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African American Women Managers' Experiences in Predominantly Black Work Environments

Ray Muhammad
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Ray Muhammad

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Review Committee
Dr. Daphne Halkias, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
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Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

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Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2013

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The experiences of African American women managers in predominantly Black work environments and the implication of these experiences on their ability to lead remains unknown. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. This study was framed by three key concepts: intersectionality of gender and race, intraracial discrimination, and colorism. The trustworthiness of the study's data was supported by employing methodological triangulation of the study's multiple data sources: semistructured interviews with 10 African American women managers as participants, journaling/ reflective field notes, and archival data. Cross case analysis revealed 8 categories that enclose a total of twelve themes: (a) career trajectory of African American woman manager, (b) gender challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise, (c) race challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise, (d) leadership experiences with subordinates informed by gender and race, (e) further career goals as an African American woman manager, (f) colorism in childhood and adolescence, (g) colorism in daily adult experiences, and (h) intraracial discrimination from subordinates based on skin tone. This study is likely to promote social change by sensitizing predominantly Black work environments on issues of equal treatment between gender groups and ways in which an intraracial context influences African American women's management experiences.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Investigation of gender as well as racial minority leaders has increased over the past few decades as the disparity between stereotypically expected behaviors and leadership prototypes has been found oppressive within these groups (Rosette & Livingston, 2012). A prime example of such double identity oppression has been identified in the case of African American women managers. Multiple studies have concluded that African American women managers who do not conform to traditional gender standards risk negative evaluations in predominantly White workplace environments, (Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2016). What researchers are recently questioning is whether the Africa American woman manager who does not conform to traditional gender standards may risk negative evaluations in predominantly Black workplace environments as often as they do in White workplace environments (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). Such intraracial discrimination may have critical implications on African American women managers' ability to lead even within a predominantly Black work environment due to their race and gender (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012; O'Brien, Franco, & Dunn, 2014; Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016), colorism, and intraracial discrimination (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010).

The present study explored the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in a predominantly Black work place. This study promoted social change by sensitizing predominantly Black work places on issues of equal treatment between gender groups and ways in which an intraracial context influences

African American women's management experiences (Cassidy, Quinn, & Humphreys, 2011). The potential benefits of this study are to understand the leadership strategies and experiences of the agentic African American female in an environment where she is not a race minority. The findings of the study may provide information which increases her inclusion and support among colleagues in workplaces, Black or White (Hall et al., 2012).

Chapter 1 provides a background, problem statement, purpose, research question, conceptual framework, and nature of the study as well as a definition of terms. Next, the researcher also explains the assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the research. Finally, the study's significance to theory, practice, and social change is presented to conclude the chapter.

Background of the Study

According to Department of Labor statistics, women compose 47% of the total U.S. labor force (USDOL, 2011). Despite these numbers, women remain exceedingly underrepresented in leadership positions in corporate America. Increasingly, researchers illuminate barriers such as gender categorization (Glass & Cook, 2016) which commonly made it more difficult for women to attain higher level corporate positions. Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink, and Haslam (2014) also revealed women are more likely to be appointed as leaders when companies are performing poorly, but not during favorable corporate conditions. Because of these aforementioned conditions under which women are appointed to leadership assignments, Bruckmuller et al. discovered a need for research into the experiences of a growing number of women occupying higher level corporate

positions. These researchers built on Barreto, Ryan, and Schmitt's (2009) *glass cliff* phenomenon which said women face greater scrutiny than men in leadership because they do not represent the typical image of a leader. Burton and Weiner (2016) examined gender discrimination in an occupational field that is predominantly female. Social role and role congruity theory provides explanation for the disproportionately low number of women in leadership roles, explaining that the expected behavior of women is to be more nurturing whereas men are expected to be more agentic.

Per Stainback, Kleiner, and Skaggs (2016), studies show the workplace to be persistent in perpetuating gender inequality, with the power of those in leadership easily constrained in instances where they tend to defy institutional norms. Leadership qualification is measured based on how expectedly masculine the behavior of the female is, which may lead to the lack of female leadership representation even among teachers (Burton & Weiner, 2016). Moreover, careers dominated by women are devalued with female dominated occupations promising a smaller economic reward despite their professed importance to the development of society (Mandel, 2013).

Classical management theory indicated that managerial dialogue is rooted in work place environments that do not associate femininity with leadership consideration, largely making female attributes irrelevant to governance (Acker, 1990). Latchanah and Singh (2016) asserted multiple forms of discrimination including race, income and gender, help shape how the woman views herself. These inequities which are embedded in society are perpetuated in the workplace and affect how women embrace their leadership role in the organization, accepting or defying gender stereotypes (Crites, Dickson, & Lorenz, 2015).

The labyrinth of barriers for women is built upon a foundation of centuries old gender stereotypes which continue to be propagated today (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Gamble & Turner, 2015).

Research is needed regarding the leadership tactics of Black professional females and how each utilizes three categories of coping strategies: active engagement, avoidance, or minimization in predominantly African American work environments. Seen culturally and in society as *strong*, the Black woman is generally thought to innately possess the power expected to singularly maintain family, help others, overcome obstacles, and suppress weakness (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014). While Black professional women are more likely to implement active strategies such as social support networks to address work-related issues, the difference is not significant between professional and nonprofessional Black women; there are significant differences between Black female professionals and nonprofessionals employing avoidance or minimization as coping strategies (Gary, Yarandi, & Hassan, 2015).

Maddox (2013) discovered that White professional women experienced a higher level of distress than Black professional women when they were targeted with discrimination. This may be attributable to African American women having adapted more to discrimination than their White counterparts, or it could support study findings which have shown African American women tend to report somatic symptoms while Whites report more psychological effects (Maddox, 2013). This may also be the effect of the cultural expectation for her to avoid weakness and breakdowns and to address her vulnerabilities in silence rather than express frailty (Abrams et al., 2014). Researchers

identify greater disparity in stress levels between Black professional and Black nonprofessional women, attributed to Black female professionals less frequently occupying managerial positions (Maddox, 2013).

This study is significant because it contributes to the research area by filling in the gap in research which largely fails to consider the agentic African American woman and her experience as a double minority in the workplace (O'Brien et al., 2014). Societal and cultural expectations help to shape the woman's view of herself and the present study illuminates how this view affects her response (Abrams et al. 2014). Maddox (2013) suggests such a study which observes the coping strategies of Black female managers as well as their agency strategies among peers that are members of the same marginalized group is critical. The proposed method of data collection exceeds typical methodologies which are designed to analyze a single stigma at a time (McCoy & Major, 2003). Therefore, the data results offer a more comprehensive and original insight into how, if at all, the experience and response of Black female managers in a predominantly Black work environment contrasts and compares to Black female manager experiences in a predominantly White work environment based on studies such as those by Hall et al. (2012).

Researchers have indicated Black women in predominantly White work environments experience lower job satisfaction, confidence and sense of empowerment than White counterparts because they have inadequate resources, minimal input, mentorship, and limited advancement opportunities (Gary et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2012). Researchers have not addressed whether these issues predominate the Black female

managerial experience in a predominantly Black work environment and how, if at all, it affects job satisfaction, confidence and the sense of self-empowerment. Investigation of the experience of the Black female manager in a predominantly Black work environment may "reveal important insights regarding the effects of homogeneity," (Apfelbaum, Phillips, & Richeson, 2014).

Problem Statement

The general problem is that despite the usual association of authority and dominance with effective leadership, African American women managers who do not conform to traditional gender standards may risk negative evaluations in predominantly Black workplace environments as they do in White workplace environments (Hall & Crutchfield, 2018; Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). According to a 2015 report by Center for Talent Innovation, African American women aspire to leadership positions: Black women are 2.8 times as likely as White women to aspire to a powerful position with a prestigious title (Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). African American women account for only 15% of women in managerial-level positions in the private sector (Rahman, Shore, & Lightner-Laws, 2016). Yet that same report indicated that 26% of Black women surveyed in managerial position believed their talents were not recognized by their superiors unless they "kept their head down" and "make no noise" (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015).

Crenshaw (1991) first introduced the term *intersectionality* to critique research that considered only one category of discrimination, such as just race or gender, as the primary source of oppression and disadvantage (Corlett & Mavin, 2014). The literature

on intersectionality highlights the interplay between inequities based on demographic factors and associated disparities (e.g., racism and sexism) that results in a larger system of oppression, leading to many different manifestations of social inequality (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, & Tomlinson, 2013). An intersectional framework can be employed to explore how social categories simultaneously interconnect and potentially lead or contribute to the oppression of women from racial minority groups in diverse professional environments (Holder, Jackson, & Ponterotto, 2015). Yet, African American women managers coping with the stress of being a racial and gender minority in the workplace have thus far only been researched in predominantly White work environments (Vial et al., 2016). Research is needed to understand the experience of African American women managers in predominantly Black work environments where they are no longer the minority, but systems of intraracial inequality feature a different set of standards for success (McCray, 2012).

A female manager is continuously scrutinized in the workplace due to their low numbers in leadership positions (Brescoll, 2012). Minority female leaders are likely to experience an extreme amount of scrutiny towards their performance in a predominantly White workplace as an agentic penalty for being a woman of color in a leadership position (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Rosette et al. 2016), and such a degree of scrutiny may weaken their ability to lead competently (Glass & Cook, 2016). Scholars analyzing the experiences of African American women managers in predominantly White work environments report these women experience such workplace microaggressions as gender and racial stereotyping (Rosette et al. 2016), exclusion from office networks (Hall et al.,

2012), and little support from colleagues in the workplace (O'Brien et al, 2014).

Scholars also reveal the White work environment provides greater opportunity for light

complexioned African American women than dark complexioned African American

women; this is reflected in research findings that light skinned African American women

experience greater success in predominantly White workplaces than dark skinned African

American women (Hall, 2016). If African American women managers' work narratives

had not been explored across diverse work environments, it would remain unknown

whether these women also experience workplace microaggressions in predominantly

Black work environments as an agentic penalty as a female leader (Livingston et al.,

2012; Rosette et al., 2016). The specific problem is the experiences of African American

women managers in predominantly Black work environments and the implication of

these experiences on their ability to lead remains unknown (Hall & Crutchfield, 2018;

O'Brien et al., 2014; Vial et al., 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to gain deeper

understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers

employed in predominantly Black work environments. To address this gap on

experiences of the agentic African American woman leader and her experience as a

double minority in a predominately Black workplace, and consistent with the qualitative

paradigm, a multiple case study design was used to meet the purpose of the study.

Semistructured interviews (Yin, 2017) and reflective field notes (Merriam & Tisdell,

2015) were utilized to explore the specific leadership experiences of African American

women managers in predominantly Black work environments. Credibility of the study's findings was supported by triangulation of data sources (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011; Patton, 2014).

Research Questions

This study explored the experiences of African American women managers in a predominantly Black work environment. African American women managers who work in predominantly African American work environments, supervising primarily Black workers served as participants for the sample population for this study. The author analyzed communication and interaction to compare and contrast experiences between African American women managers employed in a predominantly Black work environment (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

In theory-generating case research the specific research question must be developed to provide answers within the context of the empirical setting (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). By recording the experiences of African American female managers in a predominantly Black work environment, I offered insight into whether their experiences and relationships with other employees tends to differ significantly from the accounts and experiences of African American women managers in work environments that are predominantly Caucasian. Additionally, I looked at how intragroup interaction affects the leadership experience of the African American manager in a work environment where she is not the racial minority. The research question guiding this study was as follows: What are the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments?

Conceptual Framework

This study is framed by three key concepts that focus on the challenges facing African American women managers in leadership roles within predominantly Black work environments: Essed's (1991) concept of *intersectionality of gender and race*, also coined by the seminal author with the term *gendered racism*; and Turner's (1995) concepts of *intra-racial discrimination* and *colorism*. The purpose of this qualitative study using an exploratory, multiple-case research design is to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on intersectionality and intraracial discrimination, and to contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

The concept of gendered racism, defined as oppressive practices founded in the intersectionality of race and gender, is a critical concept to the foundation of this research study. Research that employs an intersectional approach, which accounts for how multiple identities form relative to power relations (Carbado et al. 2013), can more adeptly highlight how workplace experiences mirror the intersections of race and gender (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). Experiences of gendered racism arise from stereotypes associated with minorities and women or stereotypes based on both race and sex; for example, Black women are hostile or Black women are servants (Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016). African Americans widely acknowledge emphatic skin tone stratification in the Black community and research reveals this phenomenon and its psychological effects are most pronounced among African American females (Hall, 2017; McCray,

2012). As increasing numbers of women of color ascend the corporate ladder, there is a

need for more research on gendered racism to discover the impact and psychological

effects of this phenomenon on minority women managers (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Glass &

Cook, 2016).

The research question of this study relates to the intersectionality of race and

gender because it focuses attention on the experiences and perceptions of a minority

group of women whom previous scholars theorized may experience gender and race

discrimination and workplace microaggressions (Holder et al., 2015) because of gender

and racial stereotyping (Rosette et al. 2016). Such barriers may thwart African American

women managers' ability to lead even within a predominantly Black work environment

due to their race and gender (Hall et al. 2012; O'Brien et al. 2014; Vial et al. 2016),

colorism, and intraracial discrimination (Burton et al., 2010). Researchers have revealed

that skin tone stratification remains significant; gendered colorism occurs especially

among African American women who experience color preference almost from birth,

beginning in the home (Hall, 2017). Intersectionality theory has helped to elucidate more

nuanced approaches to researching issues of inequality, approaches that allow scholars to

explore how these categories overlap as well as what this means for different groups in

professional settings (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study is qualitative so that the method aligns with the purpose

of the study and provides data for the research questions. Given that the study purpose is

aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African

American women managers employed in predominantly Black work enterprises, an exploratory, multiple-case study was developed to meet research objectives of the study (Yin, 2017). The goal of qualitative research itself is to explore life experiences and interactions of people within a specific social context and this method is associated with the constructivist paradigm (Cooper & White, 2012). Social constructionism is concerned with how knowledge is constructed and understood and that reflection on human practices be a central focus in qualitative inquiry (Gergen, 1985). Social constructivists promote the connection between the individual and the body of knowledge being discovered; thus, the practitioner is encouraged to recognize his or her vital role tapping into the vast body of knowledge which may be discovered in self and others through observation and reflection (Burr, 2015). Qualitative research methodologies used within the constructivists' paradigm edify various oppressed cultural and social groups by offering a platform for those who are marginalized to share their experiences (Cooper & White, 2012). The dialogue developed between researcher and participants with the in-depth interview method used in qualitative research for purposes of data collection approaches can provide new perspectives and meanings from within a given social context.

A multiple-case study investigating a social phenomenon can involve individuals living within the setting of that social context as a separate unit of study (Yin, 2017). The unit of analysis in this study is the African American woman manager working in a predominately Black enterprise. When the data focus is only on individuals in a multiple-case study design, each unit of analysis becomes a case study in and of itself

(Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2017). This design allows for investigating differences within and between cases (Yin, 2017). The multiple case study into this phenomenon seeks to deliver reliable results to answer the research question by utilizing data collection methods which support the phenomenon being studied (Shenton, 2004). These methods, which have been refined throughout generations of scholarly research, are proven to add rigor and contribute credible results which can be replicated (Yin, 2017).

Participants for this case study were recruited using purposeful, criterion and snowball sampling strategies and screened with the following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18 years; African American women managers; supervising primarily Black employees for a period of at least two years; and, possess in-depth knowledge with the topic of the study (Patton, 2014). Applying this sampling strategy also ensures recruitment of *hidden populations*; that is, African American women managers; holding a managerial position in a predominantly Black enterprise; participants that may not be easily identified through other sampling strategies (Noor, 2008). I conducted 10 in-depth face-to-face individual interviews with African American women managers working in predominately Black work environments. In-depth interviews are cited in the research methodology literature as a reliable data collection method in explorations on intersectionality (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) determined that a population of six to 10 participants in qualitative research is sufficient to produce important themes and practical interpretations.

Definitions

For clarity, terms with various cultural, environmental, and field definitions are defined as follows:

Agency: The set of skills, tools and disposition utilized by a woman on her own terms to fulfill a purpose and objective important to herself (Jeyle, Vijayan, & Manuel, 2017).

Agentic deficiency: the perception that women lack the necessary agency to perform adequately in leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rosette et.al., 2016).

Agentic penalty: Social and occupational repercussion experienced in response to behavior that is counter-stereotypical (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Rosette et al., 2016).

Colorism: Intraracial discrimination wherein, based on skin tone from light to dark, the intensity and frequency of discrimination as well as benefit to one ingroup over another is used to establish hierarchy (Hunter, 2007; Mathews & Johnson, 2015).

Double consciousness: The struggle to reconcile two identities, neither of which fully describes the state of being of the individual. For example, Blacks in America experience the distinction of being African and American descent, but their identity is not fully encompassed as either, so they derive the term: African American (Itzigsohn & Brown, 2015; Tayebeh & Soheila, 2015).

Double jeopardy: The position that belonging to two subjugated groups multiplies the disadvantages minority women face (Williams, 2014).

Dual stigmatism: Belonging to multiple social categories whose membership subject the individual to inequality and discrimination (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016; Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Intersectionality: Interplay between several independent strands of inequality based on multiple areas of social identity, characterization and associated disparities (e.g., racism and sexism) that results in a larger system of oppression, leading to multiple manifestations of social inequality (Carbado et al., 2013; Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Intraracial: The perceived experiences of racial microaggressions among members of the same minority group (Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2014).

Marginalization: Lack of representation and inclusion as a result or expendability and lack of power, and the absence of full incorporation (Gardberg & Newburry, 2013).

Racial ingroup bias: The tendency to display a more positive attitude, provide benefit to, and express preference for same race members than non-members (Luo, et al., 2015).

Skin tone stratification: The system of hierarchy characterized by categorization into racial categories based on skin tone, resulting in colorism (Mathews & Johnson, 2015).

Assumptions

Several items are believed but cannot be demonstrated to be true in relation to this study; these assumptions are as followed:

First, we assumed that the participants of the study would answer honestly to the best of their ability. Honesty by each participant allows the researcher to base the

analysis on responses that encompass the true perception and belief of the participant. This also allowed for greater reliability of the data collected.

Second, it was necessary we assume the participants were willing to report their experiences forthrightly, allowing their experiences, responses and motivations to serve as firm foundation for deep and confident analysis.

The third assumption is the participants are motivated because they believe the study to provide insight that is useful to them directly or indirectly. As a result, it is believed the responses are the product of deliberate thought and contribution which is meaningful.

Fourthly, it is assumed there are no limits to full participation by the contributors. The participants' workload, company culture or schedule outside of the job could be a deterrent, leading to partial participation by the respondent, which would result in fragmented data collection.

Finally, it is assumed that the collection method allows the participants to give a sufficient account of their experience in their place of work. It is necessary to have a level of understanding of the workplace conditions in order to gain a proper context of the participants' responses.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study is the experience of African American female managers in predominantly Black work environments. The participants of the study are drawn from a sample of African American women meeting the study's inclusion criteria through the professional network LinkedIn. I interviewed 10 African American female managers

who meet the requirements previously mentioned, using purposeful, criterion and snowball sampling strategies. These strategies are an effective method for identifying hidden populations such as the participant pool identified in this study (Noor, 2008).

Essed's (1991) concept of intersectionality of gender and race, also coined by the seminal author with the term gendered racism; and Turner's (1995) theory of intra-racial discrimination and colorism provide insight into gender and racial discrimination (Holder, et al., 2015) in the workplace due to gender and racial stereotyping (Rosette et al., 2016). Turner (1995) specifically illuminates how these barriers may also affect the ability of minority women to lead in a predominantly Black work environment because of race and gender (Hall et al. 2012; O'Brien et al., 2014), colorism and intra-racial discrimination (Burton et al., 2010). Because previous studies on women leaders primarily focus on White women and are always conducted in traditional, majority White work places, this study is conducted in a predominantly Black work environment to offer a different perspective (Remedios & Snyder, 2015). Moreover, the study here may provide logic for the need to examine other minority groups in an intraracial context.

This research offers transferability, illustrating a critical pathway for the study of each individual minority group in environments where they are no longer the minority. The racial groups which combine to be categorized generally as minorities consist of different cultures and attitudes where groups differ in their views of themselves and others in addition to their opinion of racial inclusion (Feliciano, 2016). Therefore, although this research provides other minority groups a base upon which to develop studies examining the behavioral tendencies of their members, differences may be

revealed among the groups. Unexpected benefits of these studies would include previously unrealized limitations and effects of homogeneity that have not already been considered (Apfelbaum et al., 2014).

Limitations

Although Merriam and Tisdell (2015) have determined six to 10 participants provide a large enough sampling for practical interpretation in qualitative studies, there are limits to obtaining a larger number of participants. There are few African American female managers and even fewer who manage African American employees in a predominantly African American work environment. There are no lists which provide such information so personal knowledge is necessary to locate potential enterprises. All of these characteristics make it very difficult to develop a participant pool large enough for quantitative analysis; this is one reason a qualitative study is more viable. Selecting 10 participants is designed to allow more units for analysis for a multiple case study and increasing the possibility of revealing unique observations or variances.

Participants might have a fear of retaliation if they present those experiences that place their company in a negative light. These African American women managers might also fear making workplace interactions worse by revealing negative interactions with employees or a perceived bias by reporting positively of others. Confidentiality of participant identities was of paramount importance in the study. Additionally, the limitation of recollection as time passed between the incident and the interviews was a concern. To compensate, conversational interview discussions were conducted so managers could share events and perhaps stimulate recall (Katz, 2014). Additionally, an

inherent limitation of qualitative research is finding a way to improve temporal

precedence when establishing cause and effect (Yin, 2017). The researcher sought to

provide a maximum discernment of how one factor indeed lead to another in the study;

the triangulation of interview responses, historical literature, and field notes was

incorporated to provide accurate insight into changing processes and minimize

retrospection bias, as well as strengthen temporal discernment (Affleck, Zautra, Tennen,

& Armeli, 1999).

The semistructured interview provides opportunity to reflect on behaviors which

are commonplace and provide insight into formative episodes which shape the direction

and perceptions of the African American female managers in the defined workplace

environment (Atewologun, Sealy, & Vinnicombe, 2016). The participants were invited

to recall pertinent incidents throughout their managerial career which are related to their

experience as a Black woman manager in a workplace predominated by African

American employees; this included experiences that related to perceived occurrences

which factor and possibly intersected based on skin tone.

Dependability may be limited based on geographical difference of participants.

Observations may also differ among companies that vary in gender makeup, ownership

philosophy or culture. Utilizing an online professional network to select candidates

offers a wide variation which improves the transferability of the study.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to the research area by filling the

gap in research on experiences of the agentic African American woman leader and her

experience as a double minority in the workplace (O'Brien et al. 2014). Although there is a group of studies which examine the African American woman's history in predominantly White workplaces (Hall et al. 2012), this study is original in that it examines African American women managers' experiences in predominantly Black work environments. As stressed by Maddox (2013), the element of workplace composition is essential to understand how the experiences and coping strategies of African American women compare in a workplace environment where a majority of workers are members of her own marginalized community.

This study may be an important contribution in presenting unexamined nuances in the ways these intersecting factors have implications for African American women managers, an under-represented demographic group in the management and leadership literature (Davis, 2016). The African American female experiences the double jeopardy of being marginalized by gender and race (Rosette et al. 2016). Remedios and Snyder (2015) express the perception and impact of discrimination against women who are double minorities may be more or less affected by whether the participants identify more with gender or race. At the time of the review of literature not one peer reviewed paper was available that explored the experiences of African American women managers in predominantly Black work environments and the implication of these experiences on these women's ability to lead. By studying African American women's management experiences in a setting predominantly with members of their own race, this study may provide insight into possible issues of gendered racism towards these women.

Significance to Practice

Gender research in the workplace tends to be monolithic in that it primarily focuses on the discriminatory behaviors of White males against all other groups, including White females (Wong et al., 2014). Discrimination is as diverse and far reaching as the number of ethnic groups within the workforce. Therefore, it is important to study each group and its interracial interactions to better comprehend their cultural belief systems and how they combine to reinforce or contradict systemic discrimination (Wong et al. 2014).

Significance to Theory

Although there is literature that documents biases against African Americans from the perspective of perceivers, there is a dearth of studies on intraracial discrimination from the perspective of targets, that is, self-reports of colorism. Research has shed light on racism as a social phenomenon that happens to Black people. It also takes place through Black people via colorism and intraracial discrimination (Turner, 1995). Negative associations and stereotypes assigned to Black people and their cultures can influence how "Black people view each other" (Johnson, 2014, p. 3). This study is significant in that it makes an original contribution to the theoretical literature on intraracial discrimination by answering the study's research question on exploring the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work enterprises.

Significance to Social Change

When the work environment leads to predominately intra-racial interaction, skin color stratification found within a specific racial group (Childs, 2005) may become more pronounced in the workplace and may influence business and personnel interactions and decisions (Uzogara & Jackson, 2016). Adams, Kurtz-Costes, and Hoffman (2016) found that skin tone bias tends to be more pronounced against darker skinned African Americans but that it exists, positively and negatively for lighter skinned African Americans as well. The results of this study are helpful to reveal whether a higher level of implicit race in-group bias (Rudman & McLean, 2016) was found in a predominantly African American workplace where experiences may reveal intragroup stereotypical beliefs. By doing so, the results of this study promote social change by sensitizing predominantly Black work environments on issues of equal treatment between gender groups and ways in which an intra-racial context influences African American women's management experiences (Cassidy et al., 2011).

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 of the study provides an introduction and background to develop a conceptual framework which develops into the research question. There are volumes of research on the leadership styles and behaviors of White male leaders, but research is limited on the African American corporate leadership deportment and conduct (Johnson, 2015). Over the past several decades, an increasing number of studies analyze the role of racial discrimination in the professional experience of African Americans in White workplace settings. Additionally, inquiry into gender discrimination contributes several

theories on barriers which make it more difficult for women to attain leadership positions in corporations. Once accomplished, gender stereotyping often limits the ability to exercise the same agentic behavior as male leaders (Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette, et al., 2016). The concept of intersectionality, the intermingling of more than one type of discrimination and its effects on double minorities (Carbado et al., 2013), has become more pronounced in recent years. The recognition of broader levels of diversity among and within groups has also led to greater consideration of skin tone stratification and colorism.

In Chapter 2, the literature review explains the impact of intra-racial race and gender discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, the literature review exposes the diversity of different groups, highlighting the fact that each group has a unique perspective and voice to be considered. These findings make apparent the importance of investigation into the intra-racial, leadership experiences of marginalized groups.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The experiences of African American women managers in predominantly Black enterprises and the implication of these experiences on their ability to lead remain unknown (Hall et al. 2012; O'Brien et al. 2014; Vial et al. 2016). In predominately White work environments, African American female managers are penalized for exercising agentic behaviors typically associated with successful leadership characteristics (Livingston et al., 2012). The experience of African American women managers must also be analyzed to learn whether they suffer the same exposure in predominantly Black work environments. These findings provide valuable revelation into the intra-racial dynamics of African American female managers among members of their own race in predominantly Black work environments based solely on her being a woman in leadership (Rosette et al., 2016).

In Chapter 2, I provide the literature search strategy along with the conceptual framework upon which the research rests. I present a synthesis of knowledge on the experiences of women managers in the work place, including the unique experience of the African American female managers. Finally, I offer a critical analysis of the literature in which this study is grounded.

Literature Search Strategy

The purpose of this literature review is to examine current research findings on women in management, gender and race discrimination and intersectionality. I used several search engines and databases to purposefully extract literature from experts in the field of study. Specifically, Google Scholar, Google and Internet Explorer search engines

were used for retrieval. Databases include the Walden University Library, Business Source Complete, Sage Journals, PsycINFO, EBSCO, ProQuest, ResearchGate and the University of Chicago Library. The literature review consists primarily of research published within the past five years to ensure the most research pronouncements are considered.

The search terms used to conduct the literature review include diverse combinations of the following key words or phrases: *African American women in leadership, intersectionality, gender discrimination, race discrimination, microaggressions, Black women in management, African American female managers, glass ceiling, colorism, skin tone stratification, role congruity, intraracial bias, interracial bias, agentic behavior, and social dominance.*

The primary goal of the literature search strategy is to identify the need for research into the African American woman's leadership experience in the work environment. Research reveals racial and gender based discrimination exists and presents added barriers for marginalized groups. Literature was chosen to examine disparities in the experiences of employees based on racial distinctions. Another primary goal of the search was to analyze the role of gender discrimination in the career paths and workplace experiences of women. Additionally, a research objective was to discover if literature indicates there are differences in the experiences of various minority groups, including their intraracial perceptions, expectations and interactions. At the time of the review of literature, not one peer reviewed paper was available that explored the experiences of African American women managers in predominantly Black work place environments

and the implication of these experiences on these participants' ability to lead. Most of the peer-reviewed papers selected for the literature review were published between 2013 and 2017; less than 15% of the articles were published prior to 2013.

Conceptual Framework

This study is framed by three key concepts that focus on the challenges facing African American women managers in leadership roles within predominantly Black work environments: Essed's (1991) concept of *intersectionality of gender and race*, also coined by the seminal author with the term *gendered racism*; and Turner's (1995) concepts of *intra-racial discrimination* and *colorism*. The purpose of this qualitative study using an exploratory, multiple-case research design is to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on intersectionality and intraracial discrimination, and to contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

The concept of gendered racism, defined as oppressive practices founded in the intersectionality of race and gender, is a critical concept to the foundation of this research study. Research that employs an intersectional approach, which accounts for how multiple identities form relative to power relations (Carbado et al. 2013), can more adeptly highlight how workplace experiences mirror the intersections of race and gender (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). Experiences of gendered racism arise from stereotypes associated with minorities and women or stereotypes based on both race and sex; for example, Black women are hostile or Black women are servants (Beckwith et al., 2016).

As increasing numbers of women of color ascend the corporate ladder, there is a need for more research on gendered racism to discover the impact and psychological effects of this phenomenon on minority women managers (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Glass & Cook, 2016).

The research question of this study relates to the intersectionality of race and gender because it focuses attention on the experiences and perceptions of a minority group of women whom previous scholars theorized may experience gender and race discrimination and workplace microaggressions (Holder, et al., 2015) because of gender and racial stereotyping (Rosette et al. 2016). Such barriers may thwart African American women managers' ability to lead even within a predominantly Black work environment due to their race and gender (Hall et al. 2012; O'Brien et al. 2014; Vial et al. 2016), colorism and intra-racial discrimination (Burton et al., 2010). Intersectionality theory has helped to elucidate more nuanced approaches to researching issues of inequality, approaches that allow scholars to explore how these categories overlap as well as what this means for different groups in professional settings (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016).

Racial and ethnic identity is important and marked in the workplace, where people spend a significant portion of their days. There is still much we do not know, however, about what members of racial and gender minority groups are experiencing in the workplace, how they cope, and how they relate to others in their community or family around these issues (Plaut, Thomas, & Hebl, 2014). Although there is substantial evidence of the negative impact of interracial discrimination, research by Carbado and Gulati (2013) pointed to a *postracial era* in which a type of intraracial discrimination is

emerging in work settings different in nature to the widely-researched colorism (Hunter, 2007; Monk, 2014). Although there is literature that documents biases against African Americans from the perspective of perceivers, there is a dearth of studies on intra-racial discrimination from the perspective of targets, that is, self-reports of colorism. Research has shed light on racism as a social phenomenon that happens to Black people. It also takes place through Black people via colorism and intra-racial discrimination (Turner, 1995). Negative associations and stereotypes assigned to Black people and their cultures can influence how "Black people view each other" (Johnson, 2014).

Recent studies adopting the target perspective showed that African Americans with darker skin color self-reported more intra-racial discrimination (Anzures et al., 2013; Cassidy et al. 2011). Other studies did not find any relationship (see, for example, Keith, 2009; Landor et al. 2013). Studies did find a marked gap in the literature on women's perceptions of colorism, (Uzogara & Jackson, 2016). In this literature, color is treated as another word for *race*, which is erroneous given that colorism and racism are two different albeit overlapping types of oppression (Hunter, 2007; Uzogara & Jackson, 2016). Colorism takes place within as well as across race; research by Rudman and McLean (2016) pointed to it being especially damaging within intragroup contexts. As such, there may be different outcomes of colorism in settings that are racially homogenous (Burton, et al., 2010), one example of which is this study's intended sample: African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments.

How gender is experienced and relevant to the intersectional perspective may be entrenched within intra-racial discrimination and colorism (Burton et al., 2010). This perspective promotes a consideration of the diversity within the group of African American women rather than focusing on how their experiences differ in relation to the Black male standard (Wilder, 2010). Research on intra-racial discrimination contributes important insights into Black women's experiences as it produces complex social problems in combination with classism, racism, and sexism (Porter & James, 2016). Although this research focus on African American women, it is likely that some results may be relevant to other women of color from ethnic groups such as Afro-Caribbean, Latinas, and South Asians given that colorism has also affected these groups (Glenn, 2009). As an increasingly multiracial society emerges in the United States, there is a pressing need for research tracking colorism, inter-racial discrimination, and other such forms of oppression and to use the findings to better support racially diverse women in the workplace (Stainback et al., 2016; Uzogara & Jackson, 2016).

Literature Review

The African American Woman Leader: A Brief Historical Perspective

Researchers acknowledged even in the 1940s that women were capable to lead, however, this leadership could only be expressed via behaviors which supported accepted stereotypes (Key et al., 2012). Then as now, White women were considered the normative group and the voice of the African American woman was not heard and her experience was not considered for input into overt racial and gender discrimination present during that time. She was hardly considered a valued employee, much less a

candidate for leadership and her experience and opinion of both was disregarded (Johnson & Thomas, 2012). Although the Fair Employment Act of 1946 made discrimination based on race, creed and nationality illegal, local laws and societal practices meant very few African American women entered the workforce. Most African Americans hired in the 1950s were relegated to manual labor jobs that extended the behaviors with which Blacks had been associated through slavery (Aiken, Salmon, & Hanges, 2013; Hyde, 2014).

African American workers were consigned to low paying, service jobs such as manual labor jobs like farming and trash collection for men, while women worked as cooks, cleaners, clerks and elevator operators. African American women while capable of performing tasks, were assigned support roles as assistants or caretaker roles as secretaries but denied a primary position or title (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). African American women were penalized for decisions such as hairstyle that might reflect African rather than European culture and even the value she brought to a job was always evaluated in comparison to the White female prototype (Apfelbaum et al., 2014).

The very few African American women who gained jobs were not considered for high skilled jobs and were not allowed to operate machinery although they must be intelligent (Hyde, 2014). When hired, they were expected to behave similar to "Aunt Jemima"; caring, able to solve all problems and meet all needs of supervisors while maintaining a strong yet soft spoken demeanor (Radu, 2013). As the United States entered the de facto Jim Crow era, primarily lighter complexion African American women were able to enter the fields of teaching and nursing (Porter & James, 2016). The

African American woman was to be a "super woman", stronger than her African

American male counterparts but able and willing to navigate through dehumanization,

stress free. When paired with male counterparts, she is not outwardly credited with

success and according to Vial et al. (2016), must operate in obscurity.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s served as catalyst for more legislation

such as Affirmative Action, aimed at providing equal employment opportunities for

African Americans among corporations with federal funding (Johnson, 2015). For those

companies who did not rely on government sponsorships, it was business as usual and

discriminatory practices continued as before with little change in representation by

African American women (Johnson, 2015). This is reflective of the fact that despite

initiatives such as the Federal Glass Ceiling Act of 1991, designed to include minorities

in the governing process, African American women are still discounted as decision

makers within organizations (Pompper, 2011).

Gender and race discrimination was so pervasive, African American women

leaders faced more of a concrete ceiling rather than a glass ceiling, according to the

Catalyst Census (1991). The difficulties of the African American woman worker to

achieve executive positions is reflected by studies which reveal occupational segregation

remains as prominent today as in 1940 (Key et al., 2012). However, very little is known

on how intersectionality affects her leadership experience overall. The 2013 Catalyst

Census confirms these findings, reporting the following: African American women held

only 3.2% or 172 out of 5,306 directorships in 471 Fortune 500 companies in corporate

America (Catalyst, 2013, p. 2). Additionally, 318 companies reported no women of color

as corporate officers, 134 reported one, 19 reported two, and none of the 471 companies

surveyed had three or more women of color occupying corporate leadership positions

(Catalyst, 2013). Although 47% of the workforce in the United States is female, only

14% of the female workforce holds top management positions and females occupy a

miniscule 17% of the seats in congress (Schuh et al., 2014). While these data offer

valuable insight into gender disparities, it does not provide much needed information on

the composition of the workforce based on the intersection of race and gender (Carbado

et al., 2013).

Intersectionality of Gender and Race

The concept of gendered racism, defined as oppressive practices founded in the

intersectionality of race and gender, is a critical concept to the foundation of this research

study. Research that employed an intersectional approach, which accounts for how

multiple identities form relative to power relations (Carbado et al., 2013), can more

adeptly highlight how workplace experiences mirror the intersections of race and gender

(Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). Experiences of gendered racism arise from stereotypes

associated with minorities and women or stereotypes based on both race and sex; for

example, Black women are hostile or Black women are servants (Beckwith et al., 2016).

Increasingly science recognizes the importance of accounting for the comprehensive

marginalized experience of workers; sources used in this research study are multinational

because of the minimal volume of research on intersectionality in the United States

(Carbado et al., 2013)

Current research reveals leaders are judged positively or negatively in relation to job qualification and what roles and behaviors are considered acceptable based on stereotypes (Rosette et al., 2016). Although all studies indicate all women must provide more corporate proof than men to be considered equally capable to their male counterparts (Williams, 2014), however African American must prove themselves repeatedly more frequently than other minority women (Williams, Phillips, & Hall, 2014), women may be received differently based on race and the experience may vary from one area of interaction to another such as agentic penalty versus lasting criticism for mistakes in the execution of job tasks (Livingston et al., 2012). When leaders belong to several marginalized groups, they are judged according to multiple stereotypes, making the experience of each group unique (Williams, 2014).

The stereotypes associated with various minority women groups differ broadly. Asian women are stereotypically considered to be proficient at science but are perceived to be more docile; women of Indian origin are considered skilled at internet technology, but they are to be softer spoken; Latinas are considered to be more attuned to housekeeping skills and accommodating and Black women are thought to be less intelligent (Williams et al., 2014). While Black and Hispanic women experienced a greater need to prove themselves competent, Asian women did not; Asian and Hispanic women struggled to downplay femininity whereas Black women made no such observation (Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). Even those positive attributes could become a source of contention against those who possess them by those who consider themselves direct competitors, leading to penalization for self-promotion (Hurt, McElroy,

Sheats, Landor, & Bryant, 2014; Williams et al., 2014). Although women

overwhelmingly report having experienced gender bias, different groups (i.e. Indian,

Latina, and Asian) rate the level of gender bias in the United States differently when

compared to their native countries (Williams et al., 2014).

Whereas other women minorities tend to perceive bias against them primarily

based on gender, African American women generally perceive race as a primary issue for

marginalization (Williams et al., 2014). This may also be the result of being viewed as

more no nonsense, direct and strong (masculine) than her Caucasian, Hispanic or Asian

counterparts by peers than Whites (Rosette et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2014). This may

also be deferment to her male counterpart, attributable to the long history of racial

discrimination of African Americans and a conscious effort to prioritize the call for racial

justice over protests against gender bias by a group with multiple marginalized identities

(Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). For her to focus from a context outside of the

established framework, could lead to a strained relationship between African American

women and men, who believe her unique perspective and associated independence are

akin to betrayal (Hurt et al., 2014).

Within the realm of intersectionality, internal factors such as personal identity

affect the perception of marginalization and how discrimination is attributed in the mind

of the individual (Remedios & Snyder, 2015). While some African American women

identify more with race or gender, they view both characteristics as intertwined into their

being and inseparable (Davis, 2016). The various characteristics of the individual should

be researched in detail to provide deeper insight into understanding the experience of

minority women, who have been discovered to have more fluid and complex identities than Caucasian women (Remedios & Snyder, 2015). Studies are also beginning to recognize the usefulness of interdisciplinary considerations in research on intersectionality; issues such as class, sexual preference, ethnicity, and race (Corlett & Mavin, 2014). Research into the process of identification and compartmentalization based on categorizations such as colorism and leadership are almost non-existent although insight into phenomenon such as how the Black woman uses her multiple identities in her interactions deserves further analysis (Corlett & Mavin, 2014; Williams, 2014). As women of color, African American females must identify various perceptions and preferences of Whites in the workplace and navigate using various aspects of who they are, so they do not fall victim to stereotypes attributed to racial salience (Thornhill, 2015).

The social-identities of Blackness and identity are far ranging and cover a number of areas relating physical characteristics and behaviors to internalized conceptualization; subtle differences which give meaning to interactions and how they align more or less with stereotypical attitudes (Carbado et al., 2013). The meaning of behaviors is shaped by the historical and contextual reference of each individual; therefore, a self-identity and social-identity dynamic are at work for a given behavior and they are not necessarily the sum of the two characteristics (i.e. Black, female) (Corlett & Mavin, 2014). The most basic concept of intersectionality 'what it means to be Black and what it means to be a woman' may vary from one person to the next and responses that appear to be similar may have very different meanings from one person to another (Corlett & Mavin, 2014).

These impressions are formed by the individual's self-image and provide a context for how each individual perceives and interacts with the outside world (Mathews & Johnson, 2015). Therefore, deeper research is needed to examine intersectionality at a point where it considers social structures, and power concepts are combined with personal perspective to produce attitudes and beliefs (Carbado et al., 2013).

Intra-racial Discrimination and Colorism

Although there is literature that documents biases against African Americans from the perspective of perceivers, there is a dearth of studies on intraracial discrimination from the perspective of targets, that is, self-reports of colorism. Research has shed light on racism as a social phenomenon that happens to Black people. It also takes place through Black people via colorism and intra-racial discrimination (Turner, 1995). Negative associations and stereotypes assigned to Black people and their cultures can influence how "Black people view each other" (Johnson, 2014, p. 3). Although there is substantial evidence of the negative impact of inter-racial discrimination, research by Carbado, and Gulati (2013) point to a *post-racial era* in which a type of intra-racial discrimination is emerging in work settings different in nature to the widely-researched colorism (Hunter, 2007; Monk, 2014).

Historical Background

Intra-racial discrimination has long been present in the African American community, documented during slavery in the United States where slaves with European like features were granted preferential treatment and greater opportunity by slave masters than darker complexioned slaves (Sims, 2009). Lighter complexion slaves with

European features were not only considered more attractive, they were considered more intelligent and attributed positive characteristics such as being hard working and reliable compared to those with traditional African features (Sims, 2009). The partial treatment and characterization of light skinned slaves continued into the post chattel slave era, eventually resulting in higher education levels, more prestigious jobs for light skinned Blacks over dark skinned African Americans.

The attitude of White Americans affirming light skinned African Americans as superior to dark skinned African Americans was adopted and put into practice by light skinned African Americans; many Black communities started blue blood leagues and organizations such as churches, night clubs and neighborhood associations implemented "paper bag" tests as litmus for membership into the exclusive groups (Porter & James, 2016). For light skinned African Americans, the exclusion of dark skinned African Americans promotes a sense of superiority among themselves, however, it results in a profound resentment among many dark skinned African Americans. Subsequently, deep seeded discord among African Americans based on skin tone continues to adversely affect the unity of light and dark-skinned Blacks today (Sims, 2009). The full effect of homogenous group discrimination and its detrimental impact on the progress of African Americans has been realized through research. Although research confirms the presence of this phenomenon in the community, research into its presence and effects in the workplace is virtually non-existent despite discrimination complaints based on intra-racial bias (Sims, 2009).

Researchers have documented incidents of intra-racial colorism acts among African- Americans (Hunter, 2007; Monk 2014; Uzogara & Jackson, 2016). Sims (2004) conducted one of the rare studies on intra-racial colorism discrimination in the workplace. Research by Sims (2004) provided insight into the phenomena referred to as light skinned privilege in the workplace. At the time of this writing, there are no known studies which probe colorism and how it occurs in the workplace setting (Herring & Horton, 2004). In an updated study, colorism produced negative mental effects on African American women, affecting esteem and self-perception (Mathews & Johnson, 2015) and when it occurs and is not addressed or acknowledged in the work place these negative psychological effects are exacerbated (Sims, 2010).

Colorism is "the prejudicial treatment of individuals falling within the same racial group on the basis of skin color" (Jones, 2000, p. 1489). Although not restricted to Blacks, colorism is documented to be most acute among African Americans with origins dating back to slavery (Monk, 2014). Wilson (2002) reported colorism is a global phenomenon occurring as a by-product of racism (Mathews & Johnson, 2015). As long as multimedia images project European skin and feature as the standard of beauty, racism and a preference for light skin will exist among African Americans (Hunter, 2007; Monk 2014). During slavery, owners considered light skinned or mulatto slaves a greater commodity, believing light skinned slaves were superior to darker skinned slaves because of the presence of European blood; lighter complexioned slaves were often given duties which conferred status among slaves on them in the eyes of other slaves on the plantation (Mathews & Johnson, 2015). As a result, lighter skin grew to be considered more

appealing and valuable among slaves and the intra-racial color phenomenon became a

significant indicator of worth among African Americans on the plantation just as their

slave owners (Jones, 2000; Monk, 2014). *Intra-racial colorism* is biased treatment

among individuals of a single racial group based on skin color, usually offering

preferential treatment to lighter complexion (Jones, 2000).

Although colorism is sometimes confused with racism, they are different: the

former is a caste system within a race of people; the latter is the biased treatment of

people of one race by those of another. Colorism is the socially assigned and accepted

worth based on a value system which recognizes one shade of skin color as more

valuable than another even within a single race (Uzogara & Jackson, 2016). Racism on

the other hand, is the worth or devaluation attached to a group based on racial

categorization (Jones, 2000). Dialogue on the topic of intra-racial discrimination based

on color is taboo in the Black community, possibly because it is painful to recognize this

issue and acknowledge African Americans perpetuate what they are diametrically

opposed to; inequality based on color (Johnson, 2007; Monk, 2014). Additionally,

Blacks believe to enter this discussion could further entrench groups which are already

separated, causing deeper division among members of the race (Bates, 1994). Division

among Blacks existed during the slave era when fairer skin meant privilege and favor for

slaves (Sims, 2009). The psychological effects of the color caste system originated by

slave traders continued on into the 20th century, where light skinned Blacks were known

as "blue veins"; discrimination was not only relegated to private communities and

exclusive club memberships, churches also established criteria whereby only those with

skin lighter than a brown paper bag were eligible for admittance (Monk, 2014; Porter & James, 2016; Thompson & Keith, 2001). Consequently, intraracial colorism discrimination appears present in the workplace and affects employee morale (Sims, 2004). The aforementioned issues may lead to intentional or unintentional employment discrimination, hiring, assignments, job responsibilities, advancement, supervision, job performance, human resource development issues and costly lawsuits (Sims, 2009).

Colorism, although widely known to exist has typically been subjugated to racism and is not addressed in formal corporate policy partly because companies fail to understand exactly what is colorism. To appreciate the concept, it should be accepted that skin color does not indicate race; skin color is the social value assigned to a particular complexion of skin as compared to another (Jones, 2000), therefore the perpetrator of prejudice has assigned an intrinsic value based on personal belief which may contradict the widely-accepted caste system that lighter is superior to darker skin. Though racial identity is commonly described interchangeably with and linked to color (i.e. the Black man is African American, the Red man is Native American, the Brown man is Hispanic, and the White man is Caucasian), racial identity is not the same as colorism (Adams et al., 2016; Jones, 2000). Consider that if the race of both women is known, a White complexioned African American woman, would not enjoy the same social status afforded an olive complexioned Caucasian woman, despite being lighter skinned of the two. Studies also show the olive complexioned Caucasian would be inferior to a fair-skinned White woman with blonde hair and blue eyes (Adams et al., 2016; Jones, 2000). The legal system has largely ignored colorism complaints, instead deferring to legal issues

which involve racial discrimination (Jones, 2000). There are subtle nuances which must be understood in order to fully comprehend the phenomenon of colorism. Although colorism is defined as the benefit afforded lighter complexioned African Americans as a result of their "Whiter" appearance, literature reveals light skinned Blacks are targets of colorism by darker skinned Blacks as well (Sims, 2009; Adams et al., 2016). While African Americans understand colorism exists in the workplace, even they are not aware how homogenic considerations affect their personal career and the lack of investigation into colorism in the workplace prevents effective avenues to address this workplace issue (Keith & Monroe, 2016; Sims, 2016).

The literature describes a very unique experience for all marginalized groups and emphasizes the detriment of assuming all encounters, perceptions and coping strategies to be the same based on race and gender (Attell, Kummerow Brown & Treiber, 2017). Although there appear to be trends toward multicultural groups, melting pot interactions and interracial relationships that are more acceptable, intraracial bias continues as an ongoing issue where racial identity may be less obvious (Keith & Monroe, 2016). While studies find mainstream discrimination continues against darker skinned African Americans compared to those with lighter skin via harsher sentencing and less prestigious jobs (Adams et al., 2016; Monk, 2014), researchers discovered a change in intraracial attitudes toward darker skinned Blacks during the Civil Rights movements and calls for Black empowerment in the 1960s (Adams et al., 2016). These findings may influence how African American women perceive and respond to their work experience and with

what level of confidence in a work environment which is predominantly African American.

Literature Review

The African American Woman Leader: Experiences of Oppression, Barriers and Marginalization

Ellemers, Rink, Derks, and Ryan (2012) explored the paths of women in their ascension to leadership. Because men typically are the authors of workplace policies and qualification requirements associated with positions, many workplace expectations are framed from male oriented positions (Beckwith et al., 2016). Research indicates that in order to be promoted, many women are judged by their ability to exhibit behaviors that are stereotypically masculine, however, women are said to be appreciated for diversity and a leadership style which differs from men (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Once in leadership, women tend to be criticized if they display a more masculine leadership style; if women are more feminine, their leadership tends to be identified more along the lines of gender based scrutiny. Crites et al. (2015) explored the robustness of stereotypes by respondents to female and male leaders. Research found preconceived notions of women leaders persisted even when the observed behavior contradicted the stereotype (Burgess & Borgida, 1999). The research did not identify the robust agentic effects of stereotypes for women who belonged to more than a single marginalized group (Crites et al., 2015).

Hekman, Johnson, Der Foo, and Yang (2016) analyzed how behaviors which promote diversity affect the perceived job effectiveness of female executives. Hekman et al., (2016) asserted this penalization may cause female leaders to be less likely to engage

in acts of diversity in order to avoid unjust scrutiny. Research indicated this observation

is not only applicable to women but minority leaders as well. Women who achieve

successful positions are perceived to conform by behaving with greater masculinity in

order to show themselves more result oriented and success driven (Beckwith et al., 2016).

Investigation of gender as well as ethnic minority leaders has increased over the past few

decades as the disparity between stereotypically expected behaviors and leadership

prototypes has been found oppressive to these groups (Rosette & Livingston, 2012).

Remedios and Snyder (2015) identified a gap in research which typically deals with

marginalization from a monolithic perspective, a perspective defined by the authors as

theorization based on a single form of prejudice. Theories of dual stigmatism examine

and compare how minority women perceived and coped with varying acts of

discrimination based on race and femaleness (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016; Remedios and

Snyder, 2015). The authors discovered participants may be impacted differently

depending on whether they identified more with race or gender. This balancing act,

referred to by Carter-Sowell and Zimmerman (2015) as "double consciousness" is the

navigation of two distinct identities.

  Carter-Sowell and Zimmerman (2015) utilized Du Bois' notion of double

consciousness when referring to Black women's intersectional experience in navigating

two identities. The presence of these distinct identities can make it very difficult to

determine with certainty which stigmatism is the cause of discrimination and lack of

opportunity in various situations (Beckwith et al., 2016; Remedios & Snyder, 2015).

Carter-Sowell and Zimmerman (2015) also cited Remedios and Snyder's (2015)

suggestion that issues faced by women of color, like intersectional invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eicach, 2008), needed to be empirically investigated by contemporary scholars. Insight into discriminatory practices which specifically impact the African American female also shed light into the perceived causes of such acts and her response (Remedios and Snyder, 2015), indicating a strong need for research into the various interactions of minority women in diverse environments (Apfelbaum, Phillips & Richeson, 2014).

Clearly, African American Women continue to be targeted by suppressive tactics as well as the marginalization that has been recorded for decades. The fact that they represent an alternative to the traditionally accepted image of corporate leader, they are often overlooked as reasonable options for corporate agentic positions (Gündemir, Homan, de Dreu, & van Vugt, 2014). The two most glaring contrasts facing African American women when juxtaposed against traditionally accepted leadership traits: (1) she is African American and (2) she is female. This position makes the African American woman an outcast twice over; she is unlike the traditionally accepted leadership standards met at least partially by African American males and White women, which may affect her ability to coexist with others and find suitable career mentors (Beckwith et al., 2016; Gamble & Turner, 2015; Johnson, 2015). The widely-accepted criterion for leadership is the White male, with the White female serving as the benchmark among women. Accordingly, recent studies reveal the African American leader is critiqued more harshly than their White counterparts (Ruggs, Hebl, Law, Cox, Roehling, Weiner & Barron, 2013). While these studies prove useful in identifying disparities between Black

and White constituents, this monolithic approach fails to offer much needed analysis of the experience of African Americans based on race and sex.

The reality that the African American woman has a unique experience compared to all others is more widely accepted than before (Remedios & Snyder, 2015). The African American woman is now recognized to be at risk of discrimination based on both race and gender (Carter-Sowell & Zimmerman 2015; Remedios & Snyder, 2015). This intersectional predicament puts the African American woman manager at the disadvantage of being overlooked and isolated (Beckwith et al., 2016). The African American woman is forced to figure a way to overcome her devaluation to communicate in a way that allows her to effectively and with minimal penalization as a result of stereotypically non-conformist behavior (Beckwith at al., 2016; Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Hunt, 2016). In instances where she is the only member of her group to occupy a position, the African American woman is often considered the representative for her entire group and is heavily scrutinized while being held to a higher standard for attendance and performance (Beckwith et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2012).

Even as these strict requirements and high expectations are placed upon the African American woman, colleagues generally lack compassion toward women and the various societal roles and responsibilities assigned outside of work (Beckwith et al., 2016; Latchanah & Singh, 2016). At the same time, societal roles are instrumental in developing corporate culture and many job evaluations, perceived competencies and promotion considerations are based on perceived traditional gender roles (Beckwith et al., 2016; Desai, Chugh & Brief, 2014). Research indicates liberal and conservative male

employers were more or less likely to hire female applicants to management positions who prominently displayed traditional gender behaviors such as care giving in their application (Vial et al., 2016; Desai, et al., 2014). This is affirmed by research which reveals that although job descriptions list prerequisites such as education and experience, implicit biases such as gender, race and ethnicity have an effect on which candidates are more desirable for agentic appointments (Dean, 2015).

Research on Leadership Experiences of African American Women

African American women managers who do not conform to traditional gender standards may risk negative evaluations in White workplace environments (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012; Rosette, Koval, Ma, & Livingston, 2016). Their reputation precedes them, rooted in beliefs that are established among co-workers, individually and collectively long before the two are introduced. African American women are forced to deal with perceptions that they are unapproachable and unfriendly even before interaction takes place (Hall, 2012). Co-workers perceive a certain level of competence in the African American female manager and exercise agentic penalty against African American women based on stereotypes; she is scrutinized and judged based on how well she aligns with these expected behaviors.

The African American woman leader is typecast and critiqued based on perceptions of how she should and should not behave (Rosette et al., 2016). If the African American woman leader aligns with typical leadership models, she is considered aggressive; if the African American female leadership behavior is stereotypically feminine, she is considered too soft for the task of administration and decision making.

The presence of the African American woman may activate a unique set of stereotypes by which the agentic legitimacy and aptitude of the African American woman leader is judged (Vial et al., 2016). No matter the attributes and achievements, African American women are often not seen as the right fit for the job because they are not cut from the mould traditionally associated with prestige and power. This perception of the African American woman leader presents a unique, added challenge to be heard and receive credit for augment systems and procedures (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). Because of the dissimilarity between a female leadership style and the traditionally accepted leadership standard, the African American female leader is likely to be rejected and risks power and authority being minimized (Beckwith et al., 2016).

As a result, despite being equally qualified, women are often passed over in order to protect and maintain the status quo of organizations predominantly dominated by White males in leadership. Because Caucasian males are the predominant corporate leader, members of this group are more esteemed and must be ensured opportunity for success through mentoring, networking and engaging in behavior that limits leadership diversity (Hekman et al., 2016). One such tool is to stereotype groups who do not belong to high status groups as a method of maintaining the established hierarchical bureaucracies (Vial et al., 2016). These oft repeated stereotypes lead to deeply embedded perceptions which persist despite visual and statistical evidence to the contrary. This is evident by the lack of diversity among CEO, Executive Director and Board positions at successfully large corporations, where the vast majority of leaders are White men despite more of the workforce being non-White and female (Hekman et al., 2016). The African

American female is unique in the types of stressors she reports, coping mechanisms and the degree she must change to fit into the corporate culture despite perception that the African American racial group is the most marginalized even among minority groups (O'Brien et al., 2014). This is a considerable task in part because the African American woman is an easily identifiable target for discrimination (Hall et al., 2012). The experience of overcoming a maze of subjugation is so much a part of being an African American woman in leadership, self-identity is affected by what is projected externally (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). As a result, many African American women leaders accept self-depriving projections which reaffirm negative expectations and reinforce barriers to agency in predominantly White surroundings (Vial et al., 2016). Contrarily, research also reveals many characteristics developed in the African American woman as a result of slavery contribute positively to workplace demeanor and performance (Johnson, 2015). Study of the African American female leadership experience in predominantly Black work environments is needed to understand the encounters of African American women across settings.

According to a 2015 report by Center for Talent Innovation report, African American women aspire to leadership positions: Black women are 2.8 times as likely as White women to aspire to a powerful position with a prestigious title (Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). A study of high ranking African American women, all of whom are the first to have achieved the lofty position they occupied at the time of the interview revealed that 98% stated race as a major challenge in their career (Johnson, 2015). The fact that the African American female maintains such a high optimism in light of low

numbers of decision making opportunities may be reflected in Afrocentric epistemology; one filled with relentless struggle to overcome and the ability to hope against hope while enduring discrimination (Johnson, 2015). It appears the African American female understands more is expected of in order to excel compared to other groups; African American women must do more with less resources in order to gain the same measure of acceptance (Beckwith et al., 2016). Allen and Lewis' (2016) research reveal the African American woman is scrutinized more when occupying a leadership position. When in charge, the African American female leader is forced to provide more explanation for actions (Beckwith et al., 2016). The African American woman is also penalized more harshly when mistakes are made (Livingston & Rosette, 2012). The African American woman remains determined to succeed despite frustration because the African American woman believes she is destined to succeed against all odds (Beckwith et al., 2016). More research is needed to determine whether the work experience of the African American woman leader is affected when in a working environment predominated by African Americans. Also, do other factors such as colorism play a more prominent role in the experience of the African American woman in this atmosphere?

African American women account for only 15 % of women in managerial-level positions in the private sector (Rahman, Shore, & Lightner-Laws, 2016). Of that group, 26% of Black women managers believe they do not receive adequate recognition for their skills (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). The perceived lack of recognition is supported by research which indicates the Black woman is subjugated by other groups by race and gender; that the standard image of the Black executive would be a Black and the image of

the female executive is the White female (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). Like all women

leaders, the African American female leader is devalued and must exceed the

performance standards of men in order to be perceived as equally capable to male

counterparts (Vial et al., 2016). Additionally, the African American woman leader must

compete with other women to be heard distinctly rather than be lumped categorically by

gender. There is no recorded research about the perceived experience of the African

American woman in a work place where African Americans are no longer the minority

race? When women who attain the highest positions, they are unable to exercise the

same broad latitude of agency and power their White male counterparts enjoy and must

navigate successfully with less influence and the knowledge they may not be accepted by

co-workers (Vial et al., 2016). Research largely fails to consider the perceptions and

leadership experiences of those with dual-subordinate identities (Rosette & Livingston,

2012) and there are no known studies of the leadership experience of African American

female leaders in a predominantly African American workplace at the time of this

writing.

African American Women Managers as a Racial and Gender Minority in the

Workplace: What is Known and what Remains Unknown

A female manager is continuously scrutinized in the workplace due to their low

numbers in leadership positions (Brescoll, 2012). Minority female leaders are likely to

experience an extreme amount of scrutiny towards their performance in a predominantly

White workplace as an agentic penalty for being a woman of color in a leadership

position (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Rosette et al. 2016), and such a degree of scrutiny may weaken their ability to lead competently (Glass & Cook, 2016).

Women employees are often asked to overcome implicit and explicit biases in the workplace by doing more and working extra to go above and beyond what is expected of male employees (Dean, 2016). Women are often penalized with their capability or commitment questioned when they fail to attend social events even outside of typical work hours (Beckwith et al., 2016; Latchanah & Singh, 2016). Inequalities such as this are heightened for minority women who report themselves to be taken advantage of more frequently than their White counterparts; those minority women who are single and childless are frequently asked to perform extra duties (Dean, 2016). Further research is suggested into why qualified African American women remain largely unconsidered for leadership roles even after displaying superior ability and performance (Beckwith et al., 2016).

Women leaders are told that in order to advance their careers, they should not be too masculine; some have even been told to attend charm schools and change their appearance to reflect a more traditionally acceptable gender stereotype (Crites, et al., 2015). African American managers encounter these dilemmas and must even adjust how they speak in order to attempt to further their occupational advancement; in order to "play the game", the "African" aspect of the African American must be de-emphasized in favor of the standard "American" character trait (Beckwith et al., 2016; Hall et al., 2012). Scholars analyzing the experiences of African American women managers in predominantly White work environments report these women experience such workplace

microaggressions as gender and racial stereotyping (Rosette et al. 2016), exclusion from office networks (Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2012), and little support from colleagues in the workplace (O'Brien, Franco, & Dunn, 2014). Other microaggressive behaviors include African American women workers being affirmed by White co-workers because "you speak like us," (Hall, 2012) as well as expressions of surprise when colleagues observe behaviors which exceed their previous, limited expectations for the African American worker (Holder, 2015). Microaggressions include often unconscious and are designed to demean and reflect a notion of inferiority toward the target of discrimination (Wong et al., 2014) including teasing in relation to culturally significant events such as Black History month or references to foods stereotypically associated with a particular group of people such as African Americans and watermelon (Hall, 2012).

Microaggressions have great effect on victims; targets are known to experience anxiety, depression, helplessness and a lower sense of self-worth and may begin to overgeneralize negative experiences and seek out others to validate their emotions and experiences after questioning themselves (Hall, 2012; Holder, 2013). These interactions serve as reminders of the power dynamic which favors Caucasians; it reinforces for African American women leaders their perceived agency is not really their own, it has been loaned to them by powerful others (Allen & Lewis, 2016). The power dynamic is realized in a feedback method which leaves job performance evaluations of agentic African American employees at the discretion of supervisors who may offer or withhold information (Bear, Cushenbery, London, & Sherman, 2017). Supervisors or Board

members may choose to conduct performance reviews on any number of areas according to personal preference, formally and informally (Bear et al., 2017; Stainback et al., 2016). Suggestions and ideas by African American female employees may be rendered valueless (Allen & Lewis, 2016) unless reinforced by those of higher status (Williams, 2014). This refusal of employees of higher corporate status as a result of race or position, to engage the African American woman leader is designed to effectively determine efforts unworthy of acknowledgement; it also creates an invisibility complex which disqualifies her from promotion and added compensation and limits the influence of the African American woman in the work place (Allen & Lewis, 2016). Further research to assess the coping response of the African American female to discrimination she may not have the power to change but is fully aware, is recommended by Hall (2012).

The invisibility vise is a microaggressive behavior that is not easily quantified or explained, however it presents a major conflict for African American women, pitting their racial and feminine pride against the sense of culture and career in the office (Allen & Lewis, 2016). Although inequality and cultural suppression takes place and is noticeable, the African American woman must strategically measure how to address or cope with this discrimination and maintain an upward trajectory; comply and be a "team player" or challenge and be labelled a "troublemaker" (Latchanah, 2016; Adesaogun, Flottemesch & Ibrahim-DeVries, 2015; Hall, 2012). In addition to the inner conflict of the African American woman when interacting with White co-workers and the mainstream American culture, she faces stereotypical paradoxes among her own Black men and women at work further exacerbating her sense of invisibility (Hall, 2012;

Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Investigation finds the African American female is

isolated; considered by some co-workers to be too independent while others find her not

to be strong enough in asserting her view (Rahman et al., 2016). She may be determined

to be "too Black" and therefore, exposed to greater risk of negative stereotyping (Carbado

& Gulati, 2013). The success of African American women leaders is attributed tokenism

(Hall, 2012) or external features that are beyond control such as skin complexion

(Mathews, 2013). The African American woman she must stand on behalf of all or

decide to be loyal to self; her commitment to the African American race is questioned if

she agrees with Whites too often (Hall, 2012). Intragender and possibly intraracial

skepticism and distrust are affected when workers are successful; loyalty to gender or

race are called into question as those most alike are perceived adversaries for limited

high-profile positions (Adesaogun, et al., 2015; Williams, 2014). These nuances of

leadership and acceptable employee behavior are unique to the African American

community (Allen & Lewis, 2016) and should be studied to see whether the power

dynamic and view of corporate citizenship changes in a predominantly African American

work place. African American culture considers the woman to be the domestic principle

(Latchanah, 2016) therefore the African American woman must switch personality traits

between home and work just as she does in different corporate settings (Hall, 2012).

Fundamental traits the African American woman must utilize to try and advance in the

workplace such as education, independence and self-reliance, may cause strife in

relationships with African American males (Allen, 2016; Hurt, 2014; Shelton, Delgado-

Romero, & Werther, 2014). The societal image which causes animosity with the African

American woman, also occurs in the workplace with the African American male who sees the African American woman as a threat to his position of status (Allen, 2016; Hall, 2012).

According to Dean (2016), research corroborated overwhelmingly that men and women are unequal in the workplace, with women being treated more poorly than men of the same ethnic group. Conversely, the author identifies reports which find empirical evidence that female and ethnically diverse top executives at publicly traded corporations may be better compensated than white male counterparts. It remains unknown whether being a minority positively or negatively affects the career trajectory of females (Dean, 2016); among intraracial co-workers who may be more familiar culturally, further research could reveal how familiarity affects biases (Williams, 2014). Additionally, the experience of the African American female in a workplace with African American males and females who research shows may consider the African American woman as a competitor (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Hurt et al., 2014) must be studied.

Crites et al. (2015) recommended female leaders responses be analysed to determine whether those who do not fit common stereotypes hold those same stereotypes toward other female leaders. To better understand this dynamic of the African American woman manager, she should be observed in a workplace setting where the majority of employees are minority, specifically African American. This research may also provide insight into ways to help the African American woman avoid marginalization based on common traits and stereotypes; this could lead to resolution and help understand the career trajectory of the African American woman (Beckwith et al., 2016). Research is

needed to examine intra-racial microaggressions based on research findings which indicate various groups exhibit intragroup racial microaggressions in various ways (Wong et al., 2014).

Although quantitative research is helpful because it presents empirical finings in research, it is not always appropriate or sufficient, particularly when researching marginalized groups because of the many nuances involved in human interaction (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). The recognition of a labyrinth of socio-structural forces is essential to gain a comprehensive analysis of the intersection of race and gender of individuals who are members of two marginalized groups and how they interact among other members of the same race and marginalized group (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). Therefore, a naturalistic design is desirable in order to allow in depth research of the cumulative effects of microaggressions and strengthen external validity by recording immediate responses and avoiding ethical issues associated with manipulation of racial variables which are potentially harmful (Wong et al., 2014).

A 2012 qualitative study uses an exploratory model featuring grounded theory to examine the barriers African American women face in the workplace including inequality, diversity issues, lack of mentorship and isolation (Hall, 2012). Although it was not a theme of her research, Hall (2012) discovered African American women must also incorporate a behaviour whereby they "switch" identity to fit in among other African Americans; the current study explores these important intraracial experiences and associated barriers in the workplace (Hall, 2012). The author recruited participants using flyers and announcements at colleges, churches and social club newsletters, followed by a

one-page screening form, after which the selected participants engaged in six 2-hour focus groups on college campuses (Hall, 2012). Similarly, Sims' (2009) qualitative inquiry discovered systemic issues of power and privilege among members of the same group. Sims (2009) also revealed redress of intraracial discrimination is lacking and as such, is passively condoned with no initiative in sight to address and resolve this growing form of prejudice as society becomes more diverse. To this end, Sims (2009) explores the impact of skin tone bias among African Americans in the workplace along with the implications of education into skin tone bias in diversity training. Latchanah & Singh, (2016) also incorporated a qualitative research method which was exploratory in nature to afford researchers deeper analysis of the phenomena which affect the upward progress of women of color. The author discovered there are some cultures and sub-cultures that are more supportive than others and this may affect the trajectory and behaviour of female workers (Latchanah, 2016).

Limitations of current skin tone research include the lack of a large-scale study (Adams et al., 2016; Sims, 2009). The lack of distinction among group members of the Black diaspora, particularly with intraracial emphasis where Black Hispanics, for example, may differ in cultural attitudes from African Americans is also a weakness in research (Adams et al., 2016). Research also indicates that leader race may subordinate gender bias because the fact that the leader is White, or Black may trigger a specific set of stereotypes; failure to study the effect of race more distinctively is a limit of current research (Vial et al., 2016).

Summary and Conclusions

The literature review details the research literature encompassing topics on intersectionality issues of African American women managers and how these women leaders may risk negative evaluations in a predominantly Black workplace environment as they do in White workplace environments (Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). There are gaps in extant literature on the unique experience of the African American woman as a double minority in the workplace (O'Brien et al., 2014). Current literature largely assumes leader perceptions are homogenous for single minorities and double minorities; however, research indicates the experience of the African American woman leader varies from Caucasian women leaders in similar work place settings (Livingston & Rosette, 2012; Porter & James, 2016). It is also approached from a monolithic perspective which addresses discrimination by the White male directed toward others (Wong et al., 2014); homogeneity should not be the reference point from which diversity is examined, it is one variable among many groups (Apfelbaum et al., 2014). Unlike Caucasian women, the African American woman is less penalized by White men for agentic behavior (Livingston & Rosette, 2012; Williams et al., 2014) but penalized more harshly in mainstream corporate America for mistakes in strategy (Livingston & Rosette, 2012). The competence and achievement expectation of the African American is limited as a result of negative race, sex stereotypes and agentic invisibility (Hekman et al., 2016)

Scholars consider exploration of the intraracial experiences of minority groups vital to gain a better understanding of the unique encounters of these groups and how

their actions affirm or dispute common stereotypical belief systems (Porter & James, 2016; Wong et al., 2014). African American women experience microaggressions such as racial and gender profiling (Rosette et al., 2016), exclusion from office networks (Hall et al., 2012), intersectional invisibility (Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, 2015), and lack of support and mentorship in White work environments (O'Brien et al., 2014). Whether such workplace microaggressions and agentic penalization occur in work environments that are predominantly African American, simply because the African American woman manager is a woman in a leadership position (Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016) remains unknown and requires research.

Intraracial inequity plays a significant role in African American culture today (Carbado & Gulati, 2013; Sims, 2004) and may serve as a barrier to the ability of the African American woman to lead even in a predominantly Black work environment (Burton et al., 2010). Research reveals intraracial disparities among African American workers; lighter skinned African Americans in White work environments achieve higher social, educational, and occupational status than darker complexioned counterparts because of skin tone (Sims, 2004). There are instances in which darker skinned Blacks target those who are lighter complexion (Adams et. al., 2016; Sims, 2009).

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology for the qualitative, multiple case study designed to fulfill the research objectives of the study. The sampling rationale and method, followed by the method of data collection is also detailed in the chapter. Finally, the logic for the study as well as precedence for the data collection and analysis is provided.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain deeper

understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers

employed in predominantly Black work environments. Semistructured interviews with a

sample of African American women managers working in predominately Black

enterprises (Yin, 2017), reflective field notes, and historical literature exploring

experiences related to the purpose of the study (Yin, 2017) were used to explore the

specific leadership experiences of African American women managers.

Ten in-depth, face-to-face individual interviews were conducted with African

American women managers working in predominately Black work environments. A gap

in the research literature is identified by scholars on experiences of the agentic African

American woman leader and her experience as a double minority in the workplace

(O'Brien et al. 2014). Although there is a group of studies which examine the African

American woman's history in predominantly White workplaces (Hall et al. 2012), this

study is original and significant in that it examined African American woman managers'

experiences in predominantly Black work environments. The revelation of whether a

greater level of implicit race in-group bias (Rudman & McLean, 2016) was revealed in a

predominantly African American workplace, where experiences divulged intragroup

stereotypical beliefs, providing insight into possible issues of gendered racism towards

these women. By doing so, the results of this study promoted social change by

sensitizing predominantly Black work environments on ways in which an intraracial

context influences African American women's management experiences and on issues of equal treatment between gender groups (Cassidy, et al., 2011).

This chapter provides detailed information on the research method and rationale for conducting an exploratory multiple case study, and the central research question guiding this empirical investigation. This section also presents information and rationale for the participant selection strategy, data collection and analysis process and also explains the selection of participants; data collection strategies; and data analysis, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and the summary.

Research Design and Rationale

In theory-generating case research the specific research questions are developed to provide answers within the context of the empirical setting (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). Recording the experiences of African American female managers in a predominantly Black work environment offers insight into whether their experiences and relationships with other employees tends to differ significantly from the accounts and experiences of African American women managers in work environments that are predominantly Caucasian. The case study research context is inextricably linked to the phenomena under investigation and, therefore, research questions must be developed that are crucial to understanding real-world cases (Morgan, Pullon, Macdonald, McKinlay, & Gray, 2017; Yin, 2017). Aligning with the purpose of this study the central research question is as follows:

Research Question: What are the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments?

Researchers have indicated Black women in predominantly White work environments experience lower job satisfaction than White counterparts; the sense of reciprocity and empowerment experienced by White counterparts is less apparent and African American women perceive inadequate resources, minimal input, few sponsorship options and limited opportunity for job growth and career advancement (Gary et al., 2015; Hall et al., 2012). Current research fails to address whether these issues of discrimination are a part of the Black female managerial experience in a predominantly Black work environment and whether it affects job satisfaction, self-confidence and the sense of agency. Investigation of the experience of the Black female manager in a predominantly Black work environment may "reveal important insights regarding the effects of homogeneity," (Apfelbaum, et al., 2014, p. 235). Despite the standard association of authority and dominance with effective leadership, African American women managers may risk negative evaluations in a predominantly Black workplace environment as they do in White workplace environments for behavior that is atypical to traditional gender standards (Livingston, et al., 2012; Rosette, et al., 2016).

African American women occupy only 15% of women in managerial-level positions in the private sector (Rahman, et al., 2016). Yet 26% of Black women surveyed in managerial position believed their skill and knowledge were not acknowledged by their superiors unless they "kept their head down" and "make no noise," according to the author's report (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). A female manager faces greater scrutiny in the workplace because few women occupy leadership positions (Brescoll, 2012). Minority female leaders in a predominantly White workplace face greater criticism of their

performance as an agentic penalty for being an African American woman in a leadership position (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Rosette et al. 2016); this excessive criticism may weaken their ability to lead competently (Glass & Cook, 2016). Researchers have indicated African American women managers in predominantly White work environments must cope with such microaggressive behaviors such as negative gender and racial stereotyping which opposed typical leadership traits (Rosette et al. 2016), lack of engagement by co-workers (Hall, et al., 2012), and little encouragement from colleagues in the corporate setting (O'Brien, et al., 2014). Using an exploratory, multiple-case research design to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments, the findings of this empirical investigation may advance knowledge on intersectionality and intra-racial discrimination, and to contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

The nature of this study is qualitative, aligning with the purpose of the study to answer the central research question (Yin, 2017). Qualitative research explores the world of a given context from the viewpoint of the people living in it and is associated with the interpretivist paradigm (Cooper & White, 2012). Willis (2007) indicated that "interpretivists tend to favour qualitative methods such as case studies and ethnography" (p. 90). The interpretivist paradigm relies on naturalistic methods such as in-depth interviews, observation, and analysis of existing texts (Andrade, 2009). The in-depth interview method that is the cornerstone of qualitative research approaches can bring

forth new meanings and information of social groups living from within a specific social context (Stake, 2013).

Qualitative research methods for the interpretivist paradigm were developed to give a voice to a society's victims of oppression and their struggles with dominant institutions, organizations, and social groups for the purpose of social change (Cooper & White, 2012). Rather than a quantitative approach, which might focus on an account of events or behaviors, qualitative researchers attempt to explore how participants understand these events and how this understanding leads to behavior and new experiences (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). In this study, a qualitative method is used to meet the purpose of the study and answer the central research question pertaining to the leadership experiences as related by African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. Qualitative methodology offers researchers the opportunity to gather evidence on issues from the people's perspective living within a given context and experiencing a specific social phenomenon (Denzin, 2009). Researchers using case studies have the extra burden of convincing their readers of the legitimacy of and drawing conceptual implications from their findings (Andrade, 2009). Implementation of the case study design, places the onus on the author to demonstrate research legitimacy and enlighten the reader to conceptual significance of their research findings (Andrade, 2009).

Case studies provide a framework to study complex issues within their contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Interpretive case studies cause the researcher to become passionately involved with participants which may be a strength or weakness depending

on how it is managed (Andrade, 2009); integration of data sources in reporting findings is

a way to minimize bias in reporting (Baxter & Jack, 2008), while recognizing uniqueness

as compared to verifiable generalities (Siggelkow, 2007). A qualitative case study

method offers intensive inquiry providing in-depth understanding of the complex real-life

events of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work

environments (Livingston, et al., 2012; Rosette, et al., 2016). Because case studies do not

involve experimental controls or manipulation, an exploratory multiple case study is

suitable to gain a deeper understanding of the complex social phenomena experienced by

the study's participants (Yin, 2017) and is a favored method for interpretivist researchers

(Andrade, 2009). Implementation of the case study design, places the onus on the author

to demonstrate research legitimacy and enlighten the reader to conceptual significance of

their research findings (Andrade, 2009). Interpretive case studies cause the researcher to

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depending on how it is managed (Andrade, 2009); integration of data sources in reporting

findings is a way to minimize bias in reporting (Baxter & Jack, 2008), while recognizing

uniqueness as compared to verifiable generalities (Siggelkow, 2007).

A multiple case study design aligns with the social phenomena to be explored and

on developing an appropriate case study to address the nature of the research problem

(Yin, 2017). Since multiple case studies are based in natural settings with the intent of

understanding the process of an under-examined area, a holistic understanding of the

phenomenon can thus be explored (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 2013). This method enables

the researcher to explore differences within and between cases (Yin, 2017). Yin (2017)

argued that the multiple case study design is relevant for replication and allows researchers to address a complex social phenomenon and is relevant when comparing different studies. An inductive research approach using a multiple case study strategy can enable themes to emerge from the data, and thus allow the data and African American women managers' perspectives to drive data analysis and recommendations for further research (Yin, 2017).

Qualitative research methods, including narrative inquiry and ethnography were carefully considered for this study. After careful deliberation, the case study design is determined to be most effective for this study as opposed to narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2010), phenomenology designs (Norlyk & Harder, 2010), or ethnography methods. The case-study design is appropriate because it affords several approaches to be used to answer the research question and provides flexibility for the researcher to conduct research in a natural context. Narrative inquiry or phenomenology would not address the research problem in this study which looks at exploring participants' experiences in a broader social context than just using a narrow critical event approach (Webster & Mertova, 2007) or just the personal meanings of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology is typically used for subjective exploration of how an experience is meaningful to the participant (Moustakas, 1994). The process of inquiry in empirical phenomenology is rooted in the self-knowledge of the participant and the perception, ideas and judgments of the participant, connecting life experience to phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Based on these descriptions, meaning is derived and placed into universal themes, which produce logical concepts which are universally transcendent

(Moustakas, 1994). Because the goal of the study was to explore the leadership experiences of African American women managers, lived experiences were not as important as the exploration of the participants' experiences in the broader social and professional context of predominantly Black work environments. As a result, the use of phenomenology as a suitable research method was abandoned for this study. Grounded theory is an inductive theory developed from data collection in the field as opposed to the deductive theory wherein the researcher begins with a theory which is validated through exploration (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Thus, grounded theory was also deemed inappropriate for this study as the study begins with the idea that a conceptual framework consisting of Essed's (1991) concept of *intersectionality of gender and race*, also coined by the seminal author with the term *gendered racism,* and Turner's (1995) concepts of *intra-racial discrimination* and *colorism* is utilized as a theoretical lens through which to view the study's topics that take in-depth consideration of context (Yin, 2017).

Case study designs are useful in examining events when behaviors cannot be manipulated and when attempting to seek a greater understanding of an issue (Yin, 2017). A multiple case study investigating a social phenomenon can involve individuals living within a social context as a separate unit of study (Yin, 2017). When the data focus is only on individuals in a multiple-case study design, the study's central phenomenon, in this case the African American women manager, is the context and not the target of study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2017). The unit of analysis in this study is the African American woman manager working in a predominately Black enterprise. This design allows for investigating differences within and between cases (Yin, 2017). The

goal of a multiple case study design is to replicate findings across cases and allows the

researcher to link the research question and the research conclusion. Because

comparisons were drawn, the cases were chosen carefully so that the researcher could

predict similar results across cases, or predict contrasting results based on the conceptual

framework (Yin, 2017). Comparing and contrasting results between multiple cases leads

to more robust outcomes when using inductive theory and for any such outcomes to be

persuasive, utilizing a specific research method and design has to rely on arguments

rooted in the methodological literature (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

The versatility of qualitative research methods enables the researcher to obtain

credible research findings which align with the purpose of the study in question,

implementing a range of methodologies (Yin, 2017). Qualitative research is expected to

impart an understanding of life experiences and interactions of people within a specific,

meaningful social context (Cooper & White, 2012). The process and findings of this

constructivist research process is influenced by a variety of factors including (empirical)

observation, upon which systems of belief predicate the predisposition of the researcher.

The researcher's sense of (ontology) how an object is defined based on its relationship to

other objects, the philosophy of how scientific knowledge is derived (epistemology), and

(axiological) moral or ethical position, along with the objectives of the study, influenced

the scope of the study as well as the chosen path of the researcher. The traits of the

participants as well as the audience provided additional contextual frameworks wherein

the research design should capture attitudinal nuances and maximize the credibility of the investigation.

Effective management of reflexivity provides invaluable benefit to all who rely on the research study. Reflexivity must be conducted in qualitative research so that the interviewer is aware of any role of positionality. The researcher may occupy a position which ranges from empathy to sympathy to apathy toward the experience of the participants; however, the ability of the investigator to effectively perform critical self-analysis and identify how positionality affects research inquiry and findings determined accuracy and trustworthiness (Berger, 2015). A thorough awareness of the phenomenon by the researcher potentially revealed a more meaningful inquiry (Berger, 2015), however, the researcher was careful to not unduly influence the contributors (Cumming-Potvin, 2013). At the same time, the researcher had to understand and embrace the social constructivist emphasis on the connection between the individual and the body of knowledge and the role of the practitioner in self-discovery, while gaining knowledge from others (Burr, 2015).

In-depth interviews, were considered a reliable method of data collection, revealing common themes and nuanced reactions, and expose deeper meaning in the exploration of intersectionality (Berger, 2015; Jordan-Zachery, 2007). The unit under investigation intersects at race and gender; the African American female manager was explored within the social context of a predominantly African American work environment. Several data collection methods were implemented over a four-week period for purposes of triangulation (Yin, 2014). These data collections tools triangulated

feedback, enabling the researcher to capture intimate detailed leadership experiences of

the African American female manager intimately and instantaneously, for authentic

responses which enhanced credibility (Guion et al., 2011; Patton, 2014).

The dialogue developed between the interviewer and participants enhanced

perspective and provide greater insight of meanings in a specific social context. My

focus on each participant individually enabled each person to serve as a case study

(Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) and provide opportunity for case comparison (Yin, 2014).

Confidential data collection methods captured more intimate thoughts and feelings,

particularly involving more sensitive experiences, and provided further verification of

interview responses, adding rigor to the data collection process. This also helped to

safeguard against interviewer influence and opinion over the participants, adding

credibility to the study (Patton, 2014). As an African American, I understand certain

terms and may have experienced nonverbal cues which should allow me to stimulate

conversation and ask more probing, nonleading questions for consideration by the

participants

Methodology

A multicase study allows the researcher to investigate a social phenomenon,

comparing and contrasting differences between cases in the same social context while

contemplating each participant as a separate entity (Yin, 2014). The situational

complexities associated with specific social contexts are vital to understanding the social

and behavioral interaction of variables within a larger system (Stake, 2013). Qualitative

research can provide insight into dynamics which support relationships as well as *how*

and *why* they are maintained (Tsang, 2013). These cases were analyzed using replication

logic where although each case stands alone, replication offers contrasts and may further

theoretical constructs (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Yin (2014) suggested the

qualitative method for probing questions which also contribute originality, using a variety

of data sources (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Merriam and Tidsdell (2015) have determined six to 10 participants is sufficient

to identify important themes and practical applications in qualitative research. Research

and interview questions were designed to gain a deeper understanding of the work

experience of African American female leaders in a predominantly Black work

environment. A template for reporting the findings of the multiple case study provided

uniformity for analysis of the similarities and contrast of the participant experiences

(Noor, 2008). Triangulation provided a method of integration of multiple data sources

(Pauwels & Matthyssens, 2004) and balances the strengths and weaknesses of each

independent approach, strengthening the credibility of the study (Guion et al., 2011;

Patton, 2014; Pauwels & Matthyssens, 2004). In this study, interviews, observational

field notes, as well as seminal writings served as data sources. Purposeful participant

selection was a vital component of the research design of this study in fulfilment of a

tightly scoped research question, with a select group being observed (Eisenhardt &

Graebner, 2007; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

Qualitative multi-case study was utilized as it allows the in-depth study of holistic

and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2014, p. 2). Yin (2014) proposed

employing the case study approach, as it is most appropriate when asking how and why

questions and when the study is bounded by time. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007)

recommend that researchers utilize multi-case study approach that includes more than

one case when the goal of the study is to make an original contribution to a theoretical or

conceptual framework and provide a rich, powerful picture of human interaction as

compared to a single case study. Cross-case synthesis as an analytic procedure was

recommended when analysing data in a multiple case study to strengthen external

validity, trustworthiness of data, and consider the research more vigorous (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2015).

Designing a case study protocol allows researchers to augment the reliability of

their study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2017). The method and research design delineate

the process and system of conducting the multiple case study (Tsang, 2013). The research

design includes research questions and interview questions utilized to uncover the

participants' experiences, participant selection logic, data collection and field procedures,

an identified data analysis technique and a template to follow for reporting the multiple

case study (Noor, 2008; Stake, 2013). The research design for this study begins with the

participant selection logic.

Participant Selection Logic

Population. This proposed research study sought to understand perceptions of a

sample of participants selected for this study from within the population of African

American women in management in the United States. Although in 2014, women in

general made up less than 16% of executive leaders in U.S. corporations; only 5.3% of

executive leaders in U.S. corporations were African American women. Scholars and

business statistics report for women of color, the gap is wider according to Warner

(2014). Given that women of color encompass women of various races, it is important to

this study to note that while women of color make up 11.9% of managerial and

professional positions, African American women make up a mere 5.3% (Beckwith et al.,

2016).

Sampling criteria. When choosing a sample population for qualitative research,

population specificity and implementation of an appropriate sampling methodology is

vital to research integrity (Tracy, 2010). Purposeful participant selection for this case

study was based on criterion and snowball sampling strategies. Potential contributors

were examined with inclusion based on the following criteria: they were adults over the

age of 18; an African American woman manager occupying a managerial position in a

primarily Black populated enterprise; they were actively supervising a workforce

consisting predominantly of Black employees; and possessed in-depth understanding of

the topic of the study (Patton, 2014). Once I selected a few participants, I implemented

the popular purposeful sampling technique of Snowballing wherein I solicited from

current study candidates, other potential contributors who met the inclusion criteria

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Snowball sampling is the most common form of purposeful

sampling and works by asking a few key participants who already meet the criteria for

the study to refer others who may also meet the criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The

use of the Snowball sampling technique ensures exposure to these "hidden populations";

specifically, African American women managers; holding a managerial position in a

predominantly Black enterprise; a population which may have been difficult to identify

using other sampling strategies which do not require such an intimate knowledge of the

target sampling pool (Noor, 2008). Data collection consisted of 10 in-depth face-to-face

individual interviews by the researcher, conducted with African American women

managers employed in work environments predominated by Black employees.

Researchers find in-depth interviews are a reliable method for investigation of

intersectionality and are particularly useful for addressing relevant constituencies while

providing diversity often associated with intersectionality (Jordan-Zachery, 2007; Ritchie

et al., 2013). To ensure the emergence of important themes and practical interpretations,

six and 10 in-depth interviews were deemed acceptable. The participant selection logic

ensured that participants fulfilled the minimum recruitment criteria requirements

allowing for a credible study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This criterion-based sampling

gathered a heterogeneous group of participants to support maximum variation sampling

(Benoot, Hannes & Bilsen, 2016). Maximum variation sampling in qualitative research

relies on researcher's judgment to select participants with diverse characteristics to

ensure the presence of maximum variability within the primary data, which in this

multiple case study are the responses to the interview protocol (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Sampling selection. The study purposefully selected African American female

managers in the United States who occupy managerial positions in companies with a

majority Black work force. Although the participants intersect at race and gender and

may share characteristics of marginalization with other groups such as African American

men and White American women, the latter groups were not included in this study. The

optimal case study consists of 10 African American female managers to ensure adequate

and quality data collection. An in-depth interview was conducted with each individual study participant, providing distinct understanding of perceptions and interactions of African American female managers in a specific, 'real world' context (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Researchers including Yin (2017) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) agree six to 10 cases is a good sample size for qualitative investigation. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), documented emergence of important themes within the first six interviews and recommend no more than 12 to understand common perceptions and experiences. These themes are enhanced through harmony of self-awareness and social and cultural consciousness by the researcher and participant (Cumming-Potvin, 2013).

The unit for analysis in this study is the African American woman manager working in a predominately Black enterprise and represents a single evidentiary source of study; through in-depth interviews each unit provided rich information linking data to theoretical proposition or enabling case comparison (Tsang, 2013; Yin, 2017). Researchers determined the sufficiency of the sample size based on factors including the aim of the study, availability of time and material resources; ultimately the reliability and depth of information provided as the primary focus for selection (Guetterman, 2015).

Qualitative research has long been utilized to gain an understanding of peoples' behaviors, cultures and how they perceive and respond based on their personal experiences and observations (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Qualitative research methodology provides a diverse platform for exploration, selected based on a variety of factors including ontological and epistemological considerations, the aim of the

researcher, along with social and cultural systems of the participants (Stake, 2013).

Qualitative research is not simply theoretical, it examines concepts and constructs which

form the qualities that may lie beyond statistical properties; without these broader ideas

and concepts, research would be confined to what can be defined only by its tangible

properties (Cooper & White 2012).

Qualitative research helps people to understand seemingly innate qualities; pattern

recognition allows researchers to identify primary and secondary descriptors involving

seemingly random practices that are a part of all personal and systemic interactions

(Cooper & White, 2012; Patton, 2014). These patterns fueled emerging themes which

provide insight into current perspectives; mindsets which mutate from one period to

another based on ever evolving social standards. Patterns can reveal changes among

ethnic and gender issues (Cooper & White, 2012); they may also affirm attitudes and

behaviors that remain resilient despite legislative and non-discriminatory philosophical

changes in society (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, a qualitative research

method allowed for a thorough analysis of attitudes, behaviors and perceptions which

shape the experience of the African American woman manager working in a

predominately Black enterprise. The exploration of African American women managers'

interactions singularly and collectively, along with their assessment of their work

experience in a narrow setting provided variability for comparison as well as effective

replication (Yin, 2017).

Sampling strategy. The scope of this study is limited to the population of

African American women management positions in the United States. Because selection

is made among a marginalized group, data collection is a result of individual in-depth, semi structured interviews conducted with 10 African American women managers working in a predominantly Black enterprise through purposeful, criterion and snowball sampling techniques (Cooper & White, 2012; Patton, 2014). The in-depth interview process is useful for investigation into intersectionality, allowing flexibility on the part of the researcher to evaluate various interloping aspects of a phenomenon while avoiding fragmentation (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). In-depth, semi-structured interviews are more conversational, allowing the interviewer to capture the essence of the experience of the participant; a decreased feeling of formality and scripted format relay to the participant how important and central their response is to the study (Davis, 2016).

The agentic experience of the African American woman in the traditional corporate workplace has been determined to be uniquely different to that of her Caucasian counterpart (Livingston et al., 2012). Race moderated studies reveal the African American female manager experiences disproportionate sanction for mistakes (Livingston & Rosette, 2012) as well as added pressure to act as representative for an entire group (Beckwith et al., 2016). These lived experiences create legacies and beliefs which were explored through in-depth interviews, so the participants' accounts can be captured fully and thoroughly based on the viewpoints, perceptions and realities of each individual to a point of saturation (Yin, 2017).

The selected population and the sample size were vital to the success of the study. Candidates from this group were able to provide opinions, perceptions, and observations about their work experience in a work place predominated by African American workers

to gain sufficient insight for in-depth study of this phenomenon. Once selected, the

researcher began to establish a rapport with the participants; the dialogue developed

between researcher and participants provided a context to accurately capture data through

rich descriptions, essence and attitude of each participant (Davis, 2016; Guetterman,

2015; Shenton, 2004). The constructivist impact of the research hinges on a close

collaboration between the researcher and those who have lived experiences to provide

descriptive data rather than abstract concepts; these vivid accounts also provide deeper

understanding of the response of the participant (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Patton, 2014).

The data for this study was gathered through a purposeful sampling technique

based on individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Purposeful sampling allowed

the discovery of varieties of meanings and experiences from a sample of 10 African

American women managers working in a predominately Black enterprise (Patton, 2014).

In-depth interviews allow greater flexibility when questioning a participant and the

strategy allows questions to be addressed until saturation point is reached Eriksson &

Kovalainen, 2015).

Instrumentation

The goal of using specific instrumentation in a case study is to gather data from

multiple sources and provide sufficient data collection instruments to answer research

questions (Yin, 2017). In consideration of the various forms of measurement and

questions developed that relate to the research topic, it was important to examine all of

the responses along with the characteristics and selection of participants in the data

analysis process. Thus, it was important to gather instrumentation protocols that align

with the purpose of the study and could provide answers to qualitative research questions and contribute original data to the Conceptual Framework. Carefully choosing the appropriate instrumentation produced themes to support insights that emerge from studying the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. Three sources of data were used in this study: 1) a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) whose items have been designed and standardized by previous researchers; 2) and reflective field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) kept by the researcher throughout the data collection process; and, 3) seminal literature relevant to the study, reviewed in detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

The interview protocol. This study's interview guide consisting of open-ended questions on the leadership experiences of African American women was validated by scholars whose research works on African American women were also guided by Essed's (1991) concept of intersectionality of gender and race, also coined by the seminal author with the term gendered racism; and Turner's (1995) theory of intraracial discrimination and colorism provide insight into gender and racial discrimination (Holder et al., 2015) in the workplace due to gender and racial stereotyping (Rosette et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview method was intended to enhance the researcher's ability to understand a phenomenon or phenomena from the participant's point of view (Kvale, 1995). Hence, in the case of this study standardized, open-ended interviews questions were valuable in gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and gaining an individual viewpoint from each participant on exploring the

leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments.

The study used an interview protocol whose four sections have been previously constructed, validated and utilized in previously published, peer-reviewed studies. The opening section consists of pre-interview questions and sociodemographic characteristics (Hall, 2017), followed by instrumentation designed to reveal the perceptions associated with skin tone within the participant's gendered and racial group (Rosette et al., 2016). The third section addresses skin tone stratification among African American women based on Hall's (2017) research instrumentation and the fourth section explores the intersectional leadership experiences and dimensions of agency within the participants' gendered and racial group of African American women (Phillips, 2012; Rosette, et al., 2016;). A detailed explanation on the development and interview protocol of each section follows.

Section 1: Pre-interview questions and sociodemographic characteristics (Hall, 2017). In Section 1, which identifies pre-interview questions and sociodemographic characteristics, Hall (2017) developed the interview questions based on theoretical literature, knowledge of the socioeconomic effects of colorism, and the experience of researchers within the African American community. Hall solicited the participant's marital status, educational attainment and self-identification as light, medium, dark or very dark in terms of skin complexion by drawing on themes from data collected in 2014; Hall examined African American women of various skin tones ranging from light to very dark skinned. The questions in the study are designed to identify (a) individual, (b)

familial, and (c) communal relationship dynamics; along with (d) educational, and (e) professional status and how these components impact the psychological well-being of African American women (Hall, 2017) as related to skin color. Hall established content validity by incorporating semi-structured interview questions which were pilot tested for participants to express manifestations and experiences in relation to skin stratification.

Section 2: Perceptions of skin tone within the participants' gendered and racial group (Rosette et al., 2016). Rosette et al. (2016) investigated how perceptions of leadership effectiveness are determined based on race and gender; the authors relied on theoretical literature and their expert knowledge of the agency experience of the African American woman, and the association between perceived leadership and organizational performance to develop their questions. Rosette et al. first established a definition of race so all participants had the same or a similar interpretation of what is race. Based on this comprehensive definition, each participant engaged in a study wherein they listed as many adjectives as they were able, which were generally associated with one of three groups of women: White, Black and Asian. The questions for this seminal study also examined whether members of certain atypical racial and gender leadership categories experience a more indirect likelihood of being considered ineffective as leaders. Rosette et al. relied on previous studies dating back to 1994 for comparison as well as the expert knowledge of members of their research team to establish content validity. The authors established content validity by purposeful review of the questionnaire presented to participants. Rosette et al. examined interracial perceptions as well as intra-racial perceptions and the methodology was appropriate for the current study but was modified

to focus more directly on skin tone stratification and its role in the perception of leadership effectiveness and experience. Rosette et al. considered members of the same race and their perceptions but does not go on to address differences in skin tone and the biases that have been determined to exist in the African American community and workplace; the focus of the current study addresses this limitation.

Section 3: Skin color stratification of professional African American women (Hall, 2017). Hall (2017) developed the interview questions based on themes discovered by Maxwell's (2013) inquiry into skin stone stratification among African American female adolescents between the ages of 12-16 years (Hall, 2017). Hall incorporated expert knowledge of studies that failed to relate the social and economic relationships of skin tone stratification on Black women and utilized semistructured interview questions investigating the perceived advantages and disadvantages of skin color, and the lessons learned in reference to colorism; she established content validity by conducting a pilot test of the questions used in the study (Hall, 2017). Hall achieved saturation after conducting eight focus groups, each with between seven and nine participants. Data were consolidated into various themes, codes and patterns based on the Strauss and Corbin (1998) technique (Hall, 2017). The current study incorporates semi structured interview questions surrounding skin tone stratification to analyze perceived experiences of African American female managers in a workplace predominated by African Americans.

Section 4: Intersectional leadership experiences and dimensions of agency within the participants' gendered and racial group of African American women (Phillips, 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). Phillips (2012) developed the interview questions

by basing each item from the theoretical literature and the authors' and subject matter experts' knowledge of diversity and leadership. Phillips' goal in developing the interview protocol was to pose questions to women of color in corporate management positions relative to workplace diversity within their respective organizations and their own career history. By implementing a data collection process with a built-in audit trail, in addition to relying on previously successful study questions and meeting the prescribed criterion of those researchers for meaningful narrative analysis, Phillips (2012) was able to establish content validity. Rosette et al. (2016) created a definition of race to ensure all participants had a similar interpretation of race and created a free response study based on a 1994 study on agentic bias. The authors compared their findings to a similar 2012 study which identified stereotypical perceptions associated with experiences of agentic bias and its effect on White, Black and Asian women in order to establish content validity based on previous studies (Rosette et al., 2016). The study indicated stereotypical perceptions for minority women, similar to those found in a previous study by Ghavami and Peplau (2012); the current study explored the experiences of only Black women in agentic positions and expressly investigated their experiences in work environments predominated by African American workers.

Reflective field notes. Data collection in this study also encompassed the development of netnographic field notes gleaned from the researcher-participant online interactions and dialogue during the semi-structured interviews to be conducted via Skype (Kozinets, 2015). Skype also enabled to researcher to utilize participants in faraway locations which aids replication. Similarly, Skype enabled the interview

interaction to avoid contextual information which was helpful in avoiding personal reflexivity from the researcher and maintaining a highly unbiased atmosphere (Hanna, 2012).

Online data collection, or netnography, may contain interviews, introspection and interactions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Because most if not all online data collection interactions are recorded and saved as they occur, reflective field notes became far more salient than observational field notes. In reflective field notes from online data collection, researchers record their own observations regarding subtexts, pretexts, contingencies, conditions and personal emotions occurring during their time online, and relating to their online interactions and experiences (Morgan et al., 2017). Field notes often provide key insights into how online social interactions function and transpire and help decipher the reasons behind cultural actions, rather than offer the more typical recording or description of them (Kozinets, 2017).

Drawing from their ethnographic work in virtual worlds, Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, and Taylor (2013) offer a range of practical suggestions regarding the keeping of field notes from online interactions. These include:

1. Jotting down interesting things that occurred while the researcher was engaged in online interactions and experiences and then typing up more extensive notes after the action subsides.

2. Taking screenshots of activity and making small 'scratch notes' soon after events occur; an effort is made to expand and refine these notes within 24 hours because memories can fade.

3. Using the approach of 'two-boxing' (a term borrowed from computer gaming)

   in which two computers, screens or windows are open simultaneously; on one

   screen the netnographic engagement unfolds, while on the other screen notes

   are taken in real-time (Boellstorff, et al., 2013).

Because qualitative data collection is emergent and inductive, it can be useful to

take notes on many types of online social experiences including intriguing information or

sites, social groups, events and resources that emerge from the process. The analysis of

observational data later informs the collection of other self-report data such as in the

semi-structured interviews (Yin, 2017). Utilizing field notes simultaneously with online

data collection methods is favorable because of the subtle nature of knowledge transfer,

how it is incorporated behaviorally, and the frailty of recollection, which diminishes

quickly. In order to capture the unmitigated response from the participant during data

collection, it is important that the online events, interactions and responses be unfiltered

so raw emotions as well as intense feelings and sensitivity are conveyed in the data. It is

also very important the perceptions, positions, and responses of the participants segue as

uninterrupted as possible. The finer intricacies of the human experience are a key

element to netnography; inscription in field notes is the portal through which these

important facets become a part of the record. Seemingly minor subtleties may hint at or

in fact be elusive black swans, giving way to labyrinths that offer deep insight into how

various stimuli are interpreted and addressed (Kozinets, 2017). Developing netnographic

field notes prompts the beginning of the data analysis process in a study such as this one

driven by a qualitative study purpose and research methods (Kozinets, 2017). This

method has been used in similar studies such as that of McKinlay, Morgan, Gray, Macdonald, & Pullon (2017) where a multiple case study design using case study observational research methods to explore the research questions within real-world settings where the observational field notes launches a sequential order of data collection, data analysis, and synthesis (Yin, 2017).

The validity of this study's instrumentation depended on the matter of transferability. Transferability is similar to external validity, as both notions are involved with the amount to which the outcomes of one study can be useful to other settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This poses a challenge for many qualitative studies as findings are usually limited to specific settings and individuals (Shenton, 2004), and as a result, it is plausible that the outcomes from this research can be applicable to individuals beyond the participant group (Stake, 2013).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Several sources of data collection including in-depth, face-to-face interviews were put to use for the study. The study allowed the researcher to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black enterprises in the United States. The in-depth interview process features the interviewee as more of an informant using the observations, opinions and suggestions rather than closed responses to direct questions aligned with a theoretical proposition; inquiry was designed to analyze the past and current disposition of the interviewee as well as non-verbal behaviors and nuances centered around each discussion (Patton, 2014; Yin, 2017). Further case study evidence was obtained from multiple

sources, each offering an array of data and insight; interviews, direct observation and participant recollection, and seminal literature on the study topic to help to increase validity and reliability of the research project (Yin, 2017). Data from this variety of sources was converged during analysis, with the purpose of providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Besides interviews, observation and literature, personal notes from each interview were analyzed, coded and recorded electronically in order to define concepts, improve validity and reliability and provide coherence between the research questions to the ultimate conclusions of the study (Yin, 2017).

The data collection segment of the research project consists of face-to-face interviews, which were reliant upon IRB approval by Walden University. Ten African American women managers were selected using purposeful sampling from a sample of African American women who fulfill the inclusion priority via the LinkedIn professional network website. Social media is an effective resource to recruit study participants because it allows researchers to access wider segments of the population with whom it may otherwise be difficult to connect; social media sites also provide information from which the scientist may infer inclusion eligibility (Gelinas et al., 2017). The LinkedIn website has various groups including managerial, minority and women's groups which proved to be a useful source of recruitment for participation. I utilized snowball sampling to increase the likelihood a suitable number of participants are included in the proposed research (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010). Each participant was made aware of the general purpose of the study; the first 10 respondents who were considered

suitable for the study by the researcher were engage in semistructured interviews, one-hour in length (Rowley, 2012; Yin, 2017). The 10 multiple case study interviews provided sufficient replication design to convince the reader of a general phenomenon, displaying similar results or contrasts within the propositions of the study (Yin, 2017). The interviews were conducted to a point where findings reached redundancy and new findings did not necessarily contribute pertinent information (Mason, 2010; Yin, 2017).

The interview participants selected for the purpose of the study were African American women managers working in a predominately Black enterprise. The aim of the interview was to probe the perceptions, behaviors, experiences, beliefs and coping strategies of these women due to their experience as a double minority. The selection of various women managers meeting the inclusion requirements was to ensure variability. This also increased reliability and increased replication of inquiry into her experience as a double minority in the workplace (Yin, 2017). As a social media professional online platform LinkedIn was sufficient to reach a suitable number of participants for the study (Gelinas et al., 2017). Had this sampling method failed to supply enough participants, the snowball method would have been used to secure greater participation through the LinkedIn professional website (Sadler et al., 2010). Once an interview was conducted with the participant, they were consulted via email for member accuracy and verification.

Interviews took place in person and via Skype; results were electronically transcribed, documented and coded using Microsoft Excel software. Skype is a suitable research tool because it allows the combined benefit of a face-to-face interview combined with benefits of telephonic inquiry (Hanna, 2012). The researcher avoided the expense of

travel for face-to-face interview by using Skype and this allowed the participant to avoid

any uneasiness associated with meeting a relative stranger to be questioned (Hanna,

2012); Skype also enabled to researcher to utilize participants in faraway locations which

aided replication. Similarly, Skype enabled the interview interaction to avoid contextual

information which was helpful in avoiding personal reflexivity from the researcher and

maintaining a highly unbiased atmosphere (Hanna, 2012). The Microsoft Excel sheet

format was used for several purposes, including the following: to collect and store data;

record interview schedule and to group findings according to several themes. The

Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was also useful to organize questions and participants

numerically to better ensure anonymity (Bree & Gallagher, 2016). A personal computer

with password and biometric security served to store the information in a fortified

location, accessible only by the research conductor.

By transcribing the interviews, the researcher was able to accurately record

answers in a permanent form as a matter of record in order to conduct thematic analysis

(Yin, 2017). Handwritten notes were kept during each interview; handwritten notes offer

valuable confirmation of the views expressed by the participants and are critical in

capturing nonverbal behaviors and cues which provided added depth in insight (Katz,

2014). The research notes combined with other data collection methods used to gather

evidence allowed the researcher to improve construct validity via triangulation (Guion et

al., 2011). Each participant was provided a copy of transcript of their interview for

purposes of data source triangulation to ensure accuracy of each statement as well as

underlying attitudes associated with long-standing behaviors, beliefs or responses to systemic phenomena (Yin, 2017).

In qualitative studies, researchers have a great responsibility and play many different roles. Qualitative research that deals with sensitive topics in depth, such as this study dealing with issues of intra-racial discrimination, can pose emotional and other risks to both participants and researchers (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). Clear protocols for dealing with distress were in place and supervised by the Dissertation Chairperson so that both parties involved in research could use them if necessary. Additionally, measures were taken so that levels of researcher self-disclosure, objective displays of emotion during the interviews, and strategies to end the research relationships were well defined and communicated to participants through the Informed Consent Form (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, terms of confidentiality were made clear to the participants, additionally no attributable label such as name or distinguishable characteristic was given; any discernible information was stored separately from data (Yin, 2017).

Historical, seminal and current peer-reviewed papers on the central topic of study, combined with transcription review and analysis were used to formulate a database wherein the findings of the study may be helpful to those who seek replication while conducting similar research in the future (Yin, 2017). These data collection tools provided a medium for dialogue wherein the participants are not defined by the arena in which they perform daily; additionally, the field notes and review of transcript provided opportunity for the participants to reflect and offer insight in the most confidential setting

(Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003). Upon conclusion of the data collection phase of the study, participants were informed the materials associated with this research project are for strict research purposes and will be destroyed after 7 years.

Data Analysis Plan

The case study was an empirical inquiry, supported by theoretical propositions which align with the identified areas of interest for the study; these propositions guide the research questions of "how" and "why" the phenomena exist and evolve in the manner supported by seminal literature (Yin, 2017). Semi-structured, open ended interview questions were developed as one method to fulfill the aim of the study, along with appropriate data gathering methods designed to facilitate accurate and efficient collection Data was triangulated using other data collected over a four-week period and consolidated so that emergent themes among the participants are revealed (Cooper & White, 2012). Inferences of the study rest upon the trail of evidence built via interviews and field notes, as well as the body of literature used to develop the study (Patton, 2014).

A primary purpose the analysis of the volume of interviews and other data were triangulated (Katz, 2014) was to discover motifs and emerging themes (Merriam, 2014). The data base was developed reliably and accurately by recording and categorizing similar thoughts by key words, views and deep seeded sentiments (Yin, 2017). Content analysis occurred once the interviews had been organized and coded; this facilitated as adequate base for a delineation of patterns (Hatch, 2002), as well as to distinguish between what content was included or omitted based on theoretical suppositions (Yin, 2017). Data, collection methodology, a review of data and the researcher was subjected

to quality audits (Patton, 2014). Triangulation using multiple sources of evidence served to augment the reliability as well as the internal and constructive validity of the research (Yin, 2017).

Thematic analysis was made using pattern recognition based on interview discussions. The patterns and themes were distinguished during the sense making effort of the content analysis; nonrecurring evidence was attributed to individual case compositions. Further coding analysis of the interviews justified cataloging various themes by marking common relationships across multiple cases (Patton, 2014). In addition to binding data sources, the codes bridged themes across a variety of methodologies including interviews, field notes and historical literature (Patton, 2014). I conducted data source triangulation to strengthen the rigor of the study and promoted a more aggregate consideration of the data (Yin, 2017).

Cross-case analysis was utilized as the data analysis technique to synthesize important findings of individual case studies and once themes were synthesized, served as a crux of the multiple case analysis (Yin, 2017). Because of the comparatively low number of cases associated with the qualitative study, word tables offered an adequate method to search for patterns across cases as opposed to the meta-analysis associated with large numbers of case studies (Yin, 2017). Because the causal links in real life experiences are complex and patterns may not be readily observable, cross-case analogy fortified validity and allowed generalization to the analysis process (Yin, 2017). Likewise, data which are seemingly associated were found to be without merit through the process of cross-cases analysis. Cross-case analysis was useful to systemically assess

the logic which links the data to the propositions (Yin, 2017). The trustworthiness of data was enhanced by consolidating, reducing and interpreting the data to establish a coherent argument based on evidence (Cooper & White, 2012; Yin, 2017).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Methodological integrity is essential to produce a qualitative study that is trustworthy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The purpose of the study should fuel the selection of an appropriately aligned methodology; subsequently, a solid research design and approach are also vital to maintaining objectivity and achieving reliability (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). Four indispensable components of trust in scientific research are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility was achieved in this study by implementing several useful strategies to support trustworthiness of the data. The study reached rigorous research conclusions by following systematic processes as identified by seminal methodology scholars (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2017). The credibility of the data was reflected by the member checking process and responding to the concerns of outsiders, many of whom were unfamiliar with or challenging of the credibility of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Therefore, the credibility of conclusions reached from the data analysis was supported through the use of triangulation, persistent observation, saturation, participatory research, and research journals, an audit trail, cross-case synthesis, and word tables (Cooper & White, 2012; Morse, 2015; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2017).

Credibility of data was also dependent on the research design used within qualitative research methods to respond to the study's research questions. In the case of this study, the multiple case study design was used to develop a study where multiple voices, exhibiting characteristics of similarity, dissimilarity, redundancy and variety, was brought together to gain greater knowledge of a wider population group (Stake, 2013). The multiple case study design is recognized by Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin (1993) as a "macroscopic" case study and emphasizes the importance of an appropriate sampling strategy so that participants are typical of members of a broader, "selected society", adding to the credibility of the data (Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2017).

Transferability

Transferability occurred in this study as a result of a detailed design which allows the reader to comprehend the context of the fieldwork and judge whether the subsequent environment is sufficiently similar to apply the findings of this study to other contexts and participants (Morse, 2015; Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2017). Transferability in this instance relied on rich, descriptive data provided by each participant which convey detailed accounts of their agentic experience (Yin, 2017). The study purposely selected a sample of African American women managers across the United States who work in a predominately Black enterprise, from the LinkedIn professional network in order to increase the likelihood of transferability.

Dependability

Overlapping data collection methods such as field notes, and semi structured interviews enabled the researcher to compare and contrast themes within and between

cases based on analysis from multiple sources, used to triangulate where themes intersect (Yin, 2017). These data collection methods, refined through scholarly research added rigor, contributing results which can be replicated (Yin, 2017); additionally, code analysis highlighted observations which support the phenomenon and are replicated across the data findings (Morse, 2015). The selected data collection method of triangulation and word coding allowed broader areas of interest to be studied decisively and increased dependability (Yin, 2017).

Confirmability

Researchers achieved a point of confirmability by enacting measures which established a rationale that findings are evidence based and void of predisposition (Shenton, 2004). Confirmability was heightened by using instruments which are designed to not depend on researcher manipulation, nevertheless, the characteristics and beliefs of the analyst are inherent to data interpretation process (Patton, 2014). Data collection strategies such as triangulation (Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2017), a purposively selected variant sample (Merriam, 2014; Morse, 2015), and audit trails which reflect the researcher's background, context and prior understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) were useful to demonstrate what is called "commonality of assertion" (Stake, 2013; Yazan, 2015).

Ethical Procedures

Over the past century, ethics in research has become a primary concern for governing bodies and the public. During World War II some scientific practices raised serious ethical concerns; thus, the Nuremberg Code was created during the Nuremberg

War Crime Trials. This Code sought to establish ethical standards and practices in science; while science has provided great benefit to humanity, certain methodologies raised serious ethical questions (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Bethesda, Md., 1978). The Commission established three ethical principles to provide a framework from which scientific research and practice should be conducted: to distinguish practice and research; establish basic ethical principles; and methods by which the general principles should be applied (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Bethesda, Md., 1978). The first ethical principle listed by the Commission is "respect for persons"; a sentiment echoed by Yin (2017) who finds the dignified treatment of human beings to be of indispensable importance to a good study.

The researcher followed the ethical guidelines established in 1978 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as set forth in *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.* The principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice are highlighted and serve to undergird ethical behavior. The first principle, respect for persons adheres to two fundamental assertions: that the individuality and competence of the participant must always be revered, and that not all individuals are able to deliberately apply self-reliance and governance. Therefore, all care was given to ensure respondents are not subject to compulsion or external influence in their response to the research questions (Gostin, 1995).

The second ethical principle of beneficence was developed to ensure the well-being of the participant and society at large because of the research study (Bowie, 2017). Researchers are culpable to ensure the benefits of the study outweigh reasonably anticipated risks which may occur during and after the study. By practicing beneficence, researchers actively guard research participants against physical and psychological harm. Finally, the third principle of justice requires fair and equitable treatment of all participants as well as a requirement any study involving participants offered potential benefit to them (Sieber & Tolich, 2013).

The core of ethical qualitative research relies upon safety and confidentiality of participants, in accord with the sensitivity of the topic and group; non-malfeasance relies upon honesty and discretion (Shank, 2006) and reasonable care must be exercised to maintain ethical standards. Researchers must consider efficacy, predisposition and issues reflexivity when determining whether research is ethical (Patton, 2014). Researcher investigation of topics involving ethnicity requires transparency regarding the nature and purpose of the inquiry, diligence in protecting the confidentiality of the participants and candor.

Because the general nature of the qualitative research method involves the testimony of participants based on direct interaction (Patton, 2014) or from observations, the responses often cannot be predicted or screened by the interviewer. Participants may share information in confidence, revealing very personal details of their life. Therefore, it was extremely important to explain to the participant the terms of research including the purpose, terms of reciprocity, risk assessment analysis, terms of agreement and data

access between the participant and researcher as well as any data collection sources used in the study, along with confidentiality, informed consent, as the ethical versus legal responsibilities which govern the study.

Researchers must embody integrity in all aspects of the research practice, exercising principles of good stewardship; intellectual rights must be reported along with an accurate description of all contributions to the research project, as well as forthrightness reporting potential and realized conflicts of interest which could affect mutual adherence to responsibilities between researcher and participant (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2002). The researcher gained approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Walden University prior to the inception of any data collection. As previously explained the researcher took action to remedy ethical concerns, matters of self-governance, forthrightness, dependability and maintained the privacy of the participants and avoid a breach of trust.

The current study featured participants who belong to a vulnerable population concerning sensitive topics involving work place experiences, therefore careful attention was made to ensure the study's methods and strategies achieved the highest ethical standard. Action was taken to respect participant privacy, "do no harm", offer informed consent, and establish justification (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Bethesda, Md., 1978; Sanjari et al., 2014). The study also focused on participant empowerment, having participants honestly tell their experiences and

accurately representing those responses in such a way to move toward a balance of power (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Sieber & Tolich, 2013).

Anonymity may be necessary when dealing with sensitive or controversial topics; in case studies, it is necessary to determine if the identity of the case itself can be revealed while concealing the identity of the individual or whether the case and individuals can be identified without attributing specific identifiers (Yin, 2017). It is recognized not all individuals or groups have the power of self-determination at their disposal (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Gostin, 1995); typically, human beings establish group based hierarchical systems among themselves (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006). Therefore, the researcher in the current study sought to give voice to the voiceless, accurately. Researchers must also avoid intrusion, refraining from soliciting private information unrelated to the current research topic (Sanjari et al., 2014). This is especially important in today's climate where it is possible to obtain a great deal of personal information, available and sometimes voluntarily disclosed on the World Wide Web. Informed consent must now include a review of the "terms of use" of websites which may serve as instrumentation during the study and offer a comprehensive understanding to each participant of what is expected and what they may expect from the research project (Gelinas et al., 2017).

In 1978, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research issued the *Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*; this report identified ethical principles and guidelines by which research involving human beings could be

conducted and was necessary based on previous abuses of human beings in the name of

"science". This principle of beneficence is designed to ensure the well-being of the

participant and society at large because of the research study (Bowie, 2017). Based on

this premise, the researcher carefully assessed the physical, psychological risks

individually and societally versus those benefits yielded from the inquiry (Aluwihare-

Samaranayake, 2012). The results of the assessments were addressed in order to not only

determine feasibility, but to maximize benefits and minimize harmful effects to

participants and others (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of

Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Bethesda, Md., 1978).

The question of who benefits from the research and who carries the burden of

research is the principle of justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human

Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, Bethesda, Md., 1978). This notion

encompasses the standard that the community which invites the researcher should be

represented correctly and fairly (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012); additionally, similar to

labor law requirements, age, competence, vulnerability and equal distribution are to be

considered in order to avoid fatiguing or overreaching study participants (National

Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral

Research, Bethesda, Md., 1978).

Summary

Chapter 3 detailed the selected research design and rationale, including the role of

the researcher, and any potential ethical dilemmas as well as a quality control measure.

The design was selected based on the nature of the study; participant selection and

accompanying instrumentation are chosen because they align with the purpose of the study. This chapter also provided a description of the research design as well as the purpose for the selection. Issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were also addressed with information on the ethical procedures to be strictly adhered to with an Internal Review Board serving to manage potential risks.

Chapter 4 features a review of the data collection and analysis and presents the findings and results of the aforementioned multiple case study. This includes results for each data source, data analysis, coding procedures, and the impact of the study on the field of management. In Chapter 4 the research questions are answered and an evaluation of the findings posed in the study is presented.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. In this theory-generating case study research the specific research question was developed to provide answers within the context of the empirical setting (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). By answering the central research question and analyzing the experiences of African American female managers in a predominantly Black work environment, I offered insight and explored how intraracial group interaction and colorism affects the leadership experience of the African American manager in a work environment where she is not the racial minority. The central research question guiding this study was as follows:

- What are the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments?

The central research question was designed after an exhaustive review of the extant literature to identify gaps on the experiences of African American women managers in a predominantly Black work environment and whether in this intraracial workplace this population pays an agentic penalty simply for being a woman in a leadership position (Livingston et al., 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). A literature gap also identified on the career trajectory experiences of female managers in a same minority workplace. Further research could reveal how familiarity affects biases (Dean, 2016; Williams, 2014) such as with the experience of the African American female in a workplace with African American males and females who may consider the African

American woman as a competitor (Allen & Lewis, 2016; Hurt et al., 2014). This research may also provide insight into ways to help the African American woman avoid marginalization based on common traits and stereotypes; this could lead to resolution and help understand the career trajectory of the African American woman (Beckwith et al., 2016). Research is also needed to examine intra-racial microaggressions based on research findings which indicate various groups exhibit intragroup racial microaggressions in various ways (Wong et al., 2014).

The research design and approach were grounded in the study's Conceptual Framework, built on three key concepts that focus on the challenges facing African American women managers in leadership roles within predominantly Black work environments: Essed's (1991) concept of *intersectionality of gender and race*, also coined by the seminal author with the term *gendered racism*; and Turner's (1995) concepts of *intra-racial discrimination* and *colorism*. As can be read in detail in Chapter 2, all three concepts are founded in seminal theories and models which explain how gender is experienced and relevant to the intersectional perspective may be entrenched within intra-racial discrimination and colorism (Burton et al. 2010). Research on intra-racial discrimination contributes important insights into Black women's experiences as it produces complex social problems in combination with classism, racism, and sexism (Porter & James, 2016). The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on intersectionality and intra-racial discrimination, and to contribute original qualitative data to the study's Conceptual Framework.

This chapter provides a description of the results of the multiple-case study and will be divided into two main sections. The first is a thematic analysis of the data collected based on the study's multiple sources as recommended by Yin (2017); it contains 1) a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) whose items have been designed and standardized by previous researchers,; 2) and reflective field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) kept by the researcher throughout the data collection process; and, 3) seminal literature relevant to the study, reviewed in detail in Chapter 2 of this study. The second is a cross-case analysis in which I synthesize the findings of the initial thematic analysis of data to answer the central research question. Boyatzis (1998) stated one could take a variety of approaches to using thematic analysis and essentially get the same rigor. Boyatzis contrasted theory-driven codes, derived from the researcher's or other existing theories; inductive codes, derived bottom-up from the researcher's reading of the data; and prior-research driven codes. Boyatzis argued that all approaches have something to offer qualitative data analysis; "thematic analysis is flexible and what researchers do with the themes once they uncover them differs based on the intentions of the research and the process of analysis" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63).

In a multiple case study, the "case" itself may be a person, an event, an entity, or other unit of analysis. When focused on a person, a single case concerns one individual, where a study of more than one person constitutes a multiple case study (Yin, 2017). This approach attempts to replicate the same findings across multiple cases by exploring the differences and similarities between and within cases. The evidence created in this way is considered "robust and reliable" (Yin, 2017). Multiple cases may be sampled for

several reasons: they extend emergent theory, fill theoretical categories, provide examples of polar types, or replicate previously selected cases. Eisenhardt (1989) advises that multiple cases should follow a replication rather than a sampling logic, which is characteristic to survey research. Unlike statistical sampling methods, there is no single rule concerning the minimum number of cases that should be selected for a given multiple-case research project. The number of cases is influenced by the study aims and the research question. Each case within a multiple-case design can incrementally increase the ability of the researchers to generalize her findings. However, Eisenhardt (1989) suggests limiting the number of cases to the point where the incremental contribution of extra cases is only marginal (e.g. four to 10 cases).

Each of the 10 cases in this study is defined by the unit of analysis. A multiple-case study investigating a social phenomenon can involve individuals living within the setting of that social context as a separate unit of study (Yin, 2017). The unit of analysis in this study is the African American woman manager working in a predominately Black enterprise. When the data focus is only on individuals in a multiple-case study design, each unit of analysis becomes a case study in and of itself (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2017). The multiple case study into a social phenomenon seeks to deliver reliable results to answer the research question by utilizing data collection methods which support the phenomenon being studied (Shenton, 2004), a method proven to add rigor and contribute credible results which can be replicated (Yin, 2017). The main uncovered patterns and recurrent themes are described in detail throughout this chapter, accompanied by their respective participant voices. Tables summarizing demographics

of the study's sample population, coding categories and themes, and a cross-case

synthesis of themes across cases as recommended by Yin (2017) are also presented.

Research Setting

Data for this multiple-case study was collected by conducting semi-structured

interviews with 10 African American women managers on the Skype telecommunication

platform. The participants were recruited using the LinkedIn networking platform and

once the potential participant was identified, contact was made via email. After

acknowledging consent, an interview time was set via email. Several interviews were

rescheduled based on participant request, but the overall scheduling process was not

problematic. The criteria for selection required participants be (a) over the age of 18, (b)

an African American Manager overseeing predominantly African American company, (c)

having occupied a position of management in a predominantly African American for at

least two years, (d) willing and able to participate in a 45-minute to 1-hour recorded

Skype interview. The one on one interviews were conducted in private settings of the

participants' choice via Skype and with few interruptions. This, along with the semi

structured format allowed the participant to be fully engaged during the interview. The

participants were also fully aware of the confidentiality agreement and appeared to

express themselves openly and without incident.

Demographics

I conducted the interviews using face to face video conferences via the Skype

telecommunication platform. All interviews were recorded through two recording

devices; Snagit, a screenshot program that captures video display and audio output and an

OlympusVN-541PC handheld, digital audio recorder. The interviews ranged from 17

minutes up to 47 minutes. 10 participants took part in the study and features 10 African

American female managers. The participants had a vast range of experience in a

supervisory capacity ranging from five to 28 years in managerial positions. All managers

were responsible for direct employees ranging from a minimum of two and up to a

maximum of 66 employees. The participants were highly educated with most in the

study having terminal degrees and all but one having graduate degrees.

This study considered gender, age, ethnicity, educational and marital status of

participants since these demographic issues were pertinent variables in the defining

conceptual framework. The given pseudonyms are in an XY format in such a way that X

is presented by the generic letter P standing for "participant" and Y is the number

identifier assigned to each participant. The full demographics follow in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Participant	Age	Ethnic/ Race Group	Number of Yrs. in Management	Number of Employees	Marital Status	Education Level
Participant 1	53	African American Woman	28	7	Married	Ph.D.
Participant 2	50	African American Woman	9	4	Divorced	Ph.D.
Participant 3	40s	African American Woman	15	10	Married	Ph.D.
Participant 4	46	African American Woman	10	8	Single	Master's
Participant 5	40s	African American Woman and Cherokee	20+	20-30	Married	Ph.D.
Participant 6	40s	African American Woman	12	20	Married	Master's
Participant 7	45	African American Woman	11	66	Married	Master's
Participant 8	42	African American Woman	5	2	Married	DBA
Participant 9	42	African American Woman	15	4	Divorced	Master's
Participant 10	40	African American Woman	5	10	Married	Associate's

Data Collection

The data collection process began on March 2, 2018, following IRB approval

from Walden University (Approval Number IRB Approval #: 03-02-18-0297793). The

data collection phase concluded on April 15, 2018, when data analysis of interviews and

reflective field notes revealed no new themes, compelling the researcher to conclude the

presence of saturation. Evidence of data saturation in themes emerged during the fifth

semi structured interview with Participant P5; her responses were similar to the responses

of P3 and P4. In the seventh interview with P7, I did not discover any new data or

themes in the semi structured interview compared to responses from Participants, P3, P4,

P5, P6 and P9.

Evidence of data saturation in within the set of raw data manifested itself in

themes that included issues of discrimination based on gender, race and skin tone. These

acts appeared in the form of challenges to authority and power, intra-racial

discrimination, horizontal career growth and skin tone bias. Seminal literature also

revealed evidence of saturation in these areas based on statistical data and testimonial

accounts of skin tone bias, marginalization based on race and gender, and stereotyping

(Beckwith et al., 2016; Crites, Dickson, & Lorenz, 2015). The data analysis strategy of

triangulation of the multiple resources proved useful in revealing the commonality of

assertion among the participants, combined with the interviewer's familiarity of the

cultural dynamic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yazan, 2015). The details of the saturation

process and what was revealed are discussed thoroughly in the Study Results section.

Over a period of 46 days, I coordinated five tasks: 1) participant recruitment, 2) scheduling and conducting interviews, 3) recording reflective field notes 4) reviewing the seminal literature, and 5) member checking by the participants of the study. The study implemented a data collection process with a built-in audit trail to establish rigor. Additionally, the study relied on previously successful study question meeting the established criterion thus establishing content validity.

Data collection consisted of 10 in-depth face-to-face interviews by the researcher using the Skype telecommunication platform. The interviews were conducted over a period of five weeks with an average of two interviews conducted each week beginning March 7, 2018 and concluding April 12, 2018. The interviews were scheduled once consent was obtained by the participant and times were set based on the preference of the participant. The interviews were conducted in private settings including the participant's homes or offices while the interviewer was in an office.

Reflective field notes were recorded and maintained by the researcher beginning at the time of IRB approval by Walden University on March 2, 2018, to record my thoughts, emotions and reflections during the data collection process. I recorded experiences and reactions to formal aspects of the data collection process including participant recruitment responses, receipt of consent forms. I also recorded my reactions to informal aspects of the data collection process such as the admiration, sympathy, and respect I gained for participants as a result of their interaction with me throughout this process. The interview process was rewarding and as a researcher, I gained perspective

by observing experiences some of which were supported by literature and concepts which were not aligned with previous research but saturated in this study.

Other than typical scheduling conflicts and some delayed responses to indicate participation or return consent forms, and scheduling the interviews went as expected. The delayed response to LinkedIn recruitment emails may have been attributable to sporadic log in periods by potential participants. Additionally, there were a few instances early on where the connection was bad or even lost as a result of network routers at the participant's location. In one instance, the video capability was lost for a portion of the interview, but the handheld back-up audio recorder did not miss any responses.

In each interview, participants described their experiences as African American women managers in a predominantly Black work environment, overseeing a majority of African American employees. During the interview, a definition of race was provided for each participant, to ensure all participants had a similar interpretation of the concept of race. The questions addressed general experiences of these women related to the intersectionality of gender and race, as well experiences related to colorism and how these experiences helped shape leadership philosophy over their managerial careers.

Initial Contact

I initiated contact on March 3, 2018, recruiting participants by utilizing a criterion search via the LinkedIn Business and employment networking website. The parameters were (a) African American, (b) woman, and (c) manager. Several profiles located as a result of the search indicated the corporation was African American. In other cases, participants were informed of the criteria that they must supervise a majority of African

American employees and work in a predominantly Black work environment. The final

participant formally consented to the interview on April 12, 2018 and outreach for new

participants concluded at that time. As outlined in Chapter 3, I successfully followed the

data collection plan as established in Chapter 3. Messages were sent to several hundred

African American women who described themselves as managers in their LinkedIn

profile.

Several responded and immediately followed up, providing their email address for

me to send a consent form to them for participation in the study. Several others

responded to the initial contact but were a bit slower submitting the necessary

information for me to provide a consent form. Still others responded to the initial contact

and expressed interest in the study but failed to provide any additional information for

participation. Overall, the feedback was positive with those who did not fit the criteria

wishing me success and those who did not follow up, seeming to believe the study would

be helpful and interesting. Individuals who formally agreed to participate in the study

were encouraged to contact others who they believed fit the criterion know about the

study. Although several African American women managers were mentioned during

purposeful snowball sampling, only one responded to my recruitment solicitation; she

expressed interest in participating, however, I declined because the approved number of

participants had been met.

Interviews

A couple of participants responded immediately after initial contact and I received

formal consent the same day. Most participants responded to the initial contact and

provided the formal consent within a 48-hour period. One participant took 9 days to provide the formal consent form after initially agreeing participate in the study. This participant did express she was not hesitant, but it was a matter of bad timing (Spring Break) and health allergies that led to the delay. Once we overcame these obstacles, we were able to successfully conduct the interview. Several participant interviews were scheduled five or more days out to accommodate the busy schedule of the individual woman manager. Three had to be rescheduled due to one conflict or another for the participant.

Once the interview was scheduled, most participants were easily located on the Skype Network. However, two were unfamiliar with their username due to lack of use and one agreed to sign up for Skype. We were able to track those who could not remember their username using their phone number and full name. I also provided my username to each participant, so they knew from whom to expect a connection request.

Each participant agreed to be recorded via Skype and Snagit was used to provide video and audio recording. A second, handheld recorder served as back-up and this proved useful as I experienced technical difficulties during three interviews. The service interruptions were: a disconnection due to participant network failure and a slow connection for the same reason. All interruptions were overcome by having the participant make a location adjustment closer to their router and the interviews were conducted successfully as outlined in Appendix A. Participants were located in each time zone spanning the Continental United States and represented several states from the east to west coasts. Participants were located in the states of Arizona, California, Florida,

Georgia, Mississippi, New York, and North Carolina. Skype made interviewing

participants in these faraway locations feasible, which aided in replication (Yin, 2017).

All interviewees were encouraged to respond freely to the questions. The

confidential, semi-structured interview design was more conversational, allowing me to

capture the essence of the experience of the participant (Davis, 2016) as well as observe

non-verbal cues in a less formal interview setting. Combined with reflective field notes,

this format improved construct validity via triangulation (Guion et al., 2011).

Reflective Field Notes and Journaling

I began recording reflective field notes upon IRB approval on March 2, 2018. I

recorded my excitement at beginning the data collection process as well as the highs and

lows of the recruitment search and task of obtaining formal consent and scheduling

interviews. I also recorded the journey of selecting the tools to be used to ensure accurate

data collection as well as record my own reflections to minimize any personal bias and

expectation. As the interviewer, my interest with each interviewee was to hear their

experiences as they shared them and desired they be conveyed. I analyzed non-verbal

communication as well as the tone and attitude of the participants. The field notes and

review of transcript offered an opportunity for participants to reflect on their responses

and sentiments, in the most private setting (Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003).

I wrote a very few impactful observations during the interview but primarily I

reflected afterward and followed up with watching the video recording if necessary for

inference (Patton, 2014). This also aided in establishing patterns and themes as the

interview process progressed. The mindset is often conveyed through intonations and

cadence and may be expressed nonverbally by rocking back and forth, hand wringing, exhales and looking off in reflection. The hand-written notes provide valuable information as each interviewee affirmed their soul stirring experiences and the deep reflection and recollection they experienced.

Thematic analysis was guided by a systemic process of hand coding the data from interviews and the description of the social reality of the participants which revealed a theme (Vaismoradui, Joines, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). Triangulation of data in addition to word coding also allowed a broader recognition of patterns and increased dependability by highlighting common relationships across multiple cases (Patton, 2014; Yin, 2017).

I observed how some participants presented more direct and firmly, others seemed very jovial, but all of the participants conveyed a full awareness of the obstacles they had and expected to face in the workplace as African American women managers from Blacks supervisors, peers and subordinates as well as Whites. Although the study was concerned with the experience of African American women managers in a predominantly Black work environment, I noticed and reflected that there were instances where White comparisons and experiences were interjected. Interestingly, several participants stated they were successfully mentored by White male supervisors, which is supported to some degree by seminal research. An interesting point in my notes was how these women seem to recognize a sorority attitude among their own and spend a great deal of time teaching and coaching employees, especially other African American women.

The presence of colorism was also pronounced; every participant was able to recall impactful experiences of colorism growing up and into adult years. In particular, those participants who perceived themselves to be darker complexioned, grew to love their skin tone and value themselves. Interestingly, the darker complexioned participants stated they did not experience challenges to authority by subordinates related to skin tone, but lighter complexioned participants noticed and experienced challenges and difficulties when leading.

Member Checking

Upon completion of the transcription of the interview, the participant was sent the transcript via email for review and verification. The back and forth exchange between researcher and participant ensured accuracy and clarified any thoughts the participant felt may not have been adequately expressed. This process improves credibility and reduces concern over the accuracy of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Overall, there were very few changes made in the interview transcription with a few word additions that were inaudible.

Response to the request that participants review the interview transcript and affirm its accuracy or make changes was slower than anticipated. Most participants responded within 48 hours, but several took longer. I believe this is attributable to the busy schedule of the participants as well as their confidence in the ability of the recording to register their words accurately clearly, so transcription is more a technicality than anything else. After a reminder, participants affirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions and the data was used for coding. Edits to the transcriptions were minor recollection

errors such as how many assets were purchased through a grant or provided greater detail

such as school level as opposed to a generic statement about schools but had no bearing

on the topic of interest for this study. Hand coding took place with the updated

transcripts and the edited and approved files of the participants were stored in accord with

the data collection design set forth in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

In qualitative, exploratory studies, coding drives the ongoing process of data

collection and the researcher often reshapes the perspective and the instrument for the

next case at hand. Such ongoing reshaping of the analysis framework is exactly what

happened during this multiple case study, in such a way that each case analysis led to

additions to emerging themes of what characterized the leadership experiences of African

American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments.

Since multiple case studies are based in natural settings with the intent of understanding

the process of an under-examined area, a holistic understanding of the phenomenon can

thus be explored as soon as data collection commences and continues through the data

analysis process. (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 2013). This method enables the researcher to

explore differences and compare and contrast results within and between cases (Yin,

2017). The multiple case study design is relevant for replication and supported the

exploration of complex social phenomena as I compared results between and among the

10 cases analyzed in this study. An inductive research approach was utilized as part of

the multiple case study strategy to enable themes to emerge from the data, and thus allow

the data and African American women managers' perspectives to drive data analysis and recommendations for further research (Yin, 2017).

Thematic analysis is classified under the qualitative descriptive design and relies on sets of techniques used to analyze textual data to derive and develop themes that later at the data analysis process can be used to reflect upon their implicit meaning in answering the central research question of a qualitative study. Thematic analysis is driven by the systematic process of coding raw data, usually from interviews, examining of meaning and provision of a description of the social reality of participants through the creation of a theme (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). The data base for this study was developed reliably and accurately by recording and categorizing similar thoughts by key words, views and deep seeded sentiments (Yin, 2017). Once member checking was completed, I hand-coded the interview notes by using an Excel spreadsheet to enter the participants' transcribed responses to the questions. Once this data was entered, I highlighted key comments and phrases that were pertinent to answering the interview questions. Thematic analysis in my study was conducted using pattern recognition based on interview discussions. The patterns and themes were distinguished during the sense making effort of the content analysis; non-recurring evidence was attributed to individual case compositions. Further coding analysis of the interviews resulted in categorizing various themes by marking common relationships across multiple cases (Patton, 2014).

The following is a description of the finalized categories and themes of this multiple case study, along with respective examples of participant quotations (Table 2) to illustrate how the coding took place for each of those categories and themes. A total of

eight categories that enclose a total of 12 themes were identified for this study. The categories are (a) career trajectory of African American woman manager, (b) challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to gender, (c) challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to race, (d), leadership experiences with subordinates informed by gender and race, (e), further career goals as an African American woman manager, (f), colorism in childhood and adolescent experiences, (g) colorism in daily adult experiences based on skin tone, and (h), intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone. The 12 themes include: ascending career trajectory due to pursuit of graduate degrees; challenges to authority and power; acceptance authority and power; others doubting leadership skills of Black women; subordinates may expect preferential treatment; lack of fair promotions and rewards; being an assertive leader; setting boundaries with subordinates; finding value through horizontal career growth; light-skin tone more favorable than darker skin tones in the pre-adult years; skin tone discrimination lessens in adult life; minimal to no intra-racial discrimination from subordinates based on skin tone.

Table 2

Coding and Theme Examples

Participant	Interview Excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 1	"They talked about it like, '(Wow), she went and got her Master's degree'."	Career trajectory of African American woman manager.	Ascending career trajectory due to pursuit of graduate degrees
Participant 2	"With males…it takes them a little longer, to really say, okay, she knows what she doing."	Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to gender.	Acceptance of authority and power
Participant 3	"I probably would of fired them much quicker. But because they were African Americans, I didn't want to do that."	Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to race.	1) Others doubting leadership skills of Black women; 2) Subordinates may expect preferential treatment; 3) Lack of fair promotions and rewards
Participant 4	"You're not going to do it. If I knew how to do what you do, I wouldn't even fool with you, because you're arrogant. We got into an argument over the phone."	Leadership experiences with subordinates informed by gender and race.	1) Being an assertive leader; 2) Setting boundaries with subordinates
Participant 5	"I'm a strong believer of transformational education, or transformational approaches."	Further career goals as an African American woman manager.	Finding value through horizontal career growth.
Participant 6	"If you were darker skinned, well you weren't as beautiful."	Colorism in childhood and adolescent experiences.	Light-skin tone more favorable than darker skin tones in the pre-adult years.
Participant 7	"The preference would be a light skinned person. So it felt like you were looked over."	Colorism in daily adult experiences based on skin tone.	Skin tone discrimination lessens in adult life.
Participant 8	"None, because I feel like if it does have a negative impact then they won't be my employees."	Intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone.	Minimal to no intra-racial discrimination from subordinates based on skin tone.
Participant 9	"Oh, I think my greatest challenge that I have to be taken seriously"	Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to gender.	Challenges to authority and power.
Participant 10	"It's like a lack of interest in doing it at that time, or there is no urgency."	Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to race.	Subordinates may expect preferential treatment

As previously noted, each of these themes belong to their respective categories (see Table 2). The frequency of occurrence varied for several themes in such a way that some cases presented themes that were more prominent than others. These themes will be discussed in detail in the *Cross-Case Synthesis and Analysis* section of this chapter, along a visual representation graph to illustrate the frequency of occurrence for every theme across the cases. The following is a brief description of each of the 12 themes.

Ascending career trajectory due to pursuit of graduate degrees. This theme describes the career trajectory results of each participants' pursuit of either Master's or Doctoral level academic degrees.

Challenges to authority and power. This theme describes the challenges to their authority and power in the workplace as expressed by the participants.

Acceptance of authority and power. This theme describes methods or conditions by which participants' authority was more acceptable in the work place. Participants describe a European appearance to be more acceptable to Caucasian and African American co-workers.

Others doubting leadership skills of Black women. This theme represents participants' experience of how others doubt the ability of the African American woman to lead.

Subordinates may expect preferential treatment. This theme describes how African American subordinates of the participants expect favorable treatment from African American women managers even during interview processes.

Lack of fair promotions and rewards. This theme describes how several participants believe they do not receive adequate recognition or promotion for their workplace accomplishments and achievements.

Being an assertive leader. This theme describes the need for the participants to immediately assert themselves as leaders.

Setting boundaries with subordinates. This theme describes the need for participants to set distinctive boundaries with subordinates.

Finding value through horizontal career growth. This theme describes participants' reports that they are very aware of the challenges to promotion and are determined to overcome these obstacles to career growth.

Light-skin tone more favorable than darker skin tones in the preadult years. This theme describes the messages about skin tone these managers recall as prevalent from childhood through college.

Skin tone discrimination lessens in adult life. During later years, most of the participants who categorize themselves as darker skinned describe being more comfortable with their complexion.

Minimal to no intraracial discrimination from subordinates based on skin tone. This theme describes participant's unanimous agreement that they did not recognize any discrimination from subordinates despite the prevalence of skin tone disparity in the African American community.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The case study approach is based on the interpretation of the data and evidence of real social phenomena. Processes recommended by seminal case study and qualitative methodologists must be carefully followed to strengthen the trustworthiness of multiple case study data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2017). Utilizing the case study approach requires skill and sensitivity from the researcher to ensure that these requirements are met so that the data analysis results can be viewed with methodological rigor (Marques, Camacho, & Alcantara, 2015). In this section I present evidence of trustworthiness to add rigor to the results from data analysis and to reinforce that the study is consistent with the protocols of the qualitative methodology. Evidence of trustworthiness establishes an added value to a qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I discussed evidence of trustworthiness based on the categories of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the implementation of several appropriate strategies in this study, which support the trustworthiness of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I was able to achieve rigorous research conclusions via systematic processes previously identified by seminal methodology scholars (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2017). Additional credibility was attained using the member checking technique which is developed to address the concerns of outsiders who may question the credibility of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Participants were interviewed in a location of their choice which increased comfortability and allowed more revealing responses. The

participants were also aware of the confidentiality agreement and their ability to refuse to answer or stop the interview at any time.

Data analysis was supported through triangulation, persistent observation saturation of participatory research, cross case analysis and word tables (Cooper & White, 2012; Morse, 2015; Patton, 2014; Yin, 2017). Additionally, I emphasized the importance of sampling to enlist participants who are typical members of the broader "selected society", increasing the credibility of this study (Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2017). The use of the cross-case synthesis analysis technique allowed similarity, dissimilarity, redundancy and variation to intertwine to provide better understanding of the larger group (Stake, 2013). Face to face interview via Skype in addition to video recording increased credibility, allowing persistent observation of each participant for non-verbal communication to capture nuances which could be overlooked with audio only recording.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the evidence that is provided to readers which make transferability judgements possible for those who seek to apply the study's findings in other contexts, locations or populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study considered the significance of transferability in selecting a research design which considered whether the chosen environment was sufficient to apply to other contexts and participants (Morse, 2015; Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2017). Interview questions pilot tested in previous studies (Hall, 2017) were selected because of the high likelihood of transferability.

Utilizing an online professional network to select candidates across the United States offered a wide variation for this study and improves transferability. Transferability

relies on the rich, descriptive data provided in the detailed accounts of the agentic experience of each participant (Yin, 2017). The careful and purposeful selection of the sample of African American women managers working in a predominantly Black work environment increases transferability by providing a comprehensive understanding of the context of the study. Skype interviewing enabled to researcher to utilize participants in faraway locations which aids replication. Similarly, Skype enabled the interview interaction to avoid contextual information which was helpful in avoiding personal reflexivity from the researcher and maintaining a highly unbiased atmosphere (Hanna, 2012).

Dependability

Dependability refers to my activities as researcher and the determination of how well the techniques designed to achieve credibility and transferability meet the research standards when audited independently. The participant selection process was carefully analyzed for dependability. The recruitment selection was based on a purposeful sample obtained by a criterion-based search of the online business network, LinkedIn. Participants were emailed the criteria for participation in the study and had to confirm whether they met the criteria for consideration. Those who expressed interest were sent a consent form which reiterated the criteria for participation. Interview questions also required the participant state they met the criteria in the form of a verbal response as well as what I was visually able to verify face to face via Skype. Interview questions pilot tested and were developed to provide answers within the context of empirical setting

(Ketokivi & Choi, 2014) were relied upon for this study; the purpose was to enhance dependability.

The outside auditor of the research audit trail is the methodology expert of my Dissertation Committee. The methodology expert examined the following five stages of the audit process: pre-entry, 2) determination of auditability, 3) formal agreement, 4) determination of trustworthiness (dependability and confirmability), and 5) closure (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Materials include archived video and audio tape, written, member verified transcripts, field notes, and reports which display findings which resonate with seminal literature.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the implementation of measures which establish the rationale that findings are void of predisposition and are evidence based (Shenton, 2004). The methodology expert of my dissertation committee serves as external auditor of this study. The methodology expert audited the study for alignment of data collection, findings, analysis, interpretations and recommendations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is strengthened by the use of instruments which are designed not to depend on research manipulation, although my beliefs and characteristics as analyst are an inherent part of the study (Patton, 2014). Data collection tools such as triangulation (Shenton, 2014; Yin, 2017), a purposely selected variant sample (Merriam, 2014; Morse, 2015), and audit trails which capture the researcher's background, context and prior understanding (Denim & Lincoln, 2011) were useful in developing a "commonality of assertion" (Stake, 2013; Yarzan, 2015). In addition, field notes have been maintained

throughout the study to capture my beliefs and observational interpretations. The field notes also reduced researcher bias by increasing self-awareness before, during and after the data collection process and during data analysis (Affleck et al., 1999).

Study Results

In this theory-generating multiple case research the specific research question developed to provide answers within the context of the empirical setting (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). By recording the experiences of African American female managers in a predominantly Black work environment, I offered insight into whether their experiences and relationships with other employees tends to differ significantly from the accounts and experiences of African American women managers in work environments that are predominantly Caucasian. Additionally, I looked at how intragroup interaction and colorism may affect the leadership experience of the African American manager in a work environment where she is not the racial minority. The research question guiding this study was as follows: What are the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments? This multiple-case study revealed such behaviors, characteristics, and activities that emerged from the data analysis the related patterns and themes gleaned from the raw data gathered from the interviews. Such identification of patterns and themes took place over two phases: thematic analysis of the textual data and a cross-case synthesis analysis.

An analysis that examines themes, similarities, and differences across cases is referred to as a cross-case synthesis analysis. Cross-case analysis is used when the unit of analysis is a case, which is any bounded unit, such as an individual, group, artifact,

place or event (Cousins & Bourgeois, 2014). The analysis of data used a constant

comparative approach throughout so that new subset of data was compared to the existing

data throughout the study to compare and contrast thematic patterns across cases (Yin,

2017). The objective in this phase of analysis was to develop thick, rich commentaries

from each participant, revealing their experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon

under investigation (Patton, 2015). I was concerned only with their responses,

irrespective of consistency.

The data analysis takes into consideration cumulative data including all

interviews, field notes, member verified transcriptions, reflections of the internal auditor,

and the findings of seminal research articles (Patton, 2015). Analysis continued with a

process of cross-case synthesis for similarity, dissimilarity and redundancy as well as

crystallization of the compiled data (Stake, 2013). The emerging themes were classified,

and findings were cross referenced for graphic representation. This laid the groundwork

for cross-case analysis, one of the preeminent components of the multiple case study

design where each case is treated separately but analyzed conjunctively with other cases

in the study, increasing the researcher's ability to generalize findings (Eisenhardt, 1989;

Yin, 2017).

First Phase: Thematic Analysis of the Textual Data

There are few clear suggestions or step by step process in the literature about how

to conduct a rigorous and relevant thematic analysis (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules,

2017). The write-up of a thematic analysis should provide "a concise, coherent, logical,

nonrepetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across themes" (Nowell et

al., 2017; p. 1). A thematic analysis must clearly present the logical processes by which findings were developed in a comprehensive way, so that the implications made in relation to the data set are judged as credible and dependable. The following thematic analysis follows King (2004) in suggesting that direct quotes from participants are an essential component of the final report. Shorter quotes aid in the understanding of specific points of interpretation and demonstrate the prevalence of the themes, while longer passages of quotation provide the reader a clearer view of the original texts. This presentation of raw data needs to be embedded within the thematic analysis narrative to illustrate the 'complex story of the data', moving from a simple narrative of the data and to a convincing analysis which can be easily supported by the various means of establishing trustworthiness (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Supported by the key insights from the in-depth interview the following themes are analyzed and presented here in relation to the central research question.

Ascending career trajectory due to pursuit of graduate degrees. This theme describes the career trajectory results of each participants' pursuit of either Master's or Doctoral level academic degrees. As can be seen in Table 1, all but one participant had graduate degrees with most in the study having terminal degrees. Each participant was asked to describe her career trajectories as an African American woman manager.

Graduate degree recipients all expressed that once they received their degrees, their careers as African American women managers accelerated, leading them to incremental leadership positions. The view expressed by Participant 8 exemplifies the attitudes of seven of 10 of the participants; she stated:

I had a bachelor degree and I was like, "Well what do I need to do to get in, in her position?" She (Participant 8's manager) was like, "Well you know, you need some financing schools, finances." So, I decided to go back and get my MBA in finance. And that, that from that point, getting my degree in finance would open up a door to me.

Participant 3 reiterates this sentiment when addressing with the professionalism among colleagues, saying "You're (managers); you have a Master's degree. You may not have a PhD, but you have a Master's degree." Participant 1 also explains how her degree elevated conversation and success for her. She describes how obtaining a graduate degree created excitement and greater expectation of success by coworkers. Coworkers' reaction was "wow, (Participant 1) went and got her Master's degree". Accordingly, Participant 1 went on to obtain higher level management positions for which she had previously not been considered, even though she believed she was qualified. Finally, four of 10 participants (Participants 5, 6, 7 and 8) explain what could be expected based on the educational level of an African American woman in a firm and that she should expect to be at the bottom. Participant 5 describes how she "started out as many of us do; at the bottom" with Participant 6 clarifying: "I had a BA in Psychology. So, of course that kind of limits you."

Challenges to authority and power. This theme describes the challenges to their authority and power in the workplace as expressed by the participants. The most common description by participants was the challenge to be taken seriously in their authoritative role. Participants described a noticeable slowness by subordinates to carry

out directives. Participants were challenged by having their knowledge and expertise questioned or they were challenged to make requests in a way satisfactory to employees. Participant 5 offers a common insight from both the managerial and subordinate perspective, which was at least partly reiterated by all 10 participants:

> Being guided by another African American, is very challenging, I think, for us as people. I did have a black manager when I worked for a company, and I gave her attitude if she didn't ask me in the right way. But we have a tendency, sometimes even in management, when we're dealing with our own. We would not approach our subordinates who are black, in the same way many of us would approach a subordinate who is Caucasian or of another culture.

> Five of 10 participants respond to the same question similarly to Participant 2; she describes the challenge to authority and power among African American women managers saying, "everyone has been conditioned to marginalize our ability to lead." Participants 2, 4, 9 and 10 stated "across the board we always have to come in and argue before anyone takes you seriously" (Participant 2). Participant 10 describes the reason and results of being a woman African American manager saying Black subordinates "tend to not take females seriously. It's like a lack of interest in doing it at that time, or there is no urgency." Participant 9 describes a similar ordeal:

> It's never like, okay, we'll take your word, because this is your area of expertise. It's always like, okay, you said it, and we get that, but, you know, let's just make sure that what you said is right. So, it's a lot of second guessing, in regard to my knowledge base.

Acceptance of authority and power. This theme describes methods or conditions by which participants' authority was more acceptable in the work place. Participants describe a European appearance to be more acceptable to Caucasian and African American co-workers. Complexion and hair style and texture helped to influence acceptability by the participants. Additionally, authority was more acceptable by subordinates when managers took time to coach and interact with employees on a personal level. Participants actively engaged on this level to increase productivity in the work place. Seven of 10 participants describe similar views that complexion and hairstyle are important for acceptance by Caucasian coworkers as summed up by Participant 1:

> I'm in the acceptable color. So, I showed to a meeting with my natural hair and I got the strangest looks by some of the White women. (They) said, "Oh, (Participant 1) oh it's you. Hey!" They kept their distance when I showed up with my afro and I got these funny looks, like, "What are you? What is this? Militant now?" This-this is how my hair grows out of my head. Not militant; this is me.

> Participant 6 relays an identical experience to eight of 10 participants that even among Blacks "people did often delineate between complexions. If you were darker skinned you were, well you weren't as beautiful." Participant 4 added "I would see leadership positions, as a child, generally held by lighter women. But never dark, dark women." This is echoed by Participant 7 who also introduces historical perspective saying, "everybody that was portrayed on TV was light skinned with wavy hair, so it was always a (negative) self-image."

Additionally, eight of 10 African American women managers in this study reveal the importance of coaching and personal interaction to achieve a more acceptable leadership status.

> Everybody comes to work, even though we say we'll not bringing personal to work, we do…disabled, aging parents, doctors' appointments, all the weekday grocery and pharmacy runs. True, none of those things are my problem, but they can be my problem- if I don't give her a minute. I tell myself, you're not going to get what you need if you don't listen to her talk about her dog. So, you have to learn people are human, just like you. (Participant 4)

> Participant 10 explains "I would critique them; I also spent a day out in the field with them, showing them exactly what I needed them to do to make (sure) they're successful."

Although eight of 10 study participants recognize the importance of coaching and personal interactions, interviews with two participants revealed this is not always possible. Participant 3 describes how "Even though I tried to coach them and tried to figure out what was going on, I never could reach them. I'm just not sure why. I probably should have fired them much quicker."

> I'm more of a coach. But I've noticed that I have to come in with this aggression, before you're taken seriously. I don't like being that person. But I find that that's kind of the consensus; you don't really get a chance to be your natural way of leading, without being this hard, aggressive person and then you get beat up about it. (Participant 2)

Others doubting leadership skills of Black women. This theme represents participants' experience of how others doubt the ability of the African American woman to lead. Participants experience attitudes that they should be seen not heard in meetings with counterparts and are aware. According to the participants, the immediate attitude of subordinates toward African American managers is "why are you here"? Managers must assert they are serious and move forward developing their managerial tone from there.

Because I am a female, and I am African American; that's at least what I believe. That when I give my recommendations on something, it's always like, "okay well maybe you should call the attorney, to make sure that you're in the right- that you're stating it right, or that we're doing the right thing. (Participant 9)

Four of 10 participants express an awareness their ability will be questioned at every opportunity. Participant 1 recalls "I've got to show; I've got to be beyond question in every situation. And that's what I did. By the time I got done with (it), they weren't questioning me anymore because I'd done it well."

A lot of times when I was at meetings with some of the males, white males ... there wasn't that many black males, but a few. It was as if, "Okay, you're a female. Sit down." Or, "Why are you speaking?" Or those kinds of things. It was ... Let me give you a little history; it was almost as if we were taken back in time. (Participant 3)

Subordinates may expect preferential treatment. This theme describes how African American subordinates of the participants expect favorable treatment from African American women managers even during interview processes. The participants''

subordinates expected managers to compliment them and show appreciation for their

efforts and express gratitude and appreciation for carrying out job duties and believe they

should not be penalized for their failure to perform job duties. Several participants

expressed that the management experience of the African American woman manager is a

series of strategic compromises in the predominantly Black work environment

attributable to a sense of entitlement among subordinates. Four of 10 participants assert

they must remind subordinates how much they are appreciated to be successful as

Participant 6 states below:

> Hey, I appreciate all the work you're doing. You know what? We really need you.
> We really, I'm telling you, without you, I don't know what we would do.", stuff
> like that. It's a lot of truth to it, I'm not (going to) lie to him, but I found that I
> have to like appeal to his attributes and remind him that I know that he has these
> attributes and they are a benefit to the department; to get what I need.
> (Participant 6)

Three of 10 participants specifically describe ways they strategize to get the most

productivity from employees while not becoming discouraged. Participant 9 states: "You

know, I'm unaffected. This isn't my company, so it doesn't make sense for me to get into

battles or wage these wars over issues that I'm not being fully taken serious."

> This is reiterated by Participant 4:

> This woman who, a black woman who came to us married with, at that time, pre-
> teen daughters, never could stay late, not even 30 minutes, because I've got to go
> home and get my kids and my husband and get them squared away. So now that

her children are grown, the joke is can you hang out with us a little bit later. We

just need 30, if everybody stayed 30 minutes, we'll get this finished. You don't

have kids. But now she has a dog, so she's still got to run home. So, there's a

mentality that some people bring that I'm just going to do my best while I'm here

for these eight hours, and that's all you got me for. (Participant 4)

Participant 9 commonly experiences interviews where she must remind

interviewees they are being considered for a position, but it is not automatically theirs.

She recounts "I think that a lot of time, my people feel entitled. Like they don't have to

put their best foot forward, because, 'oh, you know, she's black, I'm black, I'm already

going to get it.' And that's not the case."

As far as attendance, tardies…they take it for granted, because I'm black; they feel

like they can do this. I know a lot of things they probably wouldn't do or say, or

actions, and situations they put themselves in, they wouldn't do if they were with

a Caucasian principal. (Participant 7)

Lack of fair promotions and rewards. This theme describes how several

participants believe they do not receive adequate recognition or promotion for their

workplace accomplishments and achievements. They describe being innovative and

achieving great results despite sometimes difficult circumstances, without any fanfare or

recognition from superiors. Even when several participants perceived themselves to be

more knowledgeable and experienced, they reported promotions awarded to others.

The employee of the month, those kinds of commendations; I very rarely got

anything like that. And my White counterparts that I knew were not doing

anywhere near what I was doing received; they were celebrated in ways that I didn't get; and to me, it was racist. (Participant 1)

Participant 7 also expresses that she was not promoted despite successful interviews and more experience than other applicants. She explains "I was overlooked for several positions. All the way up from my AP interviews, all the way to principalship."

Participant 10 explains some of the difficulties experienced even when hard earned positions are awarded: "we have been dealing with these contracts for the last five, six years and we'd never heard of any complaints. When we got in that area, there were so many complaints; "well what are you doing in my area?"

Participant 4 also relays a similar experience:

In one instance, he and I were working on a proposal together, and he spoke to me like I was just his secretary. And I don't mind, I don't have any problem with that, in fact I really don't like labels. We work together; nobody works under me. You might be on the next line below me on an org chart, but when the stuff really goes down, and it's 6:00 and everybody wants to go home, we'll working together so we can get out of there on time. He just basically told me what he was and wasn't going to do. (Participant 4)

Being an assertive leader. This theme describes the need for the participants to immediately assert themselves as leaders. The participants describe the necessity to assert power right away because they are aware people doubt them. Subordinates may reject their leadership, so some managers in this study work to learn the roles of

employees and become resourceful enough to get jobs done with as little exclusive dependence on one employee as possible. An overwhelming theme in this study is: these managers proceed to become more of a coach and mentor once the subordinates realize they are serious about leadership.

> I need you and your team to give me this so that we can do what we need to do to win this (contract), and you're telling me you're not going to do it. If I knew how to do what you do, I wouldn't even fool with you, because you're arrogant. We got into an argument over the phone. (Participant 4)

> Participant 5 clarifies a belief that is shared by six of the 10 participants in this study that leaders must be assertive. She says "I try to make sure that I show us even more respect. However, sometimes it's difficult because to get our people to respond certain ways, you have to speak their language. And sometimes they only understand a certain type of language."

> Participant 2 expounds on this thought process: I'm more of a coach. But I've noticed that I have to, come in with this aggression, before you're taken seriously. Then be able to explain: this is the way I lead, and if you want to be a part of this work, then I need you to kind of understand.

> I've noticed that with some of my African American female counterparts, they tend to take on this role of a dogmatic approach to leadership; they have to be harder and more frigid and rigid in how they manage to get the respect. People respect that; people tend to move or respond to that and that's unfortunate. (Participant 6)

Setting boundaries with subordinates. This theme describes the need for participants to set distinctive boundaries with subordinates. If not, several participants report a disparity in work productivity and employees who take advantage of more lenient managerial styles. Several participants report that employees will even state what they are not willing to do and request to be asked in a certain way to perform duties. Additionally, these managers report employees will attempt to buck the system in any area where the manager fails to track them adequately. Six of 10 participants express the requirement that they set boundaries and specify duties daily in order to achieve success.

> That's something extra, versus if you can come in, and this is what you do; we're here for kids, and you should be interacting with kids. I shouldn't have to give you a schedule. So, that takes away from my day to day operations, because I have to put all these other procedures and things in place. (Participant 7)

> Participant 10 describes that she directly had to "sit down and come up with a game plan for them" saying "I need you to go out and look at these tasks, and make sure that you're doing them right." She further expresses the need to constantly follow up as described by four of 10 participants: "They are on the lazy side; you have to push them in directions of what to do all the time. You have to follow-up all the time; can you do this for me? Have you done this yet? It is very challenging." Participant 4 echoes that belief "there's an expectation that people need to mind. And I did not set good boundaries, and I caught myself slipping and I let folks disrespect them, because I disrespected them myself."

I try as much as possible to keep it a team and remove as much of the hierarchy as possible without losing the dynamic of respect and having people behave in a certain way so that you can get things done. Even when I have to check someone's performance, really just sitting down and really being real about it. I used to struggle in this area. (Participant 5)

Finding value through horizontal career growth. This theme describes participants' reports that they are very aware of the challenges to promotion and are determined to overcome these obstacles to career growth. Therefore, the participants describe willingness to make horizontal moves to be in position for eventual upward mobility. Several participants describe moving horizontally frequently and even pursuing careers in areas other than their original career field in order to achieve corporate success.

Even though my industry is female dominated, it's White female dominated. So, actually really had to job hop. I probably changed positions every two years. So, every two years I was employed with a new company for probably, the last 15 years, or so in order for me to get to a Directorial level. (Participant 9)

Participant 4 shares a similar experience: "I started as an analyst, moved into some administrative, operational-type fields, or issues to support the company growth, basic operational things like invoicing, human resources, and then at the point where our leaders and our owners felt like we needed some more defined business development activities, I was offered the position of business development manager."

Eight participants describe experiences similar to Participant 7 who describes a career trajectory to principal that began in a different field: "I'm not an education major,

so I was considered out of field. But I came into the education career. This is my 18th year in education. I started out as a juvenile probation officer."

Some such as Participant 9 and Participant 6, stay within a general field but take opportunities as they present themselves within a corporation, seeking to advance as described below:

My background was, I had a, a BA in Psychology so, that kind of limits you. I did get a job with the accounting firm and I started out entry level. Before I left, I did end up at a position a little bit higher; it was in finance, financial control. (My dad) was like, 'Hey, why don't you try education? I was like, I don't know about that. I don't know nothing about that.' I got offered a job on the spot. They took me in off of my bachelors; off of my degree in psychology. And I was offered the position as an EC (Accelerated Children's) Teacher. I did that for about three months when a position as a business teacher came open, which allowed me to transfer to that position based off of my masters, which was in business. (Participant 6)

Light-skin tone more favorable than darker skin tones in the pre-adult years. This theme describes the messages these managers recall as prevalent from childhood through college. During childhood, the participants report society provides positive affirmation to lighter skinned siblings; the participants describe that light skinned African Americans during the college years received preferential treatment, were appointed for leadership positions, and generally considered more attractive based on their skin tone.

10 of 10 participants report receiving messages that light skin was favorable to darker skin.

> I remember being called "tar baby". You never felt good enough or you were also treated that way. I truly got it firsthand because my sister, who's younger than me, is actually (light) complexion. I would get in trouble because of stuff, for lack of a better word, that my sister would do, and my mother would know that my sister did it, she didn't care. I took the blows for all of it. (Participant 2)

Participant 5 describes a severe sense of rejection similar to Participant 2; she recalls "my mother was very dark, my father was (extremely) fair. (When) my mother had children by my father, (grandfather) forbid my father to marry my mother because she was a darkie. (When he) saw that my skin color was lighter, then they actually kidnapped me from my mom, and took me for a while."

Participant 3 recalls a girlfriend saying "she would never date or marry a guy that was dark skinned. She wanted someone that was as close to white as she possibly could get. And basically, that's what she did."

Participants 6 and 9 describe very similar experiences during their college years. Participant 6 says "if you were darker skinned, you were, well you weren't as beautiful. Or didn't look as good as someone with lighter skin; and don't (add fine), curly hair in there, oh my god. When I went to college, I went to (North Carolina) A&T and where I'm from, it was, 'Oh yeah. That's where all the white skinned girls are from,'" as a compliment.

You couldn't try out for certain sororities, because you were too light; or you
weren't dark enough. You couldn't hang out with a group of people, because you
didn't fit a specific look, that they were trying to achieve. So, I found that going
away to a predominantly black college, it was very hard to adjust to all of these
different issues that my people have, in regard to skin color. (Participant 9)

Skin tone discrimination lessens in adult life. During later years, most of the
participants who categorize themselves as darker skinned describe being more
comfortable with their complexion. Although several believe they may be overlooked for
positions because of their darker skin complexion, these participants say they are proud
of how they look and still manage to become successful. At least one of the participants
stated darker skin may actually help her receive affirmative action positions because her
complexion identifies her clearly as African American and female and affords her
opportunities to occupy positions for which she is qualified as a minority woman.

I've had to be mean to my sister in order for her to recognize that I'm not the girl
that you grew up with, so you're not going to bully me, you're not going berate me
the way you saw our mother do. She truly believes that she is better because she is
lighter. (Participant 2)

Participant 4 believes "darker women may be, especially the ones that may be
heavier, were often aligned with laziness."

Despite this, three of three participants who self-describe as "dark" report a
greater confidence in their skin tone as adults. Participant 2 states "it (her love of her
complexion) has changed, but that came with a lot of work; a lot of therapy." Participant

7 reports "I've gotten to the point where I embrace myself, I love myself, so it doesn't matter. But back in high school or college, I probably wouldn't have been this confident." Participant 8 expresses a similar pattern of development saying "I've grown to appreciate my skin, I'm very thankful that I am in it. It has made me who I am today, so I embrace it."

While two of two participants who describe themselves as light skinned, reveal nuances that accompany lighter complexion. At least one light skinned participant, while recognizing that lighter skin leads to privilege, sees what she describes as a double-edged sword. Participant 1 reveals "more European I looked and acted, there was a direct correlation with the-the more invitations I got, the more accepted I seemed to be among other blacks and whites."

I think in some situations, I have a certain amount of power and leverage that sometimes I don't think would be given to someone if they were darker, then the flip side of that is, there's also resentment. I have an issue with the fact that light-skinned black women are given privilege, because that's not the truth, either. Because I went through hell just like any other black child. I was rejected from the black community, my peers, in growing up and even sometimes as an adult, but I was also rejected by the white folks, because at the end of the day, I'm still a nigga; I'm still Black. (Participant 5)

Minimal to no intra-racial discrimination from subordinates based on skin tone. This theme describes participant's unanimous agreement that they did not recognize any discrimination from subordinates despite the prevalence of skin tone disparity in the African American community. If anything, two of darker complexioned

participants describe that their darker complexion is empowering. This is affirmed by a lighter complexioned manager who says she would be more intimidating and possibly even more effective if she were darker. Two lighter complexioned managers also report instances where their light complexion led them to be taken less seriously by male subordinates.

> No, because we're all different shades. One of our owners is a dark woman, or darker. She's a darker brown than me. Then her sister is a lighter-skinned woman. Then we've got another kind of browner woman than me, then a light- skinned, younger woman. We're all different. (Participant 4)

Participant 1 reflects "they weren't seeing me based on my physical appearance, I don't think. They saw how I was relating to them about the work." Participant 9 conveys "I'm not sure I believe that my skin tone may have had any effect on them at all."

> There's no disputing, I'm Black; there's no disputing I'm female." I did, early on, recognize and realize that a lot of positions that I got, they would make sure that I was smart enough to have the job, because you know they didn't want it to be known that "Okay, we hired her because she's black." But you could see the- the undertones and so a lot of times certain things, even with the military a lot of jobs or positions that you know my commanders would put me in because I was black. There was you know, "Okay. Yep, we need a black person. Okay, there it is, right there." (Participant 2)

According to Participant 5 who describes herself as light skinned:

There's a sister that I've worked with for some time, and sometimes she's been a peer, and often times, she's been more as a subordinate; she's very dark. Very beautiful and dark. She really has this issue where she feels I talk down to her all the time. Where I don't think it has anything to do with the fact that I'm talking down to her, I think it honestly has to do with her own insecurities as a Black woman. (Participant 5)

Cross-Case Synthesis and Analysis

Cross-case synthesis and analysis was utilized as the data analysis technique to synthesize important findings of individual cases studies and once themes were synthesized across the multiple cases in this study (Yin, 2017). Because of the comparatively low number of cases associated with a qualitative study, word tables offered an adequate method to search for patterns across cases as opposed to the meta-analysis associated with large numbers of case studies (Yin, 2017). Because the causal links in real life experiences are complex and patterns may not be readily observable, cross-case synthesis fortified validity and allowed generalization to the analysis process (Yin, 2017). Likewise, data which are not seemingly associated were found to be without merit through the process of cross-cases analysis. Cross-case analysis was useful to systemically assess the logic which links the data to the propositions (Yin, 2017). The trustworthiness of data was enhanced by consolidating, reducing and interpreting the data to establish a coherent argument based on evidence and analyzed through the study's Conceptual Framework (Cooper & White, 2012; Yin, 2017).

The cross-case analysis was an ongoing process as I analyzed each of the 10 cases separately. Recurrent themes were identified across the data to meet the study purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. The cumulative frequencies of occurrence for each theme are illustrated in Figure 1, in which I combined the data analysis from each case while analyzing the convergent and divergent data across the 10 cases. In Figure 1 I provide the reader with a multiple case study cross-case synthesis graph as a visual representation of the overall experience of this study's sample of African American women working as managers and leaders within predominantly Black work environments where the majority of subordinates identify as African American.

The most prominent category across the 10 cases was the experiences defining the career trajectory of the African American woman manager in the study. The one particularly recurrent and dominant theme in this category was all the participants' ascending career trajectory due to pursuit of graduate degrees. This theme was built on data documenting details of each participants' pursuit of higher education with nine out of 10 participants having either Master's or Doctoral level academic degrees. All participants expressed pride and a strong sense of perseverance and worked hard to earn those degrees- many times balancing work and family responsibilities either as married women, single mothers or caretaker of elderly relatives, while attending university courses after work hours, weekends or online for years. Participants expressed that for an African American woman, the only way to compete for leadership positions was the

attainment of a graduate degree. One participant expressed what several others alluded to which was: an African American woman needs at least a graduate or terminal degree to even be considered on equal footing with Caucasian females and both Caucasian and African American males in applying for a position where she would be supervising subordinates. All the women accepted that the only way for an African American woman to overcome racial and gender inequality, even in predominantly Black workplaces, was the pursuit of graduate degrees and nine out of 10 did just so. Upon awarding of their degrees, all the participants saw an upward trend in their career trajectory in terms of being hired in managerial leadership positions.

Another prominent category was that of challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to race. This category produced three themes upon completion of the data analysis: 1) others doubting leadership skills of Black women; 2) subordinates may expect preferential treatment; and, 3) lack of fair promotions and rewards.

Four out of 10 African American women managers who participated in this study experienced doubt from others in their ability to lead. Superiors, peers and subordinates frequently and openly requested second opinions to validate the recommendations of these managers. These managers also say they were allowed to exercise less autonomy than others. Additionally, the participants describe experiences in meetings where their suggestions and ideas were not welcomed by peers and their very presence at meetings was questioned. The participants coped with these experiences by developing greater determination in carrying out their jobs to such a high standard, there was no longer any

room for doubt in their performance; this included quality control checks of their own work, keeping in mind others would be looking for errors.

Four of 10 participants also commonly experience situations where subordinates expect preferential treatment in a Black work environment. This includes an expectation for managers to overlook policy violations such as: 1) timely arrival to work, 2) extended lunch breaks, 3) as well as the manager coaxing the employee to perform job duties. Additionally, four participants describe how their employees expect these African American women managers to accept that the employees' commitment to job duties will be secondary to personal matters: auto repairs, pets or other obligations that are not work related. This group of participants also describe how they were passed over for promotion or failed to receive commendation despite stellar reviews, interviews, qualifications or performance on important projects which required ingenuity and critical thinking. Two describe being passed over for positions in favor of Caucasian women who the participants believe were clearly less qualified. The participants describe changing jobs and sometimes careers as well as furthering their education to overcome this obstacle.

Another prominent category was that of challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to gender. This category produced one distinct theme illustrating the primary issue facing this sample of African- American women managers supervising Black subordinates, that of acceptance of her authority and power. Seven out of 10 participants in this study experience issues related to the acceptance of their authority and power. These managers express various factors which play a vital role for acceptance

among subordinates including complexion and hair style. Additionally, the participants

describe how they must give extra attention to employees in order for the employees in a

predominantly Black work environment to engage in carrying out job duties. This

includes coaching to such a degree the manager literally does a "walk through" of the

task to show the employee what must be done and how. These women also reveal if they

do not take extra time to engage the employee on a personal level by discussing family

and participating in casual conversations, they are less likely to be accepted as leaders.

Therefore, about a third of these managers mention they do not consider it a hierarchy

that they are supervisors; they refrain from labels and rank in order to make employees

understand that as supervisor, they don't think more of themselves.

The next prominent category was that of leadership experiences with subordinates

informed by gender and race. This category produced two themes upon completion of

the data analysis: 1) being an assertive leader; 2) setting boundaries with subordinates.

The importance of asserting strong, disciplined leadership is expressed in six of 10 cases

in this study. The participants state that the original disposition of subordinates in a

predominantly Black work environment is to question them and doubt their leadership

abilities. Therefore, these African- American women managers must clearly state to

employees what is expected of them and be prepared to meet resistance with a dogmatic,

no nonsense demeanor. The participants also convey a willingness to use strong

language to make it understood they will not back down. Once they effectively assert

themselves, they can communicate using coaching techniques and personal engagement

to establish advantageous working relationships with Black employees.

A significant part of successfully implementing a managerial strategy involves setting boundaries with subordinates. To achieve this, the majority of the participants emphasize the importance of being able to clearly articulate what will be accepted. This includes verbal encouragement, coaching, making detailed daily schedules and demonstrating tasks so employees know exactly what must be done and how. This also means the manager must be careful to monitor employees closely to ensure all duties are executed properly.

The one category producing the most interesting research results, and both unanimous among participants and yet discrepant data evidence in contrast to the assumptions of the conceptual framework and scholarly literature, is that of intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone. From this category emerged the theme of African American women experiencing minimal to no intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone. All participants expressed agreement that they did not recognize intra-racial discrimination from subordinates even though colorism and skin tone disparity is often a subject for conversation within in the African American community.

Two African- American women managers in the sample who identified as having darker skin tone stated they do not feel any discrimination because of the color of their complexion within their predominantly Black workplace. These two participants described their darker color as empowering and having given her confidence as a woman manager. These data analysis results converge with another category emerging from the data analysis, that of colorism in daily adult experiences based on skin tone. From this

category emerged the theme of skin tone discrimination lessening in adult life. This cross-case synthesis finding of convergence of data between these two categories is probably one of the more significant of this study and implications will be further discussed in Chapter 5. This process of analyzing and presenting discrepant data evidence in a multiple case study demonstrates the complexity of responding to the inductive and deductive evaluation process of qualitative data (Stake, 2013). Discrepant data is not to be ignored or considered outliers (Maxwell, 2008) and can become the foundation of a rival interpretation of the assumptions within the scholarly literature (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). The finding of discrepant data evidence among this sample of participants may provide a fresh perspective to recommendations for future research, also discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

In contrast to the two previous converging categories, the category of colorism in childhood and adolescent experiences presented a stark contrast to the adult experiences of participants on the issue of colorism as expressed in the theme of light-skin tone was viewed more favorable than darker skin tones in the pre-adult years. Participants unanimously report that as children, receiving direct and indirect overtones within their communities that light skin was preferable to dark skin. Lighter skin was considered more attractive, light skinned Blacks were more likely to receive preferential treatment and be appointed to leadership positions. Darker skinned individuals with coarse hair were more likely to be overlooked; to be beautiful and dark skinned meant you were beautiful "for a dark-skinned girl" as opposed to the natural standard of beauty in the Black community, which aligned to European standards. This perception of inadequacy

and lack of confidence for dark skinned participants persisted through to college. There, almost half the participants mention this as a pivotal point where the long-held views of intra-racial discrimination were upheld and implemented. This included selection and exclusion from campus organizations based on skin tone and open discussions of beauty as it related to a more European appearance.

The final category was that of further career goals as an African American woman manager. Almost all interviewed participants contributed to the emerging theme of this category, that the African American woman managers in the sample today find value through horizontal career growth. The participants in the study describe high aspiration and dedication to advancement in their careers. They are willing to change departments, companies, and even careers if it affords a greater opportunity for promotion. These women assess the current environment and based on their observations, seek jobs that meet their overall expectation for advancement as opposed to maintaining loyalty to a specific type of work. These African American women are willing to learn different job descriptions as long as the ultimate goal of advancement can be met with opportunity and desire to earn what they achieve. The women in this sample want to mentor others but not be manipulated for the advancement of others, even in a predominantly Black workplace. The African American women managers in this study expressed their willingness to achieve the requisite education level or more, the belief they are qualified for managerial and leadership positions, and they seek opportunities to prove themselves and their skills at the highest level of excellence possible. The cumulative theme frequencies of occurrence by participant is illustrated in Figure 1, in which I combined

the thematic analysis results from each case to graphically provide the reader with an idea of how many themes converged across cases based on the findings of this multiple-case study.
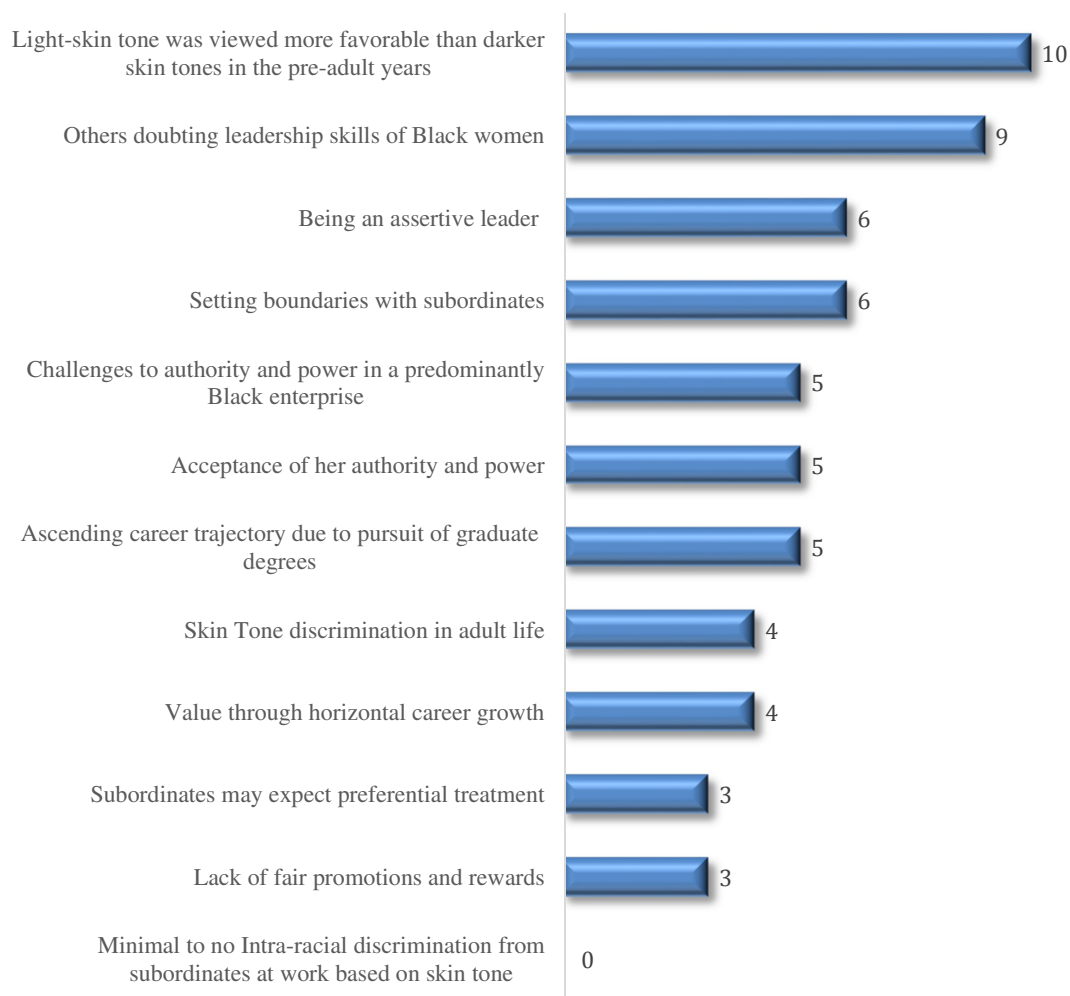
Figure 1. Multiple case analysis (theme frequency of occurrence by participant)

Triangulation. In addition to binding data sources, the codes bridged themes across a variety of methodologies including interviews, field notes and historical literature (Patton, 2014). This data source triangulation boosted the quality of the study

and promoted a more aggregate consideration of the data (Yin, 2017). Handwritten notes were a valuable component of the data collection process. The state of mind is often transmitted through audible cues such as intonation, it is also communicated non-verbally using silence, deep exhales or body language techniques such as facial expressions and subconscious movements (Stake, 2013). The handwritten notes supplemented the audible data recorded in the interview tape which was translated literally; notes provided a contextual report of non-verbal behaviors such as fears, uncertainty, and intensity for a more comprehensive recollection (Patton, 2014). I provided each study participant with a copy of the digital transcript and requested they read and verify the accuracy of their responses and the associated meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015); the transcripts were also useful to review researcher reflexivity and positionality (Berger, 2015).

I used an interview protocol for the semi structured 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 (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011; Patton, 2014). For the process of methods triangulation: during the data analysis I referenced data from my reflective journal notes and analyzing the physical artifacts such as government reports and databases of African American women in management position in the United States.

My reflective journaling helped me to maintain a neutral state as the researcher. Yin (2017) recommended that researchers practice documenting and recording feelings regarding events, behaviors, or conditions that can trigger an emotional reaction. 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 (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflexivity helped me to suspend judgment and contain any preconceptions that I had about gender bias and intra-racial discrimination prior to commencing my study.

I read and annotated peer-reviewed scholarly papers from approximately 300 scientific journals. I discovered approximately 250 articles that included government, business, company and media reports, white papers and popular media (newspaper, a magazine) relevant to the study. These reports were not substantive for the literature review but were a source to complement the semi-structured interviews.

After I conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants I continued in the method triangulation process to answer the research question, by analyzing 250 physical artifacts directly related to my themes (yin, 2017), which lead me to developing deep, thick, rich information within the following themes relating to African American women managers and intra-racial discrimination in the workplace: challenges to authority and power; leadership skills of Black women; managerial relationships with subordinates in intra-racial workplaces; lack of fair promotions and rewards; acceptance of African American women managers' authority and power; being an assertive leader; setting boundaries with subordinates; intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone; colorism and research on skin tone issues in African American

culture; and, career development This reading helped me question 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; this type of triangulation can ensure the data are rich (Fusch & Ness,

2015). In conclusion, methodological triangulation of three data sources provided

enough thick, rich information to replicate the study design (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald,

2011; Patton, 2014). 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 the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in

predominantly Black work environments.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

A case by case analysis was conducted and presented in the chapter with a total of

10 separate cases, leading to a cross-case analysis and synthesis process leading to

answers for the central research question of this multiple case study: What are the

leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in

predominantly Black work environments? Based on the findings of this multiple-case

study, a total of eight categories that enclose a total of 12 themes were identified for this

study leading to thick, rich data on the leadership experiences of African American

women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. The categories

were (a) career trajectory of African American woman manager, (b) challenges in a

predominantly Black enterprise due to gender, (c) challenges in a predominantly Black

enterprise due to race, (d), leadership experiences with subordinates informed by gender and race, (e), further career goals as an African American woman manager, (f), colorism in childhood and adolescent experiences, (g) colorism in daily adult experiences based on skin tone, and (h), intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone. The 12 themes include: ascending career trajectory due to pursuit of graduate degrees; challenges to authority and power; acceptance authority and power; others doubting leadership skills of Black women; subordinates may expect preferential treatment; lack of fair promotions and rewards; being an assertive leader; setting boundaries with subordinates; finding value through horizontal career growth; light-skin tone more favorable than darker skin tones in the pre-adult years; skin tone discrimination lessens in adult life; minimal to no intra-racial discrimination from subordinates based on skin tone.

In addition to binding data sources, I enhanced the trustworthiness of the study's data by employing methodological triangulation of three data sources: interviews, journaling/reflective field notes and historical literature (Guion, et al., 2011). This methods triangulation provided thick, rich information to replicate the study design. I analyzed and interpreted study results within the conceptual framework and illustrated how study findings added to the body of knowledge related to the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments.

In Chapter 5, I will further interpret the study findings in terms of how they compare and contrast to the literature described in Chapter 2. I will also describe how

future scholarly research can extend these findings and further study African American

women's management and leadership experiences as well as the issue of gendered racism

in intra-racial workplaces

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this multiple case study was to gain a deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American woman leaders and their experiences as double minorities in predominantly Black work environments. The nature of the study is qualitative, so the method aligns with its purpose which is to provide deep understanding of African American women managers in predominantly Black work environments, therefore the multiple case study was deemed appropriate. The study was framed by three key concepts that focus on the challenges facing African American woman mangers in leadership roles in predominantly Black work places: Essed's (1991) concept of *intersectionality of gender and race*, also coined by the seminal author with the term *gendered racism*; and Turner's (1995) concepts of *intra-racial discrimination* and *colorism*.

A multiple case analysis of 10 interviews, followed by thematic analysis and cross-case synthesis and analysis, reveals 12 prominent thematic experiences including: lighter skin tone being more favorable in the pre-adult years, having others doubt their leadership ability, the need to assert themselves as leaders and set strict boundaries with subordinates. Other revelations include the expectation African American women managers will be challenged by others in their agentic role and, while unyielding in her position of authority must develop techniques to gain acceptance. Finally, the African American woman manager emphasizes continuing education for career ascension and is determined to ascend in whatever arena provides the most likely opportunity for growth.

Interpretation of Findings

Most of the findings in this multiple-case study confirm or extend the existing

knowledge in the discipline as each case presented direct examples to the reviewed

literature in Chapter 2. Two specific issues emerged from the thematic analysis, as

discrepant data evidence in contrast to the assumptions of the Conceptual Framework and

scholarly literature: (a) all participants expressed agreement that they did not recognize

intraracial discrimination from subordinates even though colorism and skin tone disparity

is often a subject for conversation within in the African American community; and, (b)

colorism skin tone discrimination lessening in adult. These two divergent themes vis a

vis the scholarly literature will be discussed in detail later in this section.

In this section, I present and review the findings by the finalized categories of the

multiple case study as merging from the data analysis and compare them with the

relevant concepts from the Conceptual Framework and the scholarly literature. I will

provide evidence from the semistructured interviews I conducted on how the study

findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend such existing knowledge. Extension studies,

such as the present study, not only provide replication evidence but also extend the

results of prior studies in new and significant theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012).

Career trajectory of the African American woman manager. The findings of

my study are consistent with previous research by Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, (2015)

which indicated African American women strongly aspire to leadership positions with

prestigious titles. The African American woman who aspires agentic authority makes the

most of limited opportunities while enduring bias (Johnson, 2015). Despite frustration on

the job, the African American woman is determined to succeed against all odds (Beckwith et al., 2016). African American women managers in predominantly Black work environments also face stigmatism which results in a lack of opportunity in various work settings (Remedios & Snyder, 2015); they may seek to overcome this by pursuing departmental or career changes.

Research was needed to address whether being a minority woman and the dual stigmatism associated with belonging to this group (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016; Remedios & Snyder, 2015) would positively or negatively affect the career trajectory in a predominantly Black work environment (Dean, 2016). My findings reflect an environment where being a Black female has a negative effect on the career trajectory of African American women in predominantly Black work places and the results of my study, which indicate Black men consider Black women as competitors in the work place are supported by Allen and Lewis (2016) and Hurt et al. (2014).

Additionally, Williams (2014) suggested further research to explore whether workers of the same race may be biased against one another because of cultural familiarity and cultural expectations. The results of my study indicate Black co-workers and subordinates may hold bias against African American women managers, seek to undermine authority by demanding less authoritative posturing from African American women managers who need to act in the full agentic capacity. The African American woman manager must find ways to manage employees in a way unlike others in order to maintain her position and ascend in her career. This is supported by Dean (2016) who

reveals minority employees can both "help and hinder minority women" in their career and earning aspirations.

Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to gender. Research by Glass and Cook, (2016) reveals how obstacles such as gender categorization make it increasingly difficult for women to secure higher level managerial positions. The penalization for women in the workplace who fail to behave in accord with stereotypically accepted gender roles has become more noticeable in recent years (Carbado et al., 2013). African American women managers in this study reveal that the presence of traditional gender expectations exists today and remains a challenge to their ability to lead in a predominantly Black work environment.

My study found that some African American women managers who did not conform to traditional gender standards experience negative evaluations in addition to a rejection of their agentic authority, directly or indirectly. This experience is supported by Livingston et al. (2016) and Rosette et al. (2016) who indicate African American women managers face workplace microaggressions for simply being a woman. Vial et al. (2016) reveals African American women must be able to navigate through dehumanization without stress when dealing with her male counterparts; Hall et al. (2012) confirms that African American women experience more pronounced dissatisfaction from African American men than women regarding their leadership style. This is also revealed in my study which divulged several examples where male subordinates challenged their African American woman manager directly and outright refused to carry out instructions or provide assistance. What was also observed is the African American woman managers

were able to essentially overlook the offense and move on with hopes of obtaining from another source whatever work was required or completing the task themselves.

Participants describe intra-gender microaggressions from African American women subordinates and co-workers. This experience is supported Dean's (2016) study which details research that overwhelmingly concludes that women are treated worse than men within the same ethnic group. Microaggressive behaviors of African American women subordinates toward African American women managers in the sample include conduct which the participants labeled insecurity, feeling threatened and jealousy. The participants of this study also felt they received more complaints from women in their agentic role about their conversational tone than from their male counterparts. They also perceived a lack of responsiveness from both male and female subordinates to their instructions as women leaders, compared to Black men managers. Lastly, there is a greater requirement that women leaders take a personal interest in the personal lives of women subordinates than men in order to achieve a successful work relationship. This is corroborated by Crites et al. (2015) who finds that women find male supervisors more satisfactory as leaders and also nurture stereotypes, penalizing women leaders who are less traditional.

Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to race. Whereas other minority women perceive bias against them to be primarily based on gender, African American women identify race as the greater motivation for marginalization (Williams, 2014). The results of this study support the previous findings with more participants expressing they feel disenfranchised by members of their own minority group because of

race to a greater degree than gender. Studies reveal this is possible because African American women leaders are viewed as more dominant, aggressive and strong than Asian, Hispanic and White counterparts and in regard to gender, may identify with a more traditional tone of male leadership (Rosette et al., 2016; Williams, 2014). Half of the participants in this study express experiencing no gender discrimination while only three report they have never been treated unfairly in the workplace based on race. The responses to racial intolerance are also stronger and more certain than the participant responses to gender discrimination. The participants in my study perceive an expectation that despite their tough demeanor, subordinate employees in a predominantly Black working environment, expect a higher level of understanding and tolerance when they fail to perform tasks and they expect they should not be penalized severely.

African American women managers in this study strongly perceive they are not considered equal because of race. They believe they are unable to exercise the same level of autonomy as their manager counterparts of other races. The 2016 study by Vial et al. supports these findings and reveals that African American women managers recognize they have limited latitude in which to exercise agentic authority. Women managers also expressed they were made to understand they did not belong in meetings with counterparts of other ethnic groups and they should not be heard from unless spoken to (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015). My study reveals the same perception by African American women who explain how it was made clear by peers that they did not belong in managerial meetings and were not expected to contribute opinions or suggestions.

Additionally, seminal studies uncover inequalities in which African-African women managers report they are taken advantage of by superiors and must perform additional duties compared to White counterparts (Dean, 2016; Hall 2016). The current study also concludes African American women believe they must do more and with less mistakes than other White peers. African American women managers in this study also believe their expertise is second guessed and their leadership ability is undermined more than managers of other ethnicities. This experience is supported by Williams (2014) who found that women must display twice the evidence of competence of men to be considered equally competent. My study reveals once African American women managers in this study perform their job duties virtually error free, they are still overlooked for promotions in favor of those who they believe to be less qualified. Beckwith et al. (2016) also reports study results which support these findings; they report African American women remain largely unconsidered for advancement despite superior performance and ability (Rosette et al. 2012).

Leadership experiences with subordinates informed by gender and race. The African American women managers in a predominantly Black work environment interviewed for this study express a strong need to establish a firm tone by being assertive and setting boundaries. Beckwith et al. (2016) affirms this, finding that African American women managers believe aggressive communication, harder work and a willingness to speak up despite what is traditionally acceptable is necessary to achieve success in agentic positions. The participants of my study state that only after establishing themselves as assertive leaders who are relentless are they able to move

toward a coaching style of management but even then, they cannot allow the expectations and rules they have set to be usurped.

The participants of this study also reveal the stress of setting and maintaining boundaries with co-workers and subordinates in order to successfully execute their managerial duties. These women face particular pressure because they are expected to lead subordinates from an equal position more so than other leaders in their companies who exercise authority (Vial et al., 2015). Research by Hall et al. (2012) also reveals Black managers often feel the responsibility of other employees and a burden that the entire race is represented by their performance. All the while, some of these managers feel isolated from other African American employees who feel they think more of themselves and no longer a part of the struggle for success that other Blacks experience. According to Beckwith et al (2016) African American women managers who adeptly navigate this terrain become exceedingly clear communicators, allowing them to build positive relationships with other employees and be better understood by them.

Further career goals as an African American woman manager. Specific to their careers, Beckwith (2016) finds African American women managers must assertively pursue advancement rather than allow other executives to manage their careers. The results of my study reveal African American women managers in Black work environments eagerly pursue career advancement and are willing to leverage their skills in various areas in order to advance. All but one of the participants in the study specifically desired further promotion in their career, including administrating a larger number of employees than they do currently.

In many corporations, opportunities for women managers is limited because corporations rarely consider these women for positions (Beckwith et al., 2016); there are even fewer opportunities for African American women who offer an even greater perception of "illegitimate" leadership among mainstream leaders (Vial et al., 2015). Consequently, Beckwith et al. (2016) reports women must be strategic in pursuing job opportunities which offer potential advancement. The participants in my study appear to keep advancement in mind, maneuvering toward upward advancement by taking jobs in different areas or changing careers, while always focusing on opportunities which avail themselves and focusing on long term personal career goals (Purdie-Vaughns, 2015).

Several participants in the study reveal their desire to ultimately reach a level where they are able to control their destiny through ownership. This is supported by Hill et al. (2014) whose confirmed some Black workers choose not to chase promotion opportunities because of a system they believe offers very limited opportunity for African American workers.

Colorism in childhood and adolescent experiences. Almost all participants in my study experienced colorism beginning at a very young age. They report that they developed an understanding of the nuances of color bias before and during their elementary school years similar to the results of previous studies (Hall, 2016; Sims 2004). Almost all of the participants in this study recall being aware of the preference for light skin during their early formative years, beginning in the home almost from birth. They report that this message continued in church and community settings and was reiterated during the formative elementary education years. My study confirms findings

by Sims (2004) who reports a general consensus among the participants was "light is right": this was reflected by examples of lighter complexioned Black children and adults being chosen for leadership positions while darker complexioned children and adults were overlooked. Hall's 2016 study also supports these findings and reveals how African American students report messages to light-skinned Blacks and Whites build self-esteem, while darker skinned students are ignored or receive negative messages designed to diminish self-esteem.

My study reveals that many negative comments toward darker complexioned African American girls are critical of African features other than skin tone as compared to European features; in fact, dark-skinned girls are categorized differently in reference to beauty and are told they are pretty "for a dark-skinned girl" which is considered by African Americans to be less pretty than a light skinned girl. These categorizations for beauty include: 1) hair texture which may be described as "good" if it is fine, wavy and long, or "bad" if it is short, kinky or coarse, 2) the shape of the nose which is less desirable if it is broad, 3) and the size of the lips which are less appealing if they are thick. This is supported by several studies which reveal Black girls are susceptible to lower self-esteem as a result of microaggressions about their appearance and messages that they are unattractive (Hall, 2016; Sims 2004). Several participants in the current study reveal how color discrimination which occurred as an unwritten rule during early childhood became more openly discussed and implemented by peers during college. Several participants in my study discovered that social organizations on their college campuses denied membership based on skin tone and some college peers expressed

stereotypical views based on light or dark complexion, reflecting the early microaggressive messages the participants received as children. Sims' (2004) study reveals the same phenomenon among African Americans with college experience; in fact, this occurrence is so pervasive, several participants in that study mentioned their parents preparing them for these incidents as a part of their college experience.

Colorism in daily adult experiences based on skin tone. My study reveals that colorism in daily adult experiences is diminished compared to the developmental years. Although colorism is taught at an early age and remains deeply ingrained throughout American society, trends such as interracial dating and diversity in mediums such as television may increase exposure to diverse cultures and appearances (Keith & Monroe, 2016). This may mean greater acceptance of different appearances and deemphasize a single standard of beauty among African Americans.

The majority of darker skinned participants in my study express a greater appreciation of their dark skin than when they were younger and acknowledge they now feel more beautiful than they did as children. Keith (2009) provides a contextual perspective, writing that self-esteem for American-Americans has been discovered to be higher in predominantly Black environments than in majority White environments. This increases sense of purpose is validated by Phillips (2012) and Keith (2009) who both report that achievement increases self-esteem. All participants in my study have achieved a degree of success in their careers which may be reflected in the increased pride and resilience reflected in their answers. Several describe their pride by saying they would not have thought this way of themselves years ago.

Lighter complexioned participants in my study reveal a quandary in which they are considered uppity and privileged among darker skinned African Americans, but they are rejected by White Americans, the same as their darker skinned counterparts. This is supported by Keith (2009) who reveals in Black school settings, lighter skinned African Americans are privileged but this advantage for light skin does not exist in predominantly White school settings.

Intraracial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone. The one category producing the most interesting research results is findings that are both unanimous among participants and yet discrepant. The theme of intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone reveals data evidence which contrasts the assumptions of the conceptual framework and scholarly literature (Brown, 2009; Hall, 2018; Marira & Mitra, 2013; McCray, 2012). Results from Sims' 2004 study reveal skin tone categorization varies from one geographic area to another across the United States. This may affect perception, categorization and the experience of an individual based on where they grow up and live as adults. From this study, a category emerged with African American women experiencing minimal to no intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone. This is despite findings in several studies which indicate a perception among African Americans that lighter skinned individuals are perceived as more intelligent, professional and more likely to occupy leadership positions (Beckwith et al., 2016; Sims, 2004; Vial et al. 2015). All participants expressed agreement that they did not recognize intra-racial discrimination from subordinates even though colorism and skin tone disparity is recognized as a part of

the personal development process of each participant and is often a subject for conversation within in the African American community (Hall 2017; Johnson, 2014). Two African- American women managers in the sample who identified as having darker skin tone stated they do not feel any discrimination because of the color of their complexion within their predominantly Black workplace. These two participants described their darker color as empowering and having given her confidence as a woman manager. This may be attributable to one of the findings of McCray's 2012 study which reveals that even though lighter skin and higher similarity to the dominant White culture results in corporate success, there is also an increasing sentiment among Blacks that those who assimilate are views as "sell outs" in their communities. These results can be categorized as discrepant evidence in the study. This process of analyzing and presenting discrepant data evidence in a multiple case study demonstrates the complexity of responding to the inductive and deductive evaluation process of qualitative data (Stake, 2013). Discrepant data is not to be ignored or considered outliers (Maxwell, 2008) and can become the foundation of a rival interpretation of the assumptions within the scholarly literature (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). The finding of discrepant data evidence among this sample of participants may provide a fresh perspective to recommendations for future research.

Limitations of the Study

Although Merriam and Tisdell (2015) have determined six to 10 participants provide a large enough sampling for practical interpretation in qualitative studies, there are limits to obtaining a larger number of participants. There are few African American

female managers and even fewer who manage African American employees in a predominantly African American work environment. There are no lists which provide such information so personal knowledge is necessary to locate potential enterprises. All of these characteristics make it very difficult to develop a participant pool large enough for quantitative analysis; this is one reason a qualitative study is more viable. Selecting 10 participants is designed to allow more units for analysis for a multiple case study and increasing the possibility of revealing unique observations or variances.

Confidentiality of participant identities was of paramount importance in the study so that women did not fear being open or of any retaliation at their workplace or among their colleagues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Additionally, the limitation of recollection as time passed between the incident and the interviews was a concern. To compensate, conversational interview discussions were conducted so managers could share events and perhaps stimulate recall (Katz, 2014).

Additionally, an inherent limitation of qualitative research is finding a way to improve temporal precedence when establishing cause and effect (Yin, 2017). The researcher sought to provide a maximum discernment of how one factor indeed lead to another in the study; the triangulation of interview responses, historical literature, and field notes was incorporated to provide accurate insight into changing processes and minimize retrospection bias, as well as strengthen temporal discernment (Affleck, Zautra, Tennen, & Armeli, 1999).

Dependability may be limited based on geographical difference of participants. Observations may also differ among companies that vary in gender makeup, ownership

philosophy or culture. Utilizing an online professional network to select candidates

offers maximum variation sampling which improves the transferability of the study. This

criterion-based sampling gathered a heterogeneous group of participants to

support maximum variation sampling (Benoot, Hannes & Bilsen, 2016). Maximum

variation sampling in qualitative research relies on researcher's judgment to select

participants with diverse characteristics to ensure the presence of maximum variability

within the primary data, which in this multiple case study are the responses to the

interview protocol (Palinkas et al., 2015). "The primary purpose of sampling for a

qualitative researcher is to collect specific cases, events, or actions that can clarify or

deepen the researchers' understanding about the phenomenon under study…to find cases

or units of analysis that will enhance what other researchers have learned about a

particular social life or phenomenon" (Ishak & Bakar, 2014; p.29**).**

The issue of researcher reflexivity in analyzing both interview data and journaling

always can be viewed as a limitation of the study. Interviewing and journaling are

common da5a collection techniques in qualitative research—and case study research

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 2013). The concept of reflexivity has been part of

qualitative research methods in organizational research for several decades, so it is not a

new phenomenon (Haynes, 2012). Reflexivity is another hallmark of qualitative data

analysis and can affect trustworthiness of data. Hover, trustworthiness of the data was

protected from reflexivity-generated bias by relying on other sources of evidence to

corroborate any insight of participants and searching for contrary evidence as diligently

as possible (Alvesson, & Sköldberg, 2017).

Recommendations

My research project fills the gap in research which largely fails to consider the experiences of the agentic Black woman in a work environment where she is not the minority. The potential benefits of this study are to understand the leadership strategies and experiences of the agentic African American female in an intra-racial environment. The findings of the study may provide information which increases her inclusion and support among colleagues in workplaces, Black or White (Hall et al., 2012).

Based on the strengths and limitations of this study which I have detailed above, I encourage future researchers to validate these research findings using an appropriate quantitative research method for inquiry or to replicate this study implementing qualitative research paradigms which address the subject in various contexts.

Methodological Recommendation 1: Quantitative Validation

I believe a quantitative research method such as a survey would offer good insight into the transferability of my exploration into the experiences of African American women managers in predominantly Black work environances across the United States based on a larger sample population. Although several sections of my study offer emphatic results that are near unanimous among the participants, the strength of their conviction may differ based on location (i.e. west coast versus the deep south). A larger, quantitative study might confirm geographic discrepancies and similarities as well as isolate the prevalence of various components of my study based on characteristics such as age, education level, and industry.

Methodological Recommendation 2: Qualitative Replication

I also encourage future research using the multiple case study method as utilized in this study. A multiple case study may be useful to discover how research findings vary across different industries, including those that are predominantly occupied by women, such as education. Likewise, a similar study could be conducted among workers in predominantly male dominated industries such as construction; this would offer valuable insight on a more comprehensive level into the leadership experience of agentic African American women in predominantly Black work environments.

Recommendations for Future Research

Career trajectory of the African American woman. All of the participants in my study are African American women managers over the age of 40 and all participants have five or more years of experience. I recommend further research on the experiences of African American women managers who are 40 years old or younger and who have 10 years or less managerial experience. This may reveal a different perspective of the theme of the career trajectory of African American women managers than was disclosed in my study. Based on participant responses, most of the women in my study were experiencing departmental and career shifts in their thirties in order to advance. The 2015 study by Gamble & Turner reveals some Black college educated women managers even accepted administrative positions in order to gain employment in the desired company or department. Closer examination may reveal exact reasons why as well as the thought process these women experience as they manage their careers. This type of inquiry may also reveal the prevalent role risk taking plays in the advancement of African

American women who reveal a greater need to take risks if they hope to advance

(Gamble & Turner, 2015). Interestingly the study also reveals they become increasingly

willing to take risks after they suffer setbacks in the work place. Future research into this

phenomenon may reveal how this relates to the strong desire of Black women to attain a

leadership position reported by Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns (2015).

   Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to gender. Beckwith et

al. (2016) finds that African American women must overcome more obstacles than other

women to attain leadership positions and suggest further research on how they meet and

overcome these challenges to become successful. I suggest further research to determine

if the challenges faced by African American women ascribed to gender vary in intensity

and frequency by region of the United States. Sims' 2004 finds geographical differences

play a role in gender and racially stereotypical descriptions and perceptions. In addition

to geographical data, variances by industry could provide important data relating to

African American women and their experiences in predominantly Black enterprises.

Future research should examine geographically or by industry, whether the challenges

based on race are more prominent among males as in my study, or females working in

predominantly Black enterprises?

   Because on African American women managers do not align with traditional

leadership characteristics, Beckwith et al. (2016) also recommends future research and

how stereotypical beliefs affect their ascension into executive positions. Additional

studies reveal that males with conservative views of the role of females are less likely to

appoint them to non-traditional positions and are less likely to approve of them as leaders (Beckwith et al., 2016; Vial et al., 2015).

Challenges in a predominantly Black enterprise due to race. Purdie-Vaughns (2008) recommends research into the question of "what group is ignored?" She writes that this question may be even more important than the general nature of the discrimination by identifying the factors which produce intersectional marginalization. I suggest this is evidenced by the unique journey described in my study by dark skinned versus light skinned African American women where perceptions of discrimination by other racial groups, as well as intra-racial discrimination vary in intensity and frequency creating unique experiences among intra-racial subgroups as African American girls become women. This research is supported by Sims (2004) who notes changing trends in colorism among light and dark-skinned Blacks. Another area for future research should explore how Black women describe themselves as being second guessed and feel that they are constantly monitored as they perform their jobs; we should gain an understanding of how they cope with this circumstance and manage to succeed is recommended by Hall et al. (2012).

Leadership experiences with subordinates informed by gender and race. Almost all of the participants in my study describe a two-tier system of leadership practice with nuances that are unique to African American women as double minorities. Sims (2004) recommends further research to address discrimination and intra-racial privilege among homogenous groups in the workplace. They describe how as African American women managers working in a predominantly Black enterprise, they must

assert themselves, using a dogmatic approach physically and verbally to establish authority over subordinates. This may produce a conundrum as Hall et al. discover in their 2012 study Black women in leadership feel they undeservingly gain a reputation for being hostile; this should be investigated further. The participants in my study say they must also have multiple means of accomplishing tasks in order to avoid becoming vulnerable to fickle employees. To this end, they learn how to perform tasks and monitor tasks closely to ensure they are completed as required. On the other hand, the participants describe how they must be deliberate to grow personal relationships with their subordinates if they hope to gain participation from these workers and build a successful team dynamic.

Future research should also explore whether younger, less experienced African American women managers tend to be more dogmatic and progressively move toward more of a coaching style and at what stage of their career does this occur? Additionally, I suggest research into how Black women managers cope with the extreme demands they endure to successfully manage staff. Vial et al. (2015) and Hall et al. (2012) and Hall (2018) suggest an analysis of these power differentials among non-traditional leaders and how it affects the frailty of their corporate leadership experience and satisfaction.

Further career goals as an African American woman manager. Additionally, nine of 10 participants in my study hold advanced degrees; many of these women obtained Master's degrees in their thirties to early forties. Further research could provide valuable insight into the exact motivations that motivated African American women managers and leaders to pursue an advanced degree. Hall (2018) suggests socialization

and education helped African American women learn how to cope with stressful situations in the workplace and suggests future research on pursuing intergenerational dialogues for the upcoming generations of African American women aspiring for a career in management.

Additionally, the theme of further career goals as an African American woman manager in my study could be further investigated by discovering what are the intended career uses for the advanced degree sought by these women: same field advancement, intercompany advancement, career change or ownership? Several women in my study ultimately seek ownership as a remedy to career aspirations; Livingston et al., (2012) suggests further research into dual jeopardy and it's limits to advancement for Black women in the workplace and may make them seek other avenues.

Colorism in childhood and adolescent experiences. Almost all participants in my study reveal how colorism had a dramatic effect on their self-esteem during their childhood and adolescent years. Keith (2009) recommends further research into how colorism is addressed in the home during childhood. Gamble & Turner (2015) discovers that African American women managers in their study attribute their success to the manner in which they were raised. Future research should investigate whether colorism during childhood and adolescence is as pronounced for adults under the age of forty?

Additionally, several participants expressed how their college experience including more direct discrimination based on skin tone. Future studies should explore among adults and current college students whether skin tone stratification remains as conspicuous as relayed by the participants in my study who would have been college

aged in the late 70s to early 90s? Research is also suggested to examine how parents

teach children to compensate for "stigmatized" features (Keith, 2009).

Colorism in daily adult experiences based on skin tone. As adults, my

participants relay that colorism lessens in their daily lives. Several darker complexioned

participants express an increased confidence and greater level of comfortability in their

skin as well a higher sense of self-esteem. Sims (2009) suggests further research into

intra-racial inequity and the causes of power dynamics in homogenous communities.

Several lighter complexioned participants convey an increased awareness of the nuances

of being light skinned and experiencing the double-edged sword of suffering some of the

same discrimination by Whites as other Blacks, but not being accepted as being

marginalized by other African Americans. Further research should delve deeply into

these complex relationships and what causes increases in self-esteem for darker

complexioned African American women; this is affirmed by Burton (2016) who argues

the need to study how stereotypes affect women's leadership development as well as

examine gender construction in a way that considers more than a single component.

Additionally, studies should investigate the catalysts and effects of the new found dual

dilemma described by two of the three lighter complexioned African American women.

Intra-racial discrimination from subordinates at work based on skin tone.

Further research should be conducted to determine how prevalent intra-racial

discrimination from subordinates is in a predominantly Black enterprise based on skin

tone. Future research may provide a framework for discussions among African

Americans which honestly assess the impact of intra-racial inequity in the workplace

(Sims, 2012). All participants in my study explained they do not experience this type of discrimination from subordinates. This data is discrepant to other findings and an attempt to replicate could provide valuable contextual information and add a fresh perspective to future research. Future research may also consider the subordinate perspective and whether these individuals believe they respond perceive supervisors any differently in relation to skin tone. Hall (2018) also suggest a broader exploration of various components of the Black community based on the many diverse aspects of its members.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The results of the current study potentially affect positive social change on individual, family, corporate and societal levels. The findings of this study contribute to the field of knowledge in the areas of: gender bias, race bias, and intra-racial discrimination by exploring the experiences of African American women managers in predominantly Black work environments based on the intersection of race and gender. The current study could affect research in any number of business, educational and societal research areas and researchers may attempt to replicate the study for transferability. Research reveals colorism remains pervasive in the Black community and Black women in particular have been affected individually and collectively as a result of this discrimination (Hall, 2017). The current study offers critical insight into the experiences of African American women managers providing insight into the circumstances that produce a capable although non-traditional leadership style. A better understanding of African American women managers and their experiences can help

companies better utilize this valuable member of the work force as suggested by Stainback, Kleiner, and Skaggs (2016), who report that studies show the workplace to be persistent in perpetuating gender inequality, with the power of those in leadership easily constrained in instances where they tend to defy institutional norms. Greater understanding and less constraint may yield excellent managerial results.

Individual level. My study offers corroboration which may allow individuals to recognize discrimination in the work place, directed toward African American women based on gender, race, or skin tone and how it affects the work environment. In this case, it also affects the ability of these women to be effective at their job. African American women continue to fight to overcome racial and gender stereotypes by working hard, producing high quality results and are still overlooked for positions as they struggle to build their careers (Hall et al., 2012). This is partly attributable to individuals who are not open to diverse styles of leadership and penalize African American women because they do not represent characteristics of the typical leader in an American corporation.

Individuals could become catalysts for positive social change by acknowledging gender and racial biases and developing a greater awareness of the need to implement personal practices which cause them to fairly and honestly assess African American women and their capabilities. Carbado et al. (2013) describes in their study how important it is to understand the intersectional experiences of dual minorities to better comprehend how these multiple identities inform the way these women conduct themselves in business relationships with others. Additionally, individuals with executive power could offer more opportunities to deserving African American women

managers who, are normally become effective leaders when given the opportunity according to previous studies (Beckwith et al., 2016).

Family level. Skin tone stratification process which begins in the home according to the vast majority of my participants. Hall (2016) reveals a discovery that Black children are exposed to racial dynamics at a young age. This may include teaching Black children how to behave around White people and Sims (2004) finds it also includes socialization which provides advantage to lighter complexioned Blacks at home and in elementary school. Several participants in the current study describe preferential treatment toward lighter complexioned siblings with European features over darker complexioned siblings with more Afrocentric features. Research shows children who are considered more attractive or possess a preferred skin tone may receive better parenting than those who are considered less desirable (Adams et al., 2016). The consequences of these skin tone bias may produce different developmental outcomes for the children involved with both siblings experiencing negative consequences such as a sense of entitlement or low self-esteem. The psychological effects of gendered racism should be researched further to realize the impact this phenomenon has on African American women of all educational levels, classes and complexions (Allen & Lewis, 2016).

Family members can become agents of social change by acknowledging personal bias toward one complexion or another and working to mitigate discriminatory parenting practices. Parents should emphasize and personify family unity and embrace the heterogeneity of all family members. They should also practice educational awareness of the contributions of Black leaders of various hues and practice behaviors designed to

enhance self-esteem such as positive images of Black people of all complexions in the home; education and positive racial recognition have been demonstrated to have positive effects on African Americans of all complexions (Adams et al., 2016).

Organizational level. The findings of my study provide suggestive evidence for organizations to reduce gender and racial bias against African American women by utilizing assessment tools which help remove inherent bias which may result from deeply embedded stereotypical belief systems which too often mirror societal expectations based on the intersection of race and gender (Bowleg & Bauer, 2016). Corporations can consider a new baseline for hiring qualifications and consider how their current leadership definitions and expectations serve to reinforce the masculine, White male dominated stereotypical characteristics which have been the litmus for leadership quality in the past. Although leadership qualities may differ, corporations must address office cultures which consider stereotypical traits that are feminine to be inappropriate to leadership rather than positive and vital (Burton & Weiner, 2016).

Corporations can also enact programs which explore how members of various groups view themselves as leaders as suggested by Burton and Weiner (2016). This inquiry may provide valuable insight and feedback which enhances aspiring leaders as well as executive management to better realize, appreciate and agree on a career management course which provides opportunity for leadership from various groups to advance. Additionally, the criteria used in employee reviews should reflect a diverse input to avoid the tendency to reward leadership based on what the reviewer considers typical (Rosette et al., 2012). Corporate policies can also include a system which

encourages women to speak up when they perceive discrimination and gives serious consideration to accusations that they make. Diversity training and human relations policies which reflect the diverse population of the United States and represent the concerns of every group could provide valuable in preventing lawsuits for discrimination (Sims, 2009).

Societal level. My study presents suggestive evidence for society to display support for a major group of its members who continue to be disenfranchised by expressing support and a strong desire for inclusion of this group. Discrimination continues to exist in the workplace despite anti-discrimination laws (Beckwith et al., 2016) and for this to change, society must become intolerant of discrimination publicly and privately. Similar to the #MeToo movement, all people must be called upon to speak out against discriminatory practices against African American women as well as colorism among Blacks. The movement to enhance appreciation for diversity can begin at home. Educators can be watchful for the nuances of gender, racial and skin tone stratification they know is prevalent among young African American children. Culturally, there can be an ongoing effort to expose citizens to varying thoughts, ideas, cultures and characteristics. And businesses should reflect the ever-changing dynamic of American culture which features diverse people and is comprised historically and currently of many great African American women leaders. This can be aided by media which displays diverse views, opinions, and groups.

Methodological, theoretical, and/or empirical implications. This study is framed by three key concepts that focus on the challenges facing African American

women managers in leadership roles within predominantly Black work environments: Essed's (1991) concept of *intersectionality of gender and race*, also coined by the seminal author with the term *gendered racism*; and Turner's (1995) concepts of *intra-racial discrimination* and *colorism*. The purpose of this qualitative study using an exploratory, multiple-case research design is to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. The research which provides the basis for the conceptual framework of this study is critical based on previous studies which reveal the career trajectory of the African American women is unique because of her status as a double minority (O'Brien et al., 2014). The findings of this empirical investigation are aimed at advancing knowledge on intersectionality and intra-racial discrimination, and to contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. The empirical evidence presented in this multiple case study provides a reliable research method for data collection into leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. The selected method of data collection also exceeds typical studies because it analyzes more than a single stigma (McCoy & Major, 2003) which is critical to understand the intersectionality of race and gender which forms the reality in which African American women live (Hall et al., 2012). This method has been refined to add rigor and contribute credible results (Yin, 2017). By selecting 10 participants, this study has an increased possibility of revealing variances and unique occurrences.

This study features discrepant data among the participants, which revealed that all ten participants did not believe there was intra-racial discrimination towards them in their workplace may provide new insight and a fresh perspective to recommendations for future research. This process of analyzing and presenting discrepant data evidence in a multiple case study demonstrates the complexity of responding to the inductive and deductive evaluation process of qualitative data (Stake, 2013). For example, the changing dynamic of colorism for adults as compared to adolescents reveals an increased awareness by lighter and darker skinned African American women managers. The psychological effect of gendered racism, raised by Hall (2017) and incorporated into the conceptual framework of this study describes the effects of skin tone stratification to be more severe among African American women than African American men. In this study, darker skin, which has been associated with aggression and being less attractive appeared to be a positive attribute for African American women managers who seek to establish themselves as assertive, pragmatic leaders; to this effect, several participants describe this characteristic as empowering. Meanwhile, lighter complexioned African American women managers face a double-edged sword where they are not accepted as firm leaders by subordinates and they are rejected by White society as well. These findings are not supported by seminal literature however, discrepant data is not to be ignored or considered outliers (Maxwell, 2008) and can become the foundation of a rival interpretation of the assumptions within the scholarly literature (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017).

The emergent themes presented in this study are the participant's experiences as African American women managers in predominantly Black enterprises. The recommendations contained in Chapter 5 are the product of multiple case study interviews, field notes, cross-case synthesis and triangulation. The multiple-case study method is not used for this purpose but to augment external validity and cross-case comparison, safeguard against observer bias, (Stake, 2013) and advance theory extension. *which* does not target representativeness as a relationship of sample and population (Ridder, 2017). This study is a theory extension study. Extension studies not only provide replication evidence but also extend the results of prior studies in new and theoretically important directions (Bonett, 2012).   This research is significant to theory in that it made an original contribution of qualitative data exploring the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work enterprises, and thus, extending knowledge within the study's Conceptual Framework.

Conclusions

There has been a scarcity of research into the identification and stereotyping of African American women based on the categories of skin tone stratification and leadership although researchers increasingly acknowledge the need for more research into how Black women use their multiple identities in work place interactions (Corlett & Mavin, 2014; Williams, 2014).   Researchers are recently questioned whether African American woman managers are at greater risk for negative evaluations as leaders working in predominantly Black work environments similar to White work places

because they do not conform to traditional gender standards (Hall & Crutchfield, 2018; Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012; Rosette et al., 2016). Such intra-racial discrimination may have critical implications on how African American women managers lead (O'Brien, Franco, & Dunn, 2014; Vial, Napier, & Brescoll, 2016), colorism (Mirara et al., 2013; Sims, 2012), and intra-racial discrimination (Hall; 2016; Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010) even within work environments that are predominantly Black.

The leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in a predominantly Black work place were explored in the present study. This study promoted social change by sensitizing predominantly Black work places on issues of gender equity among African American women and how intra-racial work contexts influence African American women's management experiences (Cassidy, Quinn, & Humphreys, 2011).

The women in this study played an important role in understanding the experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. They provide critical insight into their struggles to attain career success even in work environments where they are not the minority. Despite the many obstacles they face as they seek to legitimize their leadership, they remain undaunted and continue to persevere by obtaining higher education, displaying a willingness to accept various horizontal positions, learn various duties and a being amenable to continue to work to establish a rapport with employees who at times doubt their leadership qualifications and ability.

Although African American women continue to overcome and achieve, more research is necessary to create a corporate culture which better utilizes the valuable skill sets they have honed through their academic, cultural, social and career experiences in order to advance business culture in the United States. Hopefully, this will allow society and corporations to properly mentor future African American women business leaders and educate Whites and African Americans of the subtle nature of discrimination which continues to purvey itself in mainstream corporate America as well as predominantly Black work place based on gender, race, and skin tone. Thanks to the participants of this study, researchers have a strong platform upon which to build a body of knowledge which accurately reveals the perspective and experiences of the African American woman in management.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Age:

Do you identify as an African American woman?

Years in the position of Manager at your job:

No. of employees under your supervision:

Is your job at a predominantly Black enterprise?

Relational status
Single
Married
Divorced
Widowed
Cohabiting

Educational level
Bachelor's degree
Master's degree
PhD or JD
Associate's degree
High school diploma

1)Can you describe your career trajectory as an African American woman manager?
2)Since coming into the field of management and leadership in your present job position and as an African American woman manager in a predominantly Black Enterprise, please tell me about your greatest challenges at work relative to issues of gender.
3) Since coming into the field of management and leadership in your present job position and as an African American woman manager in a predominantly Black Enterprise, please tell me about your greatest challenges at work relative to issues of race.
4)Reflecting on those leadership experiences, could you please describe how they influenced your way of thinking and/ or your approach to leading your employees?
5) What are your future aspirations as an African American woman manager?
6) Thinking about what you have said, is there anything else you would like to say to make sure that I understand fully what you have told me?

To ensure that participants had a similar interpretation of the concept of race as the interview continues, I provide the following definition to all participants:

"Race is usually defined as a social group or category of people that share some biological characteristics. Racial groups differ according to these characteristics. Skin color remains a primary characteristic that Americans use to place people into racial groups. In addition to skin color, features such as hair texture and face-shape have also been used to classify people into races".

7) Please list three adjectives that were typically used to describe Black women by other African Americans?
8) What skin tone best describes you?
9) Growing up as an African American girl, what messages did you receive (and from whom) about skin tone?
10) What lessons have you learned about skin color and tone?
11) In what ways do you believe your skin tone affected your employment as a woman manager?
12) In what ways do you believe your skin tone affected your role as a woman manager with your subordinates?

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Recruitment Letter to Participate in the Study

African American Women Managers' Experiences in Predominantly Black Work

Environments: A Multiple Case Study

Re: Welcome package

[02/11/2018]

Dear xxxxxxx,

First, I would like to thank you for your interest in this study. My name is Ray Muhammad. I am conducting a research study on the African American Women Managers' Experiences in Predominantly Black Work Environments.

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to gain deeper understanding of the leadership experiences of African American women managers employed in predominantly Black work environments. To address this gap on experiences of the agentic African American woman leader and her experience as a double minority in a predominately Black workplace, and consistent with the qualitative paradigm, a multiple case study design will be used to meet the purpose of the study. Each participant will be considered a separate case study.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you meet all the following criteria:
1. You are over the age of 18.
2. You are an African American Manager overseeing predominantly African American company.
3. You have occupied a position of management in a predominantly African American for at least two years.
4. You are willing and able to participate in a 45-minute to 1-hour recorded Skype interview.

If you meet these criteria, please continue reading; if you do not meet any criteria above, you are not eligible for this study. Thank you for your time.

Interviews will be the primary source of data collection. In addition to a recorded Skype session, I will take notes based on my observation. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and you are free to end the interview at any time.

For your convenience, I have included an informed consent form. If you can take part in the study, I will need this form filled out and signed before we can conduct the recorded Skype session. When you respond with your interest in taking part in the study, you may send me any questions or concerns you have about the informed consent form. Once you are comfortable, please sign the informed consent form and send to me via email. At that point, we will schedule your interview at an agreed upon time.

Remember taking part is completely voluntary. Signing the informed consent form does not mandate you in any way. I will confirm your agreement to conduct the interview prior to asking any questions.

Finally, after the session is transcribed, I will contact you to review the written report. You can provide comments and clarify any statements made in the document during this time.

Thank you for your time and effort,

Ray Muhammad, (Researcher)
PhD Student – Walden University