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Glass Ceiling Encountered by Female Chief Executive Officers as They Advance to C-Level Positions in International Nonprofit Sports Organizations.

Eric Edokpaigbe Idehen
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Eric Idehen

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Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2023

Abstract

Glass Ceiling Encountered by Female Chief Executive Officers as They Advance to C-

Level Positions in International Nonprofit Sports Organizations

by

Eric Idehen

MA, Walden University, 2018

MBA, University of Phoenix, 2014

HND, Auchi Polytechnic, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

Women are underrepresented as chief executive officers (CEOs), executive-level officers, board directors, and national sports organization board chairs in 45 countries. Despite social movements, laws, and practices supporting equal employment opportunities and workplace equality, women in top senior-level positions are still lacking. The purpose of this study was to explore challenges women face in terms of obtaining CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. The study involved exploring limitations eight women faced when aspiring to CEO positions in terms of leadership development, talent management, and policies involving international nonprofit sports organizations. This study employed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological psychological method and Giorgi's five-step data analysis; however, due to a paucity of data that did not fulfill a descriptive phenomenological approach, a generic qualitative approach was used. The glass ceiling theory was used to examine lived experiences of female CEOs who faced barriers while transitioning to C-level positions. Participants noted it was love for sports that started in middle and high school that gave them the drive to pursue international sports. They noted that their journey was difficult, and they spent many hours trying to achieve their goal of becoming CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations. They also noted they wanted to recruit women to play basketball in other places than the United States. There were many women around the world who like sports and need the opportunity to highlight their talent. This study can aid in positive social change through reducing bias in the workplace by improving and promoting equal opportunities for employee career development.

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Dedication

       To my parents who gave me and my siblings education, to my wife and children for their priceless supports and encouragement, to Mayra DeCatalan and Janvier Degbedji for their mentorship, and to the children of Cornerstone of Hope orphanage world-wide for the opportunity to serve them and to be a life-giving spirit.

Table of Contents

iv

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Females in leadership management positions represent 9% of the global pool of chief executive officers (CEOs; Haile et al., 2016; Swanson et al., 2019). Chisholm-Burns et al. (2017) defined the glass ceiling as the invisible barrier women face as they attempt to advance through various careers. Women are absent from leadership roles such as CEO or president despite advanced degrees and performance evaluations (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017).

This research involved exploring and understanding limitations women face in terms of obtaining CEO positions in international nonprofit sports organizations. The goal is to learn about experiences of women who are in CEO positions about their career journey to becoming CEOs. The study might lead to solutions to address gender underrepresentation in the workplace. Women held few of the leadership positions 40 years ago in the United States (Graham et al., 2017; Katz et al., 2018). Inequalities and underrepresentation make it difficult for women to advance to higher executive positions (Betzer-Tayar et al., 2017; Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Funk, 2015).

Chapter 1 includes the problem statement, background, and purpose of the study. This chapter includes the nature of the study, its significance, research questions, a brief overview of the theoretical framework, and delimitations. Chapter 1 concludes with a summary and transition into Chapter 2.

Background

Many women in the 21st century continue to struggle with gender and leadership roles due to limited access to executive leadership positions in some organizations

(Spencer et al., 2019). According to Spencer et al. (2019), women have trouble obtaining successful leadership careers because of male leadership's pervasive dominance. Of the top 400 non-profit organizations within the United States (U.S.), women hold 19% of executive leadership positions (Spencer et al., 2019). There is not enough research regarding leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies for women to overcome gender biases for successful advancement. Adriaanse (2016) found that women are underrepresented in many high-level sports positions and across all sports-related occupations. In the United Kingdom, sports supply over 440,000 full-time jobs, representing 2.3% of national employment. However, women are underrepresented in these positions (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). Joseph and Anderson (2016) found the percentage of women in sports leadership positions was 22% in 2016. There is a need to explore cultural biases and address because more women are not in top management positions.

Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018) explained that organizations reflect the values of their top managers who make decisions and influence individual experiences, values, and personalities. In addition, benefits of gender diversity in top management positions outweigh costs in some organizations (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018). Sinclair (2014) explained leadership positions are lacking in terms of numbers of women in many organizations in the U.S. Historically, women have been defined as subordinate to men, and discrimination is still prevalent in some organizations (Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018).

There is a gap in literature regarding lived experiences of female CEOs who face barriers while transitioning to C-level positions. Spencer (2019) revealed women

represent6% of CEO roles within Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. despite their

experience, education, competence, and motivation. Organizations struggle to optimize

the talent pipeline despite tools and human resources that are available because women

do not have access to the same career advancement opportunities as men (Spencer, 2019).

This study will fill the research gap by investigating women's lived experiences

involving the glass ceiling effect and challenges they faced with respect to working for

international nonprofit sports organizations. Women CEOs for this study lived in the U.S.

This study will show the need for new epistemological perspectives in order to explore

women's lived experiences involving attaining CEO positions in international nonprofits

organizations.

Problem Statement

Low representation of women in executive leadership roles is apparent in for-

profit sports organizations as well as for- and nonprofit businesses organizations (Spencer

et al., 2019). Despite this, little research has explored or explained the problem. There is a

dearth of literature regarding leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies women need to

overcome gender biases for more successful leadership. It is necessary to address how

females in CEO roles characterize their challenges during their path to leadership and

how they navigated those challenges. Women are underrepresented as CEOs, executive-

level officers, board directors, and board chairs in national sports organizations in 45

countries (Adriaanse, 2016). Despite social movements, laws, and practices supporting

equal employment, opportunities and workplace equality are still lacking for many

women in top senior-level positions.

The nongovernmental International Olympic Committee has 3% of women in senior leadership positions (Adriaanse, 2016). According to Betzer-Tayar et al. (2017), women are underrepresented in leadership positions at international nonprofit sports organizations due to traditional gender roles, male dominance, and masculine privilege. In the United Kingdom, where sports provide 440,000 full-time jobs (2.3% of all employment), women have 22% of leadership positions (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). Women have only 16.6% of jobs worldwide (Kalaitzi Czabanowska et al., 2017).

Katz et al. (2018) explained that gender is embedded in the NCAA organizational structure, with gender inequality reinforced through informal interactions among members. Also, Betzer-Tayar et al. (2017) argued that gender discrimination is not the only barrier to equality. Within Israeli sports, few women still hold senior-level executive management positions in major corporations (Betzer-Tayar et al., 2017). Currently, women are significantly underrepresented in sports leadership positions in both individual countries and international sports organizations. This is because sports organizations promote traditional gender roles, as well as male dominance and privilege.

According to Katz et al. (2018), men intentionally exclude women in order to keep their power positions and increase their career mobility. This exclusionary structure prevents women from learning about job opportunities. It further contributes to their underrepresentation in national and international sports organization leadership roles (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). There is a reduced opportunity for women to advance to CEO positions in international nonprofit sports organizations. Increasing knowledge about how women have succeeded in senior leadership positions in such organizations

may better position them within the leadership pipeline for success in terms of reaching senior executive levels.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore challenges women face in obtaining CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. The study involved exploring limitations women faced when aspiring to CEO positions in terms of leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports. organizations. There was detailed information provided about the challenges women in CEO positions experienced in the career journey to becoming CEOs.

Research Questions

The research questions used to guide this study were:

RQ1: How do women CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations describe their lived experiences involving attempting to become CEOs?

RQ2: How do women CEOs describe barriers to acquiring experiences needed to qualify for these positions?

RQ3: How do women CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations describe their lived experiences involving talent management, development, mentoring, and training processes needed to achieve their positions?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is used to integrate and position original ideas that contextualize and guide the study. It is used to influence and shape research by developing and producing topics and goals, refining research questions, and constructing

and evaluating the study design. For this study, the glass ceiling theory was used to examine lived experiences of female CEOs of nonprofit sports organizations who faced barriers while transitioning to C-level positions. The glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that women face that prevents them from transitioning to higher corporate leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

Spencer et al. (2019) explained women have the experience, motivation, education, and competence to be in C-Suites. However, they represent 6% of CEO positions within Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. Career development and masculine norms are some challenges women face. The glass ceiling theory was used to explain women's experiences involving obtaining leadership positions as CEOs in international sports organizations.

Nature of the Study

This study was a qualitative study. I employed a descriptive phenomenological psychological method and Giorgi's five-step data analysis. I used the glass ceiling theory as the theoretical framework. A descriptive phenomenological approach is a strategy in which researchers explore lived experience involving a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach was used to interview women in CEO positions about their lived experiences involving becoming CEOs in international nonprofit sports organizations. The qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study to understand the glass ceiling and women CEOs' lived experiences involving international nonprofit sports organizations. This qualitative research involved one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interviews with women in

CEO positions to identify their lived experiences as they pursued C-suite positions in international nonprofit sports organizations.

The primary source of data was one-on-one semi-structured interviews with participants. Due to COVID-19, specific guidelines were followed to ensure my and participants' safety. There were no face-to-face interviews. Interviews were held via telephone. I did interviews via telephone with participants and took detailed notes. Participants did not want to be recorded. Interviews lasted from 25 to 35 minutes. This was due to participants being reluctant to answer all interview questions in detail. Several participants noted they did not have much time for a long interview.

Data were collected from participants using semi-structured open-ended interview questions. Participants were interviewed via telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were analyzed using manual coding to organize data and determine patterns and themes that emerged from interview transcripts.

Definitions of Terms

Barrier: An obstacle that prevents one from moving forward in their career (Sexton et al., 2014).

Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Senior leader with chief decision-making authority in an organization or business (Cook & Glass, 2014).

C-Suite: Senior executives with the highest level of leadership in organizations (Elsaid & Ursel, 2018).

Executive Director: Individuals responsible for revenue-related activities such as fundraising, marketing, government relations strategies, and budget planning in organizations (Elsaid & Ursel, 2018).

Glass ceiling: Barriers which prevent females from being promoted to senior leadership levels of management (Glass & Cook, 2016).

Glass ceiling effects: Impediments or barriers that prevent women and persons of color from "advancing in their career in an organization" (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009, p. 31).

Nonprofit sports organization: Organizations which involve combining passion for sports with community outreach and personal development. Nonprofit organizations may use sports to support causes or to reach out to groups who are typically unable to participate in athletics (Megheirkouni, 2017, p. 2).

Sports: Athletic activity requiring skills and physical prowess. Sports include baseball, basketball, tennis, soccer, racing, and fishing (Retar et al., 2016).

Assumptions

The study was conducted to understand how gender differentially challenges women candidate opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. I explored limitations women faced by women in terms of obtaining CEO positions involving leadership development, talent management, and policies in international nonprofit sports organizations. My primary assumption was that

participants in this study provided accurate accounts of their lived experiences regarding this topic.

Scope and Delimitations

The eight to ten participants for this study were female CEOs in international nonprofit sports organizations. All participants lived in the U.S. Creswell and Creswell (2017) reported a sample size of five to 20 participants is sufficient for qualitative research. This study included females who were 18 and older. This study did not include male participants. I explored female CEOs' lived experiences concerning leadership development, talent management, and policies in international nonprofit sports organizations. The participants in this study had two years of experience as CEOs in international nonprofit sports organizations. My research did not include other ethnicities, men, or minors.

The glass ceiling theory was used to examine lived experiences of female CEOs who faced barriers while transitioning to C-level positions. Transferability was accomplished by being transparent in terms of the reader with an in-depth description of the location of the study and a detailed description of participants. I provided precise details regarding steps for the research process so that other researchers can follow these same steps and conduct the study in a similar manner. In addition, I provided a detailed description of procedures and findings of this study so that it can be generalized to other settings. I conducted individual interviews with each participant and took detail notes. Interviews were transcribed for data analysis.

Limitations

A small sample size was a limitation in qualitative research, resulting in the study not being generalizable (Ochieng, 2009). Another limitation for this study was the use of the purposive sampling method to promote rich detail on the data from the participants' lived experiences that are not generalizable (Ochieng, 2009). Also, selection bias was a limitation for this study if interested participants do not meet the criteria to participate in the study (Creswell, 2017). As the researcher, I maintained a journal to bracket my preconceived thoughts and ideas about the topic before conducting the interviews with the participants. The interview questions were created before the interview process was performed with the participants verbatim to avoid researcher bias (Creswell, 2017). In addition, the limitation for this study can potentially lack reliability and consistency due to using different probing techniques and the participants telling parts of their stories while omitting other parts (Green et al., 2015). Appropriate measures were used in this study to address the limitations through the theoretical triangulation to achieve credibility (Creswell, 2017).

Significance

This study filled the research gap by investigating women CEOs' lived experiences involving the glass ceiling when working for international nonprofit sports organizations. This research will contribute to understanding why women experience the glass ceiling as they aspire to CEO positions in international nonprofit sports organizations. Beneficiaries of this could include women aspiring to become CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations. Other beneficiaries include the Federation

International de Football Association (FIFA), other sports organizations, academic institutions, leadership, and diversity trainers. Harris et al. (2015) described women as having limited professional roles due to not having necessary decision-making experiences to be in leadership positions. Lack of practice limits women's abilities to move up to senior leadership positions in organizations. This study can be used to reduce bias in the workplace by improving and promoting equal opportunities for employee career development.

Summary

The glass ceiling theory was used to examine lived experiences of female CEOs of nonprofit sports organizations who faced barriers while transitioning to C-level positions. Women represent 6% of CEO roles within Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. despite their experience, education, competence, and motivation (Spencer et al., 2019). Spencer et al. (2019) reported despite tools and human resources that are available, organizations struggle to optimize the talent pipeline because women do not have access to the same career advancement opportunities as men. The glass ceiling is due to cultural norms, discrimination, lack of proper training, education credentials, and unconscious biases.

The purpose of this study was to understand how gender challenges female candidate opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. I explored limitations women faced in terms of aspiring to CEO positions involving leadership development, talent management, and policies in international nonprofit sports organizations.

I used a descriptive phenomenological design and Giorgi's five-step data analysis method. This is a strategy in which researchers explore lived experiences involving a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Chapter 2 includes a literature review of studies regarding how gender challenges female candidate opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Females represent 9% of the global pool of CEOs (Haile et al., 2016; Swanson et al., 2019). Lansford et al. (2010) reported women have trouble obtaining successful leadership careers because of male leadership's pervasive dominance. Of the top 400 nonprofit organizations within the U.S., women hold 19% of executive leadership positions (Spencer et al., 2019). There is not enough research regarding leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies for women to overcome gender biases for successful advancement. Adriaanse (2016) found that women are underrepresented in many high-level positions and across all sports-related occupations. In the United Kingdom, where sports provide 440,000 full-time jobs (2.3% of all employment), women have 22% of leadership positions (Harris, 2015; Joseph & Anderson, 2016).

This section includes literature and statistics involving women's lived experiences in terms of obtaining CEO positions. It includes a review of literature about the glass ceiling, career advancement, women in leadership, workplace diversity, sexism in sports management, feminist perspectives and leadership, women's leadership development in sports settings, underrepresentation of women, and gender diversity in boards. Any organizations struggle to optimize the talent pipeline despite tools and human resources because women do not have access to the same career advancement opportunities as men (Spencer et al., 2019). The literature review includes a comprehensive summary of research. My goal was to identify literature gaps that call for more research.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review involved a thorough search of Walden University's online library. I used the following databases: JSTOR, SAGE Journals, EBSCOHost, ProQuest, and PsycINFO. To gain additional resources, I used Google Scholar, which provided substantive information about relevant articles. I used the following keywords: *chief executive officer*, *diversity*, *gender*, *human resources*, *leadership development*, *top management teams*, *glass ceiling*, *concrete ceiling*, *black glass ceiling*, *glass cliff*, *women in leadership*, *career advancement*, *experiences of female CEOs*, *CEO hire*, *nonprofit CEOs*, *women in sports*, *chief executive officer women*, *gender pay gap*, *diversity in leadership*, *variety in Fortune 500 companies*, *Fortune 500*, *S&P 500 women*, *female leadership*, *academic leader*, *career advancement*, *Rawlsian theory*, *utilitarian theory*, *Equal Pay Act of 1963*, *women senior-level administrators*, *working women climbing the ladder*, *CEO gender data*, *SSGA Index constituents*, *feminism and the workplace*, *glass cliff*, *promotion discrimination*, *large-scale discrimination lawsuits*, *workplace discrimination*, and *leadership*. These keywords were used to understand the significant role gender challenges play in terms of lack of representation of women in CEOs roles at nonprofit sports organizations.

Theoretical Foundation

This study involved using the glass ceiling theory as well as the contingency theory, congruity theory, and social role theory. The glass ceiling theory was used to describe women's lived experiences as they aspired to become CEOs working for international nonprofit sports organizations.

Glass Ceiling Theory

The theoretical framework for this study is the glass ceiling theory. Morrison and von Glinow developed the glass ceiling theory. The glass ceiling theory was expanded on by Cotter et al. (2001) and Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) to include women and ethnic minorities. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) defined the glass ceiling as a set of barriers and obstacles that are subtle enough to be transparent but strong enough that they sometimes prevent women and other minorities from moving up to senior-level positions organizations. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) reported the glass ceiling affects individuals in terms of their personal experiences with racism and sexism, which can negatively affect social networks and reduce women's opportunities to engage in mentoring relationships.

Cotter et al. further developed Morrison and von Glinow's glass ceiling theory by developing different criteria to explain the glass ceiling concept. The first criterion is racial inequality and race in terms of executive positions (Cotter et al., 2001). The second criterion is that race and gender inequalities are evident at the top level of organizations. The third criterion is glass ceiling effects are related to opportunities for change and advancement and not overall position of women and other ethnic minorities. The fourth criteria are that the glass ceiling effect increases over time during women's and minorities' careers (Cotter et al., 2001).

Auster and Prasad (2016) reported the social context and sociological processes that contribute to glass ceiling effects involving advancement of African American women. African American women are often victims of glass cliff situations in their jobs.

In many cases, these women are hired to advance to leadership positions during periods in which organizations need to make the most changes to survive. If the organization fails, those women are looked upon as being the fault for the organization's fall. Many women are not hired in some organization due to some may assume they will leave organizations to raise families (Auster & Prasad, 2016).

Beckwith et al. (2017) focused on underrepresentation of African American women in executive leadership positions in large organizations and noted that regardless of strides that have been made in terms of racial equality, there continues to be a shortage of African American women in senior leadership positions in large organizations in the U.S. If this trend is to change, there needs to be more efforts on the parts of men and women to allow more women to obtain senior leadership positions in organizations (Beckwith et al., 2017).

Balasubramanian and Lathabhavan (2017) conducted a study that examined the relationship between the career pathways survey and job burnout with 467 businesswomen from Indian. The study results showed that the denial of and resilience towards the glass ceiling effects were negatively correlated with burnout. The study results also showed that acceptance and resignation of the glass ceiling effects were positively associated with job burnout (Balasubramanian & Lathabhavan, 2017).

The glass ceiling phenomenon still prevalent in international non-profit sports organizations looks at women's statistics in top leadership roles and why there are still gender and racial gaps in these organizations' top positions. According to Ayub et al. (2019), an initial online search of 25 random big green groups found that white men

occupied all the top leadership roles. In the non-profit environmental field, there are more women in the workforce. Still, they are not being promoted into the most senior positions at the organizations they work for (Ayub et al., 2019). Loftus-Farren also reported about an initiative created to increase racial diversity in mainstream environmental organizations called Green 2.0. This report found that women held less than a quarter of the president positions at conservation organizations, containing 29% of board chairs and 37 % board membership (Ayub et al., 2019). The author noted that it is odd seeing lower numbers of women in these organizations and how environmental issues disproportionately impact women. The executive director of Green 2.0, Whitney Tome, states that there is still a challenge around boards' diversity (Ayub et al., 2019).

There are payoffs, though, to having a diverse group of women in leadership positions. Loftus-Farren stated that Fortune 500 companies with women on their boards are more likely to see improved sustainability practices, growth in their profits, and have teams that make better choices and get better results (Ayub et al., 2019). Companies are looking at diversity and inclusion, trying to find ways to be more inclusive. One such example is the Sierra Club, an organization that conducted a retention-analysis study and found that their rate for people of color was shallow. They created a department to oversee the values of inclusivity. The director of that department, Kennedy-Howard, has been working hard to put together recommendations for improving people of color in the organization. The author concluded by admitting there are models and tools to help women break the glass ceiling. It is up to organizations to utilize these tools and be altruistic and ethical enough to push for change (Ayub et al., 2019).

The glass ceiling theory is also associated with the contingency theory. According to Jones and Jones (2017), contingency theory is based on the premise that career success is contingent on the foundational constructs of several factors, including leadership style, behavior, experience, expertise, and compensation level. There was a significant positive correlation between leadership styles and career success. It explains some of the reasons the glass ceiling exists. No meaningful relationship existed between passive leadership styles and career success (Jones & Jones, 2017). Whisenant (2015) explained that the role congruity theory establishes links between gender roles and leadership roles, suggesting that female leaders' prejudice comes from a less favorable evaluation of women's potential for authentic leadership based on gender. Because of this prejudice, women are disadvantaged in male-dominated areas like athletics, especially when it comes to the sex of the perceivers (Whisenant, 2015).

Feminist Perspectives and Leadership

Sinclair (2014) defined leadership as not a position or a person but a process of influence, often aimed at mobilizing people towards change – for example, in values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies (Sinclair, 2014). She gave a brief history of feminism, shared why a feminist perspective is needed to make a case for leadership, how gender comes into play with power and privilege in leadership roles, and how we can challenge women's leadership needs in society. Sinclair (2014) believed that leadership could be exercised by anyone in an organization, not just the CEO, because, at its core, it is just empowering others to act in their interests. However, modern leadership skews towards masculine and individualistic values instead, sharing a lot in common with

the military, especially in the United States. These values are part of the culture.

Authoritarian heroic leadership is also emphasized by sports analogies, with coaches used

as exemplary leadership examples. And while Sinclair stated that studies have shown

women exhibit just as many transformational behaviors as men, they are not seen as

favorably as men. Sinclair (2014) reviewed a brief history of women in leadership and

how, in the 1970s and '80s, scholars began to document women's experiences in

organizations and leadership. Scholars looked at gender differences in management and

found little difference due to sex in achievement motivation, risk-taking, task persistence,

and other significant managerial skills (Sinclair, 2014).

Sinclair (2014) proposed that the shift should focus on seeing women as a

problem to looking at men and the cultures they perpetuate to reinforce women's

exclusion. Because women have lacked power for so long, they understand authority and

its effects within relationships and effectively use leadership to minimize dominance and

oppression. When women have the freedom to organize themselves, different leadership

patterns emerge. Sinclair cited research conducted on Indigenous groups of women and

women in an educational institution where women reject hierarchy and put more effort

into building relationships and empower others.

Women's Leadership Development in Sports Settings

Megheirkouni and Roomi (2017) explored factors influencing transformational

learning experiences and examine the differences in learning elements by people with

either success or failure. The authors defined transformational learning as a phenomenon

that occurs when individuals critically reflect on their environment. Through this

reflection, they transform their thinking and view of the world (Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017). The explanation was based on the thought that adults can create new meanings out of life experiences, where people can use self-reflection of their assumptions like world systems and reframe them through critical reflection. This study was the first to explore positive and negative factors influencing transformational learning to understand the outcome of leadership learning and development initiatives within a sports organization (Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017).

The study's method was the Women Leadership Development Programme (WLDP), a three-year pilot program supported and managed by UK Sport. This program utilized major developmental activities with regular submissions of reports, stories, and experiences of the program participants, who were put under extensive pressure and challenges in the three years (Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017). The study used a qualitative research design. Data were collected from specific sports managers who participated in the WLDP in the UK. 10 out of 15 women agreed to participate. The ten women who agreed were given phone interviews; the researcher presented semi-structured questions adopted to the interviews. Following the talks, the researcher created categories and identified 50-100 critical phrases from each interview by studying each participant's themes and sub-themes. The study found that most women had both negative and positive learning (change) factors. Participants recounted positive factors that influenced change, such as reflection, telling stories, action learning, mentoring, networking, strategic thinking and communication, and conference and academic scholars' meetings. Negative factors influencing change included general-focus

education, sex, and lack of ongoing training sessions and initiatives. Sex was a significant

negative factor here because the WLDP program focused on one gender. The women

were being developed in a female-dominated environment, which they felt did not

prepare them for working with male staff. One woman stated I need more leadership

training to lead the team in men's sports as well. It is one of the biggest reasons for the

underrepresentation of women leaders in the top leadership in the sports environment.

And the design training sessions targeting only women without men and vice versa

(Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017). This study gave a good overview of learning factors and

how people can change their perceptions. Still, it did not offer a solution to battling

hardened gender discrimination in sport organizations and how men and women could be

taught to change their thinking on gender roles, especially when it comes to women in

higher positions.

Underrepresentation of Women in Sports Leadership

Historical Overview

The journey of women in attaining CEO positions has come a long way in the

United States. During the early 19th century, several women began to enter the corporate

world and obtaining CEO positions (Oakley, 2000). Oakley (2000) reported women

joined the corporate workplace in large numbers during the late 1960 and early 1970.

During this time, many women did not expect to reach executive positions as CEOs in

companies and organizations in the United States. In addition, many first-generation

females were wary of pursuing a top-level job at many companies (Oakley, 2000).

Women in leadership positions have made the most progress during the 20th century concerning the advancement to executive management in the United States (Catalyst, 2018). The Center for American Progress (2014) reported that the trend for women in attaining executive positions has declined due to the gender gap and gender segregation in many professions. The number of women climbing through the executive ranks to CEO positions has increased over the past ten years (Catalyst, 2018). For example, in the year 2000, 4% of Fortune 500 companies had a female in their CEO position (Catalyst, 2018). Today, in 2018, the number has increased to only 6% (Catalyst, 2018). Catalyst (2018) reported that after 18 years, the increase was only a 2% increase in the number of women CEOs working at Fortune 500 companies. The number of women obtaining CEO positions is almost non-existent.

Whisenant (2005) revealed that women were primarily discriminated against when they sought to become Athletic Directors in Texas high schools. Men's team sport participation reproduces men's advantage in sport-related occupations during the hiring process for sport employment positions (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). Gender roles and stereotyping tend to highlight men's higher power and social status. Due to this fact, women in organizations face significant prejudice in attaining leadership positions (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). Katz et al. (2018) explained that women are underrepresented in sport leadership positions in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA is required by the law to adhere to Title IX. According to Koca and Öztürk (2015), there is still a minimal number of studies on women's under-representation in sports in non-Western countries. The author investigated the research

further and found out why women were under-represented in sports organizations'

management positions because they were excluded.

Underrepresentation of Women

Burton (2015) conducted a review of research on the underrepresentation of

females in sports programs. The author argued that although females have increased

participation in sport, they are underrepresented in leadership positions and use a multi-

leveled perspective to study. She began the article by establishing the fact that sport is a

gendered space. A study she quoted states that sport actively constructs boys and men to

exhibit value and reproduce traditional masculinity (Burton, 2015). Burton (2015)

explored material that examines the institutionalized practices of gender in sport on a

micro-level. The author looked at the stereotyping of leaders, discrimination, and

gendered organizational cultures. She focused on women's expectations of leadership

positions, turnover intentions, and the influence of symbolic interactionism on women's

career advancement. Beginning with the macro level, Also, Burton (2015) looked at how

men dominate leadership positions in international and US sports organizations. Men

have the most influential leadership positions in various sports activities in the US, even

in women's sports coaching positions. Women hold fewer than 25% of senior leadership

positions across all US professional sports leagues (Burton, 2015). Also, she explained

that hegemonic masculinity and the influence of power on women's recruitment and

selection for leadership positions play significant roles in gender discrimination.

Stakeholder influence also affected the gendered norms of a sports organization as they

have often maintained an interest in hiring males for positions like an athletic director.

Institutionalized discrimination was too massive, particularly in an intercollegiate sport, where people are very entrenched in outdated beliefs and resistant to change for equality.

Burton (2015) discovered that gender is more dynamic and variable. In organizational culture, men are more likely to be in positions of power. They have higher pay and more status within organizations that favor men through social practices to keep women compliant. It was a problem not only in the US but in the United Kingdom as well. Also, Burton (2015) found that although organizations had gender equity policies to secure funding, the guidelines did not address inequitable gendered operational processes. However, most male-dominated cultures are targeted toward keeping men in power. Sports organizations' culture is described as gendered and segregated, with a prevalence of widely accepted stereotypes. Sports organizations favor gendered images of heroic leaders. And finally, organizations deny women access through gender discrimination by not being given access to rewards, resources, or job opportunities due to their gender.

Burton (2015) analyzed individuals and their experiences. She found that people gained human and social capital through education and job experiences. However, human, and social capital was more influential for men than for women advancing in sport organizations. Women also suffered from self-limiting behaviors, not seeking high positions when given lower roles as assistant coaches. This review was comprehensive and listed many reasons why women are not advancing in sport organization leadership. That throughout all levels Burton described, men are the ones who hold power to give women the equality and positions that they deserve.

Leadership, Women in Sports, and Embracing Empathy

Hanold (2011) gave an overview in this article about historical perspectives on leadership and how past perspectives on using sport as a basis for male leadership development have shaped our collective view on leadership in this century. Sport has historically been a site for (male) leadership development and continues to provide metaphorical significance within the context of today's leadership (Hanold, 2011). Hanold argued that new sports stories and metaphors are needed to replace the old masculine dialogue and outdated mindsets in the twenty-first century. To provide these new perspectives, Hanold highlighted high-performance female ultrarunners' stories and discussed how empathy aids in their success. Hanold (2011) mentioned how masculine and ego-centric sports analogies were used as leadership models. The information that stands out is where a cross country team's coaches gave out "head bone" to runners for each competitor that they passed, giving runners the idea that defeated competitors could wear as trophies in a sense. The author argues that ego-centered approaches, such as creating in-groups and out-groups, create mindsets and avoid empathy (Hanold, 2011). He used the model of high-performance female ultrarunners. Ultrarunning is a gender-integrated sport with men and women running together and is a less competitive sport than marathon running. Ultrarunners have a strong sense of community and friendship. The women in the sport view the broader challenge of completing the race as the goal, and with this larger goal, see their competitors as a community working together to reach that goal.

Hanold (2011) argued that viewing challenges from much broader perspectives would lead to empathic understanding in leadership. The camaraderie of the females competing in high-performance ultrarunning produces levels of caring that helps everyone perform better. The study of female runners found that they would help each other while racing and often encouraged each other. Hanold argued that this approach translates into business because it would result in in-group cohesion and high performance in individuals in the workplace. Discovering such an approach showed that despite having different intellectual beliefs about competition, empathy produces positive feelings of connection that promote working together on a deeper, more powerful level, raising everyone's performance along the way (Hanold, 2011).

Leadership Barriers for Women in Healthcare, Academia, and Business

Researchers examined barriers to women's leadership across healthcare, academia, and business by conducting a systematic literature review across five electronic databases (Kalaitzi et al., 2017; Mousa et al., 2021). The authors began acknowledging that women in the workforce have increased in numbers over the last 20 years. Researchers noted that since 2017, the number reached 63.5% in the European Union. However, they were still underrepresented in top leadership positions, occupying less than 16.6% of board-level jobs (Mousa et al., 2021). There is an abundance of literature exploring barriers that women leaders face but there is hardly any evidence related to the comprehensive evaluation of barriers to gender equality, inclusion, and their potential prevalence across healthcare, academia, and business. Each sector has its characteristics. In healthcare globally, 75% of the workforce are women. Still, only 38%

hold top positions, and in the private sector, only 18% of hospital CEOs are women, and 14% of boards of directors are women (Smith & Sinkford, 2022). In academia, the European Commission reported in 2015 that 59% of women were in the graduate pool within the EU-28. Still, the number of women drops to 18% when collecting academics holding a full professorship at universities. In business, the Gender Equality Index computed an average of 16% in the EU-28 in 2012. Women occupy only 13.7% of board seats and 3.4% of chair or presidency in the largest publicly listed companies in the EU (Smith & Sinkford, 2022).

Overall, the list of barriers to women's leadership in the healthcare sector outnumbered that of the academic sector, with the business sector outnumbering both. The business sector presented the most significant challenges to women regarding gender equality and inclusion (Kabeer, 2021). The authors concluded that the study suffers because the three sectors they focused on are not similar and that the need for leadership capacity building is not consistent. And that reporting bias and interpretation could have skewed results. The overall implications are that gender stereotypes in leadership and equal opportunities include gender-related corporate culture, inflexibility in workplace structures, and inadequate social policies (Kabeer, 2021). Gender and gender roles in family responsibilities and social acceptance are deeply rooted constraints that may foster the ambition gap (Kalaitzi et al., 2017). Kabeer (2021) noted that while the gender equality problems in these sectors are understood, they remain unresolved. This study implicated cultural expectations as the origin of women's barriers to leadership positions

and stringent work policies and organizational cultures. It did not blame men specifically but seemed to put the burden on society.

Gender Diversity in the Board, Women's Leadership, and Performance

Researchers noted that there is a lack of representation of women in leaderships positions on boards of directors and heading different organizations in the past few years (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018; Velte, 2017). Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018) noted that gender diversity is unaddressed in developing economies. In Colombia, women account for 43% of the country's labor force, but only 12% of top executives and board members are women, and only 4% of leading companies have women CEOs. Columbian legislation does not impose laws on businesses for women's participation and leaves gender diversity up to businesses themselves (Velte, 2017). Therefore, the study aimed to examine gender diversity's role to provide more research on women's effects in top management settings. Also, to generate valuable insights into practical applications that could be used to find ways to capitalize on women's human capital and the economic benefits of their involvement in top management.

Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018) stated that an organization reflects its top managers who make decisions, influenced by their personal experiences, values, and personalities. Diversity in top-management teams can promote team effectiveness and innovation. They are quick to adapt to change and adopt more affluent strategies (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018). The effects of gender diversity on performance will help unveil whether Colombian firms capitalize on their gender-diverse human capital to achieve the desired

goal of maximizing performance as would be expected from the dominant theoretical postulates in the related academic literature (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018; Velte, 2017).

Women on the Board

Women are getting higher leadership positions in organizations; equality will not happen until the end of 2055 unless more is done to establish more women leaders. In the US, as of 2017, 738 companies still had no women on their boards, and women held only just over 15% of all director seats at publicly traded US companies, which was an increase of 14% from the previous year (Birindelli et al., 2020). There are benefits to having women in higher leadership. Companies have higher stock returns and better performance when there is at least one woman on the board than all-male boards, which is more appealing to investors. In other countries, government pressure has played a role in gender equality, so European countries have the highest rate of women on board seats (Halliday et al., 2021). The research about women on the board outlined some statistics on the progress that companies have made regarding gender equality. And while it noted that most had not reached parity yet, the article about women on the board does not detail the obstacles that women face in trying to secure higher leadership positions or what possible solutions there are for businesses to employ in their everyday life practices (Birindelli et al., 2020).

Building and Supporting Young Women's Leadership for Social Justice

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is an international organization that tackles issues such as promoting gender quality, sustainable development, and women's human rights by using themes and programs, including the

Young Women's Leadership Program (YWL). Through studies and implementing

various programs, the organization found some interesting information on developing

strategies for young women's development and the kinds of challenges young women

face in their climb to success (Wilson, 2004).

Many factors play a role in challenging the success of young women as leaders.

Not all women can be categorized into one group, differentiated by geographic location,

socio-economic background, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, education (Jones &

Solomon, 2019); Wilson, 2004). However, women worldwide do face similar challenges

as they pursue leadership (Wilson, 2004). In an online discussion facilitated by the

AWID, women worldwide expressed that they were experiencing increasing levels of

violence, discrimination, Sexism, war, and poverty. They felt the constraints of tradition

and ethnic and political customs of their regions. Women also reported race, religion,

class, and unequal development as technology changes (Wilson, 2004). Being aware of

the challenges that young women face, Wilson proposed that building a comprehensive

strategy for young women's leadership would need to include a focus on building the

individual's (personal) capacity to contribute towards a collective (political) strategy

(Jones & Solomon, 2019; Wilson, 2004). A successful approach would need to provide a

more significant analysis of the interconnection between all the issues young women

struggle with and need to take those connections from a local to a global scale. Wilson

(2004) concluded that society need to facilitate more intergenerational discussions,

exploring the realities and cultures of different regions, and restructuring social justice

while remaining connected to other communities to find a solution to ensure an increase in young women's leadership successfully.

Gender and Ethnic Diversity on Boards and Corporate Responsibility

Sector-specific aspects of diversity through the lens of corporate responsibility (CR) were examined. Azmat and Rentschler (2017) argued that CR pressure should be applied to non-profits, focusing on social issues, stating that diversity builds reputation, legitimacy, credibility, and integrity. Research into CR is an emerging area of study that is growing significantly. CR and corporate governance concepts are being increasingly seen as strongly correlated and connected (Azmat & Rentschler, 2017). There is a link between women's leadership on boards and firm performance (Azmat & Rentschler, 2017). Firms with directors who are women have higher returns on investment than firms without female directors. Boards with more ethnic minorities were more successful in global business environments. Data analysis was conducted through interviews with 92 board members and stakeholders on 66 boards in Australia. Participants were asked how men and women on arts boards respond to CR requirements and how are gender and ethnic aspects of demographic diversity on arts boards linked to CR. Results and findings suggested that organizations were very mission driven. The dynamism of gender and ethnic diversity on arts boards made them responsive to CR; however, the presence of variety does not always lead to CR (Azmat & Rentschler, 2017).

Spencer et al. (2019) explained that women represent 56% of CEOs' positions within the Fortune 500 companies in the US despite their experience, education, competence, and motivation. The author conducted a study involving 57 women, 38

women were current CEOs, and 19 women were former CEOs. The study's goal was to explore and document the common characteristics and experiences of the women and what organizations could do to support their career advancement. The same research questions were administered to the participants. The researcher found that women tend to shy away from jobs that are considered challenging assignments. It keeps them from acquiring skills like courage, risk-taking, ability to manage ambiguity, and resilience required for the CEO job (Spencer et al., 2019).

Larcker and Tayan (2020) reported that though organizations have acknowledged the lack of gender diversity in the C—Suite level jobs, little has been done to create a mechanism that will address this issue and provide opportunities to increase the representation of women in top leadership roles. Fortune 500 organizations have a lot of work to do to achieve greater equality regarding female CEOs. The author concluded by saying that organizations struggle to optimize the talent pipeline despite the tools and human resources because women do not have access to the same career advancement as men (Larcker & Tayan, 2020). Also, women who experienced career development challenges masculine norms. Hence the underrepresentation of women in CEO positions. Baker (2016) suggested promoting gender equality at the top of organizations' leadership as an approach to increasing women CEOs.

Women CEOs and Senior Leaders in Corporate America

Baker (2016) explained that middle management in the most workforce is comprised of mostly educated women. They are underrepresented in the CEOs' positions. Baker's article investigated and discussed possible causes of fewer women

representatives in a senior leadership role. Baker described organizational culture, Sexism, and Societal factor as some of the challenge's women face when making the choices to become CEO in organizations. Tokenism is another factor that provides barriers to women's ambition to become CEOs. Baker (2016) explained to Kinism effects as a situation where women who advanced in their careers were greeted with hostility, creating a very hostile environment. As the women observe and interact with the token, it provides the women an insight into the hostile work environment and chooses not to pursue advancement in such an environment. The aggressive work environment experience and perception of a hostile work environment provide challenges that prevent women from advancing into CEO positions (Baker, 2016; Cangemi et al., 2015). One bias for the lack of women in senior leadership positions is the investors' role, especially when hiring someone for the CEO position in a high-growth organization. Investors would prefer to hire a male for the CEO position rather than taking chances on women with unproven leadership experience (Cangemi et al., 2015).

Attwell et al. (2019) reported that organizations could increase the number of women in senior leadership by increasing awareness with senior leaders, creating organizational policies that require women's consideration for senior leadership or CEO positions. Also, organizations should include women's values in senior leadership positions in their corporate visions and values (Baker, 2016). Other suggestions include an increase in the pool of women slated for senior leadership positions such as CEOs, provide developmental leadership experience for women in mid-management positions, and encourages women to participate in network programs inside or outside their

organization (Baker, 2016). Regardless of the difficulties, women need to have a personal goal of becoming CEOs and stay focused.

International Sports Development

Nonprofit sports organizations combine a passion for sports with community outreach and personal development. According to Maleske and Sant (2020), "nonprofit organizations may use sports to support a cause or to reach out to groups typically unable to participate in athletics" (p. 2). Sports has been used to unite people from all races and backgrounds for a central purpose to benefit nations. These nonprofit sports organizations combine a passion for sports to help heal different problems and issues different countries may have toward each other. In addition, nonprofit organizations may use sports to support a cause or to reach out to certain groups who may not be able to participate in sports programs (Megheirkouni, 2017).

There are several international sports programs around the world such as through the United Way Worldwide, the Sports Professional Associations and Organization, the American Baseball Coaches Association, the Amateur Athletic Union, and the Salvation Army Worldwide (Megheirkouni, 2017). An international sports programs that has done work in many national and international countries is the International Sports Programming Initiative. These programs promote tolerance and respect for diversity and help underserved youths around the world develop important leadership skills and achieve academic success (Megheirkouni, 2017). The goal of the International Sports Programming Initiative is to equip generation of youth, athletes, and sports professionals in several countries with the skills to use sports as a way to enhance cooperation,

tolerance, and respect for people from different races and backgrounds, Also, the program is used to build regional networks of sports and youth development professionals and to remove barriers and create a world in which people with disabilities enjoy dignity and full inclusion in the sports arena (Attwell et al., 2019; Megheirkouni, 2017).

Sports participation is socially accepted, with people from all nationalities and backgrounds (Attwell et al., 2019; Vandermeerschen et al., 2016). Despite the participation of sports programs internationally, there is still a lack of participation with individuals from socio-economic background here in the United States and many places throughout the world. Also, there is a lack of participation in sports from specific groups such as persons with disabilities, people living in poverty, women, and many individuals from ethnic cultural groups, and individuals who do not have membership in nonprofit sports clubs (Attwell et al., 2019).

Participation in sports programs seems to have some benefits both socially and in terms of health. Also, sports are considered as a social right which is embraced by many sports groups both national and international (Vandermeerschen et al., 2016). Some of the sports groups who endorse sports, and a social right are the European Sprots for All Charter and the United Nations International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (Vandermeerschen et al., 2016). Therefore, the unequal opportunities for participation in sports poses problems both in terms of policy efficacy as well as social justice. Also, if society are to reduce the gap in sports participation, there should be structural and collective efforts needed to increase the participation of many sports programs through

international efforts. Some research feel that this gap can be filled through international nonprofit sports and sports clubs (Attwell et al., 2019; Vandermeerschen et al., 2016).

Despite the development of sports internationally for several decades, opportunities for sports participation are still unequally divided with certain socially disadvantaged groups not having access to sports. Researchers noted that to reduce this gap, there need to be structural elements to reduce this gap especially for women (Attwell et al., 2019; Vandermeerschen et al., 2016). Some researchers noted whether nonprofit sports clubs can play a role in reducing these issues nationally and internationally (Attwell et al., 2019; Vandermeerschen et al., 2016). Vandermeerschen et al (2016) conducted a study that examined sports, poverty, and the role of voluntary sector while examining nonprofit sports clubs to facilitate participation of socially disadvantaged people. The purpose of this study was to examine how nonprofit clubs perceive their role and responsibility toward socially disadvantaged groups and how they act on it. The data for this study were 580 nonprofit sports clubs throughout Flanders who completed a survey on sports participation. The results of the study indicated that the human resources capacity of the club was not the main barrier for the lack of participation for the athletes in the nonprofit sports clubs. The results of the study indicated the local sports authorities and sports federations have an important role to play in supporting and encouraging sports clubs to be inclusive of all the athletes who want to participate in sports programs through the nonprofit sports clubs.

Attwell et al. (2019) conducted a study achieving an international sport development legacy. The purpose of the study was to explore and understand how

sustainable long-term legacy impacts the international sport development programs and

how it contributes to major sports events. The participants for this study consisted of five

event managers from several national and international sports governing bodies. The

participants participated in a semi-structured interview for the data collection. The results

of the study show that there is need for equal partnership in embracing legacy programs

sustainability and the need to engage stakeholders in the design and management process

in sports programs. The authors noted that that there is a need to build on best practices in

relation to the assessment of delivery contests and how information gained through the

process to shape sustainability sport development programs design to benefit all parties

involved in the sport process.

Summary and Conclusions

Based on the literature review, it is evident that there is a gap in literature.

Although more women work in nonprofit organizations, they are not being promoted into

the most senior positions at organizations in which they work (Loftus-Farren, 2018).

Sampson and Moore (2008) defined the glass ceiling as denying highest-paying positions

to women, minorities, and the disabled. Women face pay disparities when compared to

their male counterparts. My research can help add to the research knowledge based on the

perceptions of women who are head of international sports organizations. Also, the

literature highlighted several gaps in the research of women who are head of sprots

organizations and the issues and problem they face as CEOs. In addition, the literature

can help in terms of investigating gaps and explain glass ceiling effects encountered by

female CEOs as they advance to C-Level positions in international nonprofit sports

organizations. Chapter 3 includes the research method and design for this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This chapter includes the study setting, research design, rationale for the qualitative design, and data analysis and collection methods. I address validity of data and how I handled threats associated with data, in addition to population sampling procedures, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment and participation, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical issues, and data management.

The purpose of this study was to understand how gender challenges women candidates' opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. I explored limitations women faced when obtaining CEO positions involving leadership development, talent management, and policies. There was detailed information about challenges women in CEO positions experienced during their journey to becoming CEOs.

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: How do women CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations describe their lived experiences involving attempting to become CEOs?

RQ2: How do women CEOs describe barriers to acquiring experiences needed to qualify for these positions?

RQ3: How do women CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations describe their lived experiences involving talent management, development, mentoring, and training processes needed to achieve their positions?

Research Design and Rationale

The research method in this study was the qualitative method. The qualitative methodology involves studying participants to obtain an in-depth understanding of phenomena in their natural setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In addition, the qualitative approach focuses on what and how in terms of participant experiences in everyday settings (Kawamura, 2020). Qualitative research is used to understand perceptions and feelings in natural environments (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The quantitative method was not chosen because I was not interested in numerical data. I chose the qualitative method for this study because it allows for a more in-depth understanding of participants; lived experiences in their natural settings.

Qualitative research methods involve using objective methods to provide information about relationships, comparisons, and predictions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, I addressed personal views and perceptions of participants instead of statistics. I conducted a descriptive phenomenological psychological study using Giorgi's five-step data analysis to describe the experiences of the participants. I used the glass ceiling theory as the theoretical framework. A descriptive phenomenological approach is a strategy in which researchers explore lived experiences involving a phenomenon described by participants (Kawamura, 2020).

Other qualitative research designs were considered for this study, including the case study, grounded theory, and ethnography. The case study design is used to answer what, where, when, and how questions (Yin, 2014). It is used when the researcher has little or no control over events and explores a particular phenomenon in a study (Yin,

2014). The case study design was not needed to understand information about leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies. The grounded theory design is used to test a theory and determine how it relates to the phenomenon being studied with participants (Percy et al., 2015). This design was not appropriate because I was not testing a hypothesis and determining its relationship with the phenomenon. Ethnography involves power, empowerment, and inequality in terms of a specific ethnic group or group culture (Percy et al., 2015). I was not interested in ethnography because I did not study cultural aspects of female CEOs concerning leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies.

A descriptive phenomenological design was used for this study. Giorgi (2012) reported the descriptive phenomenology design is appropriate to seek understanding of lived experiences of participants. Husserl (1970) reported this method involves describing critical elements of the participants during analysis of qualitative research. The central concept of the research is female CEOs' lived experiences.

According to Gipson (2017), the contingency theory is based on the premise that career success depends on foundational constructs of leadership style, behavior, experience, expertise, and compensation. There is a significant positive correlation between transformational and transactional leadership styles and career success. No meaningful relationship existed between passive leadership styles and career success (Jones & Jones, 2017).

A phenomenological approach is a strategy in which the researcher explores lived experiences involving a phenomenon as described by participants in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach allowed women in CEO positions to share their lived

experiences involving becoming CEOs in international nonprofit sports organizations.

The qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study to understand

the glass ceiling and women CEOs' lived experiences as they aspired to this position. I

used semi structured interviews with women CEOs in international nonprofit sports

organizations to identify their lived experiences as they pursued C-suite positions.

Role of the Researcher

My role in the study is the observer. I have no personal nor professional

relationships with the women CEOs and have not met the eight participants. Personal

information shared by the participants was kept private and respected. I did not exercise

power over the participants. A story about the research, such as implications and subtlest

danger during the interview process, will be shared with the participants to decide

whether to participate. The observer was transparent and honest with the participants,

with no use of deception or misinformation. Participants were encouraged to respond to

interview questions with honesty.

The participants may reveal personal characteristics that may seem demeaning

during the interviews and force them to suddenly find out things about themselves from

the past that they may not have paid attention to or consider harmful. This social research

may risk injuring the respondents' moral integrity, for example, asking the subject to

share deviant behavior in their response to the interview questions. In this context,

informed consent is fundamental because all the respondents fully understood the

possible risk involved in the research. In addition, bracketing allowed the researchers to

become aware of their feelings and set aside their own biases to capture the authentic

lived experiences of the participants participating in the research study (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

A way to minimize biases is to use the technique bracketing when collecting the data in qualitative research (Sorsa et al., 2015). Bracketing in qualitative research is a process where the researcher suspends their presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences in describing the phenomenon being considered (Sorsa et al., 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012). In addition, bracketing allows researchers to become aware of their feelings and set aside their presuppositions to capture the participants' lived experiences participating in the research study (Sorsa et al., 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Qualitative Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The targeted population for this study were women and their experiences obtaining CEO positions, such as leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports organizations. Participants came from international sports organizations such as the United Way Worldwide, the Sports Professional Associations and Organization, the American Baseball Coaches Association, the Amateur Athletic Union, the Salvation Army Worldwide, the International Sports Programming Initiative, Global Sports Foundation, Challenged Athletes, Adaptive Sports Access for Wounded Warriors, Ball for All, Peace Players International, Project Fit America, and Right to Play. Participants were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. The sampling strategy to be used for this study used purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2017).

The recruitment method used for this qualitative study was purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. The purposive sampling technique is the deliberate choosing of participants due to the identified qualities that the participants possess (Nechval & Nechval, 2016). A key element of purposeful sampling is selecting candidates across a broad spectrum relating to the topic of study (Nechval & Nechval, 2016). Snowballing sampling is a technique that is used to recruit participants who may be hard to locate by using the participants who have already participated to assist in recruitment (Etikan et al., 2016; Ochieng, 2009). Snowball sampling starts with a small sample of participants with a set of characteristics and expands the sample by asking the initial participants to identify others to participate in the study who fit the criteria (Sorsa et al., 2015). In addition, purposeful sampling method was used to identify participants who met the criteria for the study, and the participants are recruited through snowball sampling to see if any participant knows other participants who meet the study criteria and who were interested in participating in the study.

This study's sampling frame comprised of eight to ten women currently in CEO positions and working for international non-profit sports organizations. The interviews were conducted with the participants until saturation was reached. Creswell (2017) noted that saturation is reached when the participants provide the researcher with no new knowledge about the topic being studied. In addition, the researcher conducted member checking of the data to make sure the data is accurate.

A recruitment flyer about the research was created using information such as the research topic, purpose, and interview questions. The researcher obtained permission to

post the flyer to recruit participants with international sports organizations and professional network on social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to seek CEOs to participate in the research study. The international sports organizations included the United Way Worldwide, Sports Professional Association, American Baseball Coaches Association, Amateur Athletic Union, Salvation Army Worldwide, International Sports Programming Initiative, Global Sports Foundation, Challenged Athletes, Adaptive Sports Access for Wounded Warriors, Ball for All, Peace Players International, Project Fit America, and Right to Play. Data was collected using emails and phones. The participants did not receive incentives nor compensation for their time spent on the interview (Creswell, 2018).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The female CEOs who volunteered to participate in this study met the following criteria to participate in this study. The inclusion criteria were female CEOs who had two years of experience as a CEO of a non-profit organization in the United States. The female CEOs have conducted business internationally and were willing to take the time to participate in the study. Also, the participants were 18 years and older to participate in the study. The interview was expected to last 45 to 60 minutes in length, depending on the flow of the conversation with the participants.

The exclusion criteria were women who are not CEOs at a non-profit organization and unwilling to volunteer to participant in an interview.

Instrumentation

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered the main instrument for data collection because they emerge in the data collection process (Patton, 2015). Therefore, I collected the data for this study using semi-structured open-ended interviews with the participants. The research questions, interview questions, and the theoretical framework align with each other (see Table 1).

Table 1

Instrumentation and Theoretical Alignment

Research Questions (RQ)	Interview Questions (IQ)	Theoretical Framework (GCT)
RQ1: How do women in CEO positions describe their lived experience as they climbed the ladder to become CEOs working for international non-profit sports organizations?		RQ1 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ1: Please describe the step it took you to climb the ladder to become a CEO at an international non-profit sports organization.	IQ1 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ2: Please tell me what motivated you to become a CEO of an international sport's nonprofit organization.	IQ2 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ3: Please describe if you were ever exposed to international experiences before becoming a CEO? If so, please explain some.	IQ3 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ4: Can you tell me if you ever received support on your road to becoming a CEO?	IQ4 align with the glass ceiling theory

	Follow-up question: How would you describe the support you received on your road to becoming a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization.?	
RQ2: How do women CEOs working for international nonprofit sports organizations describe the barriers to acquiring the experiences needed to qualify for CEO positions?		RQ2 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ5: Would you mind describing any barriers you might have experienced in your life that might have hindered you from becoming a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?	IQ5 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ6: What are some barriers you had to overcome to qualify for your CEO position in an international nonprofit sports organization?	IQ6 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ7: Would you please describe some strategies you used to overcome barriers in your life to become a CEO of an international nonprofit sports organization.	IQ7 align with the glass ceiling theory
RQ3: How do women in international non-profit sports organizations describe their lived experience in talent management, development, mentoring, and other		RQ3 align with the glass ceiling theory

training processes needed to
achieve CEO positions?

	IQ8: Would you mind telling me some management characteristics you feel are essential in becoming a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?	IQ8 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ9: Would you please describe some training experiences you received to aid in your qualification to become a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?	IQ9 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ10: Please describe some mentoring experiences you received that helped you to become a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization.	IQ10 align with the glass ceiling theory
	IQ11: What other experiences would you like to add that I have not asked you regarding your experiences as a woman who attained the role of a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?	IQ11 align with the glass ceiling theory

The interview questions refer to the three research questions in the areas of (a)

lived experiences on climbing the ladder to become CEO's working for international

nonprofit sport organization, (b) barriers to acquiring the experiences needed to quality

for CEO positions, and (c) lived experiences in talent management, development,

mentoring, and training processes. RQ1 focuses on lived experiences on climbing the

ladder to become CEO's working for an international nonprofit sport organization. RQ1,

IQ1, IQ2, IQ3, and IQ4 are aligned with the glass ceiling theory that explained that women have the experience, motivation, education, and competence to be CEOs at international sports organizations (Spencer et al., 2019). RQ2 focuses on barriers to acquiring the experience needed to qualify for CEO positions. RQ2, IQ5, IQ6, and IQ7 are aligned with the glass ceiling theory that focus on invisible barrier that women face that block them from transitioning to higher corporate leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). RQ3 focuses on the lived experiences in talent management, development, mentoring, and training processes. RQ3, IQ8, IQ9, IQ10, and IQ11 are aligned with the glass ceiling theory that women face retention, promotion, and recruitment due to corporate practices, stereotypes that cause behavioral and cultural biases, and cultural explanations (Spencer et al., 2019).

In addition, I took field notes on the participants during the interview process. Researchers such as Creswell and Creswell (2017) noted that face-to-face interviews are used in qualitative research to allow the researcher to insert themselves in the conversation in the participants' environment. However, due to the COVID 19 virus, the interviews took place via telephone instead of face-to-face interviews with the participants. I used semi-structured, open-ended interview questions with the participants to allow all the participants to share that lived experiences about the phenomena being studied. In addition, Creswell and Creswell (2017) reported that semi-structured let all the participants in a study ask a question without a predetermined answer for participants. I recorded the participants' expressions and nonverbal communication, and expressions in a journal to provide in-depth responses for data analysis.

An interview protocol guide was created to help the researcher ask the participants the interview questions for this study. The participants were asked the asked the participants the same interview questions. Patton (2015) reported that interviews are used in qualitative studies to seek participants' responses for data collection concerning their lived experiences (see Appendix A). Also, Patton (2015) reported that interview protocol should be developed before conducting the interviews to create a sequential approach that can be followed in the interview process. The interview protocol explained the interview process with each participant, such as the informed consent and the participant's rights and responsibilities in the interview process (Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2015). Each participant was asked if they have any questions concerning the interview process about to take place. The interview lasted from 25 to 35 minutes in length, depending on the conversation with the participants.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Procedures for Recruitment

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Next, the researcher obtained permission to recruit participants by posting a flyer on several international sports' nonprofit websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, seeking participants for this study (see Appendix B). After potential participants responded to the recruitment flyer, they were emailed a letter of invitation explaining the purpose of the research and the requirement for participating in the study (see Appendix C). Also, participants who volunteered to participate in the interview were emailed an informed consent form to review and to note their willingness

to participate (see Appendix D). After obtaining the participants' consent to participate in the study, I allowed the participants to provide a day and time they would be available to participate in the interview. The interviews were planned to be conducted by telephone or zoom, an online platform. In addition, the participants were advised that they had the option to withdraw from the study at will at any time.

A recruitment flyer was posted on Facebook and LinkedIn seeking participants for this study. The international sports organizations such as the United Way Worldwide, the Sports Professional Associations and Organization, the American Baseball Coaches Association, the Amateur Athletic Union, the Salvation Army Worldwide the International Sports Programming Initiative, Global Sports Foundation, Challenged Athletes, Adaptive Sports Access for Wounded Warriors, Ball for All, Peace Players International, Project Fit America, and Right to Play.

Potential participants who responded to the recruitment flyer were sent a letter of invitation by email explaining the purpose of the study and the requirement for participating in the study. Participants who volunteered to participate in the study were emailed an informed consent form to review and sign stating that they are willing to participate.

An invitation letter was created to seek participation in the study. After potential participants responded to the recruitment flyer, the invitation letter was sent to them. Also, after gaining consent and explaining the research protocol to each participant, a set of interview questions were used for the interviews with the participants for this study using an interview protocol. All participants were asked the same questions, but

additional probing questions were used on the participants' responses. Once the process was explained to the participants, each participant was made aware that they have the option to withdraw from the study at will at any time.

Before the interviews were conducted with the participants, the consent form was signed noting that they were willing to participate in the study. Also, all ethical procedures were followed before, during and after the interviews were conducted to ensure that all instruments were used in an ethical way to not cause harm to the participant.

Data was collected through the telephone and zoom online platform. The semi structured interviews were conducted within a 3-week period. The interview with each participant was scheduled from 45 minutes to one hour depending on the flow of the conversation with each participant.

Patton (2015) reported that interviews are an important way of obtaining the views and perceptions of participants in a study. The interview process began by making sure the participants were relaxed and feel that they were able to express themselves freely during the interview process. Also, I used an interview protocol to conduct each interview with the participants. The interviews were not recorded due to the participants did not wanting their conversation recorded. The interviews were sent back to each participant for member checking of the interview data. The participants had one week to return the interviews to me. Also, will use a USB drive to store the data from the transcripts.

A debriefing session was conducted with each of the participants for this study. Debriefing is a procedure that is conducted after completing a study (Creswell, 2017). The participants were thanked for their time and effort in being interviewed. Also, each participant was provided with my name and contact information for follow-up questions they may have about the study. In addition, the participants were provided with an overall summary of the results from the study after it was completed.

Procedures for Data Collection

Data collection sets boundaries for gathering information through the interview process and developing the protocol to record the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For the study, I identified the participants through purposeful sampling method. The data for my research was collected using interviews with the participants by telephone). The Coronavirus pandemic has affected the way the world conduct business. I conducted the interviews with the women CEOs by telephone.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), identifying areas and participants may include four aspects. The interview setting, the participants to be interviewed, the event or content the participants will discuss in their talk, and the process. The strategy for recruiting my research participants included sending a crafted message to prospective women CEOs by email. The interview process was explained to all participants in this research study. The interview questions were shared with the participants ahead of time. According to Pearson (2012), everyone should perform an interview following moral rules to bring about the greatest good or happiness for everyone concerned.

Followup Procedures and Participants Exit

A debriefing session was conducted with each of the study participants after each interview session to answer any questions the participants may have about the interview process. Debriefing is a procedure performed after completing a study to address any concerns and answer questions from participants concerning the research and the interviews methods (Creswell, 2017). For participants who may feel uncomfortable or feel anxious from the interview, I provided them with the national mental health number as a resource for the participant to call. I thank the participants for their time participating in the research study. In addition, I provided each participant with my name and contact information for follow-up questions they may have about the research. After this study, I provided each participant with the overall findings from this study, the data analysis, and the completed results.

<div align="center">

Qualitative Data Analysis Plan

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The data collection process was done from open ended interviews, journal notes, and member checking of the data were synthesized and analyzed to understand how gender differentially challenges women candidates' opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored the limitations women faced when obtaining CEO positions, such as leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports organizations. Creswell (2017) described qualitative data analysis as organizing the data by breaking it into different units, synthesizing the data, searching for different patterns, and deciding what is important in the transcribed data. Also, Lester et al. (2020) noted that data analysis

assists the researcher in synthesizing and identifying certain characteristics such as keywords and phrases used to structure the information. Also, the documented information was grouped according to the theoretical framework to offer more meaningful data analysis.

The data analysis process followed Giorgi's five steps process to analyze the data collected during the interview. It includes interviewing the eight women CEOs to describe their lived experience, reflecting the phenomenon under study. It was a descriptive phenomenological study. The data analysis was completed after the interviews had been transcribed and the interview data has been completed and analyzed the data from the participants.

The first step of the phenomenological method was for the researcher to assume an attitude to the phenomenological perspective. The process included bracketing my everyday knowledge to take a new view of the data collected in the phenomenological process. I set aside my cultural viewpoints, and theoretical perspectives (Giorgi, 2009). The data were seen as it appeared without doubt or other beliefs. Also, the data were analyzed without any perceived biases toward the participants.

The second step was that the data analysis required reviewing and reading the complete narrative to fully view the participants' experiences (Giorgi, 2012). The participants' descriptions were displayed to capture their experiences and attitudes from their everyday life. Their narratives were critically reflecting the participants' experiences to describe their experiences and how they feel about their view. The interview data were reviewed and read line-by-byline marking certain words and phrases related to the

participants' experiences they noted in the interviews. I also provided codes to words, and patterns.

The third data analysis process was determining meaning within the narrative so that the data can be dealt with in manageable way (Giorgi, 2009, p. 10). This process was done by reading the transcribed interview data several times to determine the meaning of the interview text. The reading of the text material was done so that the person does not change the meaning of the text materials being presented (Giorgi, 2009).

The fourth step in the data analysis process transforms the "meaning units into a psychologically sensitive descriptive expression of the narrative" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 2). This was done at the phenomenon and psychological level to practical science instead of the practice's metaphysical level. The meaning of the units was expressed in the third person to make accurate meanings conveyed by the participants.

The fifth step in the data analysis process was the synthesis of the general psychological structure from the psychological constituents of the experiences from the participants (Giorgi, 2009, p. 5). Giorgi (2009) noted that members differ from the concepts of elements because they are context dependent. The purpose of this step is grounded in the phenomenological idea of parts and whole (Giorgi, 2009). The value of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Descriptive words or phrases were constructed based on the participants' psychological expressions. I reviewed the transcribed data looking at the participants experiences as a whole marking words and phrases to determine different patterns and themes that emerge from the interview data.

The study's data collection involved interviewing the participants through telephone. The entire narrative was read to understand the whole situation or lived experience described by the participants. According to Giorgi (2009), the research makes scientific phenomenological reduction assumptions and delineates psychological meaning units. It is determined whenever a psychological perspective and mindful of the phenomenon being researched, it experiences a transition in importance when the description is reread from the beginning (Giorgi, 2009, p, 182). The participants had different expressions that highlighted the CEOs' psychological meaning to their views and perceptions of the interview questions. It required the use of imaginative variation and rendering implicit factors explicit (Giorgi, 2009). I used the transformed meaning units while still operating with the scientific phenomenological reduction, expression as the basis for describing the experiences' psychological structure.

Coding of Data

Coding is the process of identifying a passage in a text or other data items and searching for identifying concepts, and finding relationships between them (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Coding of the data was conducted using a software Atlas ti to organize the data for data analysis (Hwang, 2008). Atlas.ti software was used in all phases of the data analysis process to manage the data collected. Atlas.ti allowed the researcher to work more effectively with the transcribed data to simplify the coding of the data and helps to identify keywords and phrases faster. In addition, Hwang (2008) reported that, Atlas.ti software supports theoretical analysis, allows the recovery of indexed text, and other important information in the data analysis process. The software also helped in

managing the interpretation of the data using a hierarchical structured tree to sequence index categories.

Interview data from telephone interviews were transcribed by me. I reviewed the transcripts of the interviews data several times to edit the data for patterns and themes that emerge from the data. Coding was conducted to allow me to understand women CEOs' lived experiences and analyze their views and perceptions. Codes were conducted during the research process based on the data collected and analyzed. Coding was conducted manually for data analysis. The process of researching and comparing new data with existing data was done through constant comparison. As each step in the coding process begins, it was essential for the researcher to review previous data so that connectedness can be made until saturation is achieved (Urquhart, 2013).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness

I addressed the validity issues throughout the research process to ensure that there was trust all the way. All transactions and dealings with the participants were transparent.

Credibility

I made sure that participants agreed with my research and the interpretations. During the final stage of my study, I conducted member checking of interview transcripts with participants. Member checking was performed by sending transcribed data back to each participant to check for accuracy.

Transferability

Data collected for my study was transferred and analyzed accurately. Transferability was accomplished by being transparent in providing the reader with an in-depth description of the location of the study and a detailed description of the participants in this study. I provided precise details of the steps for the research process so that other researchers can follow the same steps in conducting the study in a similar manner. In addition, I provided a detailed description of the procedures and findings of this study so that it can be replicated to other settings. Also, I conducted individual interviews with each participant, created detailed notes during the interviews which were transcribed for data analysis with the participants.

Dependability

Careful attention was given to my study's final report, including analyzing discrepant data to ensure credibility and trustworthiness to my research. I ensured that the participants' narratives documented during the interview process do not change over time. The analysis of the data collected was valid and dependable. In addition, I used audit trails to illustrate that the findings are based on the participants' narratives. Also, I was transparent during the data collection and analysis process.

Confirmability

Confirmability is when the researchers' findings are based on the participants' interview narratives in a study rather than the researcher's bias. To increase confirmability to this study, I created the sample size for this study according to the guidelines of the qualitative method that supported the study's findings. Moreover, I

minimized personal bias in the data collection process with the participants by setting aside my personal views about the participant when conducting the interviews (Connelly et al., 2016). Confirmability is a part of trustworthiness in a study; therefore, I made sure the findings are reported accurately (Connelly et al., 2016). In addition, I searched for and described negative cases from the participants' responses about their experiences and viewpoints that may differ from the overall interview questions. It was conducted to ensure confirmability in the research study.

Ethical Procedures

I ensured that I eliminated biases throughout the research process according to the APA code of ethics 1.08 Principal E and respect the participants' rights and dignity. I did not knowingly participate in or condone the activities of others based upon such prejudices. I abided by the Walden IRB document's rules, including gaining access to the participants' data, and describing the women participating in the research. I made sure that the recruitment materials and process for the participants are free of ethical concerns. Moral justification is essential in conducting research. It is the thinking process of rationalizing because unethical behavior is used (Lussier, 2016). Lussier described some rationales used to justify unethical behavior as higher purpose, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, fair comparison, attribution of blame. Throughout the research process, I made decisions utilizing my moral values as criteria for judgment.

Ethics are the standards of right and wrong that influence behavior (Lussier, 2016). Any of the women participating in the research could refuse to participate or

decide to withdrawal for any reason. I address ethical concerns related to data collection and activities intervention accordingly. I provided a conducive and safe location and environment for the interview and treated all correspondence during the research process as confidential. If, for some reason, any of the women CEOs is uncomfortable talking about her lived experience for fear of retaliation, such a request will be honored and documented. People are less likely to report unethical behavior because they do not want to be whistleblowers when they perceive that the violation is not severe and when the offender is their friend (Lussier, 2016). I treated the data collected from the women CEOs to the highest ethical standard. It will be anonymous and confidential. I protected the storage and dissemination of personal data and destroy such data at the institution's discretion. Participants did not receive incentives, compensation, or payment for participating in the study. According to Babbie (2017), research participants must make sure that they are not overpaid.

Treatment of Human Participants

Participants were treated with respect and dignity. I respected their privacy, and data collected during the interviews will be treated with confidentiality. Participants had the right to refuse to participate or withdraw early from the study. There was a provision for participants to respond to any predictable adverse event.

Treatment of Data

Information and data collected during research remained confidential and had no confidentiality breach. The interview data was kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home.

Identities of participants in the study were kept confidential. Data will be stored for 7 years and destroyed afterward.

Threats to Validity

There was a plan to send an initial email to the research participants some days before the actual interview. It was an opportunity to establish trust with the research participants, review ethical considerations, and complete the consent form. During the initial email, I checked the participants' research questions to allow the participants to ponder the interview questions and prepare a better descriptive answer when the actual interview is conducted. Bias and threats to validity may be present in all research studies regardless of the methodology and are clearly articulated in the final research paper. I practiced transparency throughout the research process by conducting an ethical qualitative study to achieve validity. I ensured that I practice internal-facing transparency by being clear and transparent about all aspects of the research to the participants.

Summary

The research design and rationale, methodology, data collection and analysis, and ethical practices were described in Chapter 3. The research process enabled me to explore the limitations women faced when aspiring to CEO positions in terms of leadership development, talent management, and policies in international nonprofit sports organizations. I addressed challenges this population experienced during their career journeys to becoming CEOs. To understand leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies, women need to overcome gender biases for more successful leadership. In Chapter 4, I provide the results of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore challenges women face in terms of obtaining CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. I explored limitations this population faced involving leadership development, talent management, and policies in international nonprofit sports organizations. Also, this study included information about challenges this population experienced during their career journeys to becoming CEOs. The phenomenological design was used to explore this topic. A descriptive phenomenological approach was used to describe and explore phenomena. A change in research design was made to the research study from phenomenology descriptive to generic qualitative due to paucity of data. The original proposal noted that the interview would be conducted using Zoom, an online platform. There was a change to the data collection process because the participants did not want to be interviewed using Zoom, so I used telephone for the interviews and wrote down each participant's responses to the interview questions. This was done due the participants did not want their interviews recorded. Also, the interviews with the participants lasted from 25 to 35 minutes instead of from 45 minutes to one hour. This study addressed a research gap by investigating this topic. Results of this study may provide more information and knowledge regarding challenges of obtaining CEO positions in international nonprofit sports organizations. Data that emerged from interviews revealed factors concerning this topic. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How do women CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations describe their lived experiences involving attempting to become CEOs?

RQ2: How do women CEOs describe barriers to acquiring experiences needed to qualify for these positions?

RQ3: How do women CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations describe their lived experiences involving talent management, development, mentoring, and training processes needed to achieve their positions?

This chapter includes the data collection process, data analysis verification procedures, and a discussion of findings from this study. I discuss the setting and demographics of participants, followed by data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a summary.

Setting

A recruitment flyer about this research was created and explained the research topic, purpose, and interview questions. I obtained permission to post the flyer and recruit participants involved with international nonprofit sports organizations via LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The following international nonprofit sports organizations were targeted: United Way Worldwide, the Sports Professional Associations and Organization, American Baseball Coaches Association, Amateur Athletic Union, Salvation Army Worldwide, International Sports Programming Initiative, Global Sports Foundation, Challenged Athletes, Adaptive Sports Access for Wounded Warriors, Ball for All, Peace Players International, Project Fit America, and Right to Play. Data was collected using telephone interviews because participants did not want to use Zoom. The participants did not receive incentives nor compensation for their interviews.

Female CEOs who volunteered for this study met criteria to participate. All participants were female CEOs who had 2 years of experience as CEOs of nonprofit sports organization in the U.S. All participants had experience of conducting sports business internationally and were willing to take the time to participate in the study. They were 18 and older. Interviews lasted from 25 to 35 minutes depending on the flow of conversation. I wanted interviews to last from 45 minutes to one hour, but participants would not answer several probing and follow-up questions during interview sessions.

Demographics

Participants were eight women who were in CEO positions working for international sports organizations. One participant was White, and seven participants were African American. Participant ages ranged from 35 to 50. Years of experience serving as CEOs in nonprofit sports organizations ranged from 2 to eight years. One participant had a bachelor's degree, five participants had master's degrees, and two participants had doctorates. All participants worked for organizations that were specifically focused on basketball (See Table 1).

Interviews were conducted with participants until saturation was reached. Creswell (2017) noted saturation is reached when participants provide researchers with no new knowledge about the topic. In addition, I conducted member checking to make sure data was accurate.

Table 2

Demographics of Participants

Participants	Race	Age	Years as	Education	Type of Sports

			CEO	Level	Focus
P1	African American	50	7	Doctorate	Basketball
P2	African American	45	4	Doctorate	Basketball
P3	African American	35	3	Masters	Basketball
P4	African American	40	8	Masters	Basketball
P5	African American	35	5	Masters	Basketball
P6	White	45	3	Masters	Basketball
P7	African American	36	5	Bachelors	Basketball
P8	African American	32	2	Masters	Basketball

Data Collection

Data were collected for this study using semi-structured open-ended interviews with participants. Interviews were conducted by telephone due to the busy lives of participants. The participants did not want to be interviewed using Zoom, so I used telephone interviews and wrote down responses to interview questions. Interview data were collected during a 4-week time span, which was less than expected due to several potential participants canceling their interviews with me. Many potential participants were traveling because of spring recruiting. The original proposal noted that the interview would be conducted using Zoom, an online platform. There was a change to the data collection process because the participants did not want to be interviewed using Zoom, so I used telephone for the interviews and wrote down each participant's responses to the interview questions. Interviews lasted from 25 to 35 minutes depending on the flow of conversation. I noted that interviews were intended to last from 45 minutes to one hour,

but participants did not answer several probing questions. Also, the participants did not

want their interviews recorded because they were afraid their identities would be revealed

to other people (see Table 3).

Table 3

Interview Lengths

Participants	Interview Length	Length of Pages
P1	35 Minutes	8 Pages
P2	25 Minutes	6 Pages
P3	35 Minutes	6 Pages
P4	35 Minutes	6 Pages
P5	35 Minutes	7 Pages
P6	34 Minutes	6 Pages
P7	25 Minutes	5 Pages
P8	35 Minutes	7 Pages

Creswell and Creswell (2017) noted that the use of open-ended interviews is an

effective way to obtain the perceptions and experiences of participants in a qualitative

research study. I began the interview process by making sure the participants were

relaxed in a way that they would express themselves openly and freely. An interview

guide was used in conducting the interviews so that there could be some organization in

the interview process with each of the participants. The interview protocol was used to

explain the interview process with each participant, such as the informed consent and the

participant's rights and responsibilities in the interview process. Each participant was

asked if they had any questions concerning the interview process about to take place. All

of the participants declined to be recorded, so the researcher wrote down the participants

responses during the interview process. All participants were asked the same interview

questions during each of the interviews. I used probes with the participants so the

participants could provide a conversation around each of the interview questions.

Member checking was used to check the accuracy of the data collected from each of the

participants by sending the transcribed interview data back to each of the participants to

check the accuracy of their interview data. None of the participants suggested any

changes to their interview document. The data from the participants were stored on a

USB drive for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The research method and design for this study started out as a descriptive

phenomenological paradigm was used to explore the challenges women face in obtaining

CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored

the limitations women faced in aspiring to CEO positions, such as leadership. Due to the

paucity of data, I had to change the research design from a descriptive phenomenological

to a generic qualitative study.

I followed Giorgi's (2009) six steps process to analyze the data collected during

the interview. It included interviewing the eight women CEOs to describe their lived

experience, reflecting on the phenomenon under study using a generic qualitative

approach due to a paucity of data that did not fulfill a descriptive phenomenological

approach. I completed the data analysis after transcribing the interviews.

The first step of the thematic analysis method was for me to become familiar with the data. This included immersing myself in the data to understand the breadth and depth of the content of the data. I transcribed, read and re-read the data set while searching for patterns and meaning. Also, I took notes on the patterns and themes in the data set. The process included bracketing my everyday knowledge to take a new view of the data collected in the generic qualitative process. I set aside my cultural viewpoints and theoretical perspectives. The data were seen as it appeared without doubt or other beliefs. Also, the data were analyzed without any perceived biases toward the participants.

The second step was that the data analysis required initial code generation. This process includes generating the initial codes to organize the data with full and equal attention given to each data item. I labeled and organized data items into meaningful groups. Participant descriptions were displayed to capture their experiences and attitudes from their everyday life. Their narratives were critically reflecting the participants' experiences to describe their experiences and how they feel about their view. The interview data were reviewed and read line-by-line marking certain words and phrases related to the participants' experiences they noted in the interviews. I also provided codes to words, and patterns.

The third data analysis process was generating initial themes. This process was accomplished by sorting codes into initial themes. Also, I identified meaning and relationships between initial codes. I also used diagrams and mapping the data by writing themes and their defining properties. This process was done by reading the transcribed interview data several times to determine the meaning of the interview text. The reading

of the text material was done so that the person does not change the meaning of the text materials being presented.

The fourth step in the data analysis process was theme review. This process was done by identifying coherent patterns at the level of the coded data. Also, I reviewed the entire data set as a whole. This process was done by ensuring there was enough data to support a theme. I also collapsed overlapping themes and rework and refine codes and themes.

The fifth step in the data analysis process was theme defining and naming (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This process was done by identifying the story of each of the identified themes. Also, I organized the broader story of the data set to respond to the research questions of the study. I reviewed the transcribed data looking at the participants experiences as a whole marking words and phrases to determine different patterns and themes that emerge from the interview data. The sixth step in the data analysis process was report production (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This process involved presenting a concise and interesting account of the story told by the data both within and across the themes. This was done by writing a compelling argument that addressed the research questions.

The study's data collection involved interviewing the participants through telephone. The entire narrative was read to understand the whole situation or lived experience described by the participants. The participants had different expressions that highlighted the CEOs' expressions and perceptions. It required the use of imaginative variation and rendering implicit factors explicit (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Lochmiller et al.,

2021). I used the thematic analysis approach in the data analysis process while still operating with the scientific generic qualitative approach in obtaining the lived experiences of the participants for this research study.

The data collection process was done from open ended interviews, journal notes, and member checking of the data were synthesized and analyzed to understand how gender differentially challenges women candidates' opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored the limitations women faced when obtaining CEO positions, such as leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports organizations. Creswell and Creswell (2017) described qualitative data analysis as organizing the data by breaking it into different units, synthesizing the data, searching for different patterns, and deciding what is important in the transcribed data. Also, Lester et al. (2020) noted that data analysis assists the researcher in synthesizing and identifying certain characteristics such as keywords and phrases used to structure the information. Also, the documented information was grouped according to the theoretical framework to offer more meaningful data analysis.

Coding of Data

Coding is the process of identifying a passage in a text or other data items and searching for identifying concepts, and finding relationships between them (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Coding of the data were conducted using a software Atlas ti to organize the data for data analysis (Hwang, 2008). Atlas.ti software was used in all phases of the data analysis process to manage the data collected. Atlas.ti allowed the researcher to

work more effectively with the transcribed data to simplify the coding of the data and helps to identify keywords and phrases faster. In addition, Hwang (2008) reported that, Atlas.ti software supports theoretical analysis, allows the recovery of indexed text, and other important information in the data analysis process. The software also helps in managing the interpretation of the data using a hierarchical structured tree to sequence index categories.

I reviewed interview data several times to edit data for patterns and themes that emerged from data. Coding was conducted to allow the researcher to understand the women CEOs' lived experiences and analyze their views and perceptions. Coding was conducted manually for data analysis. The process of researching and comparing new data with existing data were done through constant comparison (Urquhart & Fernandez, 2013). As each step in the coding process begins, it was essential for the researcher to review previous data so that connectedness can be made until saturation is achieved (Urquhart, 2013). The researcher used Atlas ti to code specific words and phrases identified in the data from the text descriptions. Atlas ti was used to calculate word frequency that supported the researcher's review of the text. The most relevant words or phrases in the text data were summarized in table 3. General words that supported the sentence structure but did not align with the research questions were not included in the coding. Examples of the frequency words such as "unless," sometimes, and although, were not used in the frequency count. The results of the coding generated 44 codes that were related to the research questions (see Table 4). The codes were combined based on the research question to develop patterns and themes.

Table 4

Codes and Frequency

Codes	Frequency	Codes	Frequency
CEO	40	Motivation	30
International sports	35	Family	27
Barriers	28	Sports	50
Challenges	27	Opportunities	15
Supports	29	Goals	26
Training	29	Achieve	20
Played basketball	24	Recruitment	27
Worked in nonprofits	26	Discrimination	29
Women	41	Women sports	24
Travel	28	Prejudice	23
Determination	26	Men sports	20
Lack of support	25	Perception	24
Language barriers	10	Mother	14
Father	20	Friends	13
Funding	10	Coaches	25
Goals	21	Husband	15
Mentors	27	Women coaches	10
Men coaches	15	Workshops	5
Conferences	20	Meetings	15
Research articles	5	Books	5
Self-taught	5	Hard work	29
Barriers	28	Play sports	28
The World	27	Different countries	26
Professional development	27	Training	26

Categories and Themes

The research followed the data analysis by Saldana (2011) book on coding the data, developing categories, and listing themes that arrive from the coded data. A code is a researcher-generated construct that helps to make meaning to each participant's expression for the purpose of categorizing, making a pattern, theory building, and other analytic processes (Saldana, 2013). In this study, coding was employed to highlight

sections of text from the participants' transcripts. The coded data initial categorization

consisted of a broad range of categories due to the number of codes identified during the

line-by-line data review process. I used the codes in the process coding step and the codes

were arranged based on the three research questions. The detailed categories were

reduced into three categories developed by mapping the research questions for this study.

Table 5

Codes, Categories, and Themes

Codes	Categories	Themes
Played basketball, worked in nonprofits, other women, travel, self-determination, family, travel, sports, opportunities goals achieve, recruitment, motivation, CEO	Motivation to become CEO	RQ1-Theme 1: Hard work and determination, RQ1-Theme 2: Recruit women to play sports around the world; RQ 1: Theme 3: Experience traveling to different countries
Discrimination, prejudice, women, men sports, women sports men perceptions, lack of support, language barriers, funding, sponsors	Barriers and Challenges	RQ2- Theme 4: Prejudice toward women in sports
Coaches, friends, husband, mother, family, nonprofits, mentors, women coaches, men coaches	Supports to become CEO	RQ2- Theme 5: Support from family and coaches RQ3- Theme 6: Overcome barriers by seeking help from mentors
Workshops, conferences, meetings, coaches, research articles, books, self-taught	Training to become CEO	RQ3- Theme 7: Attend professional development training

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The issue of trustworthiness of the data in qualitative studies is often questioned

by many quantitative researchers due to the elements of reliability and validity being

addressed in a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The original proposal was to conduct a

descriptive phenomenology with the participants, but due to a paucity of data that did not fulfill a descriptive phenomenological approach, I had to change the research design to a generic qualitative study.

I addressed the validity issues throughout the research process to ensure that there is trust all the way. All transactions and dealings with participants were transparent. Transcript checking is one component of credibility, which entails the participants reviewing their interview transcripts for accuracy. I also conducted member checking by sending the interview data back to each participant to check for accuracy. I ensured trustworthiness in the data collection and data analysis by making sure that creditability, transferability, confirmability, and dependability were addressed.

Credibility

I made sure that participants agreed with my research construct and the interpretations of the data. During the final stage of my study, I conducted member checking of the interview transcript with the participants by writing down on paper what each of the participants said during each of the interviews. Member checking was performed by sending the transcribed data back to each participant to check the data for accuracy. Participants did not make any corrections to their transcribed data.

Transferability

Data collected for my study was transferred and analyzed accurately. Transferability was accomplished by being transparent in providing the reader with an in-depth description of the location of the study and a detailed description of the participants in this study. I provided precise details of the steps for the research process so that other

researchers can follow the same steps in conducting the study in a similar manner. In addition, I provided a detailed description of the procedures and findings of this study so that it can be generalized to other settings. Also, I conducted individual interviews with each participant, and created detailed notes.

Dependability

Careful attention was given to my study's final report, including analyzing discrepant data to ensure credibility and trustworthiness to my research. I ensured that the participants' narratives documented during the interview process did not change over time. I made sure analysis of the data collected was valid and dependable. In addition, I used audit trails to illustrate that the findings are based on the participants' narratives. I documented the research findings that was consistent with the current literature on the challenges women face in obtaining CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. Also, I explained the steps of that data collection process and analysis process by making sure that there was truthfulness in reporting the research findings from this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is when the researchers' findings are based on the participants' interview narratives in a study rather than the researcher's bias. To increase confirmability to this study, I created the sample size for this study according to the guidelines of the qualitative method that supported the study's findings. Moreover, I minimized personal bias in the data collection process with the participants by setting aside my personal views about the participants when conducting the interviews.

Confirmability is a part of trustworthiness in a study; therefore, I made sure the findings were reported accurately (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In addition, I searched for and described negative cases from the participants' responses about their experiences and viewpoints that may differ from the overall interview questions. It was conducted to ensure confirmability in the research study.

Results

There was a total of seven themes that emerged from data that aligned with three research questions. These were hard work and determination, recruiting women to play sports from around the world, experiences involving traveling internationally, support from family and coaches, prejudice toward women in sports, overcoming barriers by seeking help from mentors, and attending professional development training.

Theme 1: Hard Work and Determination

Participants expressed becoming a CEO of an international sports organization takes hard work and determination to achieve their goal. All of the participants noted that they put in hard work over the years to become a CEO of an international nonprofit sport organization. The participants also noted that they displayed a lot of determination to make it to the top of a nonprofit sports organization due to many discriminations displayed by many men in the sports organizations around the world. All eight of the participants responded to this theme.

P1 said:

Love for sports started with me at an early age by my parents allowing me to play sports in middle and high school. I worked for several sports' organization

throughout the United States both part time and full time. One of my goals was to

obtain a sport organization where I could promote young and older girls in

playing sports. I developed my sports program several years ago to allow women

to have a part in basketball. There is a lot of talented young ladies out there both

in the United States and in other countries. I began as a part-time team manager

then moved into a full-time position as a sports agent. It was not an easy talk due

to being a female, you have a lot of people who noted that you could not achieve

it.

P2 stated:

I had to go through the steps up climbing to the top. I was a part-time coach first

and I had to fight to get to the top. I had to start at the bottom and work my up.

Also, I wanted to help women around the world to have a change to explore

basketball to their full potential.

P3 noted:

I wanted to provide women around the world a chance to play basketball. I played

basketball in middle and high school and say that society does not recognize

women as playing sports other than on small softball and volleyball games. I was

determined to make a difference in the lives of women both here in the United

States and around the world.

P4 reported:

I think that hard work and self-determination for me to rise to the top of becoming

a CEO of an international non-profit organization. My father recruit's talent in

men basketball both here in the United States and internationally. So, I felt the need to focus on helping women to achieve their goals of being recognize for their talent in the basketball arena. Also, my family, such as my mother who played basketball in high school and in college provides me with the support that I need to manage the organization.

P5 stated:

Feel that hard work and determination helped me to rise to the top of becoming a CEO of an international non-profit organization. My husband and I coach the AAU teams in our area for men. So, I saw the need to include women basketball and also to recruit talent from women in other countries in the area of basketball. Basketball is an international sport but many women in other countries need to be expose to it the same as men.

P6 noted:

I have worked in a nonprofit in my adult life. I played basketball throughout high school and college. I started recruiting women to play basketball for some local college teams. After that I wanted to start a nonprofit to help young women in other countries to come to the United States and play basketball for college and other professional team. Also, my desire is to provide a good experience for women in sports. My organization is small, but I get the job done.

P7 stated:

I started out with a nonprofit helping girls in a mentoring program for K-12 after school program. I love basketball and saw the need to expand my non-profit for

sports in the United States for girls. About five years ago I started recruiting

basketball internationally and turned into a nonprofit to help women in other

countries to train for basketball. Things have not been easy for me but with hard

work and determination you can achieve your goals in life.

P8 noted:

It was just something that I wanted to do. I started out as a coach in the AAU

league, and I just wanted to recruit women from outside the United States. I

always wanted to run a nonprofit so here I am running one. One thing I can say is

that if you work and you can see the results of your labor.

Theme 2: Recruiting Women to Play Sports Around the World

Participants expressed that their desire to become an CEO in an international

sports organization was to recruit women to play sports around the world but especially

in the United States. The participants noted that they have to try and recruit women to

play sports from around the world where in some areas women are looked down on and

men look at women as homemakers and taking care of the children. All of the women

noted that recruitment is very competitive, and they have to work hard to recruit the new

players to play different sports. Six of the eight participants responded to this theme.

P2 said:

"What motivated me to become a CEO is how women are treated in the industry,

which pushed me forward to be a CEO. I had this desire early in life. My parents

said to be to go for your dream and one of my dreams was to own a company.

Also, I like sports and played sports in middle and high school. I also played in

college before I got hurt. This is a way for me to give back to other women. My

desire is to recruit women from around the world to play basketball to achieve

their dreams.

P3 noted:

I wanted to recruit women to the game of basketball from around the world in

other places than in the United States. There are many women around the world

who like sport and need the opportunity to highlight their talent. I feel that I can

fill the need in that area. I hold basketball campy and recruit women from several

areas of the world to come and experience basketball here in the United States.

P5 noted:

I can credit this step to becoming a CEO of an international sports organization to

my husband. Also, I say the need to include more women in sports such as

basketball. I played basketball in college and also in high school which motivated

me to reach out to help other women. I feel that women can achieve the same

goals in basketball as men you just have to provide them the opportunities to

achieve their goals, and that is what I try to do each day. I want to recruit women

from different countries to play sports especially basketball.

P6 stated:

My mother and father helped me to start my international sports organization. My

father was military, and we travel to various places both here in the United States

and throughout other countries. I say firsthand the needs of women in other

countries when it comes to playing sports. Women in other countries are not

valued as people to play sports.

P7 expressed:

My goals are to help women from around the world to have a chance to play

sports. We run different summer camps that recruit women from different places

internationally to play here in the United States in the summertime.

P8 reported:

It was my love for sports and wanted to help women all over the world to achieve

their dreams of playing basketball. It was something I played in high school and in

college.

Theme 3: Experience Traveling to Different Countries

Participants reported they have some experiences traveling to different places in

the world and they saw the need to help women in sports internationally due to the lack

of opportunities. They noted that they have to travel extensively around the world to

different countries to recruit the best women players to play sports. Five of the eight

participants responded to this theme.

P8 stated:

I was not exposed to international sports. I started out in the AAU league which I

am current a part of I just wanted to reach women throughout the world in playing

basketball. But I have traveled to several places outside of the United States and

attended sports games. Through this venture, I have learned a lot about

international sports and the need to help women in the sports area.

P6 noted:

> Yes, I was exposed to international sports due to traveling with my family to various countries. I say the needs of women and how people do not give them a chance to play sports. I want to recruit women here in the United States and in other countries and provide the good one a chance to live their dreams of playing sports.

P1 expressed:

> My parents were in the military, and we traveled a lot. So, my exposure to sports programs was in the international arena. Women were not regarded as doing well at sports, but I practice a lot of basketball and was able to do very well at it. Yes, I worked in Puerto Rico and other places before coming back to the United States and started a nonprofit and basketball team for girls' sports. I feel that my earlier exposure to basketball helped me to become a CEO of a sports programs and to give back to the community.

P2 noted:

> Yes, I worked in Canada! And this provides me the desire to include more areas of the world in basketball for women especially women of color. I worked for a sports organization, and I felt that they did not provide women enough opportunities to fulfil their goals and dream of playing sports.

P4 reported:

> My family was military, so we traveled all over the country both in the United States and other side the United States, so I had exposure to seeing others such as

women try hard to achieve their goals in playing basketball and other sports
internationally. It is different for women in other countries because so many men
feel that women should be at home taking care of the children. So, you have to
give them the necessary help to see beyond those factors that hinder them in
playing sports.

Theme 4: Support from Family and Coaches

Participants reported they received support from their family and former coaches
in their journey in becoming a CEO of an international sport organization. They noted
that they appreciate the support they receive from family members to help them in their
quest to become CEOs in the nonprofit international sports organization. Also, hey noted
that they received support from some of their former coaches in their quest to recruit
women to play sports from around the world to fulfill their dream of playing sports as an
adult. All eight participants responded to this theme.

P2 noted: "The only support I received was from my husband and my students I
was coaching at the time. He helped me and provided me the necessary support to fulfil
my dream of becoming a CEO sports organization." P1 stated:

My support system included my parents while I was young and other family
members supported me in my sports programs. When I got married my spouse
supported me and encouraged me to start an international sports program for girls
to help them to develop their skills in playing basketball. Also, being part of the
military enabled me to see the need for something like this from an international

standpoint because there is talent all over the world, we just need to tap into it, find those girls, and develop their skills in playing sports.

P4 noted:

>First, I receive support from my mother and father who collaborate with me in the organization. Also, I receive support from friends and other coaches both male and females. They provide much advice and help when I need the advice and help in life.

P3 expressed:

>Yes, I can say that I had support on my road to becoming CEO of my organization. I received support from my family, especially from my father and mother who played basketball in their life from high school to college. My father is a businessperson and he provided support on the business side to make sure that I fulfilled all of the requirements from a business standpoint. Also, I have a mentor who I talk to and meet often who knows about internal sports and makes contact for me on talent from other countries. I hold basketball caps to give women a chance to show the world their talent.

P5 reported:

>Yes, I can say that I get a lot of support from my husband who coaches AAU basketball. I also receive support from my family members and my mother to achieve my goals in life of helping women to be the best they can be in women sports.

P6 expressed:

Yes, like I said my mother and father influenced me to start this nonprofit in international sports to help other women with the chance of playing sports as adults in college or professionally. Also, I received help from other coaches on my way to achieving my dream of being a CEO of a nonprofit.

P8 stated:

I can say that I received a lot of support from my husband and my family, especially my father and my mother. They provide advice whenever I ask. Also, they work here to help me in the recruiting efforts and fund raising for the nonprofit.

P7 reported:

Yes, I have received support first from my family especially from my mother and father and my siblings. I also receive support from friends who help me sometime in the recruitment efforts and help sponsor people to come here in the summers months to play on the AAU teams here in the United States.

Theme 5: Prejudice Toward Women in Sports

Participants reported that many men are prejudiced towards women playing sports in many countries and also in some areas of the U.S. They noted that they face different types of discrimination from other women and especially men in their work of recruiting and helping women to continue to play sports. They noted that the glass ceiling is still there and can be a hinder to many women who are playing sports in many different countries around the world. Some feel that the woman's place is at home and taking care of children. Five of eight participants responded to this theme.

P3 stated:

I would say that some barriers to becoming a CEO is that you are working in a

male dominated world of sports and many of them feel that basketball is a man's

sports, so they try to discourage you in your quest in the non-profit because they

feel that business belong to the men.

P4 noted:

I had several barriers at that time, due to being a woman. Some people think that

women do not belong in the sports industry. One of the barriers I encounter in

prejudice. Towards women playing sports especially in other countries around the

world.

P1 expressed:

One barrier I experienced is that many do not want to see a woman working in

this industry. My most negative barriers come from men in the areas of

basketball. Many of them do not think that a women can be successful in the sport

area especially in basketball and recruit for the best young women from an

international standpoint.

P7 reported:

You need to have financial support. That is hard to get. You also hear men tell

you all the time that it will not work but I tell them watch me. You also receive

barriers from other women who say you are wasting your tie in trying to help

omen internationally to play sports when their society keep telling them that they

need to help take care of a family.

P2 noted:

> I had several barriers at that time, due to being a woman. Some people think that
> women do not belong in the sports industry. One of the barriers I encounter in
> prejudice. Many men think women cannot head or become CEOs of organization
> due to their narrow thinking that only men can achieve those goals.

Theme 6: Overcoming Barriers by Seeking Help from Mentors

Participants noted that they are able to overcome barriers by seeking help from
their mentors such as family members, coaches, and business leaders in their desire to be
the best CEO of international sports organizations. Six of eight participants responded to
this theme.

> P5 reported:
>
> Like I said earlier, the biggest barrier for me is to get the amount of funding you
> need to keep the organization going and conducting several fund-raising events
> throughout the year. We so have some sponsors, but we can use many more to
> donate the funds to keep us going. I also seek help from my mentors before
> making big decisions about the nonprofit to make sure that I am moving in the
> right direction.

P6 noted:

> You have to overcome barriers with men, other women you say you should not do
> this. Some feel that it is not enough money in this business. I am not doing it for
> the money but to help other women play basketball especially people who have
> mentored you alone the way to where you are now in the process.

P7 stated:

> Getting financial help in my nonprofit. I have fun raisers and sponsors that help
> me. A big barrier is recruiting overseas players to come here in the summer to
> play. Your mentor is a good source in helping you overcome barriers like people
> telling you it wants work or even financial advice. Also, getting someone to listen
> to you about what you are doing and getting them to help you financially in your
> endeavors.

P8 noted:

> People telling you it will not work, financing, helping girls internationally due to
> the customers and the laws in other countries. Therefore, you need to seek help
> from different mentors who have gone through similar issues that you have,
> especially in running a nonprofit. There will be issues that come up where you
> will need to seek advice from others.

P3 noted:

> From a business standpoint, I had to overcome barriers of financing my nonprofit
> and get buy-in from other organizations on what to do to become a non-profit
> organization. I now have several backers from the world of sports from many of
> the women in professional basketball.

P1 expressed:

> The barriers I had to overcome were how others felt about working with women.
> Working at it to become a full-time job. Financing the program through donations
> and gifts from friends' organizations and other sources. Being a nonprofit helps

with securing different sources such as grants and contracts. I also seek help from

my mentors on major decisions that may affect the organization. I have one

mentor that we talk to each week about different issues and some strategies on

handling them.

Theme 7: Attending Professional Development Training

Participants noted that they need more professional development to learn as much

about how to run an effective sports organization. They also noted that they try to attend

different professional development and training courses to increase their knowledge

about running sports organizations and workings for a nonprofit sports organization. Five

of eight participants responded to this theme.

P1 stated:

Attending yearly workshops with other CEOs. Also, being around other coaches

and watching what they do and what they do not helped me to become a CEO of a

sports organization. Also, I took courses on management skills from college and

that aided me to become COE of a sports organization.

P6 noted:

I did not have any training other than playing basketball while in college and high

school. My mother and father ran a nonprofit, so I guess I learned things from

them. My degree gave me some training in business, and I read a lot about

business and practice good business practices and follow the laws.

P4 reported:

I had not trained on how to become a CEO of an international company. I just

started here in the United States and finally started focusing of helping women

here in the United States and in other countries. I also attended workshops and

seminars talking to other CEO on strategies they use in their organization.

P7 stated, "I attend workshops on different topic that I feel I need to obtain more

information to help me to achieve my goals in the nonprofit which is helping women to

play sports here in the United States and internationally." P5 stated, "I had not trained on

how to become a CEO of an international organization. I researched the topic and

followed the advice of other organizations that I talked to. I also attended workshops and

similar on the topic."

Summary

This study involved explored challenges women face in obtaining CEO leadership

roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. I explored limitations involving

leadership development, talent management, and policies in international nonprofit sports

organizations. Also, I provided information about challenges this population experienced

during their career journeys to becoming CEOs. I proposed to use phenomenological

design to explore this topic, but I had to change the research design to a generic

qualitative approach due to a paucity of data that did not fulfill a descriptive

phenomenological approach. This study addressed a research gap by investigating the

glass ceiling effect and challenges participants faced with respect to working for

international nonprofit sports organizations. This study showed the need for new

epistemological perspectives in terms of exploring women who have succeeded in attaining CEO positions in international sports organizations.

In this study, there were a total of seven themes that emerged from data. Results of this study may provide more information and knowledge for women regarding challenges of obtaining CEO positions in international nonprofit sports organizations. Data that emerged from interviews revealed a variety of factors concerning challenges they faced. Chapter 4 included results of the study, setting and demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and themes that emerged from results. Chapter 5 includes interpretations of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, researcher reflections, and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore challenges women face in terms of obtaining CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations. I explored limitations this population faced when aspiring to these positions in terms of leadership development, talent management, and policies. Also, this study included information about challenges women in CEO positions experienced during their journeys to becoming CEOs. I proposed to use phenomenological design to explore this topic, but I had to change the research design to a generic qualitative approach due to a paucity of data that did not fulfill a descriptive phenomenological approach, a generic qualitative approach was used. This study addressed a research gap involving participants' lived experiences regarding the glass ceiling effect and challenges they faced with respect to working for international nonprofit sports organizations. This study showed the need for new epistemological perspectives to explore this topic. Results of this study may provide more information and knowledge for other women on challenges regarding this topic. Data that emerged from interviews revealed factors concerning challenges they faced.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, each theme is discussed within the broader context of the literature review in Chapter 2 and theoretical framework. I interpreted results to gain an understanding of lived experiences of challenges women face when obtaining CEO leadership roles in international nonprofit sports organizations.

Findings were analyzed and interpreted in the context of the glass ceiling theory. Findings include six themes that emerged from semi structured interviews. These were:

hard work and determination, recruiting women to play sports around the world, experience traveling to different countries, prejudice towards women in sports, support from family and coaches, overcoming barriers by seeking help from mentors, and attending professional development training.

Theme 1

Participants noted that it took challenging work and self-determination to move through their journeys to becoming CEOs of international sports organizations. They noted that it was love for sports that started back in middle and high school that gave them the drive to pursue international sports. They also noted that they wanted to help women in other countries achieve their dream in playing sports to their potential. They noted that their journey was hard, and they spent many hours trying to achieve their goals of becoming CEOs of international sports organizations. P3 noted she wanted to provide women around the world with a chance to play basketball, and she was determined to help make a difference in their lives. Also, participants noted that challenging work and self-determination helped them to become CEOs. Findings were consistent with research on women in leadership positions. Megheirkouni and Roomi (2017) defined transformational learning as a phenomenon that occurs when individuals critically reflect on their environment. Through this reflection, they transform their thinking and view of the world (Balasubramanian & Lathabhavan, 2017; Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017).

Theme 2

Recruiting women to play sports around the world was noted by all participants. They noted they wanted to recruit women to play basketball from around the world in

other places than the U.S. There are many women around the world who like sports and need the opportunity to highlight their talent. Participants said becoming a CEO of an international sports organization was due to a family member such as a father, mother, or husband. They also noted they saw firsthand the needs of women in other countries when it comes to playing sports. Findings from this theme are consistent with research on women playing sports. According to Spencer et al. (2019) women have trouble obtaining successful leadership careers because of male leadership's pervasive dominance. Of the top 400 nonprofit organizations within the U.S., women hold almost 19% executive leadership positions (Spencer et al., 2019). There is not enough research regarding leadership styles, behaviors, and strategies for women to overcome gender biases for successful advancements.

In addition, Adriaanse (2016) found that women are underrepresented in many high-level sports positions and across all sports-related occupations. In the United Kingdom, sports supply over 440,000 full-time jobs representing 2.3% of national employment. However, women are underrepresented in these positions (Joseph & Anderson, 2016). Joseph and Anderson (2016) found the number of women in sports leadership positions was just 22% in 2016. There is a need to explore cultural biases or why more women were not in top management positions (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018).

Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018) explained that an organization reflects its top managers who make decisions and influence individual experiences, values, and personalities. In addition, the benefits of gender diversity in top management positions outweigh the costs and value concerning women's knowledge, strategies, and decision-

making skills within some organizations (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018). The authors did not examine cultural biases or explore why more women were not in top management positions despite the data indicating the positive effects of increased gender diversity. Sinclair (2014) explained that leadership positions lack many women in many organizations in the United States. Historically, women have been defined as subordinate to men, and discrimination is still prevalent in several organizations. Also, Sinclair (2014) concluded that some women faced the problem, not that they were psychologically incapable of leadership. Still, instead, they faced barriers, stereotypes, and gender discrimination but failed to dig deeper into factors contributing to this phenomenon.

Theme 3

Participants expressed their experience traveling to different countries to recruit women to play sports. Several of them noted that they had experience traveling to different countries due to being in the military or through family vacation. P6 noted that she was exposed to international sports due to traveling with her family to various countries. She saw the needs of women and how people do not give them a chance to play sports. Also, several of the women reported that they wanted to recruit women here in the United States and in other countries and provide the good one a chance to live their dreams of playing sports. Also, some of the women worked for a sports organization, and they felt that they did not provide women enough opportunities to fulfil their goals and dream of playing sports. All of the women noted that it is different for women in other countries because so many men feel that women should be at home taking care of the

children. They reported that one has to give them the necessary help to see beyond those factors that hinder them in playing sports.

Hanold (2011) argued that viewing challenges from much broader perspectives would lead to empathic understanding in leadership. The camaraderie of the females competing in high-performance ultrarunning produces levels of caring that helps everyone perform better. The study of female runners found that they would help each other while racing and often encouraged each other. Hanold argued that this approach translates into business because it would result in in-group cohesion and high performance in individuals in the workplace. Discovering such an approach showed that despite having different intellectual beliefs about competition, empathy produces positive feelings of connection that promote working together on a deeper, more powerful level, raising everyone's performance along the way (Adriaanse, 2016; Fapohunda, 2018; Hanold, 2011).

Theme 4

Participants felt there was prejudice toward women in sports. They noted that some barriers to becoming a CEO is that you are working in a male dominated world of sports and many of them feel that basketball is a man's sports, so they try to discourage you in your quest in the non-profit because they feel that business belong to the men. The participants also noted that some people think that women do not belong in the sports industry. One of the barriers they encountered was prejudice towards women playing sports especially in other countries around the world. Many men think women cannot head or become CEOs of organization due to their narrow thinking that only men can

achieve those goals. The findings from this theme are consistent with the research on the glass theory theoretical framework on the glass ceiling (Whisenant, 2015). Whisenant (2015) explained that the role congruity theory establishes links between gender roles and leadership roles, suggesting that female leaders' prejudice comes from a less favorable evaluation of women's potential for authentic leadership based on gender. Because of this prejudice, women are disadvantaged in male-dominated areas like athletics, especially when it comes to the sex of the perceivers (Whisenant, 2015).

The glass ceiling theory was expanded on by Cotter et al. (2001) and Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) to include women and other ethnic minority individuals. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) defined the glass ceiling as a set of barriers and obstacles that are so subtle as to be transparent and yet so strong that they sometimes prevent women and other minorities from moving up the ladder to senior-level positions organizations. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) reported that the glass ceiling affects individuals through their personal experiences of racism and sexism, which can negatively affect social networks, which can reduce women's opportunities in mentoring relationships.

Theme 5

Participants noted that they received support to become a CEO of an international non-profit sports organization due to support from family members and coaches. All participants noted that they received help in their journey from different people that had an influence on their lives. Some noted that their husband encouraged them while others noted that it was their mother or father who encouraged them to pursue a CEO position at an international nonprofit sports organization. P2 reported that they received help from

their husband and former coaches. They helped her and provided her with the necessary support to fulfil her dream of becoming a CEO of an international nonprofit sport organization. Several of the participants credited the support from their mother and father who collaborated with them in the organization. Also, some received support from friends and other coaches both male and females. They provide much advice and help when they needed the advice and help in life.

Although many women receive support from family and friends in their quest to make advancement in business, they receive resistant from many men in the business community (Gopinath, 2020; Kalaitzi et al., 2017). The business sector presented the most significant challenges to women regarding gender equality and inclusion. Gopinath (2020) concluded that the study suffers because the three sectors they focused on are not similar and that the need for leadership capacity building is not consistent. Also, reporting bias and interpretation could have skewed the results of the study. The overall implications are that gender stereotypes in leadership and equal opportunities include gender-related corporate culture, inflexibility in workplace structures, and inadequate social policies. Gender and gender roles in family responsibilities and social acceptance are deeply rooted constraints that may foster the ambition gap (Kalaitzi et al., 2017). The authors stated that while the gender equality problems in these sectors are understood, they remain unresolved. The results of this study implicated cultural expectations as the origin of women's barriers to leadership positions and stringent work policies and organizational cultures. It did not blame men specifically but seemed to put the burden on society.

Theme 6

Participants had to overcome barriers by seeking help from mentors. They reported they had to overcome barriers with men. Some feel that there is not enough money in this business. I am not doing it for the money but to help other women play basketball especially people who have mentored you alone the way to where you are now in the process. Several of the participants noted that getting financial help is a barrier you have to overcome but they listen to their mentors. Also, a big barrier to overcome was recruiting overseas players to come here in the summer to play. In addition, the participants reported that several people kept telling them the idea will not work due to needing financial help and trying to recruit women internationally. The participants reported that they did not listen to the people who told them it would not work, and they pushed forward and overcame the barriers to become CEO of an international nonprofit sports organization. Moreno-Gómez et al. (2018) explained that an organization reflects its top managers who make decisions and influence individual experiences, values, and personalities. In addition, the benefits of gender diversity in top management positions outweigh the costs and value concerning women's knowledge, strategies, and decision-making skills within some organizations (Moreno-Gómez et al., 2018). Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018) did not examine cultural biases or explore why more women were not in top management positions despite the data indicating the positive effects of increased gender diversity.

Sinclair (2014) explained that leadership positions lack many women in many organizations in the United States. Historically, women have been defined as subordinate

to men, and discrimination is still prevalent in several organizations. Also, Sinclair

concluded that some women faced the problem, not that they were psychologically

incapable of leadership. Still, instead, they faced barriers, stereotypes, and gender

discrimination but failed to dig deeper into factors contributing to this phenomenon.

Theme 7

Participants attended professional development training to increase their

knowledge and skills involving running international nonprofit sports organizations. They

reported that they attended yearly workshops with other CEOs. Also, being around other

coaches and watching what they did and what they did not helped me to become a CEO

of a sports organization. Also, I took courses on management skills from college and that

aided me to become COE of a sports organization The participants reported that the

professional development training covered different topics that they felt was needed in

obtaining information to advance their goals in the nonprofit area which is helping

women to play sports here in the United States and internationally. In addition, some of

the women reported that they did not have any training on how to become a CEO of an

international organization. They researched the topic and followed the advice of other

organizations (Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017).

The findings from this theme are consistent with the findings from other sports

organizations. The program was the Women Leadership Development Programme

(WLDP), a three-year pilot program supported and managed by UK Sport. This program

utilized major developmental activities with regular submissions of reports, stories, and

experiences of the program participants, who were put under extensive pressure and

challenges in the three years (Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017). The study used a

qualitative research design. Data were collected from specific sports managers who

participated in the WLDP in the UK. 10 out of 15 women agreed to participate. The ten

women who agreed were given phone interviews; the researcher presented semi-

structured questions adopted to the interviews. Following the talks, the researcher created

categories and identified 50-100 critical phrases from each interview by studying each

participant's themes and sub-themes. The study found that most women had both negative

and positive learning (change) factors. Participants recounted positive factors that

influenced change, such as reflection, telling stories, action learning, mentoring,

networking, strategic thinking and communication, and conference and academic

scholars' meetings. Negative factors influencing change included general-focus

education, sex, and lack of ongoing training sessions and initiatives. Sex was a significant

negative factor here because the WLDP program focused on one gender. The women

were being developed in a female-dominated environment, which they felt did not

prepare them for working with male staff. One woman stated I need more leadership

training to lead the team in men's sports as well. It is one of the biggest reasons for the

underrepresentation of women leaders in the top leadership in the sports environment.

And the design training sessions targeting only women without men and vice versa

(Megheirkouni & Roomi, 2017). This study gave a good overview of learning factors and

how people can change their perceptions. Still, it did not offer a solution to battling

hardened gender discrimination in sport organizations and how men and women could be

taught to change their thinking on gender roles, especially when it comes to women in higher positions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the glass ceiling theory. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) developed the glass ceiling theory. The glass ceiling theory was expanded on by Cotter et al. (2001) and Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) to include women and other ethnic minority individuals. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) defined the glass ceiling as a set of barriers and obstacles that are so subtle as to be transparent and yet so strong that they sometimes prevent women and other minorities from moving up the ladder to senior-level positions in organizations. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) reported that the glass ceiling affects individuals through their firsthand experiences of racism and sexism, which can negatively affect social networks and reduce women's opportunities in mentoring relationships.

Cotter et al. (2001) further developed Morrison and von Glinow's (1990) concept of the glass ceiling theory by developing different criteria to explain their glass ceiling concept. The first criteria are racial inequality and race concerning executive positions, such as the lack of relevant education and work experience in obtaining a senior-level job (Cotter et al., 2001). The second criteria are that race, and gender inequalities are evident at the top level of the organization. The third criteria are that the glass ceiling effects are related to their opportunities for change and advancement and not the overall position of women and other ethnic minorities at the organization. The fourth criteria are that the

glass ceiling effect increases over time during women's and minorities' careers (Cotter et al., 2001).

The glass ceiling phenomenon is prevalent in international non-profit sports organizations looks at women's statistics in top leadership roles and why there are still gender and racial gaps in these organizations' top positions. An initial online search of 25 random big green groups found that white men occupied all the top leadership roles. In the non-profit environmental field, there are more women in the workforce. Still, they are not being promoted into the most senior positions at the organizations they work. This model provided a framework to explore the challenges women face in obtaining CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored the limitations women faced in aspiring to CEO positions, such as leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports organizations.

Limitations of the Study

This study included some limitations related to method, design, and data collection (Creswell, 2017). A major limitation of this study was that the participants interview lasted from 25 to 35 minutes due to the participants not responding to all of the probing questions. Many of the participants noted that they did not want to provide detail information because to the competitive edge of recruiting women in international sports around the world. Another limitation for this study was the interviews took place via telephone instead of using the Zoom platform. All the participants did not want to be identified through the Zoom online platform but agreed to the interview with telephone. Also, selection bias was a limitation for this study if interested participants do not meet

the criteria to participate in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research method and design for this study started out as a descriptive phenomenological paradigm was used to explore the challenges women face in obtaining CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The researcher had to change the research design to generic qualitative study due to the participants did not wanting their interviews to be recorded and the interviews only lasted from 25 to 35 minutes instead of 45 minutes to one hour.

As the researcher, I maintained a journal to bracket my preconceived thoughts and ideas about the topic before conducting the interviews with the participants. The interview questions were created before the interview process to avoid researcher bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In addition, the limitation for this study can potentially lack reliability and consistency due to using different probing techniques and the participants telling parts of their stories while omitting other parts (Green et al., 2015) Also, the interview questions were validated for use in this research study by having one expert in qualitative research who reviewed the interview questions. The researcher made the corrections as suggested by the expert. The interviews took place using a telephone with each of the participants.

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Recommendations for Future Practice

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In exploring women's lived experiences who have succeeded in attaining CEO positions at such organizations, this study showed the need for new epistemological perspectives. This research contributed to a deeper understanding of why women experience the glass ceiling as they aspire to CEO positions in international non-profit

sports organizations. Findings shed light on the glass ceiling effect through an exploration of women's lived experiences. Various factors such as mentoring and internships that strengthened the glass ceiling contributed to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, such as CEO (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). The beneficiaries of this study could include women aspiring to become CEOs of international non-profit sports organizations. Other beneficiaries might be Federation International de Football Association (FIFA), other sports organizations, academic institutions, leadership, and diversity trainers, including leadership development, talent management, and established policies. Harris et al. (2015) described women as having limited professional roles due to not receiving the necessary decision-making experience needed to be in leadership positions. The lack of practice limits women's ability to move up to senior leadership positions in organizations. The potential implications for positive social change consistent with and bound by the study's scope are social justice. It should be a starting point on the road to reduce bias in the workplace by improving and promoting equal opportunity for employee career development.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted to explore the challenges women face in obtaining CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored the limitations women faced in aspiring to CEO positions, such as leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports organizations. The literature review for this study noted a lack of research on women aspiring to CEO positions such as in international nonprofit sports organizations (Gipson et al, 2017;

Spencer et al., 2019). Also, According to Spencer et al. (2019), reported that of the top

400 non-profit organizations within the United States, women hold only 19% of

executive leadership positions. The low representation of women in executive leadership

roles is similarly apparent at for-profit sports organizations and both for-and non-profit

businesses (Spencer et al., 2019). The findings related to this study showed that several of

the women had self-determination and put in challenging work to become CEO of an

international nonprofit sports organization. There is a need for more research in these

areas to determine what gave these women such a drive to become a CEO of an

international nonprofit sports organization. As the researcher, I recommend that a

quantitative study be conducted with the women CEOs to find out some reasons for this

determination and challenging work. Also, the participants noted that they experienced

prejudice from others especially men in their journey to becoming CEO of their

organization. Therefore, a qualitative study should be conducted with women CEOs to

determine why and how this prejudice exists among other people especially among men.

Also, a research study should be conducted with participants from other locations in

across the United States using a larger population of both nonprofit and the general sector

of women CEOs due to the small sample size of participants.

Implications for Social Change

This qualitative study has implications for social change because it attempted to

fill the research gap by investigating women's lived experiences of the glass ceiling

effect and challenges, they faced with respect to working for international non-profit

sports organizations. The women CEOs for this study lived in the United States. This

study showed the need for new epistemological perspectives in exploring women's lived experiences who have succeeded in attaining CEO positions at international nonprofits organizations.

In exploring women's lived experiences who have succeeded in attaining CEO positions at such organizations, this study showed the need for new epistemological perspectives. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of why women experience the glass ceiling as they aspire to CEO positions in international non-profit sports organizations. Findings will shed light on the glass ceiling effect through an exploration of women's lived experiences. Numerous factors such as mentoring and internships that strengthened the glass ceiling contributed to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, such as CEO (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017). The beneficiaries of this study could include women aspiring to become CEOs of international non-profit sports organizations. Other beneficiaries might be Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) due to their push to include more females in sports, other sports organizations, academic institutions, leadership, and diversity trainers, including leadership development, talent management, and established policies. Harris et al. (2015) described women as having limited professional roles due to not receiving the necessary decision-making experience needed to be in leadership positions. The lack of practice limits women's ability to move up to senior leadership positions in organizations. The potential implications for positive social change consistent with and bound by the study's scope are social justice. It could be a starting point on the road to reduce bias in

the workplace by improving and promoting equal opportunity for employee career development.

Reflexivity

The present study was conducted to understand how gender differentially challenges women candidates' opportunities when seeking CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored the limitations women faced in obtaining CEO positions, such as leadership development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports organizations. My primary assumption was that the women participants in this study provided accurate accounts of their lived experiences of challenges they face when seeking CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations.

My role in the study was an observer. I had no personal nor professional relationships with the women CEOs and have not met the eight participants. Personal information shared by the participants was kept private and respected. I did not exercise power over the participants. A story about the research, such as implications and subtlest danger during the interview process, was shared with the participants to decide whether to participate. The observer was transparent and honest with the participants, with no use of deception or misinformation. The participants were encouraged to respond to the interview questions with honesty.

The participants revealed personal characteristics that may seem demeaning during the interviews and force them to suddenly find out things about themselves from the past that they may not have paid attention to or considered harmful. This social

research may risk injuring the respondents' moral integrity, by asking the subject to share deviant behavior in their response to the interview questions. In this context, informed consent was fundamental because all the respondents fully understood the possible risk involved in the research. In addition, bracketing allowed the researchers to become aware of their feelings and set aside their own biases to capture the authentic lived experiences of the participants participating in the research study (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Researchers noted that a way to minimize biases is to use the technique bracketing when collecting the data in qualitative research (Sorsa et al., 2015). Bracketing in qualitative research is a process where the researcher suspends their presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences in describing the phenomenon being considered (Sorsa et al., 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012). In addition, bracketing allows researchers to become aware of their feelings and set aside their presuppositions to capture the participants' lived experiences participating in the research study (Sorsa et al., 2015; Tufford & Newman, 2012).

The study's data collection involved interviewing the participants through telephone. The entire narrative was read to understand the whole situation or lived experience described by the participants. According to Giorgi (2009), the research makes scientific phenomenological reduction assumptions and delineates psychological meaning units. It is determined whenever a psychological perspective and mindful of the phenomenon being researched, it experiences a transition in importance when the description is reread from the beginning (Giorgi, 2009, p, 182). The participants had different expressions that highlighted the CEOs' psychological meaning. It required the

use of imaginative variation and rendering implicit factors explicit (Giorgi, 2009). I used

the transformed meaning units while still operating with the scientific phenomenological

reduction, expression as the basis for describing the experiences' psychological structure.

A drawback of the study was that the participants did not want the researcher to record

their interviews. So, the researcher took notes by writing down the participants responses

to each of the interview questions. The interview transcripts were sent back to each other

the participants to check the accuracy of the data collected by the researcher. None of the

participants made any changes to the interview data.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges women face in obtaining

CEO leadership roles in international non-profit sports organizations. The study explored

the limitations women faced in aspiring to CEO positions, such as leadership

development, talent management, or policy in international non-profit sports

organizations. Also, this study provided information about the challenges women in CEO

positions experienced in the career journey to becoming CEOs. I proposed to use

phenomenological design to explore this topic, but I had to change the research design to

a generic qualitative paradigm because the participants did not meet all the criteria for a

phenomenology design. A generic qualitative approach was used to describe and explore

the phenomena. This study addressed the research gap by investigating women's lived

experiences of the glass ceiling effect and challenges they faced with respect to working

for international non-profit sports organizations.

The results of this study revealed that the participants noted it was the love for sports that started back in middle and high school that gave them the drive to pursue international sports. The participants also noted that they wanted to help women in other countries achieve their dream in playing sports to their potential. The women noted that their journey was hard, and they spent a lot of hours trying to achieve their goal of becoming a CEO of an international nonprofit sports organization. The participants noted that they wanted to recruit women to the game of basketball from around the world in other places than in the United States. There were many women around the world who like sport and need the opportunity to highlight their talent.

The results of this study indicated that the participants noted that some barriers to becoming a CEO is that you are working in a male dominated world of sports and many of them feel that basketball is a man's sports, so they try to discourage you in your quest in the non-profit because they feel that business belong to the men. The participants also noted that some people think that women do not belong in the sports industry. All of the participants noted that they received help in their journey from different people that had an influence on their lives. Some noted that their husband encouraged them while others noted that it was their mother or father who encouraged them to pursue CEO position at international nonprofit sports organization.

The results of this study showed that the participants reported that you have to overcome barriers with men, other women would say you should not do this. Some feel that there is not enough money in this business. I am not doing it for the money but to help other women play basketball especially people who have mentored you alone the

way to where you are now in the process. Several of the participants noted that getting

financial help is a barrier you have to overcome but they listen to their mentors.

This qualitative study has implications for social change because it attempted to

fill the research gap by investigating women's lived experiences of the glass ceiling

effect and challenges, they faced with respect to working for international non-profit

sports organizations. The women CEOs for this study live in the United States. This study

showed the need for new epistemological perspectives in exploring women's lived

experiences who have succeeded in attaining CEO positions at international nonprofits

sports organizations.

In exploring women's lived experiences who have succeeded in attaining CEO

positions at such organizations, this study showed the need for new epistemological

perspectives. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of why women

experience the glass ceiling as they aspire to CEO positions in international non-profit

sports organizations. Findings can shed light on the glass ceiling effect through an

exploration of women's lived experiences. Numerous factors such as mentoring and

internships that strengthened the glass ceiling contributed to the underrepresentation of

women in leadership positions, such as CEO. The beneficiaries of this study could

include women aspiring to become CEOs of international nonprofit sports organizations.

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Appendix A: Interview Instrument

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
RQ1: RQ1: How do women in CEO positions describe their lived experience as they climbed the ladder to become CEOs working for international non-profit sports organizations?	**IQ1:** Please describe the step it took you to climb the ladder to become a CEO at an international non-profit sports organization.
	IQ2: Please tell me what motivated you to become a CEO of an international sport's nonprofit organization.
	IQ3: Please describe if you were ever exposed to international experiences before becoming a CEO? If so, please explain some.
	IQ4: Can you tell me if you ever received support on your road to becoming a CEO? Follow-up question: How would you describe the support you received on your road to becoming a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization.?
RQ2: How do women CEOs working for international nonprofit sports organizations describe the barriers to acquiring the experiences needed to qualify for CEO positions?	**IQ5**: Would you mind describing any barriers you might have experienced in your life that might have hindered you from becoming a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?
	IQ6: What are some barriers you had to overcome to qualify for your CEO position in an international nonprofit sports organization?
	IQ7: Would you please describe some strategies you used to overcome barriers in your life to become a CEO of an international nonprofit sports organization.
RQ3: How do women in international non-profit sports organizations describe their lived experience in talent management, development, mentoring, and other training processes needed to achieve CEO positions?	**IQ8:** Would you mind telling me some management characteristics you feel are essential in becoming a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?

	IQ9: Would you please describe some training experiences you received to aid in your qualification to become a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?
	IQ10: Please describe some mentoring experiences you received that helped you to become a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization.
	IQ11: What other experiences would you like to add that I have not asked you regarding your experiences as a woman who attained the role of a CEO in an international nonprofit sports organization?

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Participants needed for a study!

Title: Glass Ceiling Encountered by Female Chief Executive Officers as they Advanced

to C-Level Positions in International Nonprofit Sports Organizations

Are you a Chief Executive Officer at an international nonprofit sports organization

and 21 years or older?

Are you a female Chief Executive Officer who has advanced to C-level position at

your organization?

Do you live in the United States?

Are you willing to participate in an interview via Zoom?

If you answered yes to these questions, then you are ideal for this study!!!!!!!

The researcher will need you to:

>Participate in a telephone or Zoom conversation to verify participant criteria.
>Sign an informed consent in agreement of the criteria.
>Participate in a recorded interview (about 45 to 60 minutes) at an agreed upon time.

IF INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT ERIC IDEHEN