Rincón et al., 2017). In 2016, only 39.2% of middle management roles were female (U.S Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2020). With the disparity between men and women in management roles, several researchers focus on removing biases and hindrances that suppress women from moving into these positions

(Shafique et al., 2019). The biases and constraints that contribute to women's inability to progress into higher-level roles are the glass ceiling phenomenon (Shafique et al., 2019).

Women holding managerial roles have seen an increase in several areas between 2015-2020 (Thomas et al., 2020):

- 3% in manager roles

- 5% in senior manager or director roles

- 4% in VP roles

- 28% in Senior VP roles

- 22% in C-Suite roles

While growth within these roles is happening slowly, there is still progress happening. Further, for every 100 men promoted, only 85 women are promoted, indicating that there is still an apparent discrepancy between the two genders. However, the discrepancy has been improved from previous years (Thomas et al., 2020).

According to Pew Research Center (2021), the number of women holding CEO positions has reached 7.4% in fortune 500 companies. An increase in fortune 500 companies is a tremendous achievement given the historical male domination. Similarly, women in senior board positions have risen to 27% (Pew Research, 2021). As more women secure board positions they provide a broader opportunity to influence the dynamics of an organization.

Half of the middle management in the United States is currently comprised of women (Gipson et al., 2017). Middle management positions are important because these women often want to continue progressing. Women have increased in leadership roles

within middle management, but upper management roles remain sparse (Shrader et al., 2020). Further, there is a greater appointment of women to senior management positions when the company is failing or in crisis but not when the organization is performing well or in a growth phase (Gipson et al., 2017). Women are not the first consideration when appointments to roles are made but a final effort to bring businesses out of the crisis they are experiencing.

Chisholm-Burns (2017) also found that many Americans accept and support women being equally qualified and capable as men. Further, Chisholm-Burns (2017) found that Americans supported women in higher leadership roles and believed that women were equally intelligent, honest, decisive, and innovative, which are considered essential leadership traits. Despite approval and acceptance, women still face disparity in the workforce. Women are 30% less likely to be promoted to managerial positions (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Even with support from society, there is still a hesitancy to hire women into senior management roles, which research can tie back to unconscious and conscious gendered biases. The reduced promotional chances enhance the importance of retaining women in leadership roles and learning what strategies they utilize to remain resilient in their careers.

There has been considerable advancement in gender equality in the workforce recently (Fapohunda, 2018). The increase in gender diversity and equality in management roles is linked to increased profitability (Skiba et al., 2019). The US Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2020) found that women now maintain 40% of the American workforce. The increase of women in the workforce is critical in helping to increase more women in

upper management roles. Without a pool of future women leaders in the workforce, any progress toward advancing more women into management will be lost (Fapohunda, 2018; Gipson et al., 2017).

Women appeal to their employees' self-interest by forming relationships with them more effectively than men (Eagly & Carli, 2003). The forming of relationships is essential when looking to reward or improve the behaviors of employees. Women were more transformational and more likely to reward employees' behaviors creating higher satisfaction ratings among staff (Eagly & Carli, 2003). The ability to connect and recognize the positive actions of their employees can create a more harmonious and dedicated workforce. Due to changes in female behaviors, the culture within an organization, and organizational processes, women have experienced a surge in leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Women are penetrating the glass ceiling, but there remains a necessity to shatter it permanently (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). The increase in leadership roles plays an integral part in breaking the glass ceiling.

Feedback and Mentoring

Feedback is a normal part of any employment process, and there is an essential need to receive feedback on performance within a designated role or task to grow and operate effectively (Bear et al., 2017). Feedback to an employee can be positive, constructive, or negative, thus creating a response. Feedback is when an authoritative figure provides information to another to improve performance (Bear et al., 2017). Based on previously mentioned research, when feedback comes from a superior, there is an assumption that male superiors provide the feedback to female employees more

frequently. A woman leader's effectiveness is often discounted or negatively judged due to home life obligations contributing to lower performance ratings and harsher feedback from male superiors (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2018). Less than favorable performance evaluations can further hinder a woman's promotional chances.

Feedback is interpreted and processed individually by those that are in the position of receiving. Women experience negative, disproportionated evaluations from male supervisors, further intensifying gender disparity (Bear et al., 2017). Additionally, positive feedback can indicate a threat to the male supervisor of advancement in status for the female (Bear et al., 2017). Advancement is based on positive feedback and demonstration of competence in most situations. Because of this, women are less likely to receive positive or constructive feedback on performance, and women are more likely to be patronized than men (Bear et al., 2017).

Mentoring can be defined as someone with more experience sharing knowledge and experience with employees with less experience (Khalid et al., 2017). Unlike feedback, mentoring involves a more complex relationship that allows the mentee to grow and learn from the mentor. The mentoring process is an interpersonal one that is meant to be helpful and cheerful (Khalid et al., 2017). Formed on a relationship, the mentee and mentor work together to improve skills to improve the mentees' options for advancement. The mentorship was found to enhance the skills of women leaders and increase job opportunities in executive roles (Khalid et al., 2017). As skills increase, there is an argument that can be made that confidence within oneself does. Mentors attempt to

assist their mentees in developing confidence in their understanding of rules within an organization to assist in advancement (Helms et al., 2016).

The act of mentoring can be either formal or informal. Formal mentoring requires specific ground rules and often involves a third party whose services are paid for (Khalid et al., 2017). Informal mentoring focuses less on rules and procedures and more on sharing knowledge (Khalid et al., 2017) and guidance in career advancement through ongoing personal development (Alexander et al., 2020). Both forms of mentoring involve knowledge sharing and development through a relationship with a mentor. Helms et al. (2016) stated that mentoring is not a strict relationship built on advocating for career advancement but a person to help the individual develop personally to achieve advancement. Personal development for women managers further increases self-confidence, allowing individuals to believe in themselves and their capabilities.

Mentorship for women is an essential facet in cultivating employees with high potential and enables women to learn valuable information not otherwise accessible (Valerio, 2018). In addition to knowledge transfer, the connection to a mentor creates opportunities for forming new connections. Mentoring enables women to widen their network and learn valuable perspectives from mentors (Valerio, 2018). An extensive network enables women to draw from a vast pool of opportunities to grow and develop into strong leaders.

There are four phases in developing a relationship between a mentor and mentee: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Helms et al., 2016). These phases are not linear and not strict (Helms et al., 2016), and therefore the relationship is fluid and

can change to the needs of both parties. The fluid nature of mentoring provides the capability to engage in long-term mentoring that can continue through multilevel promotions, work adjustments, and challenges. Mentors are considered people who provide several levels of support to the mentee, including emotional support, performance feedback, organizational strategies, and growth in confidence (Helms et al., 2016).

Successful mentor relationships are created when mentors and mentees have similar values allowing them to form a connection (Helms et al., 2016). In most instances, they see something in the other that reminds them of themselves (Helms et al., 2016). Having a mentor that has successfully broken through the glass ceiling can provide guidance and support to the mentee, enhancing their possibilities of promotion to management roles. Women experience struggles with trying to find formal mentors. In most instances, mentoring occurs by chance and is not an intentional act (Helms et al., 2016)

Successful mentorship, as defined by women, includes three characteristics: (a) a commitment to a whole, long-term process, (b) an ongoing relationship whereby one talks about a mentee's goals and suggests ways to get there and how that path might go, and (c) helping somebody get their confidence back or gain their confidence in the first place (Helms et al.'s, 2016, pg. 9, para 2). When these characteristics are present, the mentee is learning and growing, contributing to resilience. Women expressed a better sense of capability when receiving support from other women (Gipson et al., 2017).

Women who mentor others can foster a commitment to the organization by creating opportunities for more women to move into traditional roles (Stokes et al., 2019). Women who participated in a woman-only mentorship program felt inspired and more confident in their abilities as a professional (Dashper, 2019). Confidence contributes to the belief in one's capabilities to lead and manage. Having a strong female mentor provided women with guidance and confidence for furthering their careers (Dashper, 2019).

Biases still exist within an organization creating obstacles and challenges for women leaders, but mentorship allows women to feel confident in attacking and overcoming those obstacles. Women mentoring programs do not reduce biases or discrimination in the workplace but aid in empowering women who participate (Dashper, 2019). CEOs and senior leaders recommended that women find mentors within the same industry as themselves (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). Further, Chisholm-Burns (2017) indicated that mentors are valuable resources to help open doors for those aspiring to continue within leadership roles contributing to resiliency.

Benefits of Female Leadership

Women's contribution to management is often more significant than their male counterparts (Busaibe et al., 2017) yet women comprise only 25% of senior management positions (McLaughlin et al., 2018), far from exhibiting a well-balanced gendered environment. Female leaders possess unique traits and leadership styles that make them valuable to an organization. There is a need to increase awareness surrounding the

advantages of increasing the number of women holding management roles (Rincón et al., 2017).

Women leaders often balance being a leader with caring for the home, creating a unique perspective of others. Women leaders can understand the demands of professional and personal challenges, have a higher level of empathy, and are better at nurturing their team than their male counterparts (Garcia-Solarte et al., 2018). The ability to enable teams and empathize often creates a sense of openness and approachability (Garcia-Solarte et al., 2018). Transparency and approachability can lead to better communication when staff feel they can communicate openly and not be dismissed or misunderstood.

By including women in leadership roles, organizations have improved financial performance, economic growth, and global social responsiveness (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). Organizations with broad diversity further contribute to social change, an essential societal trait today. Women on corporate boards provide more rigorous surveillance of organizational policies and reduce the number of legal infractions. In addition, women board members or women in senior leadership roles increase the number of female promotions (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). Ultimately promoting more women into leadership roles contributes to closing the gender gap within leadership roles.

Female leaders are compared to their male counterparts in skills, knowledge, and capabilities. Men in leadership roles often have less formal education than women (Glass & Cook, 2018). The combination of education and experience further allows female leaders to think more critically and accomplish complex tasks with some advantage over their male counterparts (Sharpe, 2013). Despite the advantage of women overall when

comparing them side by side neutrally, there is still hesitancy to appoint women into senior leadership roles.

Women often achieved superior ratings than their male counterparts in production, quality of work, goal setting, and mentoring (Sharpe, 2013). In addition, women surpassed male managers in collaboration, motivation, and information sharing (Sharpe, 2013). Despite the higher ratings in multiple categories, women are still held back from advancement or advanced into less valued management roles. Women are often appointed to leadership roles that are less visible to the whole organization and often only in times of failure or crisis (Gipson et al., 2017). When in crisis, a key area of focus is a deep desire and need to make changes with leadership. Organizations have more men currently in positions of power than women. During a crisis, there is a prevalence to have a male leading the organization. Therefore, replacing them with a woman creates a symbolic visualization of the organization moving toward change (Gipson et al., 2017). This change stimulates the employees toward ending the crisis due to new leadership.

Soft skills like communication, listening, leadership, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competencies are critical to leading successfully (Karim, 2019). Women hold these skills more effectively than men (Karim, 2019). The ability to have soft skills can strengthen a team's commitment to their leader. Women operate in a more relational approach to management which is closely related to the leadership theory of transformational leadership, thus increasing capabilities and effectiveness over male managers (Rincón et al., 2017). Gipson et al. (2017) said organizations with women in

senior-management roles often report higher sales performance and return on investments than that male ran organizations.

In an organization that promotes one female into management, there is an increase in sales profit by 0.5% (Hoobler et al., 2018). Additionally, organizations with more women in management operate with more attention paid to social responsibility. Women executives are more connected to the community and are often more engaged in social governance and community outreach (Cook & Glass, 2018). Community connections can increase visibility for the organization regarding diversity, corporate social responsibility, and contributing to positive social change. Not having balanced proportions of men and women in leadership can negatively impact society, thus affecting the organization's overall performance (Rincón, 2017).

Chadwick and Dawson (2018) said the preference of female leaders to be more relational contributes to stronger stakeholder relations. When stakeholders are more engaged and connected, more collaboration and communication occur, creating a higher level of commitment to needs. There have been findings that female managers provide a more critical insight into an organization's strategic needs, which includes a higher consideration for female stakeholders, both internal and external. An assumption can be made that this consideration creates a less challenging environment for other women who are working towards promotions and those already in leadership roles. The presence of women within leadership roles is a crucial resource for an organization. Women in director positions are more orientated to stakeholders' needs than men (Xie et al., 2020). Women in leadership roles are more proactive in reducing negative environmental

contributions like pollution (Xie et al., 2020). Considering environmental impacts can contribute to a positive societal reputation for the organization. Additionally, financial performance is improved through increased organizational market value (Xie et al.2020). The combination of diversity and societal considerations increases the market value due to its positive impact. Increased gender diversity within organizations for management roles is also linked to increased profitability (Skiba et al., 2019).

When interviewing for managerial roles, women are believed to apply more of a transformational style by showing themselves as role models, forward thinkers, and empowering (Eagly & Carli, 2003). When managers demonstrate the actions, behaviors, and dedication they expect from their team, there is a stronger connection to the team. Women understand the need for an idealistic role model to help empower other women to move into leadership roles. Women often lead through the lens of democracy and interpersonal actions (Skiba et al., 2019).

As such, each employee is now actively participating in decision-making and feedback, allowing women to increase positive employee behaviors, thus increasing organizational effectiveness (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Increasing effectiveness helps the organization reach goals, financial performance, and employee buy-in. Women often face negative biases due to the competing priorities of work and family; Ruderman et al. (2002) said women expressed that the knowledge gained from their family roles translated to improved abilities in their managerial roles. The top skill gained was interpersonal skills, in which women increased understanding, respect, developed, and motivated others (Ruderman et al., 2002). Women also found an increase in self-esteem

and confidence that translated to better handling failures at work (Ruderman et al., 2002).

Knowing that women managers face harsher criticism for their failed tasks at work,

increasing self-esteem and confidence allows them to understand the failure and not

experience an increase of self-blame or internalization.

Managing stress is an important trait that can contribute to persistence through

complex challenges. Women felt their balancing of dual roles gave them a higher level of

emotional support, allowing them to manage stress when in their managerial roles

(Ruderman et al., 2002). Women face challenges related to leadership development and

managing stress when challenged; therefore, the skills obtained from balancing multiple

roles bring value and increased effectiveness when leading (Stokes et al., 2019).

Multitasking and prioritizing tasks and priorities are critical skills needed to

complete projects and effectively delegate within an organization. Women found strength

in juggling multiple personal responsibilities while managing translated to improved

efficiency, focus, and prioritizing of responsibilities while managing (Ruderman et al.,

2002). Lastly, women found that helping their kids achieve their goals by finding ways to

motivate, challenge, and grow became a strength in their approach to leading employees.

Organizations have set goals, and achieving those goals brings performance satisfaction

to the manager and team from senior leadership. Managers must know how to motivate

and creatively push their teams to achieve these goals omen are considered more caring

and concerned with the possibility of causing harm to others (Setó, 2015).

Understandably the concern creates a response to diminishing the negative impact

on others. Women managers are additionally concerned with the impact on the

environment, social impacts, and making a positive impact (Setó, 2015). Further, when

organizations have a higher level of gender diversity and more women within leadership

roles, an organization's commitment to corporate social responsibility increases.

Increasing societies' praise and high regard for the leaders within the organization found

that the more women a board of directors have in managerial roles, there was a positive

contribution to financial performance. When businesses operate with a board of directors,

additional approval is needed for women managers to excel.

Women in managerial roles bring several benefits to an organization, from

employee commitment to financial performance. As stated previously, women can bring

a leadership style that creates a culture of communication and acceptance. Empowering

employees further contributes to the overall success of an organization by improving

efficiency for staff that have more confidence in their capabilities to succeed. Lastly,

financial performance increases when women occupy the majority of board directors and

lead an organization.

Resiliency

Resilience in leadership is a capacity to conquer challenges by cultivating

individual and team organizational capacities. Resilience is a characteristic that can play

an integral part in ascending to leadership roles and maintaining those roles (Stokes et al.

(2019). Resilience was derived from the mid-17th century Latin verb *resilire,* which

means to leap back (Shafique et al., 2019). The idea of resilience is not new and has been

present throughout history. As a concept, resilience is understanding failures and

breakdowns in a normal adaptive process used to cope with surprises and changes (Shafique et al., 2019).

As it applies to organizations, resilience only recently became a focus of value and benefit (Shafique et al. (2019). Looking through the lens of an organization, resiliency is a concept that can only be of benefit. Further, resilience has been identified as the ability of a person to respond to adverse situations both during and after a problem presents itself (Duchek et al., 2019). Problems arise for women trying to excel in an organization which can be challenging to overcome without resiliency. Applying the benefit to organizations to understand "Resilience is more than mere survival; it involves identifying potential risks and taking proactive steps to ensure that an organization thrives in the face of adversity" (Somers, 2009, p. 13). Viewing potential problems before they arise is a critical skill for effective management.

Women who display resilient tendencies accept uncertainties and are willing to take more significant risks (Stokes et al., 2019). Female managers accept uncertainties as a challenge, thus enabling a drive to overcome them. Further, women in management positions are working towards breaking through the glass ceiling by continuing to develop personal strategies aimed at resilience (Shafique et al., 2019).

Shafique et al. (2019) identified several variations of the definition of resiliency and in what circumstance the definitions would occur (see Table 1).

Table 1

Shafique et al. (2019): The meaning of resilience (in different circumstances)

Author	Meaning	Circumstances
Block and Block (1980)	Resilience as a trait is an accumulation of abilities and characteristics that enable individuals to adjust to the difficult situations they experience	Individual
Egeland et al. (1993)	Resilience as the skill is developed gradually through an interaction between individual and respective environments	Individual
Coutu (2002)	Resilience helps individuals to accept the reality, believe that life is meaningful and develop the capacity to extemporize	Individual
Fredrickson (2001), Connor and Davidson (2003); Fletcher and Sarkar (2013)	The ability to "leap back" from misfortune	Individual
Cooper et al. (2013)	The capability to bounce back from hindrances combined with staying efficient in difficult situations and continuing to grow stronger in the process	Individual
Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004)	The competence to go on with life, or to continue living a purposeful life, after hardship or adversity	Psychological
Luthans et al. (2006)	The developable capacity to rebound from adversity	Psychological
Horne and Orr (1998)	The aptitude to respond to change productively	Organizational

Hamel and Valikangas (2003)	The potential to continuous rebuilding	Organizational
Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003, p. 97)	"The capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful"	Organizational
McDonald (2006)	The characteristics of being able to adapt and manage environments variability	Organizational
Bustinza et al. (2016)	A desirable characteristic for an organization and its members to possess when circumstances adversely change	Organizational
Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011); Bhamra, et al. (2011); Mamouni Limnios et al. (2014), Bustinza et al. (2016); King et al. (2016)	The organization's ability to reinvent themselves or react in good time as a result of change	Organizational
Kossek and Perrigino (2016)	The capability to adapt to adversity and endure job demands	Organizational

Note. Adapted from Shafique et al.'s (2019) table of resiliency definitions.

Among female managers having resilience provides a benefit to helping push through the glass ceiling and inevitably increases the number of women in management roles (Shafique et al., 2019). Improving retention among female managers and promoting new female managers is a two-prong approach that can decrease male dominance in management. How resilience develops is the psychological strength to respond to stressors and demands placed on an individual (Barsky & Water, 2021). The importance of women continuing within management roles once they are attained needs to focus as women continue to push towards shattering the glass ceiling.

Individual people do not share the same strategies or processes for achieving resilience (Stokes et al., 2019). Resilience must be seen as an individual human

experience, operating in a collaborative setting and not a situational, organizational occurrence (Stokes et al., 2019). Women practice a unique individual strategy to remain resilient within their roles due to distinctive experiences. Additionally, individuals' resilience varies depending on the duration of time within their roles (Goyal et al., 2021). As women continue their careers, they adapt and create new strategies depending on the situations they have experienced. Women are constantly revolutionizing their unique strategies to learn the most effective manner for dealing with stressors (Goyal et al., 2021). They support statements that resilience is dynamic and an ongoing evolution for individuals. Resilience is related to staying optimistic in high-stress or demanding situations.

The ability to grow into confidence results in resiliency for women to continue overcoming hurdles in their careers. Enabling a person to adapt to stressful situations, survive, and overcome present and future challenges is a benefit of resilience (Goyal et al., 2021). Further, resilience can be learned as women discover how to handle, tolerate, or escape stressful and challenging situations when they occur. Knowing how to adapt and conquer stressful situations or challenges is a benefit that can translate into persistence for women within elevated roles in organizations. Building resilience is based on two coping skills: avoidant and active (Goyal et al., 2021). Avoidant coping skills include avoiding stressful social interactions, while active coping skills seek or offer support (Goyal et al., 2021). Utilizing these two coping skills allows women to adapt to the situation, thus creating a more resilient ability to handle stressful situations more

confidently. As time increases within their role, women can identify and confidently combat negative gendered aggressions (Goyal et al., 2021).

The idea of resilience in business and management is a newer concept still being explored (Duchek et al., 2019). An organization could have a more positive social impact by having more diversity among its leadership (Duchek et al., 2019). Organizations with employees who remain within their organization and develop resilience can benefit their company. Resilience in organizations is seen as a benefit to sustaining operations effectively (Gipson et al., 2017). Women who remain resilient in their roles provide a social and economic component of success for the organization. Organizations that promote gender diversity and prioritize the retention of their employees see a significant economic advantage for the business and the society in which they operate (Rincón, 2019).

Women leaders face a variety of stressors within their roles, especially in upper-level management roles from both personal and professional environments (Foerster & Duchek, 2018). There is an established knowledge that women experience more pressures and expectations when balancing home and career. Resilience could contribute to an individual's ability to handle stressors more efficaciously, solve problems more effectively, and think clearer (Barsky & Waters, 2021). When resilience levels are elevated, there is a correlation between higher job satisfaction and better work-life balance (Barsky & Waters, 2021). Higher satisfaction can increase organizational commitment and foster a more engaged team. Resilience among leaders motivates leaders and followers (Foerster & Duchek, 2018).

Summary, Conclusions, and Transition

In Chapter 2, I addressed literature search strategies and the conceptual framework and provided an in-depth literature review. The literature review included leadership challenges for women as well as the role congruity theory, social role theory, and gendered biases. I also addressed progression through the glass ceiling, feedback and mentoring, resiliency, and benefits of female leadership. The conceptual framework for this study was.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methodology and trustworthiness. I also provide my participant selection criteria, instrumentation, information regarding the field test, procedures I used for data collection, and data analysis methods. In Chapter 3, I also discuss credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical considerations related to this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

In this study, I explored perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management and how they remained resilient in their careers. I used a qualitative single case study design with embedded units. In this chapter, I provide the research design and rationale, and my role as the researcher is discussed. I also discuss the study's methodology as well as participant selection, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. Lastly, I address trustworthiness in this chapter, including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

This proposed single case study design was intended to explore perceptions of female leaders with at least five years of experience in management roles and how they remain resilient in their careers. I conducted the study using a qualitative approach. I collected data for this study by interviewing women with at least five years of experience in management roles. According to Mills et al. (2010), a case study involves using a three-step approach: (a) the researcher treats each interview as a single case study, (b) examines data critically, and (c) compares results across multiple studies for common themes, differences, and similarities.

A case study approach enables data collection from participants that is unique to their own experiences. The case study in research is best suited for discovering either how or why it relates to the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2018). Halkias and Neubert (2020) identified qualitative methods as necessary when researching management and

leadership issues. Stake (2010) said a case study design is useful when seeking to gain multiple perspectives related to the focus of the study. The case study design was used in this study to provide holistic and in-depth perspectives from women in management roles for at least five years across different industries according to their unique personal perspectives.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that a quantitative study involves focusing on statistical numerations to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Yin (2018) said quantitative studies involve demonstrating relationships between factors. I did not seek to explain relationships between two variables using statistical data. I conducted this study to explore participant perceptions. Therefore, a quantitative design would not be sufficient to accurately address this topic and was not an appropriate choice.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a tool to facilitate the study design, collect and analyze data, and shape data relative to the study's framework and purpose (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). First, I recruited participants for the study via purposeful sampling. This type of sampling allowed me to identify a population of participants that fit selection criteria. I ensured that I had no personal relationships with participants to prevent inadvertent biases or participants feeling they must address questions in a particular fashion. I needed to collect between five and 15 participants for this case study.

In this study, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants to gather rich data that contributed to the purpose of this study. I facilitated interviews, ensuring participants remained focused and addressed interview questions. I conducted

interviews using a semi-structured interview format. Ravitch and Carl (2016) defined semi-structured interview questions as an appropriate method to explore experiences and human perspectives. This process allowed me to ask clarifying or follow up questions for participants to further elaborate on details. This allowed me to obtain the appropriate data I needed for this study.

Next, I transcribed and analyzed data collected from interviews. I used Temi. The transcription process was conducted by uploading mp3 audio files to the server, where they were transcribed. Temi provides word-for-word transcription services. I referred to myself as person one and each participant as person two. This process allowed me to transcribe interviews into a written format, ensuring nonbiased and accurate accounts. Saldaña (2016) stated that the researcher analyzes the written data developing concise themes directly tied to the research question. I used field notes and transcriptions to formulate codes, categories, and themes to address perceptions of how female managers remain resilient in their careers.

I focused on women in management roles, and ethical guidelines were considered. As a female manager working to establish my own resilience in my career, I was capable of unconsciously guiding interviews. To mitigate this, my interview questions were approved by university reviewers and the IRB to ensure they were free of bias and misleading language.

Committee members also recorded and reviewed interviews to mitigate any biases during data analysis. Additionally, I did not use the first few interviews which were part of the field test. I used this field test to ensure biases and unconscious guidance were

effectively removed during future interviews. Ravitch and Carl (2016) said the first few interviews may need to be discarded to ensure data is pure and free of bias, further removing unintentional biases. Remaining neutral and free of assumptions was a priority.

Methodology

This qualitative single case study involved examining perceptions of female managers with at least five years in management in terms of how they remain resilient in their careers. With this study, I addressed a gap in literature on what strategies female managers perceive as beneficial in terms of helping them achieve resilience. Yin (2018) stated that a case study is appropriate when addressing a real-world case in depth. Yin (2018) said a case study requires multiple sources of evidence combined with data to be effective. I used interviews with participants, an in-depth literature review, reflective journaling, field notes, and data analysis to explore the research question for this study.

Researchers use a case study approach when they already have an idea of participants who meet inclusion criteria for a study (Stake, 2013). Purposeful sampling was an appropriate recruitment method based on my knowledge that they met the study's basic criteria. I recruited participants who were adult women over the age of 18, possessed at least five years in a management role, and were able to provide perceptions of their strategies they used to remain resilient during their careers.

A case study design was appropriate for this study because there were no variable control experiments or quantifiable data. A quantitative study design was not appropriate for evaluating perceptions or theories, as a quantitative study involves comparing two or more variables. To address the research question, I collected qualitative data from

interviews, archival data, literature, and reflective journals to support trustworthiness of the study results.

Participant Selection

For this study, I recruited participants using purposeful and snowball sampling methods. I used the conferencing software Zoom as well as telephone and email interviews. Interviews were conducted after I explained the study's purpose, my role, and confidentiality, and I obtained a signed consent form or implied consent from participants. My first step was identifying the target participant pool. I selected participants who met the criteria for screening: (a) were adult women over the age of 18, (b) possessed at least five years in a management role, and (c) were able to provide perceptions of strategies used to remain resilient within their careers. My study focused on women leaders with at least five years of experience in management roles.

Participants were recruited by reaching out to known associates who recommend women who may have met the study criterion and through the professional social media site LinkedIn. Participants were contacted via email or phone to inquire if they would participate in the study. Participants were given the premise of the research study via their preferred contact method and asked if they would like to participate. Participants then self-identified as meeting the study's requirements: being female and in a management role for at least five years and providing consent to participate.

Data saturation occurs when conducting further interviews will produce no added information contributing to the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I targeted between five and 15 participants to provide uniqueness of interactivity (Stark, 2006). Data saturation was

determined once interviews no longer provided new, data-rich content to the perceptions

of female leaders with at least five years of experience in management on how they

remain resilient in their careers.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation in a case study collects data from multiple sources and provides

proper data collection instruments to address the study's research question (Yin, 2018). I

explored and critically evaluated the questions developed to address the research question

in the study appropriately. I also examined the participant recruiting and selection process

related to data analysis. I used the following instruments in data collection: (a) letter of

introduction, (b) informed consent, (c) semi-structured interview protocol, and (d)

literature reviews. I collected data from the participant interviews that were completed.

Interviews were conducted via the use of a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews

occurred via Zoom or emailed to enable participants to provide the data I needed in a

comfortable setting during a COVID-19 pandemic, which limited personal face-to-face

capabilities.

Letter of Invitation

Once participants identified wanting to participate in the study, I emailed a letter

of invitation (see Appendix A). The invitation letter included an outline of the research

study purpose and inclusion criteria. The invitation letter informed participants of the

time requirements for the interview process and provided details of this study.

Informed Consent

To adhere to ethical data collection practices and ensure confidentiality, participants signed a consent form or provided verbal informed consent. The informed consent aligns with Walden University's IRB standards for research. Informed consent was the participants agreeing to participate in the study by signing the form or stating, "I consent." The informed consent also disclosed the research study process to participants who opted to participate.

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview allowed me to ask open-ended, predetermined questions to gain a detailed understanding of the participant's responses to the questions (Given, 2008). The interview guide (see Appendix B) was designed based on a literature review and refined by a field test. I used the interview guide to gain a deeper insight into the participant's experiences, knowledge, and personal accounts of what they perceived as practical strategies to remain resilient in their careers as managers.

Literature Review

I conducted a thorough literature review utilizing peer-reviewed scholarly articles. I used current literature published from 2015 to 2021 to provide substantiating data supporting the background, conceptual framework, and interpretation of data. Literature was also utilized to present relative theories and historical context published before 2015. I gathered literature using EBSCO Host, Sage Research Methods, and Walden Library databases. Yin (2018) indicated that a systematic review of literature data is appropriate for case studies.

Procedure for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I collected data from women managers with at least five years of experience in management roles. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted by myself. Ravitch and Carl (2016) identified that for case studies, the number of participants should be between five and 15, and these cases should provide rich contextual data. The interviews lasted no more than 30 minutes (about ½ an hour) but varied depending on the need for follow-up questions to clarify statements (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The participants were offered the option of an in-person or virtual meeting. Currently, a global pandemic affected some comfort levels to being in a room with another person face to face. I adapted by using the video conferencing software Zoom. Using Zoom, I could view participants as I conducted the interview. Additionally, participants could respond to emails if a suitable time was not available to meet. Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested being flexible and adaptable to maintain participant comfort and safety. The use of alternative video conferencing allowed the participants to still participate from the comfort and safety of their location. The software also allowed me to record the participants' audio to maintain participant confidentiality.

In some instances, more participants would have been needed if data saturation was not met or there was a need for individual interviews to be discarded (Yin, 2018). I was able to reach data saturation with nine interviews. Therefore, further recruitment did not take place. As I completed each interview, participants were notified that they would receive a transcript of our interview via email. Participants were asked to review the

transcript for accuracy and agreeance before data analysis began. Participants were reminded that they could request to no longer participate in the study, and all information gained from previous interactions would be discarded at that time. All participants agreed to continue the study after reviewing their interview transcripts.

Data Analysis Plan

I conducted this study utilizing a case study design. In a qualitative study, rich data is obtained by analyzing verbatim transcriptions of participant interviews (Patton, 2015), referred to as coding. The data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Interviews were used to address the research question for this study: What are the perceptions of female leaders with at least five years of experience in management roles in terms of how they remain resilient in their careers?

In qualitative inquiry, a code is a researcher's generated construct symbolically assigned to capture the summative or the essence of every statement in the transcript of data (Saldaña, 2015). A code could be a word or summative short phrase assigned to individual data to initiate the qualitative analysis. Coding is a crucial aspect of this qualitative data analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2015). After each participant completed the transcript review process, I began the initial review and coding of the data. I carried out two coding cycles, the pre-codes, and the actual code. The pre-coding provided the basis for coding, and I rolled the codes obtained into categories for thematic analysis. Saldaña (2015) mentioned that coding is a cyclical act, and it is rarely possible to arrive at perfect codes during the first cycle.

Thematic analysis is the primary data analysis technique used in Yin's pattern-matching process and offers an effective and reliable data approach in a qualitative study (Tracy, 2019). For the thematic analysis of the study, I used manual coding through a systematic process framed in the descriptive coding method. The descriptive coding method enabled me to assign meanings to raw data segments, which led to lists of words, phrases, or both for indexing and data categorization (Saldaña, 2016). Using the inductive analysis approach, I used the ground-up data analysis strategy (Yin, 2018) to generate codes from the transcribed data (Boyatzis, 1998).

I applied content analysis techniques for primary data. I then identified codes in the main content through in-depth interviews and created categories from the identified codes. Using a pattern-matching technique, I continued with the content and thematic analysis from primary and secondary data (Yin, 2018). The identified themes represent recognized patterns that can be assumed as responses to the research question (Yin, 2018). Software coding systems are not entirely automated and require researcher participation and assistance in guiding the software to identify appropriate codes and themes related to the study purpose. I manually reviewed the repeated words or phrases and identified the proper categories to derive accurate themes within NVivo 12. The transcripts from participant interviews were uploaded to NVivo 12, where I used the software to manage the data. The data was accessible and saved where the information could be easily retrieved.

Using thematic analysis, I searched for themes important to depicting the phenomenon involved a meticulous process of identifying themes through readings and a

sound understanding of the data (Yin, 2018), including identifying discrepant cases. Discrepant cases are identified as not aligned with most other cases (Patton, 2015). Alternative findings can help negate or support the findings related to the research question (Saldaña, 2016). No discrepant cases were found in my study's sample.

Trustworthiness

When conducting research, I must maintain trustworthiness throughout this study process. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that trustworthiness involves four equal key areas: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Trustworthiness for this study included using the online meeting platform Zoom, which allowed me to record the interview and obtain an audio file for transcription. I used a third-party transcription service, Temi, to ensure accurate interview transcription occurred.

Credibility

All data collected was stored in a secured shared drive on my computer to maintain the study's integrity. Signed consent forms and observation notes were secured in a locked office or on a secured shared drive on my computer. Participants reviewed the transcript for accuracy and intent to ensure further transparency and trustworthiness. Credibility is to what extent the research is truthful (Mills et al., 2010). Participants could state whether they approved of the transcript and wished to continue or if they wanted to opt-out of the study. Referred to as member checks, the transcript review process ensured that data collected from participants was relevant and aligned with my study (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Transferability

A researcher ensures the transferability of their study by providing research capable of applying to other studies (Yin, 2018). The study's single-case study design contributed to transferability by collecting data from participants in multiple industries with unique stories of their experiences. Participants had at least five years of experience in management roles to align with the research question and allow for transferability.

Thick descriptions are an established practice researchers use in qualitative empirical approaches (Stokes et al., 2019). Thick description includes contextual details via observing and interpreting the social meaning behind the research (Mills et al., 2010). In qualitative research in the 1970s, anthropologist Geertz (1973) used thick descriptions to investigate social practices. Mills et al. (2010) also related the concepts of thick description in case study research. I explored the phenomenon in-depth, focusing on details, context, thoughts, and relational webs in spoken and non-spoken communication. I achieved transferability in this study by using the concept of thick description throughout the study.

Dependability

Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that dependability is the capability of other researchers to duplicate the study and achieve consistency with findings. Yin (2018) also stated that dependability is determined when the study results are consistent, relatable, and repeatable—utilizing audio recordings during interviews allowed transcription to be conducted. Once transcribed, the participants confirmed that their statements were

accurate and true, further adding to the dependability of this study. I also maintain field notes throughout each interview to provide an audit trail that could be followed.

Another method I used to ensure dependability is triangulation. Data triangulation is accomplished when consistent or duplicated findings are presented through a convergence of data from multiple sources (Stark, 2006; Yin, 2018). There are four common forms of triangulation: methodical triangulation, data triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1970). Methodical triangulation uses data from different collection methods to provide consistency within findings (Denzin, 1970, 2009). Data triangulation uses data collected from multiple sources using the same method to provide consistency or duplication of findings in the study (Denzin, 1970, 2009). Investigator triangulation utilizes more than one researcher or data analyst in this single case study, and theoretical triangulation uses multiple theories to frame the research study (Denzin, 1970, 2009).

In this study, I used methodical triangulation to triangulate data obtained from audio-recorded interviews via the online conference software, Zoom, email responses, field observation notes, and data I obtained from archives. The methodical triangulation was appropriate for this study due to the extensive literature review, in-depth semistructured participant interviews, and field observation notes that I used to collect data.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, two goals need to be verified: understanding a phenomenon from the participant's perspectives and understanding the experiences and

meanings provided by participants (Given, 2008). A study's confirmability depends on the researcher's capabilities to remain neutral throughout the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used an approved interview guide that removed biases from questioning. Further, I utilized an internal review board that ensured the questions were ethically acceptable and not misleading. Lastly, I used member checking to ensure that the information I reported was accurate and reflected what the participants wanted to convey during their interviews.

Ethical Procedures

When conducting a research study, researchers must adhere to high ethical standards throughout the process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Maintaining ethical standards allowed me to ensure the accuracy and relevancy of the purpose of the study while addressing the research question. As a student at Walden University, there is a requirement that I obtain approval from IRB before I conduct data collection. The purpose of obtaining IRB approval was to ensure that no harm or injury occurred to human participants during or because of the study.

Participation in this study was voluntary. Before starting the interview, I obtained informed consent or a signed consent form from all participants. Informed consent was obtained after the participants described the study's purpose, research question, and any potential risks associated with participating in the study. Participants were asked semistructured interview questions previously approved by the IRB. Yin (2018) states that researchers should not suggest or lead a participant's response. Following the process ensured that all participants were asked questions free from bias and were not leading.

Participants were notified that personal identifiers were removed from the study to ensure their privacy. The removal of personal identifiers included names, employer names, and any other specific information that could lead to the identification of a participant. Field notes, thoughts, and interview observations were written through participant numbers rather than names. Data collected during the interview included, but was not limited to, participant interview recordings, any field notes that I took, and the scanned or electronic consent forms that were securely stored in a password-protected cloud on my computer.

Recruitment took place using a purposeful sampling strategy. I asked female managers I work with to provide suggestions on possible participants that met the study criteria. I also utilized the connections I had on LinkedIn to identify possible participants for this study. To ensure data was obtained ethically, I did not utilize managers I knew in the study so that the data obtained was not skewed or biased.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I discussed the single case study design with embedded units, and explained why this design was best for the study. The single case study design facilitated collecting data from female leaders to provide individual experiences involving how they remained resilient during their careers. The study's trustworthiness was highlighted, and I addressed participant selection, researcher biases, transferability, and dependability concerns. I addressed IRB requirements as well as ethical standards for research. I provided criteria for participant selection along with guidelines involving how I kept

participants' data secured and maintained their privacy through removal of identifying

information.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units was to explore perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management regarding how they remained resilient throughout their careers. There is a lack of information about this topic; therefore, I addressed a literature gap on resilience strategies to maintain women in leadership roles. I used nine semi-structured interview questions to collect experiences of participants. The semi-structured interview guide allowed for some latitude when asking participants clarifying questions so that I could understand more about experiences they were reflecting on. Interview questions were grounded in the literature review and pretested via a field test.

Women remain underrepresented in management roles (Gipson et al., 2017). Women continue to face barriers involving professional interactions despite feeling respected by peers (Turesky & Warner, 2020). Data collected from this study may help lead to social change to help improve other female leaders' experiences in male-dominated environments.

This chapter includes the research setting, participant demographics, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. The chapter concludes with a summary and transition to Chapter 5.

Research Setting

Data for this single case study was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with nine women managers who met the study's inclusion criteria. Interviews were conducted using Zoom and digitally recorded. Interviews ranged in time from 25 to

35 minutes. All participants were adult women over the age of 18 who spent at least five years in a management role and were able to provide perceptions of strategies they used to remain resilient during their careers.

Candidates for study participation were recruited using LinkedIn via criterion, network, and snowball sampling. I sent potential participants requests for study participation via direct messages on LinkedIn as well as direct email communications within my professional network. Prospective participants were emailed the introductory/recruitment letter and consent form. After participants responded with the words "I consent" to my email, we agreed on days and times for interviews at their convenience.

The semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix B) was developed to ensure interviewees were comfortable with the topic and understood the purpose of the research. Before commencing each interview, I reminded each participant of their right to end the interview and cease participation in the study. I informed participants that interviews would only be audio recorded, and I indicated to them when I started and stopped recording. Participants expressed they were comfortable during interviews and openly shared professional management experiences and personal strategies.

Demographics

Purposeful sampling and snowball techniques were used to choose participants who could provide rich information that was relevant to the research question. This required identifying two potential participants and asking them to recommend additional

participants who met criteria. All nine participants met the criteria to participate in this study.

Ten women met eligibility criteria for the study, and nine women comprised the study's final sample. Demographics of the study sample included nine women. Of the nine participants, eight were from the United States, and one was from Singapore. Candidates' average amount of experience in management roles was 15 years. Their experience ranged from 7 to 27 years.

Data Collection

Data collection for this single case study with embedded units began on November 28, 2022, after receiving IRB approval from Walden University (#08-30-22-0760957). Nine participants were recruited using purposeful snowball sampling. I used LinkedIn to find possible participants. I used the search tool within the site to search for possible participants for my study. LinkedIn search terms included: *Female managers*, *women leaders*, *female leadership*, *women leadership*, *diverse workforce*, *women CEO/CFO*, *leading women*, and *female owners*.

I reviewed LinkedIn search results and visually identified women managers who fit the study's inclusion criteria via their LinkedIn profile and contacted them regarding participation in this study. LinkedIn is set up so that one can only send an in-platform email message to people with whom one is connected. To identify potential participants for this study, I sent connection requests to potential participants to be connected on LinkedIn. Following that, I sent separate emails via the platform's sharing channels. Not all potential participants who received my connection request accepted my invitation to

connect on LinkedIn. Once connected, I sent introductory emails and attached consent forms to prospective participants using the LinkedIn email messaging system.

After identifying three to four participants who provided consent to participate in the study, I requested referrals for other potential participants who met inclusion criteria and would consider participating in this study. Participants who knew other women managers with at least five years of experience provided me with recommendations, including names and contact information. I connected via direct message on LinkedIn, seeking their interest in participating in the study. Overall, I connected with 20 participants, nine who accepted, one who could not participate, and 10 who did not respond. Once potential participants agreed to participate, consent was obtained to continue with the study, and communications continued via email in order to establish dates and times to conduct interviews.

Semistructured Interviews

Next, the data collection phase consisted of scheduling participants for interviews. Participants were scheduled for interviews at times that were convenient and comfortable for them. Interviews took place over a period of 2 weeks, from December 1 to December 20, 2022. I used Zoom to schedule meetings and email invitations to all nine participants. Invitations included hyperlinks to connect virtually, dial-in information to connect via telephone, and meeting invitations sent through Microsoft Outlook with decided dates and times. All interviews were audio-recorded via Zoom's integrated recording option. No internet connection issues were experienced during interviews, and audio recordings were saved for transcription. Recordings were uploaded to Temi for transcription, which

took between five and 10 minutes to complete. During the data collection process for conducting interviews, I was able to engage with participants free of bias, preconceived expectations, and judgments.

I followed the semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix B) and linked my knowledge and experience. I allowed each participant to express their thoughts without interruption fully. I kept handwritten notes that allowed me to reflect on participants' answers and asked follow up questions per the semi-structured interview protocol. Notes also allowed for accuracy of information and accurate recordings of participants. Journaling and reflective notes enhanced the study's findings and contributed to its trustworthiness. Participants were at ease and felt comfortable providing their perceptions of the topic.

Data saturation is achieved when the relative frequency of codes is stabilized, and further data points will not change the results of a study (Guest et al., 2006). I continued past five participants until I reached similar data noted from all participants after the fifth interview. Data saturation is not about the number of participants or the sample size, but the richness and depth of the data collected (Schram, 2006). Interview transcripts, journaling notes, and archival data were collected for the data analysis process using content analysis to categorize and identify categories and themes (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). The collected data from the transcribed interviews, coupled with the reflective notes and archival data, resulted in an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers.

Member Checking

After completing each interview, I uploaded the audio file of the recorded interview to the transcription service Temi for transcribing. Each transcription took between 10 and 20 minutes to complete, which included completing minor edits. Each participant was emailed a copy of their transcript for member checking to ensure the accuracy of their statements, the intended message was provided, and to ensure that I had accurately captured each participant's responses. This type of transcript review is part of the member-checking process to ensure rigorous qualitative study results (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

Participants were asked to respond to me within 72 hours if they felt the transcript was accurate and their perceptions were captured. Most participants responded to the transcript review within 24 hours. There were no changes made to the transcripts. Data collection concluded on December 20, 2022, after completing the member-checking process. All data collected for this study was electronically stored in an mp4 format. I managed participant data confidentiality as outlined in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

After completing the member-checking process for transcribed data with all the participants, I started the data analysis process. Saldaña (2016) identified the coding process as a system for analyzing participants' stories. Coding was conducted by analyzing interview transcripts for common groupings of words, phrases, or ideas to create themes. Identified themes were addressed per this study's research question and purpose. I used NVivo 12 coding software to identify frequent keywords that developed

categories. I then analyzed the categories and determined appropriate themes (Patton, 2015). These themes were applied to address this study's over-arching research question and purpose (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). The raw data transcribed and confirmed through the member-checking process presented a detailed account of the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers.

Case study research involves an in-depth, holistic investigation within the scope of the study, including industry-related data not anticipated by the literature (Yin, 2018). With the participants being the case's embedded units, this single case study design provided detailed information on the unexplored area of perceptions of experienced women managers and how they remain resilient in their careers. Because the inductive approach is used in the qualitative case studies within the management and leadership area to extend theory and allow themes to emerge from data (Halkias & Neubert, 2020), I used the inductive approach as part of my analysis strategy for themes to emerge from the raw data. Inductive analysis entails coding the data without manipulating the data to fit into a preexisting coding frame or my preconceptions. Thematic analysis is considered data-driven when the codes are generated inductively (Braun et al., 2019).

In this study, I completed all the steps related to data collection, review, and analysis. NVivo 12 does not create categories or codes; therefore, I created the codes and identified which information is applicable in addressing the research question. Additionally, I was responsible for ensuring that the data analyzed was free of bias and accurately reflected the outcomes related to the purpose of this study.

The next step was to interpret the data analyzed, which involved comparing themes from the data analysis generated through multiple sources (interviews, field notes, and archival data) and comparing those findings with the theoretical propositions from the literature review. Yin (2018) noted that the strength of the case study researcher lies in generalizing the theoretical propositions established from the literature. To this end, this study is framed by Shafique et al.'s (2019) study *Antecedents of Women Managers Resilience*. The alignment of this conceptual framework to the overall findings from case study research was used as a lens to explain the interpretation of the study results.

For case study research, data analysis requires a rigorous approach when applying the five analytical techniques of pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2018). I applied Yin's pattern-matching logic that addresses my case study's "what." Pattern matching occurs when the predicted pattern is compared with the empirical pattern. In this study and according to Yin's procedure for pattern matching, I compared the empirically based pattern with the predicted pattern, examined the extent of the matching, offered rival explanations where necessary, interpreted the results, and came to a conclusion. I searched for discrepant cases to determine their influence on the study's final results. No discrepant cases were found in my study's sample.

The four coding categories are based on the conceptual framework, and the 12 themes gleaned from the thematic analysis using Yin's pattern-matching logic are shown in the hierarchal coding frame below, each theme belonging to its corresponding coding category.

Coding: *Women's entry into management roles*

Themes: 1) Life circumstances for entering a management role, 2) early

management experiences, 3) remaining in management through resiliency.

Coding: *Gendered biases experiences by women managers*

Themes: 1) verbal harassment, 2) patriarchal mentalities, 3) higher level of

exclusion for women of color

Coding: *Women's strategies for resiliency in a management role*

Themes: 1) Continuous education and professional development, 2) persevere in

the face of challenges, 3) be a team leader by example

Coding: *Closing the gendered gap in management roles*

Themes: 1) More women mentors are needed, 2) resilience and adaptability to be

accepted as a leader, 3) seek support and leadership education from professional

women's groups

The four conceptual coding categories are grounded in the study's conceptual

framework. Shafique et al. (2019) used a conceptual framework of women managers'

resilience consisting of three significant areas: gendered biases, experiences of women

managers, and the perceptions of women managers on resilience. Shafique et al. (2019)

identified a relationship between resilience, career advancement, and breaking the glass

ceiling.

This empirical investigation aimed to advance research and address a literature

gap exploring resilience among female managers. While current studies focus on why

there are disparities between men and women in leadership roles, there is a lack of

literature on strategies to maintain women in leadership roles. All women have a potential for resilience and that they have a personal capability to determine the depth of resilience that is developed (Shafique et al., 2019). The following antecedents were identified as having a direct impact on resiliency for women managers: career adaptability, work environment engagement, and HRM interventions that are positive (Shafique et al., 2019). Answering the study's research question extends theoretical knowledge within the conceptual framework with an emphasis on the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers.

Table 2 is a visual representation of data analysis results derived from the data analysis process. These examples are arranged according to coding categories and subthemes and are supported by direct quotations and excerpts from the participants' narratives.

Table 2.

Coding and Theme Examples

Participant	Interview excerpt	Coding category	Theme
Participant 9	"My experience moving into the management role was and still is very difficult."	*Women's entry into management roles*	1) Life circumstances for entering a management role, 2) early management experiences, 3) remaining in management through resiliency.

Participant 1	"I was working in the recruiting industry and specifically had applied for a position that was more computer technology oriented. The individual who hired me clearly stated, we predominantly hire males for these roles."		
Participant 3	"That they were considering bringing someone else in from the outside to take over that position and that person ended up being a Caucasian white woman who had been at the agency left and come back. But I didn't even get an opportunity to apply interview. I was just told right off the bat, no."	*Gendered biases experiences by women managers*	1) verbal harassment, 2) patriarchal mentalities, 3) higher level of exclusion for women of color
Participant 5	"I felt, you know, a lot of times I would get the sweetheart, or don't worry your pretty head about this. Especially when I became a manager and started asking questions."		
Participant 8	"I had to work twice as hard as others while almost acting like the environment I was in was perfect. I also would look to other managers that were female, our city had a quarterly type of leadership meeting for	*Women's strategies for resiliency in a management role*	1) Continuous education and professional development, 2) persevere in the face of challenges, 3) be a team leader by example

managers in medical fields."

Participant 2	"By doing that, I have to be the most to be educated, have to have all those tools in my toolbox to continue to do that. And that's why I'm continuing my education. There's always something else to learn."		
Participant 1	"You hear a lot about the importance of mentoring, and I think that historically males have had greater access to mentors in senior leadership roles. I think that organizations could benefit by making sure that females had that the same access to female leaders within an organization."	*Closing the gendered gap in management roles*	1) More women mentors are needed, 2) resilience and adaptability to be accepted as a leader, 3) seek support and leadership education from professional women's groups
Participant 7	"But you know, kind of focusing on when you're in the business, you're handling the business. But I also think that I kind of look to other leaders for inspiration. Maybe not even within my company."		

Evidence of Trustworthiness

When conducting this study, I maintained trustworthiness throughout the research

and data collection process. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that trustworthiness involves

four equal key areas: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I maintained trustworthiness for this study by using the online meeting platform Zoom, which allowed me to record the interviews and obtain an audio file for transcription. I then used a third-party online transcription service, Temi, to produce each interview transcript. I reviewed the transcripts to ensure that accurate interview transcription occurred.

Credibility

After I collected the data, the data was stored on a secured shared drive on my computer to maintain the study's integrity. Consent forms for this study were received by email from all nine participants. I was able to save the emails in the secured shared drive on my computer. Any observation notes I took were secured in a locked office or on a secured shared drive on my computer. All observation notes did not contain the personal information of participants to help ensure confidentiality. Transcripts of interviews were sent to the participant for review for accuracy and intent to ensure further transparency and trustworthiness. Credibility is to what extent the research is truthful (Mills et al., 2010). Participants provided their approval of the transcript and desire to continue or if they wanted out opt-out of the study. All nine participants confirmed their transcript's accuracy and approval to be included in the study. This process is referred to as member checks. Member checks ensured that the data I collected from participants was relevant and aligned with the purpose of this study (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Transferability

A researcher ensures the transferability of their study by providing research capable of being applied to other studies (Yin, 2018). The study's single-case study design contributed to transferability by collecting data from nine participants with unique stories of their experiences. Transferability was further obtained by verifying that all nine participants had at least five years of management experience through a review of their professional social media profiles on LinkedIn. I also asked questions that allowed the participants to provide the number of years in a management role, their professional role titles, and experiences related to the purpose of this study.

I further ensured transferability by using thick descriptions. Thick descriptions are an established practice researchers use in qualitative empirical approaches (Stokes et al., 2019). The concept of 'thick description' was first introduced by philosopher Ryle (2009) in qualitative data. I used thick description to describe the attention to contextual details by observing and interpreting the social meaning behind the research (Mills et al., 2010). In qualitative research, anthropologist Geertz (1973) first used thick descriptions to investigate social practices as early as 1979. Mills et al. (2010) also related the concepts of thick description in case study research. I explored the phenomenon in depth, focusing on details, context, thoughts, and relational webs in spoken and non-spoken communication. I achieved transferability in this study by using the concept of thick description throughout the study.

Dependability

Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that dependability is the capability of other researchers to duplicate the study and achieve consistency with findings. Yin (2018) also stated that dependability is determined when the study results are consistent, relatable, and repeatable. I utilized audio recordings during interviews via Zoom's integrated recording capabilities. This allowed transcription to be conducted using Temi by uploading audio recording files. Once transcribed, I had the participants confirm that their statements were accurate and true, further contributing to the dependability of this study. I also maintain field notes throughout each interview to provide an audit trail that could be followed.

Denzin (1970; 2009) wrote that there continues to be a consensus among methodologists on the usefulness of the four types of triangulation: (a) data triangulation; (b) investigator triangulation; (c) theory triangulation; and (d) methodological or method. I used data triangulation to ensure dependability in this study further. Data triangulation is accomplished when consistent or duplicated findings are presented through a convergence of data from multiple sources (Stark, 2006; Yin, 2018). I also used methodological triangulation to triangulate data obtained from audio-recorded interviews via the online conference software, Zoom, email responses from participants, field observation notes I took, and the data I obtained from archives. The methodical triangulation was appropriate for this study due to the extensive literature review, in-depth semistructured participant interviews, and field observation notes that I used to collect data.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, two goals need to be verified: understanding a phenomenon from the participant's perspectives and understanding the experiences and meanings provided by participants (Given, 2008).) A study's confirmability depends on the researcher's capabilities to remain neutral throughout the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I remained neutral throughout this study by using an approved interview guide that removed biases from the questions for participants. Further, I utilized an IRB that ensured the questions in the interview guide were ethically acceptable and not misleading. Lastly, I used member checking to ensure that the information I reported was accurate and reflected what the participants wanted to convey during their interviews.

<div align="center">

Study Results

</div>

I developed the research question for this study based on the extant theoretical and applied literature, the research problem, and the qualitative, single case study with embedded units design. The purpose of this qualitative, single case study with embedded units is to explore the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers. The central research question for this single case study with embedded units was: What are the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level in terms of how they remained resilient throughout their careers?

Interview questions were grounded in the conceptual framework and extant literature focusing on various challenges women managers face and how resilience may buffer those obstacles. Resilience among women managers is a significant factor in

increasing the number of women in managerial positions (Shafique et al., 2019). Little research exists to establish the voices of women managers on what strategies they perceive as effective to remain resilient in management roles. My study's results reflect participants' experiences and inform leaders on how and why organizations can work on increasing the number of women in leadership positions (see Gipson et al., 2017). Participant responses were categorized into the following 12 themes based on the coding and analysis results.

Life Circumstances for Entering a Management Role

This theme references the experiences and circumstances that interposed a woman's drive to move into management roles. The limited number of women represented in leadership positions creates the need to be resilient (Shafique et al., 2019), and that resilience is a capability that can be developed and enhanced (Bardoel et al., 2014). Through experience, women develop the resilience to continue conquering their obstacles. Participants discussed their personal experiences and the individual circumstances that gave them internal motivation to move into management roles.

P2 said: "So the natural progression was to go into management. I did face there what I believe was a gender bias there. You know, I had been there."

P4 said:

I think for me it's been remembering why I'm doing what I'm doing. And, you know, for me, like money is great, but I'm not in my job for money. There has to be a connection to purpose and having a passion for what I do. And so as long as I know that I am helping others, then it's, it's easier for me to persist through it.

P9 said, "Thinking back, I would have to say, being patient and my ability to want to prove that I could handle the position and that the executives did not make a mistake in putting me in the position."

Early Management Experiences

This theme refers to women's experiences in their earlier management roles that helped develop their leadership strategies. Women who push to excel in their organizations by moving into higher leadership roles face challenges that further develop inner strength and resilient behaviors (Shafique et al., 2019). Specifically, female leaders experience negative assumptions from their peers, subordinates, and other executives (Kubu, 2018). Participants discussed their personal experiences and events that helped shape individual leadership strategies.

P1 said, "Yeah, I think one of the strategies that helped me in my very first management position was to really focus my energies and my individual performance to lead by example."

P9 said:

We have to fight and constantly prove ourselves to the predominantly male workforce. Going those extra miles is something that we have to keep in mind at all times and continue to do what we can to get to the level men are already in. When men are sleep or enjoying life, we as businesswomen will be up and doing what we must to rise higher.

P8 said:

You know it was like as long as I went along with what was said then I was

accepted or like at least acknowledged. Once I had my first kid there was like a

shift in what I experienced. Well, it was like it was assumed I could not manage

because I would be only thinking of my baby or like always needing to leave to

care for him. Then it became sort of like I was not a boy – I did not have a penis

so I could not be included in the inner circle of management.

Remaining in Management Through Resiliency

This theme refers to women's ability to overcome and persist through their

careers in management. Resilience is the ability to persevere and overcome in the face of

adversity. Smith and Suby-Long (2019) found that women had courage and resilience

when reviewing their stories relating to their leadership, career, and decision-making in

leadership. Resilience is a characteristic that can play an integral part in ascending to

leadership roles and maintaining those roles. Participants discussed strategies that helped

them persist within their roles in the face of challenges.

P1 said:

So, I was very fortunate early on in my career I worked in the recruiting industry

and I worked for a company that had a leadership development program. Because

I was a top producer as an individual performer, I was selected to be part of that if

I wanted to, which I did to be part of the leadership development program.

P8 said:

I do think having a mentor type person who empathizes with the experiences

helps. I also think that by speaking up and standing my ground would cause the

males to pay attention. I felt like I had to operate like they did but find my own approach at the same time. It was a hard thing to accomplish.

Verbal Harassment

This theme refers to the type of harassment women experience regarding their performance, capabilities, and skills. Within all areas and levels of the workforce, women experience biases based on gender. These biases vastly make up the basis of the glass ceiling phenomenon (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). Unique challenges are presented when women face biases or criticism based on gender. Participants discussed their experiences with biases, discrimination, or gendered harassment.

P5 said:

This is someone who has generally harassed me in the past and last week he was yelling at me, like screaming at me. So, I was trying to deflect it. I had to yell back. He was physically, physically on the, like, we're not face-to-face. Right. This is all, you know, over teams. I could physically see him like move back in his chair and he immediately apologized.

P7 said:

I had issues where we actually had to terminate somebody for getting in my face and telling me he wasn't gonna listen to a little girl. But it's, you know, sometimes you have to just keep your cool and let HR and policies do their job in those cases and, you know, just kind of stay true to you.

Patriarchal Mentalities

This theme refers to a male-dominated mentality that contributes to the biases and exclusionary practices that women experience. Eagly and Karau (2002) stated that gender is directly tied to relevancy due to the assumptions perceived based on gender. Women are considered feminine and less assertive, perceived as not strong enough to be in a leadership role where confrontation can occur. Therefore, women are often passed over for promotion into management roles, and if given a management role, they are not given great evaluations of their capabilities. Participants discussed their experience in management or moving into management, surrounding male-dominated mentalities.

P2 said:

When it came for one of us to be promo for an open position for an assistant manager, I got passed over, actually because I had, was working with a bartender who was buddies with the gm, right? So, I had, my daughter was very little. I couldn't go out after hours, and they would go out partying. And so he promoted his buddy.

P1 said: So I am thinking back to the role I had as a director, and even though you had asked about whether or not I had experienced gender bias in going into some of the management roles I actually felt that in my director role because I was reporting into leadership that was male-based leadership I do feel that there was some bias there that I confronted.

P8 said:

I was often called the young one or like sweetheart or honey. You know it was

like as long as I went along with what was said, then I was accepted or like at

least acknowledged. Once I had my first kid there was like a shift in what I

experienced. I was being shamed for needing to pump (breastmilk), or for

thinking too much like a woman.

Higher Level of Exclusion for Women of Color

This theme refers to the gendered exclusionary practices that women experience

and how these increases for women of color. Gendered biases occur for women in the

workforce, from performance reviews, promotions, lack of acknowledgment, or

perceived limitations because of their gender. Specifically, female leaders experience

negative assumptions from their peers, subordinates, and other executives (Kubu, 2018).

Participants discussed their experiences with being a woman of color as they related to

biases in management.

P4 said:

However, when I ask if I would be considered to be placed into that role, I was

told no. And that they were considering bringing someone else in from the outside

to take over that position and that person ended up being a Caucasian white

woman who had been at the agency left and come back. But I didn't even get an

opportunity to apply interview. I was just told right off the bat, no.

P3 said:

Looking from 97 until that 2015 time span there were, I'm trying to count on the

top of my head, maybe 10, five to 10 division directors of which one was an

African-American male. And then in 2013 they added an African American

female. They both were appointed by someone else. And then there really wasn't

anywhere else for us to go, so we kind of met that ceiling.

Continuous Education and Professional Development

This theme refers to the strategies women managers found beneficial in resilience.

Like mentoring, when organizations offer supportive coaching, women learn to navigate

challenging times by building confidence and self-belief (Shafique et al., 2019). Women

participating in resilience training learn interventions to improve mental health,

psychosocial functioning, and subjective well-being (Shafique et al., 2019). Participants

discussed strategies they found useful in continuing within their management roles.

P1 said:

Because I was a top producer as an individual performer, I was selected to be part

of that if I wanted to, which I did to be part of the leadership development

program. And that was an intense training program for a management role. So

once I completed that program, I actually went into more of a supervisory role,

working side by side with a manager.

P9 said, "There were many things that helped me work hard to stay relevant and

needed. Seeking out professional development on topics and speaking to a mentor

was a big help."

P4 said:

I think like coaching opportunities, mentoring women providing them with the

next opportunity to, you know to like create their career path and experiences like

there's some type of professional development or training that they want to, you know, attend to better their skills, allow it.

Persevere in the Face of Challenges

This theme refers to the ability of women managers to persist with their roles, challenges, and goals as they experience obstacles and challenges. Enabling a person to adapt to stressful situations, survive, and overcome present and future challenges is a benefit of resilience (Goyal et al., 2021). Further, resilience can be learned as women discover how to handle, tolerate, or escape stressful and challenging situations when they present (Goyal et al. (2017). Participants discussed how they persevered in their careers to overcome biases, gender exclusion, and other obstacles.

P8 said, "We have to fight and constantly prove ourselves to the predominantly male workforce."

P2 said:

It may not be what you want, but I think I may be jumping ahead, but from my personal life, I think I've faced a lot of adversity and, you know, I'm still standing. And so I've been through some really crappy things, but it could always be worse. And I think it's just your outlook on, on how you handle it. But to me, it means overcoming adversity.

P6 said:

You know, they knew this would happen, they could see it coming, they didn't do anything to, to prevent it or simply to support me or even simply to warn me. So

yeah, that was, but not nothing that I couldn't overtake. I mean, I'm not 15 years

old. I mean, you can sense things quite fast and you find your way around it.

Be a Team Leader by Example

This theme refers to women connecting with their counterparts through modeling

behaviors. Women who lead with traits assumed to be masculine (assertive, dominant)

are seen as less desirable as these behaviors stray from socially assumed female attributes

(Eagly & Karau, 2002). Mediocre performance reviews are perpetuated further by these

non-conforming behaviors resulting in demotions or a lack of promotion or (y & Carli,

2003). Participants discussed their effectiveness in working and modeling the same team

behaviors.

P5 said:

I think in addition to communication skills, it's about accurately assessing the

strengths and weaknesses of the team that you're managing. And it's the

confidence to insert yourself in the process in a way that is both supportive and

accomplishes whatever the mission is that you're trying to accomplish.

P7 said:

Because there's some things I physically couldn't do, but anything I was

physically able to do, I would jump in and work side by side with them because

that's kind of what that store needed. And kind of help show them like I wasn't I

wasn't gonna be that manager who sat in the office. I was gonna be the manager

who was out supporting them. And not afraid to get my hands dirty. Literally,

literally and figuratively.

P6 said:

I mean, I really wanted to add value probably that's my problem. I really want to, to make a difference. I want people to appreciate me to, you know I have lots of ideas and I want try to implement them and I need to receive the support for that and also to make things happening.

More Women Mentors are Needed

This theme references the benefits of women having mentors within organizations that positively affect resilience within management roles. "Formed on a relationship, the mentee and mentor work together to improve skills to improve the mentees' options for advancement. The mentorship was found to enhance the skills of women leaders and increase job opportunities in executive roles (Khalid et al., 2017). As skills increase, there can be an argument that confidence within oneself does. Mentors attempt to assist their mentees in developing confidence in their understanding of rules within an organization to assist in advancement (Helms et al., 2016). Participants shared their perception of value with organizations having mentors available to them.

P4 said:

I think pairing them with mentors is gonna be key women that I don't say look like them, and not even necessarily, but with other women that have like similar experiences that have maybe, you know, inspired, they are aware they are wanting to. So, providing those mentoring and coaching situations.

P3 said: One of the things is definitely, you know, mentorship in coaching you don't see a lot of that when you get to that kind of managerial leadership level. It's

kind of almost like it's an assumption that you are supposed to have it all or know

it all or be able to understand it all.

P1 said: Yeah. I, you hear a lot about the importance of mentoring, and I think

that historically males have had greater access to mentors in senior leadership

roles. And I think that organizations could benefit by making sure that females

had that same access to female leaders within an organization.

Resilience and Adaptability to be Accepted as a Leader

This refers to women in management roles being adaptable when leading teams.

As women continue their careers, they adapt and create new strategies depending on the

situations they have experienced. Women are constantly revolutionizing their unique

strategies to learn the most effective manner for dealing with stressors (Goyal et al.,

2021). They support statements that resilience is dynamic and an ongoing evolution for

individuals. Participants discussed their strategies for gaining acceptance as a leader.

P8 said:

I also would reflect on my day or situations and find a way that like sort of would

allow me to process and find alternatives or improvement. Again, bouncing off

others helped or just knowing that with persistence I could move up since there

was another female in that role somewhere.

P2 said:

I would say we've really had, I've really had to adapt and overcome the bias that

there was from upper leadership regarding even the necessity. They didn't see the

value or have the necessity of having the video production team. So I've really

had to fight to get certain software to get budget for equipment that they would need. So, you know, I just had to keep at it.

Seek Support and Leadership Education from Professional Women's Groups

This theme references the strategy women find necessary to maintain resiliency effectiveness. Mentorship for women is an essential facet in cultivating employees with high potential and enables women to learn valuable information not otherwise accessible (Valerio, 2018). In addition to knowledge transfer, the connection to a mentor creates opportunities for forming new connections. Mentoring enables women to widen their network and learn valuable perspectives from mentors (Valerio, 2018).

P9 said:

Organizations should continue to train and hire women in roles of leadership. Give women the same opportunities that they give to men. Provide them the ability to advance because we will work harder to ensure that the company grows and succeeds. Be open to change because women can envision systems, policies, and processes that men haven't even considered.

P8 said, "I also would look to other managers that were female, our city had a quarterly type leadership meeting for managers in medical fields. Most times it was just women who attended even though it was not just for them."

P7 said:

Right. well part of it is I was also fortunate enough in my previous role they actually had a woman in leadership conference every other year. So we were able to kind of focus on self-care while also not letting that overcome like overrun

your life too cuz there's such a thing as too much self-care, which is weird, I know.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented thematic analysis results involving nine participants in this single case study with embedded units. I then synthesized results to address the study's primary research question. Four categories and 12 themes were identified based on the conceptual framework of Shafique et al. (2019). Thematic analysis provided rich data involving participants' personal experiences. The four codes that emerged were: (a) women's entry into management roles, (b) gendered biased experiences by women managers, (c) women's strategies for resiliency in management role, and (d) closing the gendered gap in management roles.

The 12 themes that were identified after completing data analysis were: life circumstances for entering a management role, early management experiences, remaining in management through resiliency, verbal harassment, patriarchal mentalities, higher level of exclusion for women of color, continuous education and professional development, persevere in the face of challenges, (i) be a team leader by example, (j) more women mentors are needed, (k) resilience and adaptability to be accepted as a leader, and (l) seek support and leadership education from professional women's groups.

Single case study results were systematically analyzed and interpreted in the context of Shafique et al.'s framework to describe perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience in management in terms of how they remained resilient throughout their careers. The study's trustworthiness was maintained using a

methodology grounded in a comprehensive literature review. In Chapter 5, I present

interpretations of findings, describe the study's limitations, and provide recommendations

for future research. Additionally, I discuss implications for social change, theory, and

practice. Last, I include a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units is to explore perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level in terms of how they remain resilient throughout their careers. This topic remains poorly understood; therefore, this exploratory study involved addressing a literature gap. I used eight semi-structured interview questions to collect experiences of participants. Shafique et al. (2019) stated that a literature gap exists on the resiliency experiences of women managers.

To answer the study's central research question, I used qualitative data collected from multiple sources of evidence, including interviews, field notes, and archival data (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative interviews allow the researcher to elaborate further so that unexpected or divergent data may emerge (Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Stake, 2010). I used methodical triangulation to triangulate data obtained from audio-recorded interviews via Zoom, email responses, field observation notes, and data I obtained from archives. The methodical triangulation was appropriate for this study due to the extensive literature review, in-depth semistructured participant interviews, and field observation notes that I used to collect data.

Using a qualitative single case study design with an embedded units approach allowed me to give address resilience strategies in supervisory or leadership positions. Shafique et al.'s (2019) conceptual framework of explanatory factors in women managers' resilience was the framework that I used to interpret and explain this topic. Using a single case study with embedded units design was beneficial in this study

because of the flexibility it gave me to contribute original qualitative data to Shafique's

conceptual framework that emerges from recognizing patterns in collected data and

logical arguments that underpin them (see Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Stake, 2008).

After each participant completed the transcript review process, I started the data

analysis process using recommendations by Saldaña (2016) on the descriptive coding

methods, a commonly used data analysis process for novice qualitative researchers.

Coding was conducted by analyzing interview transcripts for common groupings of

words, phrases, and ideas to create themes (see Patton, 2015). These themes were applied

to address this study's overarching research question and purpose (see Halkias &

Neubert, 2020). Thematic analysis was completed using Yin's pattern-matching for

primary data via face-to-face interviews with nine participants, which revealed the

following 12 themes: life circumstances for entering a management role, early

management experiences, remaining in management through resiliency, verbal

harassment, patriarchal mentalities, higher level of exclusion for women of color,

continuous education and professional development, perseverance in the face of

challenges, team leadership by example, need for more women mentors, resilience and

adaptability to be accepted as a leader, and support and leadership education from

professional women's groups.

Interpretation of Findings

Findings of this single case study with embedded units confirmed or extended

current knowledge involving management, leadership, and resiliency literature, with each

case producing data aligned with Shafique's (2019) conceptual framework that informed

the development of my study's literature review. In this section, I present and review study findings in the context of four coding categories that emerged from thematic analysis: (a) women's entry into management roles, (b) gendered biased experiences by women managers, (c) women's strategies for resiliency in management roles, and (d) closing the gender gap in management roles. I compare these four categories with relevant concepts and extant literature presented in Chapter 2.

In this section, I indicate evidence to support how the study's findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend existing knowledge regarding the central topic of my study. This process of analyzing and presenting data evidence for theory extension in a single case study design demonstrates that combining deduction with induction with flexible pattern-matching logic (Yin, 2018) is well suited for exploration and theory development (Bouncken et al., 2021). Extension studies, such as this single case study with embedded units, provide replication evidence by offering new knowledge and possible directions for future research and professional practice strategies (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Women's Entry into Management Roles

Women who push to excel in their organizations by moving into higher leadership roles face challenges that require further developing inner strength and resilient behaviors. Women develop inner strength by overcoming barriers and working harder and smarter as they progress into leadership roles (Shafique et al., 2019). My study results confirmed that despite internal motivators for moving into higher leadership roles, women must continue developing resilience as they overcome challenges. Participants said internal motivations drove their desires to move into management roles, and

challenges required strategies to overcome them. They also confirmed that there was a need to develop unique strategies to demonstrate their abilities to manage. Shafique et al. (2019) said female leaders develop resilience through experiences, and by further developing resilience, this leads to improved attrition rates. Study results extend knowledge based on Shafique et al.'s (2019) work on regarding how qualitative research can lead to further insights regarding unique strategies women develop when moving into management roles.

Gender Bias Experiences of Women Managers

Gender biases occur to women in the workforce in terms of performance reviews, promotions, lack of acknowledgment, and perceived limitations because of their gender. Specifically, female leaders are characterized by negative assumptions from their peers, subordinates, and other executives (Kubu, 2018). My study results confirmed that biases exist for women in management roles in terms of gendered assumptions, patriarchal mentalities, and enhanced biases among women of color. Participants confirmed they experienced verbal abuse, boys club mentalities, and exclusion based on skin color and gender while in management positions.

Further, study participants confirmed that with their ability to pivot and adapt during their careers, they could persist in management. This study aligns with Shafique et al.'s (2019) conclusions that adapting to their career positively influences organizational resilience. The study results extend knowledge based on Shafique et al.'s (2019) works on how qualitative research done in my study can confirm that women managers are

more susceptible to biases in the workplace. Further, they are overcoming the adversity they encounter and building resilience.

Women's Strategies for Resiliency in Management Role

Shafique et al. (2019) interactive engagement with work environments, career adaptability, positive HRM interventions, and personal resilience traits are the core antecedents of women managers' resilience. My study results confirmed that women use professional development, ongoing education, mentorship, and support from professional networking groups as strategies to remain resilient. Participants confirmed benefits due to mentorship, leadership development training, and professional development, which contributes to enhancing resiliency within management roles. Furthermore, participants said continuing education and being a part of professional networking groups proved helpful in terms of developing strategies for building personal skills involving resilience.

The study aligns with Shafique et al.'s (2019) conclusions that engagement with work environments positively influences women managers' resilience. Shafique et al. (2019) defined positive engagement with work environments as having opportunities to engage with professional development opportunities, receive mentorship, and be given training specific to management roles. The study results extend knowledge based on Shafique et al.'s (2019) works on how qualitative research done in this study showed that women who participate in developing personal strategies remain resilient within their careers.

Closing the Gendered Gap in Management Roles

Gendered management gaps remain globally, with resilience among female managers contributing to breaking the glass ceiling (Shafique et al., 2019). My study results confirmed that women who develop strategies for overcoming obstacles would continue to enhance their career resiliency. Study participants confirmed that they could adapt to the challenges presented and persevere when they participated in developing strategies. Shafique et al. (2019) concluded by increasing the resiliency capabilities of women managers, organizations can continue to close the gender gap by retaining their women managers and promoting more women into leadership roles.

Shafique et al. (2019) concluded without providing insights into how women remain resilient, the disparity between men and women in management roles will continue. Shafique et al. claimed resilience among women managers is a positive influence on breaking the glass ceiling within organizations. Shafique et al. argued through developing valuable strategies and skills, women managers create an inner strength to continue to overcome barriers and work harder to progress through their careers.

Limitations of the Study

I conducted this research study with the expectation of some limitations. Yin (2018) defined limitations as weaknesses or shortcomings related to the study design, the researcher's skill, or participant engagement. One potential limitation of this study was the difficulty in recruiting participants. There would not have been enough rich data to contribute to a meaningful conclusion with too few participants.

Stake (2010) identified the number of participants needed in a case study between five and 10. I utilized my connections on LinkedIn's professional networking site to identify possible participants who met the study criteria. I also asked participants to recommend another person they thought met the study's criteria. The use of purposeful snowball sampling allowed for the recruitment of participants through word of mouth and recommendations from other participants, which allowed the attainment of the nine study participants in this qualitative single case study with embedded units. The data reached a saturation point, in which no new information was discovered, negating the need to continue recruiting more participants.

Another potential limitation of this study was the study's primary focus on female leaders' resiliency in organizational management. There were no male participants; all participants were female. Removing all male perspectives was necessary as the study's purpose was to perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remained resilient throughout their careers. Study participants were recruited based on the inclusion criteria: identity as a woman, being in a management role for at least five years and being over 18. This allowed for the collection of rich data from the female participants. Future studies could incorporate male insights to provide a different perspective on how female managers remain resilient in their roles through the lens of their male peers. Limitations to financial funding for the study were also considered. The study did not include any financial incentives for participants to thank them for dedicating time to the study. I used recruiting options using personal workplace connections for referrals, study participant referrals, and the professional

networking site, LinkedIn as alternatives to ensure an adequate number of participants were obtained.

Lastly, a potential limitation was my skill level in two areas: conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews with participants and completing data analysis. These limitations were essential considerations when conducting this research study. Saldaña (2016) a new researcher would not utilize the first several interviews conducted in most instances due to them not being sufficient or consistent in-process, and therefore they would be considered practice interviews. Saldaña (2016) also identified the need to analyze the first several interviews to determine the effectiveness of the research study. Using a field study allowed for validating both the interview guide and polished interview techniques to obtain the data needed for this study accurately.

Recommendations

This study focuses on extending knowledge of Shafique et al.'s (2019) study on the *Antecedents of Women Managers' Resilience.* This study furthers the research by researching the perceptions of female managers with at least five years of experience on their strategies to remain resilient in their careers. I took notes during the data collection and maintained close communication with all participants to address any further questions they may have had. Continuous documentation was maintained through every study process to provide more concrete and grounded recommendations. The glass ceiling phenomenon is studied by increasing the number of women in leadership roles through promotion and hiring with little knowledge of retention and furthering resilience (Shafique et al., 2019).

Conceptual models and frameworks developed in resilience literature do not specify the application of strategies that women commandeer to maintain their managerial roles within organizations. This literature gap limits a deeper understanding and knowledge of resilience strategies to maintain women in leadership roles and the impact these strategies create to close the gender gap further, thus furthering progression through the glass ceiling (Rincón et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2016). Considering that this study is complete, the question remains of how organizations may use the information to support the resilience strategies of women managers. Knowledge gained on effective strategies that women use to maintain resilience is critical in increasing women in management roles (Samuelson et al., 2019; Shafique et al., 2019).

Recommendations For Professional Practice

After interviewing the participants, there was evidence that women in management roles experience challenges with biases, gendered assumptions, patriarchal mentalities, and a lack of support from their organizations and managers when they are in leadership roles. In many shared experiences, the women expressed the need to find support and professional development and continue their education without assistance from their organization. Carbajal (2018) said women provide a crucial system of support to other women to empower them to accel into leadership roles. In two interviews from the study, participants explained scenarios in which they benefitted from gaining support and advice from other women's peers in leadership roles.

Shafique et al. (2019) identified professional development opportunities through the employer, professional networking groups, and education as an antecedent to enable

resilience learning for women. Many participants reported being better equipped to push through challenges they were experiencing by connecting with other women leaders through professional networking groups or mentorship. One participant reported that the availability of a leadership development program provided by her employer aided her in promoting managerial roles within the organization.

Organizations could benefit from having formal mentoring opportunities for women by other female leaders (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). The ability to connect with a mentor who has experienced, or is likely still experiencing, gendered bias assumption and exclusion at the hands of their male counterparts can prove highly beneficial in enabling other women to stay resilient in their roles. Two participants reported being referred to as sweetheart, young one, or honey and feeling repercussions for not attending after-work events with the men. Seven of the nine participants mentioned the emotional toll that would have on their confidence and that by connecting with other female mentors, they could build strategies to combat those biases. Organizations benefit through the skills and unique leadership attributes of female managers, and through the retention of those leaders, the organization can be a model of diversity and social change (Chisholm-Burns, 2017; Shafique et al., 2019).

As suggested by interviews, organizations can further support resiliency by providing mentorship, professional development, and access to educational opportunities. The mentoring process is a deep interpersonal connection that allows one to form a relationship through working together to improve skills and opportunities for advancement (Khalid et al., 2017). Women who participated in a woman-only mentorship

program felt inspired and more confident in their abilities as a professional (Dashper, 2019). Professional development plays a significant role in building resilience among women leaders. Shafique et al. (2019) concluded in their study that professional development enables women to develop a deeper understanding of their roles, the organization's needs, and the capabilities of their application of skills.

Recommendations For Future Research

The themes that reoccurred during participant interviews suggested that women leaders experience biases when getting promoted, resulting in themselves working harder and achieving higher standards than their male counterparts. Strategies that women managers found useful were often independently procured. Mentorship was a reoccurring theme that women managers found supported their ability to increase resilience. Further research could provide additional case studies expanding on formal and informal mentorship relationships and how they contribute to resilience among women leaders.

During interviews with participants, it was discovered that professional development benefited women managers in their efforts to improve their capabilities and contributed to their drive to persist through negative experiences. Professional development allows managers to learn new knowledge, network with peers, and improve skills and capabilities (Shafique et al., 2019). Participants acknowledged that having professional development provided by their employer created a sense of being valued and accepted. Further research could shed light on the value of employer-sponsored professional development and its influence in building resilience and deepening a personal commitment to the organization for women managers.

Participants expressed their experiences with gendered biases and lack of respect in their roles from their male supervisors and peers during interviews. Stokes et al. (2019) presented data that confirmed that women still experience a lack of acceptance and respect for their abilities once they are in management roles. Participants provided examples linked to patriarchal mentalities, exclusionary practices, and disvalued contributions. Busaibe et al.'s (2017) study concluded that women often add more value and contribute more to organizations than male managers. Further case study research could provide a deeper understanding of the systematic influence of positive mentorship in overcoming negative experiences related to ongoing biases.

Implications

Implications for Positive Social Change

Social pressures to increase diversity within organizations influence organizations to ensure they are seen as diverse. Multicultural organizations are still feeling the need to expand further diversity surrounding gender. Karim et al. (2019) presented findings that organizations continue to have trouble reaching these goals even with a diverse workforce. The findings of this study contribute to the knowledge of strategies that women managers use to remain resilient in their careers. Additionally, this knowledge gained could allow organizations to adopt practices that support the needs of their female managers allowing the company to retain their talent. Combining the findings of this study with the existing knowledge base on breaking the glass ceiling can create a positive social change by further increasing the number of women managers within the workforce.

Current studies show a positive sign toward breaking the glass ceiling through women developing strategies (Shafique et al.,2019). Resilience is also significant in terms of supporting women in furthering their progression through leadership roles (Shafique et al., 2019). Organizational leaders who learn more about the strategies women leaders use to remain resilient can further promote positive social change through promoting environments that positively support the advancement and retention of female managers.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Globally, progress has been made in increasing the overall percentage of women in leadership roles. According to Pew Research Center (2021), women holding CEO positions in fortune 500 companies and those in senior board positions have increased. The disparity between men and women in leadership is still present despite years of research on creating solutions to hire more women into these roles, and meeting my study's purpose offered strategies that organizations can capitalize on, furthering the growth of women in managerial roles.

This case study focused on retaining women in management by understanding successful strategies women have used to remain resilient in their careers. Additionally, the study highlighted valuable areas of focus that organizations can implement to further foster resilience among their women managers. Further, by embracing these strategies, organizations can demonstrate to all women employees that they are supported, valued, and welcomed in all roles. Resilience is an essential trait for successful female managers to have, and organizations that provide programs, training, and professional development will provide these managers with ongoing resources to continue strengthening their

resilience. Further, the increased resilience can increase organizational effectiveness, corporate social responsibility, and return on investment. Past research showed that women leaders think more critically, accomplish tasks with an advantage, and pay more attention to social responsibility (Gipson et al., 2013; Sharpe, 2013).

Implications for Theory

The theoretical implications of this study contributed to understanding how female leaders remain resilient in their careers by exploring their perceptions of effective strategies used. This qualitative single case study with embedded units provides a holistic picture of the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers. This study further applies Shafique et al.'s (2019) findings of key antecedents of resilience among female managers in the organizational context through the perceptions of female managers.

Women remain underrepresented in management roles even with an emphasis to focus on efforts to increase the hiring of women in management roles (Gipson et al., 2017). Further theoretical implications can be the use of the findings of this study to help formulate social change that can help improve another female leader's experiences in male-dominated environments. This study is significant for extending knowledge within the study's conceptual framework to support female managers resiliency within their careers, further contributing to closing the gender disparity in managerial roles globally.

Finally, my conceptual framework is based on the works of Shafique et al.'s (2019) antecedents of women managers' resilience using a theoretical and exploratory

lens to understand the perceptions of female managers on how they remain resilient within their careers. This exploratory investigation expanded research and a thicker understanding of what strategies female managers use to remain resilient in their careers by contributing new qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. In qualitative research, methodologists recommend thematic analysis results to extend theory, strengthen transferability, and guide future theoretical research (Stake, 2010).

Conclusion

My single case study with embedded units aimed to explore the perceptions of women managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers. Halkias and Neubert (2020) stated that a case study used in leadership and management studies generates thorough depictions and thematic analysis to compare previous literature data. Semistructured interviews with open-ended questions allowed participants to expand on shared experiences (Yin, 2018). The interviews grounded in this study's conceptual framework provided rich data from the perception of participants furthering the knowledge base on effective strategies women managers utilize to remain resilient in their careers.

The participants in this study provided a first-hand account of their experiences on how they benefited from mentorship, professional development, and education to overcome the biases and gendered challenges they faced in their roles. The in-depth insight provided the themes that answered the central research question and aligned with the experiences and how they affected their resilience. The knowledge gained in this study provides practical applications that organizations can incorporate in their culture to

further assist women in remaining resilient in leadership roles, contributing to breaking the glass ceiling.

Biases and gendered discrimination women feel challenged to overcome when getting promoted still exist once they succeed (Shafique et al., 2019). Further, women have high turnover rates due to tokenism and practices related to male-dominated mentalities when trying to advance their leadership roles (Samuelson et al., 2019). These barriers that continue to slow the progression of women in breaking the glass ceiling have allowed women managers to create effective strategies to combat this. The study participants recommended that organizations invest in formal mentorship that allows women to learn, grow, and relate to other female leaders. Participants also benefited from professional development opportunities they discovered on their own and recommended that organizations provide these opportunities to their employees. Lastly, participants expressed confidence in their leadership capabilities when they were a part of a professional networking group focused on skill building.

Scholars continue to focus on a positive trajectory for increasing women in leadership roles through studies conducted within the scope of overcoming biases, hiring more women, and shifting the male-dominated foundations of business operations. This study furthers the knowledge base by exploring how women remain in their leadership roles when combined with existing knowledge now provides a dual-ended approach to increasing the number of women in managerial roles.

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Appendix A: Letter of Introduction

Good afternoon,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University, inviting your voluntary participation in my research on perceptions of female managers with at least five years ofexperience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers.

This study aims to explore the perceptions of female managers with at least five years of experience at the management level on how they remain resilient throughout their careers. Participant eligibility for this study includes the following criteria:

(a) were adult women over the age of 18

(b) possessed at least five years in a management role

(c) were able to provide perceptions of the strategies used to remain resilient within their career.

I am confident your experience in the study phenomenon would contribute significantly to the study. Hence, I am extending an invitation to participate in the research. The interview may take up to 30 minutes and be audio-recorded and electronically transcribed. Your participation is confidential; therefore, your identity will be protected to safeguard you from any potential harm.

If this study interests you and you would like to participate, kindly read the attached informed consent form, and reply to this email (brandi.dehart@waldenu.edu) with the words, "I Consent." If you require additional information or have questions

regarding this study, your intended interest, or your study purpose, you may reply to this email (*brandi.dehart@waldenu.edu*), and I will respond promptly.

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study.

Respectfully,

Brandi DeHart

Ph.D. Candidate-Walden University

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. Understanding

female managers' perceptions of how they remain resilient in their careers is especially

important to management. This interview should take no longer than 30 minutes. During

the interview, I will ask you questions regarding your personal experience in

management roles and your perceptions on how you remain resilient in your career. This

qualitative single case study aims to explore the perceptions of female leaders with at

least five years of experience in management roles and how they remain resilient within

their careers. With your permission, I will record this interview for post-interview

transcription. As a reminder, your identity will remain confidential and not shared with

anyone or any entity.

Questions for participants:

1. Tell me a little bit about your experience with moving into management roles.

    a. Did you encounter any biases? Gendered exclusion?

    b. If yes, tell me about that.

2. How many years have you been in a management role?

3. What is your current job title?

    a. Time in this position

    b. Do you have previous management roles?

        i. What were those roles?

        ii. How long in those positions?

4. Can you explain to me your definition or understanding of the term resilient?

5. Thinking back to your first management role, what were some strategies that you perceived help you remain in that role? (Repeat for each management role identified above)

   a. Now, thinking of your current role, what strategies you perceived are helping you remain in that role?

6. Resiliency is defined in the context of being able to adapt and overcome challenges, biases, or obstacles to continue within your role. Considering this definition, can you provide examples of when this applied to you within your management role?

   a. What did you perceive to be the reason you were resilient?

7. The glass ceiling phenomenon is often looked at from the perspective of helping women move into leadership roles. Once in those roles, women need to remain resilient within their careers to help further close the gendered gap in management roles.

   a. What do you feel helped you?

   b. What do you feel organizations could do further to support the resiliency of women in management roles?

8. Do you have anything else to add to your interview regarding your answers and/or understanding of the research topic?

We will now conclude this interview. Thank you for assisting me in this research project. Next, I will have your audio recording transcribed and then provide you with a copy of this transcription for your approval. During the review, you will have 72 hours (about 3 days) to notify me of any corrections or changes to your information or if you no longer wish for me to use your interview in the study. If I do not hear from you in 72 hours (about 3 days), I will presume the transcription is accurate and can be used in my study.