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Exploring How Women on Corporate Boards Cope With Gender Bias

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MBA, University Canada West, 2014

BSc, University of the West Indies, 1982

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Gender bias may cause organizations to lose the values that women bring to the

workplace in leadership positions and may thwart women from reaching their personal

goals. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore

gender bias and its influence on women on corporate boards, their roles, appointment,

and the need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias to execute their roles.

The conceptual lens used was Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory to explain the

basis for intergroup discrimination, and Eagly and Karau's role congruity theory of

prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender

bias. The research question focused on identifying gender bias and experiences of women

on a corporate board. Social media and snowball sampling were used to recruit 6 English-

speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of

their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors

in provinces and territories throughout Canada. Data sources included interviews,

journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of

women on corporate boards. Using Yin's 5 phases of analysis, the study identified 7

emergent themes in the data sources: discrimination, harassment, organizational climate,

well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. The study's potential for positive

social change resides within its potential to promote the internal transformation of women

as they deal with bias. Men also need an improved understanding of their perceptions of

women in the governance structures of society to help reduce gender bias toward women.

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Dedication

To Catherine.

Acknowledgments

Thank you, Dr. Donna Brown, my mentor and committee chair, for believing in me and providing a shining light to follow. You helped me to explore and discover within myself the scholarly process waiting to demonstrate itself in this dissertation through a journey that helped me grow as a scholar-practitioner.

Thank you, Dr. Patricia Fusch, my second committee chair and methodologist, for your subject matter expertise. Your wisdom and advice to explore the art of fieldwork helped to bring the dissertation alive. I hope you like what I have done to enhance your reading experience of the study results and findings. I enjoyed creating this work of art.

Thank you, Dr. Hamid Kazeroony, my committee university research reviewer, for your insightful feedback to strengthen the dissertation. Thank you, Dr. Sandra Kolberg, my program director, for your expertise in research design and faculty advising, which was pivotal in guiding the direction I took with the dissertation. Thank you, Dr. Milan Frankl, my MBA mentor and supervisor, for encouraging me to enroll in a doctoral program.

Thank you to the six extraordinary women who participated in the study. Thank you for putting your trust in me, which enabled you to be open, honest, and authentic. You have provided thick, rich information to help to continue the research along many pathways in future studies. I hope this dissertation inspires you and other women in leadership positions, as well as women in general. I am a better researcher and individual because of my interactions with you. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Women in leadership positions may have limited social and professional connections to influential members of an organization to mentor their development as leaders. These women can experience barriers to advancing their leadership positions, such as a *glass ceiling* or *glass cliff*, which some women experience to explain their expected failure as leaders (Sabharwal, 2013). Gender stereotypes that limit men and women by indicating what they should do can promote gender bias in an organization, which can hinder the careers and performance of women (Heilman, 2012). Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Inequality in the roles performed by men and women can interrupt a woman's development toward becoming a successful leader (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). Research on gender, leadership, and identity could help in exploring women's response to gender bias and inspire social change within themselves.

In my study, prejudice based on sex includes gender bias against men by women as well as gender bias against women by men. I have defined the scope of the study to include prejudice held by men toward women on corporate boards that predominantly consist of men. I have also provided the context to establish a rationale for conducting the study.

Chapter 1 includes the introduction to the study, the study background, the research problem, the purpose statement, and the research question. The foundation for the study includes key concepts identified and defined in a conceptual framework. I justify and rationalize a research design in a section on the nature of the study, and I

conclude with definitions of key terms; assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study; and a summary of the main points of the chapter.

Chapter 2 contains a detailed review of the literature. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research method and the way in which I designed and conducted the research for the study. Chapter 4 addresses how I conducted data collection and data analysis, in addition to presenting evidence of trustworthiness and the study results. Chapter 5 includes a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Background of the Study

Exclusion of women from leadership positions and inequality in gender roles could impede women's development as leaders. Women around the world are experiencing gender bias that presents obstacles to their progress in leadership at political, social, and organizational levels (Kakabadse et al., 2015; Seierstad, Warner-Søderholm, Torchia, & Huse, 2017). Social changes to corporate boards can activate factional fault lines based on the demographic similarities and differences among board members (Veltrop, Hermes, Postma, & Haan, 2015). Social categorization among board members who represent special interest groups can create distinct in-group and different out-group memberships (Veltrop et al., 2015). An *in-group* is an advantaged group such as a male-dominant corporate board, whereas an *out-group* is a disadvantaged group such as women corporate board members, who are fewer in number compared to men on corporate boards (Jetten, Iyer, Branscombe, & Zhang, 2013). Discussion of how women cope with these situations has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

This study involved using a conceptual lens to provide a context within which to explore women's experience with gender bias on corporate boards. Social identity theory serves as a link between concepts of identity- and gender-diversity-related research (Holck, Muhr, & Villesèche, 2016). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity scholarship, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination. The role congruity theory of prejudice provides a link between the concepts of gender bias and leadership (Holck et al., 2016). Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. In my study, the theories connect gender bias with gender, leadership, and identity.

Some women in leadership roles experience less desirable behaviors from men that distort their perception of themselves. Women are joining corporate boards as members of out-groups based on gender and conforming to, instead of challenging, male norms despite stereotype threat (Kakabadse et al., 2015). A board member's organizational and behavioral conduct occurs in a socially situated context left to the interpretation of individuals (Westphal & Zajac, 2013). The women's experiences on a corporate board raise ethical concerns about the sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns that are disruptive to board dynamics (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016). Some women can experience low levels of justice and cohesion and believe the experience to be high levels of conflict in the boardroom (Mathisen, Ogaard, & Marnburg, 2013). The experiences of these women add to the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Social categorization could occur among board members leaving some women

unsure of their social identity. Gender biases disguise subtleties in the social and organizational behaviors of board members that demotivate some women and disrupt board dynamics (Chawla & Sharma, 2016; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). A woman who defines her social identity based on the perceptions of others can fail as a leader and succumb to a stereotypical gender role on a corporate board (Ibarra et al., 2013; Mori, 2014). Some women experience a variety of consequences, such as negative subordinate behaviors and reduced cooperation from other individuals (Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016). These women can develop a state of mind that can lead to aggressive or tentative behaviors in themselves (Vial et al., 2016). A woman could be vulnerable to differences between her in-group and out-group social identities.

A woman's well-being could be at risk based on negative experiences in leadership positions. Some women experience chronic stress and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and fatigue that prevent them from realizing their full potential in leadership positions (Pletzer, Nikolova, Kedzior, & Voelpel, 2015). The social context that affects a group and individuals' social identity within the group when exposed to stress can determine the coping strategy that individuals choose to manage stress (Cifre, Vera, & Signani, 2015). An analysis of occupational stress and well-being from a gender viewpoint evidenced that both men and women experience stress (Cifre et al., 2015). Men and women often use different coping strategies; for example, men tend to be problem-focused, whereas women tend to be emotion-focused (Cifre et al., 2015). An individual with a problem-focused coping strategy seeks to resolve the situation, while an individual with an emotion-focused coping strategy seeks to regulate the effect

on an individual (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, & Tatar, 2016). A woman's emotional state could affect how she develops a coping strategy based on her experience with gender bias.

In my study, a qualitative paradigm helped the research design to support study results. Feminist advocates have identified qualitative research methods as a pathway to facilitate women's voices to express their experiences, such as in interviews (Eagly & Riger, 2014). The underlying barriers that impede the progress of women on corporate boards, such as lack of mentorship, relate to social and organizational behaviors toward women (Chawla & Sharma, 2016; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). A qualitative research paradigm could be more appropriate to explore the experiences of women in leadership positions.

Chawla and Sharma (2016) conducted an exploratory multiple case study to identify barriers, enablers, and strategies to mitigate challenges that women in leadership experience in India. Chawla and Sharma used face-to-face interviews, audio recordings, and observations of eight participants. Results of the study evidenced within a set of challenges, strategies, social facilitators, behavioral facilitators, and organizational facilitators included 22 themes that impeded the progress of women in leadership positions (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). The barriers, which exist at the micro, meso, and macro levels, include the control of women's voices, male organizational culture, and constraints on women's choices, gender unconsciousness, and cultural harassment toward women in society (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Greater awareness of these barriers could help change interactional dynamics in the boardroom.

In my study, I shifted the focus from exploring gender diversity and equity to empowering women to create positive social change within themselves. Less than 100 years ago, women did not have the right to vote in the United States (Broockman, 2014). In 1960, voting became available to all Canadians (Government of Canada, 2017). Society's and men's views about women in leadership positions can take centuries to change, during which generations of talented women may remain absent from a corporate board.

The immediate course of action for women to address society's and men's views about women in leadership positions involves exploring ways in which such women can cope with gender bias and still be effective in their roles on corporate boards. Few qualitative studies of women on corporate boards exist that relate to gender bias and board dynamics (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Conducting research on women's experiences from multiple perspectives can be advantageous to academe, boards, and organizational leaders in addressing the behavioral consequences created by the inclusion of women on corporate boards (Hillman, 2015). The empowerment of women to create behavioral change in organizations and society in relation to gender bias against women in leadership roles could help other women to advance in the boardroom and leadership positions.

Problem Statement

Women's exclusion from leadership positions could affect more than governance practices, hindering gender diversity and equity on corporate boards. In 2012, survey results from corporate boards of directors of participating public and private companies in

59 countries indicated that 87% of women reported experiencing gender-related barriers, and 56% of men disagreed with the women's perception (Groysberg & Bell, 2013). Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Gender bias in leadership opportunities, selection, and promotion can limit women's career paths and undervalue their work performance (Diehl, 2014). The dynamic of gender bias toward women creates a loss to organizations and society regarding the assets and values that women can bring to leadership positions.

Societal bias against women in leadership roles supports gender stereotyping. Inequality in the roles performed by men and women can interrupt a woman's development toward becoming a successful leader (Ibarra et al., 2013). Some women cannot see themselves as leaders, or some individuals cannot recognize women with ideal leadership characteristics usually associated with men, such as decisive, assertive, and independent behaviors (Ibarra et al., 2013). Women who cannot see themselves as leaders are choosing to leave corporate boards for self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Rowley, Lee, & Lan, 2015).

The general problem of interest in this study was that organizations could lose the values that women bring to the workplace in leadership positions because of gender bias. By exploring how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias, it is possible to address a major gap in the current research literature. The specific problem was that gender bias could influence women's roles on a corporate board, which can affect their appointment, can be disruptive to board dynamics, and can create a need to develop

coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board.

My study may increase awareness of women's experience in the boardroom. Terjesen and Sealy (2016) reviewed 120 publications and consulted 50 scholars about quotas to uncover the background of women on corporate boards based on the ethical tensions experienced in the boardroom by these women. Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias have been theoretical perspectives on women's experience in the boardroom (Kakabadse et al., 2015). The individual perceptions of six participants regarding their experiences related to gender bias in the boardroom appear in a section on the study results, in Chapter 4.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. A qualitative research paradigm and a case study design represented an appropriate approach to exploring gender bias from the experiences of multiple participants to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon by collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting results. The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and

avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Research Question

The overarching research question was as follows: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board?

Conceptual Framework

The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Some women are joining corporate boards as members of out-groups based on gender and conforming to, instead of challenging, male norms despite stereotype threat (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Women's experiences on corporate boards raise ethical concerns about sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns that are disruptive to board dynamics (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016). Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

I developed the conceptual framework for my study based on the current body of

knowledge related to gender bias toward women on corporate boards. Qualitative research methods such as interviews can facilitate women sharing their experiences (Eagly & Riger, 2014). A qualitative method facilitates the in-depth and detailed study of a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). I used a qualitative descriptive multiple case study with an interview protocol to conduct semistructured interviews that included seven open-ended questions to attain the depth of information needed to explore the central phenomenon of this study (see Appendices A and F).

I explored gender bias with six women on corporate boards who participated in the study. The purposeful sample of English-speaking women had experienced gender bias at the time of their board appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada.

Theory facilitates the conceptualization of a research methodology's relationship and integration with a conceptual framework (Anfara & Mertz, 2014). I analyzed the participants' semistructured interview data, my reflective journal notes, and physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards to link the coping strategies that women developed based on the gender bias they experienced with a conceptual lens to focus, limit the scope of, and contain my study. Social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice grounded the conceptual framework of the study.

Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity theory, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination. Members of one group can discriminate in favor of the in-group they socially identify with and against out-groups

based on issues of situational relevance, such as gender (Tomenendal & Boyoglu, 2014).

An individual can have multiple personal and social identities that can oppose one

another and cause tension (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner's theory can

explain how some women could perceive the tension between their personal and social

identities as disruptive to board dynamics.

Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain

the exclusion of women from corporate boards. The roles prescribed to men and women

are social structures associated with preconceived beliefs and behaviors of society (Eagly,

1997). The agentic characteristics of men used to define effective leadership, which are

confidence, self-reliance, and dominance, are incongruent with the communal

characteristics of some women, such as caring for others (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013).

Individuals can develop prejudiced and biased evaluations of women's effectiveness as

leaders, such as the perception of role incongruity for women in leadership, based on

gender bias (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013). Eagly and Karau's theory can explain how gender

roles and leadership gender bias can affect a woman's success in her role on a corporate

board. I used the literature review in Chapter 2 to support a more detailed analysis of the

central phenomenon of my study.

I used the conceptual framework based on social identity theory and the role

congruity theory of prejudice in a qualitative descriptive multiple case study design to

provide a connection between the experiences that women had with gender bias and the

coping strategies that they developed to be effective on corporate boards.

I use the concept of gender bias to link the concepts of gender, leadership, and

identity logically to provide a holistic view of barriers, group memberships, and theories in exploring the central phenomenon in further detail in Chapter 2. Findings of my study add to the body of knowledge related to gender bias and offer a basis for positive social change in women.

Women can improve themselves for opportunities, selection, and promotion to leadership positions. Gender bias can hinder the careers and decision-making roles of some women in leadership positions who do not fit the stereotypical role of a leader (Heilman, 2012). The basis for some women's selection for leadership positions is their visibility, which creates an impression on management concerning their ability to succeed in their careers (Terjesen, Sealy, & Singh, 2009). Gender bias can cause a woman's leadership development to affect her social identity on corporate boards (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). The dynamic between gender, leadership, and identity could explain gender bias toward women in general.

Gender bias can influence women's identity. Women in leadership roles can be vulnerable to differences between their in-group and out-group social identities that they perceive to conflict with their personal identities (Kark & Eagly, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In contrast to men, women may experience negative consequences such as prejudice for indicating competence and success in their roles (Heilman, 2012). The perception that they do not fit in their role undermines women's performance expectations and the attention of the people who evaluate them as leaders (Heilman, 2012). The leaders of an organization can help to develop and promote talented women for future leadership appointments on corporate boards to indicate women's effectiveness

as board members (Terjesen et al., 2009). Chapter 2 includes a more detailed analysis of the constructs of interest and the logical connections of my study of gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias and the conceptual lens of the study.

I identified themes in the literature review and developed a semistructured interview plan with open-ended questions to answer the research question. I conducted data analysis using NVivo, a QSR International research tool, for the storage and management of data. I used NVivo to discover themes and patterns in the data collected and to help in interpreting the findings of the study. I used journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher and analyzed physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question and add credibility and trustworthiness to the study results.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board.

The primary research methods are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. A quantitative method requires the use of standardized measures to generalize the findings of a study (Patton, 2015). I did not use a standardized tool and quantitative measurement. For these reasons, a quantitative method was not appropriate for my study. Mixed methods research includes both qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study

(Patton, 2015). I did not ask closed-ended questions or use a quantitative survey. For these reasons, a mixed methods approach was not appropriate for my study.

The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. A qualitative method facilitates the in-depth and detailed study of a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). The contextual richness of a real-life phenomenon has potential to provide insights into *how* and *why* the phenomenon occurs in a setting (Yin, 2011). Exploring gender bias toward women, representing the views and perspectives of participants, understanding the contextual conditions within which women on corporate boards experience gender bias, and contributing insights into existing and emerging concepts led to an explanation of disruptive board dynamics toward women in the boardroom.

I used multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on one source alone. I used interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question and add credibility and trustworthiness to the study results. For these reasons, a qualitative method was appropriate for my study.

Qualitative

The qualitative method has five common traditions of inquiry. The five approaches to qualitative research design are narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Patton, 2015). The rationale for the research tradition chosen for my study follows.

Narrative. A narrative research design is suitable for interpreting the stories individuals have of their lived experiences of an event (Patton, 2015). A woman's stories

of her lived experiences would not have answered the research question in my study and would not have provided multiple perspectives for cross-case analysis. For these reasons, a narrative research design was not appropriate for my study.

Phenomenology. A phenomenological research design has a central theme of the shared lived experiences of individuals (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers who capture a unique event and its context can understand participants in their natural setting (Yin, 2011). As the researcher, I did not follow, share, or attempt to understand what it was like for women on corporate boards to experience gender bias as it occurs in the boardroom. For this reason, a phenomenological research design was not appropriate for my study.

Grounded theory. Grounded theory research design involves using all human forms of communication regarding the lived or shared experiences of individuals to develop or change a theory (Engward, 2013). My study was not about developing or changing theory. For this reason, a grounded theory research design was not appropriate for my study.

Ethnography. An ethnographic research design includes the researcher as the data collection instrument to study a culture-sharing group (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In my study, each woman was unique, and I interviewed each participant separately. For these reasons, an ethnographic research design was not appropriate for my study.

Case study. A case study research design includes developing questions to explore the *how* and *why* of a real-life phenomenon to attain depth and holistic view in data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014). A benefit of case studies is the ability to conduct a comparative analysis using a multiple case study design that can support cross-case and

cross-sectional studies that researchers can generalize to a theory (Tsang, 2014). This approach of inquiry was suitable for providing depth and a holistic view to explore how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias. For these reasons, a case study research design was appropriate for my study.

Case Study Design

Yin (2014) identified three common types of case study design. The three case study designs are explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive (Yin, 2014). An explanatory case study design involves using explanations to link a program's implementation with the program's effects (Yin, 2014). My study was not about analyzing coping strategies with gender bias. An explanatory case study design was not appropriate for my study.

An exploratory case study design is suitable for exploring situations to evaluate an intervention that has no clear outcomes (Yin, 2014). My study was not about evaluating coping strategies with gender bias. Therefore, an exploratory case study design was not appropriate for my study.

A descriptive case study design is suitable for describing an intervention in a real-life context (Yin, 2014). My study was about exploring gender bias and the coping strategies that women on corporate boards develop when confronted with gender bias. A descriptive case study design was appropriate for my study.

Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Gender

bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Some women are joining corporate boards as members of out-groups based on gender and conforming to, instead of challenging, male norms despite stereotype threat (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Women's experiences on corporate boards raise ethical concerns about sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns that are disruptive to board dynamics (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016). Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Methodology

I used an interview protocol with each participant during the data collection process to attain maximum data integrity. The interview protocol included the process of recruiting participants and collecting data (see Appendix A). As the researcher and data collection instrument, I compared the qualitative data in a cross-case analysis of the study results.

Participants. In past qualitative case studies on women in leadership that were similar to my study, sample sizes varied depending on the nature of the phenomenon and knowledge of the topic. Yin (2011) noted that six to 10 cases should provide valid study results. Chawla and Sharma (2016) used eight women in leadership positions from across industries such as health care and telecommunications to obtain a detailed view of personal and organizational barriers and facilitators for women in leadership. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) interviewed 38 women in leadership from academia and religious organizations to discover 27 gender-based leadership barriers. I used a sample of six

English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada. The sample selection was purposeful to attain maximum variation for a cross-case and cross-sectional analysis of the data.

Data collection. I posted a message for my contacts on social media such as LinkedIn in which I asked them to forward my e-mail address to any potential participants they knew for more information about how to participate in my study (see Appendix B). I posted a message for my contacts on social media such as LinkedIn in which I asked them to forward my e-mail address to any potential participants they knew for more information about how to participate in my study (see Appendix B). I sent an e-mail invitation to the participants, who then sent an e-mail to me for more information on how to participate in the study (see Appendix C). I attached the consent form and demographic form to the e-mail invitation with an online link (see Appendices C and D). Access to an online link was an alternative to e-mail for participants to document consent and to complete the demographic form online.

Participants had the option to document consent and complete the demographic form by e-mail or online. Participants who replied to the e-mail invitation with the words "I consent" agreed to participate in the study and attached a completed demographic form. Participants who provided their contact information and completed the demographic form online, indicated agreement to participate in the study. All participants who provided informed consent by e-mail or online, indicated they had experienced

gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their role on a corporate board. I assigned a code to each participant (using the notation Participant P01, P02, P03, P04, P06, and P09) for all communications and data collected that related to that participant, such as notes taken, reflective journal notes, and any audio recording that the participant agreed to for a semistructured interview.

I sent a follow-up e-mail to individuals who provided consent and completed a demographic form by e-mail or online to provide a date, time, and telephone number for the semistructured interview (see Appendix E). Within 14 days of receiving the follow-up e-mail, participants identified at least three options from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to schedule a semistructured interview.

Participants who agreed to the audio recording of an interview provided their permission to audio record their participation in the study. Individuals could participate in the study even if they did not want an audio recording made, but all six participants gave their permission to audio record the semistructured interviews. Participants took less than 60 minutes for the semistructured interviews, but participants had the flexibility to respond to the open-ended questions in the time they had scheduled for the interview.

I asked participants the seven open-ended interview questions based on the research question (see Appendix F). The intent of the last interview question was to elicit any other information that participants could add related to gender bias or corporate board experiences in general. As the researcher, I performed the semistructured interview by telephone. I did not need to inform participants of the scheduled duration of the interview because they determined how much time was necessary to answer the interview

questions. When closing the semistructured interview, I encouraged participants to participate in the review method of member checking and to refer a new participant to the study. Ending the call concluded the semistructured interview.

Journaling. I used journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher. The reflexivity technique allowed me to suspend judgment and contain any preconceptions I had about gender bias and prior knowledge of my study. The practice of reflexivity involves the researcher keeping notes in a journal on his or her emotions and beliefs about the data in an effort to avoid bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). The benefit of journaling was that it enabled me to realize a transformational learning experience to become a better researcher.

Physical artifacts. I analyzed physical artifacts, such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. These physical artifacts were publicly available online. One such artifact was a Commonwealth Secretariat study on gender differences in leadership and business using the science of decision-making (Patel & Buiting, 2013). Reports on women in Canada from Status of Women Canada (2016) and Statistics Canada (2016) were available to the public as physical artifacts for analysis.

Using semistructured interviews, reflective journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation served to increase the dependability of the study results. Saturation occurs when no new information, codes, and themes occurring and there exists the ability to replicate the study design (Fusch & Ness, 2015). If I did not reach a state of data saturation, I would have returned to the participants to attain more information in

follow-up interviews. I would have asked participants for more detail that I might have missed during the first interview. I would have added to the reflective journal and cross-referenced the analysis of physical artifacts with the interview data. I attained data saturation when interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts did not produce any new themes, so I did not need to implement this plan.

Data analysis. I implemented Yin's five phases of analysis, which involve compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding to analyze data. *Compiling* can include creating a database in an organized way in preparation for analysis (Yin, 2011). *Disassembling* can include coding data and sorting the data in several ways to create new insights (Yin, 2011). *Reassembling* can include categorizing, tabulating, and recombining the data to discover patterns to answer the research questions (Yin, 2011). *Interpreting* can include methodological triangulation of the sources of evidence to provide meaning to data and answer the research questions (Yin, 2011). *Concluding* can include answering the research questions based on the study results (Yin, 2011). I used Yin's five phases for the data analysis plan of my study.

Definitions

Board dynamics: Board members' interactional behaviors as a group that can affect organizational performance and leadership effectiveness in a corporate board (Buse, Bernstein, & Bilimoria, 2016).

Board governance: An organization's board is responsible for directing and controlling an organization's performance and leadership effectiveness for stakeholders (Aulgur, 2016).

Gender stereotypes: In observations of individuals in sex-typical social roles, men hold higher status roles such as chief executive officer (CEO), whereas women hold lower status roles such as secretary (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Glass ceiling: A barrier to the advancement of women such as promotions of women to leadership positions associated with increased organizational risk in an economic downturn (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Glass cliff: In an organizational crisis, the expectation is that women will have more opportunities to break through the glass ceiling, become corporate board members, and fail in their leadership roles (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Private sector: Private sector organizations (e.g., banks in the financial industry) not controlled by the government are for profit (Rosenberg Hansen & Ferlie, 2016).

Public sector: Public sector organizations (e.g., public hospitals in the health care industry) controlled by government are nonprofit (Rosenberg Hansen & Ferlie, 2016).

Women on corporate boards: Women in the governance structures of society participate in decision-making roles in the boardroom (Cook & Glass, 2014).

Assumptions

In this section, I address three aspects of the study that I believed but could not prove to be true, which were critical to the meaningfulness of the study. The first assumption was that the participants responded to the interview questions honestly and did not conceal or omit any information to distort the study results. Structural obstacles and institutional mindsets related to the privacy and confidentiality policies of an organization can affect data collection through interviews (Bruckmüller, Ryan, Rink, &

Haslam, 2014). I assumed that these organizational limitations did not interfere with participants' willingness to share their experiences with gender bias on a corporate board.

The second assumption was that the participants did not have access to the technology needed to support an interview using the Internet, such as a high-speed Internet connection. I considered using Internet applications such as GoToMeeting and Skype for the semistructured interviews to observe the body language, emotions, and facial expressions of the interviewees. In 2016, the Government of Canada initiated a project to provide access to affordable and reliable Internet in the remote locations and terrain of the Northwest Territories (Government of Canada, 2016). I assumed that the use of an alternative to the Internet was necessary to ensure that I conducted interviews with all participants consistently.

I assumed that conducting interviews by telephone would mitigate any bias between interviewer and interviewee. A telephone interview can facilitate the reduction of bias for two primary reasons: racial deference and solidarity (Hornberger, Medley-Proctor, Nettles, Cimporescu, & Howe, 2016). If interviewer and interviewee are of the same race or ethnicity, they can attempt to preserve their social identity (Hornberger et al., 2016). The interviewee may adjust his or her responses to stereotypical behaviors and beliefs that differ from the interviewer (Hornberger et al., 2016). For these reasons, I used the telephone to conduct semistructured interviews with all participants to maintain a consistent and standard interview protocol.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore

gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. The intent was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. The conceptual framework and conceptual lens served to focus and contain my study. I used this specific focus to control the scope of the study, to attain data saturation, and to answer the research question.

A delimitation of the study was the knowledge that few women are on corporate boards in Canada. Researchers for Status of Women Canada (2014) reported that of the 48% of women in the workforce, only 15.9% of corporate board members are women. I found potential participants for the study using social media such as LinkedIn, and I relied on referrals from participants to recruit new participants. The purposeful sample included English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada. The populations excluded from the sample did not meet these inclusion criteria. I invited to participate in the study eligible individuals who provided informed consent and a completed demographic form by e-mail or online.

In similar qualitative case studies on women in leadership, sample sizes have varied with the nature of the phenomena studied and knowledge of the topic. Yin (2011) indicated that six to 10 cases should provide valid study results. Chawla and Sharma (2016) used eight women in leadership positions from across industries such as health

care and telecommunications to obtain a detailed view of personal and organizational barriers and facilitators for women in leadership. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) interviewed 38 women in leadership from academia and religious organizations to discover 27 gender-based leadership barriers. I chose a sample size of six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada.

I used data collection strategies such as thick, rich description and purposeful sampling to establish transferability. In the Issues of Trustworthiness section in Chapter 3, I provide a more detailed discussion of the transferability of the study results. Transferability, a criterion for trustworthiness, refers to whether a researcher can determine if the study results are transferable to his or her situation (Bengtsson, 2016). Researchers can decide whether to apply the transferability of the study design.

Limitations

Methodology and design limitations that were beyond my control could have affected the study results. Few qualitative studies have been conducted on women's experiences on corporate boards (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Feminist advocates have identified qualitative research methods such as interviews as means to facilitate women's voices of their experiences (Eagly & Riger, 2014). A limitation of qualitative studies is the ability to replicate the study results because such research occurs in a natural setting (Patton, 2015). Dependability is a criterion for trustworthiness that relates to the consistency of the study results (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016).

Dependability applies if the feedback that participants give during the process of member checking for analysis and interpretation of the findings is consistent with the interview data collected for a study (Hays et al., 2016).

The unique behavior of a case, such as a woman on a corporate board in Canada who experienced gender bias at the time of her appointment and in her role on a corporate board, was not generalizable to all women. A limitation of case studies is lack of generalizability of the study results (Tsang, 2014). Transferability may apply if a researcher can determine whether the study results are transferable to his or her situation (Bengtsson, 2016). It is the decision of a researcher whether to make the results transferable.

Researcher bias could have influenced the study outcomes. I used journaling to address researcher bias to attain a neutral state as the researcher. The practice of reflexivity includes journaling regarding emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). The reflexivity technique helped me to suspend judgment and contain any preconceptions that I had about gender bias and prior knowledge of my study.

I took reasonable measures to address the methodological and design limitations of the study to include quality in the research design to address issues of trustworthiness of the study results. I used multiple data collection methods from multiple sources of evidence that included semistructured interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation. This type of triangulation can ensure that data are rich in

depth (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used thick, rich description and purposeful sampling of six

English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the

time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private

sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada to attain transferability of the study

results.

I used an interview protocol for the semistructured interviews to standardize the

data collection process (see Appendix A). An audit trail of the research record is evidence

of the development of a study plan (Patton, 2015). Additions, changes, and

documentation captured during a study such as memos or uploaded articles form an audit

trail (Patton, 2015). Synthesis of reports for member checking, coding structure, and

memos on the progress of research provided an auditable examination of my study. I used

an audit trail and methodological triangulation to attain dependability of the study results.

Significance of the Study

Women can bring to leadership positions assets and values that can benefit

organizations and society. If women are blocked from leadership positions, there can be a

loss of their talents and skills for organizations and society in general. Some women can

become leaders based on their proven records of accomplishments in crises, and

promoted because of their gender to fail as leaders (Elsesser, 2016). Women in leadership

positions who defy gendered patterns of career advancement could be rewriting

institutionalized career scripts that have signaled that men and women should follow

separate work trajectories (Bowles, 2012). Empowered women could create behavioral

change in organizations and society, working against gender bias toward women in

leadership roles and helping other women to advance in the boardroom and leadership positions.

In my study, I shifted the focus from exploring gender diversity and equity to empowering women and creating positive social change within them. This paradigm shift in research involves examining gender diversity based on the empowerment of women to create change has been missing from the body of knowledge (Hillman, 2015). In this section, I describe the significance of the study to practice, theory, and social change.

Significance to Practice

Gender is a generalizable construct that could inform leadership research on women on corporate boards worldwide. Some women in leadership positions experience social resistance from others and social identity conflict within themselves (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The potential practical application of my study is twofold. First, the dissemination of the study results to raise awareness of how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias could inform individuals in academe, organizations, government, and society concerning gender bias and by informing how women can manage it from within themselves.

The second potential practical application of my study involves the transferability of the study results. Other researchers could replicate the study design to explore the experiences of women on corporate boards in the public and private sectors who have faced gender bias at the time of their appointments, in their roles on corporate boards, and who have developed strategies for coping with it. A comparative analysis of empirical data on these women in other countries and industries could generate interest in this topic

among leaders in academe, organizations, government, and society, thereby promoting further research worldwide.

Significance to Theory

In my study, I explored gender bias and how it could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and to prevent their appointment from disrupting board dynamics. Social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice provided an explanation for why women had limited influence in the boardroom based on intergroup discrimination and behaviors of women in the boardroom were incongruent to expectations of board members (Cannella, Jones, & Withers, 2015; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Mathisen et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). I used social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice to justify and rationalize the study results.

Significance to Social Change

Women's well-being could be at risk based on their negative experiences in leadership positions. Some women experience chronic stress and mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and fatigue that prevent them from realizing their full potential in leadership positions (Pletzer et al., 2015). Women can have low legitimacy perceptions of their roles as leaders who are compliant with the decisions and directions of authority (Vial et al., 2016). Unless these women capitalize on their social and cultural resources, such as their social skills and behaviors with impression management and self-monitoring, they cannot enter the boardroom and be successful in their leadership roles (Vinkenburg, Jansen, Dries, & Pepermans, 2014). Despite some women on corporate

boards experiencing forms of gender bias such as glass cliff, other women have been successful in leadership roles.

My study could serve as a pathway for women to voice their experiences of gender bias in relation to entering and succeeding on corporate boards. Women who commit to their profession can choose to use their influence tactics based on previous experience to manage impressions of their power, status, and legitimacy that align with their character (Cheung, Lindsey, King, & Hebl, 2016). The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. The study could promote positive social change by indicating how women on corporate boards who manage and react to gender bias help to create change from within themselves to cope with gender bias.

Summary and Transition

In this chapter, I have described the central phenomenon that grounded the study, which involved how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics with their appointment. I have described the research plan for the study and have presented the study's background, research problem, purpose statement, and research question. I have identified key concepts and defined a conceptual framework that includes the conceptual lens of Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory and Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory of prejudice. The rationale for selecting a qualitative descriptive multiple case study research design appeared in the discussion on

the nature of my study. Definitions of key terms used in the study followed, along with a discussion of assumptions underlying the study, the scope and delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, and the significance of the study to practice, theory, and social change.

Chapter 2 includes the context for the study in a detailed review of the literature, which I conducted to position my study in relation to the body of knowledge on gender bias. The contents of Chapter 2 include the literature search strategy involving library databases and search engines, which I used to attain a comprehensive list of studies relevant to my study. A discussion of the study's conceptual framework includes identification and definition of the central phenomenon. I include in the literature review the current literature on the key concepts of my study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Women's exclusion from leadership positions could have an impact beyond governance practices that hinder gender diversity and equity on corporate boards. In 2012, results of a survey of corporate boards of directors of public and private companies in 59 countries indicated that 87% of women reported experiencing gender-related barriers, while 56% of men disagreed with the women's perception (Groysberg & Bell, 2013). Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Gender bias in leadership opportunities, selection, and promotion can limit women's career paths and undervalue their work performance (Diehl, 2014). The dynamic of gender bias toward women creates a loss to organizations and society of the assets and values that women can bring to leadership positions.

Societal bias against women in leadership roles supports gender stereotyping. Inequality in the roles performed by men and women can interrupt women's development to become successful leaders (Ibarra et al., 2013). Some women cannot see themselves as leaders, and some individuals cannot recognize women as having ideal leadership characteristics usually associated with men, such as decisive, assertive, and independent behaviors (Ibarra et al., 2013). Women who cannot see themselves as leaders are choosing to leave corporate boards for self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Rowley et al., 2015). The general problem of interest in this study was that organizations could lose the values that women bring to the workplace in leadership positions because of gender bias. The specific problem was that gender bias could

influence women's roles on a corporate board, which can affect their appointment, can be disruptive to board dynamics, and can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board.

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. A qualitative research paradigm and a case study design represented an appropriate approach to exploring gender bias from the experiences of multiple participants to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon by collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting results. The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Gender bias is a problem for women in leadership positions that exist in organizations and society in many forms. Gender bias occurs in the absence of role models for women, who therefore lack credible sources to emulate in leadership roles (Ibarra et al., 2013). Gendered career paths and work designed by men for men undervalue women's performance in supportive roles such as administration (Ibarra et al.,

2013). Access to networks and sponsors does not guarantee that women's competence makes them likable to other individuals (Ibarra et al., 2013). Some women in leadership positions whom individuals like but do not offer respect are performing in roles that are incongruent with gender stereotypes, which is a double bind that delimits women as leaders (Ibarra et al., 2013). The literature review includes empirical evidence of gender bias toward women in leadership positions.

In this chapter, I include the literature search strategy used, the conceptual framework, and a detailed literature review for my study. The literature review includes constructs of interest of gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias. I used studies that had a qualitative multiple case study design to explore the central phenomenon of my study and support the research question. The summary of the chapter concludes with major themes discovered in the literature review to provide transitional material to connect the gap in the literature related to gender bias to research methods described in Chapter 3.

Literature Search Strategy

In this section, I identify library databases and search engines, key search terms and combinations, and iterative process that I used to find a relevant scholarship for the study. The library setting on my personal computer for Google Scholar includes a link to the Walden University Library to access articles from multiple online databases such as Business Source Complete and EBSCOhost. I turned on the Google Scholar alert option to receive alerts for new articles related to my topic based on the concepts in the problem statement.

Reviewing the Search

I conducted Google Scholar searches for articles using the terms *gender bias*, *women on corporate boards*, *board dynamics*, and *coping strategies* listed in the problem statement. I discovered that the few articles I found in the initial searches did not have sufficient coverage of the scope of my study for the depth I needed to explore gender bias from multiple views of women in leadership. I refined the search terms and included the constructs of *board governance*, *group behavior*, *group roles*, *group dynamics*, *management*, *leadership*, and *organizational change* to discover articles related to leadership positions and group interactions involving corporate boards.

Criteria for Selecting the Articles

I chose articles relevant to the study to provide a holistic view of the sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns in behaviors that a woman could experience. Articles published between 2015 and 2017 provided additional resources to explore for the study, such as citations of current references. As an illustration of the iterative search process, I discovered the theory of impression management pioneered by Goffman (1959). Goffman created the theory to provide an explanation for the effort to influence other individuals' perceptions of a person, group, or organization. I proposed that the coping strategies that women developed based on gender bias could be a form of impression management, such as self-presentation, to increase their self-esteem and identity management to manage their perceived realities in the boardroom. I added the term *impression management* to the Google Scholar searches and discovered an additional 84 articles relevant to my study.

I discovered 765 articles in the Google Scholar searches, and I uploaded them into the research tool Zotero to collect and organize sources to create a bibliography of the articles. I imported the articles to QSR International's NVivo 11, another research tool, to collect and help analyze sources to store and manage the literature review. I used NVivo to run queries such as word frequencies and text searches on the 765 articles to isolate further the studies relevant to the literature review.

I reviewed the articles in depth that were similar in focus and scope to my study; used the terms *gender bias*, *identity*, and *leadership* in an NVivo text search; and discovered 94 scholarly, peer-reviewed, and full-text journal articles published from January 1, 2013, to December 31, 2016, in English for the literature review. I used articles outside the specified period, such as the seminal works of Tajfel and Turner (1979) on social identity theory and Eagly and Karau (2002) on the role congruity theory of prejudice, to support the conceptual lens for my study. I used 109 articles in total, of which 92 had publication dates within the past 5 years; therefore, 85% of the total articles were current works on gender bias toward women in leadership positions.

Conceptual Framework

In this section, I identify and define the central phenomenon for the study. The section includes the primary writings of seminal researchers related to the central phenomenon. I provide key statements and definitions inherent in the conceptual framework. I also describe how the central phenomenon applies and articulate how the study benefited from this conceptual framework.

The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could

cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective

in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Gender

bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and

personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Some women are joining

corporate boards as members of out-groups based on gender and conforming to, instead

of challenging, male norms despite stereotype threat (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Women's

experiences on corporate boards raise ethical concerns about sociocultural, structural, and

interactional patterns that are disruptive to board dynamics (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016).

Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing

from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Some women may want to find opportunities, for selection, and promotion to

leadership positions. Gender bias can hinder the careers and decision-making of some

women in leadership positions who do not fit the stereotypical gender role of a leader

(Heilman, 2012). Gender bias can cause women's leadership development to affect their

social identity on corporate boards and their leadership role (Ely et al., 2011). I connected

these concepts into a conceptual framework for my study.

A gender and leadership link connected the barriers that women could experience

in leadership positions. A leadership and identity link to the related theories known to

researchers and relevant to my study was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

and the role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). A gender and identity

link related to group memberships that could create power, status, and legitimacy for

women in leadership positions. I used the concept of gender to link leadership and

identity with gender bias for a conceptual framework (see Figure 1).
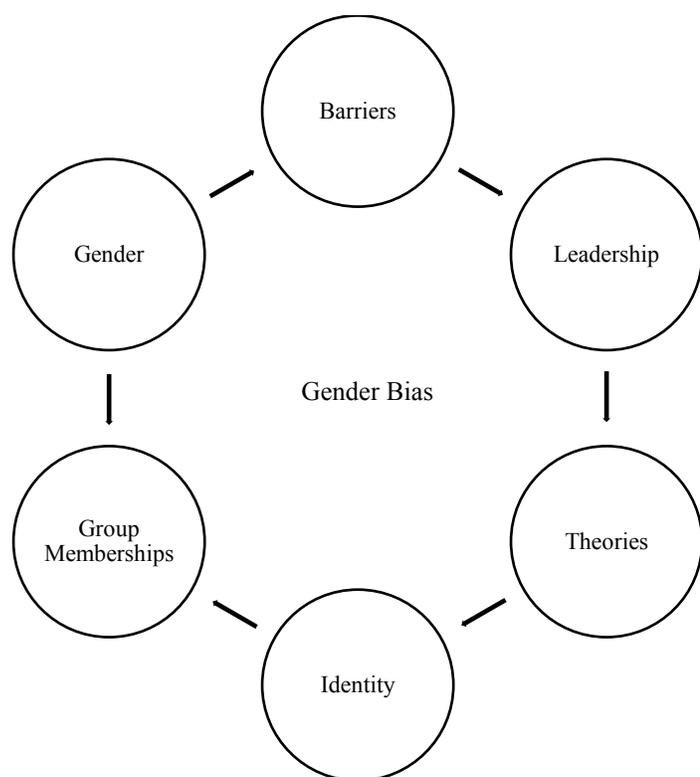
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study. The concept of gender bias was the connection between gender, leadership, and identity. Gender connected barriers to leadership. Leadership connected theories to identity. Gender connected group memberships to identity.

Conceptual Lens

In the articles retrieved from the literature search, researchers used traditional theories such as agency, resource dependency, behavioral, and corporate governance theory to explore corporate boards and board members. The role of theory was to conceptualize the relationship and integration of the research methodology (Anfara & Mertz, 2014). These theories did not fit the need to explore the central phenomenon.

The aim of my study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. Resource dependency theorists have supported the knowledge that women on corporate

boards have expert power in decision-making based on their valued background (Dunn, 2012). This opinion contrasts with social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice, which explain why women have limited influence in the boardroom (Cannella et al., 2015). The expected behavior of board members is incongruent with the expected behavior of women in general based on their gender (Mathisen et al., 2013). For these reasons, I used a conceptual lens of social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice to explore the central phenomenon under study.

Social identity theory. Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity theory, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination. Members of one group can discriminate for the in-group they socially identify with and against out-groups based on situational factors such as gender (Tomenendal & Boyoglu, 2014). An individual can have multiple personal and social identities that can oppose one another and cause tension (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner's theory can explain how some women could perceive the tension between their personal and social identities as disruptive to board dynamics.

Role congruity theory of prejudice. Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards. The roles prescribed to men and women are social structures associated with preconceived beliefs and behaviors of society (Eagly, 1997). The agentic characteristics of men used to describe effective leadership, which are confidence, self-reliance, and dominance, are incongruent with the communal characteristics of some women, such as caring for others (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013). Individuals can develop prejudice and provide

biased evaluations of women's effectiveness as leaders, such as a perceived role incongruity of women in leadership based on gender bias (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013). Eagly and Karau's theory can explain how gender roles and leadership gender bias can affect women's success in their role on a corporate board.

Application

The studies related to gender diversity of corporate boards discovered in the literature search served as a foundation for the literature review. Terjesen et al. (2009) conducted a review of 400 published articles in multidisciplinary fields concerning women on corporate boards. Terjesen et al. mapped the characteristics and outcomes of gender diversity on corporate boards across four levels of analysis. The literature review structure included theory, characteristics, and the effect of women on corporate boards at the individual, board, organization, industry, and environmental levels (Terjesen et al., 2009). The study was a comprehensive and detailed review of the body of knowledge.

Results of the study evidenced that the shortcomings of research in theoretical development, directions to improve corporate governance, and inclusive practices represent the interests of stakeholders (Terjesen et al., 2009). Terjesen et al. (2009) recommended that future research at the individual level include in-depth interviews to explore women's experiences on corporate boards with their appointment using a conceptual lens of impression management theory. The approach can answer research questions related to the strategies that women use in the boardroom to be effective and their reasons for successful and unsuccessful appointments (Terjesen et al., 2009). The rationale for my study was that the perspectives of women on corporate boards were

missing from the literature, indicating a need to create awareness of their experiences in the boardroom based on gender bias.

Benefits

The conceptual framework helped facilitate the research to provide a holistic view of women's experience with gender bias and how women cope with it on a corporate board. The central phenomenon, which was gender bias in the boardroom, was missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias. The conceptual framework was based on the constructs of interest, which were gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias. When combined with the central phenomenon, these elements of the conceptual framework provided a roadmap of areas to cover in the literature review.

I used a qualitative descriptive multiple case study research design for my study. A benefit of case study design is the ability to conduct a comparative analysis using a multiple case study design that can support cross-case and cross-sectional studies that researchers can generalize to a theory (Tsang, 2014). The links between gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias and social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice within a qualitative descriptive multiple case study were intended to focus, limit the scope of, and contain my study. A bounded case study design supported the timely completion of the study.

I identified themes in the literature review and developed a semistructured interview of open-ended questions to help answer the research question. I conducted semistructured interviews with a purposeful sample of participants that included six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the

time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private

sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada. The sample was purposeful to

attain maximum variation for cross-case and cross-sectional analysis of the data. The

benefits of the conceptual framework included the provision of a deeper approach to the

literature review.

Logical Constructs

      Gender stereotypes represent barriers women experience in leadership positions.

Social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice was the conceptual lens

of the framework. In-group and out-group social identities represent group memberships

based on gender bias. I enhanced Figure 1 to include logical constructs related to barriers,

theories, and group memberships (see Figure 2).
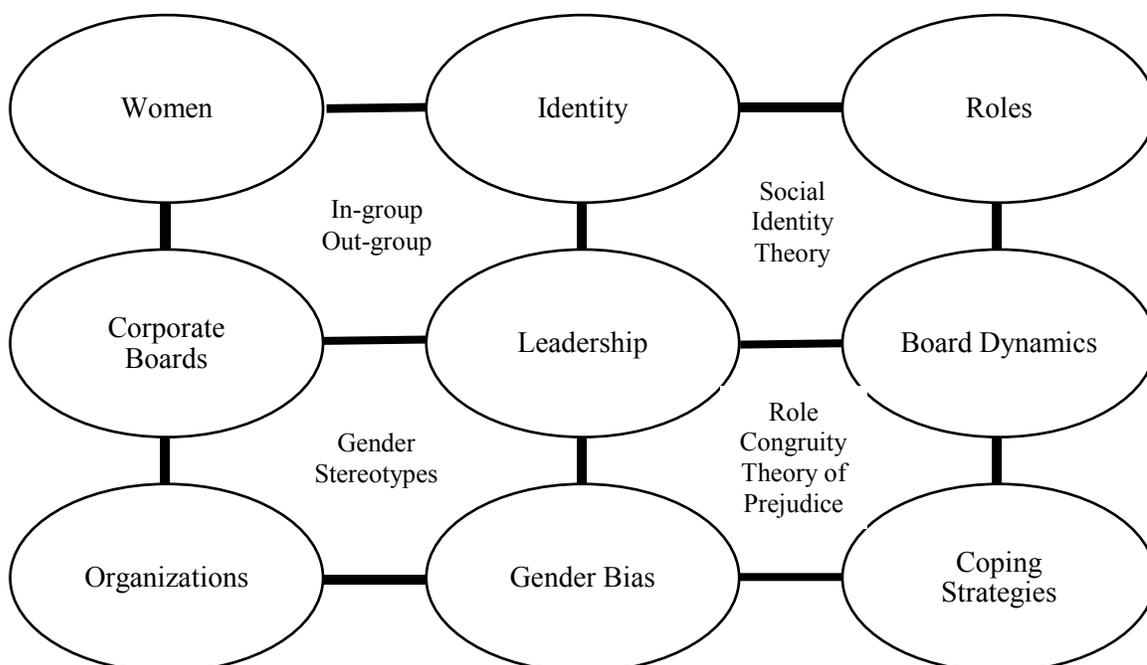
Figure 2. Conceptual framework includes the logical constructs of the study. The links between gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias and the social identity theory and role congruity theory of prejudice focus, limit the scope of, and contain the study.

To illustrate the conceptual framework, I used an example of a woman on a corporate board of an organization where she experiences gender bias in the form of stereotypical gender behaviors from other board members. Gender stereotypes in observations of individuals in sex-typical social roles, men hold higher status roles such as chief executive officer (CEO), whereas women hold lower status roles such as secretary (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender diversity refers to the integration of women within the decision-making roles of a boardroom that can create gender bias toward these women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Board members' interactional behaviors could have a negative effect on the experiences of these women.

A woman's appointment could be disruptive to board dynamics. An organization's board is responsible for directing and controlling an organization's performance and leadership effectiveness for stakeholders (Aulgur, 2016). The leaders of an organization can help to develop and promote talented women for future leadership appointments on corporate boards to indicate women's effectiveness as board members (Terjesen et al., 2009). A board member's interactional behaviors as a group can affect the organizational performance and leadership effectiveness that can be disruptive to board dynamics (Buse et al., 2016). Group memberships on a corporate board, in an organization, and in leadership could create an identity challenge for women.

Women's group memberships could skew their impressions of themselves. The basis for some women's selection for leadership positions is their visibility, which creates an impression on management concerning their ability to succeed in their careers (Terjesen et al., 2009). Women in leadership roles can be vulnerable to differences

between their in-group and out-group social identities that they perceive to conflict with their personal identities (Kark & Eagly, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The perception that women do not fit in their role undermines women's performance expectations and the attention of the people who evaluate them as leaders (Heilman, 2012). A conflict between women's identities and their performance as a leader in leadership positions could have consequences to themselves, the board, and the organization.

Gender bias toward women on corporate boards can create negative experiences for these women. In an organizational crisis, the expectation is that women will have more opportunities to break through the glass ceiling, become corporate board members, and fail in their leadership roles (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). These women are disadvantaged; as a result, they must cope with gender bias to maintain effectiveness in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment.

Literature Review

In this section, I use the conceptual framework to inform, organize, and outline the literature review. A description follows of the studies related to the constructs of interest and qualitative multiple case studies, data collection, and data analysis methods consistent with the scope of my study. The gaps and deficiencies of prior research in the body of knowledge related to gender bias follow. I analyze the approach to the problem taken by researchers and the strengths and weaknesses of their studies. I provide evidence to justify and rationalize the study and conduct an in-depth review of the central phenomenon of my study.

The discussion on future research related to the phenomenon includes a

description of known, controversial, and remaining future research related to the central

phenomenon of the study. I conclude with a review and synthesize the studies related to

the research question followed by an explanation why the approach selected was

meaningful to the study. The framework used for the literature review included the

components of the literature review (see Figure 3).
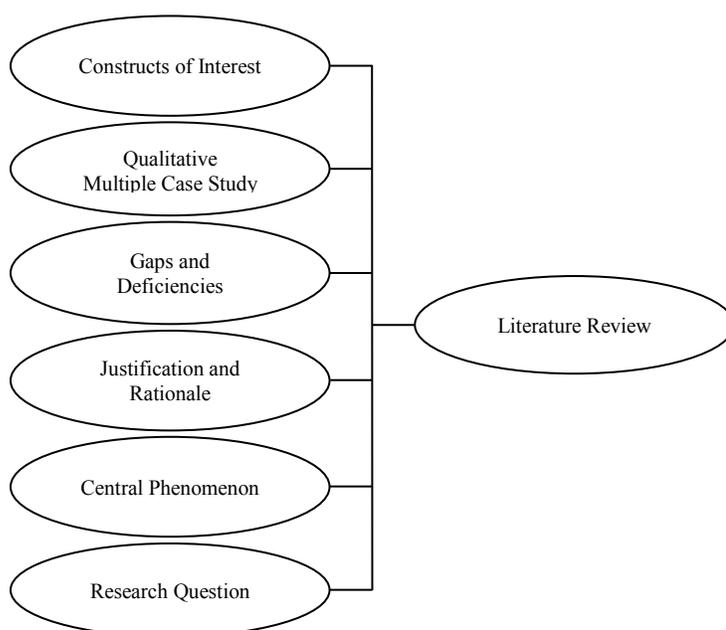
Figure 3. Components of the literature review. Articles included components associated with the constructs of interest in the study, qualitative method and multiple case study design, and gaps and deficiencies in the body of knowledge related to gender bias. The justification and rationale, central phenomenon, and research question concluded the literature review.

Constructs of Interest

In this subsection, I discuss the constructs of interest using concepts: gender bias,

leadership, and identity. Emerging themes and patterns identified from studies informed

components of the literature review. I positioned my study to fit in the body of

knowledge related to gender bias because of logical connections between the constructs

of interest, method, design, and data sources. Data sources included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards.

Gender bias. Gender is a generalizable construct that my study results could inform leadership research on women on corporate boards worldwide. Gender includes the attributes or traits associated with a sex (Crites, Dickson, & Lorenz, 2015). Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Gender bias toward women could affect their behaviors and leadership development. Some women experience criticism because they display behaviors that contradict gender role stereotypes, such as board chair, risking failure in leadership positions (Vinkenburg et al., 2014). Women's exclusion from corporate boards could involve multiple forms of gender bias based on sex includes bias against men by women as well as bias against women by men.

Gregory, Jeanes, Tharyan, and Tonks (2013) noted gender bias in attitudes and behaviors toward women prevent their progression to senior positions in an organization. Gregory et al. (2013) analyzed secondary data from the London Stock Exchange regarding listed UK companies' performance and profiles of women on their boards. Gregory et al. (2013) used a quantitative research design to examine the effect of the market on the announcement of women appointed to corporate boards.

Gregory et al. (2013) indicated board announcements was gender bias, an unconscious prejudice that posed a risk for organizations. Results of the study had demonstrated announcements of women on corporate boards occurred when market

trading was less favorable (Gregory et al., 2013). Trading markets became more favorable in the long-term or within 10 days after an announcement (Gregory et al., 2013). Short-term results were less conclusive than long-term results after appointing women to serve on a corporate board (Gregory et al., 2013). Gregory et al. (2013) noted practical implications of the study was reporting discriminatory practices and behaviors in the boardroom toward women to destabilize gender role stereotypes. Market fluctuations based on a woman's appointment to corporate boards was gender bias.

A woman's appointment to serve on a corporate board has far-reaching implications for women, boards, and organizations. Hafsi and Turgut (2013) conducted a quantitative study on boardroom diversity and corporate social performance. A sample of 95 companies listed on the 2005 S&P500 Index obtained from four databases with company and industry-related information: IRRC Directors, Board Analyst, Compustat, and KLD, was suitable for cross-sectional analysis. Hafsi and Turgut (2013) examined the diversity of corporate boards as a balanced mix of gender and age of board members using a theoretical lens of agency theory and the resource dependence theory. Hafsi and Turgut (2013) explained agency theory associated with the diversity of boards, while resource dependence theory associated with the diversity in boards.

Board members bring values to an organization that could be incongruent to their physical profile. The study results indicated gender and age of board members positively affected corporate social performance (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). An individual's influence as a board member contributed to sensitivities of board issues, such as his or her connections to stakeholders and access to information that could benefit an organization

(Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). Board members' resourcefulness and influence contributed significantly in strategic decision-making because of diversity in gender and age (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). Hafsi and Turgut (2013) indicated an organization could perceive the value of an individual to differentiate him or her based on the value conveyed on a corporate board from other individuals.

Some women may not realize the extent of their role on stakeholders. Choudhury (2014) conducted a study to conceptualize the underrepresentation of women from equality and economic perspective and used strategic management theory to rationalize a focus on board effectiveness based on demographics for effective leadership. Choudhury (2014) asserted an equality rationale to justify gender diversity, and that a diverse society was to have an equal distribution of power and resources, participation, and influence between men and women. The economic rationale was to increase the number of women on corporate boards, but gender quotas had failed to achieve gender parity on boards and with organizations as a result of lack of interest to prioritize gender diversity (Choudhury, 2014).

Gender bias embedded in culture is a reason to explore why fewer women than men are on corporate boards. Choudhury (2014) conducted a research study for increasing the presence of women on corporate boards and contributions they make in decision-making. Choudhury (2014) developed a model for effective boards based on task performance and the ability for cohesive teamwork of board members, which includes effort, cognitive conflict, knowledge, and skills. Choudhury (2014) concluded that an alternative to gender quotas was increasing the demand for women and supply of

women waiting for board appointments. Choudhury (2014) recommended creating a database of qualified women, improving support systems by offering flexible working conditions, and time for family commitments to create more opportunities.

Leadership diversity could have a positive effect on organizational success. Gender diversity can minimize ethical myopia of homogeneous boards with the inclusion of women to provide a competitive advantage to decision-making (Fredricks, Tilley, & Pauknerová, 2014). In a quantitative study, Fredricks et al. (2014) explored the influence of gender and culture and the perceptions of societal ethics of decision-making on corporate boards. Fredricks et al. (2014) conducted a survey with experiential-based questions for 568 undergraduate business students in the U.S. and New Zealand's future leader's program.

Gender bias is a social factor that women could bring to corporate boards. Fredricks et al. (2014) compared the study results to test Hofstede's dimensions of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation indicating women added competitive advantage to decision-making and a valid reason to include them on corporate boards. Women have a socialized caring tendency, such as they prioritize relationships, seek social acceptance, and make ethical choices (Fredricks et al., 2014). In contrast, men have socialized tendency to value success, lack loyalty to an organization, and make unethical decisions (Fredricks et al., 2014). Men and women can influence behaviors and respect from others but face ethical dilemmas such as cultural stereotyping (Fredricks et al., 2014). Fredricks et al. identified a weakness in the survey method of questions in the scenarios that women interpreted differently because of

their differing views from men.

Some organizational leaders look at women in leadership positions with children differently. Smith (2014) conducted a study to conceptualize the noncompliance of organizations to legislation related to women and individuals with families. Regulations and practice had promoted discrimination against women with families such as to widen the gap in compensation (Smith, 2014). Discrimination toward women with families directly related to assumptions associated with gender stereotypes, such as not promoting women with children (Smith, 2014). Smith (2014) contended that indirect discrimination based on structural obstacles in workplaces included the exclusion of women with families from job postings.

Gender bias could influence change at the organizational level. Smith (2014) indicated an increase in organizational commitment to gender equality and family integration required an understanding of practices that support discrimination and developing alternative practices to prevent marginalization of women with children in the workplace. Smith (2014) concluded the study indicating a widespread regulatory failure to address gender equality effectively. Organizational leaders who integrated work and life commitments into their social and cultural structures are leaders in removing barriers for women by building their capacity and motivation to leadership positions (Smith, 2014). Smith referred to emerging positive language and shift in thinking within organizations to remove direct and indirect discrimination toward women and women with families.

Some organizational leaders use globalization as a strategy for survival. Bastida

and Moscoso (2015) conducted a quantitative study of the practice and legality of excluding women from international assignments that can help them to acquire skills necessary for advancement to senior management using European Union law. In a global context, Bastida and Moscoso (2015) contended that women lacked international experience and coined the term *steel barrier* to describe the social and cultural bias women experienced in the field.

Bastida and Moscoso (2015) surveyed 454 participants on international assignments by e-mail. Results of the study indicated barriers women experienced: selection processes, lack of interest in expatriation, physical safety, and risks of traveling to underdeveloped countries, rejection by foreigners, isolation, and loneliness related to gender bias (Bastida & Moscoso, 2015). Personal and family concerns were factors that denied women any expatriation assignments and effectiveness while on assignment (Bastida & Moscoso, 2015). A woman's exclusion from international assignments could lack the support of other women, board, and organization.

Gender bias embedded in an organization include an organizational bias toward women in support of traditional role stereotyping on international destinations that limited progress of women to positions of inferiority compared to men (Bastida & Moscoso, 2015). Women lack access to management in multinational organizations that promote inequality and discrimination in structure (Bastida & Moscoso, 2015). Bastida and Moscoso (2015) noted the European Union laws promote equality, enforce compliance, and include women on international assignments.

Some women on corporate boards could be a positive social change in an

organization because of their empowerment. Cook and Glass (2015) conducted a quantitative study to examine board compositions in U.S. Fortune 500 firms during 2001 to 2010 regarding the advancement of women CEOs and organizational performance. Cook and Glass (2015) used a Cox hazard model to perform statistical analysis with time and fixed effects on these variables.

Gender bias exists in personal experiences of women in leadership positions. Cook and Glass (2015) acknowledged the study results indicated a woman's access to CEO positions was dependent on the diversity of a board and presence of at least one influential woman on the board to create upward mobility of these women. Cook and Glass (2015) explained women on corporate boards who are influential evade the challenges associated with gender bias. Cook and Glass (2015) indicated the application of the study findings could involve women building powerful networks, developing confidence in their abilities, and organizational leaders facilitating advancement of women in leadership positions. Empowered women could create a behavioral change in organizations and society of gender bias toward women in leadership roles to help other women advance in the boardroom and leadership positions.

Women in leadership positions could be a stereotype threat. Von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, and McFarlane (2015) conducted a quantitative study on stereotype threat. The sample consisted of 512 women in leadership positions from banking and financial organizations in Australia (von Hippel et al., 2015). Participants had access to an online survey through professional development and networking organizations (von Hippel et al., 2015).

Gender bias could have negative consequences on women that influence their role on a corporate board. Von Hippel et al. (2015) indicated the survey results that women in leadership positions experienced stereotype threats that reduced their well-being in the workplace. Some women in leadership positions felt disengaged as females in their work and as mentors to other women (von Hippel et al., 2015). Some women had a conflict with their identity separation as a stereotype threat and experienced depression, negative attitudes on the job, and urgency to resign from their jobs (von Hippel et al., 2015). Personal and social identities in conflict could affect a woman's well-being.

Negative consequences of gender bias described by von Hippel et al. (2015) are psychological factors that affect women in leadership positions, such as tokenism, stereotyping, and devaluation of their worth. Von Hippel et al. (2015) supported celebrations for successful women role models in leadership not related to stereotypical roles such as human resources, but in the banking and financial sector to lessen the threat of gender stereotyping. The study results indicated stereotype threats on women in leadership positions in male-dominated industries affect their well-being.

A focus on women excludes men from balanced research. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) conducted a study of women in leadership at academic and religious organizations located in mid-Atlantic, U.S. The authors used critical human resource development theory to discuss reasons why men used sexism to disadvantage women and create gender inequality in the workplace. The qualitative research included face-to-face interviews with 38 participants for cross-sector analysis (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Results of the study indicated adversity of women was similar to experiences of leaders

in the upper echelons of organizations at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) identified 27 gender-based leadership barriers that controlled women's voices, male organizational culture, constraints to women's choices, gender unconsciousness, and harassment of women.

Gender bias could create awareness for change in the boardroom. As Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) explained, the practical application of their study was the dissemination of the study results to create awareness and improve organizational environments for women in leadership positions. The limitations of the study were experiences of women in leadership within academic and religious organizations (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) recommended future researchers include other industries such as businesses and experiences of male leaders to compare study results.

Women could suffer financial loss as a result of gender bias. Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) conducted a study to conceptualize lack of flexibility in the workplace that supports the devaluation of women's roles while caring for children, family, and working. Some women suffer the consequences of lost income, missed promotion opportunities, and increased conflict in raising their family while working (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) indicated gender pay gap between men and women in leadership positions identified married men with children received higher pay and more opportunities for promotion than the equivalent level for women.

Gender bias could be intentional to allow women to fail in leadership positions. Some women received promotions to leadership positions when risk of organizational failure was high (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Glass cliff exists when organizational

leaders placed women in traumatic situations not favorable to men because of the belief women were more effective agents of organizational change than men due to women's healing capabilities (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Direct and indirect discrimination in industry, such as engineering, gender bias exists in sexual harassment and ostracism to silence women, encourage them to leave the workforce and face consequences of loss of income (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) emphasized the significance of their paper was the conceptual framework developed to represent gendered forces acting to reduce capital accumulation among women.

A gendered organization could become a reality inferred by Hoyt and Murphy (2016) who conducted a literature review to explore the phenomena of gender stereotype threats, women, and leadership. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) indicated that as more women entered the boardroom, gender differences became less evident. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) explored the concept of gender stereotype threats toward women in leadership positions as situationally induced to harm the performance of stigmatized individuals, devalue their social identities, cognitive, and social skills.

Gender bias could result in women coping as a victim or victor. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) discovered the consequences of stereotype threats were reactions or resilience by women in leadership positions. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) discovered the complexity of gender stereotyping against women in leadership roles provided opportunities to empower them from negative effects of a threat. These opportunities included advocating for minorities in the media, in male environments, and for women to overcome the possibility of threats at an individual level (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Some women use

self-help, role models for mentoring, and stereotypes in the work environment (Hoyt &

Murphy, 2016). Hoyt and Murphy (2016) alleged women who identified with their

gender and felt motivated to perform could experience the most negative effects of the

threat.

Gender bias could be unsafe for women in leadership roles because individuals

assume who and what they represent. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) concluded that

organizations should create identity-safe environments and present leadership tasks as

safe to minimize the gender stereotype threat toward women. Women's exclusion from

leadership fosters discrimination in organizational structures that stifles adaptability,

flexibility, and technical innovation within decentralized governance structures (Hoyt &

Murphy, 2016). Hoyt and Murphy (2016) supported gender neutrality to foster the growth

of gendered organizations in environments that were androgynous to leadership.

Gender bias toward women in the minority relates culturally to personal

experiences with race. Murray and Ali (2016) conducted a qualitative study on gender

diversity and exclusion of Muslim professional women from the United Kingdom and

Australia in the workforce using a conceptual lens of human agency theory and coping

theory to explore the coping strategies used by these women. Murray and Ali (2016)

received advice on the cultural sensitivity of the research from leaders of an Islam society

and received permission to contact women from a local Islamic agency.

A face-to-face, one-hour semistructured interview took place with each

participant (Murray & Ali, 2016). A sample of 20 participants included newly recruited

participants using snowball sampling (Murray & Ali, 2016). A participant information

sheet served to protect the privacy of individual participants. Murray and Ali (2016) explored how qualified Muslim professional women adapt, react, and reflect on discriminatory behaviors in the workplace.

Gender bias can affect the type of response women choose to take; for example, Murray and Ali (2016) contended that core properties underpinned the behavioral characteristics of coping was problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Women who viewed situations related to gender bias as challenging used problem-focused coping strategies: active coping, planning, and seeking social support (Murray & Ali, 2016). Women who viewed similar situations as threats used emotion-focused coping strategies: acceptance, turning to religion, denial, and behavioral and mental disengagement (Murray & Ali, 2016).

Gender bias could play a significant role for women to their advantage. Murray and Ali (2016) explained the study results indicated women actively managed and planned for stress-related events by using emotion-focused coping. This coping strategy gave women the support to manage and control the triple jeopardy of race-related ethnicity, work practices, and gender biases (Murray & Ali, 2016). These women preoccupied their everyday lives planning for stress.

Murray and Ali (2016) demonstrated the significance of the study through connections between human agency properties: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness with coping strategies used by the women. This situational context could be challenging for women actively engaged in coping with gender bias. How women in the minority assess the bias they experience, and context

could determine coping strategies they develop against gender bias.

A woman's appointment to leadership positions could be unsafe for women, boards, and organizations. Ryan et al. (2016) conducted a literature review of glass cliff, which refers to women appointed to leadership positions during times of organizational crisis and replaced when organizational performance declines. Ryan et al. (2016) found patterns of glass-cliff-related appointments of women from 1996 to 2000 to defuse scandals or crises on UK boards and similar results in U.S. Fortune 500 companies.

Gender bias could be a pathway to fail women in leadership positions. Ryan et al. (2016) discussed the results of a literature review indicating glass cliff referred to more than gender differences; it was complex and included women in the minority groups based on the number, their race, and ethnicity. Media scrutinized and portrayed women in leadership positions such as Fiorina, a former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, as a colossal failure (Ryan et al., 2016). They blamed women for negative outcomes during crises such as mergers (Ryan et al., 2016). Ryan et al. (2016) concluded men have preferential access to leadership than women do and that women appointed to leadership positions could hasten their failure in the workplace.

Some women waiting to advance in leadership positions could affect organizational performance. Schwab, Werbel, Hofmann, and Henriques (2016) conducted a quantitative study on the managerial gender diversity and firm performance of financial service organizations in Portugal. Schwab et al. (2016) used data from Portuguese's Ministry of Work and Social Solidarity, including human resource information of firms from 1985 to 2000.

Gender bias may not be inclusive of leadership; rather it transcends all levels of an organization. Schwab et al. (2016) indicated the study results on organizational performance was dependent on varying levels of managerial gender diversity from all-male cohorts that at least two women managers can weaken organizational performance. Group interactional dynamics between men and women were dependent on group composition (Schwab et al., 2016). Schwab et al. (2016) found managerial gender diversity improvement correlated with organizational performance increases and, at parity, organizational performance was less effective.

The presence of gender bias could vary in leadership and all levels of an organization. Schwab et al. (2016) explained that at different levels of managerial gender diversity, different theories become evident in some group dynamics. Tokenism and the isolation of women in leadership positions are distinguishable at the lower levels of managerial diversity (Schwab et al., 2016). Schwab et al. (2016) concluded the limitation of the study results was not replicable in other countries. Multiple theories were in play, which leads to no single theory to explain the complexity of gender bias toward women in leadership positions.

Men and women's orientation to change societal norms is complex. Seron, Silbey, Cech, and Rubineau (2016) conducted a qualitative study related to sex segregation in engineering transcends occupations, cultures, and professional socialization, which undermines women's confidence during their career development. Seron et al. (2016) followed cohorts in major engineering institutions in the United States for 4 years and collected students' experiences bimonthly from student diary notes and face-to-face

interviews.

Gender bias could be the basis of social factors embedded in the culture. Seron et al. (2016) discussed the study results on women's orientation: initiation rituals to work, teams, and socialization on jobs that were subject to cultural gender biases. Men and women's experiences in professional cultures differed with their interpretation of real-world problems (Seron et al., 2016). Men managed problems at face value, and women specified problems as a commitment to solve, to improve the quality of life, and to serve the public (Seron et al., 2016). Men tended to surmount challenges without eroding their confidence, and women sought the confirmation of their abilities from other individuals (Seron et al., 2016). Men thrived on teamwork and women experienced gender stereotyping such as organizing and managing teams while men performed the work (Seron et al., 2016). Men described workplace experience as fulfilling, whereas women discovered that the engineering profession was not for them (Seron et al., 2016). Men and women's differences were distinguishable from their reality in the workplace.

Gender bias promotes homogeneity in society through a historical lens. Seron et al. (2016) induced from the data the onset of sex segregation was throughout the history of professional socialization between men and women and embedded in a culture of discrimination and harassment toward women. These gendered patterns of departure were the reproduction of male-dominated professions in workplaces and exit of women from professions such as engineering (Seron et al., 2016). Seron et al. (2016) argued for reform to start in classrooms, education, professions, and organizations structural and cultural context to build confidence in women.

Leadership. Men and women have different leadership styles that could help determine the context for opportunities in leadership. The selection and promotion bias for men assumes their potential as leaders in contrast to women based on their performance (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Some women can self-select out of promotion to leadership positions because lack of confidence that reduces their value capital acquisition (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Forces that inhibit value capital creation in organizations against women start from early life experiences of gender roles and behaviors in male and female children, further compounded by social expectations, and gender behaviors of societal norms (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) indicated "double bind" refers to limits in behaviors that some women face when attempting to influence and engage a group toward a common goal because of gender and ethnicity.

Gender could inform leadership about board dynamics after introducing women as board members. Triana, Miller, and Trzebiatowski (2013) conducted a quantitative study to explore interacting dynamics of women on corporate boards as power differentiators, board gender diversity, organizational performance, and strategic change. Triana et al. (2013) used a sample of 462 publicly traded Fortune 500 organizations listed in Compustat from 2002 and 2004. Triana et al. (2013) chose hierarchical linear regression statistical technique to test hypotheses related to interactional dynamics.

Gender could be synonymous with leadership change when women are nonthreatening to board leaders. Triana et al. (2013) indicated the study results that no significant correlation exists between board gender diversity, the power of women on

corporate boards, and strategic change. The underlying theoretical implication discovered power and gender occurred when women have the power to influence strategic change on corporate boards (Triana et al., 2013). The condition holds true for women who have power when threats to organizational performance were low (Triana et al., 2013). These women had increased power when threats to organizational performance were low and strategic change was high (Triana et al., 2013). Triana et al. asserted the converse was also true: when the threat was high, the power of women on corporate boards and strategic change was low.

Leadership could associate the health of an organization with the appointment of women board members. Triana et al. (2013) recommended practical applications of the study results was delay appointing women to corporate boards if an organization was vulnerable to risk. The action contradicts acting out glass cliff (Triana et al., 2013). Triana et al. (2013) discussed future researchers exploring the timing of a woman's appointment in her career, her power level, and the threat to organizations at the time of her appointment.

Some women in leadership could use empowerment to realize their potential in boardrooms. Schuh et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative study that included four sub-studies to provide insights into power links with leadership: power motivation differences in men and women using the social, structural, and evolutionary lens, and power motivation that improves through role modeling and training. Schuh et al. (2014) used the theoretical lens of motivational theory to examine changes in women's leadership roles that did not transfer power motivation to a new leadership role, as it did for men. Schuh

et al. (2014) conducted four studies in Germany using a cross-sectional group of participants that sampled 125 business students for Studies 1 and 2 and 382 employees recruited using online portals for Studies 3 and 4.

Leadership and power differentials experienced by women could be motivational for them than for men. Schuh et al. (2014) facilitated students completing Hossiep and Paschen's Business Focused Inventory of Personality instrument on work-relevant personality factors to receive real-time feedback on the study results. Confirmatory factor analysis was suitable for hypothesis testing. Schuh et al. (2014) indicated the study results of the four studies provided converging support for the hypotheses, women reported less power motivation than men did, and the connection between gender and leadership role occupancy.

Leadership studies have common issues that Schuh et al. (2014) indicated were limitations of the study, such as small sample size and cross-sectional design were common in leadership studies. The instrument used was common to previous research (Schuh et al., 2014). A comparative study in countries where gender equality differed from Germany could produce varying study results (Schuh et al., 2014). Schuh et al. (2014) recommended practical applications of the study was to find ways to balance gender distribution in leadership positions that enabled power motivation in women in leadership positions. The empowerment of women was the central theme of the study that relied on actions of organizational leaders to develop interventions (Schuh et al., 2014).

An organization's dependence on the change in the boardroom could be missing the perspectives of board members. Brown (2015) conducted a study related to the

concept of demythification to explain board dynamics caused lack of diversity and exclusion of women on corporate boards. Brown (2015) considered the Enron scandal and financial crisis in 2008 as pivotal points for board reform. Brown (2015) supported exploring sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns of board members and board dynamics.

The board members of an organization that represents leadership include stakeholders and special interest groups. Brown (2015) discussed board reforms included audits, compensation reviews, the role of nomination committees, and limited membership to independent directors to manage and control behaviors of board members based on their unreliability affected board dynamics. Board homogeneity increases had excluded minorities and women from selection processes of board members, although suitable and qualified candidates can serve on corporate boards (Brown, 2015). Board members included individuals who supported management and had personal and business connections to management (Brown, 2015). Brown (2015) contended social connections could undermine board performance, contribute to lucrative compensation packages for CEOs, and reduce the risk of appropriate interventions while increasing risk of fraud in an organization.

Board governance, the unique skill of leadership, should not involve management of an organization. Brown (2015) described board members having personal connections for board cohesion and communications; however, these behaviors did not benefit organizations in strategic decision-making and planning because of deficiencies in skills of existing board members. Brown (2015) explored functions of boards and concluded

that boards of public organizations do not perform an advisory role but have a better level of accountability for the diversity of boards than in private sector organizations. Boards provide legal oversight, establish boundaries, and intervene with management, but only in the interest of represented shareholders (Brown, 2015). Brown (2015) recommended exploring board dynamics from the viewpoint of relationships between board members and risks to an organization.

Boards are dependent on members of boards not fail in their accountability to shareholders. Hambrick, Misangyi, and Park (2015) conducted a study to explore the research question, "Why do boards fail so often?" The study involved modeling the qualities of board member's independence, expertise, bandwidth, and motivation to qualities of a board. Hambrick et al. (2015) noted one qualified board member is predictive of board efficacy and two or more qualified board members can minimize board governance failures.

Leadership has differing viewpoints as discovered by Hambrick et al. (2015) who explored several theoretical perspectives, such as predictive theory in research design, to develop a predictive model for board sufficiency. The purpose of the theoretical framework using agency theory was to integrate governance theory, resource dependence theory, and classic theory for board members effectiveness (Hambrick et al., 2015). Hambrick et al. (2015) induced a viewpoint that minorities who can influence actions of one board member can play a powerful role in challenging and changing norms of a group. Hambrick et al. (2015) conceded that members of a minority group tended to keep their opinions or ideas private out of a concern for group consensus and time

considerations.

Hambrick et al. (2015) indicated that board dynamics improved when a board member who was in the minority can vocalize well-reasoned and emphatic concerns to create interest and debate in the boardroom. Hambrick et al. (2015) concluded that other board members should revisit their thinking if initiating minority board members are consistent, confident, and committed in judgments of their experiences in the boardroom. Board members in the minority can stand up for themselves.

Board dynamics could be effective during group interactions of board members. Pugliese, Nicholson, and Bezemer (2015) conducted a case study to examine board dynamics by videotaping board meetings of two Australian corporations. In addition to videotaping meetings, the researchers conducted observations and interviews. Pugliese et al. (2015) sought to answer three research questions that covered interactions of board members in meetings, patterns and sources of variations in interactions, and interactional patterns that differ between board members based on their perceptions of board effectiveness.

Leadership was complex and affected board dynamics that Pugliese et al. (2015) discovered in the study results, which revealed board member interactions were multidimensional, dynamic group interactions were similar, and board member's inclusion was board effectiveness in the boardroom. Board member interactions would change according to agenda items, board climate, and board meeting arrangements (Pugliese et al., 2015). In a boardroom, interactions exist at three dimensions: speaking time, turn taking, and silence (Pugliese et al., 2015). Pugliese et al. (2015) concluded

board effectiveness depended on group interactions and board members' effectiveness in board dynamics.

Women in the minority could be subject to prejudice by other individuals. Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) conducted a study to explore origins of empathy and roles of women from biological and societal perspectives compared to men. Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) noted empathic nature of women was preferable to leadership in intraorganizational crisis, whereas men were preferable for leadership roles in interorganizational crisis. Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) used the theoretical framework of evolutionary psychology to explain the glass cliff phenomenon that women experience in the boardroom.

Leadership theory was situational that Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) discovered in the theoretical framework of evolutionary psychology: reciprocal altruism, parental investment, and social role, dual-inheritance, and approach-inhibition theories. The researchers explored these theories to model human interactions as a source of gender bias toward disadvantaged women in leadership positions based on gender and as members of a minority group (Vongas & Al Hajj, 2015). Women will knowingly perpetuate sex stereotypes when set up to fail (Vongas & Al Hajj, 2015). Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) noted the behavior women exhibited in high-powered struggles versus being disadvantaged in general.

Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) recommended future researchers consider: emotional traits and abilities of leaders, source of gender bias, evolution, and societal context in exploring the coping strategies women use in their response to gender bias they experience in the boardroom. Discriminatory behaviors against minority groups can

result in shorter tenure on boards because of a woman's well-being, such as experiencing stress and harassment against women, which are areas for future research (Vongas & Al Hajj, 2015). Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) concluded the implications for theory is to learn more about the glass cliff and explore women's appointment to a glass cliff position.

In Bierema's (2016) study, the author indicated to challenge traditional and masculine views of leadership. The focus of the study was developing women in leadership positions. In this study, Bierema's findings indicated that women's development as leaders was women's responsibility. Bierema (2016) `explored the demographic status of women, women and leadership theory, and challenges women in leadership positions experienced, provided recommendations by informing how women in leadership positions attained acceptance, and access opportunities in the boardroom. Bierema (2016) articulated limitations of women in leadership positions based on implicit bias, inadequate learning and development strategies, and cultures that were resilient to change created organizations better suited for women in leadership positions.

Bierema (2016) leadership skills development refers to effective leadership irrespective of gender and demonstrable behaviors such as listening to and energizing employees, articulating a vision, and inspiring others to follow the leader. Bierema (2016) noted that shifts in an individual's mindset could focus on effective leadership and support of women in leadership positions. Women are to learn and apply skills to become effective in their leadership roles themselves.

Women in leadership positions may be likable to other individuals they encounter and lead. However, individuals who like a woman personally may not respect the

individual and position of authority the woman holds. Vial et al. (2016) in their research, conceptualized women in leadership positions self-reinforced an imposter role. An imposter role can occur when an individual's intelligence is critical to success in the role such as a medical resident (Hutchins & Rainbolt, 2017). Vial et al. (2016) noted that effects of attaining a leadership role could lead to status acknowledgments, the perception of power differentials, gender stereotyping of leaders, and the extent to which subordinates supported leaders can determine the legitimacy of a leader.

Leadership could affect an individual's well-being to change individual behaviors. Vial et al. (2016) indicated the study results demonstrated leaders could develop a state of mind that can lead to aggressive or tentative behaviors in themselves. These behaviors can influence or not influence an individual's status and perception of power decreases or increases the legitimacy of a leader (Vial et al., 2016).

Vial et al. (2016) explained that gender stereotyping makes the finding difficult for women in leadership positions than male leaders because male leaders tend to gain respect and admiration from subordinates as a result of gender. Leadership appointments were uncertain for some women, noted by Vial et al. (2016) that unless women in leadership positions can legitimize their role, relative illegitimacy could result in a variety of consequences, such as negative subordinate behaviors, and reduced cooperation toward women in leadership positions. Vial et al. (2016) concluded these women could develop a precarious mindset triggered by negative responses toward subordinates and reinforce negative expectations of female leaders to undermine their authority in self-reinforcing cycles of illegitimacy.

Identity. Social identity theory provides the theoretical connection between concepts of identity and gender diversity. De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) conducted a detailed literature review of women on corporate boards represented their image. De Anca and Gabaldon used theoretical frameworks of social identity theory, stakeholder theory, and the signaling theory to explore women entering and staying on boards, self-promotion, and visibility using media to their advantage. De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) discovered issues pertained to women not perceived as typical female directors: young, with a higher level of education, and married to challenge corporate images and media acceptance. De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) proposed a theoretical model of women on corporate boards and their images the authors claimed reduced gender biases in the workplace of governments, boards, organizations, and media. The model has two pathways the first, is a discourse of women themselves to create a public image through media for self-promotion (De Anca & Gabaldon, 2014). Second, is a deconstruct of media's shared perception of female directors added to a homogenous image of a corporate board that depicts a range of talent, variety of females, and roles within a board (De Anca & Gabaldon, 2014).

Future research includes media's influence on women's identity in leadership positions. De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) inferred women on corporate boards, quotas, and glass ceiling barriers are areas to explore the role of media that addresses gaps in the body of knowledge related to gender bias. The role of media's portrayal of women on corporate boards enabled heightened attention of the selection biases toward male board members (De Anca & Gabaldon, 2014). A role media assumed of women was

stereotypical extensions of an all-male board (De Anca & Gabaldon, 2014). De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) shared media questioned and challenged women on corporate boards about their competence and likeability but not for men.

Social influence based on the identity of women leaders add value for women seeking leadership positions. De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) discussed access to boards based on a woman's image using the theoretical framework of social identity theory. According to social identity theory: gender, race, class, and occupation are characteristics that determine an individual's in-group status (De Anca & Gabaldon, 2014). De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) considered the stakeholder theory as a means for a woman to access board members. Women who bring value as stakeholders to boards improve organizational performance through connections to other stakeholders (De Anca & Gabaldon, 2014). De Anca and Gabaldon (2014) explained media's importance in signaling the value of women on corporate boards in contrast to perceived roles of women helping or hindering an organization.

Some women's career experiences with gender bias could determine the impression they portray to individuals. Vinkenburg et al. (2014) conducted a study to explore women's leadership development based on career transitions throughout their profession. Vinkenburg et al. (2014) emphasized women's human capital and reputation helps determine their admission to leadership positions. Women's social identity can influence decision-making, social capital, cultural capital, impression management, self-monitoring, and discriminative ability (Vinkenburg et al., 2014). Women who perceived they had a deficit in these areas can find impression management a useful coping strategy

against gender bias (Vinkenburg et al., 2014). Vinkenburg et al. (2014) inferred impression management was the effort women use on other individuals to like them, appear competent, and exceed performance expectations in their roles.

Women on corporate boards could give the impression of power, status, and legitimacy. Some women could develop coping strategies based on gender bias to influence other individuals' perceptions of them as they transition and perform leadership roles (Goffman, 1959). Some women on corporate boards could master social, political, and interpersonal skills for success in their roles (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) indicated the social identities of women could influence decision-making in the boardroom based on their in-group or out-group memberships.

Group socialization could exclude women from membership. Zhu, Wei, and Hillman (2014) conducted a quantitative study to explore recategorization theory to support the inclusion of new members to a corporate board if they were demographically different based on other similar and shared demographic characteristics. Zhu et al. (2014) hypothesized the implications for women and ethnic minority board members of perceived similarities and differences could result in members of these groups feeling uncomfortable, having a shorter tenure on boards, not becoming a member of board committees, or not chairing a board committee. Zhu et al. (2014) sampled 472 public companies listed on Fortune 500 from 1994 to 2006.

Board membership could affect women's identity because of gender bias toward women in leadership positions. Zhu et al. (2014) explained bias in evaluations of minority members of corporate boards to bias leadership and decision-making.

Interpersonal communications or impression management can minimize biases if minority board members develop skills to shift the focus away from their differing demographics with other members in a boardroom (Zhu et al., 2014). Zhu et al. (2014) noted practical applications of the study was exploring how social categorization and recategorization influence board dynamics.

Some women on corporate boards could have similar career backgrounds. Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) conducted a quantitative study to explore human capital: age, education, professional experience, and professional networks as primary contributors to appointments of women to a corporate board. Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) sampled 494 board members of U.S. public companies listed on S&P 500 index from 2005 and 2010.

Group associations could relate to special interest groups based on identities of women in leadership positions. Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) identified in the study results women's association with government and education rather than age and network connections predicted board memberships in comparison to men (Hodigere & Bilimoria, 2015). Gender was a causal factor that had an impact on women's appointments, not board dependent, and receptiveness of women as board members in an organization (Hodigere & Bilimoria, 2015). These findings supported discriminatory practices in board appointments based on gender bias.

Group membership could be exclusive for men than women based on women's identity in leadership positions. Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) emphasized women on corporate board's professions play a more significant part than men's professions. Some

women's group membership determines their appointment to corporate boards (Hodigere & Bilimoria, 2015). In contrast, board appointments of men related to their human capital and professional network characteristics (Hodigere & Bilimoria, 2015). Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) recommended growing the number of women advancing to corporate boards in nonprofit, public, and government organizations an area for future research. Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) claimed women on corporate boards share commonalities in their advancement to the boardroom.

Some interests of board members could change board dynamics. Veltrop et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study with 318 Dutch pension fund board member delegates representing special interest groups that disrupt board performance. The researchers hypothesized the basis of these disturbances could activate fault lines to enable social categorization among board members (Veltrop et al., 2015). Demographic similarities and differences between board members can distinguish similar in-group members and different out-group members (Veltrop et al., 2015). A theoretical lens of social categorization theory supports observable characteristics of board members to classify their associated interests.

In-group membership's practice of board reflexivity has a moderating role on factional demographic fault lines and fault line activation to improve board performance (Veltrop et al., 2015). Board members can prevent factional demographic fault lines from creating social categorization within boards by reflecting on board processes (Veltrop et al., 2015). Board reflexivity of active reflecting by board members on functions could create alternative processes to the stop activation of fault lines.

Identity can influence disruptive board dynamics based on disruptive behaviors of board members. Veltrop et al.'s (2015) study results indicated the practice of reflexivity by board members communicated: group objectives, strategies, and processes adapted to internal and external pressures that involved behavioral changes by board members. Factional demographic fault lines were disruptive to board dynamics, with appropriate interventions can reduce the effects on board performance (Veltrop et al., 2015). Veltrop et al. (2015) recommended board members engage in reflexivity using active questioning, debating, exploring, and analysis of events.

Some women may be perpetrators of gender bias. In a study, Derks, Van Laar, and Ellemers (2016) indicated the queen bee phenomenon was women who self-present male characteristics, physically and psychologically separate themselves from other women, and endorse and legitimize gender hierarchy. The queen bee phenomenon occurs in response to social identity threat felt by women on corporate boards of other women (Derks et al., 2016). The phenomenon is women's response to coping while working in male-dominant organizations (Derks et al., 2016). Derks et al. (2016) contended women on corporate boards attempt to distance themselves from other women was addressing the social identity threat they experienced, which was incongruent to gender role stereotypes of women being nurturers.

The identity of women in leadership positions' plays a role in the organizational hierarchy. Derks et al. (2016) explained male dominance and inequality in several groups had consequences such as to preserve power. For junior women, limited growth opportunities and lack of female role models was a result of gender bias (Derks et al.,

2016). In an organization, the queen bee phenomenon could limit opportunities for gender diversity, such as diverse perspectives in decision-making can create a negative climate against diversity (Derks et al., 2016). For gender hierarchy, the perception of gender inequality was a consequence of women's behaviors that fit the stereotypical role of women's hostility toward each other (Derks et al., 2016). Seeing other women as threats and not as collaborators contrasts how men view other men.

Women in leadership positions' identity and role can limit social identity threats Derks et al. (2016) inferred based on consequences of gender bias. By instigating social change, such as to use interventions can address organizational behaviors against bias (Derks et al., 2016). Derks et al. (2016) proposed making women aware of implicit gender bias and their contribution to gender discrimination. A social change within women, an internal transformation, could reduce the effects of bias toward them.

Women's awareness of themselves could benefit from changes in their perspectives related to gender bias. The concept of identity underlies diversity-management-related research (Holck et al., 2016). Holck et al. (2016) conducted a systematic literature review based on identity and diversity, and explored the sense of self, such as who are you? Holck et al. (2016) framed responses to gender, job, or metaphor to explore the concept of identity.

The identity of women in the boardroom is a reason to develop business cases for managerial discourse on the value of diversity to improve organizational performance (Holck et al., 2016). A critical perspective on diversity is a social injustice of minorities and less privileged (Holck et al., 2016). Holck et al. (2016) indicated the literature review

demonstrated an awareness of women's experiences could enable political motive to act on structural barriers to create possibilities for positive social change.

An organization's attitude toward women in leadership roles could change because of awareness of gender bias. Kemp (2016) conducted a literature review of 70 articles to explore gender equality and inequality in organizations. Kemp (2016) used NVivo to perform context analysis of literature. Results of the study indicated equality and inequality were emerging themes in organizations related to gender or genderless imagery of women (Kemp, 2016). Kemp (2016) identified themes aligned with values, similarities and differences in values, and differences in subthemes of femicide were injustices against women.

Identity and a woman's impression of herself could overextend her influence and create trouble with a board chair. Kemp (2016) recommended women who had roles in leadership to rethink organizational frameworks into the modern era. Kemp (2016) provided new metaphors for organizations to image real women in leadership positions. As women became visible in leadership roles, their presence could be normal rather than the exception on a corporate board.

Some women could assume the leadership of groups if they are extraverts. Lemoine, Aggarwal, and Steed (2016) conducted a quantitative study of two sub-studies on relationships between gender and leadership of women leaders. The researchers used the theoretical lens of social role theory and social identity model of leadership to examine two constructs. Lemoine et al. (2016) used two sample populations in different areas of the U.S. for the main study.

Lemoine et al. (2016) conducted two studies. In the first study, the researchers sampled 498 master's of business administration students in the northeastern United States assigned to 121 groups of varying numbers of males and females in groups of four to five students (Lemoine et al., 2016). Participants completed gender and personality questionnaires followed a month later by leader emergence questionnaire (Lemoine et al., 2016). In the second study, the sample of 484 undergraduate university students in the southeastern United States was 115 short-term class groups (Lemoine et al., 2016). Groups included gender diversity they completed gender and extraversion questionnaire and emergent leadership in-class surveys (Lemoine et al., 2016). Lemoine et al. (2016) collated the study results.

Lemoine et al. (2016) shared the study results on board dynamics of groups with high extraversion were male dominant, and women emerged as leaders. Group extraversion was an important factor how groups formed leadership prototypes (Lemoine et al., 2016). Women who emerged as leaders were sociable, communal, and engaged in-group settings of leadership (Lemoine et al., 2016). Women could change leadership culture in organizations because of their nurturing behavior.

Qualitative Multiple Case Study

The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. I used semistructured interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological

triangulation to answer the research question. Social identity theory and the role congruity theory of prejudice used within a qualitative descriptive multiple case study design provided a connection between experiences that women had with gender bias and coping strategies they developed to be effective on corporate boards.

Research on gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias could be challenging to execute because of complexity. In a study, Mensi-Klarbach (2014) provided a conceptual framework to conduct research related to gender in top management teams. The framework included four layers of gender moderators: societal, organizational, group, and individual processes toward gender (Mensi-Klarbach, 2014). Mensi-Klarbach explained that these factors related to an organizational and societal context for discussions related to gender and diversity.

A qualitative method could be complex and include multiple layers of concepts. Mensi-Klarbach (2014) introduced several concepts derived from a meta-analysis of literature related to gender bias, found a multilayered framework to explain why diversity was not working and explained gender diversity was subject to gender bias of leadership in organizations. An overview of the framework includes concepts and areas that would positively contribute to organizational outcomes (Mensi-Klarbach, 2014). The first layer was individual characteristics that included ownership networks, values, job experiences, and intersectionality (Mensi-Klarbach, 2014). The second layer was top management teams that included power relations and managerial discretion (Mensi-Klarbach, 2014). The third layer was an organization that included steepness of hierarchy, patterns, and degree of segregation, and understanding of diversity (Mensi-Klarbach, 2014). Mensi-

Klarbach concluded the fourth layer was a society that included reporting on gender, norms of good management, and horizontal and vertical segregation.

Mensi-Klarbach (2014) declared the four layers were challenging to include in research design. An integrated view of diversity in organizations and top management teams can lead to better organizational outcomes and conclusive research results (Mensi-Klarbach, 2014). A holistic view of gender and gender diversity was relevant but did not explain why subgroups in management relate to sex categories more than another demographic characteristic such as age.

A case study design was relevant to my study because of the benefits of cross-case analysis. Tsang (2014) conducted a literature review of case studies published in the *Academy of Management Journal* from 2008 to 2012. Areas of focus included three objectives: to define generalization and related concepts, provide evidence from the literature on generalizing from case study results, and discuss benefits of case study versus quantitative methods (Tsang, 2014). A case study researcher should use four criteria to assess the rigor used in research when planning case studies: generalizability, internal validity, construct validity, and reliability (Tsang, 2014). Tsang discussed an ongoing debate about lack of generalizability of case study methods.

In case study design, Tsang (2014) indicated the study results of generalization was interchangeable with external validity and involved inferring from observed instances, such as case settings to general statements. A data analysis method and pattern matching in case studies were equivalent to empirical generalization such as statistical generalization in quantitative studies (Tsang, 2014). Tsang (2014) noted a benefit of case

studies was conducting a comparative analysis using a multiple case study design that supports cross-case and cross-sectional studies and provide generalization to theory.

A qualitative case study could use several data collection and analysis methods. Seierstad et al. (2017) applied a processual design approach for a longitudinal country-comparative case study supported by the theoretical framework of institutional theory to explore the role of actors who determined policy and change decisions. Seierstad et al. (2017) analyzed primary and secondary data sources on national public policies to increase the number of women on corporate boards in four European countries using an adaptation of the political science framework.

Seierstad et al. (2017) conducted a multiple case study to include an approach of inquiry with several dynamic perspectives: media coverage, political documents, academic research, political debates, and legal. Qualitative data included participant observations, semistructured interviews, and text analysis (Seierstad et al., 2017). Seierstad's et al. (2017) categorized participants from 2000 to 2014 by roles in civil society, business and corporate, state and international interests to increase the number of women on corporate boards in various forums such as public debates.

A multiple case study included multiple cases and units of analysis. Seierstad et al. (2017) described the study results of differing roles and influences of actors, motivations, and interactions by country. Seierstad et al. (2017) methodologically collated data over a 14-year period in Norway, England, Germany, and Italy using a small subset of data presented to address the research questions. Seierstad et al. (2017) acknowledged the thick and rich data collected were suitable for use in future studies.

Seierstad et al. (2017) noted primary findings were actors' motivation, interactions, and influence differed significantly between countries.

A multiple case study design could enable various data displays. Seierstad et al. (2017) used visual displays of actor's interactions and motivations of each country in network analysis diagrams. The method could apply to other qualitative studies to help communicate findings instead of lengthy discussions (Seierstad et al., 2017). Seierstad et al. (2017) emphasized the uniqueness of the qualitative approach in their study but took a cursory perspective of the theoretical framework to shape approach of inquiry. Seierstad et al. (2017) removed confines of structure and looked at processes of actors beyond the confines of institutional theories in visual presentations.

A researcher using case study design could methodologically apply his or her data collection and analysis skills to increase rigor in a study. Chawla and Sharma (2016) conducted an exploratory multiple case study to identify barriers, enablers, and strategies to mitigate challenges that women in leadership experience in India. Chawla and Sharma (2016) used face-to-face interviews, audio recordings, and observations of eight participants.

Data analysis included manual thematic analysis and coding for data reduction. Chawla and Sharma (2016) manually color-coded emerging themes and subthemes in the data and discovered 22 major themes created from the interview data from eight women in leadership positions. Chawla and Sharma (2016) indicated the study results evidenced five categories: challenges, strategies, social, behavioral, and organizational facilitators inclusive of major themes impeding the progress of women in leadership positions.

Chawla and Sharma (2016) acknowledged cultural contexts of Indian society emerged in the study results, such as gender perceptions, spiritual or religious practices, family, control of emotions, and mentorship. Chawla and Sharma (2016) recommended the study become part of cross-cultural research on women in leadership positions in general. The table presentations helped to visualize the study results.

Gaps and Deficiencies in Prior Research

Researchers in gender literature identified opportunities, such as gaps in prior research. Other opportunities in gender literature are deficiencies in prior research. These opportunities combined are findings from the body of knowledge related to gender bias connected women and their experiences in the boardroom, compared study results across industry and countries, and explored other demographics, such as race could provide a complete analysis of organizational and societal bias.

Gaps. Terjesen et al. (2009) explored the body of knowledge related to gender bias to research an approach to study women on corporate boards, identify theory, characteristics, and effect on individuals, boards, firms, industries, and environments. Quantitative research was prevalent than qualitative methods used, based on available data (Terjesen et al., 2009). Terjesen et al. (2009) noted the approach to research included a focus on the underrepresentation of women using the feminist approach of inquiry.

Terjesen et al. (2009) reviewed 400 publications, and one in 10 articles addressed theoretical development, primarily in the human and social capital. Terjesen et al. (2009) indicated the research agenda of women on corporate boards renewed scholarship and lamented that gaps in theoretical deficiencies in fields of interest did not explain why

Norway's model to increase women's representation on corporate boards to 40% failed to improve organizational performance. Terjesen et al. (2009) explained gaps in literature demonstrated lack of scholarship in the field and researchers should take a positive perspective rather than a negative portrayal to explore why women on boards are successful.

Terjesen and Sealy (2016) reviewed 120 publications and consulted 50 scholars in the field while exploring gaps in the literature to uncover backgrounds of women on corporate boards. Terjesen and Sealy (2009) formulated questions to shape theoretical perspectives to research strategies based on responses to ethical tensions in the boardroom experienced by women on corporate boards. Terjesen and Sealy (2009) recommended using stakeholder theory to explore women's influence or women influenced by organizations, social identity theory to explore intra- and intergroup relations, dynamics of diversity between groups in the social environment, and social capital theory to explore individuals access resources through networks and connections.

An agenda for social change within women could use appropriate process and methodology for research. Social change creation provides a holistic lens of phenomena, offers solutions, explores advantages and disadvantages, and proposes ways to implement change to close gaps (Zeitoun, Osterloh, & Frey, 2014). Zeitoun et al. (2014) used demarchy, a methodology of ancient Athenians, to provide a novel approach that advances corporate governance by randomly selecting stakeholder representation on boards. Zeitoun et al. (2014) explored processes to implement and sustain demarchy in response to gaps in the body of knowledge related to gender bias. The model of shared

decision-making to improve traditional agency view of organizations vulnerable to exploitation by management, such as the demise of Enron and the financial crisis of 2008 (Zeitoun et al., 2014).

A gap in research literature could be an area of opportunity described by Zeitoun et al. (2014) for demarchy to take advantage of distributed power for decision-making rather than led by powerful interest groups. Demarchy reduces self-promotion, costs to campaign for board membership, and attains higher levels of heterogeneity groups rather than homogeneous groups (Zeitoun et al., 2014). Demarchy encouraged women candidates often excluded or represented neglected talent pool from participating on boards as members, facilitated stability and continuity of diverse interests among stakeholders rather than single entities, such as family or related board members (Zeitoun et al., 2014). Zeitoun et al. (2014) indicated random selection of decision makers could have advantages and disadvantages, such as not having skills for board membership.

The practical application of this study was to provide a holistic lens to address a gap in the literature or a response to a problem more effectively than in previous research. Zeitoun et al. (2014) offered a solution, explored the advantages and disadvantages, and proposed ways to implement the change to close the gap. The process and methodology are useful for reviewing a social change in research.

Deficiencies. A gap in the body of knowledge related to gender bias was women's voices in the boardroom. Terjesen et al. (2009) identified lack of in-depth interviews at the individual level to connect women's experiences on corporate boards, their appointment, impression management lens, and using secondary data. Triana et al. (2013)

discussed exploring the timing of a woman's appointment in her career, power level, and a threat to organizations at the time of her appointment. Vongas and Al Hajj (2015) recommended considering emotional traits and abilities of leaders, the source of gender bias, evolution, and societal context to explore coping strategies women use in response to gender bias they experience in the boardroom. Discriminatory behaviors against minority groups, shortened tenure on boards as a result of women experiencing stress, and increased negative stereotypes are additional areas for consideration (Vongas & Al Hajj, 2015).

A deficiency in scholarship mentioned by Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) was growing number of women's advancements on corporate boards in nonprofit, public, and government organizations. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) supported the inclusion of women in other industries such as businesses and experiences of male leaders to compare the study results. Cabrera-Fernández, Martínez-Jiménez, and Hernández-Ortiz (2016) noted to replicate studies is to explore characteristics, qualities, attributes, and effectiveness of women on corporate boards.

A lack of women in leadership positions could have related opportunities such as Terjesen and Sealy (2016) indicated a multilevel phenomenon of an integrative approach of multiple theories and data to focus on ethics and diversity to use quotas. Rhode and Packel (2014) supported the existence of deficiencies in the body of knowledge regarding multilevel approach to ascertain why regulatory quotas are not producing results to change the underrepresentation of women in the boardroom. Hillman (2015) concluded less-well-developed aspects of board diversity such as ethnicity, nationality, and function

as potential areas for future research.

Justification and Rationale

Women could create the change they want for themselves in boardrooms and organizations. A paradigm shift that looks at gender diversity based on women's empowerment to create change was missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias (Hillman, 2015). Bierema (2016) confirmed the approach and recommended researchers go beyond gender and start talking about effective leadership. Empirical evidence in these areas could add to the body of knowledge related to gender bias and provide a positive social change in women. Rhode and Packel (2014) concluded strategies for change are not dependent on legalizing quotas and institutional initiatives, rather women adopt strategies, such as mentoring, education, coaching, networking, and self-promotion.

In a study, Holzhammer (2014) acknowledged underrepresentation of women on corporate boards was an organizational loss. The author recommended societal changes must precede legislative measures because gender equality in society will lead to the success of women in boardrooms. Holzhammer (2014) emphasized a holistic view of gender equality at management level and failure of legislative quotas, equality legislation in the European Union, and the Gender Equality Directive. Holzhammer (2014) deduced the underlying cause for the underrepresentation of women on corporate boards had been women's societal roles, gender stereotypes, and male working culture. Holzhammer (2014) recommended legislation and directives further reinforced male dominance in boardrooms, which adds to the persistence of gender inequality.

Holzhammer (2014) proposed opportunities for change by addressing the problem of changing roles and responsibilities of women in home, workplace, and society using an ideological, societal, and institutional approach. A change in roles and responsibilities of women change redistribution of social roles and power that women will have to assume and confront are consequences of change (Holzhammer, 2014). Holzhammer (2014) recommended sustainability of societal change in roles and responsibilities of men and women is dependent on women themselves. The Holzhammer study had a feminist scholarly voice and viewpoint that women were equals, influence, and shape their purposes, including representation on corporate boards.

A woman's experience in boardrooms could help raise awareness and implement interventions to enable board diversity. Cabrera-Fernández et al. (2016) conducted a literature review of women on corporate boards that involved exploring 76 journal articles included several theories associated with corporate governance theory, agency theory, resource dependency theory, human capital theory, stakeholder theory, and institutional theory. Although research on women is increasing, several factors declared up front should include distinguishing scope of the study, type of organization such as stock market or medium-sized enterprises, a country in which a study takes place, and legislative gender quotas or recommendations.

A multiple case study design could provide systemic views of a problem. Cabrera-Fernández et al. (2016) explained holistic views of a research problem included multiple perspectives of a theoretical framework that supports research purpose, questions, and methodology. Cabrera-Fernández et al. (2016) declared irrespective of

inconclusive and inconsistent findings of empirical studies replication of studies should be a goal of future research and not of the past. Cabrera-Fernández et al. (2016) recommended exploring characteristics, qualities, attributes, and effectiveness of women on corporate boards.

Cabrera-Fernández et al. (2016) asserted that qualitative multiple case study approach would be a natural fit for future research based on findings from the literature reviews Cabrera-Fernández et al. (2016) concluded using diverse theoretical perspectives and approaches provides rigor and results to explain the effectiveness of women on corporate boards. Cabrera-Fernández et al.'s (2016) conclusion served to justify why the approach to my study produced significant study results.

Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Some women are joining corporate boards as members of out-groups based on gender and conforming to, instead of challenging, male norms despite stereotype threat (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Women's experiences on corporate boards raise ethical concerns about sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns that are disruptive to board dynamics (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016). Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

A review and synthesis of studies related to the central phenomenon describe what researchers knew about women on corporate boards, controversial, and further study. Kulik and Metz (2015) conducted a literature review of empirical evidence on gender diversity in corporate boards to reveal organizational outcomes related to performance, practices, and demographics. The focus was on women in senior leadership, CEOs, corporate boards, top management teams, and managers (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Kulik and Metz provided a conceptual framework to model the literature review that mapped leadership positions to influencers of organizational outcomes.

A gap could develop from inductive reasoning such as Kulik and Metz (2015) discussed dynamics between women in leadership and organizational outcomes influences both mediator and moderator influencers. Mediator influencers are behavioral differences in leadership styles of men and women, such as women's unique perspectives, aversion to risk, and internal and external signaling to stakeholders (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Moderator influencers are contextual differences that can affect society within a national context, organizational strategy, and organizational culture (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Results of the study were comparable to similar and relevant studies related to the central phenomenon.

Known. Kulik and Metz (2015) indicated results from the study evidenced that women in leadership can provide economic value to organizations because of their demographic influence. Women have effective transformational leadership style using transactional contingent reward behavior (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Women appointed to leadership roles overcome prejudice and gender stereotypes (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Kulik

and Metz (2015) contended that women in their study had high human capital and sharpened their technical and survival skills for effectiveness in their leadership roles.

A gap that Kulik and Metz (2015) indicated was a positive outcome for women on corporate boards is the improved accountability of internal board activities, such as the effort to improve accountability (Kulik & Metz, 2015). The number of women in management waiting to advance in leadership positions lacks because the pool of talented women who are available for board membership is not at critical mass to make a positive social change to gender diversity in the boardroom (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Women may have to support themselves to become effective leaders.

A known gap in the body of knowledge related to gender bias is lack of women's' presence on corporate boards. Kulik and Metz (2015) deliberated that the business case for gender diversity of leadership in an organization was to increase the number of women on corporate boards and improve outcomes. Social change realization exists in the social value of gender diversity to benefit all and not only half of society (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Kulik and Metz (2015) indicated the benefits of gender diversity must start with women to change the environment for women in general.

Controversy. Kulik and Metz (2015) explored negative consequences of gender diversity on corporate boards related to disruptive board dynamics. An illustration was decision-making on corporate boards that did not realize expected outcomes of organizational performance because of gender diversity (Kulik & Metz, 2015). In this situation, the organizational outcome can contradict reasons for gender-diverse boards (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Board gender quotas represent an attempt to increase the number

of women on corporate boards.

Terjesen and Sealy (2016) categorized the issue of gender quotas for board representation in 15 countries as ethical tension for an organization. The theoretical frameworks used to support the study of these tensions were motivation, legitimacy, and organizational outcomes related to institutional theory, stakeholder theory, social identity theory, and social capital theory (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016). Kulik and Metz (2015) acknowledged gender quotas are an effort by government leaders to increase the number of women on corporate boards but failed to realize the benefits of diverse decision-making because women do not have experience in leadership positions.

Gender informs leadership inclusion based on an organization's survival. Kulik and Metz (2015) indicated women are likely to receive appointments when an organization was in a crisis such as the threat of a financial loss that places women in a glass cliff position. Terjesen and Sealy (2016) concluded future researchers should focus on ethics and diversity of quotas as a multilevel phenomenon using an integrative approach of multiple theories and data. Gender quotas have failed to improve organizational performance and created difficult experiences for women in the boardroom.

Unknown. Kulik and Metz (2015) made four recommendations to address gaps in the body of knowledge. First, be explicit about theoretical perspectives, which means using theory to predict differences between men and women, such as a woman's presence could be advantageous to corporate boards, or not, in comparison to men's presence (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Kulik and Metz (2015) advised that these competing forecasts

could position gender diversity at all levels of leadership of an organization.

Second, be focused on the mediating variables of gender in leadership and organizational outcomes. Mediator influencers between men and women are behavioral differences in leadership styles, women's unique perspectives, women's aversion to risk, and women's internal and external signaling to stakeholders (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Kulik and Metz (2015) noted that performing a content analysis of interviews with women in leadership positions could better capture mediating constructs affected by gender diversity.

Third, be selective about organizational outcomes affected by gender and leadership. The primary focus of organizational outcomes in research has been organizational financial performance, which is not solely dependent on the quality of the top management teams in leadership (Kulik & Metz, 2015). Kulik and Metz (2015) advised that researchers use a holistic view of organizational outcomes to influence managerial decision-making, such as strategic choices on a longitudinal timeframe.

The fourth recommendation from Kulik and Metz (2015) was to incorporate moderator contextual influencers in a national context, organizational strategy, and organizational culture to address the relationship between gender and organizational performance. Kulik and Metz (2015) advised the recommendation could be most challenging to navigate and attain an audience. Men and women in leadership positions may have the same goal to move the agenda forward.

Studies Related to the Research Question

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore

gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. I present a review and synthesis of studies related to the research question. I also explain the approach selected and meaning of the research question.

Research question. The overarching research question was as follows: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board? Exclusion of women from leadership positions and inequality in gender roles could impede women's development as leaders. Women around the world are experiencing gender bias that presents obstacles to their progress in leadership at political, social, and organizational levels (Kakabadse et al., 2015; Seierstad, Warner-Søderholm, Torchia, & Huse, 2017). Social changes to corporate boards can activate factional fault lines based on the demographic similarities and differences among board members (Veltrop, Hermes, Postma, & Haan, 2015). Social categorization among board members who represent special interest groups can create distinct in-group and different out-group memberships (Veltrop et al., 2015). Discussion of how women cope with these situations has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Some women may be aware of their experiences with gender bias. Gender bias

toward women on corporate boards can be promotions based on demonstrable accomplishments, whereas men receive referrals to a board by a current board member, whether they have qualifications or not for leadership positions (McDonald & Westphal, 2013). Access to mentoring in career development, such as coaching, and psychosocial functions, such as encouragement, is significant to enhance women's self-efficacy as leaders (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Despite lack of women role models in leadership, men are not eager to perform mentoring roles because of potential allegations of sexual discrimination toward women mentees (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Some women may have difficulty in finding mentors to help their leadership development.

Some women may navigate nuances of corporate boards themselves. Some women could experience less mentoring regarding the participation process from other board members to navigate nuances of behaviors and relationships within a board's social norms, such as intergroup biases (McDonald & Westphal, 2013). If men mentored women and these women become a success, women could attribute success to men's wisdom and guidance rather than their skills and expertise (Heilman, 2012). Such situations can prevent women from obtaining the credit they deserve, even when they earned the credit (Heilman, 2012). Because women see themselves as less competent than men, some women are unwilling to take the same amount of credit as men for successful joint outcomes (Heilman, 2012). Women's response to recognition based on their experiences relates to gender bias.

Some women may not be aware of gender bias until it affects them. Gender bias appears in written form and communications, such as media portrayal of women CEOs

(Heilman, 2012). At the announcement of women CEOs, trade markets were less favorable (Gregory et al., 2013). Ryan et al. (2016) asserted that men are preferentially accessing leadership positions compared to women.

Gender bias in international assignments is in favor of men than women. Factors that deny women expatriation assignments, such as personal and family concerns, have an association with women who are not effective for such assignments (Bastida & Moscoso, 2015). Women will knowingly perpetuate sex stereotypes when set up to fail (Vongas & Al Hajj, 2015). Some women as leaders and in leadership roles can experience less favorable behaviors from others than men experience and subsequently develop a distorted perception of themselves in leadership positions (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Gender stereotyping makes the experience of less favorable behaviors from others more difficult for women in leadership positions than for men, who tend to gain respect and admiration from subordinates because of their gender (Vial et al., 2016). Mathisen et al. (2013) concluded some women could experience low levels of justice and cohesion and believe them to be high levels of conflict in the boardroom.

Some women may respond negatively to gender bias. Social categorizations between board members could leave some women unsure of their social identity. Women who define their social identity based on perceptions of others can fail as leaders and succumb to gender stereotypes in their role on a corporate board (Ibarra et al., 2013; Mori, 2014). Women's perceptions of their experiences with gender bias could send conflicting signals to individuals regarding their reality.

Board members may contribute to women's response to gender bias. Gender

biases disguise subtleties in the social and organizational behaviors of board members and can demotivate some women and disrupt board dynamics (Chawla & Sharma, 2016; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Some women experience a variety of consequences, such as negative subordinate behaviors and reduced cooperation from other individuals (Vial et al., 2016). These women can develop a state of mind that can lead to aggressive or tentative behaviors in themselves (Vial et al., 2016). A woman could be vulnerable to the differences between her in-group and out-group social identities.

Some women appointed to glass cliff positions often serve on corporate boards when an organization was vulnerable to organizational threat and during strategic change thereby altering their power level in the boardroom (Triana et al., 2013). Some women in leadership positions can experience stereotype threats reducing their well-being at work (von Hippel et al., 2015). The negative effects of these stressors on women and their well-being in male-dominated industries place them at risk with their health (von Hippel et al., 2015). Some women can experience chronic stress and mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and fatigue, which prevent them from realizing their full potential in leadership positions (Pletzer et al., 2015). The state of women's well-being could affect their response to gender bias.

Some women's experiences with gender bias may cause them to change their perceptions. A woman's well-being could be at risk based on her negative experiences in leadership positions. Women who viewed a situation related to gender bias as a challenge used problem-focused coping strategies: active coping, planning, and seeking social support (Murray & Ali, 2016). Women who viewed a similar situation as a threat used

emotion-focused coping strategies of acceptance and turned to religion, denial, and behavioral and mental disengagement (Murray & Ali, 2016). Some women could ignore the risks to their health because of gender bias or choose to leave their leadership positions.

Impression management could be an approach used to empower women on corporate boards. Unless women capitalize on their social and cultural resources, such as their social skills and behaviors with impression management and self-monitoring, they will not enter the boardroom or be successful in their leadership roles (Vinkenburg et al., 2014). Women who commit to their profession can choose to use their influence tactics based on previous experience to manage impressions of their power, status, and legitimacy that align with their character (Cheung et al., 2016). Zhu et al. (2014) noted interpersonal communications or impression management would minimize biases if minority members developed skills to shift the focus away from their differing demographics with other members in the boardroom.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I provided the context for studying literature related to gender bias and emphasized the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, and literature review. I described the iterative process of the literature search strategy. I identified and defined the central phenomenon that grounded the study, which was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment.

The conceptual framework section included discussion of logical constructs of

gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias. These concepts intersect with women's experiences in group memberships, barriers, social identity theory, and the role congruity theory of prejudice to support women's need to develop coping strategies. The study could shift focus in research from exploring gender diversity and equity to empowering women creating positive social change within themselves.

In Chapter 3, I provide an account of the research method selected to explore research design rationale to explain why other possible choices are less effective to answer the research question. A description follows of the researcher's role, management of biases, and applicable ethical issues that included control of these issues in the study. In the methodology section, I detail procedures to conduct the study that another researcher can choose to follow. A discussion follows related to the issues of trustworthiness that included credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures used in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. A qualitative research paradigm and a case study design represented an appropriate approach to exploring gender bias from the experiences of multiple participants to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon by collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting results. The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

In this chapter, I review the multiple case study design I chose and my rationale for selecting it. In a section on the role of the researcher, I present details on my role and the methods I used to manage any researcher biases I might have had. The section on methodology includes participant selection logic; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and the data analysis plan. A section on issues of trustworthiness includes credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures. I conclude this chapter with a summary and

transition to Chapter 4, which contains the study results.

Research Design and Rationale

The overarching research question was as follows: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board?

In Chapter 1, I discussed the logical connections of the method, design, and approach of inquiry to the constructs of interest and participants, addressing the qualitative method, multiple case study design, and descriptive approach of inquiry. The constructs of interest were gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias. The participants were a purposeful sample of six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and territories throughout Canada.

In Chapter 2, I explored the body of knowledge related to gender bias to justify and rationalize the logical connections of the study in the literature review. Feminist advocates have identified qualitative research methods as means to facilitate women's voices of their experiences through interviews (Eagly & Riger, 2014). I extended the conceptual framework from the logical constructs of gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias to connect logically to a qualitative descriptive multiple case study design and the participants of the study (see Figure 4).
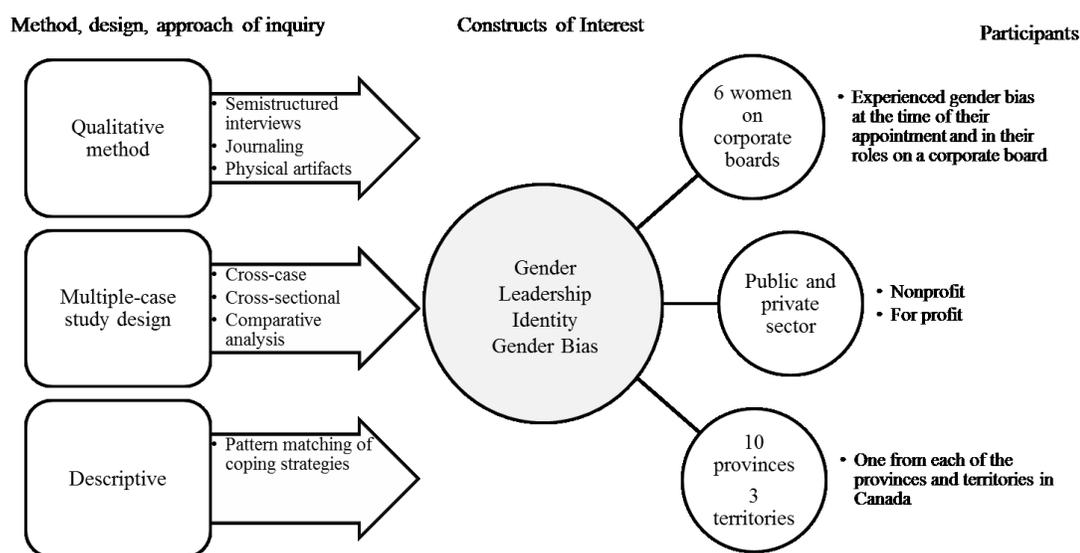
Figure 4. Logical connections of the study. The constructs of interest from the conceptual framework were gender, leadership, and identity with gender bias. These constructs logically connected to the method, design, approach of inquiry, and participants of the study.

Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Some women are joining corporate boards as members of out-groups based on gender and conforming to, instead of challenging, male norms despite stereotype threat (Kakabadse et al., 2015). Women's experiences on corporate boards raise ethical concerns about sociocultural, structural, and interactional patterns that are disruptive to board dynamics (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016). Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Research Tradition

The primary research methods are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. A quantitative method requires the use of standardized measures to generalize the findings of a study (Patton, 2015). I did not use a standardized tool and quantitative measurement. For these reasons, a quantitative method was not appropriate for my study. Mixed methods include using both qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study (Patton, 2015). I did not ask closed-ended questions or use a quantitative survey. For these reasons, a mixed method approach was not appropriate for my study.

The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. A qualitative method facilitates the in-depth and detailed study of a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). The contextual richness of a real-life phenomenon has potential to provide insights into *how* and *why* the phenomenon occurs in a setting (Yin, 2011). Exploring gender bias toward women, representing the views and perspectives of participants, understanding the contextual conditions within which women on corporate boards experience gender bias, and contributing insights into existing and emerging concepts led to an explanation of disruptive board dynamics toward women in the boardroom.

I used multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on one source alone. I used interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question and add credibility and trustworthiness to the study results. For these reasons, a qualitative method was appropriate for my study.

Qualitative. The qualitative method has five common traditions of inquiry. The

five approaches to qualitative research design are narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Patton, 2015). The rationale for the research tradition chosen for my study follows.

Narrative. A narrative research design is suitable for interpreting the stories individuals have of their lived experiences of an event (Patton, 2015). A woman's stories of her lived experiences would not have answered the research question in my study and would not have provided multiple perspectives for cross-case analysis. For these reasons, a narrative research design was not appropriate for my study.

Phenomenology. A phenomenological research design has a central theme of the shared lived experiences of individuals (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers who capture a unique event and its context can understand participants in their natural setting (Yin, 2011). As the researcher, I did not follow, share, or attempt to understand what it was like for women on corporate boards to experience gender bias as it occurs in the boardroom. For this reason, a phenomenological research design was not appropriate for my study.

Grounded theory. Grounded theory research design involves using all human forms of communication regarding the lived or shared experiences of individuals to develop or change a theory (Engward, 2013). My study was not about developing or changing theory. For this reason, a grounded theory research design was not appropriate for my study.

Ethnography. An ethnographic research design includes the researcher as the data collection instrument to study a culture-sharing group (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In my study, each woman was unique, and I interviewed each participant separately. For

these reasons, an ethnographic research design was not appropriate for my study.

Case study. A case study research design includes developing questions to explore the *how* and *why* of a real-life phenomenon to attain depth and holistic view in data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014). A benefit of case studies is the ability to conduct a comparative analysis using a multiple case study design that can support cross-case and cross-sectional studies that researchers can generalize to a theory (Tsang, 2014). This approach of inquiry was suitable for providing depth and a holistic view to explore how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias. For these reasons, a case study research design was appropriate for my study.

Case study design. Yin (2014) identified three common types of case study design. The three case study designs are explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive (Yin, 2014). An explanatory case study design involves using explanations to link a program's implementation with the program's effects (Yin, 2014). My study was not about analyzing coping strategies with gender bias. An explanatory case study design was not appropriate for my study.

An exploratory case study design is suitable for exploring situations to evaluate an intervention that has no clear outcomes (Yin, 2014). My study was not about evaluating coping strategies with gender bias. Therefore, an exploratory case study design was not appropriate for my study.

A descriptive case study design is suitable for describing an intervention in a real-life context (Yin, 2014). My study was about exploring gender bias and the coping strategies that women on corporate boards develop when confronted with gender bias. A

descriptive case study design was appropriate for my study.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was the data collection instrument. I accounted for and assessed the quality of the research design for the trustworthiness of the study results. Yin (2011) identified the six abilities of a researcher as listening, asking good questions, knowing about the research topic, caring about the data, multitasking, and persevering. I discuss in detail the quality of the research design in a section on issues of trustworthiness, treatment of human participants, and in a section on ethical procedures.

My role as the researcher included conducting a literature review relevant to the research topic, developing research questions, and interviewing a purposeful sample of participants. I collected and analyzed the data, which included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question. I also presented the study results to interpret the findings and provide recommendations based on the conclusions.

I conducted semistructured interviews by telephone with participants who had provided informed consent to participate and completed demographic form by e-mail or online. Yin (2011) noted to converse successfully in a qualitative interview, an interviewer should speak less than the interviewee, be nondirective to allow participants the flexibility to describe their experiences, stay neutral, maintain rapport with participants, use an interview protocol, and do some analysis of the data when interviewing. My preparation as the interviewer was thorough, and I rehearsed and

followed the script in the interview protocol (see Appendix A). The analysis of the

interview data involved referencing data from my reflective journal notes and analyzing

the physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate

boards for methodological triangulation. I practiced the art of successful interviewing by

rehearsing the interview questions (see Appendix F).

I used reflective journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher. Yin (2011)

recommended that researchers practice documenting and recording feelings regarding

events, behaviors, or conditions that can invoke emotions. For a researcher, the practice

of reflexivity includes taking notes in a journal about his or her emotions and beliefs

about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). Reflexivity helped me to

suspend judgment and contain any preconceptions that I had about gender bias and prior

knowledge of my topic.

I analyzed physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women

on corporate boards. These physical artifacts were publicly available online. One such

artifact was a Commonwealth Secretariat study on gender differences in leadership and

business using the science of decision-making (Patel & Buiting, 2013). Reports on

women in Canada from Status of Women Canada (2016) and Statistics Canada (2016)

were available to the public as physical artifacts for analysis. Yin (2011) recommended

that researchers compile physical artifacts from various sources such as libraries,

historical archives, and electronic sources to clarify details and complement interviews. I

collected and reviewed physical artifacts before and after conducting the semistructured

interviews to learn the content, which helped me have a meaningful conversation with the

participants of my study.

As the researcher, I had no personal or professional relationships with the participants. I posted a message to my contacts on social media such as LinkedIn to forward my e-mail address to any potential participants they knew for more information about how to participate in my study (see Appendix B). Potential participants included English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and territories throughout Canada. I used the snowball sampling method to recruit new participants. Snowball sampling involves purposefully selecting new data collection units as an offshoot of existing units (Yin, 2011). Snowball sampling based on referrals was suitable for locating hard-to-access populations such as women on corporate boards.

Methodology

This section includes discussions on participant selection logic, instrumentation, and researcher-developed instruments for my study. This section also includes the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection and the data analysis plan. I describe these components of the study in sufficient depth so that other researchers can replicate the study design.

Participant Selection Logic

I live and work in Toronto, Canada. In 2015, according to Statistics Canada (2016), the population of Canada was 36 million, and 86% of the population lived in four of the country's 10 provinces: Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta. Of the

48% of women in the workforce, only 15.9% are on corporate boards (Status of Women Canada, 2016). Unidentified in the 2015 census was the distribution and location of these women in the public and private sectors throughout Canada. In my study, participants were women on corporate boards in any province and territory in Canada.

Sampling strategy. I am a user of social media with several online connections and groups. Social media represent an emerging data collection tool that has unlimited potential to gather multiple perspectives (Spence, Lachlan, & Rainear, 2015). The shift among researchers toward using social media for data collection offers many possibilities for new approaches of inquiry (Diaz, Gamon, Hofman, Kıcıman, & Rothschild, 2016). I had social media accounts on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Researchgate, YouTube, and Walden to access my contacts and send messages about my study.

I used the snowball sampling method to recruit new participants. Snowball sampling is a referral-based method to locate hard-to-access populations (Spence et al., 2015). I used snowball sampling to recruit a new participant for my study from an existing participant's referral. A participant's identity remained confidential from a referring participant to maintain the privacy of all participants.

Criteria for participant selection. In order to be eligible to participate in this study, women needed to have experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards. Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). An assumption was that participants in my study responded honestly and did not conceal or omit any information, which could have distorted the study results.

Participants indicated a willingness to participate in the study by returning a consent form and a completed demographic form by e-mail or online stating that they had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment to corporate boards and in their roles on these boards. A complete response to the demographic form included the participant's e-mail address, location in Canada, industry sector, career background and skills, the organizational environment at the time of the participant's board appointment, number of years as a corporate board member, number of board seats held, and role on the corporate board.

I needed each participant's e-mail addresses so that I could contact her to communicate a date and time for the semistructured interview. I identified a participant's location in one of the provinces and territories in Canada, which are Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Yukon, for cross-sectional analysis. Industry sector data indicated that the participant was a corporate board member in the public or private sector for cross-sectional analysis.

Data on participants' career background and skills indicated the background and skills that they brought to corporate boards for cross-case analysis. Information on the organizational environment to understand what was occurring in the organization at the time of a participant's board appointment helped in determining whether an appointment was a glass cliff position such as a financial threat, merger and acquisition, organizational loss, or business as usual. Cross-case analysis included the number of years that a

participant had been a corporate board member; the number of corporate board seats a participant held; and the role of a participant as a CEO, committee chair, or board member.

Women on corporate boards are so few in numbers that any additional criteria for case selection of the purposeful sample could have affected sample size, exclude some individuals, and lengthen the data collection process for the study. Defining participant selection criteria to include women who had spent at least one year on a corporate board could also have affected the number of participants I could recruit. Gender bias at the time of a participant's board appointment and in her role on a corporate board could be immediate but not apparent to the participant. However, this information could be evident in her responses to the interview questions. I qualified and included women who could benefit from my study results and met the inclusion criteria. Not included in the sample were individuals who did not meet the inclusion criteria.

Sample size. In past qualitative case studies on women in leadership that were similar to my study, sample sizes varied depending on the nature of the phenomenon and knowledge of the topic. Yin (2011) noted that six to 10 cases should provide valid study results. Chawla and Sharma (2016) used eight women in leadership positions from across industries such as health care and telecommunications to obtain a detailed view of personal and organizational barriers and facilitators for women in leadership. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) interviewed 38 women in leadership from academia and religious organizations to discover 27 gender-based leadership barriers. I used a sample of six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the

time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private

sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada. The sample selection was

purposeful to attain maximum variation for a cross-case and cross-sectional analysis of

the data.

Procedures to identify, contact, and recruit participants. I used an interview

protocol to attain maximum data integrity consistently during the data collection process

with each participant (see Appendix A). The interview protocol included the procedures

for the role of the researcher, initial contact with potential participants, and conducting

the semistructured interviews. As the researcher and data collection instrument, I

compared the qualitative data in the cross-case analysis of the study results.

Message on social media. I posted a message for my contacts on social media

such as LinkedIn in which I asked them to forward my e-mail address to any potential

participants they knew for more information about how to participate in my study (see

Appendix B). Potential participants included English-speaking women on corporate

boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their

roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and territories

throughout Canada. Some women sent an e-mail to me for more information on how to

participate in the study.

E-mail invitation to participate. I sent an e-mail invitation to the participants with

the consent form and the demographic form attached to the e-mail invitation (see

Appendices C and D). The consent form included the voluntary nature of the study, risks

and benefits of being in the study, information about payment and maintaining privacy,

contacts, and questions, and details regarding obtaining consent. The demographic form included space for an e-mail address, location in Canada, industry sector, career background and skills, the organizational environment at the time of the participant's board appointment, number of years as a corporate board member, number of board seats held, and role on the corporate board. I provided an online link as an alternative to e-mail for participants to document consent and complete the demographic form online.

Participants could document consent online by providing their contact information and completing the demographic form using SurveyMonkey. As the researcher, I could access information using SurveyMonkey in real time to know if recruitment of potential participants was progressing toward a purposeful sample. I entered any e-mail responses of consent and completed demographic forms in SurveyMonkey to include all participants' demographics in tabular form. I include the participants' demographics in Chapter 4.

Consent form and demographic form. Individuals who provided consent and completed the demographic form by e-mail or online, indicated informed consent to participate in the study based on their experiences with gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their role on a corporate board. I assigned a coding representation to the participants using notations Participant P01, P02, P03, P04, P06, and P09 for all communications and data collection related to each participant, such as notes taken, reflective journal notes, and any audio recordings they had agreed to for the semistructured interviews.

Follow-up e-mail to schedule a semistructured interview. I sent a follow-up e-

mail to participants who provided consent and completed a demographic form by e-mail or online to provide a date, time, and telephone number for the semistructured interview (see Appendix E). Each participant identified at least three options from Monday to Friday and during business hours from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. within 14 days of receiving the follow-up e-mail to schedule a semistructured interview.

Saturation and sample size. Women on corporate boards are so few in numbers that any additional criteria for case selection of the purposeful sample could have affected the sample size, excluded some individuals, and lengthened the data collection process. Saturation takes place when there is no new information, coding, and themes occurring, and there exists the ability to replicate the study design (Fusch & Ness, 2015). If I did not reach a state of saturation of the data, I would have returned to the participants to attain more information in follow-up interviews. I would have asked a participant for more detail that I could have missed during the first interview. I would have added to the reflective journal and cross-referenced any new information from the interview data with the analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I attained data saturation in the study after I saturated all data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts that did not produce any new themes and I did not need to implement this plan.

Instrumentation

The data collection strategy included multiple data collection methods for each source of data. Yin (2014) identified six sources of evidence as units of analysis, of which I used three. In my study, the data sources were interviews, journaling, and

analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on

corporate boards for methodological triangulation to increase the dependability of the

study results (see Figure 5).
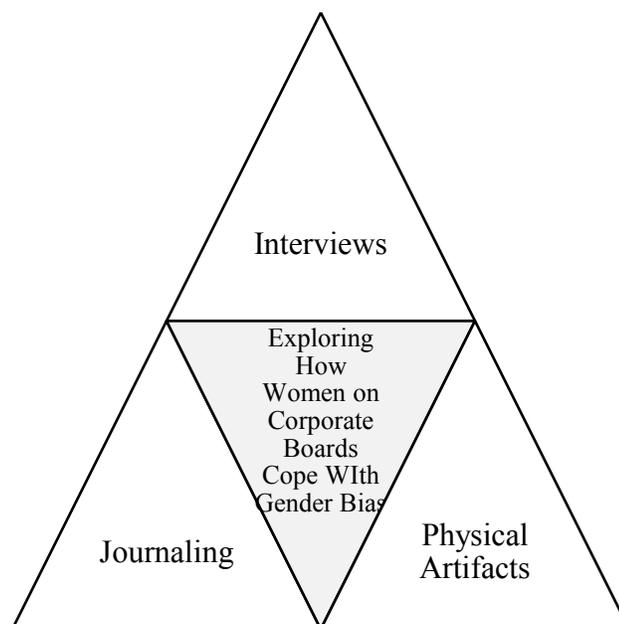
Figure 5. Data collection plan of the study. Interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards used were to attain methodological triangulation to increase the dependability of the study results.

Interviews. I used semistructured interviews as a data collection method to

facilitate the participants to share their views in a way they found comfortable in

responding to seven open-ended questions on gender bias and their experiences in the

boardroom (see Appendix F). The flexibility of open-ended questions led to in-depth,

thick, rich information based on the participants' responses. I conducted semistructured

interviews with a purposeful sample that included six English-speaking women on

corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in

their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and

territories throughout Canada. I used an interview protocol to standardize and

consistently conduct the semistructured interviews by telephone (see Appendix A).

    Semistructured interviews. Participants who provided consent and a completed

demographic form by e-mail or online, indicated informed consent to participate based on

their experiences with gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their role on a

corporate board. Participants had the flexibility to respond to the open-ended questions in

a nonbiased setting. I asked each participant seven open-ended interview questions based

on the research question related to a participant's acknowledgment of gender bias, how

the participant became aware, responded, and changed her response when faced with

gender bias (see Appendix F). The last interview question was for the participant to add

any other information related to gender bias or corporate board experiences in general.

    I placed each interview call at the agreed upon date and time with the participant

using the telephone number provided, and I noted the date, time, and location of the

semistructured interview. I introduced myself to establish a rapport with the participant

and thanked the participant for providing her documented consent and a completed

demographic form. The participant provided her permission to audio record the

semistructured interview. All six participants gave their permission to audio recording the

semistructured interviews, and I did not need to inform any participant that she could

participate even if she did not want the interview audio recorded. I took notes of the

participants' responses during a semistructured interview.

    I took case notes about the semistructured interview, and I wrote in my reflective

journal any emotions I felt, concepts, and themes of patterns during the interview. If I

needed more detail or depth in a participant's response to the open-ended questions, I asked probing questions. I had planned to monitor the time during the interview, but I did not need to inform any of the participants if a time limit approached before the specified end time because the participants answered the open-ended questions and completed the semistructured interviews. I had planned to but did no need to ask participants to extend the time or schedule a follow-up interview because there was no new information.

I encouraged the participants to participate in the review method of member checking, the analysis and interpretation of the interview data. I reminded the participants of the member-checking process. Member checking serves to attain maximum benefit for credibility and confirmability of the study results (Yin, 2011). I asked the participants if they could refer another participant to the study. I used the snowball sampling method to recruit new participants. Snowball sampling is a referral-based method to locate hard-to-access populations (Spence et al., 2015). I received one referral by e-mail from a participant. I used snowball sampling to recruit a new participant for my study from an existing participant's referral. A participant's identity remained confidential from a referring participant to maintain the privacy of all participants.

As the researcher, I reviewed and interpreted the interview data. I wrote each question and a succinct synthesis of the interpretation in two pages. I provided a saved copy of the synthesis to a participant by e-mail and requested a response within 14 business days. I asked all participants if the synthesis represented their answers or if they could provide additional information for the study. I continued the member-checking process until there were no new data to collect. I thanked the participants for their time,

participation, and referral of new participants if received. I indicated I was ending the call and hung up after I heard the participant hang up first.

Journaling. I used reflective journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher. The practice of reflexivity includes journaling regarding emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). I used reflexivity to suspend any judgments and contain any preconceptions that I had about gender bias and prior knowledge of my study. Researchers' journal to reflect on their role as the data collection instrument in relation to the phenomenon of study (Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). Reflexivity involves monitoring the research process of assumptions and relationships a researcher has with a topic, sample, and site using tools such as a reflective journal (Hays et al., 2016). Reflective journaling is a data collection method of self-analysis and reflection, which is an important aspect of field research used throughout the research process (Yin, 2011). I wrote in my reflective journal notes related to my research experience.

I used reflective journaling to record my feelings, and the circumstances that led to emotion, such as when I identified with a situation a participant had experienced with gender bias or I discovered an analysis of a physical artifact provided information to bias my role as the researcher. The journal notes included concepts and themes that emerged in the study. I recorded the date, time of the journal note, and wrote what came to mind that related to the study. At times, I would doodle or draw variations of mind maps such as the conceptual framework logical constructs and logical connections of the study. The flexibility of reflective journaling helped me to attain deep, thick, rich information based

on reflectivity and used for methodological triangulation to answer the research question. The reflective journaling process was transformative, and I became a better researcher by maintaining my perspective, participating and being flexible, and balancing what I heard from the participants and my emotions.

Physical artifacts. I analyzed physical artifacts, such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. The physical artifacts were publicly available online. On such artifact was a Commonwealth Secretariat study on gender differences in leadership and business using the science of decision-making (Patel & Buiting, 2013). Reports on women in Canada from Status of Women Canada (2016) and Statistics Canada (2016) were available to the public as physical artifacts for analysis.

In Chapter 2, in a section on literature search strategy, I discovered 765 articles that included government reports relevant to the study. These reports were not substantive for the literature review but were a source to complement the semistructured interviews. The flexibility of analyzing physical artifacts led to deep, thick, rich information based on government reports and databases of women on corporate boards that I used for methodological triangulation to answer the research question. I analyzed 60 physical artifacts before and after I conducted semistructured interviews with the participants.

Researcher-developed instrument. I used the demographic form of eight questions to establish some demographic information about the participants (see Appendix D). These questions included a participant's contact e-mail address, location in Canada, industry sector, career background, and skills. I used the question about the

organizational environment to determine if a participant's board appointment was a glass cliff position. Participants' responses to the questions regarding the number of years as a corporate board member, number of board seats held, and role on a corporate board revealed some characteristics such as board tenure of the participants.

I used literature sources to develop the seven open-ended questions to align with the research question (see Appendix F). Literature sources provided context for the interview questions and data. The seven open-ended questions for the semistructured interviews followed the demographic form of the study. I created these open-ended questions to discover how gender bias can cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them to be effective in their roles and determine how to avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment.

The last open-ended question captured any other information a participant wished to share related to gender bias or corporate board experience. Participants could share additional information relevant to the study that remained unknown to me at the time of the semistructured interview. If new information became available that enhanced the open-ended questions, I planned to make adjustments, such as to add the change, but I did not need to do this. Similarly, if new information became available that enhanced the study, I planned to add the change only after careful review with my dissertation committee and approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), but no situations warranted this action.

I conducted the semistructured interviews by telephone with participants using the interview questions as part of the interview protocol to ensure content validity. I

performed member checking with the participants after I reviewed and interpreted the interview data. Member checking involves obtaining feedback from the analysis and interpretation of the findings for accuracy (Patton, 2015). I wrote each question and provided a synthesis of the interpretation in one to two pages. I provided a copy of the synthesis to each participant by e-mail and asked for a response within 14 business days. I asked each participant if the synthesis report represented her answers or provide additional information for the study. I continued the member-checking process until there were no new data to collect.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Data collection took place in my home office using the telephone and computer. My role as the researcher was to collect the data. I consistently used the interview protocol for each participant to ensure maximum data integrity by demonstrating rigor and skill in the interview process. I recorded my feelings using reflective journaling. I also compiled and analyzed physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards before and after conducting a semistructured interview.

I obtained data from the consent forms and completed demographic forms online. All six participants completed the demographic form online. I took notes in a notebook for case notes during the semistructured interviews and audio recordings on my iPad. All six participants gave their permission to audio record the semistructured interviews. I converted all data sources to Adobe pdf format and uploaded to NVivo for methodological triangulation to answer the research question.

The 60 physical artifacts discovered in the literature search were publicly

available online. One such artifact was a Commonwealth Secretariat study on gender differences in leadership and business using the science of decision-making (Patel & Buiting, 2013). Reports on women in Canada from Status of Women Canada (2016) and Statistics Canada (2016) were available to the public as physical artifacts for analysis.

I used a scanner to scan the paper notes and reflective journal to pdf files, which is a file format used to upload files to NVivo. I stored the data in three places: in my home office on my personal computer, on my biometric USB key backup that I always carried in my purse, and on my external hard-drive backup in my safety deposit box located at a bank.

I assigned a coding representation to the participants using the notations Participant P01, P02, P03, P04, P06, and P09 for all communications and data collected that related to each participant, such as notes taken, reflective journal notes, any audio recordings they had agreed to for the semistructured interviews. The security provision protected participants during the initial data collection. I uploaded all files to NVivo for storage and management of the data on my personal computer. I retained my notebook and journal in my home office under lock and key.

I performed daily backups of my personal computer to my biometric USB key backup. Backing up archived data to my external hard-drive backup involved retrieving the external hard-drive from my safety deposit box at the bank. When the backup from my personal computer was complete, I returned the external hard-drive to my safety deposit box at the bank.

I managed and controlled access to the data using password protection for the

personal computer and external hard-drive backup and my fingerprint for the biometric USB key backup. Locks and keys provided secured access to the data in my home office and safety deposit box at the bank. I locked my purse in my desk drawer at my home office or carried the biometric USB key backup of the data with me.

The plan for data disposal 5 years after study completion include shredding my notebook and journal. At that time, I will perform a delete and remove option on my personal computer to remove files in NVivo of data related to the study. I will use the format function to erase files related to the study on my biometric USB key backup and external hard-drive backup.

Participants at any time could exit the study without question by contacting me directly by e-mail to end their participation in the study and have their information removed from the study. No participant asked to leave the study after data collection was complete. I did not delete any participants' data from my notebook, journal, or audio recordings of the semistructured interview data. For the participants who remained in the study, I encouraged them to participate in member checking to obtain feedback from the analysis and interpretation of findings for the accuracy of the interview data.

I had a follow-up plan if I did not reach a state of saturation of the data, I would have returned to the participants to attain more information in follow-up interviews. I would have asked a participant for more detail that I could have missed during the first interview. I would have added to the reflective journal and cross-referenced any new information from the interview data with the analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I attained data

saturation in the study after I saturated all data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts that did not produce any new themes and I did not need to implement this plan.

Data Analysis Plan

I used Yin's five phases of analysis that involved inductive, emerging, and interpretive inquiry of my study. Yin's five phases of analysis and their interactions are a nonlinear cycle of compiling a database, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting data, and concluding the data (Yin, 2011). I interpreted these patterns using the conceptual lens of social identity theory and role congruity theory of prejudice and explored how gender bias may cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them to be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment (see Figure 6).

Compiling
• Data source
• Interviews
• Journaling
• Physical artifacts
• NVivo

Disassembling
• Themes
• Coding
• NVivo
• Research question
• Sort data sources

Reassembling
• Context analysis
• Patterns
• Comparisons
• Negative instances
• Rival thinking
• Tabular forms

Interpreting
• Attribute
• Completeness
• Fairness
• Empirical accuracy
• Value-added
• Credibility
• Mode
• Description
• Visual displays

Concluding
• Furture research
• New concepts, theories, and human social behavior
• Substantive propositions
• Generalizing to a broader set of situations

Figure 6. Data analysis plan of the study. Yin's five phases of analysis and their interactions used to compile, disassemble, reassemble, interpret, and conclude data.

Data sources were interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to increase the dependability of the study results. Compiling data involves creating a database in an organized way in preparation for analysis (Yin, 2011). I created a case study database using NVivo and uploaded this information for storage and data management.

I coded concepts and ideas from all data sources using NVivo to identify themes in the data. Disassembling can include coding and sorting the data in several ways to create new insights (Yin, 2011). The disassembling phase involved breaking down compiled data into fragments and labels. I used the components of the research question as labels to categorize the data for coding.

I searched for patterns in cross-case and cross-sectional analysis of the data using NVivo to generate visual displays such as tables and charts. Reassembling data include categorizing, tabulating, and recombining data such as cross-case analysis to discover patterns to answer the research questions (Yin, 2011). The reassembling process involved clustering and categorizing themes into a sequence of groups.

I questioned the meaning of recurring concepts and ideas to generate themes that were complete, fair, empirically accurate, value-added, and credible. Interpreting can include the methodological triangulation of sources of evidence to provide meaning to the data and answer the research questions (Yin, 2011). The interpretation stage involved creating narratives from sequences and groups for the conclusions. Narratives occurred using emergent themes of the participants' journey of awareness about gender bias, their

responses, and any changes to their response against gender bias.

I noted any recommendations for future research in the field of study related to gender bias. These recommendations appear in Chapter 5 and include the answer to the research question based on the study results. I used Yin's five phases of analysis for the data analysis plan. I made recommendations for future research based on any new concepts, theories and human social behaviors, propositions, or generalizing based on a broader set of situations that emerged during the study.

NVivo. QSR's NVivo 11 for Windows is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software used to improve reporting analysis and interpretation of all sources of qualitative data as a tool for data management, storage, and backup to classify and visually represent the data (O'Connell, 2013). I used coded identifiers (Participant P01, P02, P03, P04, P06, and P09) to refer to the participants anonymously so that no one could identify any participants and removed any reference to personal information that would compromise a participant in my final report.

I used NVivo to sort and visually display the data in tables and figures for further analysis. The coding process of contextual data obtained from the sources of evidence involved making a series of interpretations of context analysis using queries such as searching for frequently occurring words and phrases (Katikireddi, Bond, & Hilton, 2014). Emerging codes can reflect conceptual meaning that NVivo translates into graphical models for analysis (O'Connell, 2013). As the researcher, I analyzed the data and used NVivo to assist in the process, but I performed the analysis after NVivo sorted the data and generated tables.

Issues of Trustworthiness

I have described and documented research procedures of the study for review and critique by a reader for transparency. The unique behaviors of participants who experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their role on a corporate board were not generalizable to all women because the setting was different for each occurrence of gender bias toward the participants. I used reasonable measures to address the methodological and design limitations of the study, including ensuring the quality of the research design to address issues of trustworthiness of the study results. In this section, I discuss the issues of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

I used the strategies of methodological triangulation and member checking to attain credibility of the study results. Credibility relates to the accuracy of study results based on the research process (Hays et al., 2016). The credibility of the research data reflects the validity of collected data from multiple sources (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). I used interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question and add credibility and trustworthiness of the study results.

Member checking, analysis and interpretation of the findings, provided consistency with interview data collected for the study. Member checking involves a researcher having a continuing dialogue with participants regarding the accuracy of the interpretation and meanings of interview data (Hays et al., 2016). Methodological

triangulation and member checking established the credibility of the study results.

Transferability

I used the strategy of thick, rich description and purposeful sampling to attain transferability of the study results. Transferability relates to the generalizability of the study results, which is a limitation of case studies (Hays et al., 2016; Tsang, 2014). I used multiple data collection methods from multiple sources of evidence: interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation. This type of triangulation can ensure the data are rich (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I used a purposeful sample of six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and territories throughout Canada.

I continued to conduct data collection until attaining data saturation. Saturation occurs when there is no new information, coding, and themes occurring, and there exists the ability to replicate the study design (Fusch & Ness, 2015). If I did not reach a state of saturation of the data, I would have returned to the participants to attain more information in follow-up interviews. I would have asked a participant for more detail that I could have missed during the first interview. I would have added to the reflective journal and cross-referenced any new information from the interview data with the analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I attained data saturation in the study after I saturated all data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts that did not produce any new themes and I did not need

to implement this plan. Transferability is a criterion for trustworthiness that could occur if a researcher can determine if the study results are transferable to his or her situation (Bengtsson, 2016). Researchers could decide whether to use transferability of the study design.

Dependability

I used the strategy of an audit trail and methodological triangulation to attain dependability of the study results. Dependability relates to the consistency of the study results (Hays et al., 2016). A limitation of qualitative studies is the inability to replicate results because the research occurs in a natural setting (Patton, 2015). An audit trail of the research record is evidence of the development of a research plan (Patton, 2015). The additions, changes, and documentation captured during a study, such as memos or uploaded articles, are from the audit trail (Patton, 2015). Synthesis reports from member checking, coding structure, and memos on the progress of research provided an auditable examination of my study. I used NVivo to track modifications to the sources of evidence.

I used an interview protocol and scripts for the semistructured interviews to standardize the data collection process. Journaling helped me to attain a neutral state as the researcher, and analyzing physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. The data sources provided the methodological triangulation to answer the research question. I used an audit trail and methodological triangulation to attain dependability of the study results.

Confirmability

I used methodological triangulation and reflexivity to attain confirmability of the

study results. The practice of reflexivity includes journal note taking of a researcher's emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). Confirmability relates the accuracy of a participant's perspectives without the influence of researcher bias (Hays et al., 2016). I used interviews, journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to increase confirmability of the study results.

I made three assumptions in the study. The first assumption was the participants responded to the interview questions honestly and did not conceal or omit information that could have distorted the study results. The second assumption was the participants did not have access to the technology needed to support an interview using the Internet, such as a high-speed Internet connection. The third assumption was the need to mitigate any bias between interviewer and interviewee during the interview by conducting the interview by telephone. I checked the study results against the assumptions to confirm the research.

Ethical Procedures

Establishing the quality of the research design served to address the issues of trustworthiness regarding credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study results. Ethical procedures used were to conduct the study in a moral and responsible way for the treatment of human participants and treatment of data of a study (Hays et al., 2016). I conducted the study using ethical procedures such as the voluntary participation of the participants, the purposeful sample was not at risk throughout the

study, and the benefits were for the women who participated in the study.

Treatment of human participants. Receiving approval from the IRB was the first goal to achieve prior to starting the data collection procedure. The IRB provides approval from an ethical position for a review of a study for research with human subjects (Yin, 2011). As listed in the *Belmont Report,* the basic ethical principles that apply when conducting research involving human relations are respect for persons and the principle of beneficence (National Institutes of Health, 2016). I completed training required for the ethical conduct of research involving humans from the National Institutes of Health (2016) in the United States and the Panel on Research Ethics (2016) in Canada (see Appendices I and J). I attained approval from the IRB to gain access to participants who could document their consent by responding to my e-mail invitation to participate in my study (see Appendix C).

I considered the protection of human subjects by attaining voluntary informed consent from participants. A participant was free to accept or turn down the e-mail invitation to participate in the study at any time. I planned for but did not need to implement a procedure for participants who decided to exit the study to contact me directly by e-mail to end their participation in the study and have their information removed from all files. I would have performed deletion of a participant's data from my notes taken, reflective journal notes, and audio recordings of the interview data. I encouraged participants to participate in member checking to obtain feedback from analysis and interpretation of the interview data for accuracy and continued the process until data saturation.

Women on corporate boards are so few in numbers that any additional criteria for case selection for a purposeful sample could have affected the sample size, excluded some potential participants, and lengthened the data collection process of the study. If a woman met the inclusion criteria, there was no reason to exclude her from the study. The criteria were English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and territories throughout Canada. Some participants could have belonged to vulnerable populations, but I had no way of knowing this. If a participant met the inclusion criteria, then her inclusion in a particularly vulnerable population had no relevance to her ability to participate in the study. I had no ethical justification to obtain any other information about a participant, or to exclude her because of it. I used the same protections specified in the consent process for all participants.

The participant selection process involved sending an e-mail invitation to individuals who sent an e-mail to me asking for more information on how to participate in the study (see Appendix C). I attached the consent form and demographic form to the e-mail invitation, provided an online link as an alternative to e-mail for participants to provide their contact information, and complete the demographic form online (see Appendix D). A participants' selection to the study depended on the return of the consent document and completed demographic form by which they indicated their agreement to participate in the study. A signed informed consent form indicated the potential participant had experienced gender bias at the time of her appointment and in her role on a corporate board.

The IRB has an adverse event reporting form (Walden University, 2015) that researchers must submit within 1 week of occurrence and realization of an adverse event. The IRB provides instructions to researchers regarding continuation or discontinuation of a study. I identified a potential adverse event that I thought could need action to protect the participants, researcher, and university. Participants could experience some emotional discomfort during a semistructured interview of their experiences with a gender bias that could cause an unpredictable response in the participant and was unknown at the time prior to the interview. However, I did not have to send an adverse event reporting form to the IRB within 5 days of an interview because an adverse event did not occur in my study.

Treatment of data. Participants' safety or well-being did not pose any risks to participating in my study. I assigned a coding representation to the participants using notations Participant P01, P02, P03, P04, P06, and P09 for all communications and data collected that related to the participants, such as notes taken, reflective journal notes, any audio recordings they had agreed to for the semistructured interviews. The security provision protected participants during the initial data collection. I anonymized the data so that no personal information could identify participants in the data and removed any reference to personal information that would compromise a participant in my final report.

I obtained data from the consent forms and completed demographic forms online. I used a notebook for notes taken during the semistructured interviews with participants for case notes. I audio recorded interviews on my iPad for all participants who agreed to have audio recordings of the semistructured interviews. I wrote reflective journal notes of

my impressions and feelings before, during, and after the semistructured interviews using reflexivity. The practice of reflexivity includes journal note taking of a researcher's emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). I analyzed physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I converted the data sources to Adobe pdf format and uploaded to NVivo for methodological triangulation to answer the research question. I used a scanner to scan paper notes taken and reflective journal notes to pdf files. I uploaded all pdf and audio files to NVivo and stored the data in the same formats in which I obtained them.

I stored the data in three places: my home office on my personal computer, my biometric USB key backup that I always carried in my purse, and my external hard-drive backup in my safety deposit box located at a bank. I uploaded all files to NVivo for storage and data management of the data on my personal computer, and retained my notebook and journal in my home office under lock and key. I performed daily backups of my personal computer to my biometric USB key backup. I archived the data to my external hard-drive backup by retrieving the external hard-drive from my safety deposit box at a bank. I performed the backup from my personal computer and returned the external hard-drive to my safety deposit box at a bank.

I managed and controlled access to the data using password protection for my personal computer and external hard-drive backup and my fingerprint for the biometric USB key backup of the secured data. I used locks and keys to access the data in my home office and safety deposit box at the bank. I locked my purse in my desk drawer at my home office or carried the biometric USB key backup of the data with me.

I will personally dispose of the data 5 years after study completion by shredding my notebook and reflective journal. I will delete the computer files in NVivo on my personal computer to remove the study data. I will erase the files on my biometric USB key backup and external hard-drive backup related to the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the research method and explored research design rationales for choosing case study design. I discussed other possible choices, and I explained why these choices were less effective ways to answer the research question. I included a discussion on the researcher's role, management of biases, and ethical issues that were applicable to my study. Discussion on the control for these issues preceded the methodology section with details for other researchers to replicate the study design and issues of trustworthiness.

In Chapter 4, I describe the results, provide a description of the research setting, and address the participants' demographics and characteristics relevant to the study. I describe the process and methods used in terms of data collection, storage, and management throughout the study. Data analysis included the coding methods, emergent themes, and patterns in the data that provided evidence of trustworthiness using the strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I conclude Chapter 4 with a presentation of the findings of my study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. A qualitative research paradigm and a case study design represented an appropriate approach to exploring gender bias from the experiences of multiple participants to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon by collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting results. The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

The overarching research question was as follows: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board? In this chapter, I review the research setting, demographics of participants, data collection, and data analysis processes of the study. Evidence of trustworthiness and study results precede a

summary of the answer to the research question and transition to Chapter 5.

Research Setting

As the researcher, I was the data collection instrument. Yin (2011) identified the six abilities of a researcher as listening, asking good questions, knowing about the research topic, caring about the data, multitasking, and persevering. I collected and analyzed data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards in my home office located in Canada, using my telephone and computer.

Participants scheduled a semistructured interview (or had her executive assistant dedicate time in her busy calendar to an interview because of traveling and meetings). A participant had a family situation that took her away from her office and arranged for a private space located near her family member to respond to the open-ended questions by telephone. Another participant completed her transition from a board chair role before her participation in the study. These actions indicated that personal or organizational conditions did not influence the participants or their experiences with gender bias at the time of the study that could have influenced the interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

Participant demographics and characteristics relevant to the study included Canadian provinces and territories, industry sector, background and skills, and organizational appointment. Data on the number of years on corporate boards, number of board seats held, and role provided information related to participants' tenure on corporate boards. I discuss the participants' demographics and characteristics in detail in

the next section.

Participants

The purposeful sample included six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors from provinces and territories throughout Canada. The women provided informed consent and completed the demographic form by e-mail or online to meet the criteria to participate in the study. A participant was a unit of analysis in the study.

I uploaded the demographic forms to NVivo to collect case information assigned to case classifications and attribute values. Case classifications were descriptive information about cases obtained from the demographic form, which included data on an e-mail address, province or territory, industry sector, background, skills, organizational appointment, number of board years, number of board seats, and role of participant. The case classifications framework generated using NVivo indicates the fields of the demographic form (see Figure 7).
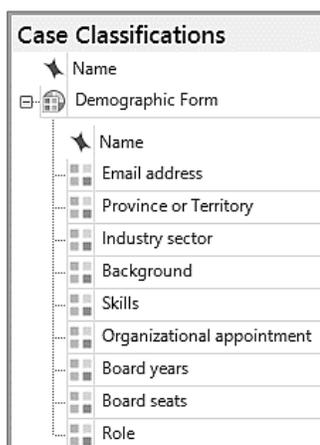
Figure 7. Case classifications framework generated using NVivo.

I assigned each participant a code to anonymize the data collected, thereby assuring privacy and confidentiality. The participant codes used were Participant P01, P02, P03, P04, P06, and P09 for all related data collected from interviews, journal notes, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. The codes used appeared as labels on participants' demographic forms (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Participant code	Province or territory	Industry sector	Background/ skills	Organizational appointment	Board years	Board seats	Role
P01	Alberta	Private	Law/ municipal and nonprofit boards	Business as usual	2	1	Board member
P02	Ontario	Private	Finance/ leadership	Business as usual	4	1	CEO
P03	Quebec	Public	Engineer/ chemical	Financial threat	4	1	Board member
P04	Ontario	Public	Entrepreneur board executive/ private multinational	Merger and acquisition	10	1	Committee chair
P06	Ontario	Private	CEO and boards/ corporate governance and leadership	Business as usual	10	1	Committee chair
P09	Quebec	Public	Town council/ human resources	Business as usual	5	4	Board member

Note. Information obtained from the participants' demographic forms online.

Alberta, Quebec, and Ontario are the provinces in Canada with the highest population growth based on the 2016 Census of Population (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Participants were from the following provinces: Ontario, which ranks first in population;

Quebec, which ranks second; and Alberta, which ranks fourth. I used the data from the

demographic forms to generate numbers of participants by provinces and territories (see

Figure 8).

Number of Participants by Provinces and Territories
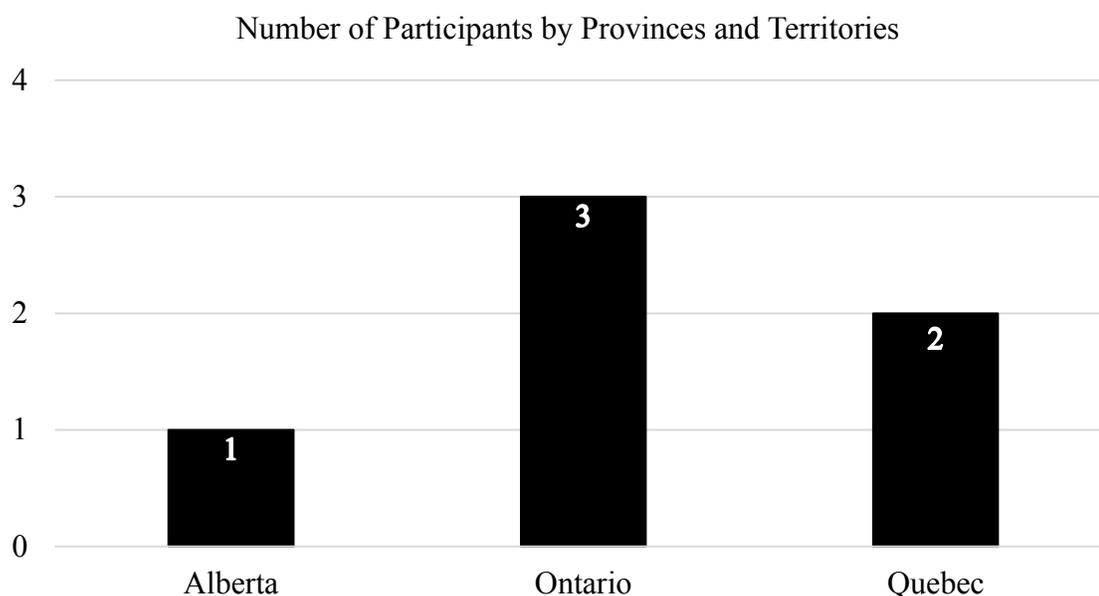
Figure 8. Number of participants by provinces and territories.

The numbers of participants representing the provinces and territories of Canada

were similar to the order of highest population of Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta. Women

in other provinces and territories expressed interest in participating in the study, but they

did not submit the consent form or complete the demographic form by e-mail or online.

Industry representation data indicated that there were three participants from the

public sector and three from the private sector. A 50:50 industry-sector split between the

participants provided a cross-sectional analysis of the study results. I used the data from

the completed demographic forms to generate the number of participants by industry

sector (see Figure 9).

Number of Participants by Industry Sector
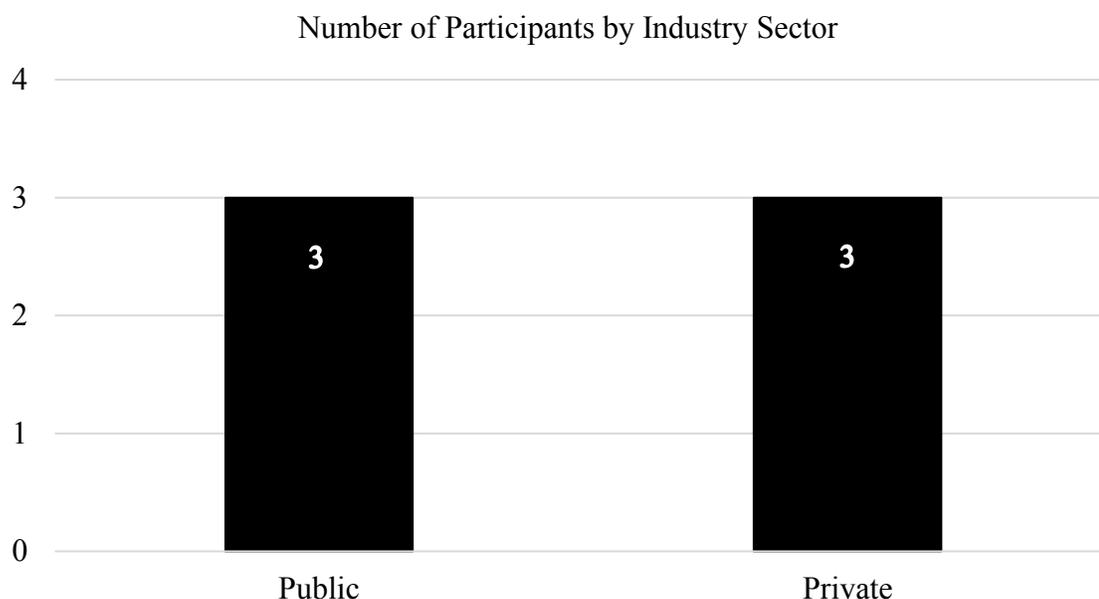
Figure 9. Number of participants by industry sector.

I used the data collected from participants from the public and private sectors for cross-sectional analysis. Participants' backgrounds included experiences in roles such as CEO, engineer, an entrepreneur with years of board executive experience, finance, multiple board seats, law, and town council. Participants included in their skills: experience on municipal and nonprofit boards, chemical engineering, human resources, leadership, Canada, U.S., private, multinational, corporate governance, growth, and transitions.

A question related to the organizational loss was on the demographic form to allow participants to indicate what was occurring in their organization at the time of their appointment to a corporate board. *Organizational loss* refers to the loss of control by an organization's management to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness

(Vanstraelen & Schelleman, 2017). Participants selected *financial threat*, *merger and acquisition*, and *business as usual*; none indicated that organizational loss was occurring at the time of their appointment to a corporate board. I used the demographic forms to generate data on the number of participants by organizational appointment (see Figure 10).

Number of Participants by Organizational Appointment
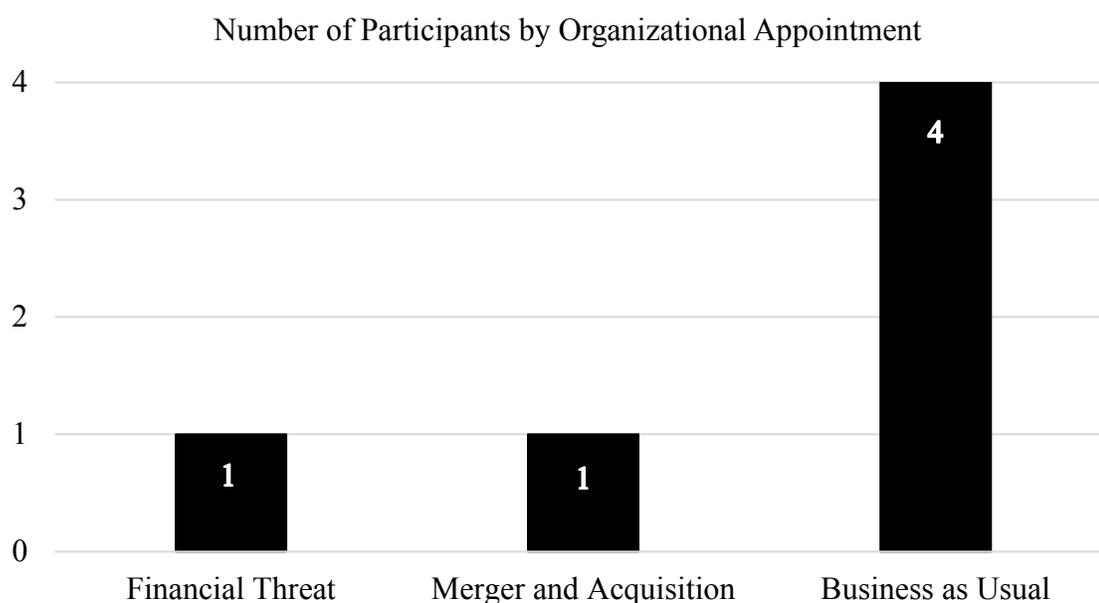
Figure 10. Number of participants by organizational appointment.

Four participants indicated that it was business as usual at their organizational appointment. Three came from the private sector. Participants had between 2 and 10 years of experience on corporate boards.

Five of the six participants held one board seat in their current roles. A decision they made was to focus and commit their time to serve a single corporate board rather than hold multiple board seats. One participant who had retired held four board seats because of her ability to allocate her time to similar interests and to work holistically.

Participants held CEO, committee chair, and board member positions. The committee chair role included the role of board chair, as indicated by two participants in their semistructured interviews. I used the data from the demographic forms to generate the number of participants by role on corporate boards (see Figure 11).

Number of Participants by Role on Corporate Boards
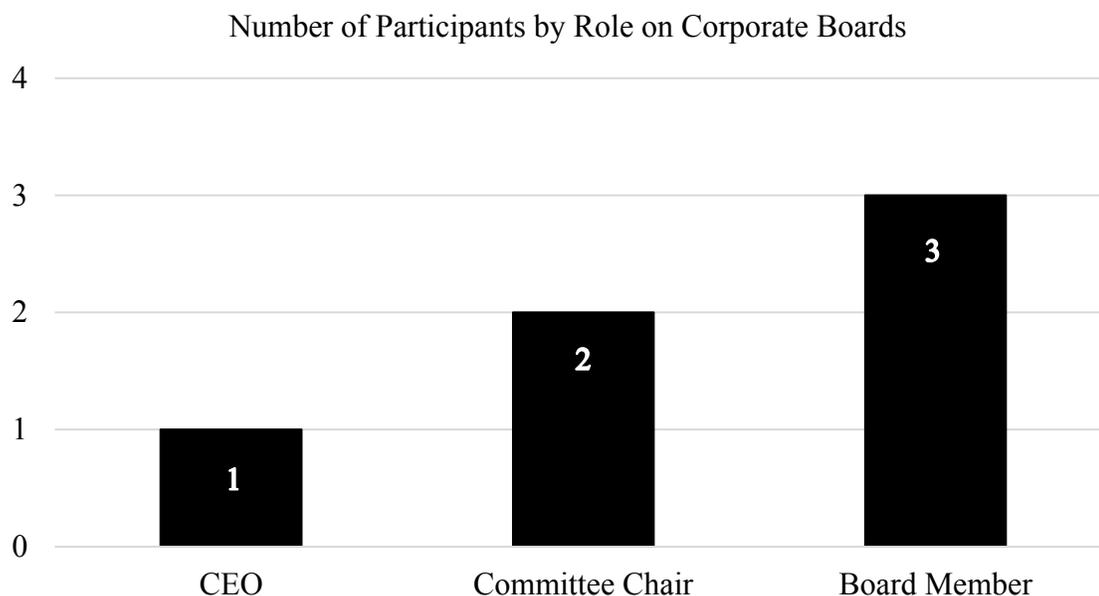
Figure 11. Number of participants by role on corporate boards.

Three participants held the role of board members, the most represented role by participants in the study. One CEO and two committee chairs completed the roles of participants. In the next section, I explore the data collection techniques I used in the study.

Data Collection

Data collection started on March 23, 2017, following Walden University IRB approval (Approval Number 03-22-17-0540517). The data collection phase ended on July 10, 2017, when data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such

as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards did not produce any new themes, thereby indicating saturation. Evidence of data saturation in themes emerged during the third semistructured interview with Participant P04 because her responses to the open-ended questions were similar to the responses combined from Participant P01 and P02. In the sixth interview with Participant P03, I did not discover any new data or themes in the semistructured interview compared to responses combined from Participants P01, P02, P04, P06, and P09.

Evidence of data saturation in themes emerged in journal notes that included the themes of discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. Similarly, evidence of data saturation in themes emerged in the analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards, which indicated themes such as stereotyping, bullying, and the "old boy's club". I performed methodological triangulation of the data sources to answer the research question. I discuss in detail attaining data saturation in the Study Results section.

In 109 days of data collection, I coordinated five tasks: making initial contact, conducting semistructured interviews, journaling, analyzing physical artifacts, and member checking by the participants of the study. I documented the study methodically to develop rigor in the process and create an audit trail. A Gantt chart of the timeline of the study generated using Microsoft Project on my personal computer on March 17, 2017, indicated the detailed tasks of data collection (see Figure 12).

ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	1st Half	2nd Half
					Jan | Mar | May	Jul | Sep
1	Data collection	109 days	Thu 3/23/17	Mon 7/10/17		
2	Start data collection	0 days	Thu 3/23/17	Thu 3/23/17	◆ 3/23	
3	Initial contact	71 days	Thu 3/23/17	Fri 6/2/17		
4	1. Message on social media	67 days	Thu 3/23/17	Mon 5/29/17		
5	2. Email invitation to participate	48 days	Tue 4/11/17	Mon 5/29/17		
6	3. Consent form and demographic form	48 days	Tue 4/11/17	Mon 5/29/17		
7	4. Follow up email to schedule a semistructured interview	50 days	Thu 4/13/17	Fri 6/2/17		
8	Semistructured interviews	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
9	5. Placing the call	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
10	6. Starting the semistructured interview	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
11	7. Conducting the semistructured interview	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
12	8. Notifying the participant of the scheduled duration of the semistructured interview	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
13	9. Closing the semistructured interview	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
14	10. Ending the call	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
15	11. Semistructured open-ended interview questions	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
16	Journaling	109 days	Thu 3/23/17	Mon 7/10/17		
17	12. Reflective journaling	109 days	Thu 3/23/17	Mon 7/10/17		
18	Physical artifacts	109 days	Thu 3/23/17	Mon 7/10/17		
19	13. Analyze physical artifacts	109 days	Thu 3/23/17	Mon 7/10/17		
20	Member checking	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
21	14. Analyze and interpret the interview transcripts	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
22	15. Prepare synthesis of the interpretation in two pages	84 days	Mon 4/17/17	Mon 7/10/17		
23	16. Provide a saved copy of the synthesis to the participant	82 days	Wed 4/19/17	Mon 7/10/17		
24	17. Obtain confirmation from participant the synthesis is accurate	80 days	Fri 4/21/17	Mon 7/10/17		
25	18. Continue member checking process until no new data to collect	80 days	Fri 4/21/17	Mon 7/10/17		
26	Complete data collection	0 days	Mon 7/10/17	Mon 7/10/17		◆ 7/10

Figure 12. Gantt chart of the data collection timeline of the study. Participant recruitment, scheduling and conducting semistructured interviews, journaling, analyzing physical artifacts, and member checking occurred simultaneously over a total duration of 109 days.

The five tasks included 18 processes, such as sending a message on social media and conducting the semistructured interview with the open-ended questions (see Appendices B and F). These processes occurred simultaneously after 25 days had elapsed from sending the message on social media to receiving the first informed consent and completed demographic form because the recruitment of participants took longer than expected. I managed the data collection processes by documenting the actual completion of the tasks against the plan.

Initial Contact

I started the initial contact to recruit participants for the study on March 23, 2017, and I completed these contacts on June 2, 2017. I sent 1,116 messages on social media to

my contacts, which included individuals, groups, and organizations with networks across

Canada. I used LinkedIn, Facebook, Researchgate, and YouTube social media sites to

send the message Canada-wide.

A Facebook advertisement of the message from April 5 to May 5, 2017, reached

65,080 individual sites and 200 views. A YouTube video presentation of the message

posted on April 12, 2017, received 27 views. I performed a Google search for the

message on social media of the study on May 17, 2017 (see Figure 13).
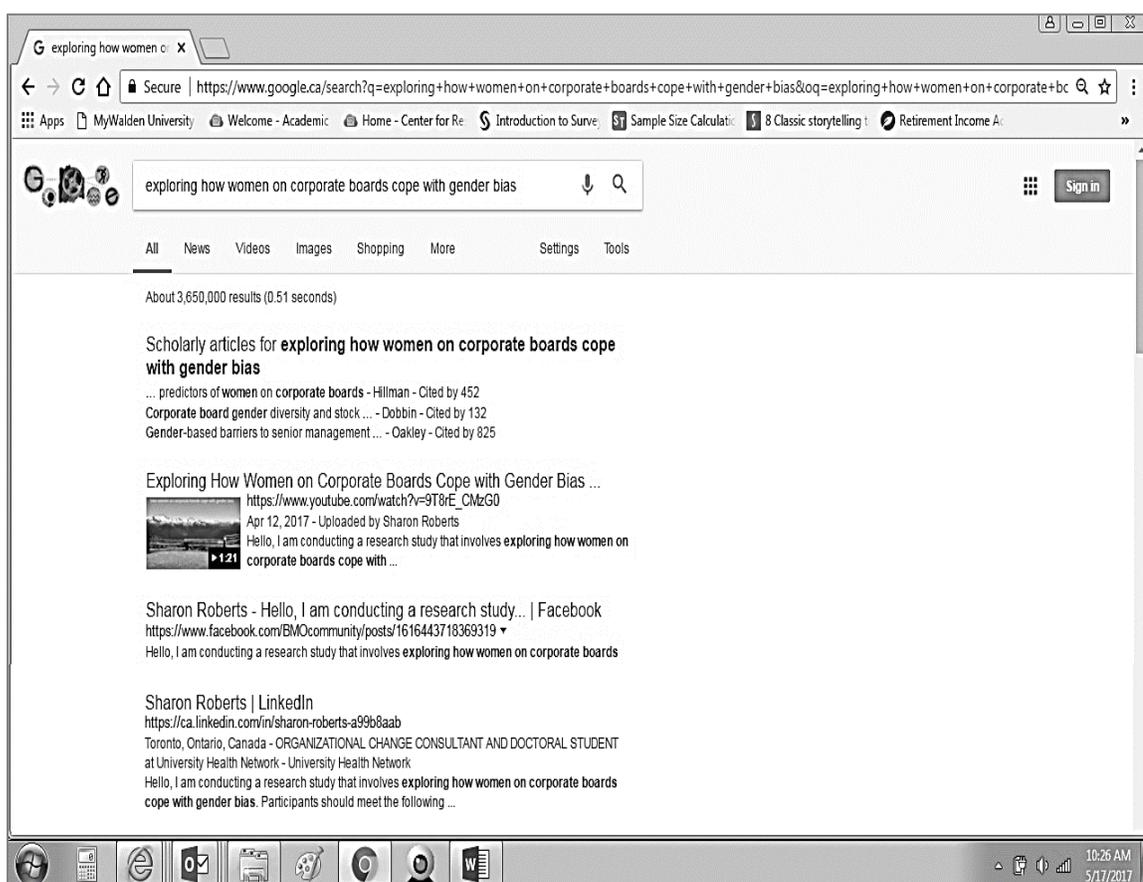
Figure 13. Message on social media on a Google search list dated May 17, 2017. A search for the words "exploring how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias" led to the message on YouTube, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The study had a worldwide presence of about 3,650,000 results using social media.

My contacts of individuals, groups, and organizations had diverse backgrounds, such as parliamentarians, celebrities, public figures, women professional clubs, women business owners, and CEOs. Groups included academic and nonacademic entities, such as universities, and special interest groups, such as women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Organizations included private sector financial institutions, legal firms, and consulting firms, and public sector community groups such as the YWCA, newspapers, magazines, and e-newsletters.

I discovered conference postings on my Twitter account from connections that included the UN Women Canada's Global Women Network and Women in the World conferences on gender equality, both held in April 2017. TheBoardlist opened on April 25, 2017, at the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) in Canada that featured women in technology who were available for board seats. The Facebook page for TheBoardlist provided new contacts to send my message on social media to board members and organizational sponsors.

I followed the data collection plan as presented in Chapter 3 with a minor variation in the process. Some participants sent an e-mail to me for more information on how to participate in the study, as expected. Other participants sent their e-mail address to participate in the study on Facebook in responding to my message on social media. I responded to these 30 potential participants by sending the e-mail invitation to participate in the study to their e-mail addresses (see Appendix C).

A source of recruitment for participants was either unknown, in response to the message on social media, or from snowball sampling. Snowball sampling involves

purposefully selecting new data collection units as an offshoot of existing units (Yin, 2011). As an illustration, Participant P04 referred my study to Participant P06 by way of an e-mail introduction to me.

Some potential participants, such as Participants P05, P07, and P08, indicated they could not participate in the study because they were busy and lacked time or availability due to meetings. I did not receive informed consent. They sent apologies for not participating, wishes of good luck in the research, and interest in reviewing the findings when completed. Other women who were eager to participate in the study but hesitant to speak up also sent a similar message.

I received informed consent and completed demographic forms online from six women. I sent these participants the follow-up e-mail to schedule semistructured interviews and confirmed date, time, and telephone numbers to call (see Appendix E). Data collection progressed with an accumulation of data from multiple data sources. I discuss data collection of interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards that included identifying emergent themes.

Interviews

Some participants responded immediately or took up to 14 days to confirm schedules for a semistructured interview. Participants indicated they were busy with annual general meetings, traveling, and attending conferences. I kept a log for an audit trail of the semistructured interviews that included the participant codes used, date, permission to audio record, start time, end time, and duration in minutes (see Table 2).

Table 2

Semistructured Interview Log Organized by Participant Code

Participant code	Date in 2017	Permission to audio record	Start time	End time	Duration in minutes
P01	Monday, April 17	Yes	9:00 AM	9:51 a.m.	51
P02	Monday, May 1	Yes	11:00 AM	11:19 a.m.	19
P03	Monday, July 10	Yes	1:30 PM	1:46 p.m.	16
P04	Tuesday, May 23	Yes	12:00 PM	12:59 p.m.	59
P06	Monday, June 12	Yes	9:00 AM	9:43 a.m.	43
P09	Thursday, June 15	Yes	9:30 AM	10:02 a.m.	23

I followed the IRB-approved procedures and documented each step of the process methodically to cover all aspects of the interview protocol (see Appendix A). I conducted the first semistructured interview on April 17, 2017, and last on July 10, 2017, at the specified dates, times, and telephone numbers to call. Participants did not choose a Wednesday or Friday for a semistructured interview, and Monday (4 of 6 [67%]) was the most preferred day.

I received permission from each participant to audio record the semistructured interview. The preferred time of day was in the morning, with two exceptions that took place in the afternoon. Duration of the semistructured interviews ranged from 16 to 59 minutes. I conducted notes taken to create a written account of each participant's semistructured interview.

I remained flexible to allow participants to answer the open-ended questions based on their responses. I used probing questions that were suitable in exploring any areas that needed more detail to understand the meaning behind answers or follow-up on

phrases used by participants to describe a situation. Similarities in communication styles between the participants during the semistructured interviews became evident throughout the process.

I found it challenging to account for six time zones across Canada. Participants scheduled their semistructured interviews based on their setting. For example, I became disturbed on the day of the semistructured interview with Participant P04. I thought I did not adjust for the time differences in my calendar. The situation became apparent the morning after a holiday weekend on May 23, 2017, when I thought I needed to call a different time zone and missed the call because my calendar did not include a note. After a few anxious minutes, I discovered that I lived in the same time zone as Participant P04.

Self-doubt can affect interviewers despite preparations and using an interview protocol. Time zones were the most significant disrupter to my state of mind, which I addressed going forward by noting the time zone for each semistructured interview scheduled and time difference in the calendar subject line. The visual reminder helped me to acknowledge my preparation and confirmed the correct time for the semistructured interviews going forward.

Journaling

I began my reflective journal on March 23, 2017, to record my thoughts and emotions during the data collection process. I recorded how I felt when I received my first informed consent and completed demographic form from Participant P01. I realized profound respect for this participant, which was humbling for me. A researcher who can mitigate his or her lens can interpret the perception of participants in a study (Fusch &

Ness, 2015). As the researcher, the adjustment was to attain a state of neutrality technique known as reflexivity to neutralize any preconceived ideas about the participant and her perceptions of gender bias on a corporate board. The practice of reflexivity includes journal note taking of a researcher's emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). I quickly contained my emotions and adjusted to attain a state of neutrality as the researcher.

I was the data collection instrument. I wrote short notes and expanded them in my reflective journal before and after a semistructured interview. A qualitative analysis of journal contents to explore the interpretation of a central phenomenon can cause the reduction of content into essential elements and refined further into themes (Mayes, Dollarhide, Marshall, & Rae, 2016). Journaling assisted me to identify themes in the contextual data by hearing and interpreting how gender bias caused participants to develop coping strategies to help them to be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment.

I used thematic analysis of my journal notes to reduce the data into groupings. Data reduction into meaningful groupings can involve using a block and file approach (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). As an illustration of a block and file approach, I highlighted manually a group theme such as discrimination in my journal notes related to the semistructured interview with Participant P01.

Physical Artifacts

I analyzed the physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards that I had collected during the literature review. Government

reports included *Women in Canada at a Glance: Statistical highlights 2012* (Statistics Canada, 2015), *Women on Boards* (Status of Women Canada, 2016), and *Women and Paid Work* (Moyser, 2017) are available to the public as a source of statistical data for women and girls in Canada. The laws included the *Constitution Act, 1982: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Department of Justice, 2017), *Charter of Human Rights Act, 1985* (Department of Justice, 2017), and *Rights of Women* (Government of Canada, 2017).

Government databases included *Statistics Canada: Latest Indicators* (Statistics Canada, 2016) such as data related to the labor force and *Statistics Canada: Women and Paid Work* (Statistics Canada, 2017). *Statistics Canada: Census of Population 2016* (Statistics Canada, 2017) is an online interactive database that allows individuals to select variables such as age and income by geography.

Other reports included *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone* (Jahan, 2016) and the *Gender Inequality Index (GII)* (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). Physical artifacts related to global trends and strategic focus of women on corporate boards included *Paving the Way to Opportunities: Women in Leadership Across the Commonwealth* (Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013) and *Commonwealth Secretariat Study on Gender Differences in Leadership Styles and The Impact Within Corporate Boards* (Patel & Buiting, 2013). *Gender and Leadership: Reflections of Women in Higher Education Administration* (Dunn, Gerlach, & Hyle, 2014) and *Cultivation of Virtuousness and Self-Actualization in The Workplace* (Fernando & Chowdhury, 2016) completed this group of physical artifacts.

I included consulting reports such as *Time for Change: Recruiting for Europe's Boardroom*s (Deloitte, 2013) and *Women in the Boardroom: A Global Perspective* (Deloitte, 2015). Other consulting reports included *Women in the Workplace 2016* (McKinsey&Company, 2016) and *Annual Report Card 2016* (Canadian Board Diversity Council, 2016) because of the global perspective of women in leadership positions presented in these reports.

The analysis of physical artifacts and databases such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards added to the methodological triangulation of data sources that also included interviews and journaling to answer the research question. The type of triangulation is a method of data saturation of rich, in-depth data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In my study, the three data sources provided thick, rich information to replicate the study design that I present in detail in the Data Analysis and Study Results sections.

Member Checking

I started to conduct member checking with the participants of the study on April 19, 2017, and completed it on July 10, 2017. Member checking involves a researcher having a continuing dialogue with participants regarding the accuracy of the interpretation and meanings of the interview data (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016; Patton 2015). I prepared and sent a two-page synthesis of analysis and interpretation of the semistructured interview data to participants for member checking. I discuss this limitation, which could have affected my member checking data, in the Limitations section.

In my study, I audio recorded the semistructured interviews to ensure the accuracy of the interview data, but I did not conduct transcription review by participants. A transcript review is to confirm an accurate record of what a participant stated in an interview (Patton, 2015). The method did not provide in-depth data for saturation in my study. For this reason, transcript review was not appropriate for my study.

Methodological triangulation and member checking established trustworthiness and credibility of the study results. I sent a synthesis report to participants within 2 days following the semistructured interview because I wanted to attain the earliest confirmed responses from participants that the analysis and interpretation of the findings were consistent with the interview data collected for the study. Five of six participants confirmed their synthesis reports were accurate. One participant did not respond to her report. In one case, I changed the order of a report based on a participant's feedback to align the content better. To correct this, I reviewed the audio recording and notes taken, made the adjustments, and sent an updated report to the participant for her review and feedback about the report's accuracy.

As the researcher, I stored the audio recordings of the semistructured interview and member checking in NVivo. Member checking provided enhanced trustworthiness and credibility of the study results (Hays et al., 2016). In the next section, I discuss the data analysis using Yin's five phases of analysis for all data sources of interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards.

Data Analysis

Data collected included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards to provide methodological triangulation to answer the research question. Data collection and data analysis occurred together (Miles & Huberman, 2013). My experience with the first semistructured interview helped as a source for comparison with other participants, which provided a lens to collect useful data and identify potential themes to explore further.

I used Yin's five phases of analysis to enable inductive, emerging, and interpretive inquiry for my study. Yin's five phases of analysis and their interactions comprise a nonlinear cycle: compiling a database, disassembling data, reassembling data, interpreting data, and concluding the data (Yin, 2011). I discuss inductively, emerging, and interpretive inquiry using Yin's five phases of analysis in my study.

Yin's Five Phases of Analysis: Compiling

I uploaded data collected to NVivo for analysis. Compiling can involve creating a database in an organized way in preparation for analysis (Yin, 2011). I created for each participant a case study database in NVivo for storage and data management to include the collected data. The data uploaded to NVivo included audio recordings and notes taken during the semistructured interviews conducted by telephone, synthesis reports for member checking, reflective journal notes using reflexivity, and analysis of physical artifacts. A folder framework generated using NVivo indicates a tree structure for storage and management of the data (see Figure 14).
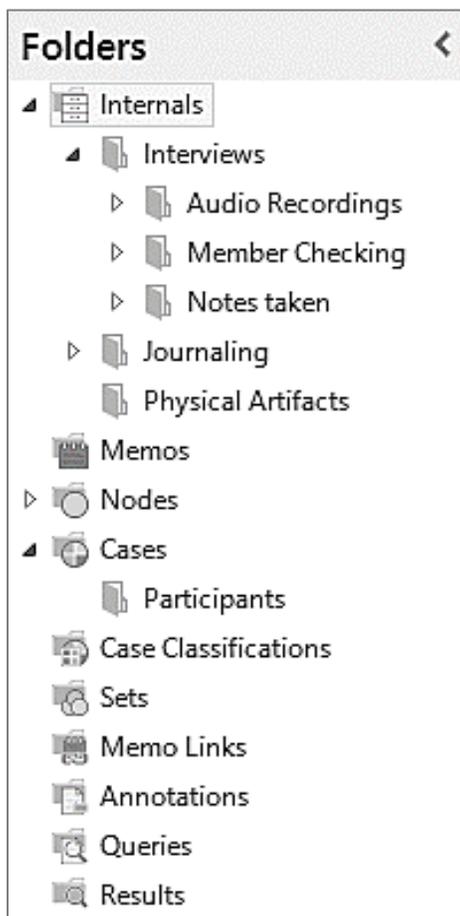
Figure 14. Tree of folders generated using NVivo.

The name of a folder identified the type of data stored in that folder. A subfolder included information related to the participants such as member checking folder included synthesis reports of the semistructured interviews. In my study, the data collected was thick in quantity and rich in quality. In qualitative research, thick data such as in case notes can produce large amounts of textual data, and rich data is multilayered, complex, and has depth (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). I conducted data collection and analysis simultaneously to explore the data contextually for emergent themes inductively.

Yin's Five Phases of Analysis: Disassembling

I manually coded concepts and ideas from the sources of data to identify themes. Data sources were interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases for methodological triangulation to answer the research question. I wanted to be close to the data, to develop an in-depth view of the data, and to make sense of the data.

The disassembling phase involved breaking down compiled data into fragments and labels to categorize the data. Disassembling can include coding and sorting data in several ways to create new insights (Yin, 2011). The coding process of contextual data obtained from the sources of data involved making a series of interpretations of context analysis using queries such as searching for frequently occurring words and phrases (Katikireddi, Bond, & Hilton, 2014). As the researcher, I analyzed the data and used NVivo to assist in the process, but I performed analysis of the data after NVivo sorted the data and generated tables.

Interviews. In Chapter 3, I used the literature sources to develop the open-ended questions that addressed the research question of the study (see Appendix F). These sources served as context for the interview questions and data. Alignment between the research question and components that included experiences dealing with a gender bias that influenced role, affected board dynamics, and coping strategies to deal with gender bias with the interview questions were color-coded to indicate pathways (see Figure 15).
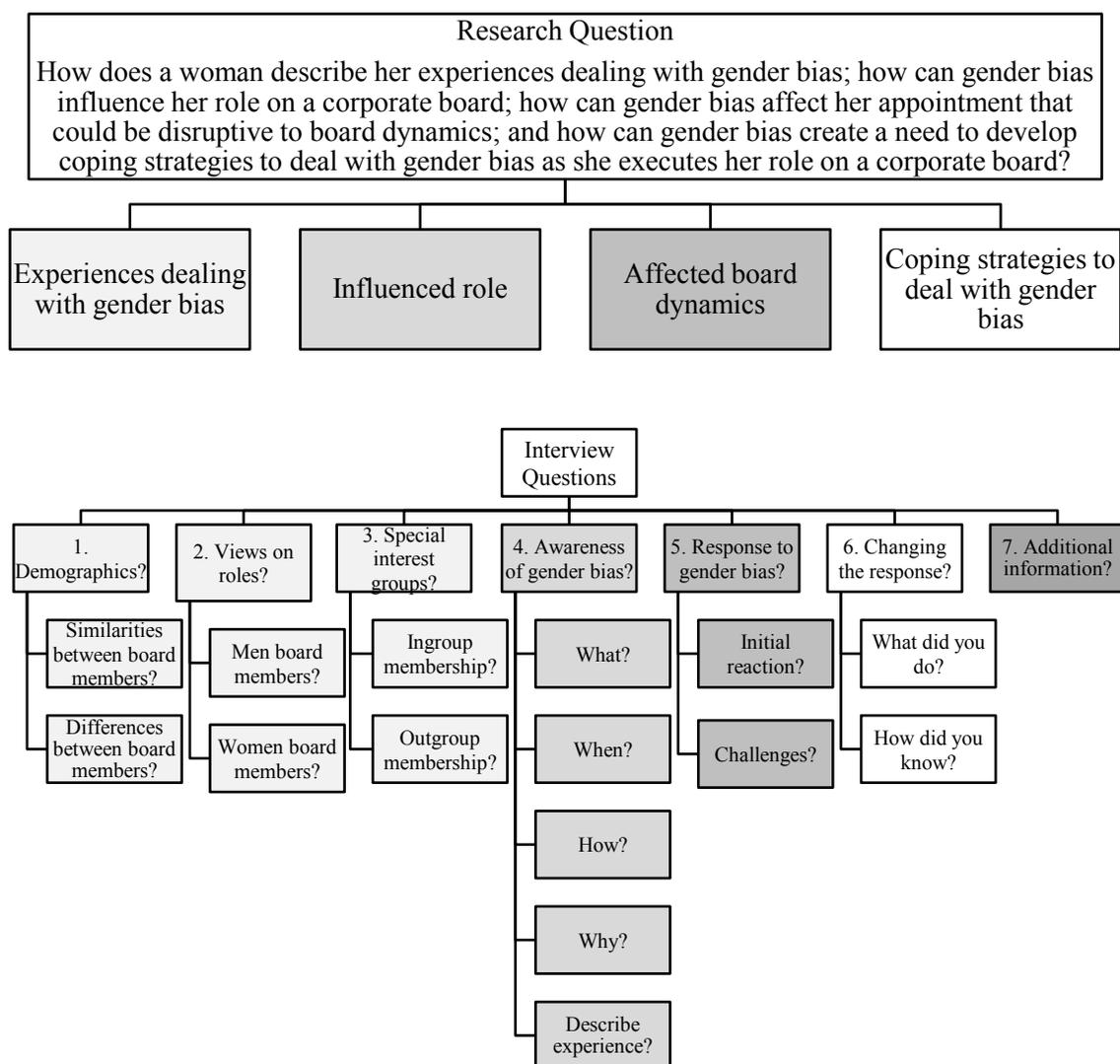
Figure 15. Research question alignment with the interview questions of the study.

A component of the research question based on experiences dealing with gender bias aligned with interview questions 1, 2, and 3. Influenced roles aligned with interview question 4. Affected board dynamics aligned with interview question 5. Coping strategies to deal with gender bias aligned with interview question 6, and additional information aligned with interview question 7 (see Table 3).

Table 3

First Cycle Codes of Interviews Used for Categorizations of Research Question

Components of the research question	Interview questions	Categorizations
Experiences dealing with gender bias	1. What demographic similarities and differences exist between board members? 2. What views do you have about the difference in the roles of men and women board members? 3. What are the special interest groups that distinguish themselves from ingroup and outgroup board membership?	Acknowledgment

Influenced role	4. How did you become aware of your experiences with gender bias?
	   a. What have you experienced as gender bias in the boardroom?
	   b. When did you experience gender bias at your appointment, interacting with board members, in your role?
	   c. How do you know this is gender bias?
	   d. Why do you think gender bias was directed towards you?
	   e. How do you describe your experience with gender bias?
		Awareness

Affected board dynamics	5. How did you respond to your experience with gender bias?
	   a. What was your initial reaction to gender bias?
	   b. What challenges did you experience with gender bias?
		Response

Coping strategies to deal with gender bias	6. How did you change your experience with gender bias?
	   a. What did you do in your response to address gender bias?
	   b. How did you know if this was successful in addressing gender bias?
		Change of response

Other question	7. What additional information would you like to add that is related to gender bias or any other aspect of your corporate board experiences?	Additional information

I used Saldana's (2012) First Cycle method for the initial coding of data based on themes of the interviews. Theming the data can identify codes in the form of sentences to convey participants' meanings (Onwuegbuzie, Frels, & Hwang, 2016). I used first cycle codes of interviews to generate categorizations of the research question.

The first cycle of codes based on the alignment of the research question with the interview questions identified categories such as acknowledgment, awareness, response, change of response to gender bias, and additional information. Acknowledgment involved recognition of something done or received by an individual (Evers & Deng, 2016). Awareness involved selective attention processing events that can bias an individual's perception in favor of noticeable information in the environment that can adapt behavior (Bourgeois, Neveu, & Vuilleumier, 2016). Response involved a reply or a reaction to an event by an individual (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Change of response involved a change in behavior to an event that was different from before the event by an individual. The additional information involved submission of data not previously reported by an individual.

Journaling. I used thematic analysis of my journal notes to reduce the data into groupings. Data reduction into meaningful groupings can involve using a block and file approach such as to highlight themes in the data (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). I mapped four components of the research question: experiences dealing with gender bias, influenced role, affected board dynamics, and coping strategies to deal with gender bias to thematic groupings generated in the journal notes and color-coded to indicate pathways (see Figure 16).

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                           Research Question                                │
│  How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how   │
│  can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender   │
│  bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics;   │
│  and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to     │
│  deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board?      │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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| Experiences dealing with gender bias | Influenced role | Affected board dynamics | Coping strategies to deal with gender bias |

| Discrimination Harassment | Organizational climate Well-being | Disruption | Empowerment Leading |

Figure 16. Research question alignment with thematic groupings of the journal notes. The thematic groupings were discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading.

A component of the research question based on experiences dealing with gender bias aligned with themes discrimination and harassment. Influenced role aligned with themes organizational climate and well-being. Affected board dynamics aligned with theme disruption. Coping strategies to deal with gender bias aligned with themes empowerment and leading.

I used Saldana's (2012) First Cycle method for the initial coding of data based on themes of the journal notes. The first cycle of codes based on the alignment of the research question with thematic groupings of the journal notes included categories of discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. I used first cycle codes of journaling to generate categorizations of the research question (see Table 4).

Table 4

First Cycle Codes of Journaling Used for Categorizations of Research Question

Components of the research question	Journaling	Categorizations
Experiences dealing with gender bias	Age Being a woman	Discrimination Harassment
Influenced role	Old boy's club Stress	Organizational climate Well-being
Affected board dynamics	Exclusion	Disruption
Coping strategies to deal with gender bias	Mentor relationship Purposeful goal	Empowerment Leading

Gender-based discrimination is an overt action taken against a woman by a man

or a woman (Bruce, Battista, Plankey, Johnson, & Marshall, 2015). Harassment is any

negative interpersonal interaction individuals use to create an intimidating, hostile, or

offensive working environment (Neall & Tuckey, 2014). A component of the research

question based on experiences dealing with gender bias aligned with categorizations of

discrimination and harassment in my journal notes.

Organizational climate emerges from social information process that concerns

meaning individuals attach to policies, practices, and procedures they experience and

behaviors they observe that leadership rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider,

Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). An individual's well-being provided a sense of self, embedded

in a wider system of recognition, and misrecognition of capabilities, social integration,

security, and processes to benefit an individual (Atkinson, 2013). A component of the

research question that influenced role because of gender bias aligned with categorizations

of organizational climate and well-being in my journal notes.

Disruption can destabilize an individual characterized by confusion, deliberate

threats, external pressures, resource limits, sensitivity, and connectivity to other individuals (Fiksel, Polyviou, Croxton, & Pettit, 2015). The onset of disruption can be frequent changes in external factors beyond an individual's control with intentional attacks aimed to cause harm, influences that create constraints or barriers, limitations on performance, controlled conditions for integrity, and degree of interdependence and reliance on external entities (Fiksel et al., 2015). A component of the research question that affected board dynamics because of gender bias aligned with the categorization of disruption in my journal notes.

Empowerment is a meaningful shift in experiences of power attained through an individual's interactions in the social world that can build confidence, connections, and consciousness of authenticity in an individual (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). Leading is to adopt a virtuous behavior based on a journey toward an ideal self, which takes courage to choose who an individual becomes and work in excellence to attain humanness (Fernando & Chowdhury, 2016). A component of the research question is coping strategies to deal with gender bias aligned with categorizations of empowerment and leading in my journal notes.

Physical artifacts. I used contextual analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. The contextual richness of a real-life phenomenon has potential to provide insights into *how* and *why* the phenomenon occurs in a setting (Yin, 2011). I mapped four components of the research question: experiences dealing with gender bias, influenced role, affected board dynamics, and coping strategies to deal with gender bias to the frequently occurring text from

analysis of physical artifacts that were color-coded to indicate pathways (see Figure 17).

Research Question			
How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board?			
Experiences dealing with gender bias	Influenced role	Affected board dynamics	Coping strategies to deal with gender bias
Diversity Gender imbalance CEO experience Special interest groups Identity	Family Organizational climate Lone female Old boy's club Age Exclusion Lack of equity Being a woman Targeted Harassment Discrimination Violence Expectations of society Bullying Stereotyping	Entrepreneurship Well-being Empowerment Leaving Stress Disruption	Advocacy for change Impression management Relationship building Networking Purposeful goal Skill building Knowledge building Efficacy Leading Mentor relationship

Figure 17. Research question alignment with a contextual analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards.

I used Saldana's (2012) First Cycle method for the initial coding of data based on themes of contextual analysis of physical artifacts. The coding process of the contextual data involved making a series of interpretations using queries such as searching for frequently occurring words and phrases (Katikireddi, Bond, & Hilton, 2014). The first cycle of codes based on the alignment of the research question with a contextual analysis of physical artifacts included seven major themes of discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading with 33 minor

themes. I used first cycle codes of analysis of physical artifacts to generate

categorizations of the research question (see Table 5).

Table 5

First Cycle Codes of Physical Artifacts Used for Categorizations of Research Question

Components of the research question	Physical artifacts	Categorizations
Experiences dealing with gender bias	Age	Discrimination
	Being a woman	
	Gender imbalance	
	Stereotyping	
	Lack of equity	
	Lone female	
	Bullying	Harassment
	Violence	
Influenced role	Old boy's club	Organizational climate
	Special interest groups	
	Diversity	
	Identity	
	Stress	
	Family	Well-being
	Expectations of society	
Affected board dynamics	Role challenge	Disruption
	Leaving	
	Targeted	
	Exclusion	
Coping strategies to deal with gender bias	Efficacy	Empowerment
	Entrepreneurship	
	Skill building	
	Knowledge building	
	Mentor relationship	
	Networking	
	Relationship building	
	Purposeful goal	Leading
	Support system	
	Inclusion	
	Advocacy for change	
	CEO experience	
	Impression management	
	Governance	

Yin's Five Phases of Analysis: Reassembling

I searched for patterns in cross-case analysis of the data using NVivo to generate

visual displays such as tables and figures. Reassembling can include categorizing,

tabulating, and recombining data such as using the cross-case analysis to discover

patterns to answer the research questions (Yin, 2011). I coded and analyzed the data

manually before creating a model in NVivo for efficiency (see Figure 18).

Nodes		
Name	Sources	References
Organizational climate	86	2406
Special interest groups	86	2406
Old boys club	82	2401
Diversity	78	2396
Identity	74	2391
Empowerment	86	2406
Efficacy	86	2406
Entrepreneur	82	2401
Skill building	81	2399
Relationship building	81	2399
Networking	81	2399
Knowledge building	77	2394
Mentor relationship	77	2394
Leading	86	2406
Purposeful goal	86	2406
Support system	86	2406
Inclusion	82	2401
Advocacy for change	78	2396
CEO experience	77	2394
Impression management	77	2394
Governance	69	2384
Discrimination	78	2396
Age	78	2396
Gender imbalance	78	2396
Lack of equity	74	2391
Stereotyping	74	2391
Being a woman	73	2389
Lone female	70	2386
Disruption	75	2392
Role challenge	76	2394
Leaving	74	2391
Targeted	74	2391
Exclusion	71	2387
Harassment	74	2391
Bullying	74	2391
Violence	74	2391
Well-being	74	2391
Stress	74	2391
Expectations of society	74	2391
Family	70	2386

Figure 18. Node framework generated using NVivo.

I used the create function to generate a new node in NVivo to represent a theme. Researchers use nodes to collate information in one place to help to identify emerging patterns in the data based on a theme (Houghton et al., 2017). The empowerment node graphic generated using NVivo indicated connections between the data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards (see Figure 19).
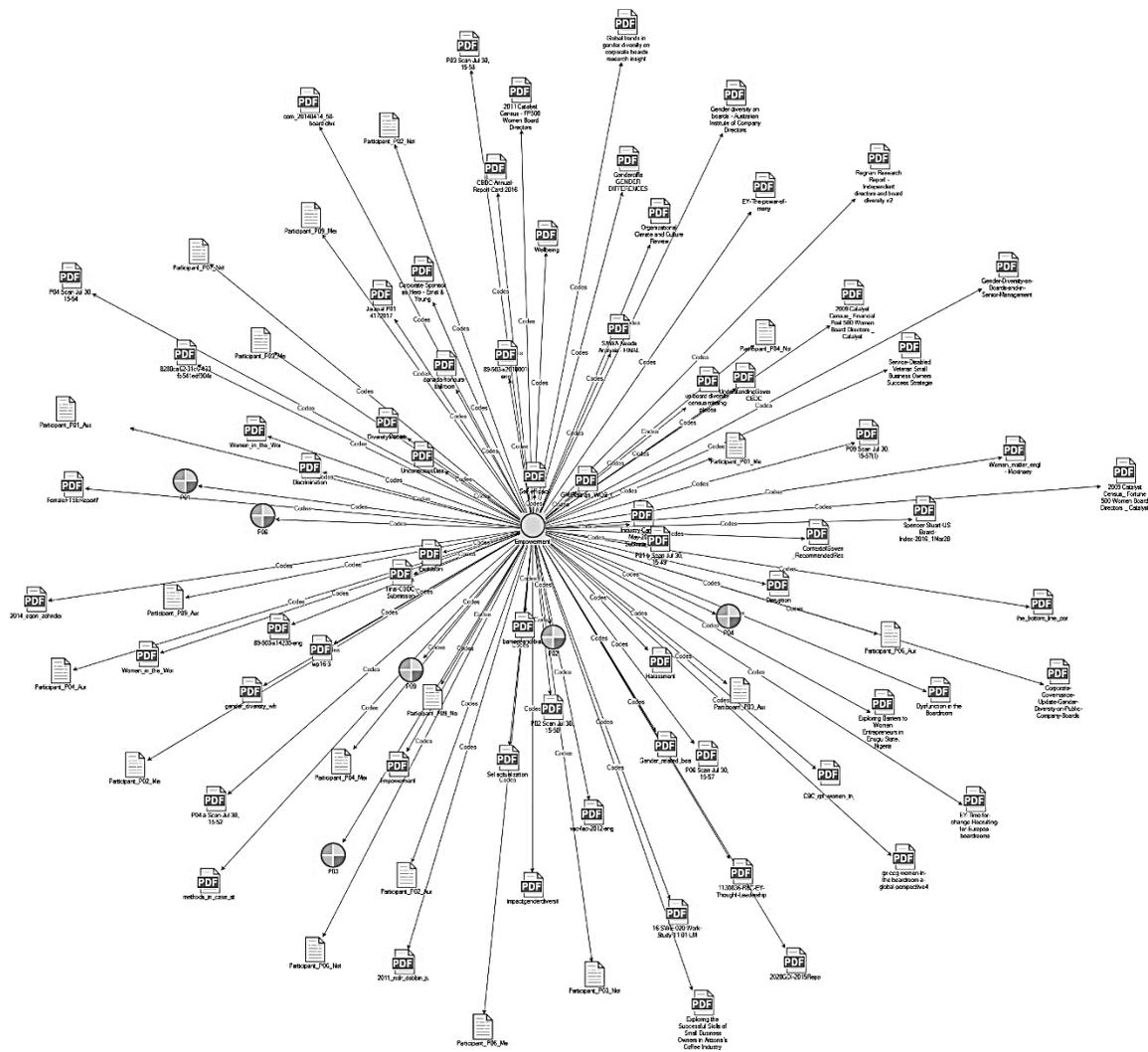
Figure 19. Empowerment node generated using NVivo.

I used NVivo for cross-case and cross-sectional analysis of the data to generate tables and figures in the Study Results section. Emerging codes can reflect conceptual meaning that NVivo can translate into graphical models for analysis (O'Connell, 2013). Patterns that emerged in the data were common such as having a family, a support system, purposeful goal, skill building, and mentor relationship that I discuss in detail in the Study Results section.

Yin's Five Phases of Analysis: Interpreting

I questioned the meaning of recurring concepts, such as discrimination and identity to ensure the themes were complete, fair, empirically accurate, credible, and ensure they added value. Interpreting can include methodological triangulation of sources of evidence to provide meaning of the data and answer the research questions (Yin, 2011). The type of triangulation can ensure the data are rich (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The interpretation stage involves creating narratives from sequences and groups for conclusions.

The interview questions had five categorizations that were acknowledgment, awareness, response, change of response to gender bias, and additional information. The journal notes categorizations were seven major emergent themes of discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards generated categorizations of 33 minor themes.

Six minor themes related to discrimination: age, being a woman, gender imbalance, stereotyping, lack of equity, and a lone female in the boardroom. Two minor

themes related to harassment: bullying and violence. Four minor themes related to

organizational climate: the old boy's club, special interest groups, diversity, and identity.

Three minor themes related to well-being: stress, family, and expectations of society.

Four minor themes related to disruption: role challenge, leaving, targeted, and exclusion.

Seven minor themes related to empowerment: efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building,

knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. Seven

minor themes related to leading: a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion,

advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance.

A pathway emerged that connected categorizations between the research question

with participants' response to the semistructured interview, major emergent themes of the

journal notes, and the minor themes of the analysis of physical artifacts such as

government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. The seven emergent

themes and 33 minor themes formed a narrative that described a pathway the participants

of the study experienced with gender bias and how they cope with it. A participant's

acknowledgment, awareness, response, change of response to gender bias, and additional

information based on major emergent themes connected the minor themes to the literature

reviewed in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework of the study.

I discuss the pathway in Chapter 5 in the Interpretation of Findings section to

describe findings of the study that confirmed and added to the body of knowledge related

to gender bias, the conceptual framework, and answered the research question. In the

Implications section, a positive social change occurred at the individual, organizational,

and societal levels. The section includes recommendations for practice of the findings. I

illustrate the pathway in a descriptive narrative in Chapter 5 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Major and Minor Emergent Themes Related to Research Question

Components of the research question	Interview questions categorizations	Journal notes major emergent themes	Analysis of physical artifacts minor themes
Experiences dealing with gender bias	Acknowledgement	Discrimination	Age
			Being a woman
			Gender imbalance
			Stereotyping
			Lack of equity
			Lone female
		Harassment	Bullying
			Violence
Influenced role	Awareness	Organizational climate	Old boy's club
			Special interest groups
			Diversity
			Identity
		Well-being	Stress
			Family
			Expectations of society
Affected board dynamics	Response	Disruption	Role challenge
			Leaving
			Targeted
			Exclusion
Coping strategies to deal with gender bias	Change of response	Empowerment	Efficacy
			Entrepreneurship
			Skill building
			Knowledge building
			Mentor relationship
			Networking
			Relationship building
	Additional information	Leading	Purposeful goal
			Support system
			Inclusion
			Advocacy for change
			CEO experience
			Impression management
			Governance

I illustrate methodological triangulation to include one table per theme from NVivo to indicate the frequency of occurrence of themes in the data sources of interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards to answer the research question. I present findings based on components of the research question that include experiences dealing with gender bias, influenced role, affected board dynamics, and coping strategies to deal with gender bias. I discuss in detail methodological triangulation of the data sources in the Study Results section.

Yin's Five Phases of Analysis: Concluding

Concluding the data analysis involved making recommendations for future research in the field of study. Concluding can include answering the research questions based on the study results (Yin, 2011). I provide recommendations for future research based on any new concepts, theories, human social behaviors, or propositions and a broader set of situations in the Study Results section.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I have described and documented research procedures of the study in Chapter 3 in the Methodology section for review and critique by a reader for transparency. In my study, the unique behavior of a case was a woman on a corporate board in Canada who had experienced gender bias at the time of her appointment and in her role on a corporate board was not generalizable to all women. Reasonable measures to address methodological and design limitations of the study included quality of the research design to address issues of trustworthiness in the study results. In this section, I explore the

issues of trustworthiness using criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study results.

Credibility

I implemented credibility without adjusting credibility strategies noted in Chapter 3, which were using multiple sources of data and collecting strategies that provided evidence and converged into believable conclusions. Five of the six participants agreed that the analysis and interpretation of their semistructured interviews for member checking were accurate. Participant P06 did not respond to my e-mail to confirm the accuracy of the synthesis report for member checking. Data quality included thick, rich information that I reduced from complex data to extract themes using coding, tables, and figures to describe themes and patterns in the data to indicate the validity of the study results. I used reflective journal notes and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question.

Transferability

I implemented transferability without adjusting transferability strategies stated in Chapter 3, which was using a purposeful sample of six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors throughout Canada. I continued to collect data until attaining data saturation. Saturation occurs when no new information, coding, and themes occurring and when the ability to replicate the study design exists (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I attained data saturation on three levels. First, I

saturated all data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards that did not produce any new themes.

Evidence of data saturation in themes emerged during the third semistructured interview with Participant P04 because her responses to the open-ended questions were similar to the responses combined from Participant P01 and P02. In the sixth interview with Participant P03, I did not discover any new data and themes in the semistructured interview data compared to responses combined from Participant P01, P02, P04, P06, and P09. Evidence of data saturation in themes emerged in the journal notes that included discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. Similarly, evidence of data saturation in themes emerged in the analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards such as stereotyping, bullying, and the old boy's club.

Second, I attained a state of neutrality as the researcher during the data collection process because my emotions were controlled, and I had no influence on the study results. Third, in my study, the three data sources included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards provided thick, rich information to replicate the study design. Transferability is a criterion for trustworthiness that could occur if a researcher can determine if the study results are transferable to his or her situation (Bengtsson, 2016). Researchers could decide whether to use transferability of the study design.

Dependability

I implemented dependability without adjusting dependability strategies noted in Chapter 3, which was to enhance dependability by establishing stability in themes presented using qualitative strategies such as audit trails to track changes to coding decisions. Labels used were stable and not changing frequently in categorizations, thematic, and contextual analysis of themes in the data sources (Mayes, Dollarhide, Marshall, & Rae, 2016). In my study, the data sources were interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and database of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question.

Quantifying coded themes of the participants provided evidence of convergence in the data. A woman's orientation, initiation rituals to work and teams, and socialization on jobs are subject to cultural gender bias (Seron, Silbey, Cech, & Rubineau, 2016). Repeating my study could lead to similar study results because gender bias experienced by the participants occurred in different settings and at different times in their careers transcending occupations, cultures, and professional socialization to undermine their confidence during their career development.

Confirmability

I implemented confirmability without adjusting confirmability consistency strategies noted in Chapter 3, which was to control any researcher bias using reflective journaling based on reflexivity and enhance confirmability by consistently using an interview protocol (see Appendix A). I made three assumptions for the study. The first assumption was the participants of the study responded to the interview questions

honestly and did not conceal or omit any information that could distort the study results.

The second assumption was the participants did not have access to the technology needed to support an interview using the Internet, such as a high-speed Internet connection. The third assumption was that interviewing by telephone mitigated any bias during the interview between interviewer and interviewee. I checked the study results against these three assumptions to confirm the research.

Study Results

The overarching research question was as follows: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board? I supported the overarching research question using multiple sources of data that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question.

In this section, I discuss the data sources to support emergent themes of discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. I provided evidence that could add to the body of knowledge related to gender bias, an updated conceptual framework, and tables generated by NVivo to indicate the occurrence of themes in the data. I used methodological triangulation to demonstrate data saturation based on a theme to answer the research question. I discuss if any discrepant cases or nonconfirming data where applicable.

Emergent Theme 1: Discrimination

The discrimination theme occurred in 75% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Six minor themes of discrimination included age, being a woman, gender imbalance, stereotyping, lack of equity, and a lone female in the boardroom. Minor themes occurrence in the data ranged from 50% to 75% (see Table 7).

Table 7

Emergent Theme 1: Discrimination

Discrimination	Semistructured interviews Participants						Journaling	Physical artifacts	Percentage
	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09			
Age	x		x	x		x	x	x	75%
Being a woman			x	x	x		x	x	63%
Gender imbalance	x		x	x	x			x	63%
Stereotyping	x		x	x			x	x	63%
Lack of equity	x		x	x				x	50%
Lone female	x			x			x	x	50%

Interviews. Participants described discrimination using terms such as physical differences between themselves and board members based on race and religion because of their appearances. Gender-based discrimination is an overt action taken against a woman by a man or a woman (Bruce, Battista, Plankey, Johnson, & Marshall, 2015). In my study, some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) shared their experiences of overt discrimination toward them in the semistructured interview data.

Participant P01 stated,

I am a young visible minority in a male-dominant profession who struggled to

find my voice in the boardroom, present my ideas of inclusion, and representation

in the firm. Assumptions about me and my appearance, which was different from

the majority of the board members of older homophobic White men, I became an

object of stereotyping to a race, religion, and its practices of which I had no

associations (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P03 responded,

"I am young to be on a board and hold board positions" (semistructured interview,

July 10, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 stated,

I was the first woman in a senior role in an organization. Individuals' that I

encountered did not expect women as leaders and providers. I continued to work

during my pregnancy because of my beliefs. I returned to work sooner than

expected because peers undermined my efforts while I was on maternity leave and

had to rearrange my family's lives. I was reminded by peers that I was with

family and need not to be at work. A financial institution requested a male

involvement to secure funds for my business of which I did not comply and

eventually got the funding for my business. My experience of gender bias of

being devalued, degraded and humiliated was because I am a woman

(semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Participant P06 said,

My experience with gender bias was in a situation where my goal was to be a

board chair for a private organization. I lost the role because I was not a male and

did not have an accounting or law degree. I am aware, and women known to me

are aware of the subtleties of gender bias and not naïve that being a woman does

put oneself at a disadvantage despite having the same skills as some men

(semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant did not confirm the synthesis report for the analysis and

interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking.

Participant P09 replied,

It is easier to start on boards when young but important to have a good support

system as a woman (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P09, personal communication, June 20, 2017).

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to discrimination such as age, being a woman, stereotyping, and a lone female in the boardroom from the semistructured interviews. I share the journal notes related to discrimination toward participants from my reflective journal. Some participants (4 of 6 [67%]) indicated gender, age, and race were discriminatory behaviors they experienced dealing with gender bias in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

Is she getting emotional? What am I hearing? It is a relief for her to be talking

about it. The voice of a woman who needed to be heard. Her passion is strong

about her experience with gender bias at the most profound level. Things we may

ignore that can make a difference to an individual's success was consciously

intimidating to her daily (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

I hear a determined, articulate woman describe why she is a leader. She is familiar

being around males because of the industry and school she grew up in but still

they underestimate her just because she is a woman and under 40 years old does

not mean she cannot do the job (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

Impressive. A family member in hospital but she committed to meet with me by

telephone in a private room in a hospital in Canada. A fascinating speaker, and

articulate. I hear the emotion in her voice describing how the treatment by a board

chair, the bank, and peers towards her attempted to reduce her to nothing just

because she is a capable and intelligent woman (journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Journal notes on P06,

What a refreshing interview. Calming but insightful. Although she says, she does

not experience gender bias she was passed over for a board chair position because

of being a woman (journal notes, June 12, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P09,

Participant P09 now retired has a wealth of experience in the field of board

governance. A no-nonsense and get on with it individual (journal notes, June 15,

2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports

and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to demonstrate the minor

themes of discrimination such as age, being a woman, gender imbalance, stereotyping,

lack of equity, and a lone female in the boardroom. Some questions come to mind such as

what does the law say about discrimination and was discrimination experienced by the

participants against the law. I share the analysis of physical artifacts related to the

discrimination theme.

Department of Justice. (2017, August 1). *Constitution Act, 1982: Canadian Charter of*

Rights and Freedoms. Retrieved from http://www.laws-

lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html

Canada's Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms indicates that every

individual is equal before and under the law. An individual has the right to equal

protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic

origin, color, religion, sex, age, mental, or physical disability (Department of Justice,

2017). Some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) in my study indicated they were the lone female

in the boardroom or had no support from the few women on a corporate board.

Participant P01 stated, "A lack of women on the board and at the firm did not mask the

lack of support from the few senior women on the board and their disinterest in me and

my situation" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). Some participants were without

support from other women in leadership positions and peers. Participant P04 stated, "I

thwarted attempts to destabilize me by peers" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

Participant P01 said, "I came to the realization that peers, assumed to be allies, did not

care about me but looked out for themselves" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

A woman experiencing discrimination without proof such as a witness could find it

difficult to challenge her experiences were against the law without evidence and support

to a claim.

Department of Justice (2017, September 22). *Canadian Human Rights Act, 1985*.

      Retrieved from http://www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/H-6/FullText.html

      The Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) of 1977 protects equality, equal

opportunity, fair treatment, and an environment free of discrimination (Government of

Canada, 2017). As identified in my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) indicated

experiences dealing with gender bias toward them because of being a woman limited

their advancement in the boardroom, undermined their efforts, and challenged their

character. Participant P06 indicated, "I lost the role because I was not a male", and,

"Being a woman does put oneself at a disadvantage despite having the same skills as some men" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). Women continue to face challenges balancing their work and family obligations (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2016).

An individual's compliance with the CHRA is discretionary and in the hands of an organization's leadership, which could be male dominant. A woman in such an environment could experience gender bias toward herself. I suggest that some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) in my study did experience acts of discrimination toward them that was against the law because of their gender, age, and race. Participant P04 stated, "My experience of gender bias of being devalued, degraded and humiliated was because I am a woman" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Gender Inequality Index (GII)*.

Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) referred to discrimination as a barrier to women (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). Women excluded in decision-making process occupied inferior positions to initiate transformative change in organizations (Jahan, 2016). In 1969, Johnson a trailblazer in STEM at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) calculated the first moon landing (NASA, 2017). Johnson, an African-American woman, shared some lessons learned in her career that included, "Love learning, follow your passion, do what you love and love what you do, pay it forward, and encourage the younger generation" (NASA, 2017). The characteristics that Johnson indicated such as mentoring other women, all participants (6

of 6 [100%]) of my study were mentors to women in leadership positions in Canada.

Participant P09 reported, "I play a significant role for women at the national level to be

Canadian leaders, but I lament that what is missing is the lack of more women role

models and mentoring at all levels of society in general" (semistructured interview, June

15, 2017). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based

on women who use discrimination as an incentive to become more effective in their

leadership styles that could minimize the effects of gender bias on themselves and other

women in an organization.

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, some participants

described the discrimination they experienced dealing with gender bias based on age,

being a woman, gender imbalance in the boardroom, stereotyping, lack of equity, and a

lone female in the boardroom. Overt discrimination can explain harmful or intimidating

actions or utterances towards an individual (Bruce et al., 2015). I discuss the body of

knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Age. An individual could interpret another individual's generational choice as a

threat to his or her quality of work and life (Heath, 2016). In Canada, adulthood refers to

individuals over 18 years of age. A young adult perceived to lack leadership experience

can experience intergenerational conflict with older adults (Levy, & Macdonald, 2016).

In my study, the journal notes indicated some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) were younger in

age of over 20 years old and under 40 years old to the other participants and had

perceived they experienced more discrimination toward them because of their youth in

the boardroom. Journal notes, "Participant P03 is a woman and under 40 years old does

not mean she cannot do the job" (journal notes, July 10, 2017). Based on gender, age, and race, human interactions were a source of gender bias toward women in leadership positions and members of a minority group were at a disadvantage in the boardroom (Vongas & Al Hajj, 2015).

  Being a woman and stereotyping. Gender stereotype roles that limit men and women to what they should do could promote gender bias in an organization to hinder careers and performance of women (Heilman, 2012). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) shared intimidating actions toward them by individuals stereotyping race or religion. Participant P01 said, "Assumptions about me and my appearance, which was different from the majority of the board members of older homophobic White men, I became an object of stereotyping to a race, religion, and its practices of which I had no associations" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). Men and women can influence the behaviors and respect from others but face an understanding of ethical dilemmas such as cultural stereotyping (Fredricks et al., 2014). Cultural stereotyping was evident towards some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) in my study who did not reveal their race because of this form of bias. Participant P04 stated, "I am uncomfortable when individuals are devalued because of their ethnicity, sex, and race" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Gender stereotyping makes the experience of less favorable behaviors from others more difficult for women in leadership positions than for men (Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016).

  Discrimination toward women with families directly related to assumptions associated with gender stereotypes, such as not promoting women with children (Smith,

2014). In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) faced multiple forms of discrimination such as challenges with behaviors by peers when pregnant and in motherhood that made a participant return to work sooner than expected after childbirth. Participant P04 stated, "I was reminded by peers that I was with family and need not to be at work" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Some women suffer the consequences of lost income, missed promotion opportunities, and increased conflict in raising their family while working (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

Gender imbalance, lack of equity, and lone female. A board member's gender and age diversity contributed significantly to strategic decision-making process, as a resource and influencer (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013). Evidenced in my study was participants were trailblazers, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) were the lone female in the boardroom, but they recognized gender bias toward them was their opportunity for a greater purpose by understanding why they were on a corporate board. Participant P04 stated, "Women should not lose their humanness. Being nervous and scared when I was the only female in the room became an opportunity for a greater purpose. Find the strength and remind myself of why I am here, why I am doing this" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). An individual's influence as a board member contributed to the sensitivities of board issues, such as his or her connections to stakeholders and access to information to benefit an organization (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013).

Conceptual framework. In my study, the discrimination theme occurred in 75% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the

conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of gender bias to indicate discrimination was behavior that women on a corporate board experienced dealing with gender bias.

Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Gender stereotyping makes the experience of less favorable behaviors from others more difficult for women in leadership positions than for men (Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016). The role congruity theory of prejudice provided the link between concepts of gender bias and leadership (Holck et al., 2016). Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. I provide the updated conceptual framework with findings at the end of the Study Results section.

Emergent Theme 2: Harassment

The harassment theme occurred in 63% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Two minor themes of harassment included bullying and violence. Minor themes occurrence in the data was 63% (see Table 8).

Table 8

Emergent Theme 2: Harassment

| | Semistructured interviews Participants | | | | | | | Physical | |
Harassment	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09	Journaling	artifacts	Percentage
Bullying	x		x	x			x	x	63%
Violence	x		x	x			x	x	63%

Interviews. Participants described harassment using terms such as bullying by male board leaders, voice silenced, sexist behaviors, violence toward women, and derogative language. *Harassment* is any negative interpersonal interaction individuals use to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (Neall & Tuckey, 2014). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) shared several perceptions of harassment in the semistructured interview data.

Participant P01 replied,

Opposition by some board members towards me because of my talk of change and moral consciousness against derogative behaviors was to ignore and silence me. Violence, yelling, and accusations of sexual harassment towards the few women on the board and in the firm, was normal (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P03 stated,

My experience with gender bias was I had a member of the committee yelled at

me or screaming that he was not happy. It was not because I was a woman, but it

did not help. I think if I was a man, I am not sure the board member would have

been so aggressive with me the way he did (semistructured interview, July 10,

2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 responded, "The language used by men devalued me as a woman in

leadership, mother, and entrepreneur. Bullied by a male board leader, I was alone and left

to stand up for what I knew was right" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to harassment

such as bullying and violence from the semistructured interviews. I share the journal

notes related to harassment toward participants from my reflective journal. Some

participants (3 of 6 [50%]) indicated they experienced aggressive behaviors toward them

in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

I hear the fear in her voice. I hear regret for not shutting up. Participant P01 is

hurting (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

> Although Participant P03 is dismissing the intimidating, hostile, and aggression
> by the board member toward her, this may be an unpleasant experience for her
> (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

> Participant P04 seems experienced in managing a bullying male board leader. She
> mentioned having evidence and being prepared a lot. I think Participant P04 has
> learned to live with discrimination. Fearless (journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to indicate the minor themes of harassment such as bullying and violence. Workplace bullying is negative interactions such as incidences of victimization and patterns of mistreatment (Neall, & Tuckey, 2014). I share analysis of physical artifacts related to the harassment theme. United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Gender Inequality Index (GII)*.

Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii

An expectation of women was that it is "normal" to experience harassment from men. Harassment is a barrier against women that include bullying (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) spoke up against bullying and violence by speaking up against the behavior of individuals who demonstrated this behavior toward them. Participant P01 stated, "Opposition by some board members towards me because of my talk of change and moral consciousness

against derogative behaviors was to ignore and silence me" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). The double bind is the limits of men's behaviors that some women experience when attempting to influence and engage a group toward a common goal (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Similar to discrimination, harassment, was another barrier against women for speaking up increase the behaviors of bullying and violence toward women.

McKinsey&Company. (2016). *Women in the workplace 2016.* Retrieved from

https://www.womenintheworkplace.com/

In a study related to anti-harassment and discrimination, training in organizations evidenced that the behaviors exceeded employee bias training by more than 40% (McKinsey&Company, 2016). In my study, a participant who reported derogative behaviors became a scapegoat and targeted for removal from the board. Participant P01 said, "I became a scapegoat in spite of other individual's expressing similar concerns" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). In a study about the corporate women waiting for board appointments, 24% of employees surveyed indicated managers challenged gender-biased language and behaviors regularly (McKinsey&Company, 2016). Some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) in my study indicated they reported events related to harassment but became a target and excluded from decision-making. Participant P01 stated, "Complaints increased about me for speaking up that led the board to become upset with me creating an unpleasant tension" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

In my study, indicated women threatened the social status of men in leadership. Participant P02 responded, "Gender bias was a traditional attraction to comfort that

preserves the old boy's club" (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017). The old boy's club was a climate of exclusion, unawareness of their mistakes, and a lack of recognition of women's capabilities (Carr, Gunn, Kaplan, Raj, & Freund, 2015). Inductively, women are a threat to maintaining boards that are in favor of keeping to traditional ways of male-dominance. Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on the inclusion of women in the boardroom is a threat to the social status of men in leadership positions.

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, some participants described the harassment they experienced dealing with gender bias based on minor themes of bullying and violence. Harassment is any negative interpersonal interaction individuals use to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (Neall & Tuckey, 2014). I discuss the body of knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Bullying and violence. The social and cultural response to gender, age, and violence is complex (Kaladelfos, & Featherstone, 2014). Some women experience sexual harassment in education, business, and politics (Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) acknowledged verbal attacks of harassment directed toward them because of bullying was because of their being in a leadership position such as a board chair. Participant P04 stated, "Bullied by a male board leader, I was alone and left to stand up for what I knew was right" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

Academics use the term *microaggression* to describe exclusion and verbal attacks

of harassment (Hill et al., 2016). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) who were young and wanted to make changes in the boardroom perceived they experienced discrimination and harassment increases. Participant P03 noted, "I think if I was a man, I am not sure the board member would have been so aggressive with me the way he did" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Some women are a target for harassment by men if, men view the women as a threat (Berdahl, 2007).

My journal notes indicated harassment of some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) did affect them emotionally. Journal notes, "Although Participant P03 is dismissing the intimidating, hostile, and aggression by the board member toward her, this may be an unpleasant experience for her" (journal notes, July 10, 2017). Barriers related to gender bias exist at micro, meso, and macro levels, such as control of women's voices, male organizational culture, constraints on women's choices, gender unconsciousness, and harassment toward women culturally in society (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016).

In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) acknowledged that a hostile work environment could potentially affect other areas of a woman's life such as her well-being and family conflict, which can be alleviated with a support system such as a mentor relationship. Participant P04 stated, "The language used by men devalued me as a woman in leadership, mother, and entrepreneur" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Some women are a target for harassment by men if the men view women as a threat can experience harassment from these men in leadership positions (Berdahl, 2007). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on harassment, bullying, and violence toward women in the boardroom.

Conceptual framework. In my study, the harassment theme occurred in 63% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of gender bias to indicate harassment was behavior that women on a corporate board experienced dealing with gender bias.

Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women (Cook & Glass, 2014). Gender stereotyping makes the experience of less favorable behaviors from others more difficult for women in leadership positions than for men (Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016). The role congruity theory of prejudice provided the link between concepts of gender bias and leadership (Holck et al., 2016). Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. I provide the updated conceptual framework with findings at the end of the Study Results section.

Emergent Theme 3: Organizational Climate

The organizational climate theme occurred in 88% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Four minor themes of organizational climate included the old boy's club, special interest groups, diversity, and identity. Minor themes occurrence in the data ranged from 63% to 88% (see Table 9).

Table 9

Emergent Theme 3: Organizational Climate

	Semistructured interviews Participants							Physical	
Organizational climate	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09	Journaling	artifacts	Percentage
Old boy's club	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	88%
Special interest groups	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	88%
Diversity	x		x	x	x		x	x	75%
Identity	x			x	x		x	x	63%

Interviews. Participants described organizational climate using terms such as experiencing tense moments, did all the work, and their values misaligned with an organization. They shared that unenlightened thinking from board members prevented a change in the boardroom. A threat of termination was always imminent, and they were comfortable having an equal voice with other board members. Organizational climate emerges from social information process that concerns meaning individuals attach to policies, practices, and procedures they experience and behaviors they observe that leadership rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) shared their perceptions of organizational climate in the semistructured interview data.

Participant P01 said,

I was unable to internalize the firm's values that led me to speak up about the

misogynist, racist, and sexist behavior displayed by the board members. I led a

couple of key events but received no support from the male board members who

attended the meetings, did not provide their input, did not respond to any of my e-mails, and left me to do all the work. The threat of losing my job, a necessity to support my young family, made it difficult to continue to work in such a climate (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P02 responded,

When men are present in a setting, they assume the expected role of women is to perform administrative tasks and to do all the work. I hold a different perception that gender bias is a nonissue as a leader. I am a leader of a board of women who are comfortable expressing themselves (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P02, personal communication, May 3, 2017).

Participant P03 noted,

A noticeable difference between men and women board members is that the men when they arrive and are new they take more space quickly by asking questions, requesting follow-up, talk more, and are firmer on the board. In contrast, women take more time before they ask questions, raise their hands, ask for follow-up, and more delicate in doing these things. The board is large and sometimes have problems with groups that create themselves into a mini board. My job is to work

hard because the previous board made decisions before arriving at a board meeting depending on the interests of what they think should occur on the board. In the past, the board had tension and many problems because of special interest groups. Three groups existed of which two major groups had different ways of thinking and each had a leader. In the past, this created many problems for the board. The groups included both men and women, but more men took up space in those groups by talking louder (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 stated,

A shift from the old boy's club in the majority to a minority in numbers had created the opportunity for a diverse board and with more females. I came from a country where women were leaders and old boy's clubs did not exist, women had opportunities as business leaders. I lament coming to Canada was like entering an era of 20 years ago where gender bias permeated throughout the entire society and that was a culture shock. Male board members are not open to the opinions of others, drifted, or not engaged (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Participant P06 indicated,

Gender bias is a traditional attraction to comfort. Most boards are comfortable

with their old boy's club, especially on the larger corporate boards. Women have

not occupied the highest level of major corporations, so the pool of individuals

that boards attract are individuals with experience such as a CEO of a bank,

insurance company, large investment house, or in real estate. These individuals

have had the advantage of who they know, and their friends are male. In the

women's world, with fewer women that have the ability to attract to these large

boards do not have an easy time getting there. Gender bias is more evident on

private corporate boards that are still male dominant. In contrast, the not for profit

boards include volunteers and more diverse in gender, age, and race that attracts

women (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant did not confirm the synthesis report for the analysis and

interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking.

Participant P09 replied,

There are more men on corporate boards, in paid positions, and more women than

men are volunteering on public boards. Board member's make decisions

differently such as men readily affirm their roles and are more progressive than

are women. In contrast, women think about it and consult with family, friends,

and other individuals before they make their decisions. Men are more likely to

join forces together or talk together, and try to get to decision-making. Most

disturbing are how the men will get together before a board meeting in a smaller

meeting to decide. In comparison, women wait for group discussions with board members to make the right decision (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P09, personal communication, June 20, 2017).

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to organizational climate such as the old boy's club, diversity, and identity from the semistructured interviews. I share the journal notes related to organizational climate from my reflective journal. Some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) indicated they were on a dominant male board except for Participant P02 in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

I am hearing of a white old boy's club (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P02

A board of women must be a different experience (journal notes, May 1, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

A board within a board making decisions and led by men again (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

Old boy's club (journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P06,

Old boy's club (journal notes, June 12, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P09,

A board within a board making decisions and led by men (journal notes, June 15, 2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to indicate the minor themes of organizational climate such as the old boy's club, special interest groups, diversity, and identity. An organization unknowingly could be promoting unconscious bias in the boardroom. I share the analysis of physical artifacts related to the organizational climate theme.

Moyser, M. (2017, March 9). *Statistics Canada: Women and paid work.* Retrieved from
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14694-eng.htm

More women in the public sector are in leadership positions than in the private sector (Moyser, 2017). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) from the public sector agreed that the diversity of not for profit boards had improved such as the diverse representation of gender, age, and race because of the legislation. Participant P06 indicated, "In the not for profit sector, women are less bias to success and take on roles that do not look perfect (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). The federal government through the employment equity act facilitated a workforce that was representative of the national population and helped to provide employment opportunities to qualified but disadvantaged Canadians that included women (Moyser, 2017).

In 2015, 54% of legislators and senior government managers and officials were women (Moyser, 2017). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) acknowledged that

the old boy's club is a private sector phenomenon in organizations. Participant P06 indicated, "My observations related to gender bias are of private corporate boards are still male dominant and not for profit boards include volunteers more diverse in gender, age, and race that attracts women" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). In 2015, only 25.6% of senior managers in the private sector were women (Statistics Canada, 2017).

EY. (2011). *The corporate sponsor as hero: Advancing women into leadership roles*.

Retrieved from http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-The-corporate-sponsor-as-hero/$FILE/EY-The-corporate-sponsor-as-hero.pdf

An organization's climate could have unstated assumptions about women and their commitment to advancement because of family conflict (EY, 2011). In my study, some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) were business owners and created their environment for work such as a participant had an all-female board. Participant P02 responded, "I am a leader of a board of women who are comfortable expressing themselves" (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017). A wall of pictures of male pass presidents of an organization could be signaling that women do not attain this leadership position in the organization.

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, participants described organizational climate that influenced their role based on minor themes of the old boy's club, special interest groups, diversity, and identity. Organizational climate emerges from social information process that concerns meaning individuals attach to policies, practices, and procedures they experience and behaviors they observe that leadership rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). I discuss the body of knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Old boy's club and special interest groups. An organization's culture could project symbolic traditions that promote gender bias such as a wall covered with pictures of past male CEOs. Some women's values could conflict with an organizational culture they assume to mean leadership positions are unattainable (Diehl, & Dzubinski, 2016). In my study, some participants' (3 of 6 [50%]) values conflicted with an organization, and they chose to leave a corporate board. Participant P01 stated, "I was concerned of being fired, with not many opportunities in the area, and decided to leave the board" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). Women who cannot see themselves as leaders are choosing to leave corporate boards for self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Rowley et al., 2015).

Social changes to corporate boards can activate factional fault lines based on demographic similarities and differences among board members (Veltrop, Hermes, Postma, & Haan, 2015). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) acknowledged the influence of special interest groups created conflict in the boardroom such as influencing decision-making. Participant P02 responded, "Board members do come with an overarching vision of what they are serving for and their agenda of what they want to contribute" (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017). Confirmed by Participant P06 who indicated, "Board members come with personal interests such as in the arts or experts in specialized fields such as accounting and law" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). Participant P09 indicated the manner in which the special interest groups worked and replied, "Men are more likely to join forces together or talk together, and try to get to decision-making. Most disturbing are how the men will get together before a board

meeting in a smaller meeting to decide" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017). Social

categorization among board members who represent special interest groups could create

distinct in-group and different out-group memberships (Veltrop et al., 2015).

   Diversity and identity. Gender diversity refers to the integration of women into

decision-making roles in the boardroom that can create gender bias toward these women

(Cook & Glass, 2014). Four participants (4 of 6 [67%]) in my study indicated to me they

had or were actively involved in their businesses. Participant P06 indicated, "I am a CEO

and part owner of my company in a dominant male industry" (semistructured interview,

June 12, 2017). Gender-based leadership barriers included control of women's voices,

male organizational culture, and constraints to women's choices, gender

unconsciousness, and harassment of women (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016).

   Group interactional dynamics between men and women were dependent on a

group's composition (Schwab, Werbel, Hofmann, & Henriques, 2016). I identified in my

reflective journal that development of a board within a board occurred for some

participants (2 of 6 [33%]) in my study. Journal notes on Participant P03, "A board

within a board making decisions and led by men again" (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Participant P03 noted, "Three groups existed of which two major groups had different

ways of thinking and each group had a leader. In the past, groups created many problems

for the board. The groups included both men and women, but more men took up space in

those groups by talking louder" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Agentic

characteristics of men used to define effective leadership, which includes confidence,

self-reliance, and dominance, which are incongruent to communal characteristics of some

women such as caring for others (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013).

Men managed problems at face value, and women specified a problem as a commitment to solve to improve the quality of life and to serve the public (Seron, Silbey, Cech, & Rubineau, 2016). In my study, Participant P09 reported, "If observed I will try to bring it into the light at a board meeting to realize that some of the decision-making occurred outside of the boardroom. If I notice any collusion between the men, I will try to keep all individuals on track and for everyone to talk about it so that a decision is not of what the men agreed to before the meeting but for all board members to decide" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017). Gender diversity can minimize ethical myopia of homogeneous boards with the inclusion of women to provide a competitive advantage to decision-making (Fredricks, Tilley, & Pauknerová, 2014). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on effort women on a corporate board exert to maintain management and control of board chair because of special interest groups' role in the boardroom.

Conceptual framework. In my study, organizational climate occurred in 88% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of leadership to indicate organizational climate was a consequence of leadership that influenced the role of women on a corporate board because of gender bias.

A gender and leadership link connected barriers that women could experience in

leadership positions. A leadership and identity link to related theories known to researchers and relevant to my study was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination.

The role congruity theory of prejudice provided the link between concepts of gender bias and leadership (Holck et al., 2016). Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. In my study, these theories connected gender bias with gender, leadership, and identity. I provide the updated conceptual framework at the end of the Study Results section.

Emergent Theme 4: Well-Being

The well-being theme occurred in 63% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Three minor themes of well-being included stress, family conflict, and expectations of society. Minor themes occurrence in the data ranged from 50% to 63% (see Table 10).

Table 10

Emergent Theme 4: Well-Being

Well-being	Semistructured interviews Participants						Journaling	Physical artifacts	Percentage
	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09			
Stress	x		x	x			x	x	63%
Family	x			x			x	x	50%
Expectations of society	x			x	x			x	50%

Interviews. Participants described well-being using terms such as perceived as having nothing to contribute to the board, undermined by peers, feelings of isolation, fear of termination, overwhelming stress, emotional anger, disbelief, fear, and anxiety, devalued, degraded, and humiliated, and family conflict. An individual's well-being provided a sense of self, embedded in a wider system of recognition, and misrecognition of capabilities, social integration, security, and processes to benefit an individual (Atkinson, 2013). In my study, some participants (4 of 6 [67%]) shared their perceptions of well-being in the semistructured interview data.

Participant P01 replied,

Told that I was not a good fit I experienced overwhelming stress from peers who isolated and undermined me. I became disheartened about the behaviors I experienced from them. It was too stressful and uncomfortable to continue in that climate and to raise a young family. I became angry because of the social injustice towards me (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P03 responded,

> I had many discomforts and a lot of conflict during this time when I started. I
> faced reality and because I am a structured person, I had to know all my projects
> and files in depth so that they can see I was in control, and knew what I was
> talking. All the preparation before, all the structure, and a lot of follow-up I did to
> be in control and build my credibility. My strategy was to follow-up I had to meet
> a lot with the committee and members of the board regularly. I had to get into a
> relationship with them the committee. I was inviting them to have a drink or eat
> and discuss. I tried to find other ways to build this relationship with them, so I
> used different strategies to be able to gain their respect (semistructured interview,
> July 10, 2017).

> The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 stated,

> My role is to create the right environment for everyone, know who they are, why
> they are on the board, work together, and to show up. I consider the lack of
> accessing the contributions of all board members as wasted opportunities. I am an
> advocate, uncomfortable when individuals devalued other individuals because of
> their ethnicity, sex, and race that leads to a risk of not having robust discussions,

rich experiences, and understandings of the board. I feel it is a waste of a resource

and my responsibility is to be a lone wolf, feel the fear, and stop it. I felt shocked

that my passion and emotion I lived in my role was associated negatively with my

family life (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Participant P06 indicated,

I have good interactions with board members where generative conversations are

meaningful. When a personal bias to something exists, it will become an issue. I

just push forward through gender bias (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant did not confirm the synthesis report for the analysis and

interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking.

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to well-being

such as stress and family conflict from the semistructured interviews. I share the journal

notes related to well-being of participants from my reflective journal. Some participants

(4 of 6 [67%]) indicated their well-being influenced their role in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

Participant P01's family is important to her. I hear how torn she was to leave

clients, but family came first for her. She paused to reflect on the breakdown

between the board and herself (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

> It is lonely at the top. Participant P03 is working her way through obstacles and is a winner. I hear the determination in her voice to succeed. Good for her (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

> I can imagine Participant P04 as a superwoman getting the job done no matter what (journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Journal notes on P06,

> Funny how this interview is so calming but the strength and focus of Participant P06 is evident (journal notes, June 12, 2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to indicate the minor themes of well-being such as stress, family, and expectations of society. A woman's well-being could change her ability to lead a role in future society. I share the analysis of physical artifacts related to the well-being theme.

Janjuha-Jivraj, S., & Zaman, A. (2013). *Paving the way to opportunities: Women in leadership across the Commonwealth*. Retrieved from http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/acca/global/PDF-technical/human-capital/pol-tp-ptwto.pdf

The forces shaping the business environment include changes to social values and expectations of work, globalization, and an aging population (Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) shared the need to fit in with peers

in the boardroom, and have common values with an organization, but the perceptions of family and work created tension for them in their roles. Participant P01 said, "It was too stressful and uncomfortable to continue in that climate and to raise a young family" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). In a future society, women could increasingly fill the demand for leadership positions such as CFOs and accountants (Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013).

Deloitte. (2015). *Women in the boardroom: A global perspective*. Retrieved from

https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/risk/articles/women-in-the-

boardroom-a-global-perspective.html

In the Deloitte (2015) study on women in leadership positions that included 25 countries was a review of initiatives countries were undertaking to further progress of women in the boardroom. Family-friendly policies can help to advance female professionals to leadership positions (Deloitte, 2015). The creation of another layer of protection for women and their rights identified in the law usurps original intent to protect women and in the workplace. Participants in my study have been advancing in leadership positions in the boardroom while some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) cared for their families without family-friendly policies. Participant P04 stated, "I felt shocked that my passion and emotion I lived in my role was associated negatively with my family life" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). The role of the legislature to advance women's representation in the boardroom included the constitution, human rights, and policies (Deloitte, 2015). Legislation has been in place for more than half a century related to gender bias that included discrimination and harassment toward women.

Hill, C., Miller, K., Benson, K., & Handley, G. (2016). *Barriers and bias: The status of women in leadership*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Women (AAUW).

Women seeking leadership positions must balance work and family responsibilities (Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016). Hill et al. (2016) wrote a report to examine the environment for leadership in the classroom, workplace, and politics. The authors identified gaps in gender leadership that included women waiting to advance in leadership positions problem, persistent sex discrimination, caregiving, and women's choices. Similarly, the authors indicated a lack of effective networks and mentors, stereotypes, and bias created a gap in gender leadership.

The report provides a guideline for gender parity that individuals, employers, and policymakers are to enforce to create change (Hill et al., 2016). A new normal of women in leadership positions could mean individuals learn to understand stereotype threat to serve as a defense against any limitations associated with them. Employers could actively encourage mentoring programs to share credibility in the field of interest. Policymakers could create an equitable workplace by enforcing existing laws and women learn to cope with gender bias while organizations and society adjust to change in the environment.

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, some participants described the well-being theme that influenced role based on minor themes of stress, family conflict, and expectations of society. An individual's well-being provided a sense of self, embedded in a wider system of recognition, and misrecognition of capabilities, social integration, security, and processes to benefit the individual (Atkinson, 2013). I

discuss the body of knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Stress. Some women in leadership positions can experience stereotype threats that reduce their well-being at work (von Hippel et al., 2015). In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) associated stress they experienced with difficult situations. Participant P01 stated, "Told that I was not a good fit I experienced overwhelming stress from peers who isolated and undermined me. I became disheartened about the behaviors I experienced from them" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). Stress can be psychological as a result of an event that places special physical and psychological demands on an individual (Misra, & Srivastava, 2016). In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) chose to leave an organization as a means of survival or conform to an environment that had little to offer them in growth and opportunities. Participant P03 noted, "I had many discomforts and a lot of conflict during this time when I started. I faced reality and because I am a structured person I had to know all my projects and files in depth so that they can see I was in control, and knew what I was talking" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). The social context that affects a group and an individual's social identity within the group when exposed to stress can determine the coping strategy they chose to manage stress (Cifre, Vera, & Signani, 2015).

Family. Time spent on housework and child rearing are gendered (Baxter & Tai, 2016). The inter-role conflict between work and family can occur when role pressure in a domain is incongruent to another domain (Crawford, Shanine, Whitman, & Kacmar, 2016). In my study, a participant while on maternity leave from work had experienced peers who undermined her efforts. The participant in my study left her newborn child to

return to work that disrupted her family's lives but thought it was necessary to assert her role at work. Participant P04 stated, "I returned to work sooner than expected because peers undermined my efforts while I was on maternity leave and had to rearrange my family's lives" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). A personal demand on self is the impostor phenomenon that links influence of work on a family creating an internal experience of falsehood for high achievers who have difficulty personalizing their experience of success (Crawford et al., 2016). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on the impostor phenomenon and evaluation of self.

Expectations of society. Some women actively managed and planned for stress-related events by using emotion-focused coping (Murray & Ali, 2016). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) paused and reflected during a semistructured interview when they shared how gender bias influenced their role. Participant P03 noted, "All the preparation before, all the structure, and a lot of follow-up I did to be in control and build my credibility" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) in my study shared they followed up with individuals who confronted them to talk about what happened and build a relationship with these individuals. Participant P06 indicated, "I have good interactions with board members where generative conversations are meaningful" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). The expectation is that women will have more opportunities to break through the glass ceiling, become corporate board members, and fail in their leadership roles (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Conceptual framework. In my study, the well-being theme occurred in 63% of

data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of leadership to indicate well-being was a consequence of leadership that influenced the role of women on a corporate board because of gender bias.

A gender and leadership link connected the barriers that women could experience in leadership positions. A leadership and identity link to related theories known to researchers and relevant to my study was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination.

The role congruity theory of prejudice provided the link between concepts of gender bias and leadership (Holck et al., 2016). Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. In my study, these theories connected gender bias with gender, leadership, and identity. I provide the updated conceptual framework at the end of the Study Results section.

Emergent Theme 5: Disruption

The disruption theme occurred in 88% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Four minor themes of disruption included role challenge, leaving, targeted, and exclusion from decision-making. Minor themes occurrence in the data

ranged from 50% to 75% (see Table 11).

Table 11

Emergent Theme 5: Disruption

| | Semistructured interviews Participants | | | | | | | Physical | |
Disruption	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09	Journaling	artifacts	Percentage
Role challenge	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	75%
Leaving	x			x	x		x	x	63%
Targeted	x		x	x			x	x	63%
Exclusion	x			x			x	x	50%

Interviews. Participants described peers are not allies, competition with peers, a target for removal, use of scapegoat tactics, retreat socially, personal bias, overextend one's influence, and leave a corporate board and labeled this experience as *disruption*. Disruption can destabilize an individual characterized by confusion, deliberate threats, external pressures, and resource limits (Fiksel, Polyviou, Croxton, & Pettit, 2015). In addition to the sensitivity and connectivity to other individuals, disruption can onset frequent changes in external factors beyond an individual's control (Fiksel et al., 2015). Intentional attacks aimed to cause harm, influences that create constraints or barriers, limitations on performance, controlled conditions for integrity, and degree of interdependence and reliance on external entities (Fiksel et al., 2015). In my study, some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) shared several perceptions of disruption in the semistructured interview data.

Participant P01 responded,

My talk of change and moral consciousness of derogative behaviors the board

ignored and silenced me perceived as disruptive to board dynamics creating

opposition towards me by some board members. Complaints increased about me

for speaking up that led the board to become upset with me for creating an

unpleasant tension between them. An unusual atmosphere developed that made it

difficult for me to interact with peers. I became a scapegoat despite other

individual's expressing similar concerns. Perceived as disruptive to board

dynamics and the firm's reputation I became a target for removal from the board.

A lack of women on the board and at the firm did not mask the lack of support

from the few senior women on the board and their disinterest in my situation and

me. An unusual atmosphere developed that made it difficult for me to interact

with peers who increasingly excluded me from decision-making or changed their

minds to provide to me any needed support I came to the realization that my

peers, assumed by me to be allies, did not care about me but looked out for

themselves. I retreated socially from my peers because I was unable to continue in

the toxic environment. Concerned about a firing with not many opportunities in

the area, I decided to leave the board. I gave up (semistructured interview, April

17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P02 stated,

> A gender imbalance board can have different dynamics versus a balanced board
> of more bias where women may feel the need to strut or show their stuff. In an all-
> female board, the dynamics are different such as Type A personalities will want to
> contribute and get things done rather than follow. They compare quantitatively
> those contributions invested with what other individuals contribute that may
> influence board dynamics (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P02, personal communication, May 3, 2017).

Participant P03 noted,

> I knew how to deal with it because in my field, I work with men and it is not
> something that I am afraid of so when those things happen I know how to handle
> them, and I did not go into confrontation with the board member. I just let him
> calm down, and I take care of the situation after the meeting but in the meeting, I
> assume my authority and let him know I am the one who is supposed to decide
> during the meeting. I feel I am still in control and I feel I know how to handle it
> because I work with men. It was not just the men, it was women who in a
> previous experience made me feel I was terrible in my role. When I first started to
> be a chair, of a committee, I was worried, and I believed when people told me it
> was harder to be the chair of a committee. I had to build the credibility, and it
> took me maybe more time than someone else (semistructured interview, July 10,

2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 indicated,

A noticeable difference in board dynamics is that the female board members are very considerate. They bring compassion and ideas of others to the discussions. Male board members tend not to be open to the opinions of others, they drift, or lack engagement. I considered the lack of accessing the contributions of all board members as wasted opportunities. Thwarting attempts to destabilize me by peers I showed up, prepared with evidence, and took control of the environment. I was alone and left to stand up for what I knew was right (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Participant P06 replied,

I have witnessed younger women less experienced with a change the world attitude overextending their influence that tends to get them into difficulties on a corporate board. I share an observation that when a personal bias to something exists it will become an issue. At the board level, the intent is to solve and not create problems. Governance is different from operational understanding

requiring unique skills set as a director rather than a specialist. Gender bias is present in the workplace. It will take time for bias to work its way through the system. Partly because men and women see it differently, but it is a desired trait for a boardroom. Differences of opinion rather than be afraid of it is okay and should not matter because of gender, race, or color (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant did not confirm the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking.

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to disruption such as role challenge, leaving, targeted, and exclusion from decision-making from the semistructured interviews. I share the journal notes related to disruption that affected board dynamics from my reflective journal. Some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) indicated disruptive behaviors in the boardroom affected board dynamics which I observed the effect on participants in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

I hear disappointment in Participant P01's voice that before now she has never shared with an individual. This is a safe environment for her to speak. The consequence of voicing the need for change means targeted. She was isolated (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P02

Participant P02 is positive and upbeat about her board. I hear in her voice her confidence and trust of her board members (journal notes, May 1, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

Participant P03 is a strong and capable woman. Trusting other individuals was a

lesson she learnt the hard way, but she did build her credibility with them. She is

on a learning curve (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

Taking control of the environment is the right thing to do for Participant P04.

Note: women are different from men (journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P06,

I think Participant P06 is saying this well that young women who overextend their

influence may attract gender bias from male board members. Women are different

from men (journal notes, June 12, 2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports

and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to indicate the minor

themes of disruption such as role challenge, leaving, targeted, and exclusion from

decision-making. Board composition could affect group interactional dynamics between

members. I share the analysis of physical artifacts related to the disruption theme.

Janjuha-Jivraj, S., & Zaman, A. (2013). *Paving the way to opportunities: Women in*

leadership across the Commonwealth. Retrieved from

http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/acca/global/PDF-technical/human-

capital/pol-tp-ptwto.pdf

The identification and recruitment of highly skilled women remain a challenge

(Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013). In 1931, Canada was a founding member of the

Commonwealth (The Commonwealth, 2017). Evidenced in my study was that some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) did not rely on an organization to validate them but actively networked with board members to build relationships and their credibility. Participant P03 noted, "I had to build the credibility, and it took me maybe more time than someone else" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Attitudes of individuals have differed across the Commonwealth for developing and nurturing the talent of women for leadership positions (Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013). A common platform for like-minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions reduce any disruption to board dynamics. The lack of standard approach to affect the change could not become a reality that could leave women to fend for themselves.

EY. (2013). *Time for change: Recruiting for Europe's boardroom*. Retrieved from

http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-Audit-Committee-Time-for-

change-Recruiting-for-Europes-boardrooms/$FILE/EY-Time-for-change-

Recruiting-for-Europes-boardrooms.pdf

In a report from EY related to recruiting practices of European boards findings indicated that boardroom appointments remain closed to candidates with previous experience and personal networks (EY, 2013). The limitation could explain why younger women who join a corporate board and lack previous experience and networks could have trouble navigating the nuances of a board that affects board dynamics. In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) who were younger in age shared the most details related to disruption of board dynamics because they wanted to change and improve the environment in which they worked for every individual who could not speak up for

themselves. Participant P06 replied, "I have witnessed younger women less experienced with a change the world attitude overextending their influence that tends to get them into difficulties on a corporate board" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). A change in board recruitment could focus on younger board members as expectations of board dynamics.

In the EY (2013) report provided ideas such as to transform board recruitment to realign composition of the boardroom to needs of a business. In my study, Participant P06 indicated, "A CEO of an organization does not want a board they have to fight with, that the board is better than oneself, or second-guessing the decision-making" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). The widening of the search criteria can include candidates with analytical skills, independent thinking, and a capacity to support and challenge other individuals (EY, 2013). In my study, Participant P04 stated, "The lack of accessing the contributions of all board members was a wasted opportunity" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Leaders who adopted a mindful approach to gender bias can deliberately create change in their actions such as to think, learn, and act differently (EY, 2013). These ideas to improve board recruitment of women in the boardroom were commonsense that could advance women in leadership positions.

EY. (2015). *Women in leadership: The family business advantage*. Retrieved from

http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/ey-women-in-leadership-the-family-business-advantage/$FILE/ey-women-in-leadership-the-family-business-advantage.pdf

The EY (2015) report indicated the success of family businesses advancing

women in leadership positions evidenced 55% of boards of the world's largest family businesses that have at least one woman on a corporate board. The finding was more than public and private sector organizations such as women held 20.5% of board seats in 2015 in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). In my study, four participants (4 of 6 [67%]) were entrepreneurs or owned businesses in their careers. Participant P06 indicated, "Women entrepreneurs more likely not affected by gender bias" and "In the not for profit sector, women are less bias to success and take on roles that do not look perfect" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). The EY report implied women on corporate boards had more success in a family-owned business.

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, some participants described disruption that affected board dynamics based on minor themes of role challenge, leaving, targeted, and exclusion from decision-making. Disruption can destabilize an individual characterized by confusion, deliberate threats, external pressures, resource limits, sensitivity, and connectivity to other individuals (Fiksel, Polyviou, Croxton, & Pettit, 2015). The onset of disruption can be frequent changes in external factors beyond an individual's control with intentional attacks aimed to cause harm, influences that create constraints or barriers, limitations on performance, controlled conditions for integrity, and degree of interdependence and reliance on external entities (Fiksel et al., 2015). I discuss the body of knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Role challenge. Disruption can destabilize an individual to cause perceptions that interfere with socializing with peers such as exclusion by working only with individuals

based on their gendered socialization and conformity to stereotypical expectations of those individuals (Dunn, Gerlach, & Hyle, 2014). In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) withdrew from socializing because of the lack of trust, support, and overlooked by peers. Participant P01 stated, "I retreated socially from my peers because I was unable to continue in the toxic environment" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). Women excluded in the decision-making process occupied inferior positions to initiate transformative change in an organization (Jahan, 2016). Group interactional dynamics between men and women were dependent on a group's composition (Schwab, Werbel, Hofmann, & Henriques, 2016). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on a common platform for like-minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions to reduce any disruption to board dynamics.

Leaving and targeted. Individuals without the support of another individual in an organization where they work and have experienced unexpected events early in their career can force them to quit the job (Drury, 2016). In my study, Participant P06 indicated, "I share an observation that when a personal bias to something exists it will become an issue" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). A woman's lack of agency and voice, limited the political advantage to change using traditional means such as meeting with a board leader (Jahan, 2016).

In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [50%]) had worked to improve a corporate board for themselves and other individuals, but perceived by peers as disruptive to board dynamics. Participant P04 stated, "I helped to rebuild a couple of boards some in an environment that did not flourish. I moved the board from an overly formal to an

informal style where individuals are comfortable to discuss openly" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Some women who cannot see themselves as leaders are choosing to leave corporate boards for self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Rowley, Lee, & Lan, 2015).

Conceptual framework. In my study, disruption occurred in 75% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of leadership to indicate disruption was a consequence of leadership that affected board dynamics on a corporate board because of gender bias.

A gender and leadership link connected barriers that women could experience in leadership positions. A leadership and identity link to related theories known to researchers and relevant to my study was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination.

The role congruity theory of prejudice provided the link between concepts of gender bias and leadership (Holck et al., 2016). Eagly and Karau (2002) created the role congruity theory of prejudice to explain the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. In my study, these theories connected gender bias with gender, leadership, and identity. I provide the updated conceptual framework at the end of the Study Results section.

Emergent Theme 6: Empowerment

The empowerment theme occurred in 100% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Seven minor themes of empowerment included efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. Minor themes occurrence in the data ranged from 75% to 100% (see Table 12).

Table 12

Emergent Theme 6: Empowerment

	Semistructured interviews Participants							Physical	
Empowerment	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09	Journaling	artifacts	Percentage
Efficacy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Entrepreneurship	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	88%
Skill building		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	88%
Knowledge building			x	x	x	x	x	x	75%
Mentor relationship			x	x	x	x	x	x	75%
Networking		x	x	x	x	x		x	75%
Relationship building		x	x	x	x	x		x	75%

Interviews. Participants described empowerment using terms such as regroup, use it to their advantage, dismiss it, and prove them wrong. They found a mentor, open to diverse opinions, and networked. Participants included skills building, improvisation, and practice in their repertoire. They took control of their emotions, came prepared with

evidence, stepped up, stood up, and spoke up to take control of an environment. Empowerment is a meaningful shift in the experience of power attained through an individual's interactions in the social world that build confidence, connections, and consciousness of authenticity in an individual (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) shared several perceptions of empowerment in the semistructured interview data.

Participant P01 indicated,

Maybe I should have been more astute and not have said anything at the time. I retreated from social interactions with peers, gave up, and regretted not having to advocate for my clients. I believe it was a lost cause. I needed to exit from the social aspect of the industry and start anew. I dismiss any demeaning behavior I may experience such as credit given to others for my work. I no longer have a dependency on anyone for support, acknowledgment, or expectation to understand who am I, and my cause. None of these things matter anymore to me. My advice to women is to be cautious about joining corporate boards. Seek boards that prove they are inclusive of women, visible minorities, and all orientations in general. The board is against violence, reserve seats for women, and reflects your values (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P02 noted,

> My advice to women are to make sure those facets of your life are moving
>
> forward simultaneously. One out racing the other will get you out of balance. An
>
> imbalance is never going to help you to contribute especially if you are on a board
>
> and if you are in a place of leadership. Women should not be afraid to ask
>
> questions, participate, speak up, ask for assistance, for opportunities, make
>
> yourself known, and stand out front. If you can bring all those facets, it can add to
>
> what you are doing in the workplace (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P02, personal communication, May 3, 2017).

Participant P03 stated,

> In my previous experience and staying calm in those situations, you need to stay
>
> strong and focused on what you are supposed to do even though it happens. You
>
> need to maintain the focus and control the meeting and not be distracted or out of
>
> control when it happens. These are the key things you do when an event happens,
>
> and then after the meeting, you try to find the solution if it is possible. I work with
>
> men and it is not something that I am afraid of so when those things happen I
>
> know how to handle them. The first advice I would give to women joining boards
>
> is you have to be confident in who you are and your abilities to do it. If you start
>
> the job and you believe you will not be able to do, it would be very difficult. At
>
> first, you need to make sure you believe that you can do it you have to learn

things you will not be the best at the start. The second advice I would give is to

have people around you that can give you some advice during all the time that

you will be doing this job. For me, I am young, ever since I started my career I

have had some advisor around me that I have full confidence in them. I have had

different advisors and when I have questions, and I am not sure I talk to them and

ask questions. I am consulting with them a lot to help me become a better board

member or chair of the board. I could give a lot of advice, but I think those two

made a difference its good confidence in your abilities and capabilities and having

advisors around you. Also, to communicate a lot, ask questions, talk to people,

and do not be shy to make mistakes thinking that you will ask the wrong

questions. There are no wrong questions, and the more you ask questions, the

more you will understand so that would be the main advice I would give to

women (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 replied,

Thwarting attempts to destabilize me by peers I showed up, prepared with

evidence, and took control of the environment. Taking control of the environment

is a choice and it creates the environment for the best discussions to happen or

risk of not doing. I never put myself in a position of not showing up completely

prepared and know what I can do to help other individuals. I know and own the

knowledge of why I am here, the board, and individual. I developed my public speaking to refine my abilities by attending an improvisation class. I started small and found safe places to practice and hone my skills learning to improvise in the moment under pressure and everyone is looking at me. Opportunities created outside of the boardroom helped to prepare me to become boardroom ready. I took control of my destiny. I have a mentor who I know and the environment they work. It is helpful to see the individual, as strong and powerful but not to compare me with other individuals. Women may not handle board work well and may get scared, cry, or crumble under pressure. Women in leadership should share their war stories and practice controlling their fear and anxiety. When they can take control of their emotions, it is time to mentor others. Show up 100%, and not be distracted by anything. To be effective at the moment means no use of smartphones. Become more polished. Women in leadership should share their war stories. Practice controlling fear and anxiety. It is important for women to present a very professional image. As an example, an individual should not become distracted or be distracted by uncomfortable shoes. It is best to dress in a way that individuals do not notice or become distracted by yourself and not to think about what you are wearing. To get help from friends of their opinion of what you wear well. Be grateful for everything that happens in your life – good or bad, as each experience shapes you and makes you more capable of doing what you are destined to do. I identified as being courageous by board members, I feel obligated to step up, stand up, and speak up for other individuals devalued

because of their gender, race, and ethnicity. My advice to women is to take

control of the environment (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Participant P06 responded,

Women entrepreneurs more likely not affected by gender bias. I consider myself

an outlier, immune to gender bias based on my lived experience and role as the

CEO in a male dominant industry. Women often take on jobs men might not

because of the opportunities for their careers but they often attracted to more

challenging roles that men may find too difficult. In the not for profit sector,

women are less bias to success and take on roles that do not look perfect.

I chose to ignore inappropriate behaviors because it does not help to dwell on it,

which I consider very disruptive. The best female leaders are mentors.

Be passionate about the idea of governance to be an effective director with a

capacity to understand and make an organization better such as in fundraising or

advice on strategy. The objective is to serve and not work for the company. Ask

questions without the preamble. Develop emotional skills that are mature and

balanced. Be open to diverse opinions, network, and connect with individuals

(semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant did not confirm the synthesis report for the analysis and

interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking.

Participant P09 reported,

> My ability to talk in front of people if practiced will become a natural thing to do
> because it takes experience. I am everywhere and not afraid to express my
> opinions. I am forthright I do not support any discussions or experiences of
> gender bias but know that it does exist in some groups and see it. If observed I try
> to bring it into the light at a board meeting to realize that some of the decision-
> making occurred outside of the boardroom. If I notice any collusion between the
> men, I try to keep all individuals on track and for everyone to talk about it so that
> a decision is not of what the men agreed to before the meeting but for all board
> members to decide. A pitfall exists for a woman who joins a board or elected and
> wants to be good and give 100% of herself. An illustration of a significant
> difference between men and women is the preparing for board meetings. Board
> members receive big envelopes with documents for a board meeting, and the
> women will read all documents. Men on their arrival at a board meeting will open
> the documents at the meeting. My advice is for women to not worry about it
> because there are always individuals to provide the information and knowledge
> that may be lacking in a particular area. To use those individuals to find out about
> what to do and to get things done. Women should not be afraid and ask questions
> is a way to indicate that you are interested and able to make the right decisions.
> My advice to women is that the best thing is involvement in a mentoring program.
> As a mentor, I play a significant role for women at the national level to be
> Canadian leaders, but I lament that what is missing is the lack of more women

role models and mentoring at all levels of society in general (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P09, personal communication, June 20, 2017).

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to empowerment such as efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building from the semistructured interviews. I share the journal notes related to empowerment from my reflective journal. All participants (6 of 6 [100%]) indicated some form of empowerment in their character such as strong women in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

Participant P01 is a strong individual. I hear the relief in her voice because she is free now and knows what to do now for herself and family (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P02

A board of women must be a different experience (journal notes, May 1, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

I am impressed because Participant P03 sounds like she is in control (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

Participant P04 is presenting a guidebook of her experience for success on a

corporate board. I hear her passion to help and expression of fun while sharing

(journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P06,

I hear Participant P06 saying governance a lot. This is what board work is about. I

hear her determination to drive home this point about governance and the

difference between a functional management (journal notes, June 12, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P09,

So much to offer and more. Participant P09 is exciting to listen too. This

information is so rich and fun (journal notes, June 15, 2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports

and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to indicate minor themes

of empowerment such as efficacy and entrepreneurship. Other minor themes are skill

building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship

building. I share the analysis of physical artifacts related to the empowerment theme.

Statistics Canada. (2016, September 15). *Education in Canada: Attainment, field of study*

and location of study. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-

enm/2011/as-sa/99-012-x/99-012-x2011001-eng.pdf

Gender-based inequality diminishes with increased levels of education (Statistics

Canada, 2016). In 2011, 52.7% of women in Canada earned university degrees of

bachelors and higher degrees (Statistics Canada, 2016). In my study, Participant P06

indicated, "Women often take on jobs men might not be because of the opportunities.

They are often attracted to more challenging roles that men may find too difficult"

(semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). Women held 34.8% of management positions

and 37% of senior management positions (Statistics Canada, 2016). In 2015, only 25.6%

of senior managers in the private sector were women (Statistics Canada, 2017). In my

study, Participant P06 stated, "Many women known to her will join corporate boards that

are challenging and interesting" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). Men occupied

more leadership positions in 2015 to women who held 20.5% of board seats in Canada

despite women earning more university degrees to men (Statistics Canada, 2016).

EY. (2011). *The corporate sponsor as hero: Advancing women into leadership roles*.

> Retrieved from http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-The-corporate-
>
> sponsor-as-hero/$FILE/EY-The-corporate-sponsor-as-hero.pdf

Sponsorship can help women to advance in leadership positions through

empowerment, exposure, and experience in the field of interest (EY, 2011). The EY

(2011) report indicated the need for courage in sponsors; they could put their reputation

and careers at risk helping to minimize gender disparities, and advocating for the

advancement of women in leadership positions. In my study, Participant P09 reported, "I

lament that what is missing is the lack of more women role models and mentoring at all

levels of society in general" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017). Findings of the

EY (2011) report indicated that meaning of sponsorship was advocacy for the

advancement of women in leadership positions and mentorship was personal and

professional support to individuals. The attribute of great sponsors is their commitment,

connections, persistence, willingness and honesty (EY, 2011). Sponsorship as a

sustainable business practice could be good for succession planning in an organization.

In the EY (2011) report, there was no indication that sponsorship could be for a selected type of women based on preferences of a sponsor to support diversity. In my study, some participants (5 of 6 [83%]) reached out to mentors and mentored other women by building trusting relationships to receive and send personal and professional advice. Participant P06 indicated, "The best female leaders are mentors" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). In my study, participants were trailblazers who did not indicate that a sponsor helped them in their role on a corporate board, but they relied on themselves to discover and correct any areas of deficiencies to make them better board members. Participant P09 replied, "If practiced will be a natural thing to do because it takes experience" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017).

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, participants described the empowerment theme for developing coping strategies to deal with gender bias based on minor themes of efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. Empowerment is a meaningful shift in the experience of power attained through an individual's interactions in a social world that build confidence, connections, and consciousness of authenticity in an individual (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). I discuss the body of knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Efficacy and entrepreneurship. Empowerment includes the concept of efficacy that is a belief in human functioning based on motivation, emotional states, and actions of what an individual believes versus what is objectively true (Bandura, 1977). In my study, participants (6 of 6 [100%]) in situations lacked control such as leaving an intimidating

environment discovered a better perspective of themselves because of empowerment.

Participant P09 stated, "My ability to talk in front of people if practiced will become a

natural thing to do because it takes experience. I am everywhere and not afraid to express

my opinions. I am forthright I do not support any discussions or experiences of gender

bias but know that it does exist in some groups and see it" (semistructured interview,

June 15, 2017). Societal expectations and cultural norms help determine the type of

entrepreneurship in business that women initiate, have resources, and goals for their firms

(Coleman, 2016).

Women who cannot see themselves as leaders are choosing to leave corporate

boards for self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Rowley, Lee, & Lan,

2015). The four participants (4 of 6 [67%]) in my study who were entrepreneurs

leveraged their strengths as leaders to become business savvy locally and internationally,

which was an added advantage to joining a corporate board. Participant P06 indicated, "I

chose to ignore inappropriate behaviors because it did not help to dwell on it, which I

consider very disruptive. I push forward through it" (semistructured interview, June 12,

2017). Women-owned businesses relate them to the context of their lives and part of their

journey to leadership positions (Coleman, 2016).

Skill and knowledge building. Underestimation of women's skills is gender

discrimination related to mistaken-based discrimination (Gabaldon, Anca, Mateos de

Cabo, & Gimeno, 2016). In my study, some participants (3 of 6 [100 %]) sought to

improve themselves in areas they thought were deficient such as public speaking.

Participant P04 stated, "Look for safe places to get skilled such as speaking in public to

refine your abilities in the moment" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). They chose to defy gender bias toward them by adopting self-empowerment techniques such as skill building and practiced until they were proficient in the skill. Participant P04 indicated, "Learn to improvise in the moment under pressure when everyone is looking at you. Listen and adjust what you have in mind based on what is coming from the audience. Practice, practice, and practice in front of the mirror and to individuals. They created the confidence for board readiness through practice" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). In Canada, women appointed to dominant male boards have a specialized skill in an industry (Gabaldon et al., 2016).

Mentor relationship. Access to mentoring in career development, such as coaching, and psychosocial functions, such as encouragement, are significant to enhancing women's self-efficacy as leaders (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). In my study, participants who had access to mentors described their need to ask questions to help them find their way. Participant P03 noted, "I am consulting them a lot to help me become a better board member or chair of the board" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). A mentoring relationship is invaluable to a mentee, but this has not increased the number of promotions for women (Drury, 2016).

All participants (6 of 6 [100%]) in my study are advocates for women to succeed in the boardroom and they are mentors. Mentoring is personal, and for women who do not feel a sense of responsibility for mentoring the next generation of women, there remains a need for systemic and social change for women to succeed (Soklaridis et al., 2017). A participant in my study described a leader that can attain control of her emotions

signifies the individual as a mentor. Participant P06 indicated, "Develop emotional skills that are mature and balanced" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). Organizational leaders can facilitate advancement of women in leadership positions by building powerful networks and developing confidence in women's abilities in leadership positions (Cook & Glass, 2015).

Male mentors offer less psychosocial support to women and female mentors provide personal and emotional support (Gabaldon et al., 2016). In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) indicated they had male mentors, but they had other support systems such as family, friends, or female peers to share their experiences on a board. Participant P04 indicated, "I am fortunate to have role models of strong females in my family, my mentor is a male associate" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Trust played a significant role for participants in who and what they shared with because of privacy and confidentiality. Participant P04 stated, "Know your mentor and their environment. It is helpful to see the individual, as strong and powerful but do not compare yourself to others" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Women may not handle board work well and get scared, senior women who have mentors are few compared to men in leadership positions (Gabaldon et al., 2016). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on women's mentor relationship between men and women with women in leadership positions facilitates their development in leadership roles.

Networking and relationship building. Networks can help to support career development and opportunities to improve technical skills and expertise in a field of

interest (Dunn, 2012; Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016). In my study, some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) had retreated from socializing with peers because of gender bias toward them such as discrimination and harassment by peers. Participant P01 stated, "I needed to exit from the social aspect of the industry and start anew" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). Social categorization between board members can leave some women unsure of their social identity (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013).

Some participants (2 of 6 [33%]) in my study went out for coffee and dinners to build relationships and their credibility with board members. Participant P03 noted, "My strategy was to follow up, I had to meet a lot with the committee and members of the board regularly. I had to get into a relationship with them the committee" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). The women who define their social identity based on perceptions of others can fail as a leader and succumb to gender stereotypes in their role on a corporate board (Ibarra et al.; 2013; Mori, 2014). The hierarchical relationships of women in leadership positions could be empowering or disempowering for them (Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016). Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on women in leadership positions encountered relational opportunities and challenges that influenced their careers.

Conceptual framework. In my study, empowerment occurred in 100% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of gender bias to indicate the empowerment theme related to the

identity of women on a corporate board to create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias.

In-group and out-group social identities represent group memberships based on gender bias. A gender and identity link related to the group memberships that could create power, status, and legitimacy for women in leadership positions. An individual can have multiple personal and social identities that can oppose and cause tension (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination. I provide the updated conceptual framework at the end of the Study Results section.

Emergent Theme 7: Leading

The leading theme occurred in 100% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports of women on corporate boards. Seven minor themes of leading included a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion, advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance. Minor themes occurrence in the data ranged from 50% to 100% (see Table 13).

Table 13

Emergent Theme 7: Leading

Leading	Semistructured interviews Participants						Journaling	Physical artifacts	Percentage
	P01	P02	P03	P04	P06	P09			
Purposeful goal	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Support system	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Inclusion	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	88%
Advocacy for change	x	x		x	x		x	x	75%
CEO experience		x		x	x	x	x	x	75%
Impression management		x	x	x	x		x	x	75%
Governance				x	x		x	x	50%

Interviews. Participants described the emergent theme of leading using terms such as start a business, present a professional image, not dependent on others, emotional skills are mature and balanced, at peace with oneself, expect to be smart and successful, never accept limitations, attain mentor status, and lead. An individual can attain a state of self-actualization to adopt a virtuous behavior based on a journey toward an ideal self that takes courage to choose who an individual is to become and to work in excellence to attain humanness (Fernando & Chowdhury, 2016). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) shared several perceptions of leading in the semistructured interview data

Participant P01 stated, "I am at peace now with the freedom to influence change" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P01, personal communication, April 21, 2017).

Participant P02 indicated,

> I believe gender bias is a nonissue as the leader. My role is to facilitate an equal voice for all board members and navigate the different personalities as the CEO. I do not listen to negativity, but I am guided by what is important in my life. An essential element of my success is my clarity and focus of a well-defined mission to understand what I do and why for other individuals to follow my lead.
>
> I have found my voice and not afraid to speak up, or fear of my voice. A gift I feel lucky to have attained living in Canada of strong leadership that provides for parity and equality. I am an advocate for working women of the middle class to find their voices and provide needed support in this niche area. I focus on a well-defined mission to understand what I do and why for other individuals to follow my lead. I voice my ideas and opinions with ease and have a clear sense of purpose. Make sure those facets of your life are moving forward simultaneously. One out racing the other will get you out of balance. An imbalance is never going to help you to contribute especially if you are on a board and if you are in a place of leadership. You help the women you are helping the world because on one level they run the world. Maybe not doing it in the boardroom or at the highest level of leadership because we are raising the children, we have that nurturing, and we have that sense of family (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017).
>
> The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P02, personal communication, May 3, 2017).

Participant P03 noted,

"There is work still to do, but we are going in the right direction" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P03, personal communication, July 11, 2017).

Participant P04 responded,

As a board leader, my role is to help with the why, own it, be responsible, and show up. Otherwise, I believe it is best to serve somewhere else. Show your children what you do. It is the one most valuable gift you can give for themselves. How you prepare, how you think through problems, and how you present yourself. These are the gifts for the next generation who may not know what gender bias is. I look at it as an opportunity for a greater purpose. I decided that when you start having self-doubt it can keep you from acting, and nothing hurts your business or career more than not acting. Women should not lose their humanness. Find the strength and remind yourself of why you are here, why are you are doing this (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant P04, personal communication, May 25, 2017).

Participant P06 said,

> Women in general, are less likely to blow their own horn to promote themselves.
> In governance courses, the advice is changing this position such as many women
> are known to me will join corporate boards that are challenging and interesting to
> them. Women seeking to join boards is to be passionate about the idea of
> governance to be an effective director with a capacity to understand and make an
> organization better such as in fundraising or advice on strategy. The objective is
> to serve and not work for the company. Ask questions without the preamble.
> Develop emotional skills that are mature and balanced. Be open to diverse
> opinions, network, and connect with individuals. A calmer more balanced
> approach is more attractive which provides a better opportunity to join a board
> that will teach you rather than a push and pulls approach that will not work. It is
> push-pull where you need to be able to join a board that gives back as well as you
> give. If it is a one-way street, it does not work for either side. A CEO of an
> organization does not want a board they have to fight with, that the board is better
> than him or her, or second-guessing the decision-making (semistructured
> interview, June 12, 2017).

The participant did not confirm the synthesis report for the analysis and
interpretation of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking.
Participant P09 replied,

> I consider myself not personally impacted by gender bias because I am forthright
> and leading. Board work includes many meetings. Many meetings without the

support and a demanding job are not easy to do until after retiring it is much

easier to take up board positions. It is easier to start on boards when young but

important to have a good support system as a woman.

I encourage women who are thinking about joining a board not to hesitate.

Encourage men to say women should come on boards, for women to hear it, know

that it is there, and able to do it. Board experience is good for my image and

moral. I did it, I can do more, and not have to quit (semistructured interview, June

15, 2017).

The participant confirmed the synthesis report for the analysis and interpretation

of the interview data was accurate and complete through member checking (Participant

P09, personal communication, June 20, 2017).

Journaling. In my reflective journal, I highlighted themes related to leading such

as a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion from the semistructured interviews.

Other themes included advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management,

and governance. I share the journal notes related to leading from the reflective journal.

All participants (6 of 6 [100%]) indicated leading behaviors in the journal notes.

Journal notes on Participant P01,

I hear relief in Participant P01's voice. A calmness and change in tone is evident.

Good for her (journal notes, April 17, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P02

I hear in Participant P02's the voice of a woman who is empowered. I hear

confidence and purpose in her voice. Her clarity in this very short interview is

evidence of her experience as a leader (journal notes, May 1, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P03,

I hear in Participant P03's voice a sense of hope for what is to come is good for women in general (journal notes, July 10, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P04,

I hear hope in Participant P04's voice. Her advice to women show the depth of her journey and learning to cope with gender bias by leading (journal notes, May 23, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P06,

Participant P06 is the calmest individual ever. I hear in her voice the wealth of her knowledge and experience as a leader. Learn to govern (journal notes, June 12, 2017).

Journal notes on Participant P09,

I hear in the voice of Participant P09 the enthusiasm about her board work and fulfilling this is for her (journal notes, June 15, 2017).

Physical artifacts. The analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards included evidence to indicate the minor themes of leading such as a purposeful goal, support system, inclusion, and advocacy for change. Other minor themes of leading were CEO experience, impression management, and governance. I share the analysis of physical artifacts related to the leading theme.

Patel, G., & Buiting, S. (2013). *Gender differences in leadership styles and the impact within corporate boards*. Retrieved from

http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpadocs/Genderdiffe.pdf

A Commonwealth Secretariat study on gender differences in leadership and business used the science of decision-making (Patel & Buiting, 2013). The theoretical lens of the study was prospect theory of how individuals perceived value as a loss or gain. The authors indicated because gender differences exist in the perception of risk with the perceived value it formed the basis of actions and decisions of leaders. They discussed underrepresentation of women on corporate boards based on these gender differences in decision-making. The study provided a minimal theoretical foundation to support logic as a result of lack of the number of women on corporate boards.

In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) were leading an initiative and identified themselves as leaders. Participant P02 indicated, "My role is to facilitate an equal voice for all board members and navigate the different personalities as the CEO" (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017). Participant P03 replied, "There is work still to do, but we are going in the right direction" (semistructured interview, July 11, 2017). Participant P04 replied, "As a board leader, my role is to help with the why, own it, be responsible, and show up" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Participant P06 replied, "Women seeking to join boards is to be passionate about the idea of governance to be an effective director with a capacity to understand and make an organization better such as in fundraising or advice on strategy" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017). Participant P09 replied, "I consider myself not personally impacted by gender bias because I am forthright and leading" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017).

Patel and Buiting (2013) used a data collection design that included interviews,

but the design and analysis strategies were unknown. The sample population and size of the study was unknown. Missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias was research based on decision-making in gender differences that may have different outcomes because of gender.

The body of knowledge related to gender bias. In my study, participants described leading as coping strategies to deal with gender bias based on minor themes such as a purposeful goal, support system, inclusion, and advocacy for change. Other minor themes were CEO experience, impression management, and governance. Leading is to adopt a virtuous behavior based on a journey toward an ideal self that takes courage to choose who an individual becomes and work in excellence to attain humanness (Fernando & Chowdhury, 2016). I discuss the body of knowledge related to gender bias with findings of my study.

Purposeful goal. Some women have an internal glass ceiling imposed on themselves that can compromise their career goals (Drury, 2016). Evidenced in my study was that participants took control of their environment. Participant P01 said, "I am at peace now with the freedom to influence change" (semistructured interview, April 17, 2017). A participant came to meetings prepared to speak with supporting evidence. Participant P04 stated, "I showed up, prepared with evidence, and took control of the environment" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). The removal of internal barriers can increase women's power legitimacy (Drury, 2016).

Participants in my study related their goals such as a clear purpose, to articulate why they are here, and for other individuals to follow. Participant P02 responded, "An

essential element of my success is a clarity that is focused on a well-defined mission to understand what I do and why for other individuals to follow and for me to lead" (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017). Participant P09 replied, "A clear sense of purpose to know why will guide how you focus on what is important" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017). Some women have different expectations of their firms to fulfill goals, attain flexibility, work-life balance, and family (Coleman, 2016).

Support system and inclusion. Women who can integrate their careers with themselves and family have a high core self-evaluation (Wang, Wagner, Scott, Corman, & McKinley, 2016). In my study, participants indicated a balanced relationship between work and family to perform board work effectively. Participant P09 replied, "A lot of meetings without the support and a demanding job is not easy to do but after retiring it is much easier to take up board positions" (semistructured interview, June 15, 2017). Participant P02 responded, "An imbalance is never going to help you to contribute especially if you are on a board and if you are in a place of leadership" (semistructured interview, May 1, 2017). Core self-evaluation is a belief an individual has of them self with an ability to succeed and make a difference in the world (Wang et al., 2016). Evidenced in my study was that participants relationship building with other members of a corporate board was for their inclusion in decision-making. Participant P03 noted, "I was inviting them to have a drink or bite and discuss. I tried to find other ways to build this relationship with them, so I used different strategies to be able to gain their respect" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Leadership support of women reaching their full potential could eliminate gender bias toward women (LaPierre, Hill, & Jones, 2016).

Advocacy for change. The perceived similarity between in-group members includes psychological benefits realized such as positive interactions, communications, and friendships (Kulik, Metz, & Gould, 2016). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) were advocating change in the boardroom, for themselves, and for other less fortunate individuals such as women who lost their voice to speak up. Participant P02 responded, "I am a leader who has a clear identity of myself and perspective of my role as an advocate for working women of the middle class to find their voices and provide needed support in this niche area" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Advocating on behalf of other individuals is a gender stereotype associated with women as nurturing (Kulik, Metz, & Gould, 2016).

CEO experience and governance. A positive concept of leadership is an authentic transformational leader that links actions and behaviors of a leader to the well-being of leader and followers (Chasserio, Poroli, & Redien-Collot, 2016). Evidenced in my study was all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) shared the style of leadership to facilitate board members to have an equal voice in the boardroom and decision-making. Roundtable discussions helped to facilitate an equal voice at the table. Participant P04 stated, "I create the right environment for everyone, know who they are, why they are on the board, work together, and to show up" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). Some characteristics of an authentic leader include a consistent values and beliefs system, reliable and trustworthy attitude, and builds on a follower's strengths (Chasserio, Poroli, & Redien-Collot, 2016).

Impression management. The effort to influence other individuals' perceptions of

an individual, group, and organization include self-presentation, to increase self-esteem and identity management to manage any perceived realities in the boardroom (Goffman, 1959). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) encouraged other women to ask questions from individuals who can provide information such as individuals who are preparing a board meeting of any knowledge they could be in deficit. Participant P03 noted, "Communicate a lot, ask questions, talk to people, and do not be shy to make mistakes thinking that you will ask the wrong questions" (semistructured interview, July 10, 2017). Some women could develop coping strategies based on gender bias to influence other individuals' perceptions of them as they transition and perform leadership roles (Goffman, 1959).

The advice from participants in my study was not to stand out but be comfortable to prevent being distracted from what was important in the boardroom. Participant P04 stated, "How you prepare, how you think through problems, and how you present yourself. These are the gifts for the next generation who may not know what gender bias is" (semistructured interview, May 23, 2017). A woman's appearance matters more than a male for her perceived value to an organization (Bartels, 2016).

Unless women can capitalize on their social and cultural resources, such as their social skills and behaviors using impression management and self-monitoring, they cannot enter the boardroom and be successful in their leadership roles (Vinkenburg, Jansen, Dries, & Pepermans, 2014). In my study, all participants (6 of 6 [100%]) acknowledged women needed to check their emotions. Participant P06 stated, "Develop emotional skills that are mature and balanced" (semistructured interview, June 12, 2017).

Women on corporate boards can master the social, political, and interpersonal skills needed for success in their roles on the board (Goffman, 1959).

Conceptual framework. In my study, the leading theme occurred in 100% of data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards. I discuss the conceptual framework with findings of my study. I updated my conceptual framework of the logical construct of gender bias to indicate leading related to the identity of women on a corporate board to create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias.

In-group and out-group social identities represent group memberships based on gender bias. A gender and identity link related to group memberships could create power, status, and legitimacy for women in leadership positions. An individual can have multiple personal and social identities that can oppose and cause tension (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination. I provide the updated conceptual framework at the end of the Study Results section.

Summary of Emergent Themes

I did not discover any discrepant cases or nonconfirming data that did not meet the selection criteria of the study including English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada. I discovered seven emergent themes and 33 minor themes in the data sources (see Table 6, p. 170).

I updated the conceptual framework based on the study findings of major themes. The gender bias construct included behaviors of discrimination and harassment. The leadership constructs included behaviors of organizational climate, well-being, and disruption, and the identity construct included empowerment and leading themes (see Figure 20).
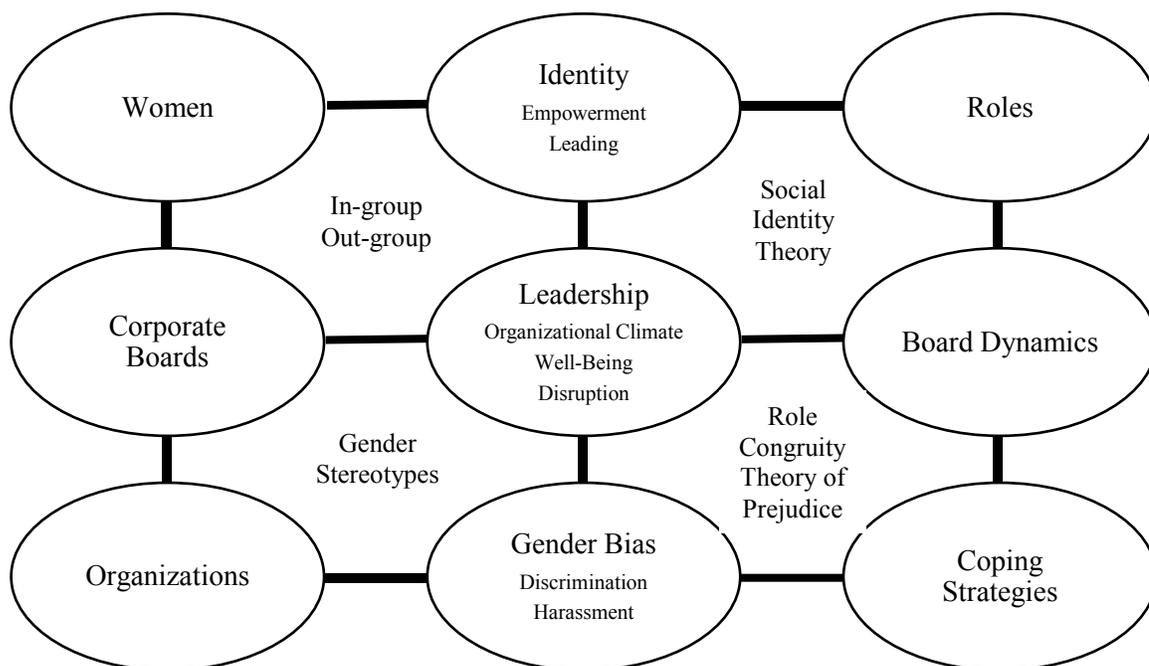

Figure 20. Conceptual framework included logical constructs and findings of the study.

The inclusion of the seven themes in the conceptual framework includes associated minor themes to add depth to the constructs of gender bias, leadership, and identity. The findings of the study provided context for future research. A summary of findings includes major themes, impact at the individual, organizational, and societal levels, situations identified, and areas of future research (see Table 14).

Table 14

Summary of Findings

Themes	Impact levels	Situations	Future research
Discrimination	Individual and societal	A change of men's and society's attitudes that relate to gender bias will take longer but is something to work towards by society.	Women use discrimination as an incentive to become more effective in their leadership styles.
Harassment	Organizational	Women who spoke up against harassment were a threat to men.	The inclusion of women in the boardroom is a threat to the social status of men in leadership positions.
Harassment	Individual and organizational	Women who spoke up against gender bias experienced increased harassment toward them.	Harassment, bullying, and violence toward women in the boardroom.
Organizational climate	Individual and organizational	Women provided a competitive advantage to decision-making.	The effort women on a corporate board exert to maintain the management and control of board chair because of special interest groups' role in the boardroom.
Well-being	Individual	Women who are high achievers have difficulty personalizing their experience of success.	The impostor phenomenon and evaluation of self.
Disruption	Organizational	An organization could use a standard approach to affect change in the boardroom.	A common platform for like-minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions.
Empowerment	Individual and organizational	Women on a corporate board are alone in the boardroom because of a lack of support from peers. These women need a trusted advisor to close this gap.	Women's mentor relationship between men and women with women in leadership positions facilitates their development in leadership roles.
Empowerment	Individual	The hierarchical relationships in women's career have helped with their empowerment in leadership positions.	Women in leadership positions encountered relational opportunities and challenges that influenced their careers.
Leading	Individual and societal	Women in leadership positions used perceived value or loss in decision-making.	Decision-making in gender differences that could have different outcomes because of gender.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research setting, demographics, data collection, and data analysis processes of the study using Yin's five phases of analysis. To answer the research question, I used a qualitative descriptive multiple case study design and multiple data sources that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate board, and a purposeful sample. The sample included six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada.

I provided evidence of trustworthiness of the study results through data saturation and methodological triangulation of all data sources to answer the research question. I attained data saturation on three levels. First, I saturated all data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts that did not produce any new themes. I collected the data from all data sources simultaneously. At data saturation, I stopped data collection to explore patterns that emerged in the data for analysis. Second, I attained a state of neutrality as the researcher using reflective journaling during the data collection process because I controlled my emotions and had no influence on the study results. Third, methodological triangulation of three data sources provided thick, rich information to replicate the study design. I analyzed and interpreted study results within the conceptual framework and illustrated how findings of the study added to the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

The answer to the research question was as follows: The participants described their experiences dealing with gender bias based on men's behaviors of discrimination and harassment toward them. An organizational climate embedded in gender bias affected the women's well-being that influenced the women's role on a corporate board. Disruption to board dynamics affected women's appointment negatively. The women were successful through their empowerment to create behavioral change within themselves, and by leading organizations, they thwarted the bias they encountered while executing their role on a corporate board.

In Chapter 5, I provide a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings of my study. Details include an interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations. Implications of the study and conclusions completed Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore gender bias and how gender bias can influence a woman's role on a corporate board; how gender bias can affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how gender bias can create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as women execute their roles on a corporate board. A qualitative research paradigm and a case study design represented an appropriate approach to exploring gender bias from the experiences of multiple participants to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon by collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting results. The intent of the study was to explore gender bias and how women cope with it. The central phenomenon that grounded the study was how gender bias could cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. Information on how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias has been missing from the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

In the study design, I did not use a standardized tool and quantitative measurement, or closed-ended questions and a quantitative survey, which ruled out both the quantitative and mixed-methods approaches. A qualitative method facilitates the in-depth and detailed study of a phenomenon (Patton, 2015). I used multiple data sources, including interviews, journal entries, and physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards, to provide thick, rich information. A descriptive case study design is suitable for describing an intervention in a real-life

context (Yin, 2014). A qualitative method and descriptive case study design were appropriate for obtaining an in-depth, holistic view of how gender bias can cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment.

Through social media and snowball sampling, I recruited six English-speaking women on corporate boards who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada. Sample selection was purposeful to attain maximum variation for cross-case analysis of the data. Data saturation occurred after I had saturated all data from interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts.

The semistructured interviews included seven open-ended questions developed from the literature review related to gender bias. Interviews were conducted by telephone to maintain privacy and access to participants. Reflective journaling helped me to contain any researcher bias using reflexivity to attain a neutral state. The analysis of physical artifacts provided methodological triangulation of the data to answer the research question while contributing to the credibility and trustworthiness of the study results.

Yin's five phases of analysis provided a framework that involved compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding to analyze the data. Analysis of the data indicated seven themes: discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading. These major themes related to 33 minor themes that emerged from my analysis of the data.

Six minor themes that emerged from the discrimination data included age, being a

woman, gender imbalance, stereotyping, lack of equity, and a lone female in the boardroom. Two minor themes emerged from the harassment data: bullying and violence. Four minor themes emerged from the organizational climate data: the old boys' club, special interest groups, diversity, and identity.

The three minor themes that emerged from the well-being data were stress, family, and expectations of society. Four minor themes emerged from the disruption data: role challenge, leaving, targeted, and exclusion. Seven minor themes emerged from the empowerment data: efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. Seven minor themes emerged from the leading data: a purposeful goal, support system, inclusion, advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance.

The answer to the research question was as follows: Women describe their experiences dealing with gender bias based on men's behaviors of discrimination and harassment toward them. An organizational climate embedded in gender bias can affect women's well-being, which influences women's roles on corporate boards. Disruption to board dynamics affected women's appointments negatively. Women were successful through their empowerment to create behavioral change within themselves, and by leading organizations, they thwarted the bias they encountered while executing their roles on a corporate board.

In this chapter, I provide a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations based on findings of the study. Details include interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations. Implications of the study and conclusions complete the

chapter.

Interpretation of Findings

In this section, I discuss how the findings in Chapter 4 confirm, disconfirm, or extend the body of knowledge related to gender bias by comparing them with the discoveries in the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. I analyze and interpret the study results in the conceptual framework within the data, findings, and scope of the study. The overarching research question was as follows: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias; how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board; how can gender bias affect her appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics; and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board? Findings of the study included discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment, and leading.

The findings aligned to previous research such as Chawla and Sharma's (2016) study results, which indicated that within a set of challenges, strategies, social facilitators, behavioral facilitators, and organizational facilitators included 22 themes that impeded the progress of women in leadership positions (Chawla & Sharma, 2016). Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) identified 27 gender-based leadership barriers that included control of women's voices, male organizational culture, constraints to women's choices, gender unconsciousness, and harassment of women. I have organized the section based on the research question and used the findings of my study to answer the research question.

Research Question

      How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias? The findings of my study provide a detailed description of women's experiences dealing with gender bias based on men's behaviors of discrimination and harassment toward them. The findings are consistent with previous research by Seron, Silbey, Cech, and Rubineau (2016) that indicated sex segregation was evident throughout the history of professional socialization between men and women and embedded in a culture of discrimination and harassment toward women. Some men used sexism to disadvantage women to create gender inequality in the workplace (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016).

      Gender-based discrimination is an overt action taken against a woman by a man or a woman (Bruce, Battista, Plankey, Johnson, & Marshall, 2015). The findings of my study revealed six minor themes that emerged from the discrimination data: age, being a woman, gender imbalance, stereotyping, lack of equity, and a lone female in the boardroom. The findings align with those of researchers such as Vongas and Al Hajj (2015), who indicated that women in leadership positions and members of minority groups based on gender, age, and race were at a disadvantage in the boardroom. Gender stereotyping makes the experience of less favorable behaviors from others more difficult for women in leadership positions than for men (Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016). Discrimination toward women with families directly related to assumptions associated with gender stereotypes and was evident in patterns such as not promoting women with children (Smith, 2014).

      The social and cultural response to gender, age, and violence is complex

(Kaladelfos, & Featherstone, 2014). Harassment is any negative interpersonal interaction that individuals use to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (Neall & Tuckey, 2014). The findings of my study indicate two minor themes that emerged from the harassment data: bullying and violence. The findings corroborate those of Berdahl (2007), who found that women who threaten the social status of men in leadership positions could experience harassment from these men. The control of women's voices, male organizational culture, constraints on women's choices, gender unconsciousness, and harassment toward women occurred at micro, meso, and macro levels (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Women become targets for harassment by men if the men view them as a threat (Berdahl, 2007).

The significance of the findings of my study confirms and adds to the body of knowledge related to gender bias. Women described their experiences dealing with gender bias based on men's behaviors of discrimination and harassment toward them. The findings are in harmony with my conceptual framework, which links gender bias with behaviors of discrimination and harassment, social identity theory, and the role congruity theory of prejudice. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains the basis for intergroup discrimination. The role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002) explains the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. The findings in my study provide a detailed description of women's experiences dealing with gender bias based on men's behaviors of discrimination and harassment toward them.

How can gender bias influence a woman's role on a corporate board? The findings of my study provide a detailed description of the gender bias that influenced women's roles on corporate boards based on an organizational climate embedded in gender bias that affected women's well-being. The findings are consistent with previous research by Veltrop, Hermes, Postma, and Haan (2015), who indicated that social changes to corporate boards could activate factional fault lines based on demographic similarities and differences among board members. Women who integrated themselves into decision-making roles in the boardroom could unintentionally cause gender bias against themselves (Cook & Glass, 2014).

Organizational climate is social information process that concerns meaning individuals attach to policies, practices, and procedures they experience and behaviors they observe that leadership rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). The findings of my study indicated that four minor themes emerged from the organizational climate data: the old boys' club, special interest groups, diversity, and identity. The findings align with those of researchers such as Veltrop et al. (2015), who indicated that social categorization among board members who represent special interest groups, could create distinct in-group and out-group memberships. The old boys' club was a climate of exclusion, unawareness of mistakes, and a lack of recognition of women's capabilities (Carr, Gunn, Kaplan, Raj, & Freund, 2015). Some women had a conflict with their identity separation as a stereotype threat and experienced depression, negative attitudes on the job, and urgency to resign from their jobs (von Hippel et al., 2015). Some women in leadership positions experienced social resistance from others and

social identity conflict within themselves (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

An individual's well-being provides a sense of self, embedded in a wider system of recognition and misrecognition of capabilities, social integration, security, and processes to benefit the individual (Atkinson, 2013). The findings of my study described three minor themes that emerged from the well-being data: stress, family, and expectations of society. The findings corroborate those of von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, and McFarlane (2015), who indicated that some women in leadership positions could experience stereotype threats that reduce their well-being at work. The mindset of women not fitting into their roles undermines their performance expectations and attention of the people who evaluate them as leaders (Heilman, 2012). Some women suffer the consequences of lost income, missed promotion opportunities, and increased conflict in raising their family while working (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Some women do not have a positive core self-evaluation regarding their ability to succeed and make a difference in the world (Wang et al., 2016). Women in leadership positions can experience stereotype threats that reduce their well-being at work (von Hippel et al., 2015). Some women have a conflict with their identity separation as a stereotype threat and experience depression, negative attitudes on the job, and urgency to resign from their jobs while confronted with increased conflict in raising their family while working (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & McFarlane, 2015).

The significance of the findings of my study confirms and adds to the body of knowledge related to gender bias. The influence of organizational climate embedded in gender bias can affect women's well-being. The findings are in harmony with my

conceptual framework, which provides a link between gender bias and leadership with barriers identified for organizational climate and well-being that influence women's roles on corporate boards. A leadership and identity link to the related theories known to researchers and relevant to my study was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which explained the basis for intergroup discrimination. The role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002) explained the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. These theories connected gender bias with gender, leadership, and identity within the conceptual framework of my study. Gender bias influenced women's roles on corporate boards based on an organizational climate embedded in gender bias that affected women's well-being.

How can gender bias affect a woman's appointment that could be disruptive to board dynamics? The findings of my study provided a detailed description of the gender bias that affected women's appointments that disrupted board dynamics. The findings are consistent with previous research by Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015), who indicated that gender is a causal factor that can affect the appointment of women to corporate boards and an organization's receptiveness to women as board members. Group interactional dynamics between men and women are dependent on a group's composition (Schwab, Werbel, Hofmann, & Henriques, 2016).

A disruption to the environment could destabilize an individual, with this destabilization characterized by confusion, deliberate threats, external pressures, and resource limits (Fiksel, Polyviou, Croxton, & Pettit, 2015). The findings of my study revealed four minor themes that emerged from the disruption data: role challenge,

leaving, targeted, and exclusion from decision-making. Disruption could lead to frequent changes in external factors beyond an individual's control, causing sensitivity and connectivity among other individuals (Fiksel et al., 2015). The findings of my study align with those of researchers such as Veltrop et al. (2015), who indicated that disturbances could activate fault lines that enable social categorization among board members. Intentional attacks aimed to cause harm influenced the creation of constraints or barriers, limitations on performance, controlled conditions for integrity, and degree of interdependence and reliance on external entities (Fiksel et al., 2015).

An increase in the homogeneity of corporate boards excluded minorities and women from the member selection process, despite the existence of suitable and qualified candidates (Brown, 2015). Individuals who do not have the support of another individual in an organization where they work may find that unexpected events early in their career can force them to quit their job (Drury, 2016). Women who cannot see themselves as leaders are choosing to leave corporate boards for self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities (Rowley, Lee, & Lan, 2015).

The significance of the findings of my study confirms and adds to the body of knowledge related to gender bias. Women's appointments to corporate boards can be disruptive to board dynamics. The findings are in harmony with my conceptual framework, gender and leadership link that connected barriers women could experience in leadership positions. A leadership and identity link to the related theories known to researchers and relevant to my study was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which explains the basis for intergroup discrimination. The role congruity theory of

prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002) explains the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. These theories connected gender bias with gender, leadership, and identity within the conceptual framework of my study. Gender bias affected women's appointments that disrupted board dynamics.

How can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as a woman executes her role on a corporate board? The findings of my study described gender bias created a need for women to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as they executed their role on a corporate board through behaviors of empowerment and leading. The findings are consistent with previous research of Murphy (2016) who discovered the complexity of gender stereotyping toward women in leadership roles provided opportunities to empower them from the negative effects of a threat. The consequences of stereotype threats were a vulnerable reaction or resilience demonstrated by women in leadership positions (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

Empowerment is a meaningful shift in the experience of power attained through an individual's interactions in the social world that build confidence, connections, and consciousness of authenticity in an individual (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). The findings of my study revealed seven minor themes that emerged from the empowerment data included efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. The findings align with those of researchers such as Rhode and Packel (2014) who indicated the strategies for change were for women to adopt mentoring, education, coaching, networking, and self-promotion. Women who have access to mentoring in career development, such as

coaching, and psychosocial functions, such as encouragement, is significant to enhance women's self-efficacy as leaders (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Networks can help to support career development and opportunities to improve technical skills and expertise in a field of interest (Dunn, 2012; Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016).

The findings of my study align with findings of Cifre, Vera, and Signani (2015) that indicated the social context that affects a group and an individual's social identity within the group when exposed to stress could determine the coping strategy they chose to manage the stress. Murray and Ali (2016) contended that the core properties that underpinned the behavioral characteristics of coping were problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Women who viewed the situation related to gender bias as a challenge used problem-focused coping strategies of active coping, planning, and seeking social support (Murray & Ali, 2016). Women who viewed a similar situation as a threat used emotion-focused coping strategies of acceptance, turning to religion, denial, and behavioral and mental disengagement (Murray & Ali, 2016). The findings of my study made visible women used problem-focused coping strategies to deal with gender bias as they execute their role on a corporate board.

Leading is to adopt a virtuous behavior based on a journey toward an ideal self that would take courage to choose who an individual is to become and to work in excellence to attain humanness (Fernando & Chowdhury, 2016). The findings of my study made visible seven minor themes that emerged from the leading data included a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion, advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance. The findings corroborate with the findings of

Cheung, Lindsey, King, and Hebl (2016) who indicated women who commit to their profession could choose to use their influence tactics based on previous experience to manage impressions of their power, status, and legitimacy that align with their character. Interpersonal communications or impression management could minimize biases if minority board members develop the skills to shift the focus away from their differing demographics with other members in the boardroom (Zhu, Wei, & Hillman, 2014).

Vinkenburg et al. (2014) emphasized women's human capital and reputation helps determine their admission to leadership positions. Women's social identity can influence decision-making, social capital, cultural capital, impression management, self-monitoring, and a discriminative ability (Vinkenburg et al., 2014). Women who perceived they had a deficit in these areas can find impression management a useful coping strategy (Vinkenburg et al., 2014). The basis for some women selected for leadership positions is their visibility and impression management to manage their careers (Terjesen, Sealy, & Singh, 2009).

Impression management pioneered by Goffman (1959) explained the effort to influence other individuals' perceptions of a person, group, and organization. The findings of my study supported the coping strategies women developed based on gender bias was a form of impression management such as self-presentation, to increase their self-esteem, and identity management to manage their perceived realities in the boardroom. The findings align with those of Vinkenburg et al. (2014) who indicated impression management is the effort women use on other individuals to like them, appear competent, and exceed performance expectations in their role.

The significance of the findings of my study confirms and adds to the body of knowledge related to gender bias. Women create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as they execute their role on a corporate board through behaviors of empowerment and leading. The findings are in harmony with my conceptual framework that linked gender and identity with group memberships to create power, status, and legitimacy of women in leadership positions with behaviors of empowerment and leading. An individual can have multiple personal and social identities that can oppose and cause tension (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1979), pioneers of social identity, developed this theory to explain the basis for intergroup discrimination. The role congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002) explained the exclusion of women from corporate boards as a result of gender bias. The findings in my study provided a detailed description of gender bias created a need for women to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as they executed their role on a corporate board through behaviors of empowerment and leading.

In summary, the interpretation of the findings of my study described women's experiences dealing with gender bias based on men's behaviors of discrimination and harassment toward them. An organizational climate embedded in gender bias affected women's well-being that influenced their role on a corporate board, and their appointment disrupted board dynamics. The women were successful using behaviors of empowerment to create behavioral change within themselves, and by leading organizations, they thwarted the bias they encountered while executing their role on a corporate board.

The women used problem-focused coping strategies of empowerment that included efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. The leading strategies included a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion, advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance. The strategies to cope with gender bias checklist is an outcome of my study of the coping strategies, behaviors, actions, and date completed (see Table 15).

Table 15

Strategies to Cope With Gender Bias Checklist

Coping strategies	Behaviors	Actions	Date completed
Empowerment	Efficacy	Learn to take control of emotions	
	Entrepreneurship	Own a business	
	Skill building	Take a course of any gaps in skill	
	Knowledge building	Acquire knowledge about a board	
	Mentor relationship	Find a trusted mentor	
	Networking	Be visible in the industry	
	Relationship building	Create trusted relationships	
Leading	Purposeful goal	Define what you do and why	
	Support system	Tell family and friends	
	Inclusion	Realize the value of different thinking	
	Advocacy for change	Take control of the environment	
	CEO experience	Shadow a CEO for six months	
	Impression management	Have a professional image	
	Governance	Become an effective director	

The strategies to cope checklist illustrates empowerment and leading as the coping strategies against gender bias. Within the empowerment coping strategy are the behaviors that included efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. Within the leading coping strategy are the behaviors of a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion, advocacy

for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance. The behaviors have an associated action as indicated in Table 15. Women who are using the checklist can indicate a date of completion as evidence of their readiness to cope with gender bias.

Limitations of the Study

In this section, I describe if any the limitations and reliability of my study results as evidence of trustworthiness that arose during the execution of the study. I should stress that I took reasonable measures to describe the limitations of the study to include quality in the research design that addressed the issues of trustworthiness of the study results. In Chapter 1, the focus concerned three limitations of the study.

The first limitation of the study identified in Chapter 1 focused on the methodology and design that were beyond my control and could have affected the study results. A limitation of qualitative studies is replicating the study results because the research occurs in a natural setting (Patton, 2015). In 109 days of data collection, I sent 1,116 messages on social media to my contacts across Canada. I used LinkedIn, Facebook, Researchgate, and YouTube social media sites to send the message Canada-wide. A Facebook advertisement of the message reached 65,080 individual sites that led to 200 views. A YouTube video presentation received 27 views. I responded to 30 potential participants by sending the e-mail invitation to participate in the study to their e-mail addresses. I received informed consent and completed demographic forms online from six English-speaking women had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their roles on corporate boards in the public and private sectors in provinces and territories throughout Canada.

I have addressed the issue where five of six participants confirmed their synthesis report for member checking was accurate. Dependability is a criterion for trustworthiness that relates to the consistency of the study results (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Dependability occurs if the feedback from participants during member checking the analysis and interpretation of the findings is consistent with the interview data collected for a study (Hays et al., 2016). Member checking was to provide a participant the opportunity to confirm the analysis and interpretation of an interview were accurate and complete (Patton, 2015). One participant in my study did not respond to my e-mail to confirm the accuracy of the synthesis report. The credibility of the study results improves when a participant confirms the synthesis report (Patton, 2015). Possible reasons a participant did not respond to member checking was the participant did not remember the interview or did not recognize the data presented in the synthesis report (Bengtsson, 2016). The limitations of member checking data in my study included a time delay because of a waiting period of 14 days for a participant to confirm by e-mail response that the synthesis report was accurate. I should make clear that I did not receive the participant's confirmed response to her syntheses report, but I did include the data collected related to the participant in the study.

I intentionally used an interview protocol for the semistructured interviews to standardize the data collection process (see Appendix A). An audit trail of the research record was evidence of the development of a study plan (Patton, 2015). Additions, changes, and documentation captured during a study such as memos or uploaded articles included an audit trail (Patton, 2015). The synthesis reports for member checking, coding

structure, and memos on the progress of research provided an auditable examination of my study. I used an audit trail of logged events such as the NVivo date and time stamps of uploaded data sources that included the interview data, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards.

The second limitation of my study identified in Chapter 1 focused on the unique data sources used in the study that included interviews, journaling, and analysis of physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of women on corporate boards for methodological triangulation to answer the research question. The type of triangulation is a method of data saturation of rich, in-depth data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Transferability is a criterion for trustworthiness that could occur if a researcher can determine if the study results are transferable to his or her situation (Bengtsson, 2016; Hays et al., 2016). A researcher will need to decide whether to make the results transferable to a study (Bengtsson, 2016). I used thick, rich description and purposeful sampling for a researcher to decide the transferability of the study results. The findings of my study are unique and restricted to the data sources used in the study.

The third limitation of the study identified in Chapter 1 focused on researcher bias that could have influenced the study findings. I had addressed the issue of researcher bias through reflective journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher. The practice of reflexivity includes journal notes taken of a researcher's emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1983). The reflexivity technique helped me to suspend judgment and contain any preconceptions that I had about gender bias and

prior knowledge of my study.

In summary, I have revised the limitations of the study identified in Chapter 1 to describe the reliability of my study results. I described member checking, multiple and unique sources of data used, the interview protocol, audit trail, and restriction of researcher bias as evidence of trustworthiness that arose during the execution of the study. A researcher could decide to make my study results transferable to a study.

Recommendations

In this section, I describe recommendations for further research grounded in the strengths and limitations of my study and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The experiences of women from multiple perspectives in research can be advantageous to academe, boards, and organizational leaders regarding the behavioral consequences created by the inclusion of women on corporate boards (Hillman, 2015). I think possible areas for further research based on the findings of my study include discrimination, harassment, organizational climate, well-being, disruption, empowerment and leading (see Table 14, p. 254).

Recommendations for Future Research

Discrimination as an incentive. Future research into exploring how women use discrimination toward them as an incentive should focus on women becoming more effective in leadership styles. The findings of my study described the role of men is to help change the bias toward women in leadership positions through collaboration with women to effect behavioral change in organizations and society. A change of men's and society's attitudes that relate to gender bias will take longer but is something to work

towards by society. The findings align with researchers LaPierre, Hill, and Jones (2016) who indicated leadership support of women reaching their full potential could eliminate gender bias toward women. An emerging positive language and a shift in thinking in organizations can remove direct and indirect discrimination toward women and women with families (Smith, 2014). Women appointed to leadership roles overcome prejudice and gender stereotypes (Kulik & Metz, 2015).

Bierema (2016) recommended researchers extend beyond gender and focus on effective leadership. A positive concept of leadership was an authentic transformational leader that links actions and behaviors of a leader to the well-being of the leader and followers (Chasserio, Poroli, & Redien-Collot, 2016). The findings of my study provided details of the behaviors of discrimination that could provide a pathway to use my study results to explore discrimination further. One avenue for further study would be research into women who use discrimination as an incentive to become more effective in leadership styles to change men's and society's attitudes on gender bias.

Threat to the social status of men. Without further research into women's inclusion in the boardroom, it will not be possible to explore the threat to the social status of men in leadership positions. The findings of my study revealed women who spoke up against harassment were a threat to men. The findings are consistent with those of researchers Derks, Van Laar, and Ellemers (2016) indicated male dominance and inequality in several groups have consequences such as to preserve their male power. An organization should create identity-safe environments and present leadership tasks as safe to minimize the effect of the gender stereotype threat toward women (Hoyt & Murphy,

2016). A woman's orientation, initiation rituals to work and teams, and socialization on jobs were subject to cultural gender biases related to discrimination and harassment (Seron, Silbey, Cech, & Rubineau, 2016). Women on corporate boards in the public sector provide legitimacy, credibility, and a role model to a private sector organization for a research setting (Brieger, Francoeur, Welzel, & Ben-Amar, 2017; Hodigere & Bilimoria, 2015).

Hoyt and Murphy (2016) concluded that organizations should create identity-safe environments and present leadership tasks as safe to minimize the effect of the gender stereotype threat toward women. A research study could explore why women are a threat in the boardroom. Research conducted on the differences between men who do not have an issue with those who do with women in the boardroom. Men and women differ that cause for the differences in the boardroom. Future research should focus on the inclusion of women in the boardroom is a threat to the social status of men in leadership positions.

Harassment, bullying, and violence. Without further research into harassment, bullying, and violence toward women in the boardroom, it will not be possible to take corrective action to address improper behaviors by men against women. The findings of my study revealed women who spoke up against harassment experienced increased harassment. The findings align with previous research such as Murphy (2016) alleged women identified with their gender and felt motivated could experience the most negative effects of the threat.

The findings are consistent with findings of Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) who indicated forces that inhibit value capital creation in an organization against women start

from early life experiences of gender roles and behaviors in male and female children, further compounded by social expectations, and gender behaviors to expectations of society. Seron et al. (2016) argued for reform to start in the classroom, education, professions, and organizations in a structural and cultural context to build confidence in women. Legislation without compliance and enforcement by organizations and society further adds to the persistence of gender inequality (Holzhammer, 2014).

A qualitative study on harassment, bullying, and violence could be difficult to conduct without volunteer participants with so few women on a corporate board but could provide a pathway to use my study results for information to build an instrument of these behaviors and access women on a corporate board to gather the information. A study conducted collaboratively with volunteer participants could facilitate positive social change in the boardroom. Further research into the harassment, bullying, and violence toward women should focus on legislation and directives that further reinforce male dominance in the boardroom and early experiences of gender roles preserved by society.

Effort women on corporate boards exert. It is relevant to explore the effort women on a corporate board exert to maintain the management and control of board chair because of special interest groups' role in the boardroom. The findings of my study revealed women provided a competitive advantage to decision-making. The findings are consistent with those of researchers Fredricks, Tilley, and Pauknerová (2014) who indicated gender diversity could minimize the ethical myopia of homogeneous boards with the inclusion of women to provide a competitive advantage to decision-making. Some women have an emancipative culture to change based on their motivation and

societal support to take on leadership roles on a corporate board (Brieger, Francoeur, Welzel, & Ben-Amar, 2017). Brieger et al. (2017) recommended exploring women as board chairs because of their empowerment to advance socio-economic development such as their capabilities to assume leadership roles.

Women in leadership positions have extended emancipative rights socially, politically, and economically as a guarantee to conduct a leadership role on a corporate board (Brieger et al., 2017). The findings of my study provided details of the organizational climate that could provide a pathway to use my study results to explore why special interest groups have so much influence in the boardroom. The role and hidden agendas of special interest groups in the boardroom and how do women board chairs work with special interest groups. I think a possible area for research include the effort women on a corporate board exert to maintain the management and control of board chair because of special interest groups' role in the boardroom.

Impostor phenomenon and evaluation of self. Future research into the impostor phenomenon (IP) and evaluation of self should focus on a woman in a leadership position. The findings of my study revealed women who are high achievers have difficulty personalizing their experiences of success. The findings align with previous research such as Kulik and Metz (2015) contended that women in their study had a high human capital and sharpened their technical and survival skills to be effective in their leadership roles. Gender-based inequality diminishes with increased levels of education (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The IP phenomenon links the influence of work on a family that creates an

internal experience of falsehood for high achievers who have difficulty personalizing

their experiences of success (Crawford et al., 2016). Von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, and

McFarlane (2015) described the negative consequences of gender bias were

psychological factors that affect women in leadership positions related to tokenism,

stereotyping, and devaluation of their worth. The findings of my study revealed the well-

being of women in leadership positions could provide a pathway to use my study results

for information to explore an emotion-focused mindset. Some women do not have a

positive core self-evaluation of themselves to have the ability to succeed and make a

difference in the world (Wang et al., 2016). These women in leadership positions can

experience stereotype threats that reduced their well-being at work (von Hippel et al.,

2015). One avenue for further study would be research into the specific ways a woman

can develop an impostor phenomenon that could allow them to evaluate themselves

negatively.

A common platform. Without further research into a common platform for like-

minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions, it will not

be possible to reduce any disruption to board dynamics. The findings of my study

described an organization could use a standard approach to affect change in the

boardroom. The findings align with previous research such as Janjuha-Jivraj and Zaman

(2013) who indicated the identification and recruitment of highly skilled women could

provide a standard approach to affect change despite the reality to leave women to fend

for themselves. An example is TheBoardlist that opened on April 25, 2017, at the

Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) in Canada and featured women in technology who were

available for board seats.

An organization could indicate support to companies like TheBoardlist to transform board recruitment of highly skilled women in leadership positions. An organization could realign the composition of a board to meet the needs of business (EY, 2013), widen the search criteria to include candidates with analytical skills, independent thinking, and a capacity to support and challenge other individuals (EY, 2013). A pool of women with common skills and purpose could provide a pathway to create independent organizations and corporate boards in their field of interest such as STEM.

A gap in gender leadership included women waiting to advance in leadership positions problem, persistent sex discrimination, caregiving, women's choices, effective networks and mentors, stereotypes, and bias (Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016). Choudhury (2014) concluded that an alternative to gender quotas was to increase the demand for women and to increase the supply of women in the waiting to advance to leadership positions.

The number of women waiting to advance in leadership positions lacks the pool of talented women who are available for board membership is not at a critical mass to make a positive social change to gender diversity in the boardroom (Kulik & Metz, 2015). The findings of my study related to disruption could provide a pathway to use my study results for information by a human resources department of an organization to explore changing their recruitment practices for board positions. It is relevant to explore a common platform for like-minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions to reduce any disruption to board dynamics.

Mentor relationship. Without further research into a mentor relationship between men and women with women in leadership positions, it will not be possible to know if it could help close a gap and facilitate women's development in leadership roles. The findings of my study described women on a corporate board are alone in the boardroom because of a lack of support from peers. These women need a trusted advisor to close this gap. The findings align with researchers, Cook and Glass (2015) indicated organizational leaders could facilitate advancement of women in leadership positions by building powerful networks and developing confidence in women's abilities in leadership positions.

Some men are not eager to perform the mentor role because of potential allegations of sexual discrimination toward women mentees (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). For male mentor relationships with women in leadership positions, if women mentored by men become a success, the women could attribute the success to the men's wisdom and guidance rather than to their skills and expertise (Heilman, 2012). These situations could prevent women from obtaining the credit they deserve, even when they earned the credit (Heilman, 2012).

Some women are unwilling to take the same amount of credit as men take for successful joint outcomes because the women see themselves as less competent to men (Heilman, 2012). For women mentor relationships with women in leadership positions, some women could experience less mentoring regarding the participation process from other board members to learn to navigate the nuances of behaviors and relationships within a board's social norms, such as intergroup biases (McDonald & Westphal, 2013).

These women could feel disengaged as females in their work and as mentors to other women (von Hippel et al., 2015). Women could have difficulty in finding mentors to help with their leadership development (Ely et al., 2011). It is relevant to explore a mentor relationship between men and women with women in leadership positions, which could help, close the gap to facilitate women's development in leadership roles.

Relational opportunities and challenges. One avenue for further study would be research into the relational opportunities and challenges women in leadership positions encountered that influenced their careers. The findings of my study revealed the hierarchical relationships in women's career have helped with their empowerment in leadership positions. The findings are consistent with Holzhammer's (2014) study that indicated a change in roles and responsibilities of women could cause a redistribution of social roles and power women will have to assume and confront are the consequences of the change (Holzhammer, 2014). Holzhammer (2014) recommended sustainability of societal change in roles and responsibilities of men and women was dependent on women themselves.

The findings of my study related to the behaviors of empowerment could provide a pathway to use my study results for information to explore how women in leadership positions overcame their emotions to become emotionally stable. A question for future study to address could be how women in leadership positions mentoring other individuals helped them to become better leaders. Future research into the relational opportunities and challenges women in leadership positions encountered should focus on the influence of their careers.

Decision-making in gender differences that could have different outcomes. It is relevant to explore the decision-making in gender differences that could have different outcomes because of gender. The findings of my study revealed women in leadership positions used perceived value or loss in decision-making. The findings corroborate with Seron et al. (2016) who indicated men and women's experiences in the professional culture differed with their interpretation of real-world problems. Men managed problems at face value, and women specified a problem as a commitment to solve to improve the quality of life and to serve the public (Seron et al., 2016). Men thrived on teamwork and women experienced gender stereotyping such as organizing and managing the team while men performed the work (Seron et al., 2016). Men described workplace experience as fulfilling, whereas women discovered that the no profession was not for them (Seron et al., 2016). Men tended to surmount challenges without eroding their confidence, and women sought the confirmation of their abilities (Seron et al., 2016).

The findings of my study related to the behaviors of leading could provide a pathway to use my study results for information to explore why some men on corporate boards meet outside the boardroom to socialize and make board decisions. Other questions to explore could include why men on corporate boards collude and come to board meetings with all the answers and why men on corporate boards prepare for board meetings differently from women. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) supported the inclusion of women in other industries such as businesses and the experiences of male leaders to compare the study results. Women on corporate boards in the public sector provide legitimacy, credibility, and a role model to the private sector (Brieger, Francoeur, Welzel,

& Ben-Amar, 2017). Future research into decision-making in gender differences should focus on the different outcomes because of gender.

In summary, the findings of my study identified nine possible areas for further research include women who use discrimination as an incentive to become more effective in leadership styles to change men's and society's attitudes on gender bias. The inclusion of women in the boardroom is a threat to the social status of men in leadership positions. Additional research on the harassment, bullying, and violence toward women with a focus on legislation and directives that further reinforce male dominance in the boardroom and early experiences of gender roles preserved by society.

The effort women on a corporate board exert to maintain the management and control of board chair because of special interest groups' role in the boardroom. Women who develop an impostor phenomenon that could allow them to evaluate themselves negatively. A common platform for like-minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions to reduce any disruption to board dynamics. A mentor relationship between men and women with women in leadership positions, which could help, close the gap to facilitate women's development in leadership roles. The relational opportunities and challenges women in leadership positions encountered that influenced the women's careers and decision-making in gender differences could have different outcomes because of gender.

Women, academe, organizations, corporate boards, government, and society could find the results of my study helpful as it relates to gender bias and how women cope with it. I developed my study to create a new standard in research of women on

corporate boards with the intent to add to the body of knowledge related to gender bias of the study findings. The nine areas identified for future research could provide further insight into the dynamics between men and women on corporate boards and their relationship with gender bias.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The findings of my study have the potential to affect positive social change at individual, organizational, and societal levels. Findings of my study could add to the body of knowledge related to gender bias. The study results could provide information to explore areas for future research, and a researcher could decide whether to make the results transferable to a study.

Individual level. My study offers suggestive evidence for an individual to recognize gender bias through behaviors that included discrimination, harassment, and an organizational climate that can affect the individual's well-being to disrupt board dynamics. Women in leadership positions who defy the gendered patterns of career advancement are rewriting institutionalized career scripts that have signaled men and women to follow separate work trajectories (Bowles, 2012). An individual could choose to change their experience with gender bias by choosing to change their response to it through the actions of empowerment and by leading an organization.

My study appears to support the argument for a change in women to become successful through their empowerment created behavioral change within themselves, and by leading organizations, they thwarted the gender bias they encountered while executing

their role on a corporate board. The women used the empowerment and leading techniques to become successful coping with gender bias on a corporate board. The study described the empowerment techniques that included efficacy, entrepreneurship, skill building, knowledge building, a mentor relationship, networking, and relationship building. The leading techniques included a purposeful goal, support system, and inclusion, advocacy for change, CEO experience, impression management, and governance.

I developed the strategies to cope with gender bias checklist based on the study findings for women to use and monitor their progress (see Table 15, p. 271). Women can learn and apply skills to become effective in their leadership roles themselves (Bierema, 2016). Women can become ready for the increased need for leaders by learning to cope with gender bias while organizations and society adjust to the changing work environment of more women in leadership positions (Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016). The positive social change could occur from the use of the strategies to cope with gender bias checklist to reduce women's experiences with a bias that influenced their role on a corporate board and disrupted board dynamics.

Organizational level. My study offers suggestive evidence for an organization to help reduce gender bias towards women such as a standard approach to affect change in the boardroom using a common platform for like-minded and skilled individuals to help advance women in leadership positions to reduce any disruption to board dynamics. Employers could actively encourage mentoring programs to share credibility in the field of interest for women (Hill et al., 2016). Policymakers could create an equitable

workplace by enforcing existing laws (Hill et al., 2016). An organization could enforce work policy in conjunction with the legislation to create safe places for empowered women to work (Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016).

My study appears to support the argument for change with those of Schuh et al. (2014) who indicated an organization could find ways to balance gender distribution in leadership positions that enabled power motivation of women in leadership positions. Family-friendly policies could help to advance female professionals to leadership positions (Deloitte, 2015). Hoyt and Murphy (2016) indicated that organizations should create identity-safe environments and present leadership tasks as safe to minimize the effect of the gender stereotype threat toward women. The potential for positive social change at the organizational level is dependent on the actions of organizational leaders to develop and implement interventions to reduce the effects of gender bias toward women.

Societal level. My study offers suggestive evidence for society to be supportive of women who spoke up against harassment were a threat to men and experienced increased harassment. Seron et al. (2016) argued for the reform to start in the classroom, education, professions, and organizations in a structural and cultural context to build confidence in women. The roles prescribed to men and women are social structures associated with preconceived beliefs and behaviors of society (Eagly, 1997). A change of mindset in both men and women against gender bias is an initiative the United Nations identified as a sustainable development global goal to attain gender equality (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). Holzhammer (2014) recommended the sustainability of a societal change in the roles and responsibilities of men and women was dependent on

the women themselves. The positive social change could occur at the societal level by reducing the effects of gender bias toward women and girls starting in the home, with families, parents, and children at a very young age.

Recommendations for Practice

My research fills the gap how gender bias can cause women on corporate boards to develop coping strategies to help them be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment. The results of the study provide men and women, organizations, and society with evidence to support new approaches to reduce gender bias toward women and strategies to cope with gender bias. They can initiate training to raise the awareness of the findings of the study and related training in the workplace to enable a reduction in gender bias.

Women will need to learn how to cope with gender bias to be successful in leadership positions. The forces shaping the business environment include changes to the social values and expectations of work, globalization, and an aging population (Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013). In a future society, women could increasingly fill the demand for leadership positions such as CFOs and accountants (Janjuha-Jivraj & Zaman, 2013). On the surface, this would suggest that the strategies to cope with gender bias checklist could be an important factor to help facilitate the success of women to cope with gender bias be effective in their roles and avoid disrupting board dynamics because of their appointment (see Table 15, p. 271). The positive social change could occur because of the awareness the findings of the study and tool that adds to the body of knowledge related to gender bias.

Conclusions

Women on a corporate board are often in the minority. They may have limited access to influential members of an organization to enhance their development in this leadership and decision-making position. Gender-based barriers such as a glass ceiling or glass cliff that some women experience can explain some men's expectations of women to fail as leaders in these positions (Sabharwal, 2013). Although women on a corporate board may provide a competitive advantage to board decision-making, there remains insufficient knowledge of the ethical concerns the women experience that is disruptive to board dynamics and the women's self-esteem.

Women who cope with gender bias through their self-empowerment to create behavioral change within themselves have a strong likelihood to be successful. The women who adjust their response to bias could change men's and society's perceptions of women as a threat to the social status of some men (Bierema, 2016; Fredricks, Tilley, & Pauknerová, 2014; Kulik & Metz, 2015; LaPierre, Hill, & Jones, 2016). Women responding proactively to gender bias can demonstrate they can work collaboratively in a positive way. They can manage gender bias through their actions and leadership skills, to thwart the bias they encounter while executing their role on a corporate board. Regardless of the type of gender bias, women can use coping strategies to transform themselves and change men's perceptions of women in the governance structures of society.

Even though the number of women on a corporate board may increase in an organization, men on the boards may still exhibit gender bias in working with them that can diminish the women's effectiveness. Changing men's mindsets about women

colleagues on boards as well as society's attitudes that relate to gender bias is a goal for society to work towards a more respectful and collaborative working relationship between men and women. First, women in leadership positions can influence changes to existing legislation and policies to facilitate more gender equality in the workplace (Holzhammer, 2014). Second, leaders of an organization can use interventions to assist in developing a culture that improves women's well-being, reduce gender bias toward women, and promote a more collegial working relationship between men and women (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016; Terjesen et al., 2009). Finally, society's acceptance of gender neutrality could increase women's presence in decision-making positions (Holzhammer, 2014; United Nations Development Programme, 2016). When men and women through governments, organizations, and society as a whole collaborate, the potential of eliminating gender bias increases.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol includes the overall process for the participant recruitment and data collection steps. I will use the interview protocol consistently to attain maximum data integrity during the data collection process with each participant. This includes the procedures for the role of the researcher, initial contact with potential participants, and conducting the semistructured interviews.

Role of the Researcher
1. As the researcher, I am the data collection instrument. I will demonstrate rigor and skill in the interview process to attain maximum data integrity by consistently using the interview protocol for each participant.
2. At this time, as the researcher I had no personal or professional relationships with participants of the study. Participants referred by my contacts on social media such as LinkedIn are invited to the study. Existing participants using the snowball sampling method refer new participants to the study.
3. In the data collection procedures, I will use journaling to attain a neutral state as the researcher. I will use reflexivity to suspend judgment and contain any preconceptions that I had about gender bias and prior knowledge of my study. My preparation as the interviewer will be thorough, rehearsed, and follow the script in the interview protocol. I will never prompt or infer phrases or categories to the interviewee.
4. Flexibility following the script. In the interview, I will follow the script and ask the open-ended questions but will allow participants the flexibility to respond without interrupting or prompting about their experiences with gender bias.

Initial Contact
1. Message on social media. I will post a message to my contacts on social media such as LinkedIn as follows: Hello, I am conducting a research study that involves exploring how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias. Participants should meet the following criteria of women who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their role on corporate boards, in the public and private sector, from the provinces and territories throughout Canada, and spoke English. Please to forward my e-mail address to any potential participants you may know for more information about how to participate in this study. Thanks very much, Sharon, Doctoral Student, Walden University.
2. E-mail invitation to participate. I will send an e-mail invitation to the participants who sent an e-mail to me for more information on how to participate in the study. I will attach the consent form and demographic form to the e-mail invitation. I will provide an online link as an alternative to e-mail for participants to document consent and complete the demographic form online.

3. Consent form and demographic form. Participants will have the option to document consent and complete the demographic form by e-mail or online.
   a. For e-mail. A participant replying to the e-mail with the words, "I consent" is agreeing to participate in the study and attaches a completed demographic form.
   b. For online. A participant who provides her contact information and completes the demographic form online is indicating her agreement to participate in the study.
   I will assign a coding representation to participants using notations of *Participant P01, P02…P09* for all communications and data collected that relates to the participant such as notes taken, reflective journal notes, any audio recordings they had agreed to for the semistructured interviews.
4. Follow-up e-mail to schedule a semistructured interview. I will send a follow-up e-mail to a participant who had provided document consent and completed demographic form by e-mail or online to provide a date, time, and telephone number for the semistructured interview. A participant is to identify at least three options from Monday to Friday during business hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm within 14 days of receiving the follow-up e-mail.

Semistructured Interviews
1. Placing the call. As the researcher, I will place the call at the agreed upon date, time, and telephone number of the participant for the interview.
2. Starting the semistructured interview. I will note the date, time, and location of the semistructured interview. I will introduce myself to establish a rapport with the participant. I will thank the participant for informed consent to participate and providing document consent and completed demographic form by e-mail or online. I will ask the participant for her permission to audio record or not the interview. I will let the participant know she can participate even if she does not want the audio recording now. I will record the participant's response by notes taken.
3. Conducting the semistructured interview. I will ask the participant the open-ended interview questions. I will take case notes about the interview. I will journal during the interview. I will ask probing questions if I need more detail of depth in the participant's response to the questions.
4. Informing the participant of the scheduled duration of the interview. I will monitor the time of the interview, inform the participant at five minutes before the time limit, and ask if the participant will need to extend the time or schedule a follow-up to complete the interview. If the participant agrees to extend the time, I will continue the interview. If the participant agrees to a follow-up interview, I will make the arrangements based on the participant's availability for the interview. I will note the date, time, and telephone number for the follow-up interview.
5. Closing the semistructured interview. I will encourage the participant to participate in the review method of member checking of the analysis and

interpretation of the interview data. I will remind the participant about the member checking process. Member checking is to attain maximum benefit for credibility and confirmability of the study results. As the researcher, I will review and interpret the interview data. I will write each question followed by a succinct synthesis of the interpretation in one to two pages. I will provide a saved copy of the synthesis to the participant by e-mail for a response to me within 14 business days. I will ask the participant if the synthesis represents her answers or if there is additional information she can provide for the study. I will continue the member checking process until there is no new data to collect. I will ask the participant if she can refer another participant to the study. I will thank the participant for her time, participation, and referral of a new participant if received for the study.

6. Ending the call. I will indicate I am ending the call and make sure to hang up when I hear the participant hangs up first. I will then hang up my telephone.

Appendix B: Message on Social Media

Hello, I am conducting a research study that involves exploring how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias. Participants should meet the following criteria of women who had experienced gender bias at the time of their appointment and in their role on corporate boards, in the public and private sector, from the provinces and territories throughout Canada, and spoke English. Please to forward my e-mail address to any potential participants you may know for more information about how to participate in this study. Thanks very much, Sharon, Doctoral Student, Walden University

Appendix C: E-mail Invitation to Participate

Woman on Corporate Board
Canada.
Dear Ms. Corporate Board Member,

Exploring how women on corporate boards cope with gender bias

This letter is to invite you to participate in a research study to explore gender bias and how can gender bias influence a woman's role on a corporate board, how this can affect her appointment that may be disruptive to board dynamics, and how can this create a need for developing coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board. Gender bias is an unconscious prejudice embedded in an individual's background, culture, and personal experiences with women.

In this invitation to participate, you can find attached a consent form and demographic form. If you would like to participate in the study, you can document consent and complete the demographic form by e-mail or online. For e-mail, reply with the words, "I consent" and attach a completed demographic form. For online, document consent by providing your contact information and completing the demographic form online.

Your informed consent to participate in the study and completed demographic form is indicating you have experienced gender bias at the time of your appointment and in your role on a corporate board. You can call the Walden University Research Participant Advocate ███████████████████████ in case you need to discuss anything regarding your rights privately as a participant.

Thank you for your interest
Sharon Roberts
Doctoral Student
Walden University

Appendix D: Demographic Form

Please complete all questions listed below. Provide the e-mail address at which you want to receive e-mails related to the study. Thank you.

E-mail: _____

Questions: Please provide answers to all questions that are most appropriate:
1. Where is your location in Canada?
    1. Alberta
    2. British Columbia
    3. Manitoba
    4. New Brunswick
    5. Newfoundland and Labrador
    6. Northwest Territories
    7. Nova Scotia
    8. Nunavut
    9. Ontario
    10. Prince Edward Island
    11. Quebec
    12. Saskatchewan
    13. Yukon

2. What is the industry sector that you are a corporate board member?
    1. Public sector
    2. Private sector

3. What is your career background and skills that you bring as a corporate board member?
    1. Career background in _____
    2. Skills in _____

4. What was occurring in the organization at the time of your appointment?
    1. Financial threat
    2. Merger and Acquisition
    3. Organizational loss
    4. Business as usual

5. How long have you been a corporate board member? _____years

6. How many board seats do you hold? _____

7. What is your role on the corporate board?
    1. CEO
    2. Committee Chair
    3. Board member

Appendix E: Follow-Up E-mail to Schedule a Semistructured Interview

Hello Ms. *Woman on Corporate Board*

I have received your consent to participate and a completed demographic form to work with you to schedule a date, time, and telephone number for an interview. I have assigned a coding representation to you using the notation of *Participant P01, P02…P09.* This code of _____ is for use on all data collected that relates to you and any communications going forward such as for member checking.

Member checking is to attain maximum benefit for credibility and confirmability of the study results. As the researcher, I will review and interpret the interview data.
I will write each question followed by a succinct synthesis of the interpretation in one to two pages. I will provide a saved copy of the synthesis to the participant by e-mail for a response to me within 14 business days. I will ask you if the synthesis represents your answers or if there is additional information you can provide for the study. I will continue the member checking process until there is no new data to collect.

Please indicate three options of your availability for a telephone interview below from Monday to Friday during business hours 9:00 am to 5:00 pm within 14 days of receiving this e-mail.

	Date	Start Time	End Time	Telephone Number
Option 1	_____	_____	_____	( ) -
Option 2	_____	_____	_____	( ) -
Option 3	_____	_____	_____	( ) -

Your information will remain private and confidential and using your participant code.

Thank you.
Sharon Roberts
Doctoral Student
Walden University

Appendix F: Interview Questions

The research question is: How does a woman describe her experiences dealing with gender bias, how can gender bias influence her role on a corporate board, how can gender bias affect her appointment that may be disruptive to board dynamics, and how can gender bias create a need to develop coping strategies to deal with gender bias as she executes her role on a corporate board?

1. What demographic similarities and differences exist between board members?
2. What views do you have about the difference in the roles of men and women board members?
3. What are the special interest groups that distinguish themselves from ingroup and outgroup board membership?
4. How did you become aware of your experiences with gender bias?
   a. What have you experienced as gender bias in the boardroom?
   b. When did you experience gender bias at your appointment, interacting with board members, in your role?
   c. How do you know this is gender bias?
   d. Why do you think gender bias was directed towards you?
   e. How do you describe your experience with gender bias?
5. How did you respond to your experience with gender bias?
   a. What was your initial reaction to gender bias?
   b. What challenges did you experience with gender bias?
6. How did you change your experience with gender bias?
   a. What did you do in your response to address gender bias?
   b. How did you know if this was successful in addressing gender bias?

Other question:
7. What additional information would you like to add that is related to gender bias or any other aspect of your corporate board experiences?