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Perceptions of Black Women Educational Leaders on Anti-black Women Leadership Syndrome

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Perceptions of Black Women Educational Leaders on Anti-black Women Leadership

Syndrome

by

Rashida Hobbs-Jones

EdD, Walden University, 2023

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Doctor of Education

Walden University

November 2023

Abstract

The problem this study explored was that although Black women are currently the most college-educated per capita in the U.S. compared to other groups, Black women still lag in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school education. The purpose of this research study was to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory were used to ground the study. The research questions examined helped to improve the understanding of whether anti-black women leadership syndrome exists. A basic qualitative research design was used to study the problem. Data were collected using interviews with 12 Black women in educational leadership roles. The data in this study were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. The study findings indicated that Anti-black women in leadership syndrome have been attributed to this disproportionate representation. Findings also point out that while Black women were often excluded from leadership roles in secondary schools and schools that were not majority Black, they were often discriminated and denied higher leadership opportunities. The implications of positive social change include helping hiring officials understand how Black women in senior leadership positions in public education are disproportionately represented and how through effective leadership practices and educational policy changes may lead to the attainment of Black women educators ascending to senior leadership roles.

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Dedication

This dissertation is inscribed in homage to my daughter, Rajah Baldwin, my mother, Mauresia Hobbs, my sisters, Najah and Naesha Hobbs, and every Black girl who has risen, time and again, above the trials that lay in her path. Black women resonate with the spirit of water – ever-adaptable, always fluid. We effortlessly mold to the containers of roles society hands us, but our essence remains unfettered, potent, and enchanting. We possess a dual nature: gentle yet unwavering, malleable yet formidable, and compassionate while commanding. This boundless resilience, a defining trait of our character, carries us through the ceaseless waves of microaggressions. It empowers us to skillfully traverse the intricate maze of political, cultural, and societal landscapes. Amidst it all, our ambition to lead remains undimmed. I see your strength, your grace, your indomitable spirit, and I celebrate you.

Changing how we see images is clearly one way to change the world.

- Bell Hooks

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To my daughter, Rajah Baldwin, our relationship transcends the boundaries of mother-daughter love; it is a partnership in embracing womanhood unapologetically. Your presence illuminates my life and teaches me the power of vulnerability. Your boundless imagination fuels my aspirations, and I hope your dreams become the wings that carry you toward your destined path. You are my pride, and I am grateful every day for the privilege of being your mother.

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constitute an indomitable force far more potent than when we are divided. Your teachings instilled in me the essence of love, respect, and the significance of viewing women as assets in both personal and communal realms. Because of you, I understand that our collective power is magnified manifold when we uplift rather than tear down. Your wisdom has been a guiding light, shaping not just my world view but also my professional ethic.

And I appreciate how you raised me. And all the extra love that you gave me. Dear Mama.

-Tupac Shakur

I must also express my deep appreciation for my doctoral committee, Dr. Felicia Blacher-Wilson and Dr. James Bailey. Your support arrived at a pivotal time when discussions on feminism and social justice are especially fraught. Your insightful guidance has been invaluable in shaping the methodology, terminology, and conceptual frameworks of my work. I couldn't have asked for a more supportive and knowledgeable committee.

Lastly, my profound thanks go to the brave participants of this research. Your candid insights have enriched my study and have reshaped my understanding of our collective path forward. Your voices have not just informed my research, but they have empowered it, and it is my sincere hope that this work does justice to your shared experiences and wisdom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Black women are currently the most college-educated per capita in the United States (U.S.) (U.S National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2021). However, despite their high educational attainment rates, Black women still lag behind other groups in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school education (Fuller et al., 2019; NCES, 2021). Despite advances in education, there has been a slight improvement in Black women's representation in senior leadership roles in the kindergarten (K) through the 12th-grade public educational arena (Cyr et al., 2021; Fuller et al., 2019; Grillo et al., 2022; Johnson, 2021; Macias & Stephens, 2017; Parker, 2019; Patton & Jordan., 2017; Stanley & Crawford, 2022; Watson, 2020).

There are many structural reasons why Black women, despite their increase in postsecondary education, are currently experiencing a lack of leadership advancement in the education field compared to White men and women (Fuller et al., 2019). Research on Black women in educational leadership has focused primarily on Black women's lived experiences as staff members and graduate students, superintendents, and school leaders across many political, cultural, and historical contexts (Cyr et al., 2021; Fuller et al., 2019; Grillo et al., 2022; Johnson, 2021; Macias & Stephens, 2017; Parker, 2019; Patton & Jordan, 2017; Stanley & Crawford, 2022; Watson, 2020). These studies do not address if there is a connection between anti-black ness among those in power and privilege as a contributing factor in hiring Black women to senior leadership roles (Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Grillo et al., 2022; Horsford et al., 2021; Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2021).

There is a significant need for increased research around anti-black ness in public school leadership selection (Cyr et al., 2021; Fuller et al., 2019; Grillo et al., 2022; Johnson, 2021). Diversity efforts and research studies have not resulted in more Black women leaders ascending to new heights in educational leadership roles, indicating more research is needed to determine the root of the problem (Macias & Stephens, 2017; Parker, 2019; Patton & Jordan, 2017; Stanley & Crawford, 2022; Watson, 2020). Suppose Black women's educational preparedness is growing exponentially (NCES, 2021). Why are the K – 12 senior leadership opportunities not increasing at the same rate? Even more troublingly, there is some reason to believe that Black women's participation in public school leadership is declining (NCES, 2021). This study explored if there could be a pervasive anti-black woman-in-educational leadership syndrome, a term coined by the researcher in this study, is at play that explains this dichotomy.

This research may lead to positive social change by helping district leaders, hiring officials, and educational advocates understand how Black women in senior leadership positions in public education are disproportionately represented. The study findings may also help hiring authorities understand how bias associated with race and gender interferes with the hiring and promotion of Black women in senior leadership in public education. Positive social change may also occur through effective leadership practices and educational policy changes that district leaders, hiring officials, and educational advocates believe lead to the attainment of Black women educators ascending to senior leadership roles.

Background

The general requirement to become a K – 12 educator is a bachelor's degree in any field, not necessarily a degree in education (Gordon & Niemiec, 2020). The general requirement for senior leadership roles in K – 12 public education is a master's degree or above (Gordon & Niemiec, 2020). Black women's college enrollment from 2000 to 2018 went from 35% to 41% (Coleman & Price, 2020). These data sets suggest that more Black women who may be educationally prepared to qualify for senior leadership positions in K–12 public education is increasing faster than any other racial and gender group. In comparison, the college enrollment rates of 18-to-24-year-olds from 2000 to 2018 for White women grew from 41% to 45%, a four percent increase compared to a five percent increase for Black women (McGee et al., 2022). Other groups show similar patterns. College enrollment for White 18-to-24-year-old men from 2000 to 2018 rose from 36% to 39%, with enrollment for Black men rising from 25% to 33% (McGee et al., 2022). With this comparison, Black women, which happens to be the smallest group, had an impressive 6% gain, second only to the 8% gain for Black men. The data above does not include Hispanic college enrollment since other ethnic groups were added to that statistic.

The NCES (2021) data also reflects Black women as the highest degree holders per capita amongst all racial groups. For example, from 1989 to 2020, Black women grew in earning their master's degrees from 6.4% to 14.7% (Banks, 2020). Regarding degree attainment for White men from 1989 to 2019, attainment decreased from 87% to 65.9% for master's degrees; White women decreased from 87.3% to 63.4% for earning a

master's degree (McGee et al., 2022). Black men grew from 4.6% to 11.0% for earning their master's degree, Hispanic men from 3.0% to 10.9%, Asian/Pacific Islanders 5.0% to 8.7%, and American Indian men remained static at .4%. Similarly, Black men went from 6.2% in 1989 to 10.3% in 2019 (NCES, 2021). The degree attainment data are essential to the research as they further highlight the problem of Black women attaining the highest number of degrees per capita for all groups yet being underrepresented in senior leadership roles in K-12 public education.

When data are further reviewed for other groups of women, similar findings of Black women remain the highest degree earners in postsecondary education from 1989 to 2019 (NCES, 2021). Female groups achieving their master's degrees from 1989 to 2019, Hispanic women grew from 2.9% to 11.6%, Asian Pacific Islander women rose from 3.0% to 6.8%, and American Indian women from .4% to .5% (NCES, 2021). Black women are 6% of the population but are currently awarded approximately 13% of degrees (NCES, 2021). In each of the groups mentioned above, except for the Hispanic group, the data reflects their numbers either decreasing, having limited growth, or growth not near the substantial rate of Black women over the years according to their population size. That said, Black women currently earn the highest number of degrees per capita compared to all groups, including Hispanic males and females.

There is a gap in the literature around what specific variable(s) outside of the racism and sexism components of anti-black women in leadership syndrome may contribute to the underrepresentation of Black women leaders in public school education outside of race and gender (Yi et al., 2022). Racism and sexism do not fully capture the

unique experiences of Black women that are not experienced by other racial groups (Yi et al., 2022). A possible explanation for the lack of Black women in educational leadership positions is anti-black racism, anti-black ness, or anti-black women in leadership syndrome. Anti-black racism, anti-black ness, or anti-black women in leadership syndrome are terms used to define prejudice directed toward Black people or those perceived to be Black. The anti-black racism and anti-black ness concept is founded on the belief that all racial and ethnic minority groups, such as People/Person of Color (POC) or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), have similar experiences. Such comparisons undermine the unique centrality of anti-black ness to U.S. institutions and society, behaviors and beliefs, and policies and practices (Yi et al., 2022). Individuals do not have to be White to contribute to anti-black ness or to adopt anti-black attitudes (Comrie et al., 2022).

Anti-black racism is not solely about the racial oppression of Black people by Whites but also by other racial and ethnic groups, all of which have been heavily influenced by White supremacy (Comrie et al., 2022). Undeniable, anti-black ness, and anti-black racism dwell and flourish within institutions and ideologies of White supremacy, Whiteness, access to Whiteness, and fear of Blackness. Anti-black racism and anti-black ness acutely affect anyone who contrived to engross those institutions and ideologies, heedless of their racial or ethnic background (Comrie et al., 2022). Anti-black racism must be understood within the context of anti-black ness. The terms anti-black racism and anti-black ness go beyond "racism," as it acknowledges the differences that hold Black people in oppression. Understanding these terms is essential in exploring how

anti-black racism and anti-black ness manifest in attitudes, ideologies, beliefs, and practices that may contribute to the underrepresentation of Black women in K–12 public education senior leadership roles. This study is needed as it provided insight into whether there could be a pervasive anti-black woman-in-educational leadership phenomenon called anti-black women in leadership syndrome. Black women are discriminated against due to their gender and race, contributing to their lack of representation in leadership positions.

This chapter provided background information about this study. The problem and purpose of the study were also stated, followed by a review of the research questions and conceptual framework that guided the study. The researcher explained the study's nature, provided definitions relevant to the work, and clearly defined the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance. The chapter ended with a summary.

Problem Statement

The problem this study explored was that although Black women are currently the most college-educated per capita in the U.S. compared to other groups, Black women still lag in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school education (Fuller et al., 2019; NCES, 2021). This study also explored if an anti-black woman in leadership syndrome contributes to these reported outcomes – i.e., whether there are characteristics, opinions, emotions, or behaviors related to the perception of Black women's race and gender that negatively impact the success of Black women in leadership.

Women in the U.S. have had to fight for equal education rights (Kose et al., 2021). Recent research on college-educated groups has shown that Black women are

currently being educated at a substantially higher rate per capita than any other group (Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Bell, 2020; NCES, 2021; Yi et al., 2022). However, the number of Black women in leadership roles throughout the public school education system is not commensurate with Black women's rates of educational attainment (Bailes & Guthery, 2020; Bell, 2020: National Education Association [NEA] Research, 2019); this disproportionate representation may be related to anti-black women in leadership syndrome, where Black women are discriminated against based on their race and sex.

Black women lead only a fraction of the nation's school districts, holding approximately 1.4% of all superintendent positions in the U.S. and less than 4.7% of principal positions in public school secondary education (Bailes & Guthery, 2020; NCES, 2021). Black assistant principals are 4% - 5% less likely in the first four years of their career to be promoted to a principal role than their White counterparts with equivalent experience. However, on average, the most extensive promotion period was five to six years (Bailes & Guthery, 2020). Without the specific percentages of Black women achieving promotion, Bailes and Guthery (2020) found that all-inclusive Black assistant principals were 9% less likely to be promoted in year five than their White colleagues. Black candidates make principals at an average of 5.27 years, while White assistant principals average 4.67 years, attributable to race (Bailes & Guthery, 2020). These findings show that race significantly predicts promotion and time to promotion from assistant principal to principal. One could also argue that for Black women, race and gender are significant determinants of advancement and the time it takes to advance to a public education senior leadership role.

Although the literature is available regarding racial and gender inequities contributing to the disproportionality of Black women's lack of success in their advancement toward senior leadership positions, there is a gap in research regarding how Black women in public education K-12 are targeted differently than other groups in a phenomenon termed anti-black leadership syndrome in this study. Additionally, anti-black ness is considered more pervasive, brutal, and systematic than racism (Pontso et al., 2018; Yi et al., 2022). No systematic literature reviews explore whether an anti-black woman in leadership syndrome contributes to anti-black outcomes – i.e., whether characteristics, opinions, emotions, or behavior are associated explicitly with Black women's underrepresentation in senior leadership roles in K-12 public education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. With continuous experience, education, and school-level attainment, Black women are less likely to be promoted and have longer wait times for promotion when compared to White assistant school leaders (Bailes & Guthery, 2020). While the teacher workforce has diversified significantly in the past 30 years, White women still uphold most teaching roles (Bailes & Guthery, 2020). Conversely, White men typically hold more senior leadership positions than women relative to the proportion of White men in K – 12 public education roles (Bailes & Guthery, 2020; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.).

The lack of diversity in senior leadership positions in public school education prevents some student scholars from magnifying educational freedom (Bartanen & Grissom, 2019). This study addressed the problem from the perspective of Black women leaders in the education sector. Interviews were conducted around the problem statement to understand participants' experiences and what they felt contributed to Black women's narrow achievement of senior leadership roles in public K- 12 educational environments. Due to the impact of the lack of senior leadership diversity roles in public schools, leaders in these senior roles and those who impact the policy decisions of the public education system need to do everything within their power to hire, retain, and promote more Black women leaders. The research questions further helped to improve the understanding of whether anti-black women leadership syndrome exists.

Research Questions

The following research questions were explored in this study:

RQ1. How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education?

RQ2. How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership positions in K-12 education?

Conceptual Framework

An Afrocentric epistemological lens encapsulated the conceptual framework of this study. In the discipline of education and education leadership research, Whiteness

and maleness usually have dominated conceptual epistemological and methodological

perspectives and applications (Allen & Liou, 2019). As a result, the voices and richness

of research informed by diverse scholars have been limited (Allen & Liou, 2019).

Viewpoints from Black women are usually silenced in leadership conversations,

specifically educational leadership conversations (Burton et al., 2020).

 The conceptual framework referenced heavily for this research study was

Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality theory, as this study examines the intersectionality of

race, gender, and role. Intersectionality, therefore, refers to the simultaneous experience

of social categories such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation

and how these categories interact to create systems of oppression, domination, and

discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). Positioning women of color and their control at the

epistemic center will assist in finding new theoretical understanding that addresses them,

which could lead to better studies explicitly addressing this particular group. Besides, this

study provides insight into the voice and influence of Black women leaders as a cultural

group, which are not distinct from their racial and gender identities.

 Critical race theory also served as a guide for this study. In the 1970s, activists

pushed for Black and White equality and developed the critical race theory (CRT)

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). CRT theory is used to examine the idea of racism and

discrimination in society based on racial context, as recommended by its advocates (Bell,

1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). Using this background knowledge of CRT, the theory

was used to analyze the factors affecting Black women's ascent to leadership positions in

the public education system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Tate IV, 1997).

The CRT was historically created from critical legal studies (CLS) and the liberal race discourse, major social movements in the legal profession, and liberal race debate (Bell, 1995; Tate IV, 1997). According to Crenshaw (1991), "this engagement [of movements] institutes a race involvement within CLS and a distinctly progressive intervention within liberal race theory" (p. 1343). Generally, CLS did not critically examine racism or issues of race. As a result, CRT was created in the early 1980s amid social unrest over ongoing racial inequities following the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Delgado and Stefancic (2013) asserted that various elements support the CRT's claims. The assertion that racism is a common occurrence in society, that race is an idea created by society, that racism is fueled by the self-interest of the majority racial group, that narratives and storytelling can challenge preexisting beliefs. The notion that White people have benefited from civil rights legislation is a notable example of CRT's five central tenets.

CRT was used in this study to influence the intersectionality of race and gender among Black women in leadership positions in the public school system. As already stated, CRT theory is characterized by four central tenets, including racism as an ordinary phenomenon in society, race as a social construct, convergence of interest, and the notion of storytelling and narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Mensha, 2017; Tate IV, 1997). According to the tenets of CRT, race and gender are social constructs that influence the representation of Black women in leadership positions in the public school system. Given the understanding of these variables, the researcher used the theory to explore the challenges faced by Black women in the public school system.

Nature of the Study

A basic qualitative research design was used to study the problem. Interviews were conducted to address the problem statement and understand participants' experiences and if race, gender, and anti-black women in leadership syndrome contribute to Black women's lesser achievement of senior leadership roles in K–12 public education environments. Data collection came from Black women in senior-level positions, such as principals, executive directors, chief executives, and superintendents in Texas. Participants in this sample group had defied the statistical odds to gain leadership positions. However, they would likely experience prejudice and anti-black racism throughout their careers.

Alfred et al. (2019) established the presence of an assumption of a shared meaning amongst participants with shared understandings. These essences signify frequently understood essential meanings through a widely experienced phenomenon (Alfred et al., 2019). The participants explained their experiences with gender and racial challenges and how they overcame such barriers. An elementary qualitative research design allowed the participants to share their experiences of becoming leaders and their first-hand journey as Black women leaders in K – 12 public educations.

To increase the study's trustworthiness and validity, data sources from reputable peer-reviewed journals, papers, and research were also investigated. The data and information to examine offer insights into the anti-black racism in the U.S. and the underrepresentation of Black women in leadership positions in K -12 public school education. The Educational Administration & History Journal, Educational Research

Journal, Educational Management & Leadership & Educational Administration Journal, Journal of Black Studies, and some other sources are just a few that were used to gather archival data for data triangulation. Interviews conducted with Black women school superintendents, chief officers, executive directors, and principals served as primary data sources in this study. The two informational sources are likely to help identify whether the limited number of Black women in leadership positions in education is because of an anti-black women leadership syndrome.

Definitions

Anti-black ness is defined as the beliefs, attitudes, actions, practices, and behaviors of persons and institutions that devalue, minimize, and marginalize Black people's full participation in society, visible or perceived as of African descent (Comrie et al., 2022).

Anti-black racism is defined as a specific kind of racial prejudice directed toward Black people or those perceived as Black (Comrie et al., 2022).

Antiracism is challenging, identifying, and opposing racism, racial prejudice, and systemic racism (Hamilton-Mason & Schneider, 2018).

White Privilege is defined as the advantages White people receive based on their race in a society with racial inequity (Comrie et al., 2022).

White Supremacy is defined as the "political, economic, and cultural system in which Whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, [and] conscious and unconscious White superiority and entitlement are widespread" (Mowatt, 2021, p.94).

Assumptions

As a basic qualitative study, the research's theoretical assumptions include that participants' data was accurate to their experience (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Degeling & Rock, 2020; Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher supported this assumption by providing absolute confidentiality of participant data, eliminating the need for individuals to conceal or distort information.

Secondly, it was expected that while each participant had a unique story, the data acquired from the participant were at least partly generalizable or may be used to enrich a larger discussion of the phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Degeling & Rock, 2020; Nowell et al., 2017). This hypothesis was validated by data collecting until data saturation was achieved. Thirdly, the researcher is anticipated to stay neutral during data collection. Even though everyone will add their perspective to the investigation, I remained objective during the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Degeling & Rock, 2020; Nowell et al., 2017). Using a published thematic analysis method provided more evidence for this notion. This framework for data analysis made the study more replicable and helped the researcher stay unbiased during data analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

Scope and Delimitations

The research problem was that Black women are currently the most college-educated group per capita in the U.S. compared to other groups. However, Black women still lag in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school education (Fuller et al., 2019; NCES, 2021) due to biases related to race and gender, termed anti-black women in leadership syndrome in this study. Through this study, I sought to understand

better if an anti-black woman in leadership syndrome contributes to the reported

outcomes that negatively impact Black women proportionately attaining senior leadership

positions in K-12 public education.

The scope of this study included 12 Black women principals, executive directors,

chief executives, and superintendents working in K-12 public schools in the U.S.

Leadership positions referred to women working as principals, school executive directors,

chief executives, and superintendents. Furthermore, participants were only included if

they had been in a qualifying leadership position for at least six months. There are several

delimitations in this study. This study did not include White women, Black men, or other

people of color. These delimitations were designed to support the study's overall purpose,

to explore the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership

positions in K - 12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome

contribute to this underrepresentation.

Transferability was considered throughout the completion of the study to

encourage trustworthiness. Transferability is the generalizability of inquiry (Nowell et al.,

2017). An additional goal of this research study's findings is to apply to other contexts

and populations by the researcher providing evidence. Such evidence came from the

recommendation of Nowell et al. (2017), who provided a thick description of the

phenomenon. A thick description consists of the researcher providing a robust and

detailed journal account of their experiences during data collection (Nowell et al., 2017),

including but not limited to the setting, time, people, and other conditions of data

collection.

Limitations

This research had several limitations. This study employed a non-probability sampling approach; hence, the findings were confined to the study population in which the research was conducted. Due to this restriction, the study cannot be generalized to the whole U.S. population and is probably irrelevant to other nations. This constraint about limited sample size was compensated by the depth of data anticipated to be gathered through in-depth participant interviews (Flick, 2019). It was further addressed by gathering data until data saturation was reached.

The U.S. is now suffering from a pandemic associated with the new coronavirus, COVID-19, and it is unknown when the impacts of this pandemic will subside. As a result, participants may prefer to conduct interviews virtually rather than in person. The researcher compensated for this constraint by conducting interviews through Zoom rather than over the phone when in-person interviews are impossible. I did not see participants' body language or other nonverbal indicators during phone interviews, hence why Zoom interviews are preferred (Flick, 2019). This constraint may be alleviated partly if participants can engage in video and voice calls.

This study's last limitation is its reliance on self-reported data. Self-reported data may be erroneous because individuals may incorrectly recall or intentionally or unintentionally distort occurrences. The researcher compensated for this constraint of data collection until data saturation was reached by ensuring participants the confidentiality of their remarks and establishing rapport with them. Hence, they feel comfortable expressing honest experiences (Flick, 2019).

Significance

Black women in public school education across the U.S. face various issues related to the hiring and promotion to senior leadership positions that are not faced by their White counterparts or other men and women of color (Allen & Liou, 2019). This study collected Black women's perspectives on whether anti-black women leadership syndrome contributes to the problem of underrepresentation of Black women in the educational leadership field. Their perspectives may also help to address the issue of minimal research about anti-black women in leadership roles in public education. This study may also help advance hiring practices by influencing policies to address hiring inequities amongst more BIPOC populations representation in senior leadership roles in K-12 public education. The study may also contribute to school district leaders and hiring recruiters creating supportive ways to advance Black women in more educational leadership positions.

The anti-black women leadership syndrome is a concept created by the researcher based on a potential conceptual model for understanding if anti-black racism or anti-blackness are contributing factors for the lack of Black women leaders. The meaning of the anti-black women leadership syndrome construct is the behaviors, attitudes, or actions that dehumanize, minimize, devalue, prevent, and marginalize the equitable, equal, and full participation of Black women ascending to leadership roles because they are Black women. Individual actions demonstrating anti-black women leadership syndrome behaviors, attitudes, and actions may range from acts of prejudice and overt racism to unconscious bias and inherited White supremacy. Anti-black women leadership

syndrome is not a clinical diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (DSM), nor is it a term to excuse the behaviors of individuals who exhibit the

phenomenon's characteristics. Anti-black women leadership syndrome is a coined term

by the researcher to bring awareness that Anti-black women leadership syndrome is much

more than racism. Instead, anti-black women leadership syndrome refers to the specific

dimension of racism directed toward Black women ascending to leadership roles in their

careers.

Individuals with anti-black women leadership syndrome may consciously or

unconsciously believe Black women are lazy, problem people, or inferior. People who

enact anti-black women leadership syndrome also may consciously or unconsciously

mischaracterize Black women as scary, aggressive, angry, unskilled, and less intelligent

in their professions. Therefore, the argument can be made that the lack of advancement in

their careers is warranted. Suppose Black women can be seen in their careers as unskilled

or angry. In that case, those in power who make hiring decisions can argue that is why

the Black woman did not climb to leadership levels in her career, despite her

qualifications and educational attainment. Because of these negative feelings, attitudes, or

actions, anti-black women leadership syndrome combines these attitudes with how

individuals with power make hiring decisions about the lack of promotion or

advancement of skilled and qualified Black women to uphold beliefs of colonialism and

racial and gender hierarchy. As long as the legacies of colonialism and racial hierarchies

persist, whiteness is consistently elevated while simultaneously devaluing and oppressing

nonwhite individuals (Allen & Liou, 2019; Howard et al., 2022; Whitney, 2022). To

eliminate discrimination against Black women in the workforce, particularly about Black women ascending to senior leadership roles in K-12 public education, Crenshaw's (1991) intersectionality was used as a conceptual framework to address how discrimination differs between other racial and gender groups and Black women.

Anti-black women leadership syndrome may be exacerbated by intersectional aspects such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. Actions of individuals that demonstrate anti-black women leadership syndrome can be intentional or not intentionally enacted from any gender or ethnicity. Regardless of whether anti-black women leadership syndrome is intentional or not, it benefits nonblack groups by placing White people at the top of the already existing racial hierarchy. It places Black people at the bottom and nonblack people of color between the racial hierarchy (Howard et al., 2022; Whitney, 2022; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). Anti-black women leadership syndrome specifically impacts Black women seeking leadership roles, in this study specifically in education, by excluding them from the full participation and sense of belonging in education and educational leadership roles. Anti-black women leadership syndrome prevents Black women from exercising fundamental freedoms in having equal footing, such as the freedom to thrive and work from oppression or abuse. In essence, due to the lack of research on anti-black ness and anti-black racism and its impact on Black women, the messages from anti-black women leadership syndrome uphold that Black women are to blame for their lack of leadership career attainment they face, not the anti-black women leadership syndrome enforcing them.

This body of work explicitly applies the anti-black women leadership syndrome concept to Black women in public education. It is salient to them because of the perceived connections between their interconnected experiences as Black women leaders and their challenges toward senior leadership attainment. The additional educational significance of this study is to understand and address the existing body of knowledge related to the problem concerning the lack of Black women ascending to senior leadership roles in K-12 public education (Liou & Alvara, 2021). Previous research has demonstrated this issue as problematic for Black women, Black students, and the U.S. workforce (Liou & Alvara, 2021). This study may lead to positive social change. It may help school district leaders hire officials. Educational advocates understand that minimal research has focused solely on anti-black women from those in positions of privilege and power, possibly contributing to Black women's inequities in leadership career advancement in public school education. This knowledge may help school district leaders, hiring officials, and educational advocates increase the number of Black women in senior leadership roles in public education. More Black women in educational leadership profoundly impacted student academic achievement and better equity practices in educational systems, such as hiring, retaining, and promoting Black educators and student educational opportunities (Jang & Alexander, 2022).

Summary

The problem this study explored was that although Black women are currently the most college-educated group per capita in the U.S. compared to other groups, Black women still lag in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school

education (Fuller et al., 2019; NCES, 2021). This study also explored if an anti-black

woman in leadership syndrome contributes to these reported outcomes – i.e., whether

there are characteristics, opinions, emotions, or behaviors that negatively impact the

success of Black women in leadership. The purpose of this research study was to explore

the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership

positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a

contributor to this underrepresentation. An Afrocentric epistemological lens encapsulated

the conceptual framework of this study. This study was also guided by intersectionality

and critical race theory.

A basic qualitative research design explored the study's problem. Interviews were

conducted to study the problem statement and understand participants' experiences and if

race, gender, and anti-black women in leadership syndrome contribute to Black women's

lesser achievement of senior leadership roles in K–12 public education environments.

The research's theoretical assumptions included that the data acquired from participants

was accurate or accurate to their experience (Degeling & Rock, 2020; Nowell et al.,

2017). The scope of this study included Black women in leadership positions working in

K-12 public schools in the U.S. Leadership positions referred to women working as

principals, executive directors, chief executives, and superintendent positions.

Including participants was contingent upon holding a qualifying leadership role

for at least a year. The study has drawbacks. This study had no White women, Black

men, or persons of other races. Non-probability sampling was used in this study; hence,

the results may only apply to the sample population used for the research. The purpose of

this study was to examine and address the body of knowledge that exists regarding the issue of Black women not being promoted to senior leadership positions in K–12 public education. A review of the literature was presented in the next chapter. The literature review comprised a discussion of the previous studies on this topic, including the essential concepts condensing this study. The description of the conceptual framework was also provided in more detail.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Although Black women currently have the highest college enrolment rates in the U.S. when compared to other groups, the problem that has to be addressed in this study is that Black women still struggle to fill senior educational leadership positions in the public education system (Fuller et al., 2019; NCES, 2021). This study aimed to investigate the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women of color in senior educational leadership roles in the K–12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome are one of those factors.

The literature review indicated in this section is related to Black women's experiences in K–12 public school senior leadership positions. The main objective of this literature review was to offer a thorough analysis and contribute to the definition of the research topic that is the basis for this study. Most of the research on minority women in public school education, however, focuses on their struggles and experiences as they strive to fill critical leadership roles. The first part of the review discussed methods for searching articles and the literature search approach. Together with the databases of key concepts used to search for the articles, criteria for including and excluding articles were supplied. The theoretical framework was covered next.

Intersectionality and CRT were examined, and how this study is grounded. The next step was a review of relevant literature that focuses on critical topics and ideas, including a discussion of Black women's educational opportunities, challenges they face when applying for top leadership roles, and solutions to the underrepresentation of Black women in these roles. The discussion of each of these sections is as follows.

Literature Search Strategy

To identify the databases required to gather scholarly articles, books, and other publications about the study topic, the Walden University Library and Google Scholar were consulted. PubMed Central, Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects, PsycINFO, UpToDate, ProQuest, PsychoInfo, Academic Premier, Sage, JSTOR, ResearchGate, EMBASE, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, Cochrane Library, Emerald, EBSCO, and Elsevier were only a few of the databases that were searched. Only sources released during the five years between 2019 and 2023 were used to preserve the accuracy and credibility of the sources used. The search words used included *critical race theory (CRT), intersectionality, African American women, Black women, leadership experiences, top K-12 leadership positions barriers, anti-black ness, anti-black racism, and underrepresentation of Black women*.

Conceptual Framework

The study was informed by intersectionality and Critical Race Theory (CRT). Early in the 1970s, activists pushing for Black and White equality gave birth to CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). Delgado and Stefancic (2013) argued that the CRT framework identified racism as being institutionalized in societal norms and law as a factor in the disparity seen and felt in the U.S. The CRT theory was employed in this study to examine Black female school principals, executive directors, chief executives, and superintendents' recruiting and retention experiences in U.S. public school educational institutions. CRT theory is usually used to examine the idea of racism and racial discrimination in society, as suggested by its proponents (Bell, 1995; Delgado &

Stefancic, 2013). Using this background knowledge of CRT, the theory was employed in this study to analyze factors impacting the hiring and retention of Black women as senior-level leaders, as well as their perceptions of diversity and the predominance of White senior leaders in U.S. public school educational institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Tate IV, 1997).

Delgado and Stefancic (2013) claim that CRT has several components supporting its claims. Significantly, CRT is based on five fundamental principles: the notions of racism as a standard and accepted social phenomenon, interest convergence that fosters self-interest, and race as a social construct. Additional tenets include the idea that Whites have benefited from civil rights legislation and narratives that can express or oppose Eurocentric ideas.

The intersection of racism and gender in Black women who hold senior leadership roles in K–12 education, including principals and superintendents, may be influenced by this study's application of CRT. The five basic assumptions of CRT theory—racism as an everyday social reality, race as a social construct, convergence of interests, the idea of storytelling and narratives, and the idea that Whites have been the genuine beneficiaries of civil rights legislation, have already been mentioned (Mensha, 2017). Because race and gender are social constructs that have impacted how Black women are seen as leaders in K–12 public education, I used the theory to analyze the difficulties Black women experience in achieving the highest levels of leadership in K–12.

Intersectionality Theory

The black feminist study is primarily rooted in intersectionality theory (Acuff, 2018). The phrase "intersectionality" was initially coined by Crenshaw (1991). The phrase was created after the author began looking into friends and describing the lived experiences of those oppressed, focusing on the circumstances faced by women of color (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality, therefore, refers to the simultaneous experience of social categories such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation and how these categories interact to create systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). The intersectionality framework examines the interconnected elements that may result in bias or discrimination against a group of people. When examining underrepresented groups, it is crucial to consider intersecting identities, such as being a woman and a person of color.

The earliest references to intersectionality were made by Sojourner Truth in 1851 (Crenshaw, 1991). While giving her famous speech on *Ain't I A Woman* at the women's convention in Ohio, Sojourner Truth challenged the perception of being black and a woman as mutually exclusive (Crenshaw, 1991). Since the speech at the convention, both Crenshaw (1991) and Keuchenius and Mugge (2021) established that intersectionality became the center of feminist's agenda and research on female representation. Crenshaw (1991) asserted that the significance of intersectionality has necessitated its inclusion in gender studies and psychology.

The theory of intersectionality has evolved since its conception in that through the 1980s, it focused on anti-discrimination. Crenshaw (1991) noted that the evolution of the

intersectionality theory was centered on creating a sense of belonging for individuals in a particular group. In the extant literature, the continued experiences of gender and racial oppression can best be understood through the intersectionality theory following its revolution. Intersectionality as a theoretical framework is anchored on the assumption that the social categories of race, social status, gender, and ethnicity interconnect at different levels of a person's life (Crenshaw, 1991; Keuchenius & Mügge, 2021). Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina (2018) concurred with Crenshaw (1991) that social-structural racism and sexism are associated with oppression and privileges accorded to people.

There are three forms of intersectionality identified by Crenshaw (1991), and they include political, representational, and structural intersectionality. Crenshaw (1991) discussed structural intersectionality in terms of racism, sexism, and classism. According to Crenshaw's (1991) findings, structural intersectionality by oppressing minority women in the United States has also informed and molded their experiences with racism and sexism. In her study on sexually abused women, Crenshaw (1991) used structural intersectionality to explore the extent of oppression experienced by women at different societal levels.

Political intersectionality describes antagonistic structures that segregate Black women from other women. Political intersectionality asserts that the experiences of Black women are significantly different from those experienced by White women (Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018). Crenshaw (1991) established that political intersectionality influenced the policies and political decisions that influenced the identities of minority subordinates.

Representational intersectionality is associated with the strategies aimed at supporting Black women. Comparable to Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina (2018), Crenshaw (1991) used intersectionality theory to highlight racism and the underrepresentation of Black women. Through representational intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991) emphasized the value of portraying Black and other marginalized women in modern literature and the media. Based on the preceding discussion, the intersectionality theory is critical in investigating the challenges experienced by Black female education administrators in K-12 learning institutions.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables

History of Black Women in Education and Leadership

In 1833, abolitionists established Oberlin College in Ohio, which helped Black women get an education. Previously, Black women were denied education; nevertheless, they significantly improved in getting degrees from Oberlin College. New chances were generated for Black women at the end of the Civil War. However, they still encountered hindrances. The educated Black women migrated to the South. They assisted in educating other Black women in America because schools were established to assist in educating Black women to be functional citizens (Wolfman, 1997). Rules were created to assist in developing education in the U.S. The most significant strategy regarding access to public education and, subsequently, for Black women in America was offered in 1862 with the enactment of the first Morrill Land Grant Act (Wolfman, 1997).

The Act resulted in the farming and machine-driven arts scholastic program, providing funding and 30,000 acres of land to form public institutes in all states

(Rudolph, 1990). When the subsequent Morrill Act of 1890 was approved, access was prolonged precisely to Black Americans, which approved the yearly dissemination of finance for learning on a "just and equitable" principle to Black Americans in 17 states (Brazzell, 1996; Bowles & De Costa, 1971). This Act directed the formation of 17 state-sanctioned Black institutes that united with the set of existing Black colleges that were private and 54 supplementary Black schools recognized under the first Morrill Act (Rudolph, 1990). The Act also made the segregation of Blacks legal. It emphasized a curricular prominence on mechanics, farming, and the manufacturing arts. The federal government subsidized this idea of professional learning. Though it was attractive to some Black Americans, it fortified the belief that Black women in America were intellectually less skilled than their White counterparts and should be accessible with a discrete and lower level of education (Anderson, & Gerbing, 1988; Davis, 2022).

Roebuck and Murty (1993) advocated that public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were designed to access millions of dollars in national government funding to create White land-grant universities to reduce Black Americans' education to occupational training and to impede them from joining White land-grant Universities. Despite the surroundings that enhanced their establishment, these institutions and their private counterparts jointly formed at least 3,400 college graduates in America by the end of the century (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Many Black women were selected to obtain degrees from HBCUs, such as Howard University, Fisk University, and Wilberforce University.

The first college in America for Black women to grant graduate degrees to women of color was Hartshorn Memorial College, founded in 1883. Despite ongoing challenges, Black women persistently desire to pursue their academic pursuits (Jones et al., 2022). Dubois's 1900 report on Black University graduates showed that 252 women, as opposed to 2,272 men, had completed their degrees (Jones et al., 2022). About 65 of them received their degrees from Oberlin College. In addition, only 22 of the 156 Black graduates from universities were women.

This vast inequity in scholastic accomplishment made some Black American women anxious about this disturbing problem. Early activists for Black girls and women's education, explicitly through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, proclaimed that elevating the place of Black women in society would promote the entire race. Likewise, establishing racial improvement fell mostly on Black women, with the limited numbers of educated Black women in the late 19th century significantly influencing the Black community (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

As a result of the Northern philanthropists' and their Southern agents' interest in Black rural education, the first two decades of the 20th century, they had an educational consciousness that sparked the American South (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Additionally, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) described how the public school system in the South went through a surprising development. To strengthen the legal substance of public education, state laws were changed. In addition, school buildings appreciated, illiteracy rates dropped quickly, local taxes rose, school periods lengthened, and teacher

pay increased dramatically. Historians believe the Southern education movement began formally with this drive for organized schools.

Additionally, White southern academics and business patrons combined efforts contributed to the movement's success. The battle regarding the goals of southern education for Whites and Blacks resulted in each of these organizations forging a potent new force. The Southern Education Board, established in 1901, and the General Education Board, established in 1902, were the two leading educational groups that approved the cooperation. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, these boards' programs and policies significantly impacted Southern Black public education (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

The Civil Rights and Women's movements emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and they were a vital force in the fight against racial and gender inequality in education (Lee & Thomas, 2022). Discrimination based on racial, ethnic, or national origin, as well as disabilities, was forbidden when the Civil Rights Act of 1964's Title VII became law (Lee & Thomas, 2022). Comparatively speaking, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 outlawed gender discrimination in educational institutions receiving government support (Lee & Thomas, 2022). Black women's rate of completing four years of college increased gradually in the 1960s and 1970s, from 3.3% in 1960 to 4.5% in 1965 to 4.6% in 1970 to 6.2% in 1975. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

Reasons for Underrepresentation of Black Women in Leadership Positions

Gender Stereotyping

Gender stereotyping negatively influences Black women's representation in educational leadership positions. Gender stereotyping refers to ascribing to one's gender-specific attributes and roles by the reason of his or her membership in social group of women or men based on physical appearances such as dress and body structure (Williams et al., 2022). Williams et al. (2022) examined the experiences of first-generation Black college women in the U.S. by interviewing six Black women. They found that the pioneer women in college had to endure gender stereotyping and other discriminatory practices such as racism. Through a systematic literature review, Truehill (2021) examined Black women leaders' experiences in K-12 public education in California and established that Black women leaders had negative experiences through gender discrimination, racism, and sexism. An earlier study by Bailes and Guthery (2020) investigated the systematic delay in principal promotions by race and gender in Texas by data analysis responses from 4,689 assistant principals and found that Black women assistant principals were the least likely group to be considered for promotion at any time. Comparably to Williams et al. (2022), Channing (2022), through a systematic literature review, examined the challenges and barriers faced by Black women in the U.S. and reported that Black women endured many challenges, including gender bias and stereotyping. Gender-based bias impedes Black women from aiming for senior leadership positions in education.

Increased sidelining and segregation of women of color in education results from sexism and racism in institutions of learning (Pories et al., 2019). Sexism is

discrimination against individuals based on gender or gender differences (Horsford et al.,

2021). Research has exposed learning institutions as unequal fields despite the

assumption that such institutions are required to promote knowledge, foster truth, and

enhance reasoning (Bourabain, 2020). In previous research, Purwar (2004) established

that many learning institutions within the U.S. still consider White students as

knowledgeable compared to their minority counterparts.

Research has revealed that Black women who have experienced sexism have

reported adverse health outcomes and poor career development compared to women with

no experience (Pories et al., 2017). The traumatic experiences reported by women who

have experienced sexism have impacted their career development. The fear of being

discriminated against for being Black and woman hindered their willingness to progress

their career. Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) concurred that sexism interfered with Black

women's job satisfaction and mental health, affecting their overall performance at work.

Gender stereotyping of Black women has exacerbated their underrepresentation in

education and education leadership. Blosser (2020) examined the experiences of Black

women studying advanced engineering in the U.S. by interviewing 12 Black women and

found that Black women were remarkably underrepresented because of their gender and

race. Identically, Eaton et al. (2020) explored how gender stereotypes and racism

influenced the hiring ability of professors in the U.S. by interviewing 251 professors and

established that Black women were ranked lowest regarding hiring ability. Differing from

Blosser (2020) and Eaton et al. (2020), Davis (2022) investigated the experiences that

impacted the career paths of Black women superintendents and those who sought to

advance their careers in schools in the U.S. through a systematic literature review and reported that Black women encountered barriers such as gender bias and racism in their careers. Based on the reviewed studies, it is imperative to note that gender stereotyping is a barrier to Black women's representation in educational leadership.

Gender stereotyping is a potential barrier hindering the representation of Black women in senior leadership positions in organizations. Gender stereotyping explains why Black women are less represented and men are overrepresented in senior leadership positions (Eagly et al., 2020). Eagly et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study with 30,093 adults to investigate gender stereotypes. Black women's leadership positions in the U.S. Eagly et al. (2020) demonstrated that having a leadership role in a given field, such as STEM, makes people believe men should handle such leadership positions and that women have limited skills and characteristics needed to succeed in such a science field. Minority women continue to face gender stereotypes, impeding their access to senior leadership positions in organizations. Charlesworth and Banaji (2022) explored gender stereotypes in the organization. They found that Black women have to cope with racial and gender stereotyping through segregation from workplace advancements. These stereotypes are because Black women are viewed as having limited intellect as their male counterparts. Such barriers limit their access to senior-level positions (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2022). In general, studies reviewed concur that gender stereotype hinders Black women's access to leadership positions.

The negative gender stereotypes allotted to Black women's racial makeup are not only disheartening but also harm the reputation of Black women and affect their

psychological well-being in the organization. Hentschel et al. (2019) investigated different dimensions of gender stereotypes and found that negative stereotyping of Black women as lacking leadership abilities demeans their readership prowess, limiting their chances of accessing senior leadership positions in organizations. Black women are negatively stereotyped, resulting in more men being preferred for senior leadership positions than women in organizations. Black women are believed to lack the requisite competence in managing an organization or usurping leadership responsibilities (Hentschel et al., 2019). Arnold and Loughlin (2019) stated that gender stereotyping significantly limited Black women's access to the organization's senior leadership positions. Extending Arnold and Loughlin's (2019) findings, Froehlich et al. (2020) gender-segregated occupations are linked with stereotype-relevant characteristics such that Black women are more disadvantaged in accessing leadership opportunities, where men are much preferred than women.

Glass Ceiling

Women are traditionally oppressed and frustrated because senior leadership positions are meant to be occupied by men, not women. Bloch et al. (2021) analyzed an intersectional strategy for the glass ceiling, including race, gender, and share of middle and senior management in workplaces in the U.S. Bloch et al. (2021) revealed that a worker's ability to reach senior-level management is based on race and gender. Men are preferred for senior-level management over women, and Black men and women are racially segregated in leadership positions. The underrepresentation of Black women in top-level positions has become a global problem, indicating that the glass ceiling could be

the key reason for such disparity, especially among Black women (Welch et al., 2021).

Corpuz et al. (2020), agreeing with Welch et al. (2021), demonstrated that men are

preferred for high-stake jobs and that Black women are not naturally predisposed to

senior-level management responsibilities. Studies revealed that Black women's glass

ceiling hinders them from attaining organizational leadership positions.

The glass ceiling may be a key barrier Black women face in senior leadership

positions. To address the glass ceiling issue and women's leadership in K – 12 public

education in the US, Dahlvig and Longman (2020) reported that glass ceilings are self-

imposed micro-barriers at an individual level that hinder leadership opportunities for

Black women in the U.S. Corroborative findings of Dahlvig and Longman (2020) were

reported in a qualitative study conducted by Sales et al. (2020) to investigate Black

women's leadership in the U.S. The findings indicated that Black women are being

overlooked, undervalued in favor of men, marginalized, and unappreciated due to their

minority status. Such barriers can deter the progression of Black women (Sales et al.,

2020). Field et al. (2020) highlighted that women would not be appropriate for the tasks

of a senior-level leadership position because they cannot report to duties early because of

domestic roles of caring for a family, unlike men, who are likely to commit to

management roles. The articles discussed have indicated that the glass ceiling is a crucial

hindrance to Black women's access to leadership positions.

Research indicates that Black women encounter various challenges, including the

glass ceiling that limits their ascension to senior leadership positions. Kim (2020)

examined intersectionality and gendered racism in the U.S. The findings indicated that

gender discrimination through the glass ceiling had impeded the ascension of Black women to senior leadership positions because men are traditionally preferred for senior leadership positions over women due to gender discrimination in workplaces (Kim, 2020). Comparable findings to Kim (2020) were replicated in a quantitative study with 32 senior female federal law enforcement officers conducted by Yu (2020) to examine the glass ceiling in federal law enforcement and women's career advancement. Extending Kim's (2020) findings, Yu (2020) found that Black women holding senior-level positions in organizations resemble the distinctive tokenism whereby they hardly have a voice in the organization's decision-making and have limited access to power compared to men (Yu, 2020). Through a quantitative study to explore gender equality, Parmer (2021) reported that promoting Black women to top managerial positions is challenging due to a glass ceiling and gender inequality in organizations.

The devaluation and underappreciation of Black women, as reported by Sales et al. (2020), barred women from leadership positions. Similarly, Sales et al. (2020) demonstrated that Black women were being overlooked in favor of men blocking their ascension to leadership positions (Sales et al., 2020). Welch et al. (2021) explained that underrepresentation, undervaluation, and disregard for Black female leadership negatively influenced their appointment to leadership positions. Consequently, anti-black ness has also been demonstrated in the findings reported by Kim (2020). Kim (2020) reported that gender discrimination significantly hindered Black women's ascension to senior leadership positions. Similar conclusions were drawn by Parmer (2021), who revealed that Black women were discriminated against and denied leadership

opportunities due to being women and Black. Therefore, devaluation, underappreciation of Black women, and discrimination represented anti-black ness and anti-black racism against women, contributing to their lack of ascension or attrition from leadership positions.

Lack of Mentors

The lack of mentors and mentorship programs has hindered Black women's educational leadership. Gooden et al. (2020) studied the importance of mentoring Black women by interviewing two female doctorate students under a mentorship program in the U.S. They reported that mentoring gave them the confidence to advance their careers and hold leadership positions. Disparate to Gooden et al. (2020), Scott (2022) and Brooks (2022), Davis et al. (2022) investigated the influence of the SistUH Scholars initiative at the University of Houston, which is a mentoring program for Black doctoral women students and found that the mentorship program was significant in helping Black women advance their careers and assume leadership positions as compared to Black women without a mentoring program. The absence of mentors only helps increase the underrepresentation of Black women in top leadership positions.

Fewer Black women in leadership positions have meant few mentors for Black women, thus upholding their underrepresentation in education leadership. King and Upadhyay (2022), through a systematic literature review, studied the actions Black educators took in helping Black women and other minority groups in career advancements and established that Black faculties are advocating for more mentorship programs to help Black women aspiring to be leaders in K-12 education. Varyingly,

Shavers et al. (2022) explored the significance of mentoring for Black women pursuing doctorate degrees by interviewing seven women education leaders in the U.S. and reported that most women face many challenges while aspiring for senior leadership positions, including a lack of mentors and support. Like King and Upadhyay (2022), Carter and Craig (2022) conducted a systematic literature review to establish the barriers to Black women's promotion to senior education leadership positions in the U.S. and found that many Black women face impediments to senior roles, including a lack of diverse mentorship. Green and Jackson-Jefferson (2021) reported corresponding results; they examined the barriers and challenges to Black women sociologists aiming to get into leadership positions in the U.S. Green and Jackson-Jefferson (2021) found that Black women have limited access to mentoring, which significantly increases their underrepresentation in education leadership positions. Lack of mentorship and support for Black women is characterized by low representation in education leadership positions.

A deficit of mentors and mentorship programs has overseen an underrepresentation of Black women in top education positions. Lee et al. (2022) examined the barriers to Black women ascending to senior leadership positions in the U.S. by interviewing 15 Black women. They reported that Black women faced many barriers, including lack of mentorship, racism, and gender stereotyping. Compared to Lee et al. (2022), Karalis Noel et al. (2022) investigated the experiences of Black women under mentorship programs in the US by interviewing 31 minority scholars, including Black women. Karalis Noel et al. (2022) established that mentorship was vital in encouraging Black women to advance their careers into senior leadership positions. Poor

mentorship also contributed to Black educators abandoning their motivation to be leaders in K-12 education. Dissimilar to Lee et al. (2022) and Karalis Noel et al. (2022), who administered structured interviews, McGee et al. (2022) used a systematic literature review to explore the enabling factors for the ascendancy of Black educators in K - 12 public education to top university leadership positions in the US and found that Black scholars are quick to acknowledge lack of mentorship programs that are a barrier to as an end to senior leadership positions in K - 12 public education. The lack of mentors for Black women significantly hinders the representation of Black women in senior leadership positions.

Mentors are essential in aiding Black women to advance their careers and become leaders in K-12 education. Apugo (2021) investigated the mechanisms of breaking barriers facing Black women in senior leadership positions in the US by interviewing 15 Black doctorate graduate women and reported that barriers facing Black women include lack of mentors and racism, and mentorship programs could help them overcome them. A nonidentical study to Apugo (2021) was conducted by Shen et al. (2022) through a systematic literature review to investigate the impacts of mentoring Black women in academic medicine in the US and established that lack of mentoring was one of the barriers to achievement in academic medicine and it disproportionately affects Black women. Equally, Alfred et al. (2019), through a systematic literature review, studied the techniques to be applied in advancing and developing Black women into education leadership positions in the US and reported that mentorship was vital in encouraging

Black women to take up leadership positions. The lack of mentors in higher education

institutions impedes Black women who want to advance their careers.

As illustrated, the lack of mentoring opportunities and programs has hindered the

ascension of Black women to senior leadership positions in learning institutions. Lopez

(2020), while examining anti-black racism in education for school leaders, noted that

Black women experienced exclusion, oppression, and discrimination associated with

inequality and lack of equity due to anti-black racism. In the qualitative research, Lopez

(2020) established that anti-black racism increased the number of Black educators

leaving the profession, resulting in the unavailability of mentors for upcoming Black

educators. Similar to Lopez (2020), Bell (2020) asserted that anti-black ness and anti-

black racism were associated with disdain and disregard for Black women in leadership

positions in institutions of learning. Increased cases of microaggression and devaluation

increased turnover intentions for Black women leaders. Pasque et al. (2021) reiterated

that White supremacy was associated with increased cases of anti-black ness racism,

negatively associated with increased turnover intentions. Thus, lacking Black female

mentors in educational leadership was associated with anti-black ness and racism.

Lack of Networking

The underrepresentation of Black women senior leaders in the K–12 public

education depicts Black women's lack of professional networking in top educational

leadership positions in the literature. Johnson and Fournillier (2021) examined the

barriers experienced by interviewing two Black women on their quest to be appointed to

senior education leadership positions in the US and reported that Black women suffered

from many challenges, including a lack of networking relationships. Results by Longman et al. (2019) and Johnson and Fournillier (2021) were substantiated by Jang and Alexander (2022) through data analysis with a multiple regression model exploring the practices that successful Black women principals used in the US and found that the Black women principals have a successful professional network. Lack of networking for Black women is a significant barrier that prevents them from taking up leadership positions in education.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual abuse and harassment are significant barriers to women's ascension to senior educational leadership positions. Stanley and Crawford (2022) investigated the challenges faced by pro-religious Black women aiming to become teacher educators in theology and established that most Black women faced sexual harassment, often leading them to abandon their professions. Different from Stanley and Crawford (2022), Jones (2022) studied the various challenges faced by Black queer women in the education sector in the US by interviewing ten Black queer women and established that many Black queer women fear leadership as a result of sexual harassment and judgment on their abilities. Correspondingly, Lee and Thomas (2022) examined why Black women critical teachers were leaving their profession at a higher rate by interviewing 15 ex-critical Black women teachers in the US and established that the critical teachers suffered a lot of discrimination and sexual harassment at work, prompting them to leave. Sexual harassment significantly discourages Black women from aspiring to be leaders in K-12 education.

Wilkins-Yel et al. (2022) examined the impacts of the psychological requirements of the science field of study on Black women by interviewing 12 women. Burton et al. (2020) explored the impacts of discrimination on Black women leaders in education in the US by interviewing ten Black women and established that most Black women suffered from mental health disorders, leading them to resign. Mental health disorders are a barrier to women ascending to senior educational leadership positions.

Professional Isolation

Black women executives are frequently placed in specific positions belonging to one race or gender. This implies that Black women with senior leadership positions are typically isolated physically from other White counterparts and duties or roles. From Harris's (2020) perspective, isolating Black women in top leadership positions based on their gender or roles is commonly referred to as being in the other workplace. Consequently, the sense and feeling of otherness create a typical form of isolation with far-reaching implications, such as a lack of social support. The implication of isolation based on race or roles could result in limited opportunities for promotion or consideration within the top leadership ranks. Similar results were reported by Pories et al. (2019), whose findings revealed that most Black women executives tend to feel separated from the rest of the organization, leading to poor work. Leath et al. (2022) also noted that a sense of otherness among Black women executives makes them feel like strangers to the organization, not team members. The exclusion of Black women based on their race and gender, as well as roles, limits the number of Black women in K-12 leadership positions.

Mentorship and sponsorship programs are critical in supporting Black women's desire to serve in senior leadership positions in K-12 public education. Harris (2020) noted that mentorship programs effectively break down the barriers of isolation based on roles and race frequently experienced by Black women. Similar thoughts were reported by Leath et al. (2022), who emphasized that most Black women in senior leadership positions need more influential mentors to support their top leadership aspirations. Similar results were reported by Harris (2020) and Ramirez (2022), where 32% of Black women in senior leadership roles identified a lack of role models of the same race in organizations as a major impediment to upward career growth. With marginally low numbers of Black women leaders, there are inadequate Black women mentors in organizations, reducing the confidence and abilities that Black women have in senior leadership positions.

Lack of mentorship and sponsorship programs have negatively influenced the representation of Black women in senior leadership positions in K-12 education centers. Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) explored the role of Black female teachers in teacher preparation and retention. Using a qualitative sample of 12 Black teachers, Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2020) established that Black female teachers served as mentors and advisors for newly recruited teachers of color. However, having a limited number of Black female teachers in K-12 schools resulted in poor teacher preparation, increased attrition of Black teachers, and, thus, poor representation. King and Upadhyay (2022) reported consistent findings and investigated mentoring relationships supporting Black and Brown faculty careers. Mentoring practices and positive mentoring relationships were found to

positively promote the careers of Brown and Black faculty, which fostered recruitment, retention, and representation of people of color in the faculty. Joseph and McKenzie (2022) reiterated that when Black women acted as coaches, they increased the number of women willing to take up community leadership positions, thus increasing the representation of women. However, the limited number of Black women coaches negatively influenced the representation of Black women and their willingness to take up leadership positions in the community and K-12 education centers.

Women-to-women mentorship programs could also help minimize challenges caused by role and race isolation among Black women. Several studies, such as Bejarano and Smooth (2022), have established that same-gender mentorship programs effectively improve leadership capabilities and capacities among Black women. In a different study, Cartwright et al. (2021) found that top leadership positions in K-12 education were likely to have more Black women represented if Black women had access to same-race and gender mentors in organizations. However, Awadzi (2019) reported an insignificant effect of the same race and gender of mentorship programs on minorities' representation in senior leadership positions. Surprisingly, Mims and Kaler-Jones (2020) established that being mentored by a mentor of the same race and gender could not necessarily translate to one being promoted to a senior leadership position in an organization. Although mentorship programs play a critical role in nurturing minority women to assume leadership positions, there is inconsistent empirical evidence of how mentorship of the same race and gender contributes to Black women's representation of senior leadership positions.

It takes more for Black women executives to be successful. Several studies have established that Black women leaders must develop high confidence in their abilities, skills, and decisions in senior leadership positions. Developing a strong confidence in one's abilities has been identified as one of the key factors contributing to the success of Black women in K-12 education top leadership positions. In top leadership positions, in addition to tackling stereotypes and isolation, there is an automatic pressure to succeed based on their unique beliefs, competency, and skill confidence (Awadzi, 2019; Mims & Kaler-Jones, 2020).

Duo Bias

The most prominent issue African Americans face in organizations is duo bias. Duo bias occurs when an individual is discriminated against based on multiple attributes. In most cases, duo discrimination occurs where the individual is discriminated against based on race and gender. In organizations, Black women are first segregated based on gender and racial affiliations (Chance, 2022). Typically, most Black women have a limited chance of serving in top leadership positions because if they are not segregated based on race, they are discriminated against by gender. Chappelle (2022) investigated African Americans' views about duo bias in the workplace. The researcher recruited a total of 36 participants from different sectors. Upon conducting the analysis, it was established that 65% of participants identified duo bias as a significant factor affecting their senior leadership position aspirations. Although some participants noted they could find an opportunity to serve in senior leadership as women, their race was used against them (McGee, 2020). Other studies have also established that gender and race could

affect Black women's top aspirations to be leaders in K-12 education (Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020). The findings are consistent with previous literature whereby women from different minority groups have identified gender and race as two forms of duo bias they encounter when aspiring to serve in senior leadership positions (Evans- Winters & Hines, 2020; Porter et al., 2020; Shavers & Moore, 2019).

While describing anti-black ness and anti-black racism, Bell (2020) stated that the concepts were described as disdain, disregard, and disgust for Black women in leadership positions. T. Jones (2022) reiterated that White supremacists discriminated against Black women first because they were women and second because of their racial differences. In previous research, Bell (2020) demonstrated that Black women in leadership positions were not accorded the respect they deserved because they were Black, and due to White supremacy, male leaders failed to recognize their authority. The descriptions provided by the preceding scholars describe cases of duo bias encountered by Black women in their places of work. For instance, Evans-Winters and Hines (2020) and Porter et al. (2020) demonstrated that gender and racial discrimination hindered women's aspirations for top leadership positions. Evidence of consistent results was reported by Chance (2022), who noted that gender stereotyping and racial discrimination prevented Black women from achieving leadership positions. Duo bias can, therefore, be associated with anti-black ness and anti-black racism.

Anti-blackness and Anti-black Racism

Anti-black racism is systematic and structural in its approach in that it marginalizes and devalues Black people and communities in all contexts (Silva, 2020). It

is structural in the sense that it relates to how classism, sexism, and racism intersect and oppress minority women while at the same time molding their lived experiences in different ways (Crenshaw, 1991). Underneath anti-black ness is the subtle structural racism that predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in the US, as examined by CRT, and continues to be held in place by White supremacist beliefs, inequitable policies, and within institutions (Crenshaw, 1991). Anti-black racism differs from racism and White privilege and is often overlooked (Comrie et al., 2022). The term "racism" does not fully encapsulate the experiences of Black people such as Black women, men, trans, gender-conforming, nonbinary, youth, girls and boys, migrants, and communities (Comrie et al., 2022). To abridge the whole experience of various Black groups, such as the experiences of Black women leaders in K – 12 public education, there must be intentionality in acknowledging the specific harm in various settings caused by anti-black racism and anti-black ness.

Anti-black ness and anti-black racism against Black women manifest in three forms: disdain, disgust, and disregard (Bell, 2020; J. Jones, 2022). While studying a Black feminist's call for collective action against anti-black ness, Bell (2020) sought to explain how disdain, disregard, and disgust for Black women manifested in learning institutions. In their analysis of qualitative data, Bell (2020) acknowledged that many learning institutions in the US were plagued with the narrative of White supremacy that resulted in their limited or complete ignorance of Black staff members. Bell (2020) reiterated that although many institutions of learning in the US had a staff of people of color, only a few or no Blacks were represented. In explaining this observation, Bell

(2020) and Bell (2020) asserted that the lack of Black staff members in learning institutions is a lack of Ph.D. or other academic qualifications but a deliberate disregard, discrimination, and anti-black ness during the hiring process.

Black women have reported experiencing increased discrimination and microaggressions that have increased attrition from leadership positions and covert anti-black racism against Black women. Bell (2020) reported that many Black women quit their leadership positions due to increased discrimination and microaggressions that proved overwhelming. In concert with Bell (2020), J. Jones (2022) explored how anti-black ness, characterized by administrative marginalization, disregard, and disdain, negatively influenced Black women in leadership positions. T. Jones (2022) reported that due to White supremacy, there is a disregard for Black women's existence or contribution to their professionalism. T. Jones (2022) further noted that most Black women left their leadership positions as many of their decisions when leading were not respected and, as a result, were judged harshly if their decisions yielded negative results. Together with Bell (2020), J. Jones (2022) established that the constant sidelining of Black women despite being in leadership positions led to them questioning their leadership roles, experience, and qualifications.

As characteristics of anti-black ness and anti-black racism, disdain, disregard, and disgust, Bell (2020) investigated diversity, persistent inequality, and discrimination against women in professional positions. In the qualitative research, Bell (2020) described disregard and disdain for Black female professionals in terms of persistent inequality and discrimination. Further analysis of the data revealed that persistent

discrimination and inequalities experienced by Black women characterized their devaluation and being exploited for profit rather than being rewarded for their efforts. Gilmore et al. (2021) extended Bell (2020) research by examining anti-black racism and being against the progress of Black people. While exploring how anti-black ness manifests in Black people, Gilmore et al. (2021) established that Black people were viewed as disposable and objects to be exploited for profit as they were during the slavery periods. Therefore, with White supremacy, Black people are no more than subjects and objects of work that do not warrant recognition or rewards. Corroborative findings were reported by Coburn and Crichlow (2020), who illustrated that anti-black ness was propagated by the devaluation of Black people and failure to recognize the efforts made by Black people.

Stereotyping Black women has also been used to describe disregard and disgust against Black women in professional positions. Motro et al. (2022) quantitatively investigated the impacts of stereotyping Black women as angry in their workplaces. Analyzing data from 555 Black women, Motro et al. (2022) established that stereotyping Black women as angry exposed them to microaggressions and discrimination. Based on the preceding discussion, anti-black ness and anti-black racism characterized by disdain, disgust, and disregard for Blacks have been associated with increased attrition of Black women in leadership positions and failure by Black women to ascend to leadership positions in different professions, including education.

Anti-black ness and Anti-black Racism in K-12 Schools

Anti-black racism is one of the significant barriers that cause the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions. Burton et al. (2020) examined the influence of anti-black racism in K-12 education leadership positions in the US by interviewing 10 Black female principals and reported that Black women were mostly subjected to anti-black ness and anti-black racism in their quest to become school leaders; thus, many of them feared getting into leadership positions. Similar to Burton et al. (2020), Johnson (2021) explored the balance between gender, race, and responsibility in educational leadership in the US by interviewing four Black women leaders. The results were that Black women encountered various barriers, such as anti-black ness and anti-black racism, in ascending to leadership positions. Unlike Burton et al. (2020) and Johnson (2021), who used interviews, Eaton et al. (2020) investigated how anti-black racism stereotypes impacted the development of Black women scholars into senior leadership positions in US public schools by surveying 251 school principals in K-12 education. Eaton et al. (2020) established that executive-level members had a gender and racial bias toward hiring Black female principals. Anti-black racism stereotypes significantly impeded Black women from achieving senior leadership positions in K-12 public education.

Racial profiling, another characteristic of anti-black racism, toward Black women is challenging for Black women to ascend into top educational leadership roles. Duncan (2019) studied the influence of Black teachers in mitigating the effects of racism by their White colleagues in the US. He reported that Black teachers, more so women, had a

tough time dealing with racism from their colleagues and thus got discouraged from advancing their careers into leadership positions. Haynes et al. (2020) found that Black women had difficulty ascending to senior educational roles because of anti-black racism. Iheduru-Anderson, Okoro, and Moore (2022) explored the diversity and inclusion of leaders in education in the US by administering questionnaires to 34 K-12 Black educators. Iheduru-Anderson, Moore, and Okoro (2022) established that Black female K-12 teachers were subjected to anti-black racism stereotyping that challenged them to advance their careers. Although the questionnaires established the perceptions of Black female K – 12 teachers and not senior leaders, the results are the same, underlining the influence of racism on Black female teachers intending to seek senior leadership career roles and leaders' survival in their senior leadership roles in K-12 public education.

Anti-black racism may result in limited opportunities for Black women to ascend to senior leadership positions. Through a qualitative study with 22 Black women, Spates et al. (2020) investigated Black women's strategies for gendered racism in the US. The findings demonstrated that Black women experience increased anti-black racism in their quest for organizational leadership positions. According to Spates et al. (2020), White women are preferred for those positions over Black women in the US because of racial inequality. Townsend (2021) explored why Black women are missing as leaders in K-12 education. With a sample size of 5 Black women, Townsend (2021) reported that racism and sexism are the key reasons. Black women are missing in administrative leadership in education roles in the US. Eaton et al. (2020) conceptualized gender and race and their impact on women's advancement in STEM using an interview with 22 Black women.

They found that Black women have limited access to principal and superintendent positions because of their skin color compared to their White counterparts. The articles reviewed indicate that racism is a crucial barrier hindering Black women from getting senior leadership roles in K – 12 public education.

Although women have entered the workforce through various professional positions, admission into top leadership positions in K- 12 public school education has been limited for Black women due to their racial background. Lomotey (2019) analyzed the leadership of Black women school principals. Through a systematic review of 57 peer-reviewed articles, Lomotey (2019) reported that Black women experience the double difficulty of having a Black ethnic background and are racially discriminated against (Lomotey, 2019). Agreeing with Lomotey (2019), Smith et al. (2019) established that Black women are racially overlooked and disregarded when assigning senior educational leadership opportunities in K-12 education. Similar results to Smith et al. (2019) were established by Banks (2020) in reporting that Black women are racially oppressed and denied key leadership opportunities that desire their qualifications for the jobs. Thus far, the articles discussed have revealed that Black women miss out on top leadership opportunities because of the increased racism unique to Black women, anti-black ness, and anti-black racism.

Addressing Underrepresentation of Black Women in K-12 Senior Leadership Positions

Providing Mentorship

Mentoring Black women is a significant strategy when studying the underrepresentation of Black women in senior leadership roles. Minnett et al. (2019) explored Illinois mentorship programs' significance in encouraging Black women to advance into doctorate leadership positions. Minnett conducted face-to-face interviews and reported that Black women having mentors of their race usually feel comfortable and optimally have success in their quest for leadership. Similar to Minnett et al. (2019), Scott (2022) investigated the power of mentorship, sponsorship, and community in the success of Black women in the US. By interviewing seven Black women who became student affairs officers, Scott (2022) found that they owed the success of their top leadership attainment to mentorship by other Black women leaders. Resemblant to Minnett et al. (2019) and Scott (2022), McIntyre and Burchell (2022) examined the role of mentorship for Black women's career advancement in corporate manufacturing in the US by interviewing 15 Black women and established occupational mentorship was significant in self-efficacy and prepared Black women ready for promotion. Mentorship of Black women is essential in career advancement and prepares them for promotion.

Mentorship programs are important in addressing the underrepresentation of Black women in senior leadership positions. Bertrand Jones et al. (2020), through a systematic literature review, examined the role of the Sisters of the Academy, a mentorship program in the US for Black women aiming to develop their careers in

academia, and found that the mentorship program was instrumental in the development of Black women and successful promotion to senior leadership positions. Coleman and Price (2020) established that mentorship programs at the institution have helped Black women navigate into leadership positions. The study by Coleman and Price (2020) was corroborated by Deigh (2022). Deigh explored the impacts of cross-racial mentorship of Black women in the US under the counselor education and supervision programs by interviewing eight Black women who are doctorate students and found that the mentorship program successfully elevates Black women into leadership positions and career development. Based on the reviewed studies, mentorship is key when addressing the underrepresentation of Black women in leadership positions.

Black women need mentors to guide and motivate them to advance their careers and subsequent appointment to senior leadership positions. Mims and Kaler-Jones (2020) investigated the impacts of a summer mentoring program in the US by interviewing 21 Black girls enrolled in the program that aimed to instill leadership skills into them. They reported that the program emphasized Black girls helping and mentoring each other to promote the representation of Black women in future leadership positions. Correspondingly, Cartwright et al. (2021) examined the mentorship experiences of Black female doctorate women in the US by interviewing ten female doctorate students and reported that mentorship programs provided Black women with professional opportunities to develop their careers and be ready for top leadership positions. Using a systematic review of the literature, the findings reported by Awadzi (2019) differed from Mims and Kaler-Jones (2020) and Cartwright et al. (2021) in that mentoring was key in

helping Black women ascend to senior managerial positions. Mentorship is imperative for Black women in developing their professions and aspiring for senior leadership positions.

Providing Professional Networking

Establishing a professional network helps other Black women overcome barriers to obtaining senior leadership positions. Davis (2019) explored the impact of the Sister Help Sister networking program in the US by analyzing responses from 52 Black women enrolled in the program; establishing a friendship network helped Black women overcome barriers in their careers and develop into Black women achieving senior leadership roles. Equally, Smith et al. (2021) examined the importance of social networking among Black women engineering students in the US through open and close-ended questionnaires for five years. Smith et al. (2021) established that social networking was most likely to aid students to progress in their careers compared to Black female students who did not have access to a social networking program.

Analogous to the studies by Davis (2019) and Smith et al. (2021), Leath et al. (2022) studied the significance of Black women's friendship networks in career advancement and attainment of senior leadership positions in the US. Leath et al. (2022) interviewed 48 Black women and reported that friendship networks helped Black women have the courage to aspire for a senior leadership position as encouraged by the success stories of their predecessors. Networking is a key factor to consider when addressing the underrepresentation of Black women in senior leadership positions.

Through professional and social networking, Black women can achieve equal representation in top leadership positions in K-12 public education. Through a systematic

literature review, Pories et al. (2019) examined the rise of Black women's leadership in surgery in the US. They established that more Black women are taking up roles in surgical medicine through mentorship, networking, and sponsorship. Harris (2020) explored how Black female superintendents attained and successfully held the superintendent position by interviewing five Black female superintendents and established that professional networking was a critical factor that guided them to get into that position.

Extending the research conducted by Harris (2020), Ramirez (2022) explored the barriers to Black women's leadership and possible strategies to mitigate them. Ramirez (2022) established that many Black women leaders experienced anti-black ness, anti-black racism, and gender stereotyping that negatively influenced their professionalism. However, social and professional networking and mentorship programs proved critical in addressing the challenges due to anti-black ness, anti-black racism, and gender stereotyping. Whereas Pories et al. (2019) used a systematic literature review, Harris (2020) and Ramirez (2022) administered interviews, but all studies yielded the same results emphasizing the importance of professional networking. Having professional and social networking groups aided more Black women in senior leadership positions in K-12 public education.

Black women's networks, through friendship and profession, promote their representation at high-level leadership positions. Bejarano and Smooth (2022) examined the success of Black women in the US elections, where more Black women were elected to office, and identified the importance of strategic networks set up by Black women

leaders to prepare more Black women for political seats. Contrary to Bejarano and Smooth (2022), Butler and Whitehead (2022), through ethnography, explored the importance of networking in getting more Black women into senior leadership positions and reported that network socialization is imperative in getting more women to advance their careers and ascend to leadership positions. A prior study by Rankin et al. (2021) investigated the reduction in the number of Black women leaders occupying leadership positions in computer science by interviewing 24 Black women in the computer studies field. The findings revealed a lack of professional networking to address issues affecting Black women in the computer sector. Thus, professional networking is important in helping Black women overcome barriers to top leadership positions.

Providing Executive and Leadership Training

Executive training of Black women is fundamental in preparing them for leadership positions. Main et al. (2022) explored the role of early management training for Black women in the US through data analysis and found that early management training significantly helped Black women attain top leadership positions in the future. According to Main et al. (2022), Berry and Reardon (2022) examined the leadership preparation and career paths of Black women principals and superintendents in the US through data review from the Schools and Staffing Survey. The analysis of the collected data revealed that leadership and management training were key components of Black women attaining top leadership positions.

To substantiate the study results by Main et al. (2022) and Berry and Reardon (2022), Morris-Wiseman et al. (2022) examined the underrepresentation of Black women

in academic surgery leadership in the US by analyzing 25 academic surgical societies. Morris-Wiseman et al. (2022) found Black women to be majorly underrepresented due to a lack of leadership and executive training. Concerning K-12 educators, Farmer and West (2019) adopted interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore the training concerns of seven online K-12 teachers. The analysis of the collected data revealed that K-12 Black women educators, besides seeking dialogue with organizational leaders, advocated for extensive professional training to better prepare them for their educational jobs. Mystakidis et al. (2021) reported consistent findings and used mixed-methods research to investigate the role of professional training in preparing Black women educators to use augmented and virtual reality in their teaching to enhance their professionalism. Leadership training is important in helping prepare more Black women for leadership positions.

The need for leadership training for Black women in K-12 education was also evidenced by Lisle-Johnson and Kohli (2020), who investigated how leadership training helped Black women educators in K-12 teaching resist ideological marginality and racism. Using data collected from 12 Black women educators, it was established that leadership and professional training helped mitigate racism and marginalization. The results indicated that leadership training was key in helping Black teachers network and develop the skills needed to navigate the school environment and address instances of racism while supporting each other. Corresponding results were reported Farinde-Wu et al. (2020) conceptualized how K-12 schools recruited and retained their Black teachers and found that leadership and professional training were keys to attracting and retaining

Black women in K-12 learning institutions. Akin to Farinde-Wu et al. (2020) and Kohli et al. (2020) qualitatively investigated racial justice leadership possibilities and professional development for Black teachers in K-12 schools. Following thematic analysis of the qualitative data, Kohli et al. (2020) established that professional development and justice leadership possibilities helped Black teachers navigate the school environment while addressing the negative impacts of racism and marginalization on their professionalism.

Although research has demonstrated the significance and the need for more training of Black educators (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Lisle-Johnson & Kohli, 2020), Kohli et al. (2020) noted that a good number of K-12 schools lacked professional development and leadership training programs for their teachers of color especially Black women. The lack of training and professional development programs hindered the effectiveness of Black women educators in K-12 schools to mitigate racism, marginalization, and leadership underrepresentation. However, a positive relationship exists between professional development, leadership training, and enhanced Black Women K-12 educators' approach to racism and career advancement.

Leadership training for Black women helps them acquire skills and the mindset required for senior leadership positions. Collins (2022) investigated the experience of Black American women college presidents in the US by interviewing six Black women college presidents and found that the majority owed their success to acquiring leadership skill sets from training and mentorship programs. Likewise, Collins (2022) Rahming (2022) studied the influence of mentorship and training on Black women in the US by interviewing eight Black women and reported that their rise to managerial positions was

aided by attending management training programs for junior Black women. Relatable to Collins (2022) and Rahming (2022), and Smith (2022) examined the accelerated path to leadership for Black women through interviews of 120 women leaders in the US and found that organizational and structural changes success is characterized by executive and leadership training of Black women leaders. Executive training for Black women has a positive impact on the advancement of their careers and subsequent improvement in their representation in top leadership positions.

Diversity in Leadership

In order to address the challenges Black women encounter in senior leadership positions, organizations need to implement diversity programs. Diversity programs are designed to create awareness and equality in the workplace (Shavers & Moore, 2019). Diversity programs are meant to ensure that employees are given an equal chance and growth opportunities within their organization despite their race and gender (Davenport et al. (2022). Although diversity programs have been implemented in many organizations, disparity still exists in K – 12 public education senior leadership positions where Black women are underrepresented compared to their White counterparts (Feng et al., 2021). Therefore, it ensures that diversity programs are fully integrated into the organization's mission, vision, and culture (Townsend, 2021).

Existing evidence supports that social networking could be a valuable tool that Black women can use for Black women to ascend to senior leadership positions. Typically, social support could include developing relations with family members, friends, colleagues, and those in power (Feng et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2022). Social

networking allows Black women to increase their chances of serving in top leadership positions by being exposed to mentors and career growth opportunities aligned with leadership goals (Truehill, 2021).

According to Leath et al. (2022), it is not strictly based on who you know, but it is whom and what they know based on what they tell you. On the other hand, having limited access to social networks is likely to reduce low self-esteem and increase frustrations and social inequalities in the workplace (Pories et al., 2019). Smith et al. (2021) interviewed 36 Black women and found that developing a strong sense of career growth was directly linked to Black women's social network. Davis (2019) also conducted a qualitative study investigating the role of social networks among Black women and reported that Black women exposed to the broad social network were likelier to succeed in top leadership positions. Although Black women are likely to succeed in top leadership positions, they still hold a low status quo compared to their White counterparts (Feng et al., 2021). Black women make fewer decisions at work than White employees, who hold more power to make decisions at work. Kessler and Varnado (2022) noted that White privilege is fractured by White allies standing up to racism. White observers have a significant role to play in dismantling racism and anti-blackness. White observers must examine their racial biases, study race relations and the effects of racism, and critically reflect on their racial identity (Kessler & Varnado, 2022). Before White observers can become faithful allies, They must examine how their experiences directly or indirectly perpetuate or dismantle anti-black racism and racism. Social justice matters are not the sole issue of Black people. Instead, social justice consists of both

targets of bias (i.e., Black people) and nontarget allies (i.e., White people) (Burns & Granz, 2023). Burns and Granz (2023) shared that White supremacy will not end until White people accept it as a White issue needing to be solved by White people rather than a Black issue seen as Black people's problem or an issue that only deserves White empathy.

Diversity and Anti-blackness/Anti-black Racism Education in Hiring Practices

To enhance teacher diversity in institutions of learning, especially the number of Black women educators in leadership positions in the education sector, providing anti-black ness/anti-black racism education is essential. Bell (2020) investigated the impacts of surface-level diversity in addressing anti-black ness in learning institutions. Drawing from personal experiences, Bell (2020) established that advocating for education and training on anti-black ness and anti-black ness racism helped promote diversity and acceptance of students and teachers of color in learning institutions. Similar findings were reported by Lopez and Jean-Marie (2021), who investigated how teaching, leading, and learning challenged anti-black racism in qualitative narrative research. The qualitative data analysis revealed that Black educators were better placed to confront and disrupt anti-black ness and antiracism in learning institutions through their teaching and leading. By teaching about anti-blackness and antiracism, Black educators ensured that students were better prepared to confront antiracist comments, beliefs, attitudes, or situations while learning.

Agreeing with the research by Lopez and Jean-Marie (2021), Patton and Jordan (2017) investigated how Black educators and institutions of learning addressed White

supremacy, racism, and anti-black ness. Conducting a qualitative review of 25 published articles, Pasque et al. (2021) reported that disrupting White supremacy and racism through education and teaching was critical in addressing anti-black ness. Moreover, engaging in dialogue and teaching against racism, anti-black ness, and White supremacy fostered diversity and the ascension of Black educators to K-12 public education senior leadership positions. Weiner et al. (2022) qualitatively investigated the experiences of 20 Black female principals with discrimination and anti-black ness in hiring and promotion experiences. It was established that there were fewer Black female principals because the hiring process was unfair and lacked transparency, as superintendents and other hiring authorities were discriminatory towards Black female applicants. However, increasing education on diversity and the need for inclusion discouraged anti-black ness and discrimination and increased the chances of Black women being hired as school principals.

Education and anti-blackness teaching have been demonstrated as key to promoting diversity in educational leadership. Gonzalez and Cokley (2021) qualitatively investigated core antiracist courses for counselors as a strategy to mitigate anti-black racism. Employing a case-study research design, Gonzalez and Cokley (2021) illustrated that the core antiracist course was effective in helping trainees accept and address cases of racism and discrimination in their professional lives while advocating for diversity. King and Upadhyay (2022) reiterated the findings in qualitative research exploring strategies to mitigate anti-black racism in organizations while advocating for diversity in the same organization. The findings revealed that studying the history of anti-black

racism proved critical in helping organizations develop strategies that mitigated racism and encouraged hiring Black people. Ford et al. (2022), while investigating tools for enhancing Blackness in learning institutions, revealed that developing an antiracist agency learning plan allowed the implementation of strategies that fostered diversity and discouraged antiracism and anti-black ness in learning institutions. To be accepted at workplaces due to their racial affiliation, Black racial groups tend to assimilate into White culture against their own culture, thereby contributing to anti-black ness (Pasque et al., 2021). Racism restricts the White population from associating with BIPOC in terms of education and other lifestyle activities, thus promoting White supremacy and anti-black ness (Pasque et al., 2021).

Benefits of Racial and Gender Diversity in Top Positions in Education Sectors

Having gender and racial balance in senior-level positions in the K – 12 public education sector significantly lower staff turnover rates. Davenport et al. (2022), through a systematic literature review, examined the significance of having racial and gender diversity in education institutions' leadership positions in the US and established that promoting a culture of inclusivity helps in making staff have confidence in the leadership structure thereby sticking to their course. Identical to Davenport et al. (2022), Feng et al. (2021), through a systematic literature review, explored the status of having women neurosurgeons in senior academic leadership positions in the US. Women in senior leadership positions improved staff retention, cutting recruitment costs.

Corresponding results to those of Davenport et al. (2022) and Feng et al. (2021) were reported by Cardel et al. (2020). Cardel et al. (2020) reviewed the literature to

investigate the role of equity in academic leadership positions, recruitment, and promotion processes in the US. The results indicated that gender and racial diversity in leadership positively impacted staff retention, recruitment, and tenure. Preventing staff turnover is a significant benefit of having gender and racial diversity in K – 12 public education leadership positions.

Racial and gender equity in leadership positions ensures staff has a sense of ownership in the institution, preventing resignations and transfers. Gonzalez et al. (2020) conducted a systematic literature review to investigate the gender distribution in leadership positions in anesthesiology educational programs in the US. Gonzalez et al. (2020) found that having gender equality in senior leadership positions improves staff recruiting, training, and retention and gets the best out of them. In contrast to Gonzalez et al. (2020), Keane et al. (2021) examined the gender distribution and the influence of having a minority in the US. Following quantitative data analysis, it was established that having women leadership is essential as there is more recruitment, promotion, and retention of women, thereby increasing gender diversity.

Similar to Keane et al. (2021), Rosenkranz et al. (2021) explored racial and gender inclusivity in leadership positions and its impacts on medical schools. Analyzing the outcome of the data retrieved from the University of Minnesota Medical School, Rosenkranz et al. (2021) reported that diversity in medical school leadership positions is imperative in producing a diverse medics workforce and helps in the retention of medics.

Similar findings have been reported for K-12 educators in K-12 schools. McQuillan (2021) qualitatively investigated gender and sexual orientation diversity

policies in K-12 schools in the US. Employing document analysis, McQuillan (2021) established that scaling gender and diversity policies helped K-12 schools in the US increase the number of and retain already employed minority educators. Consistent findings were reported by Allen and Hilliard (2022), who investigated the intersectionality of race, gender, and education in Black girls in K-12 schools. Though Allen and Hilliard (2022) found the number of Black girls being expelled from K-12 institutions, increasing the number of Black women educators in K-12 schools motivated Black girls to steer of criminal behaviors and complete their education. Concurrently, increasing racial and gender diversity was crucial in retaining educators from minorized communities. Perrone (2022) reported consistent findings and investigated why diverse leadership mattered in K-12 education. In the literature review, Perrone (2022) noted that in addition to addressing issues associated with bias and racism, enhancing educator diversity in K-12 schools mitigated turnover intentions.

Extending the research conducted by Allen and Hilliard (2022), Perrone (2022) revealed that increasing teacher diversity in learning institutions created an environment that encouraged professional development and mentoring of newly recruited teachers of color. Thus, diversity mitigated the negative environmental impacts demonstrated by most White teachers. Meyer et al. (2022) reiterated the preceding findings and investigated the role of equity in addressing sexual orientation and gender diversity in K-12 schools. Qualitatively analyzing data retrieved from nine school districts in the US, it was evident that equity in leadership enhanced the professional development and inclusion of teachers of color. Thus, professional development and diversity inclusion

created a supportive environment discouraging turnover intention for K-12 educators. Therefore, racial and gender inclusivity in senior academic positions is imperative in preventing staff turnover and motivating Black students to complete their educational goals.

Gender and racial balance in senior academic leadership positions are characterized by a diverse institutional workforce that promotes equity and fair representation. Niu et al. (2020) studied the trend in gender-race representation in the leadership of faculty of academic radiology in the US through a systematic literature review and established that promoting more ethnic minorities and women into leadership was characterized by achieving a diverse workforce portraying equity and fairness. Corroborating results by Niu et al. (2020) and Kearse et al. (2022) examined the diversity, inclusion, and equity in academic medical and surgical faculty leadership positions by conducting a systematic literature review in the US. They established that diversity in the senior leadership of faculty and staff promoted a diverse workforce that ensures equity among genders and races. Contrasting Niu et al. (2020) and Kearse et al. (2022), who conducted systematic literature reviews, Monga et al. (2022) quantitatively investigated the significance of diversity and inclusivity in training at the faculty of breast imaging in the US. Monga et al. (2022) reported that having diversity in gender and racial representation at the leadership of the faculty has overseen an influx of more diverse students taking the course.

Providing everyone an equal chance to receive an education requires that prominent roles in the education sector be inclusive of both genders and races. Using a

thorough analysis of 57 peer-reviewed articles, Lomotey (2019) investigated the impact

of Black female principals on the standard of education in the US. She found that Black

kids' academic performance significantly improved in schools with Black female

principals. Toldson (2022) evaluated the effects of the leadership of Black colleges in the

US through a systematic assessment of the literature and discovered that the gender

diversity of Black college and university leadership has significantly boosted the standard

of education that Black Americans may access. There is evidence that racial and gender

diversity enhances the performance of both students and teachers. By examining

performance data from 11958 female undergraduates, Bowman et al. (2022) investigated

the improvement in student achievement in science and engineering topics in the US.

According to Bowman et al. (2022), hiring more female lecturers and instructors was a

motivating element in raising students' academic achievement. Although the three studies

under consideration use distinct settings and sample populations, the conclusions

consistently emphasize the value of diversity in raising educational standards. Higher

education quality and student achievement are two key characteristics of racial and

gender equity in top leadership roles.

　　　　Racial and gender balance in senior-level academic leadership is significant in

helping students be self-motivated to excel academically. Bauman et al. (2019) examined

the factors promoting college attendance by minority students in the US by interviewing

seven participants and established that social factors like having a diverse school

leadership were important in motivating the students to attend college. Buzzetto-

Hollywood et al. (2019) explored the role of diverse leadership in an academic institution

in having a student be self-motivated education by data analysis by use of models in the US. Buzzetto-Hollywood et al. (2019) established that diversity in school leadership was imperative in achieving self-motivation by students to excel in academia. Corresponding to Bauman et al. (2019) but dissimilar to Buzzetto-Hollywood et al. (2019), Schiller et al. (2020) studied the trends in leadership at orthopedic academic institutions in the US through administering of interviews and found that a diverse orthopedic leadership gave trainees self-motivation to excel in their orthopedic studies. Racial and gender inclusivity is imperative for students to excel through self-motivation.

Students can accept and develop an understanding of various cultures when senior-level education leadership positions are inclusive and diverse. Through the literature review, Shavers et al. (2022) investigated the impact of having Native Americans serve in leadership roles in New Mexico schools and found that doing so helped children understand the value of other cultures. Consoli et al. (2022), in contrast to Secatero et al. (2022), investigated the significance of having international students in the US psychological faculties by interrogating seven international leaders. They discovered that the students embraced various cultures, enabling them to have multilingual skills. Similar to Consoli et al. (2022), Emerick (2022) used interviews to examine the diversity and inclusivity of emerging bilingual students in senior-level leadership positions in US K – 12 public schools. The findings showed that adopting a diverse mindset and including bilingual students in senior leadership roles at their institutions ensured that students were aware of and accepting of cultural differences. One significant advantage

of racial and gender inclusion in senior leadership roles is the development of respect for diverse cultures.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature analysis examined Black women's history, challenges, and experiences regarding their aspirations for career advancement (Pories et al., 2019). Based on the literature review analysis, Black women are more underrepresented in senior leadership positions within the K – 12 public education sector (Chance, 2022; Chappelle, 2022). Given their underrepresentation, Black women have had to experience highly challenging barriers in achieving senior leadership positions within the K – 12 public education field (Burton et al., 2020; Johnson, 2021). Despite the challenges, no recent research has examined the experiences of Black women in senior leadership positions in K – 12 public education using current data to validate previous findings (Cardel et al., 2020).

The literature review identified mentorship as the best strategy for women to be nurtured to top leadership positions in the education sector (Eaton et al., 2020). However, the existing literature also reveals different challenges linked to mentorship, including a lack of equal mentorship opportunities and time for already limited Black educators (Iheduru-Anderson, Okoro, & Moore, 2022). Through a critical race and intersectionality theoretical lens, societal issues related to the representation of Black women in senior-level leadership positions in K – 12 public education were discussed.

The chapter was organized into sections, from the literature search strategy to the theoretical framework. Afterward, the chapter reviewed the literature review on

significant themes and concepts. The history of Black women in education, barriers to top

leadership positions, how anti-black ness and anti-black racism impact Black women

ascending to senior level leadership roles and strategies Black women can use to reach

senior level leadership aspirations were discussed. Afterward, diversity and its roles in

top leadership positions were discussed. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and

design used to conduct the study. Chapter 3 includes research methodology and design,

population, sample, researchers' role, data collection instruments, data collection

procedures, data organization and management, trustworthiness, and ethical issues related

to the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this research study was to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. To address this purpose, the following research questions were used to guide the study:

RQ1. How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education?

RQ2. How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership positions in K-12 education?

In this chapter, I described the methodology used in the study. This included a description of the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, the participants, recruitment, data collection, and analysis procedures. I also discussed the trustworthiness of the study, as well as the ethical procedures that were taken.

Research Design and Rationale

This study used a basic qualitative research design with semi-structured interviews to collect data. Studies that use a qualitative descriptive approach try to present a comprehensive overview of the experiences of persons (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This approach is acceptable when the study's objective is to describe the participants' experiences and when those experiences are not well documented in the

literature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K - 12 public schools and whether anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation are currently poorly understood. Therefore, using a fundamental qualitative research technique, such as conducting interviews, made it possible to better understand and characterize this situation.

Other types of qualitative studies that are also descriptive, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, and ethnography, differ from basic qualitative studies in that these other designs attempt to explain phenomena. In contrast, basic studies attempt to describe experiences or processes. It is common practice to begin with basic qualitative research when attempting to explain a topic for the first time. Subsequently, more specialized study designs are used to shed light on further nuances of what was first stated in basic qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It is more appropriate to use a basic qualitative method that focuses on describing the experiences of the participants rather than another design that focuses on describing phenomena for this study, given that the purpose of this study was not well represented in the literature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

As was previously stated, using other methods in this research would be inappropriate. Quantitative research is acceptable when the examined data is numerical, like employing survey data to analyze a measurable effect. For instance, quantitative research is appropriate when statistical data is being examined. Alternatively, if the study's primary goal is to measure attitudes, behaviors, viewpoints, or other variables,

that can be quantified (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For instance, quantitative correlational studies aim to determine whether a relationship between the variables can be established (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The goal of the research was not to examine the statistical relationship between the various factors, and the type of data that was acquired for this study is not numerical. As a result, it was decided not to conduct the research using a quantitative method.

Other qualitative methods were likewise considered inappropriate for this research endeavor. In phenomenology, the researcher investigated the participants' lived experiences to understand better how the participants experienced a certain occurrence (Sundler et al., 2018). Rather than focusing on experiencing phenomena, in this study, the researcher is interested in describing the perspectives of a group of participants. In addition, the participants' lived experiences were not the primary emphasis of this research; instead, the primary focus was answering the precise research questions guiding this study.

Because ethnographers immerse themselves in society to discover its prevailing themes, a technique that takes an anthropological perspective would not be suitable for this research. By exploring emerging themes, ethnographers do not seek to explain a particular phenomenon. However, they are guided by what arises naturally from their observations (Flick, 2019). Grounded theory would also not be appropriate for the study as grounded theory explores process, action, and interaction to develop a theory based on observations rather than experiences told by the participants (Sundler et al., 2018). A case study would not be appropriate as multiple data types are required. In the case of the

current study, additional data types are unavailable or would not significantly contribute to understanding the research questions (Sundler et al., 2018).

Role of the Researcher

In this investigation, the researcher played a pivotal role in collecting data. This data collection comprised asking questions based on the semi-structured protocol that served as a guide for the interviews, asking follow-up questions when appropriate, advising participants of their rights, and obtaining informed consent to participate. Participants in the study signed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form. In addition, I was accountable for reviewing all the data gathered for the research and reporting the findings. I also carried out the process of data collecting and analysis. I was responsible for developing the semi-structured procedure that would be used with the assistance of the researcher's academic team during the interviews.

My relationship with one of the principals who participated in the study was that the researcher currently serves as the leader's consultant in the capacity of assisting the leader in closing student academic achievement gaps; however, I do not work in the school and only consult with the leader one time weekly. I am not the leader's supervisor, nor is the leader my supervisor. During the study, there was no supervisory or instructor relationship involved.

I am an educational consultant who works for an educational service company supporting a few districts throughout Texas. There are roughly 3,643 Black female superintendents throughout the US – only 1.9% of the nation's superintendents (Horsford et al., 2021). Three Black superintendents work in North Texas. I consulted with a school

district that employs one of the three Black female leaders. Field notes were utilized in reporting and analyzing data to manage research bias. To avoid confirmation bias, I kept detailed written records. Casad (2019) stated that confirmation bias is when the researcher interprets the data based on the researcher's beliefs.

Methodology

The section contained an overview of the participant section, recruitment, data collection, and data analysis procedures. The instrumentation of the study was also discussed.

Participant Selection

Within research, ethical issues must be considered. Walden University outlines ethical standards for protecting participants and their identities. I followed Walden University's ethical standards. Participants in this study were selected from Black women currently in senior-level positions, such as principals, executive directors, chief executives, and superintendents in Texas. Participants in this sample group had defied the odds to gain leadership positions. Still, they experienced prejudice and anti-black racism throughout their careers. These participants described whether they had experienced gender and racial barriers against women in leadership syndrome and, if so, what they did to overcome such challenges. Participants selected met the following selection criteria:

1. All participants were principals, executive directors, chief executives, or superintendents.

2. All participants were employed at public schools.

3. All participants were leading any of the grade levels K- 12

4. All participants worked in Texas.

5. All participants worked as a principal, executive director, chief executive, or superintendent for at least six months.

This study's participants were recruited through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that enables the researcher to select participants according to a predetermined set of criteria. The purposive sampling approach allowed me to choose participants who are likely knowledgeable and have experienced instances of the phenomena that are the subject of this research (Flick., 2019). By selecting volunteers this way, I acquired data from persons who have first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Flick, 2019).

I recruited at least 12 individuals who fulfilled the inclusion requirements. Nonetheless, the collection of data continued until data saturation was achieved. The moment at which no fresh or innovative information is obtained from participants is known as data saturation (Flick, 2019). By obtaining data saturation, I ensured that the sample participants accurately reflected the population, and that the data were not biased by unique experiences that other community members do not often share. Five to 10 individuals are generally adequate to obtain data saturation in qualitative research (Flick, 2019). This estimate influenced the study's sample size.

Instrumentation

According to Yi (2022), qualitative researchers serve as the primary instrument for data collection. As a result, I was responsible for implementing the study's major data-gathering technique, namely creating the interview protocol and performing the semi-

structured interviews. I constructed the interview questions listed in the appendices of this research (see Appendix C). I was also responsible for asking follow-up questions, collecting replies, safeguarding data, and protecting participants' privacy. It is compatible with semi-structured interview methods for the researcher to be responsible for developing follow-up questions (Flick, 2019).

A panel of experts, including data analysts, examined the semi-structured interview I created to verify that it was likely to capture the data required to answer the study questions. I made any changes proposed by the panel of experts. The researcher began data collecting after being approved by IRB. By getting the approval of an expert panel for the interview methodology, I also ensured that the study protocol did not inadvertently reflect any biases or preconceptions. The expert panel comprised individuals with expertise in qualitative research or familiarity with the topic under investigation. The members of the expert panel did not engage in the actual research.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The study was conducted in school districts in Texas. The process of data collection commenced upon site authorization and approval from IRB. The permission of the IRB is required for every research study involving human beings. Once IRB approval was given, I emailed the target school districts' superintendents and senior educational leaders seeking permission to perform the research. I explained the research goal, requested approval from the district, and ethical research expectations. I also requested authorization to utilize the employee email list for recruiting purposes. If the target

districts deny permission, I choose a new school district in Texas and use the same procedure to request permission to conduct research.

The population of this research consisted of 10 senior-level leaders. These senior leaders represented roles such as principals, executive directors, chief executives, and superintendents at Texas elementary, middle, and high schools, with IRB permission required. Once site permission and IRB approval have been obtained, data collection for this study proceeded.

I sent a recruiting email to the district's central office elementary, middle, and high school senior leaders. The email also included the informed consent form link. Participants read the consent form and reply I agree or state I agree during recorded interviews to indicate their willingness to participate in the research.

Senior leaders interested in participating in the research contacted me directly using the information in the recruitment email. I responded to each participant's inquiries, and if they were still interested in joining, the researcher inquired if they met the study's eligibility requirements. If they did, I emailed them a consent form to examine. Then, I organized a face-to-face interview with the participants at a convenient time for them. We met at a quiet public place, such as in a room at the school or a private room in the library. If unavailable to meet at the school or in a private room, the interviews were conducted via Zoom as a teleconference. By completing Zoom interviews, participants had the flexibility to participate in the research from their homes or schools.

At the time of the interview, I thanked them for volunteering and reminded them that they were not required to answer a question if they did not like to. I also informed

them that they could withdraw from the research without repercussions by emailing me or stating they wish to do so during the interview. During the interviews, I also asked their permission to record the session and reaffirm the interview's confidentiality. I record the interviews using a digital sound recorder and write field notes. Before beginning the interview, I informed participants that the conversation was recorded. Participants who did not give their permission were thanked for their time and dismissed from the study. I followed the interview procedure but asked participants follow-up questions depending on their replies to the protocol questions to obtain additional in-depth data.

I called other districts if insufficient volunteers were not acquired in the first school district. I requested volunteers using the techniques stated before until sufficient volunteers were recruited. Following the conclusion of the interviews, I transcribed and reviewed the recordings verbatim using a software application (app) and recording from my tablet. I provide each participant with a copy of the transcript for evaluation to increase the research's reliability. This procedure is known as member checking, and it gives a chance to determine if the transcripts of their interviews truly represent their intentions (Flick, 2019). If participants reported that the transcript was inaccurate, I revised it to match their stated purpose and meaning.

Data Analysis Plan

The data in this study was evaluated using the thematic analysis technique developed by Braun and Clarke (2014). The thematic analysis was inductive, consisting of recognizing and categorizing patterns that emerge from the data through repeated inspection and comparison. This was accomplished by reviewing the data several times.

The following are the six stages of thematic analysis: (1) reading and rereading all of the data in its entirety to become familiar with it, (2) locating initial codes that represent meaningful patterns in the data, (3) organizing initial codes that are similar into themes, (4) reviewing and refining the themes, (5) naming and defining the themes to indicate their significance as answers to the research questions, and (6) developing a presentation of the results.

In the first phase of the coding process, the researcher is required to read and reread the whole dataset to get comfortable with it (Braun & Clarke, 2014); hence, I read and reread all of the interview transcripts to become familiar with the data. As a result of going through this procedure, I guaranteed a comprehensive understanding of the data. I started to formulate some preliminary ideas about the data. In the second phase of the research project, the researcher is tasked with identifying the first patterns of significance in the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). During this stage, I broke down the meaning of the data into smaller chunks and coded all of the parts of the data that were pertinent to the study questions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). These codes were informed by my original ideas gained through the process's first stage.

I categorized the original codes into CRT and intersectionality themes in phase three based on their similarity (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Using CRT and intersectionality as a frame to code assisted in examining how social identities work on various levels, resulting in unique experiences, barriers, and opportunities for each individual. Thus, oppression is dependent on various identities. Some of the codes I began with of CRT include the many forms of oppression, examples of active anti-black ness and anti-black

racism, systems of power, and subtleness or racism. Some codes I began with of intersectionality included race and gender barriers, support structures, and identity gatekeeping. I reviewed each of the original codes, considered how they related to one another, and then integrated them into more general themes (Braun & Clarke, 2014). These themes conveyed significant information about the study questions and the data. I reviewed the subjects again and made any corrections in the fourth phase (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this stage, I evaluated the developed themes and the passages of texts contained in each topic. I then improved the themes by being combined when appropriate, split when they become divergent, and removed when the evidence does not support them (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

The researcher names and defines the themes in the fifth step of the research process to show how pertinent they are as answers to research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). I attempted to capture the essence of each topic at this point while also considering the actual meaning of the theme, what sub-themes exist, and how the sub-themes relate to the major topic (Braun & Clarke, 2014). As part of the last stage of the coding process, the researcher needed to present the results (Braun & Clarke, 2014). I wrote a report on the findings and delivered it in the study's fourth chapter (Braun & Clarke, 2014). I determined that data saturation has been attained and that data collection and analysis are finished once the interview data of at least ten participants have been analyzed using the method described by Braun and Clarke (2014) and when data analysis from the last two consecutive participants has not revealed any new themes or insights.

Trustworthiness

The four pillars of trustworthiness are transferability, confirmability, credibility, and dependability. Interviewing at least ten people and gathering enough information increased the research's credibility. Data saturation occurs when participants no longer provide original or creative inforon (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). By attaining data saturation, By attaining data saturation, theic. Although each participant's experiences are unique, reaching data saturation guarantees that the experiences participants describe are at least comparable to those of participants in the population. Saturation of data also ensures the generalizability of data.

Credibility and Transferability

The research's transferability was strengthened by conducting at least 10 interviews and achieving data saturation, just as its credibility (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). It is unlikely that this investigation's conclusions would apply to a population other than the study participants, as is the case with qualitative research. However, obtaining data from a high sample size made it easier to apply the study's findings to populations with similar features (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). To increase validity and credibility, data triangulation to prove themes was conducted through quotes and descriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Quotations and descriptions may offer more clarity and bring content to life, adding richness to data.

Conformability and Dependability

The study's dependability and conformability were ensured by transcribing participant interviews verbatim and demanding that each participant assess his or her

transcripts after completion. By doing this, the researcher can ensure that neither the participant nor I unintentionally tampered with the data. I knew if the participants believed the statements accurately reflected their experiences since they could do so after the session. My understanding of the data grew. I reviewed the data repeatedly during the coding process to ensure that there had not been any coding drift, which further raised the confirmability and dependability of the data. A phenomenon known as "coding drift" occurs when a code's meaning changes from the start to the end of coding (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). The researcher ensures constant codes throughout the coding process and that another researcher can replicate the coding process by making any necessary changes to the codes at the end and regular intervals throughout the coding process, thereby establishing dependability (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

By closely upholding the principles outlined in this chapter, I ensured confirmability. This allowed other researchers to replicate the researcher's work and confirm or refute the current study's findings (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). Other researchers may assess and critique the researcher's methods by properly detailing and defending them, allowing the researcher to employ them in the study (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). This increases the overall validity of the research's findings because readers know that the results can be duplicated if a subsequent study is conducted on the same population (Ratajczyk et al., 2016).

Ethical Procedures

The researcher shall ensure that this study's completion is ethical by maintaining the participants' confidence throughout the process and keeping the research's integrity.

Before beginning data collection, I obtained IRB permission and site authorization from the targeted school districts. I also took all necessary measures to protect privacy and keep information private from anyone but myself. Before starting data collection, I also sent each participant an informed consent form. Transcripts protected participant and district confidentiality by using pseudonyms or participant numbers. I kept all information on a password-protected computer, and the researcher will get rid of all paperwork five years later per IRB regulations. Some examples of digital destruction may include deletion and overwriting the current data with random data until the current data can no longer be retrieved or destroying the hard drive. Hard copies were shredded.

Upon completing the study, I disseminated my work by sharing a one-to-two-page summary of the findings with participants. I emailed the summary to all participants, ensuring the summary was in layperson's terms so the public could understand that study. In the one-to-two-page summary, I gave the study's context and used graphics such as charts, diagrams, and images to make more abstract concepts comprehensible. I have a short section that describes the research methods.

I adhered to the recommendations of the Belmont Report. The Belmont Report indicated several key concepts that the researcher will use. This entails maintaining the beneficence, justice, and courteous treatment of participants. I promised to be decent and respectful to every participant (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). This was accomplished by being kind to each participant and answering their questions honestly. I also promised to uphold any agreements established with participants, such as maintaining the confidentiality of personal information and accurately presenting their

experiences in the study report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). I ensured that beneficence comes from treating everyone fairly. Participants' data and confidentially were handled similarly, and the same protocol-specific questions were asked (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). Finally, I ensured justice was done by sharing the study's results with every participant and academic community (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021).

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. In Chapter 3, I described that this study used a basic qualitative research design with interviews to collect data. In this study, my role as the researcher played a key role in collecting data. Participants in this study were selected from Black women currently in senior-level positions, such as principals, executive directors, chief executives, and superintendents in Texas. This study's participants were recruited through purposive sampling. The research was conducted in school districts in Texas. The data in this study was evaluated using the thematic analysis technique developed by Braun and Clarke (2014). The credibility of the research was bolstered by conducting interviews with at least ten participants and collecting sufficient data. I ensured the ethical completion of this study by protecting the research's integrity and the confidentiality of the participants during its duration.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this research study was to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. The research questions used to guide this study were: RQ1. How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education? RQ2. How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership positions in K-12 education? This chapter includes the following sections: (a) setting, (b) data collection, (c) data analysis, (d) evidence of trustworthiness, (e) results, and (f) summary.

Setting

I organized face-to-face interviews with the participants at a convenient time for them. The participants and I met at a quiet public place, such as in a room at the school or a private room in the library. If the participant was unavailable to meet at the school or in a private room, the interviews were conducted via Zoom as a teleconference. No personal or organizational conditions at the time of study would influence the interpretation of the results.

Participant Demographics

All participants were Black women. Additional relevant demographics are indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

	Job title at time of study	Number of years in leadership positions
P1	Chief Academic Officer	10 years
P2	Principal	5 years
P3	Executive Director of Teaching, Learning and Leadership Development	1 Year
P4	Executive Director	
P5	Elementary Principal	28 years
P6	Principal	5 years
P7	Schools Improvement Administrator	4 months (10 years as a principal)
P8	Principal	5 years
P9	Principal Leadership Coach	3 years
P10	Principal	2 years
P11	Superintendent	20 years (2 years superintendent)
P12	Superintendent	18 years (2 years superintendent)

Data Collection

One semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the 12 participants. The interviews were conducted at participants' schools in private rooms that were not otherwise in use when the participants were available to meet in person, and online via Zoom when the participants were not available to meet in person. The average duration of

data collection was one hour per participant, and the interviews were recorded with the participants' permission using a handheld and Zoom's digital audio recorder. No unusual circumstances were encountered during data collection. There were no deviations from the data collection procedures described in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique developed by Braun and Clarke (2014). The thematic analysis was inductive, consisting of recognizing and categorizing patterns from the data through repeated analysis and comparison. The six stages of thematic analysis were: (1) reading and rereading all of the data in its entirety to become familiar with it, (2) locating initial codes that represent meaningful patterns in the data, (3) organizing initial codes that are similar into themes, (4) reviewing and refining the themes, (5) naming and defining the themes to indicate their significance as answers to the research questions, and (6) developing a presentation of the results (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

In the first stage of the coding process, the researcher must read and reread the whole dataset to get comfortable with it (Braun & Clarke, 2014); hence, I read and reread all interview transcripts to become familiar with the data. As a result of going through this procedure, I guaranteed a comprehensive understanding of the data. I started to formulate some preliminary ideas about the data.

In the second analysis phase, the researcher is tasked with identifying the first patterns of significance in the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). During this stage, I compartmentalized the meaning of the data into smaller chunks and coded all of the parts

of the data that were pertinent to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). These

codes were informed by my original ideas that were gained through the first stage of the

analysis. Overall, 150 chunks of data were assigned to 22 codes. Table 2 indicates the

initial codes and the number of excerpts from the data assigned to each.

Table 2.

Data Analysis Initial Codes

Code (alphabetized)	*n* of participants contributing (*N*=12)	*n* of data excerpts assigned to code
Acknowledging systemic inequality	1	1
Additional labor	6	11
Being a reflective leader	4	4
Being a woman of color afforded leadership opportunities	8	12
Being held back by leader	3	5
Being overlooked	7	8
Being stereotyped	6	8
Burnout	4	5
Comments on appearance	7	10
Comments on cliquishness	2	3
Comments on strong personality	5	11
Discrimination limited leadership opportunities	10	17
Experiencing dislike and distrust	5	10
Helped working with the Black community	5	5
Increasing representation	6	7

Code (alphabetized)	*n* of participants contributing (*N*=12)	*n* of data excerpts assigned to code
Perceived as aggressive	6	12
Possibility of attrition	3	3
Predominantly White district	1	1
Questioning self	7	8
Safety and support in numbers	2	5
Targeted mentorship	3	3
Understanding Black women culture	1	1

I reviewed the initial codes in the third stage and considered how they related and then integrated them into general themes (Braun & Clarke, 2014). These themes conveyed significant information about the research questions and the data. Overall, the 22 initial codes were grouped to form five preliminary themes by grouping similar codes into a smaller number of broader categories of meaning, as seen in Table 3 below.

The preliminary themes were reviewed once more and made any necessary corrections (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this stage, I evaluated the developed themes and the passages of texts contained in each code. The themes were then improved by combining when appropriate, splitting when they became divergent, and removing when the evidence did not support them (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

In the fifth stage of the analysis process themes were named and defined to show how pertinent they are as answers to research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). I

attempted to capture the essence of each theme at this point while also considering its

actual meaning by reviewing the data assigned to each theme and code to assess its

meaning concerning the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Table 3 indicates

how the initial codes were grouped to form the finalized themes.

Table 3.

Grouping of Initial Codes to Form Finalized Themes

Theme Code grouped to form theme	*n* of participants contributing (*N*=12)	*n* of data excerpts assigned to theme
Theme 1. Intersectional discrimination limited proportionate leadership achievement under most circumstances	12	57
Additional labor		
Being held back by leader		
Comments on appearance		
Comments on cliquishness		
Comments on strong personality		
Discrimination limited leadership opportunities		
Theme 2. Being a Black woman enabled leadership achievement in majority-Black elementary schools	11	23
Being a woman of color afforded leadership opportunities		
Discrepant data - Predominantly White district		
Helped working with Black community		
Safety and support in numbers		
Theme 3. Manifestations of intersectional discrimination such as stereotyping and	10	38

Theme Code grouped to form theme	*n* of participants contributing (*N*=12)	*n* of data excerpts assigned to theme
overlooking led to anti-black women in leadership syndrome		
Being overlooked		
Being stereotyped		
Experiencing dislike and distrust		
Perceived as aggressive		
Theme 4. Consequences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome include risk of burnout and attrition	12	20
Being a reflective leader		
Burnout		
Possibility of attrition		
Questioning self		
Theme 5. Hiring and promotion practices need to be modified to address anti-black women in leadership syndrome	9	12
Acknowledging systemic inequality		
Increasing representation		
Targeted mentorship		
Understanding Black women culture		

As part of the last stage of the coding process, the researcher ~~of~~ must present the results (Braun & Clarke, 2014). I wrote a report on the findings and delivered it in the

present chapter. I determined that data saturation had been attained and that data collection and analysis were finished once the interview data of 12 participants had been analyzed using the method described by Braun and Clarke (2014) and when data analysis from the last two consecutive participants had not revealed any new themes or insights.

Results

Research questions organize this presentation of results. Table 4 shows how the themes were used to address the research questions.

Table 4.

Alignment of Themes with Research Questions

Research question	Themes aligned with research question
RQ1. How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education?	**Theme 1.** Intersectional discrimination limited proportionate leadership achievement under most circumstances. **Theme 2.** Being a Black woman enabled leadership achievement in majority-Black elementary schools.
RQ2. How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership positions in K-12 education?	**Theme 3.** Manifestations of intersectional discrimination such as stereotyping and overlooking lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome **Theme 4.** Consequences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome include risk of burnout and attrition **Theme 5.** Hiring and promotion practices need to be modified to address anti-black women in leadership syndrome

Research Question One

RQ1 was: How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education? Two themes were presented to address this question: (Theme 1) Intersectional discrimination limited proportional leadership achievement under most circumstances, and (Theme 2) Being a Black woman enabled leadership achievement in majority-Black elementary schools. Discussions of these themes follow.

Theme 1: Intersectional Discrimination Limited Proportionate Leadership Achievement Under Most Circumstances

All participants contributed data to this theme. Almost all participants indicated that at some point in their careers, gender and race discrimination had limited their leadership opportunities. They described gender and race discrimination as manifested most conspicuously in denying leadership opportunities. Gender and race discrimination were also manifested in the unsolicited comments and messages the participants received about their appearance, bearing,, and personality and in the additional labor they had to perform to receive recognition for their work.

Ten participants indicated that race and gender discrimination had limited them from proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions through denial of leadership opportunities in favor of males, majority women, and members of other minority groups. P10 expressed this perception by stating, "We don't have the same

luxury or the available opportunities that Black men, White men, White women, and even other minority groups have." P10 added that in the absence of equal opportunities, "In my career, it has always posed challenges, especially in leadership roles, just moving to the next level, or being respected, or having to have to prove myself over and over again that I am worthy of the role." P1 agreed that leadership opportunities were often denied to Black women, saying, "It has been difficult because most of the people in leadership positions in this capacity are White males." P3 provided a representative response about being held back in her career when she wanted to transfer from a majority-Black campus to a majority-Hispanic one, and human resources representatives seemed unwilling to let a Black educator lead outside of a majority-Black school:

> Before I became a principal and before I became an instructional coach, I wanted to transfer schools, so I wanted to leave a Black campus that was predominantly Black, African American, and move to a predominantly Hispanic campus, and I was told by the head of HR that no, I was needed on this campus, and you were going to stay on this campus, which was hurtful. And I loved where I was at, but I was looking to move around to try to get some more experiences so that I could eventually apply for a principalship and have some more background knowledge and different things to pull from. So that part was hard, trying to get out of that mold of a Black educator: 'We need you here in this Black school, because there's not many of you in this city, and we need you here.'

P6 stated that race and gender discrimination hindered her leadership aspirations because, "I was seen by color and by gender, and not by my intellect and my ability and

the qualities that I had that enhanced how I was serving my community, my students, my

teachers, my parents." P11 said that race and gender had both been barriers to her

ascending to a superintendency, a position that was most frequently held by White males:

"A lot of positions, even in the superintendent's, which have been predominantly White

male. And so that's been my experience that sometimes race and or gender is a barrier."

P11 recounted the story of a superintendent position for which she had applied but not

received the position. The position had gone to a White male even though P11 was highly

qualified and had interviewed well. The next year, the White, male superintendent left

that district to receive a higher salary elsewhere, and the district was forced to undergo

another hiring process. P11 said of their error in hiring the wrong candidate, "If they

would have hired me, I would still be there for the kids . . . But then I learned that they

had some racial things, and they were just scared to do something different." P12 spoke

of an earlier time in her career, when she was working in a majority-Hispanic district:

> When I was working to move from the assistant principalship to principalship, I
>
> was aware that I worked in an area that was majority a demographic that didn't
>
> reflect my demographics, , and so the likelihood of being promoted in that area
>
> was limited.

P12 did not perceive that promotion, and when she was ultimately promoted to a

superintendency, it was in an urban, majority-Black district.

Five participants indicated that gender and race discrimination were manifested in

distaste for their grooming and apparel choices, which were reframed in problematic

terms through those discriminatory lenses as unprofessional. P2 said, "It was stated, you

may want to lose weight if you want to become a principal . . . you may want to comb

your hair in a different style." P6 was warned that a certain hairstyle was too "ethnic": "I

was definitely told that I should not wear braids in my hair. That just kind of came off as

too ethnic." P4 provided a response that corroborated P6's in saying, "I wouldn't get big

braids because they talked about it." P8 said of the unsolicited comments she received

that they concerned her attire:

> Those messages were wholeheartedly of the type of clothing that a Black woman
>
> should wear, or what she should not, and again how her clothes accentuate her
>
> curves . . . My husband and I talked about that it has been embedded that we
>
> [Black women] literally get up and go straight to the mirror to ensure that
>
> everything is right, that everything that we have purchased is professional. But we
>
> have received these sometimes verbal, or nonverbal, unsolicited responses to what
>
> Black women wear, how do they look like in it? And if it's professional, it could
>
> be the same dress, color, style. that another ethnic female may have on, but it's
>
> always about the Black female's appearance in her garments.

P11 recalled saying to a fellow Black woman superintendent prior to her

interview for her current position, "I don't think I should wear my braids. I think I should

take them out. Slick my hair back. Put in a bun, right? I wrestled with that . . . because

everybody doesn't perceive them as professional." P11 decided to wear braids as a

conscious choice and a deliberate form of self-expression. P12 believed at one point in

her career that her promotion might depend on her losing a significant amount of weight:

At one point in my life, I was a whole lot heavier, and I realized if I wanted to move beyond the principalship in the next level that I needed to get in better shape physically, because again, you have to look like you can run an organization, and that you are the face and representative of the organization.

As a result of this thinking, P12 lost 70 pounds.

Five participants indicated that race and gender discrimination were manifested in hostility toward or resentment of their strong or assertive personalities, which were reframed in problematic terms through those discriminatory lenses as aggressive or intimidating. P10 described her exhaustion in trying to mitigate the expressions of authority that were appropriate to her role, but which colleagues and subordinates perceived through the lens of race and gender discrimination as aggressive:

Other people tell their people what to do, and they don't get pushback. But because I am working with all White women, I have heard all of it: "When you talk, you're intimidating, you're aggressive." So, every day, I have had to, especially when I was in that 98% White situation, I was constantly masking, doing the extra smiles, and oh, my God, I go home just exhausted from putting on this performance, because I didn't want to be seen in that light [as aggressive] . . . I've heard it all, about how I carry myself being an angry Black woman.

P5 provided corroborating data, reporting that having a strong personality had barred her from being promoted:

The strong personality prevented me from being promoted within this district. Because I was an African American woman. My personality is too strong. I am very direct. Being direct has been intimidating to White females. I don't sugarcoat things. I think that most [White women] don't know how to take that directness. It created intimidation, and they didn't think they could manage me.

P6 said that when she was attempting to be promoted, "The obstacle was that I was a strong Black woman." P11 said, "I think sometimes men are intimidated sometimes by women and sometimes specifically Black women." P12 expressed a different perception, suggesting that men liked strength but that women disliked strong women: "Men kill their weak, and women kill their strong, so meaning men don't like weak men, and women don't like strong women."

Six participants indicated that race and discrimination were manifested in the additional labor they had to do to obtain equal recognition for their efforts. P2 spoke of the extra effort that Black women had to put into "code switching," while majority males were able to relax and be spontaneous:

You had to just code switch. You had to know what to say, and when to say it, and how to say it. And a man could come in and just be charming. It's just like as a woman, you have to go beyond the extra mile.

P6 spoke of how her journey toward leadership was not just about proving that she could lead, but how it was also about proving that she was more than the color of her skin, an effort that she described as double what a majority leader would need to undertake:

The journey has been not just about me studying to show myself approved to make sure that I could actually lead in the way that matters as I should, to be effective. But the journey was more of trying to master how to ensure that I could have the opportunity to get into the space first without people looking at my skin, my color . . . So yes, that was the journey of doing just that, having to master it on two different levels.

P7 said that one form of extra effort she had to put in as a female leader was assuring male parents that she was truly in charge: "As a Black woman in leadership, I've had to stay on my ground even with my parents, who are male, and had to reassure them that I was the captain of the ship." P7 added that another form of extra labor in which she often had to engage was defending herself against microaggressions: "Sometimes instead of you really focusing on the issue, you're really focusing on these microaggressions that are coming your way that are really due to insecurities from that other person." A third form of extra labor in which P7 said she often had to engage was establishing her knowledgeability with individuals who might question it because or her race or gender but would not question it if she were a majority male: "I've had to understand that there is a period where you're gonna have to be able to show that you know what you're talking about before that trust is at a hundred percent, or even at a high rate." P11 described extra labor in terms of not being able to make a mistake, when people of other races and genders were able to err from time to time: "Sometimes other peers or counterparts, they get the opportunity to make mistakes . . . We [Black women] don't get to make a mistake. And if we do, we better own it, fix it, get it right, so that we could kind of be in right

standing." P11 said that if Black women did make mistakes and fail to repair them promptly, "We could taint or hinder the opportunities for others [other Black women] who may come behind us or beside us . . . [or] it could be to my own demise." P12 described how another Black woman in her organization was trying to destroy her professional character to take her superintendent position:

> I think unfair and unique challenges that people want your seat, and they come with personal attacks, or poke holes. I work currently in a situation where there's an aggressive and deliberate attempt to make me appear to be incompetent or incapable of doing the job, and I think it's self-projection, because I am a Black female, and it's a Black female who wants the seat.

P12 explained that when there were a limited number of leadership positions available to Black women, competition between Black women for those few seats could become sharp, with the result that Black women could turn on one another:

> In certain situations, there were lots of African American females who were doing outstanding work, and because it was a crowded field, some probably were given opportunities over other African American females . . . there were only so many spots.

Thus, the participants indicated that the intersectionality of race and gender discrimination limited their proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions in several ways, including the outright denial of opportunity in favor of majority males, Black males, and majority females; the reframing of the appearance as

unprofessional; the reframing of their personality as aggressive, and; the need to do extra work to receive equal recognition.

Theme 2: Being a Black Woman Enabled Leadership Achievement in Majority-Black Elementary Schools

Eleven participants contributed data to this theme. It was a manifestation of race and gender discrimination that being a Black woman enabled leadership opportunities specifically or exclusively in majority-Black elementary schools. As women, Black women were perceived as nurturing, and therefore suited to leadership roles in schools where younger children were taught. As Black individuals, Black women were perceived as suitable for leadership roles in majority-Black schools and communities. Thus, while Black women were (as discussed under Theme 1) often excluded from leadership roles in secondary schools and in schools that were not majority-Black, they were often funneled into leadership roles in primary schools that were majority-Black, the participants indicated.

While being funneled into leadership positions in majority-Black elementary schools was confining for the participants themselves, the participants acknowledged that the experience was positive for the Black students they served. P9 noted that elementary school leadership roles were often reserved for women: "Nowadays the roles have changed. Elementary principals are typically women, from what I see in the district that I serve. And then males are typically the secondary principals." P9 said of her experiences serving as a leader in predominantly Black elementary schools, "I believe it's helped

because it allows Black students to see other Blacks as role models in leadership

positions. Hispanics and Black students, it is very good for them to see someone like

them in leadership." P3 applied for principalships at one majority-Black and two

majority-White campuses, and she described how different the experiences were:

> When I decided to apply for campuses, I applied for three campuses before I was
>
> actually selected to be a principal. Two of them were White, and one of them was
>
> African American. The two White campuses I was not asked to apply for. I did
>
> that on my own. The African American campus, I was asked to apply for. And so,
>
> I know I was targeted for that one. And because I was an African American
>
> woman, and I was encouraged to apply, I was encouraged to study and to make
>
> sure that I was ready for the interview, and I met with the superintendent and all
>
> of those things before I had an interview. So I was set up for that campus, and
>
> they wanted me there, and I believe it was because I was an African American
>
> woman.

P3 was hired at the majority-Black school, of which she said, "Coming in an

African American woman, I've had many parents say that they're happy that I'm there,

that they see someone that looks like them, and they feel like they can approach me

more." P12 said that her initial rise to an educational leadership position was through a

program designed to develop principals who matched the demographics of the students

they would serve:

I was a participant in a principalship program that was a scholarship by my school

district, and the whole point of that was to have a diverse pool of leaders that

match the demographics of the students that were served by the district.

P7 said, "My vantage point is working with predominantly African American kids

. . . when it comes to a district that is again predominantly African American, serving

Black and brown students." P7 indicated that the experience was positive for students

because they benefitted from the experience of having a same-race leader: "The

demographics of students that I have served have had a high population of African

American students, which has yielded the need for African American leader." P4 said that

she was hired as part of a conscious effort to increase the representation of Black leaders

in a district with a growing Black student population, to serve as a role model to those

students:

> When I interviewed . . . they had all these African American kids . . . and [the
>
> superintendent] had just decided that, hey, it was time the [district] had some
>
> representation in the administrative ranks so that the kids that we serve can see
>
> people serving in those types of positions, because at that particular time, . . .
>
> mainly it was the cafeteria workers and the custodians that were African
>
> American.

P5 said, "The schools that I ultimately took over were African American

students." P2 indicated that she was leading the school in the predominantly Black

community where she grew up: "As a principal, I am leading in the community where I

was raised, and so when I deal with situations that arise within my campus, I am able to most of the time relate to the experiences of the students."

P11 provided discrepant data. She indicated that during her career she had served in leadership roles at the district level in two districts that were not majority-Black. Her previous position was with a majority-Hispanic district where she was hired as Chief of Staff by a Black male superintendent. Her position at time of study was as superintendent in a district that she described as "93% White." She described herself as having been hired for this position through an equitable process in which her ample qualifications were recognized and her race and gender were not an issue, an experience that was rare among participants in this study. When she was asked whether there were other Black women in the leadership pipeline in her majority-White district, she stated that she was aware of only one Black woman teacher in her district, and no other Black women. Asked if she would consider hiring other Black men or women for leadership positions in her district, she said that she certainly would, but that she would have misgivings about doing so because of the stigma that others attributed to the perceived cliquishness of Black people, a form of racial discrimination the impact of which she described as follows:

> I think about race all the time, and if you are of the White persuasion, it does not come up. If you're African American, we think about that all the time. For instance, if there's two or three of us in one space and we're talking, we're like, "We have to split up," because it just looks [about to say it looks "bad," but then stopping and correcting herself]—it doesn't look bad, we're not doing anything,

but people make misperceptions all the time. And so, I think that's something that

others [White people] may not have to think about.

P11 suggested only half-jokingly that the Black male superintendent who hired

her as Chief of Staff in the majority-Hispanic district had made a bold move in doing so,

overriding misgivings about being perceived as cliquish in predominantly White spaces.

Research Question Two

RQ2 was: How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black

women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership

positions in K-12 education? Three themes emerged that answered this question,

including: (Theme 3) manifestations of intersectional discrimination such as stereotyping

and overlooking lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome, (Theme 4)

consequences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome include risk of burnout and

attrition, and (Theme 5) hiring and promotion practices need to be modified to address

anti-black women in leadership syndrome. Discussions of these themes follow.

Theme 3: Manifestations of Intersectional Discrimination Such as Stereotyping and
Overlooking Lead to Anti-black Women in Leadership Syndrome

Eleven participants contributed data to this theme. The participants reported that

several manifestations of intersectional discrimination led to anti-black women in

leadership syndrome. One such manifestation was overlooking Black women and their

achievements, regardless of how deserving of recognition they were. Another

manifestation of discrimination was stereotyping. A third manifestation of discrimination

was the dislike and distrust that some participants experienced from some coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents.

Seven participants reported that they felt they had been unfairly overlooked or passed over for opportunities they deserved because they were Black women. P3 described her perception of how racial bias operated among the leaders responsible for conferring promotions:

> I don't know whether the people who are doing the selecting are sitting around purposely thinking, "We're going to exclude her because she's a Black woman." But I do believe in bias. And they go to who they feel real comfortable with. And I'm very direct. I am very straightforward, and I'm very independent, and I do feel like people sometimes are intimidated by that. I'm not necessarily their go-to. But I am the go-to when there's issues that come up with dealing with Black children or Black parents. You know, I'm good for that. But other things, they don't come to me. They would overlook me.

P5 spoke of seeing colleagues who were less qualified being promoted past her: "I know that there were people promoted over me that I know didn't have the qualifications and data I had. I was bringing data equivalent to a magnet school. I was going out of my way, being on committees." P6 reported that she was passed over for a promotion because the favored (but less qualified) candidate had a better "look":

> I definitely have been in positions where I felt overlooked . . . It was very well known that I was stronger than the other applicant, and I was not chosen, and I

was actually brought in, and the words were said: "It's not because you're not more qualified. It's just because right now there's a different look that is needed."

P10 also spoke of being passed over: "I applied for an assistant superintendent position, but that time they chose the male. I applied for the superintendent position, and come to find out not only gender, but race was a factor." P2 indicated that she received a shoddy excuse for being passed over: "The opportunities that I have seen lately have gone to Hispanic females. When I question, 'Why is it happening? Why am I not able to move up?' You know, I was actually told that my application was lost."

Six participants reported that they had experienced being stereotyped. P10 indicated that educated Black women were stereotyped as aggressive or intimidating: "Black women who are educated, that people find intimidating. We're found intimidating, whereas I think other women in other races are looked on as safe." P11 agreed, saying, "I think when we say something, we come across as an angry Black female." P4 spoke of how, as a Black person, she was stereotyped as unintelligent:

> There's always the assumption that if you're Black, you can't do certain things, you can't articulate, you can't write well, you can't speak well, that you don't know that you're incompetent. You know, I remember when I taught English at another school's open-house night. My classroom was standing-room-only because I was in another Anglo district. There were not even any seats for people to sit, where the other teachers did not have nearly as many people come to their classrooms, and it was pretty much the questions that they were asking and stuff just made me

feel like they were just trying to reassure themselves that I really could teach
English to their kids.

P9 had a similar experience to P4's of having her competence questioned when
she was teaching in a predominantly White school:

I think they questioned if I could actually teach, and my response was, I'm the
only person on this grade level with a master's degree. So, if you choose your
child not to be in my class, you feel free to go talk to the principal and have your
child removed. And that happened. That happened one time, and after that
happened, I really didn't get any more of that. But I was really, really kind of
shocked that this parent felt like she couldn't trust her kid with me because I was
Black.

Five participants spoke of how intersectional discrimination was manifested as
dislike and distrust toward them from some colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, and
parents. When P4 was an assistant principal at a majority-White school, her White, male
principal did not trust her to write memos at first: "The distrust part came from the person
above me, because when I would write memos and emails to the teachers, or whatever, he
didn't want anything to go out unless he or his secretary checked it at the beginning." P6
had experienced being disliked and excluded by White supervisors, as she discussed in
the following example:

Dislike? Very much. So, an example was an event where the supervisor was
supposed to take out her cohort of principals. And she did not invite me, she

invited everyone else, and I was her only Black principal, and she did not invite
me. She sent the invites to the other principles of all White women, and I found
out about it by accident . . . And so, when I reached out to her to say, "Hey? You
know, the ladies let me know that you were going out and celebrating a cohort,
but I didn't receive an invite from you," and so she was like, "Oh, I'm sorry. I just
didn't think you would want to participate or be in the group, so I just didn't
bother you with it . . . I just didn't think that maybe you would mesh well with the
ladies."

P6 added that the same supervisor routinely excluded her from communications
that were sent to all the other (White) principals. P7 spoke of having to deal with dislike
and defiance from subordinates:

When I would ask them to do certain things, they would be very
combative in large settings. They would dismiss or ignore me, and when
I'm talking to them, as if no one's talking, and I'm clearly having a
conversation or trying to have a conversation. Asking them to do certain
things, and they blatantly wouldn't comply.

P4 added that when she was serving as an assistant principal on a majority-White
campus, she received outright hatred from some parents:

Hatred, of course, because I would even have the people saying, "I don't want that
woman talking to my kids." I don't want "that" woman, you know. They didn't

even have the decency to say your name, or whatever they would say, that woman, and they'd even point at you.

Thus, the participants reported that intersectional discrimination manifested in several ways that converged in their experiences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome. Those manifestations included being overlooked, being stereotyped, and being distrusted and disliked solely because of their race and gender by some coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents.

Theme 4: Consequences of Anti-black Women in Leadership Syndrome Include Risk of Burnout and Attrition

All 12 participants contributed data to this theme. The participants reported that their experiences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome took a significant toll on them. The costs of being in environments where the syndrome was prevalent included the risk of burnout, the risk of attrition, and significant self-doubt.

Four participants spoke of wrestling with the risk of burnout. P3 described her vacillations between resolving to continue in her position and giving in to exhaustion:

"Do I still want to do this? Am I still committed? And I go back and forth, when I'll feel like, Oh, yeah, I can do it. I can make another year. And then, oh, Lord! I don't know if I want to fight this battle again."

P5 said that her feelings of burnout had led to suicidal thoughts because of the burden of leading a school of the low-performing, majority-Black kind into which Black women leaders were funneled:

I didn't realize I was burnt out in principalship after five years. I was the only campus administrator . . . I talked to my husband and said, I can't do this anymore. There were actual suicidal thoughts. I was physically, emotionally, mentally, and psychologically done . . . The workload that many African American women have in education, we always have the toughest schools . . . I have done turnaround in the last 10 years. I met with my superintendent to let him know I am actively pursuing a position. I let him know I have to do something different if I am going to live.

Like P5, P7 noted that burnout was difficult to avoid in the leadership positions into which many Black women were funneled: principalships in low-performing, majority-Black elementary schools. P7 said, "The burnout is really something that we have to talk about as a leader in a turnaround district, and then a turnaround school." P7 contrasted her position in a low-performing, majority-Black turnaround school with the positions of principals in higher-performing schools from which she, as a Black woman, was systematically excluded:

I think that the hustle and the grind you have as a leader [in a turnaround school], it's a little bit different from those other schools where kids are, you know, in more affluent areas, and they have two-parent homes, and the average income of

the homes are much higher. I think that, after a certain time, I just started to get tired of that, because I was working sun-up to sundown, weekends and holidays. There was no day off.

As P3's and P5's responses indicated, participants' experiences also led to a risk of attrition from their school leadership positions. Three other participants in addition to P3 and P5—for a total of five participants—spoke of attrition risk as a result of their experiences. P4 had resigned a leadership role: "I said if I don't do anything, then that means I agree with what's going on. So I resigned." P4 was subsequently called back to her district on a contract basis to assume other leadership roles. P6 indicated that it was her work that mattered to her, and that she was willing to do that work in a different setting if necessary: "You don't limit yourself and stay in one place . . . when that [place] does not work, you move on, and you continue to do the work."

Five participants indicated that their experiences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome had caused them to feel significant self-doubt. P1 reported that she experienced imposter syndrome in her superintendency: "There are times where it [leadership] feels very isolated, and I probably go through the imposter syndrome. Should I even be here? Why am I here?" P10 indicated that whenever she was passed over for a position, her first reaction was to seek a way to blame herself: "Anytime you are turned down for a position, I think the first thing you ask yourself is, what did I do wrong?" P2 also spoke of doubting herself after being passed over for opportunities: "You always want to be your best self. And then when those opportunities don't come, you question:

What is it that I need to change about myself?" Like P1, P8 doubted herself when she

succeeded in receiving an opportunity, wondering what caused a superior to recommend

her for a principalship: "I mainly questioned what the individual saw in me that enabled

them to recommend me for the position."

P11 and P12 indicated that they had not felt significant self-doubt, but that at

times they had questioned themselves and their callings because of the obstacles they

faced as Black women leaders. They discussed how they addressed these doubts and

questions when they arose. P11 said of how she reaffirmed her commitment to the

students she served,

> Do you have times when you are just like, "Lord! Why did I say yes to this
>
> calling?" But anything worth doing, it's going to be hard. And we know that. And
>
> I knew that before I applied to the position, and I knew that as I've moved up the
>
> whole ladder, if you will. So, you have those days, but I do it for the kiddos, and I
>
> keep them in the forefront of everything that I do, say, and think. Do we get
>
> discouraged? Absolutely. Do I try not to take things personal? Absolutely. So, it's
>
> just like you have to have that mental strength and know your purpose and hold
>
> on to that. Don't forget it . . . just keep going, but always center it, and focus it
>
> back on the students.

P12 also discussed the messages she gave herself when she became discouraged:

> People see the glory, but it's a whole lot untold in the story, right? But then you go
>
> back to your North Star and your why, and you go back to what is it that I'm

hoping to accomplish, and where do I want to leave the organization? And so,

that's what pushes me to stay focused, to get to the goal. And then, when I feel

like the job is done, or I've worked myself out of a job, it'll be time to go.

Theme 5: Hiring and Promotion Practices Need to Be Modified to Address Anti-black Women in Leadership Syndrome

Nine participants contributed data to this theme. The participants indicated that to

address anti-black women in leadership syndrome, or rather to compensate for it, changes

in hiring and promotion practices were needed. The recommendation that participants

made most frequently was that intentional efforts needed to be made to increase the

representation of Black women in senior-level leadership positions. Targeted mentorship

programs, acknowledging systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture

were also recommended.

Five participants recommended addressing anti-black women in leadership

syndrome by increasing the representation of Black women in senior-level leadership

positions. P10 believed that some positions should be set aside for Black women: "If you

truly believe in equity, and you truly believe that Black women should be assigned

higher-level positions, then you're gonna put some positions aside and say no matter

what, this a Black woman who needs to be hired." P3 noted that it was important to staff

senior-level leadership positions with Black women in order to attract Black candidates to

entry-level positions in the leadership pipeline:

The young African Americans don't want to work in a district where you're the token, you're the only one, there's no one in Central Office that looks like you, no one for you to model after or to mentor you.

P5 stated that having Black women in senior leadership positions began with, "Having a diverse central office. Central office decisions impact campuses. It starts with diverse central offices and who have people who come with multiple experiences that are directly related to the schools."

P7 recommended a targeted mentorship program: "I think that there should be a mentorship program, or mentorship opportunity, to support African American women in leadership." P8 stated, "I just think that we as a district would need to have, you know, a true understanding of the cultural aspect of African American females." P8 clarified that just as the district needed to understand how cultural biases affected students, it should understand how cultural biases affected Black women: "Truly understanding the cultural background. You know when we talk about cultural biases with students? We also need to know about cultural biases of different ethnic groups as well." P6 called for an acknowledgement of systemic inequities: "The mentality of like everybody is equal, and I don't see color, is what keeps us stuck. And so, I think the first thing is just to make sure that there is an acknowledgment of systemic inequality."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The four pillars of trustworthiness are transferability, confirmability, credibility, and dependability. Interviewing 12 people and gathering enough information increased the research's credibility. Data saturation occurs when participants no longer provide

original or creative information (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). By attaining data saturation, I

verified that the sample participants accurately reflected the whole population and that

the results were not skewed by unusual experiences that were not frequently shared by

the public. Although if each participant's experiences were unique, reaching data

saturation guaranteed that the experiences participants describe were at least comparable

to other that of participants in the population. Saturation of data also enhanced the

transferability of data.

Credibility and Transferability

The research's transferability was strengthened by conducting 12 interviews and

achieving data saturation, just as its credibility was (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). It is unlikely

that this investigation's conclusions will apply to a population other than the study

participants, as is the case with qualitative research. However, by obtaining data

saturation, it is easier to apply the study's findings to populations with similar features

(Ratajczyk et al., 2016). To increase validity and credibility, data triangulation was

conducted to support themes through quotes and descriptions (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

Quotations and descriptions may offer more clarity and bring content to life, adding

richness to data.

Conformability and Dependability

The study's dependability and conformability were enhanced by transcribing

participant interviews verbatim and requesting that each participant assess his or her

transcripts after completion. By doing this, I ensured that neither the participant nor the

researcher would unintentionally tamper with the data. The researcher knew if the

participants believed the statements accurately reflected their experiences since they had the chance to review them after the session. As my understanding of the data grew, I reviewed the data repeatedly during the coding process to ensure that there had not been any coding drift, further raising the data's confirmability and dependability. The phenomenon known as coding drift occurs when a code's meaning changes from the start to the end of coding (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). The researcher ensured constant codes throughout the coding process and that another researcher could replicate the coding process by making any necessary changes to the codes at the end and at regular intervals throughout the coding process, thereby establishing dependability (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

By closely following the procedures outlined in Chapter 3, I ensured confirmability. This adherence allowed other researchers to replicate the researcher's work and confirm or refute the current study's findings (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). Other researchers may assess and critique the researcher's methods by properly detailing and defending them (Ratajczyk et al., 2016). This increases the overall dependability of the research's findings because readers are aware that the results can be duplicated if a subsequent study is carried out on the same population (Ratajczyk et al., 2016).

Summary

Two research questions were used to guide this study. RQ1 was: How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education? Two themes were presented to address this question. The first RQ1 theme was: intersectional discrimination

limited proportional leadership achievement under most circumstances. All participants contributed data to this theme. Almost all participants indicated that at some point in their careers, gender and race discrimination had limited their leadership opportunities. They described gender and race discrimination as manifested most conspicuously in denying leadership opportunities. Gender and race discrimination were also manifested in the unsolicited comments and messages the participants received about their appearance bearing and personality, and in the additional labor they had to perform to receive recognition for their work.

The second RQ1 theme was: being a Black woman enabled leadership achievement in majority-Black elementary schools. Nine participants contributed to this theme. It was a manifestation of race and gender discrimination that being a Black woman enabled leadership opportunities specifically or exclusively in majority-Black elementary schools. As women, Black women were perceived as nurturing, and therefore suited to leadership roles in schools where younger children were taught. As Black individuals, Black women were perceived as suitable for leadership roles in majority-Black schools and communities. Thus, while Black women were (as discussed under Theme 1) often excluded from leadership roles in secondary schools and in schools that were not majority-Black, they were often funneled into leadership roles in primary schools that were majority-Black, the participants indicated. While being funneled into leadership positions in majority-Black elementary schools was confining for the participants themselves, the participants acknowledged that the experience was positive for the Black students they served.

RQ2 was: How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership positions in K-12 education? Three themes addressed this question. The first RQ2 theme was: manifestations of intersectional discrimination such as stereotyping and overlooking lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome. All 12 participants contributed data to this theme. The participants reported that several manifestations of intersectional discrimination led to anti-black women in leadership syndrome. One such manifestation was overlooking Black women and their achievements, regardless of how deserving of recognition they were. Another manifestation of discrimination was stereotyping. A third manifestation of discrimination was the dislike and distrust that some participants experienced from some coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents.

The second RQ2 theme was: consequences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome include risk of burnout and attrition. All 12 participants contributed data to this theme. The participants reported that their experiences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome significantly affected them. The costs of being in environments where the syndrome was prevalent included the risk of burnout, the risk of attrition, and significant self-doubt.

The third RQ2 theme was: hiring and promotion practices need to be modified to address anti-black women in leadership syndrome. Nine participants contributed data to this theme. The participants indicated that changes in hiring, and promotion practices were needed to address anti-black women in leadership syndrome, or rather to compensate for it. The recommendation that participants made most frequently was that

intentional efforts needed to be made to increase the representation of Black women in

senior-level leadership positions. Targeted mentorship programs, acknowledging

systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture were also recommended.

Chapter 5 includes discussion, interpretation, and recommendations based on these

findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The problem addressed in this study was that although Black women are currently the most college-educated per capita in the U.S., Black women still lag in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school education (Fuller et al., 2019; NCES, 2021). The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. A basic qualitative research design was used to study the problem. Interviews were conducted to address the problem statement. Data collection came from Black women in senior-level positions, such as principals, executive directors, chief officers, and superintendents in Texas. Participants in this sample group had defied the statistical odds to gain leadership positions. However, they had likely still experienced prejudice and anti-black racism throughout their careers. Thematic analysis was adopted for data analysis.

Gender and race discrimination was manifested most conspicuously in the denial of leadership opportunities, and they were also manifested in the unsolicited comments and messages the participants received about their appearance and their personality. There was a manifestation of race and gender discrimination that being a Black woman enabled leadership opportunities specifically or exclusively in majority-Black elementary schools. Black women were perceived as suitable for leadership roles in majority-black schools and communities. While being appointed into leadership positions in majority-

Black elementary schools was confining for the Black women, the participants acknowledged that their experience was positive for the Black students they served.

The participants reported that several manifestations of intersectional discrimination led to anti-black women in leadership syndrome, including overlooking Black women and their achievements, stereotyping, and the dislike and distrust received from some coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents. The findings also demonstrated that the participants' experiences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome took a significant toll on them, including the costs of being in environments where the syndrome was prevalent, such as the risk of burnout, the risk of attrition, and significant self-doubt.

Changes in hiring and promotion practices were needed to address the anti-black women in leadership syndrome. The recommendation that participants made most frequently was that intentional efforts needed to be made to increase the representation of Black women in senior-level leadership positions. Targeted mentorship programs, acknowledging systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture were also recommended. Chapter 5 includes interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, implications, recommendations based on these findings, and conclusion.

Interpretation of findings

The discussion and interpretation of findings were based on the research questions and respective themes discussed below.

Research Question One

RQ1 was: How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education?

Theme 1: Intersectional Discrimination Limited Proportionate Leadership Achievement under Most Circumstances

Research findings demonstrated that gender and race discrimination limits black women's leadership opportunities. Gender and race discrimination is manifested most conspicuously in denying leadership opportunities. The results imply that gender and racial discrimination limited Black women from attaining leadership positions in the academic sector. The findings have also been reported in other studies. Kim (2020) found gender discrimination through the glass ceiling to impede the ascension of Black women to senior leadership positions because men are traditionally preferred for senior leadership positions over women due to gender discrimination in workplaces (Kim, 2020).

While the current study findings indicate that gender and race discrimination is manifested most conspicuously in denying leadership opportunities, previous research refuted this claim. Yu (2020) indicated that Black women holding senior-level positions in organizations resemble the distinctive tokenism where they hardly have a voice in the organization's decision-making; however, they have limited access to power compared to men. The difference in findings could be because of different participants used for data collection with different views and responses regarding Black women ascending to

leadership positions. Consistent with the current study findings, Cartwright et al. (2021) reported that promoting Black women to top managerial positions is challenging due to a glass ceiling and gender inequality in organizations.

Gender and race discrimination also manifested in the unsolicited comments and messages the black women received about their appearance, bearing, and personality. In the additional labor, they had to perform to receive recognition for their work. The results confirm past research indicating that Black women's devaluation and under-appreciation barred them from leadership positions (Sales et al., 2020). They were being overlooked in favor of men, blocking their ascension to leadership positions (Sales et al., 2020). Gender discrimination has been demonstrated as the key obstacle to Black women's ascension to academic leadership. Current study results are consistent with past research findings by Welch et al. (2021), who explained that underrepresentation, undervaluation, and disregard for Black female leadership negatively influenced their appointment to leadership positions. The findings contribute to the previous literature by establishing that gender and racial discrimination limited Black women from attaining leadership positions in the academic sector.

Theme 2: Being a Black Woman Enabled Leadership Achievement in Majority-Black Elementary Schools

Based on the findings, it was a manifestation of race and gender discrimination that being a Black woman enabled leadership opportunities specifically or exclusively in majority-Black elementary schools. Although black women were regarded as nurturing for younger children, Black women were considered suitable for leadership roles in

majority-Black schools and communities. The results imply that Black women were only given leadership in all Black elementary schools.

However, previous research confirms the current study's findings by establishing that Black teachers, more so women, had difficulty dealing with racism from their colleagues and thus were discouraged from advancing their careers into leadership positions (Duncan, 2019). The current results also confirm past research findings by Haynes et al. (2020), who found that Black women were primarily accepted in majority Black schools but also had difficulty ascending to senior educational leadership roles after principalship. Black women were often capped at the principalship level due to anti-black racism. One may believe that White people are the only perpetrators of anti-black women in leadership syndrome and that as a person of color or Black person, one cannot hold anti-black women in leadership syndrome views. The study's findings showed that although Black women were more accepted in majority Black schools, Black women were not excluded from still experiencing Black-on-Black or people-of-color anti-black women in leadership syndrome.

Contrary to the current study findings that Black women were perceived as suitable for leadership roles in majority-Black schools and communities, Truehill (2021) established that Black women leaders had negative experiences through gender discrimination, racism, and sexism. Bailes and Guthery (2020) found that Black women assistant principals were the least likely group to be considered for promotion at any time. The study findings have added to the body of empirical knowledge by revealing that

Black women were only given leadership roles, mostly principalship, in all black elementary schools.

Research Question Two

RQ2 was: How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-black women in leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level leadership positions in K-12 education?

Theme 3: Manifestations of Intersectional Discrimination Such as Stereotyping and Overlooking Lead to Anti-black Women in Leadership Syndrome

Research findings imply that Black women were always overlooked when assigning leadership positions despite being more qualified. Similar findings to the current results were reported in past research by Field et al. (2020), who highlighted that Black women were overlooked and would not be appropriate for the tasks of a senior-level leadership position because they could not report to duties early as a result of domestic roles of caring for a family, unlike men, who are likely to commit to management roles. Channing's (2022) findings also concur with current findings in revealing that Black women endured many challenges, including gender bias and stereotyping. Gender-based bias impedes Black women from aiming for senior leadership positions in education.

Current findings indicate that stereotyping Black women was another manifestation of discrimination. Smith et al. (2019) established that Black women are racially overlooked and disregarded when assigning senior educational leadership opportunities in K-12 education because of gender and race stereotyping. Gender

stereotyping has challenged Black women aspiring for leadership positions in the academic sector. The findings align with Williams et al. (2022), who found that the pioneer Black women in college had to endure gender stereotyping and other discriminatory practices such as racism.

Discrimination was also exhibited by the dislike and distrust that some participants experienced from coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents. The study results confirm previous research findings by Blosser (2020), who revealed that Black women were remarkably underrepresented because of their gender and race. Eaton et al. (2020) also established that Black women were ranked lowest regarding hiring ability because of increased gender and racial stereotyping, thus negatively affecting their aspiration to leadership positions. Research findings contribute to the previous research by demonstrating that Black women were always overlooked when assigning leadership positions despite being more qualified.

Theme 4: Consequences of Anti-black Women in Leadership Syndrome Include Risk of Burnout and Attrition

The results indicated that Black women's experiences of anti-black women in leadership syndrome significantly affected them. The costs of being in environments where the syndrome was prevalent included the risk of burnout, the risk of attrition, and significant self-doubt. The results imply that Black women were negatively affected by the prevalence of anti-black syndrome, including the risk of burnout, attrition, and significant self-doubt.

Previous research confirms these findings by establishing that devaluation, under-appreciation of Black women, and discrimination represented anti-black ness and racism against women contribute to their lack of ascension or attrition from leadership positions (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2020). Prior research indicates that having a limited number of Black female teachers in K-12 schools resulted in poor teacher preparation, increased attrition of Black teachers, and, thus, poor representation (King & Upadhyay, 2022).

Anti-black women in leadership syndrome contribute to burnout, risk, and attrition among Black women teachers because of increased race and gender discrimination. Past research suggests that when Black women acted as coaches, they increased the number of women willing to take up community leadership positions, thus increasing the representation of women (Joseph & McKenzie, 2022). Research finding adds to the previous literature by establishing that Black women were negatively affected by the prevalence of anti-black syndrome, including the risk of burnout, the risk of attrition, and significant self-doubt.

Theme 5: Hiring and Promotion Practices Need to Be Modified to Address Anti-black Women in Leadership Syndrome

Current study findings imply that changes in hiring and promotion practices are needed to address the anti-black women in leadership syndrome. Previous studies indicate that effective leadership through educational policy changes, such as inclusivity in hiring and promotion practices, and that district leaders, hiring officials, and educational advocates believe lead to the attainment of Black women educators ascending to senior leadership roles (Stanley & Crawford, 2022).

Targeted mentorship programs, acknowledging systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture were recommended ways to enhance the representation of Black women in leadership positions. The result concurs with previous research by Alfred et al. (2019), who reported that mentorship was crucial in encouraging Black women to take up leadership positions because the lack of mentors in higher education institutions impedes Black women who want to advance their careers. In agreement with the current research findings, Minnett et al. (2019) reported that Black women having mentors of their race usually feel comfortable and optimally have success in their quest for leadership.

Other studies have also suggested mentorship and understanding Black women's culture as key to encouraging Them to achieve their career aspirations of becoming leaders in the academic sector. Scott (2022) found that they owed the success of their top leadership attainment to mentorship by other Black women leaders. Targeted mentorship programs are important to black women's leadership aspirations. McIntyre and Burchell (2022) established that occupational mentorship was significant in self-efficacy and prepared Black women for promotion and career advancement. The findings contribute to past research by revealing that acknowledging systemic inequities and understanding Black women's culture are recommended ways to enhance the representation of Black women in leadership positions.

Limitations of the Study

This study employed a non-probability sampling approach; hence, the findings were confined to the study population in which the research was conducted. Because of

this restriction, the study cannot be generalized to the whole U.S. population and may be irrelevant to other nations. The depth of data compensated for the limited sample size gathered through in-depth participant interviews and gathering data until data saturation is reached (Sundler et al., 2018).

The US was suffering from a pandemic during the 2019 to 2021 outbreak associated with the new coronavirus, COVID-19, and it was unknown when the impacts of this pandemic would subside. As a result, participants preferred to conduct interviews virtually rather than in person, which limited the amount of information participants provided in their responses. I had to compensate for this constraint by conducting interviews through Zoom rather than over the phone when in-person interviews were impossible.

The reliance on self-reported data also limited the study. Self-reported data may be erroneous because individuals may incorrectly recall or intentionally or unintentionally distort occurrences, thus leading to the unreliability of the findings. I compensated for this constraint of data collection until data saturation was reached by ensuring participants the confidentiality of their remarks and establishing rapport with them.

Recommendations

Several recommendations were advanced from the results of this study. The recommendations included recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Practice

I recommend implementing mentorship programs about enhancing equality in leadership positions for Black women. I offer suggestions for action to school district leaders, education stakeholders, and policymakers to use these results by implementing awareness and mentorship programs to improve the representation of Black women in leadership positions. Anti-black women leadership syndrome specifically impacts Black women seeking leadership roles, in this study specifically in education, by excluding them from the full participation and sense of belonging in education and educational leadership roles (Howard et al., 2022).

I recommend that new, existing, or future school district leaders implement the recommendations from this study, such as acknowledging systemic inequities and providing equal promotion opportunities in the academic sector. Regardless of whether anti-black women leadership syndrome is intentional or not, it benefits nonblack groups by placing White people at the top of the already existing racial hierarchy and placing Black people at the bottom, and nonblack people of color in between the racial hierarchy (Howard et al., 2022; Whitney, 2022).

I recommend that school district leaders create awareness among supervisors, subordinates, and parents to enhance equity in the hiring and promoting of Black women in academic leadership. The awareness would provide insights for improvement as an engagement effort and identify opportunities for the growth and development of Black women for leadership positions in the academic sector.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings were limited to the study population in which the research was conducted. Because of this restriction, the study cannot be generalized to the whole U.S. population and may be irrelevant to other nations. Therefore, future research could expand the number of participants to enhance the findings of this study and explore how other school leaders in different regions of the United States and nations provide reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools.

The reliance on self-reported data also limited the study. Self-reported data may be erroneous because individuals may incorrectly recall or intentionally or unintentionally distort occurrences, thus leading to the unreliability of the findings. A quantitative study is a recommendation for future research to uncover the connection of this study's findings with strategies for improving the hiring and promotion of Black women to the top leadership positions in public schools. Researchers could conduct a quantitative study in future research to analyze the statistical relationship between strategies to improve Black women's ascension to leadership positions in the education sector.

Study findings demonstrated a need for intentional efforts to increase the representation of Black women in senior-level leadership positions. Researchers can expand on the results of this study by conducting a qualitative study using a different conceptual framework, such as the expectation states theory, to explain the findings.

Implications

This research study has several implications. They were categorized into implications for positive social change and theoretical implications, as discussed below.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The results from the study may help support school district leaders and hiring recruiters, creating supportive ways to advance Black women in more educational leadership positions. The research study findings may also lead to positive social change in helping school district leaders, hiring officials, and educational advocates understand that minimal research has focused solely on anti-black women from those in positions of privilege and power, possibly contributing to the inequities Black women face in leadership career advancement in public school education.

The findings of the study may help school district leaders, hiring officials, and educational advocates increase the number of Black women in senior leadership roles in public education. More Black women in educational leadership will profoundly impact student academic achievement and better equity practices in educational systems, such as hiring, retaining, and promoting Black educators and student educational opportunities.

The findings may help school district leaders understand the need for intentional efforts to increase the representation of Black women in senior-level leadership positions. This body of work explicitly applies the anti-black women leadership syndrome concept to Black women in public education. It is salient to them because of the perceived connections between their interconnected experiences as Black and women leaders and their challenges toward senior leadership attainment. Therefore, intentionally increasing

Black women's representation in leadership positions would help create gender and racial equality.

Discrimination was also exhibited by the dislike and distrust that some participants experienced from coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents. Policymakers can use the results to implement policies to enhance equity in schools regarding the hiring and promoting of Black women to top leadership positions. Anti-black women leadership syndrome may be exacerbated by intersectional aspects such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and others (Wingfield & Chavez, 2020).

Results revealed manifestations of intersectional discrimination that led to anti-black women in leadership syndrome, including overlooking Black women and their achievements, regardless of their recognition. School district leaders can adopt these study findings to create awareness through mentorship about the need for equality in school leadership positions. The findings will help schools fight such problems in hiring and promoting Black women in top leadership positions.

School district leaders, education stakeholders, and policymakers can benefit from this study's results through targeted mentorship programs, acknowledging systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture to enhance the representation of Black women in leadership positions.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of the study are supported by analyzing intersectionality theory. Intersectionality as a theoretical framework was anchored on the assumption that the social categories of race, social status, gender, and ethnicity interconnect at different

levels of a person's life (Crenshaw, 1991; Keuchenius & Mügge, 2021). Social-structural racism and sexism are associated with oppression, and privileges accorded to people (Crenshaw, 1991). The study result adds to this theory by establishing that overlooking Black women and their achievements, regardless of their deserving of recognition leads to gender, racial, and stereotyping of Black women. Crenshaw (1991) used structural intersectionality to explore the extent of oppression experienced by women at different societal levels.

Similar to the current findings, intersectionality describes antagonistic structures that segregate Black women from other women (Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018). The theory confirms the current study findings, which indicate that gender and race discrimination was manifested in the unsolicited comments and messages the Black women received about their appearance and their bearing and personality and in the additional labor they had to perform to receive recognition for their work. The implication is that Black women are discriminated against in leadership opportunities through gender and racial discrimination. Representational intersectionality is associated with the strategies aimed at supporting Black women. Comparable to Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina (2018), Crenshaw (1991) used intersectionality theory to highlight racism and the underrepresentation of Black women. Through representational intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991) emphasized the value of portraying Black and other marginalized women in modern literature and the media. The intersectionality theory is critical in investigating the challenges experienced by Black female education administrators in K-12 learning institutions. The findings have added to representational intersectionality by

highlighting recommendations to prevent racism and gender discrimination, including targeted mentorship programs, acknowledging systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture, which was also recommended to enhance the representation of Black women in leadership positions.

Apart from the intersectionality theory, I also adopted Critical Race Theory to guide this study. The current study findings indicated that Black women experienced racial discrimination, which is consistent with Critical Race Theory's constructs because it examines racism and discrimination. Activists pushed for Black and White equality and developed the critical race theory (CRT). CRT is used to examine the idea of racism and discrimination in society based on racial context, as recommended by its advocates (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). Using this background knowledge of CRT, I used the theory to analyze the factors impacting the ascent of Black women to leadership positions in the public education system. The findings added to this theory because these results implied that gender and racial discrimination limited Black women from attaining leadership positions in the academic sector.

CRT was used in this study to understand the intersectionality of race and gender among Black women in leadership positions in the public school system. The results implied that Black women were negatively affected by the prevalence of anti-black syndrome, including the risk of burnout, attrition, and significant self-doubt. As already stated, CRT theory is characterized by four central tenets, including racism as an ordinary phenomenon in society, race as a social construct, convergence of interest, and the notion of storytelling and narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Mensha, 2017; Tate IV, 1997).

Such tenets were mentioned in the current study findings by highlighting the adverse effects of anti-black ness that result from racial discrimination, leading to attrition and burnout among Black women with leadership aspirations.

According to the tenets of CRT, race and gender are social constructs that influence the representation of Black women in leadership positions in the public school system. Given the understanding of these variables, the research findings indicate that the challenges faced by Black women in the public school system included racial and gender discrimination, including anti-black ness notions across different races, including Hispanics, Asians, Whites, Blacks, as well as Latinos. Results also revealed that Black women were always overlooked when assigning leadership positions despite being more qualified. Surprisingly, anti-black ness was not only perpetrated by White men and women but was also promoted by other Black men and women and other racial groups such as Hispanics, Latinos, and Asians. The implication is that CRT theory provides a lens of how racial and gender discrimination has challenged Black women's ascension to top leadership positions.

Conclusion

Although Black women are the most college-educated per capita in the U.S. compared to other groups (Kearse et al., 2022), they still lag in obtaining senior educational leadership roles in public school education. This study explored the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K-12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome contributed to this underrepresentation. Gender and race discrimination was manifested most conspicuously

in denying leadership opportunities. It was a manifestation of race and gender discrimination that being a Black woman enabled leadership opportunities specifically or exclusively in majority-Black elementary schools. Black women were considered suitable for leadership roles in majority-black schools and communities. Thus, school district leaders would use the findings to understand that while Black women were often excluded from leadership roles in secondary schools and schools that were not majority Black, they were often discriminated against and denied leadership opportunities.

Overlooking Black women and their achievements, regardless of how deserving of recognition they were, stereotyping, the dislike and distrust Black women experienced from some coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, and parents were regarded as manifestations of gender and race discrimination. The costs of being in environments where the syndrome was prevalent included the risk of burnout, the risk of attrition, and significant self-doubt among Black women. It can be recommended that intentional efforts be made to increase the representation of Black women in senior-level leadership positions. There was also a need for targeted mentorship programs, acknowledging systemic inequities, and understanding Black women's culture to understand and gain insight into preventing gender and racial discrimination of Black women to get to leadership positions in the education sector. Further research is needed to examine strategies to combat gender and race discrimination against Black women aspiring to ascend to educational leadership positions.

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Appendix A: Introductory Email

Subject line:

Interviewing Black women in senior leadership roles in K – 12 public education during May - June ($10 thank you gift)

Email message:

Dear Esteemed Leader,

My name is Rashida Hobbs-Jones. I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am in the Educational Administration and Leadership graduate program. As part of the provisions of my doctoral degree, I am performing a research study that involves the examination of Black women in senior leadership roles in K – 12 public education. I would like to invite you to participate.

The purpose of my research study is to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K – 12 public schools and if anti-black women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. By examining the perceptions of Black women senior leaders in educational leadership roles, there will be an opportunity to help address the issue of minimal research about anti-black women in leadership roles in public education. This study may also help advance hiring practices by influencing policies to address hiring inequities amongst more Black indigenous people of color (BIPOC) populations representation in senior leadership roles in K – 12 public education. This study may also contribute to school district leaders and hiring recruiters creating supportive ways to advance Black women in more leadership positions. As the study explores Black women senior leaders' perceptions, I will attempt to thread together common understandings and themes.

<u>About the study:</u>

- One 45-60 minute in person, phone, or Zoom interview that will be audio recorded only.
    - An audio-recording of the interview session will take place to accurately capture and reflect upon what is discussed. The audio-recordings will only be reviewed by myself to analyze and transcribe the data. After the analysis is concluded, the audio-recordings will be destroyed.
- You would receive a $10 Amazon, Target, or Starbucks gift card as a thank you
- Please be certain that confidentiality will be of critical importance as this research is performed. If you decide to participate, your anonymity will be protected throughout the research.

<u>Volunteers must meet these requirements:</u>

1. All participants will be principals, executive directors, chief executives, or superintendents.
2. All participants will be employed at public schools.
3. All participants will be leading any of the grade levels K- 12
4. All participants must have been working as a principal, executive director, chief executive, or superintendent for at least six months.

I welcome any questions you may have related to the interview session.

I am extremely grateful and appreciative for your consideration to partake in this study. Please let me know if you are interested in participating. Interviews will take place during May - June 2023.

Please respond to this email to let the researcher know of your interest. You are welcome to forward it to others who might be interested.

Sincerely,

Rashida Hobbs-Jones

Doctoral candidate – Walden University
Rashida.jones2@waldenu.edu
hobbsrashida@gmail.com

Appendix B: Social Media Post

Caption: There is a new research study to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black women in senior educational leadership positions in K – 12 public schools and if antiblack women in leadership syndrome is a contributor to this underrepresentation. By examining the perceptions of Black women senior leaders in educational leadership roles, there will be an opportunity to help address the issue of minimal research about antiblack women in leadership roles in public education. This study may also help advance hiring practices by influencing policies to address hiring inequities amongst more Black indigenous people of color (BIPOC) populations representation in senior leadership roles in K – 12 public education. As the study explores Black women senior leaders' perceptions, I will attempt to thread together common understandings and themes.

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- You would receive a $10 Amazon, Target, or Starbucks gift card as a thank you
- Please be certain that confidentiality will be of critical importance as this research is performed. If you decide

Appendix C: Dissertation "Semi-Structured" Interview guide/protocol

Research Question #1: *How does the intersectionality of race and gender limit the proportionate achievement of senior-level leadership positions for Black women in K-12 public school education?*

1.1 Has being a Black Woman helped or hindered your overall leadership once you achieved a position? If so, how?

1.2 Describe to me what your journey to achieving a senior-level leadership position was like as a woman?

1.2.1 Describe to me what your journey to achieving a senior-level leadership position was as a Black woman in K – 12 public education.

1.3 Were there any limitations to your advancement towards becoming a senior leader? If so, what were they?

1.3.1 What do you believe contributed to those limitations?

1.3.2 How did you deal with these experiences?

1.3.3 How did you learn to navigate this/these challenge(s) in general?

1.4 During your K – 12 journey towards senior leadership attainment, did you receive unsolicited messages about being a Black woman from other people in the workplace? This includes peers, hiring managers, leaders, or other school figures?

1.4.1 What did you think about the unsolicited messages?

1.4.2 Do you recall receiving any unsolicited messages that you disagreed with?

General Examples of Unsolicited/Subtle Negative Messages Directed Towards Leaders:

- Appropriate hair and grooming

- Better ways to conduct yourself
- Gender expectations – role as a senior leader
- Racial expectations – role as a senior leader

Research Question # 2: *How does the intersectionality of race and gender lead to anti-*

black women leadership syndrome for Black women trying to attain senior-level

leadership positions in K-12 public education?

2.1 How do you believe you are characterized as a Black woman leader?

2.2   As you have ascended the ranks of educational leadership, do you believe your

senior leadership journey has been impacted by you specifically being a Black woman?

Why or why not?

2.2.1   In your trying to achieve or achieving a senior leadership role, have you

experienced specific instances of hatred directed towards you because you are a Black

woman? If so, how?

2.2.2   In your trying to achieve or achieving a senior leadership role, have you

experienced specific instances of dislike and distrust directed towards you because you

are a Black woman? If so, how?

2.2.3   In your trying to achieve or achieving a senior leadership role, have you

experienced the feeling of being overlooked or unnoticed because you are a Black

woman? If so, how?

2.2.4   In your trying to achieve or achieving a senior leadership role, did you

face bias or systemic barriers in being hired or promoted due to being a Black woman? If

so, how?

2.2.5   In your trying to achieve or achieving a senior leadership role, have you faced unfair expectations, unique challenges, or biased assumptions regarding where you fit in the workplace that you believe were different from other women and men of other racial and ethnic groups? If so, how?

2.3   Tell me about any strategies or methods you believe school districts and the educational community at large should implement and practice to better support Black women educational leaders, specifically Black women ascending to senior leadership roles?

2.3.1   Have you ever thought about leaving your leadership position? Why or why not?

2.3.2   Since being in a leadership role, have you questioned your experience and qualifications as a leader?

2.3.3   In your leadership position, have you had to deal with any stereotypes? If so, what are some examples? If so, did those stereotypes have an impact on you achieving leadership roles?

2.3.4   What is your educational background?

Closing question: These are all the questions that I have prepared for you within my interview protocol. Do you feel there are any more questions that I should have asked, that I did not? Are there any additional comments you want to ensure are added?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Walden University

Institutional Review Board

100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 1210.

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

612-312-1210 | irb@mail.waldenu.edu

You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program.

Interview Procedures:

I will be interviewing professionals (no more than 20) about their work and audio-recording their responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking).

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You are welcome to skip any interview questions you prefer to not answer.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, I will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the Scholarworks website.

Privacy:

I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am <u>not permitted</u> to share interviewee names, identifying details, contact info, or recordings with anyone outside of my Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study.

Contacts and Questions:

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 05-26-23-0495439.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"