2019

Adolescent Girls of Color and Leadership Development

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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The Office of the Provost

Walden University
2019

Abstract

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by

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2013

BS, Norfolk State University, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract

Adolescent girls of color (GOC) experience significant changes in social expectations during puberty based on gender and racial inequity. This divergence usually changes the trajectory for GOC relative to leadership development and may affect their career choices, life decisions, and overall directions for growth. This qualitative study explored the experiences of women of color (WOC) who hold senior leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. Critical theory grounded this study as its aim is to identify marginalization of any kind and determine ways to free those who are oppressed. Research questions focused on the perceived challenges the participants experienced during adolescence and the intervention strategies that aided them in overcoming those challenges. A qualitative case study used purpose-driven semi structured interviews of 4 WOC who hold senior leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. Data were coded, categorized, and analyzed to uncover themes. The study results revealed four themes based on data analysis of the participants' responses: (a) lack of representation, (b) lack of direction, (c) racial and gender discrimination, and (d) lack of collaboration. Identifying strategies that aid GOC in overcoming gender and racial inequity relative to leadership development may support policy creation that helps provide funding for nonprofit leaders whose mission is to prepare adolescent GOC for leadership. This study may also initiate conversations about how the intersection of gender and race adds additional barriers for adolescent GOC as they are shaping their identities.

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Dedication

I cannot imagine completing a task as daunting as this without a support system. I would like to dedicate this project to several angels in heaven and many here on earth. Initially, I must honor my bio dad, the late Clyde J. Rooks, and my bonus dad, the late John B. Price: two of the best fathers in the world who shaped me to become the strong woman I am today. I honor the late Bertha Talton, Bertha Talton Mickel, and Momma Rayne Jones Fultz for adopting me in love and giving me a family that continues to love, guide, and support me. I honor the late Dr. Sarah E. Moten, my aunt, who inspired me to be the best I can be. I thank, honor, and adore Aunt Edna Talton who has walked me through every challenge I have ever experienced. I thank my mommies, Angela Grimes and Everline Sykes, for the guidance and direction I appreciate and need. Finally, this research study is dedicated to my baby boy, Briaun Rooks. Thank you for encouraging me when I wanted to give up. Thank you for supporting my efforts to complete such a daunting task. Without you by my side, I know I would not have finished. Finally, this research study is dedicated to every girl who has had challenges with receiving the leadership development needed to become world changers. The world is yours. If I can accomplish this task, you too can accomplish anything you set your mind to.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge those who have been supportive for me throughout this process: God for strength, comfort, and direction. Dr. Francisco for being more than a committee chairperson. I appreciate the phone calls, the text messages, and the words of encouragement when I wanted to quit. I would not have been able to complete this process without your support. I would like to thank Dr. McAllister for helping me structure my methodology to align with this study. You stepped in at a time when I needed your assistance the most. I would like to thank Walden University for everything! The mission of this great university is everything I needed to transition and to restart my doctoral journey! I am grateful for The Hampton Green Team at Faneuil Inc., whom I supervise daily. Thank you for supporting me on this journey and for continuing to work hard in my absence. I must acknowledge my Freedom Life Church family! I am grateful for the love, support, and encouragement I needed throughout this process. Finally, I must acknowledge my dog Breezie Jess! Thank you for licking my tears when I was sad, pulling your blanket close to me, and lying beside me during the late nights. Your presence was necessary. There is nothing like the love from a fur baby!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Prior to puberty, both girls and boys believe and react favorably to leadership roles and responsibilities because prepubescent youth generally share similar traits, characteristics, and training (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). When they reach adolescence; parents, schoolteachers, and mentors train them according to stereotypical gender roles. Hoy and Kennedy (2008), Archard (2012), and Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, and Nakkula (2016) assert that girls of color (GOC) experience unique challenges related to leadership development associated with the marginalization of gender and race. Puberty triggers systematic discrepancies in the lives of boys, girls, and GOC, although there is progress in many facets around the world. The result is usually better opportunities for boys, limitations for girls, and further limitations for GOC (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008; Archard 2012; Clonan-Roy et al., 2016).

Without a positive intervention strategy, GOC potentially become women challenged with identifying their leadership skills and abilities. The Title IX Education Amendment of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination of gender in any federally funded educational program, institution, or activity (Rose, 2015). Prior to this amendment, women were limited in their admission to colleges and universities. They were not allowed to participate in certain organized sports activities. In addition, they were not considered for leadership roles in most professions. This legislation for educational reform attempted to level the gender divide in the educational system. It improved many educational outcomes for girls in the school setting. However, those

improvements in the educational system relative to gender equality did not translate into women attaining leadership positions or employment in the fields of math and science.

Although educational reform attributed to the successful educational outcomes for girls, it did not attribute to educational outcomes in the area of leadership development for adolescent GOC (Archard, 2012). GOC continue to experience challenges related to the intersectionality of gender and race despite the Title IX legislation that was established almost six decades ago (Archard, 2012). A report from the U.S. Office of Global Women's Issues denotes that the Let Girls Learn initiative and the DREAMS (determined, resilient, empowered, AIDS-free, mentored, safe) initiatives were developed from this legislation (U.S. Department of State, 2016). These initiatives address societal norms that preclude adolescent girls from receiving equal access to leadership development. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) and Archard (2012) assert that initiatives are essential. Yet, they alone are not enough to ensure adolescent GOC are able to overcome their perceived challenges related to leadership development.

Few initiatives specifically prescribe programs for adolescent GOC because marginalization often precludes them from obtaining access to targeted leadership development that incorporates strategies to address their perceived challenges relative to gender and race. In addition, fewer studies acknowledge how gender and race play a role in leadership development for adolescent GOC. The intersection of race and gender contributes to their experiences as a marginalized group. Sumner, Burrow, and Hill (2018) assert that marginalization is the exclusion of a minority or subgroup where their needs are ignored or are not understood. Marginalization has several properties, including

separation, as it involves boundaries adolescent GOC use to maintain their identity (Sumner et al., 2018). Often, their identities are formed based on cultural ideas about what it means to be a part of a social group. Race and gender are social groups that adolescent GOC are born into. Their self-image, self-esteem, and values are tied to their learned behaviors about those social groups. Many of their behavioral patterns exist based on stereotypes and outside influences from those who rarely understand or identify with their experiences (Sumner et al., 2018; Acker, 2006; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Those influences often lead adolescent GOC to believe they are not smart enough or good enough to identify as leaders.

Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) denote issues relating to minimal studies surrounding the marginalization of race and gender and its relationship with the lack of targeted leadership development for women of color (WOC). Furthermore, fewer studies mention the need to develop GOC's leadership skills during adolescence in order to minimize their perceived challenges prior to adulthood. This marginalization of race and gender begins during childhood. GOC must be presented with leadership opportunities and leadership development during adolescence to maximize their opportunities as WOC leaders (Acker, 2006; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

Critical Theory and Marginalization

Critical theory is the conceptual paradigm that framed the constructs of this study: the oppression and the marginalization of adolescent GOC relative to leadership development. Freire (2000) and Zou and Trueba, (2002) assert that critical theory exposes ways an unjust society uses a set of ideas to convince people that marginalization and

oppression are normal. Critical theory also aims to analyze competing interests between groups in a society. The goal is to discover that oppression and marginalization are not normal; there is a need for change, and change can happen (Acker, 2006). Critical theory allows people to identify those groups who gain, who lose, who benefit, and who struggle. Identifying those groups is the first step to accepting the need for change. Unfortunately, the identification of the privileged usually revolves around race, class, gender, and sexuality (Zou & Trueba, 2002). GOC experience the marginalization of race, class, gender, and sexuality, but for the purposes of this study, gender and race are the competing interests.

Perceptions of what makes an effective leader may play a role in how adolescent GOC are viewed as candidates for leadership roles and leadership development. Festekjian, Tram, Murray, Sy, and Huynh (2014) assert that perceptions of leadership and who should be considered leaders are often influenced by a person's race and gender. These thought processes may have implications for further research to determine how to incorporate leadership opportunities and leadership development for adolescent GOC as they are judged based on stereotypes relative to the marginalization of race and gender. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical data and qualitative research on how the intersection of race and gender affect adolescent GOC in the area of leadership development (Archard, 2012; Festekjian et al., 2014).

Chapter 1 consists of the background of the research topic, the purpose of this research study, and the problem statement. I also cover the research questions that guide the study, the conceptual framework that grounds the study, the nature of the research,

and definitions of essential terms. In addition, in Chapter 1, I provide assumptions, the scope of delimitations, and limitations of the study. I conclude this chapter by identifying the significance of the research study, the implications for social change, and a synopsis of the main points and findings.

Background of the Study

Adolescence is a crucial time in a girl's life. It is a time when girls experience physical, mental, and emotional changes unique to their specific situations (Archard, 2012; U.S. Department of State, 2016). Globally, adolescent girls live in poverty, are forced to marry and birth children, or they are not provided access to a quality education. Thirty-one million girls are not registered in a structured educational system, and 250 million adolescent girls live in impoverished communities U.S. Department of State, 2016). A large portion of adolescent girls live in areas of conflict related to gender-based violence. Many more are affected with HIV/AIDS and are not able to acquire skills to become financially self-sufficient.

Adolescent GOC struggle with the aforementioned areas in addition to marginalization associated with the intersection of gender and race. Jacobs (2016) asserts that adolescent GOC are under researched in the area of social sciences and education because they are usually grouped with adolescent girls or youth in general. In doing so, their identities are tied with all girls and all youth. However, adolescent GOC's identities are shaped by their unique economic, social, and psychological circumstances. Attempting to group them together minimizes the unique challenges adolescent GOC experience. For example, Jacobs (2016) and Zou and Trueba (2002) assert that adolescent

GOC receive harsher punishments in schools for asserting similar behavioral patterns as their White peers. Adolescent GOC are twice as likely to be suspended in every state. Globally, adolescent GOC are 5.5 times more likely to be suspended for behavioral issues left to individual interpretation (Morris & Perry, 2017). Morris (2016), Wun (2016), and Morris and Perry (2017) assert that there are further significant disparities relative to the discipline rates of adolescent GOC. They are 8.5 times more likely than White girls to be suspended in states like Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois. Even more alarming, in an area like Washington, D.C.—where GOC represent 73% of all girls enrolled in school—94% are suspended (Morris, 2016; Wun, 2016; & Morris & Perry, 2017). This equates to GOC being 17.8% more likely to be suspended than their White female peers (Morris & Perry, 2017). Additional barriers exist when discussing GOC and discipline in schools. One is the bias related to stereotypes relegated to race and gender. For example, adolescent GOC are viewed as being angry, aggressive, promiscuous, and hypersexualized (Jacobs, 2016; Zou &Trueba, 2002). This bias is harmful because school officials' views of adolescent GOC are reshaped to their detriment In addition to the above stereotypes, school administrators also set the bar much lower academically for GOC than for their White peers (Jacobs, 2016; Zou &Trueba, 2002).

Arguably, all girls are depicted unequally in the media. Most visual images are relegated to small-framed, blond-haired, blue-eyed, White young women. Every White girl will not identify with all aspects of these images, but they will with some. Adolescent GOC have fewer positive images replicated in the media. Jacobs (2016) and Zou and Trueba (2002) assert that in addition to not having many visual images to identify with,

GOC are also depicted as overly sexual, mentally unstable, loud, and uneducated. Their White peers are depicted as stable, smart, and docile (Jacobs, 2016; Zou &Trueba, 2002). Adolescent GOC struggle with their identities differently than their White peers do.

Adolescence is a critical period and an opportune time to equip adolescent GOC with leadership development through targeted, structured, and introspective educational programs (Archard, 2012; Archard, 2013; Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Without targeted leadership development, adolescent GOC become WOC who struggle with identifying their leadership abilities. Furthermore, they are less likely to transition into leadership roles at Fortune 500 companies. However, empowered, educated, and well-developed adolescent GOC can reshape the current disadvantages that perpetuate cycles of poverty, low self-esteem and self-image, and eventually the identity crisis of WOC (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008).

According to the U.S. Department of State (2016), gender and racial disparities contribute to the lower economic status of adolescent GOC and, later in life, WOC. WOC represent less than 3% of board of directors in Fortune 500 companies (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 2016). Less than 8% of the legal profession is represented by WOC (AAUW, 2016). WOC are historically underrepresented in the science and math fields (AAUW, 2016). Additionally, WOC have faced the hardest challenges climbing the corporate ladder and are chastised more than their peers when they make mistakes (AAUW, 2016).

My goal was to advance scholarly knowledge about the challenges GOC experience during puberty, relative to leadership development. Those challenges translate

into the challenges WOC experience in their pursuit of leadership opportunities in their careers. In this study, I uncovered themes that may promote further research that can identify intervention strategies to aid adolescent GOC in acquiring targeted leadership development. Targeted intervention programs may assist adolescent GOC in overcoming barriers associated with the intersection of gender and race that they experience in schools, at home, and in their extracurricular activities during puberty.

Problem Statement

Wilton, Good, Moss-Racusin, and Sanchez (2014) assert that WOC's inability to achieve in leadership roles based on risks associated with bias, stereotypes, and preconceived notions relative to their race and gender. These struggles may begin in adolescence because this is when girls struggle with their identities; adolescent GOC struggle with their identities in unique ways. Morris (2016) found that adolescent GOC experience race and gender-based oppression. They are affected by implicit policies relative to dress codes, subjective behavioral patterns, and the misrepresentation of Black femininity. Morris (2016) asserts that stereotypical Black femininity is described as combative, loud, and sassy behavior. Adolescent GOC are disciplined more harshly while attempting to navigate the emotional challenges that puberty initiates. Adolescent GOC begin to recognize the disparities that exist between them and their White peers. Adolescent GOC are torn between becoming independent leaders and responding to more traditional feminine roles (U.S. Department of State, 2016). In addition, few leadership development programs are targeted for adolescent GOC. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) posit that GOC lack educational, social, and leadership development at a time they may benefit

from it the most. In addition, the challenges they experience associated with marginalization of race and gender are not being acknowledged.

Most prepubescent girls are on track developmentally with their male peers, but changes in social structure appear when girls enter adolescence (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). During that time, parents, teachers, and mentors begin to view them differently. When young girls transition into puberty, their identities are shaped differently than their male peers (Hoyt &Kennedy, 2008; Festekijan et al., 2014). Festekjian et al. (2014) assert that a greater division exists in the way adolescent GOC are perceived and developed as opposed to their White peers. This division usually results in greater possibilities of success for boys and greater restrictions for girls. There are even greater restrictions for GOC (U.S. Department of State, 2016). Gender and racial disparities contribute to the lower economic status of WOC (U.S. Department of State, 2016). These disparities also contribute to additional disadvantages: socially, psychologically, and culturally. Adolescent GOC become WOC who are underrepresented in high -paying careers, land and property ownership, senior management positions in Fortune 500 companies, and political participation (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Because WOC leaders experience both racial and gender discrimination through isolation and exclusion in the workforce, they do not obtain the same level of leadership development opportunities their peers do within their respective organizations (Johnson & Thomas, 2012). WOC's lack of targeted leadership development translates into an inability to gain leadership roles.

WOC held just 3.8% of the board seats in Fortune 500 companies even though women, overall, make up 20.2% of those board seats (Catalyst, 2018). Reportedly, 318

companies reported no WOC as corporate officers. In addition, WOC earn 63 cents for every dollar of their White female counterpart's earnings. White women gained a surplus in their adjusted gross income, which was roughly 29%. On the other hand, WOC had an adjusted gross income of less than 19% (Catalyst, 2018). WOC made up 7.1% of 115th U.S. Congress; 105 members were women and 38 of those were WOC. The low representation of WOC in politics could translate into a lack of policy creation benefiting WOC and GOC in a multitude of issues plagued by the intersection of race and gender. If adolescent GOC can benefit from targeted leadership development, they may enter adulthood and the workforce with skills and abilities that could help them overcome gaps in wages, political participation, and leadership roles.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of WOC who hold senior leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. This study acknowledges the challenges these WOC experienced as adolescent GOC related to leadership development and the intervention strategies they benefited from to overcome these challenges to become senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. This study filled a gap in the literature about the unique challenges' adolescent GOC experience relative to leadership development. The scope of this study was unique because I explored the experiences of WOC leaders who overcame challenges with leadership development during adolescence. I also explored the marginalization of gender and race in the context of leadership development. Leadership and leadership development were defined as positions of power held by White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

Men (Northouse, 2013). Over time, leadership and leadership development were defined as characteristics and traits that could be learned or developed (Northouse, 2013; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Leadership development can incorporate specific skills, characteristics, and abilities a person can acquire over time. Adolescence is an opportune time to introduce those leadership skills to GOC because it is a time of inquiry, growth, and development. It is also a time when adolescent GOC may benefit from targeted leadership development to help them identify themselves as leaders, acquire leadership skills, and develop the leadership skills they may already have. Participants in this study included four WOC who hold senior executive positions in Fortune 500 companies. These women identified having challenges during adolescence relative to leadership development. They engaged in electronic interviews, detailed their unique challenges and triumphs, and provided suggestions for future adolescent GOC who may be experiencing similar issues.

The purpose of this research study was to identify themes that focused on participants' experiences as adolescent GOC. In this research study, I explored how the participants were able to develop leadership skills despite social challenges related to the marginalization of gender and race they experienced. I provided the participants an opportunity to tell their stories of overcoming unique obstacles as adolescent GOC to become executive leaders. They detailed their struggles, trials, and triumphs as they developed in the area of leadership. This research contributes to the body of knowledge about adolescent GOC's experiences as they attempted to gain leadership skills and abilities. Creswell (2007) asserts that qualitative research is the process of inquiring about

a social phenomenon in a natural setting. Therefore, the participants in this study focused on the why or what of this phenomenon based on their experiences.

Research Questions

This case study relied on viewpoints and insights from four WOC who acknowledged having challenges during adolescence related to leadership development. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What types of challenges did WOC experience as adolescent GOC?

RQ2: When WOC were adolescents, how did these challenges influence them in the area of leadership development?

RQ3: What types of leadership development experiences were available to WOC during adolescence in extracurricular activities, electives, and the home?

Conceptual Framework

Critical theory is the conceptual framework for this qualitative inquiry. Critical theory has been dissected since its inception in the early 1930s. According to Fischer and Tepe (2011), critical theory has both a narrow and a broad meaning. In the narrow sense, critical theory spans several generations of thoughts from German theorists known as the Frankfurt School (Davidson et al., 2006; Müller-Doohm, 2017). According to those theorists, critical theory seeks to free humans from all forms of slavery. It also works to create a world that satisfies the needs of all humans equally. In the broader sense, critical theory has merged to connect with various social movements that identify the marginalization of any individual or group. Its aim in the broad or narrow sense is to identify oppression and work to free those who are oppressed (Davidson et al., 2006).

According to Freire (2000), marginalization is one form of oppression. Adolescent GOC experience marginalization associated with both gender and race. Chaplin et al. (2006) suggest that girls undergo physical changes in their hormones and their body that may add stressors associated with their self-discovery. Adolescent GOC are attempting to navigate between defining their identity and navigating challenges associated with race and gender discrimination. Furthermore, adolescent GOC are overwhelmed as they are also attempting to frame these challenges while attempting to identify with White middle-class femininity. Cole and Zucker (2007) and Francombe-Webb and Silk (2016) assert that White middle-class femininity consists of women who follow directions, who are docile, who are small-framed with straight hair, who are goal-oriented, and who ascribe to sexual purity. In addition, these women sustain traditional gender roles where a man is in charge; they also are perceived as passive, attractive, and great mothers (Cole & Zucker, 2007; Francombe-Webb & Silk, 2016).

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research is essential in understanding the experiences or phenomena of its participants. Creswell (2009) and Yin (2011) assert that qualitative research is a method of inquiry where researchers investigate how individuals or groups attribute meanings to a phenomenon. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is interpretive. As a method, it promotes studies of individuals' lived experiences in their natural setting to make sense of a thing and develop phenomena relative to the participants' meanings. Yin (2011) asserts that qualitative studies incorporate a research process that employs varying measures to

collect, analyze, and articulate the data that could include interviews, field notes, and observations.

In this research study, I employed a qualitative case study approach. I included participant interviews of four WOC, senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies. With a case study method, a researcher identifies an individual's perception of the meaning of an event (Maxwell, 2002). By exploring the participants' views of the same situation, a researcher can articulate what it was like to experience this from their perspective. Baxter and Jack (2008) assert that qualitative case study methodology supplies researchers with instruments to sustain a study with complex phenomena within specific contexts. When the approach is applied correctly, it becomes a valuable method for behavioral science research. It can be used to develop theories to evaluate programs and identify targeted intervention strategies (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In line with Creswell (2007) and Baxter and Jack (2008), I delineated the experiences of the participants, explored the identified problem, and sought to fill a need for further research.

Definitions

Adolescence: A developmental stage where physical, mental, and emotional changes exist. This period generally begins at age 11 or 12 and ends at the legal age of 18 (Chan, Tufte, Cappello, & Williams, 2011; Hoyt &Kennedy, 2008).

Gender identity: The stereotypical gender roles related to leadership and leadership development, not specific to physical gender identity related to the LGBT ideology.

Girls of color (GOC): Girls and young women who are of African descent.

Leader: A WOC who holds a senior leadership role in a Fortune 500 company.

Leadership: Composed of a set of practical skills, traits, and abilities that a person can be taught to ensure they are able to set and achieve goals (Northouse, 2013). In addition, leadership is how those same people use the skills they have learned to help others become leaders.

Leadership development: A program or strategy that helps a person or people acquire and hone leadership skills and abilities.

Marginalization: The exclusion of a minority or subgroup such that their needs are ignored or misunderstood. The minority and subgroup in this particular study are WOC and adolescent GOC.

Women of color (WOC): Adult women who are of African descent.

Assumptions

Patton (2012) asserts that a researcher is an instrument in the data collection process and will have assumptions. A researcher must denote them to ensure participants can review them and make informed decisions when answering the research questions and follow-up questions (Patton, 2012). This qualitative case study was founded on several assumptions. Initially, the participants shared similar experiences as adolescent GOC relative to the acquisition of targeted leadership development. Another assumption was that the participants answered the interview questions in an honest and candid manner; they detailed their experiences and or challenges sufficiently. In addition, the participants were willing to participate in this research study voluntarily, without force, and they did not expect any gains from their participation. Their information was

confidential and only used for the purposes of this research study. The final assumption was that WOC and adolescent GOC still have similar challenges whether in the workplace or school regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are decisions a researcher makes that denotes the confines the study. These delimitations are within the control of the researcher and include the objectives, research questions, and chosen conceptual framework. This research study is delimitated to a small number of participants because only four WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies participated; thus, the results of this study may not be generalizable. Nonetheless, the data add to the body of knowledge about adolescent GOC and their experiences related to leadership development. Another delimitation is the narrowness of the scope of the study. This study focused on four WOC leaders who expressed having challenges during adolescence in the area of leadership development. This further decreases the generalizability across leadership levels. This study excluded White women leaders, White men, and men of color leaders. This study also excluded WOC leaders outside of Fortune 500 companies. I chose only Fortune 500 companies in the United States because WOC leaders are underrepresented in Fortune 500 companies more so than other organizations. This research study consisted of only senior executive WOC leaders who experienced challenges with leadership development during adolescence based on the gap in the literature related to the leadership development of adolescent GOC.

Limitations of the Study

Because qualitative analysis is used to explore the experiences of its participants, there are limitations in its results (Yin, 2011). This qualitative inquiry yields several limitations. I am a marginalized individual from the same background as my participants. I was also a marginalized adolescent GOC who was misunderstood. I was overlooked for leadership roles and leadership opportunities because of race and gender-based oppression. My potential bias could have challenged this study's findings. As the data collection tool in this research, I ensured my bias did not negatively affect the way I collected, coded, and presented the data. Another limitation is the participants' views may contain bias during data collection. However, I uncovered themes that add value to the body of knowledge in this subject area.

An additional limitation of this research study was the use of four WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies. WOC leaders in other fields, such as nonprofit organizations, were excluded from this research study. The data did not yield findings that were generalizable in respect to large populations. However, the research sustained an understanding of the factors that influenced WOC's leadership development process despite their challenges as adolescent GOC.

Significance of the Study

This research study was unique because I explored how gender and racial inequity affect GOC and their access to leadership development through the lens of WOC leaders who have overcome those challenges. This research study was also unique because its participants were once adolescent GOC who experienced gender and racial inequity, but

they overcame those challenges and became senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies. This research filled a gap in understanding adolescent GOC's experiences relative to leadership development. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008), Archard (2012), and Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) assert that the intersectionality of race and gender negatively affect adolescent GOC because they are challenged with balancing their changing hormones while experiencing obstacles socially, economically, and culturally. According to Callahan et al. (2012), adolescent GOC typically experience gender and racial inequity during puberty as they develop educationally, socially, and emotionally. Adolescent GOC have higher suspension rates than their White female peers (Morris & Perry, 2017). They are less likely to be chosen for leadership development programs due to stereotypes that imply adolescent GOC are inferior educationally and behaviorally (Jacobs, 2016).

Adolescent GOC may overcome perceived challenges relative to leadership development by exploring this topic. This area has not been widely studied in relation to adolescent GOC outside of extracurricular sports activities (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008; Jacobs, 2016). This research study can offer recommendations to leaders, mentors, parents, and teachers to aid adolescent GOC in their quest for sustainable leadership development. This research is important because it will explore how race and gender intersect. It also explores how the marginalization of race and gender affects adolescent GOC just as it affects WOC. As the researcher, I explored how WOC leaders' experiences during adolescence influenced their leadership abilities, how they identified as leaders, and their career choices. The goal of the study was to explore a phenomenon that could identify strategies to help adolescent GOC overcome perceived negative

experiences during puberty relative to leadership development. Those obstacles may be minimized if the challenges are identified and explored.

This research study was a qualitative case study approach to explore how gender and race intersect and negatively impact the perceived challenges WOC experience as adolescent GOC in the area of leadership development. The critical theory paradigm grounded this research study. Davidson et al. (2006) asserted that critical theory's initial goal is the progression toward a fair and just society. Its primary concern is to identify injustice and eliminate oppression in any form. Critical theory also denotes that individuals may become agents of change by working to form a liberated society (Davidson et al., 2006).

Implications for Social Change

The intersection of race and gender and its negative impact have been a force for social change (Datta, 2009). This research study contributes to positive social change in several ways. The findings detail real-life experiences of how adolescent GOC may overcome perceived challenges related to leadership development. These findings may become a catalyst for social change by assisting nonprofit organizations in developing targeted leadership development programs for adolescent GOC. Such programs may also help adolescent GOC identify and hone their leadership abilities. During those programs, nonprofit leaders can also groom adolescent GOC into social change agents who understand it is their duty to give back to their respective communities. This research may also prompt public servants to create policies that support funding for nonprofit organizations whose missions are training future leaders. Finally, this research study may

restart the conversation about how the intersection of gender and race adds an additional barrier for adolescent GOC as they are shaping their identities based on stereotypes, negative images and views, and misguided preconceived notions. Wun (2016) posits that stereotypical Black femininity implies that WOC and GOC are incapable of being warm, inviting, and assertive and that they are overly aggressive, overly sexual, and combative.

Summary

This research study addressed the problem of adolescent GOC experiencing unique challenges related to leadership development because of the marginalization of race and gender. These challenges often continue into adulthood. Festekjian et al. (2014) and Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) assert that WOC are grossly underrepresented in senior leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. This could be because they lack targeted leadership development during adolescence. Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) also delineated that a wealth of research has focused on one dimension of the journey of WOC leaders: race or gender. In addition, even less research implicates the challenges adolescent GOC experience relative to leadership development (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008).

This qualitative case study addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the patterns, characteristics, and behaviors of WOC who have identified experiencing challenges with gaining effective leadership development as adolescent GOC. I explored how those challenges may have affected their leadership abilities, leadership choices, and their identification of themselves as leaders. Ill-prepared WOC leaders may have struggled with obtaining targeted leadership development unique to their identities as

adolescent GOC. These perceived barriers have contributed to the low percentage of WOC leaders in Fortune 500 companies.

The participant pool consisted of four WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies who experienced challenges with gaining leadership development as adolescent GOC. WOC leaders were the best sample for this research study because they were able to speak about their experiences as adolescent GOC related to leadership development. They detailed their emotions relative to their perceived challenges surrounding their participation or lack of participation in leadership development programs. The unit of analysis was WOC leaders. The data were useful to further research in this area and identified themes necessary to examine targeted programs for adolescent GOC related to leadership development.

The lack of research regarding the intersectionality of race and gender related to leadership development for adolescent GOC presented a need for further research in this area. Society needs to understand how the challenges that adolescent GOC experience relative to leadership development affect them as they transition into adulthood. This research uncovered reasons there is a lack of WOC leaders in Fortune 500 companies. As a community leader, mentor, and nonprofit leader, I work with adolescent GOC to help them overcome perceived obstacles associated with the intersectionality of race and gender. These data help me to identify ways of better assisting adolescent girls and GOC as they develop educationally, socially, and emotionally. Exploring WOC and their perspectives will allow me to uncover ways to direct training programs to provide

adolescent GOC with the best possible opportunities to become successful leaders in any area of study.

In Chapter 2, I explore the literature pertaining to critical theory, adolescence, and how adolescent GOC are perceived, trained, and groomed. I explore the literature relative to leadership, leadership theories, and leadership development, and the literature in relation to women leaders, WOC leaders, and femininity. I also examine the gap in the literature related to adolescent GOC and leadership development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the literature-based conceptual framework I used for examining leadership development opportunities for adolescent GOC and the specific challenges they face in school and in the community. This conceptual framework guided the analysis and interpretation of the data of the study. The constructs used to frame this study were limited to adolescence; the interconnections between race, gender, and identity; leadership theories; leadership development; and women in leadership.

To have a stronger understanding of women as leaders, and more specifically WOC in leadership, it is essential to dissect societal norms and values that penetrate the lives of GOC from birth. These societal norms, stigmatization, and stereotypes that label GOC in a negative manner challenge their development in many ways. Adolescent GOC are attempting to craft their identities during a time when competing interests preclude them from forming healthy self-image and self-esteem (Sumner et al., 2018). If they are able to overcome challenges associated with marginalization, GOC will have a greater opportunity to develop healthy self-esteem and self-image, overcome stereotypical nuances, and become WOC leaders who are able to navigate similar challenges in the workforce.

McCullough, Ashbridge, and Pegg (1994) asserted that adolescents who identify themselves as leaders are individuals who have a supportive village, who are socially and psychologically adjusted, and who have healthy self-images and self-esteem. These individuals are likely to transition into leadership roles as adults. There are ways to

ensure adolescent GOC are well-oriented and have healthy self-esteem. There must exist an equilibrium related to how they are perceived and treated in educational, social, and extracurricular settings.

This chapter is organized as follows: I outline the literature search strategy and the databases I used to gather timely and seminal peer-reviewed scholarly articles. I discuss the conceptual framework of this qualitative study. I review literature in several major areas, including leadership development, leadership, adolescent girls, adolescent GOC, women leaders, and WOC leaders. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a summary of the major themes and points covered.

Literature Search Strategy

I explored multiple databases in the Walden University Library to search for scholarly literature suitable for this study. I also used Google Scholar, a standard Google search, and the local public library's electronic database to acquire a multitude of various scholarly literature for this study. I used Thoreau and ProQuest Central to find peer-reviewed journal articles published in the last 5 years. I also used articles that dated back more than 5 years for seminal contributions on various topics of interest. I was able to acquire relative literature for my research topic about leadership and adolescent GOC.

I set up article alerts through Google Scholar to gain timely scholarly articles. I searched for peer-reviewed and open-access articles through Google to locate the latest research material. I found articles that addressed leadership development, adolescents, GOC, and WOC leaders. I used a variety of search terms to locate articles pertinent to

this subject: *leadership*, *WOC and leadership*, *women leaders*, *adolescence*, *Black girls*, *Black women*, *adolescent girls*, *adolescent GOC*, *puberty*, and *critical theory*.

Conceptual Framework

Critical theory was the conceptual framework for this qualitative inquiry. Critical theory has been dissected since its inception in the early 1930s, yet its premise is evolving. According to Fischer and Tepe (2011), critical theory has both a narrow and a broad meaning. In the narrow sense, critical theory spans several generations of thought from German theorists known as the Frankfurt School (Davidson et al., 2006; Müller-Doohm, 2017). According to those theorists, critical theory seeks to free humans from all forms of slavery or oppression. It also works to create a world that satisfies the needs of all humans equally. In the broader sense, critical theory has merged to connect with various social movements that identify the marginalization of any individual or group. Its aim in the broad and narrow sense is to identify oppression and work to free those who are oppressed (Davidson et al., 2006).

According to Freire (2000), marginalization is one form of oppression. Adolescent GOC experience marginalization associated with both gender and race. Chaplin et al. (2006) suggest that girls undergo physical changes in their hormones and their body that may add stressors associated with self-discovery. However, it is an even more difficult period for adolescent GOC. They are attempting to navigate between defining their identity and the identity of White middle-class femininity. Cole and Zucker (2007) assert that White middle-class femininity is defined by women who are docile and small-framed with straight hair and who possess sexual purity. Furthermore, Cole and

Zucker (2012) and Blake, Butler, Lewis, and Darensbourg (2011) assert that White middle-class femininity implies that White women sustain traditional gender roles where the man is in charge and the woman is a second-class citizen. While adolescent GOC are attempting to navigate the nuances of their emotions, they must also reconcile how their experiences are woven through the intersection of race and gender.

Fischer and Tepe (2011) assert that critical theory is a social theory used to evaluate societal norms. Its goal is to identify valid assumptions that hinder humans from understanding how the world works. These theories are aligned with Karl Marx's theories. Marx was a German philosopher who believed that all humans should be free to live, act, and thrive in an equal state of a true democracy with no restrictions by a labor market (Antonio, 1981). In turn, the population would understand their level of oppression and work to end it. Much of Marx's theories birthed the foundation for critical theory. Although Marx's theories, known as Marxism, were related to inequality in the labor market, their premise is comparable to adolescent GOC's perceived challenges associated with the marginalization of race and gender and leadership development.

Other tenets associated with critical theory are the dissection of the ideology that justifies social or economic oppression. Its goal is for people to acknowledge that oppression exists so they can be freed from it. Researchers use critical theory to investigate the layers of social and economic oppression, how they could be freed from it, and ways people can recognize its existence (Davidson et al., 2006; Fischer & Tepe, 2011). Because critical theory dissects and proliferates social phenomena (Fischer & Tepe, 2011; Kaplan, 2003), it is the ideal framework to ground this research study. The

intersection of gender and race shapes a person's social experience, which is biased toward a mainstream cultural identity. Adolescent GOC's social experiences are shaped through lenses that may preclude them from receiving leadership development that encapsulates their unique social experiences (Archard, 2013; Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016).

Critical theory is used to judge the domination of oppression through lenses of liberation (Fischer & Tepe, 2011; Kaplan, 2003). Kaplan (2003) asserts that critical theory incorporates several tenets that ground research in areas such as marginalization, intersectionality, and equality. Critical theory employs research methodologies grounded in presuppositions that examine the importance of rights, liberty, individually, and equality (Kaplan, 2003). Critical theory has evolved. It incorporates critiques of power, authority, gender, race, culture, ethnicity, and the political economy and environment, and any issue associated with social justice (Kaplan, 2003). Critical theory's primary goal is to challenge power and authority everywhere it appears, including public policy, mass media, the law, corporations, global economics, and political organization (Kaplan, 2003). Critical theory has been used in research studies that involve marginalization or oppression, inequality, social injustices, and exploitation. Additionally, critical theory is used to focus on creating a philosophy that will spark the maturation of a society void of inequality and oppression and a society focused on promoting justice (Fischer & Tepe, 2011; Kaplan, 2003).

I developed this research study from the critical theory conceptual framework for several reasons. Critical theory acknowledges oppression and marginalization in several

facets, institutions, and areas. In this study I focus on the marginalization of gender and race and on how those tenets shape the leadership development of adolescent GOC. Critical theory focuses on the reformation of gender and racial inequity, as they are signs of oppression and alienation. Critical theory also asserts that once the level of oppression is identified, humans may overcome the oppression and become free to explore their purpose in a liberated society, and researchers can use critical theory to view phenomena from various lenses. Finally, the critical theory framework grounds this research study as it offers a foundation for individuals who are seeking reform in any facet. It helps those agents of change become sensitive to oppression, marginalization, and inequality of any kind (Davidson et al., 2006; Carr, 2000). Studying the marginalization of race and gender relative to adolescent GOC and leadership development helps answer questions regarding their perceived challenges, offer ways for them to become effective WOC leaders, and hopefully engages further research that will add to body of knowledge regarding the division associated with the lack of WOC leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States.

Adolescence

Chan et al. (2011) assert that adolescence is an evolutionary stage where physical and psychological development occurs. Although the age varies, adolescence typically begins at 11 or 12 and ends at 18. Adolescence can also be a time of confusion for youth. They have a newfound awareness of themselves, and they are attempting to understand biological changes and nuances (Wise, 2000). Even normal transitions through adolescence come with challenges. Youth must learn how their newfound reality should

adjust in how they relate to others. Many adolescents do not understand what is happening as adolescence is usually when they learn to detach from total dependence on authority figures (Wise, 2000). Yet, authority figures may not know how help navigate those changes. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) also assert that adolescence can be a challenging time for girls as they are learning themselves. During this stage, girls are discovering who they are, what they want, and how to navigate between self-worth and self-identity. Chaplin et al. (2006) suggest that girls undergo physical changes in their hormones and their body that may add stressors associated with self-discovery. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) also assert that this is a critical time in adolescent girls' lives and they are more likely than their male peers to become depressed, to suffer from eating disorders, and to suffer from many other psychological disorders. Positive intervention strategies can help change adolescent girls' trajectory.

According to Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) and Chan et al. (2011), adolescence is a pivotal time for girls to be exposed to women leaders. They should also engage in identifying various leadership styles. Furthermore, adolescence is an essential time for girls to participate in leadership roles as they are attempting to navigate between defining their identity and defining how their peer-to-peer relationships influence how they see themselves. In addition to the various challenges all adolescent girls experience, adolescent GOC are challenged with shaping their identity through racial and gender lenses. Adolescence is a time where positive intervention strategies may help adolescent GOC overcome a negative trajectory that could impede their development (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008; Chan et al., 2011). Leadership development is an intervention strategy

that can help adolescent GOC identify and mature their leadership skills while helping them identify themselves as leaders. However, competing factors impede adolescent GOC from participating in leadership development programs.

Adolescent GOC's Disparities

Adolescent GOC experience disparities that contribute to them being overlooked for leadership development. Blake et al. (2011) assert that over the last 10 years, GOC experienced harsher punishments in school systems for nonviolent offenses. Much of their suspensions were based on subjective stereotypical views that could have been de-escalated if school officials were sensitive to the needs of adolescent GOC (Blake et al., 2011). Wun (2018) asserts that within the last 6 years, GOC in elementary and secondary schools across the nation were suspended at a rate of 12% compared to 2% for White girls of the same age. Blake et al. (2011) and Wun (2018) suggest that adolescent GOC were suspended more than any other race of female students and more than White and Asian male students. Adolescent GOC were chastised, suspended in-school, or suspended out of school for being unlady-like, for being too assertive, or simply asking questions in a way that was perceived as vigorous (Blake et al., 2011; Wun, 2018). Adolescent GOC are also being arrested in school settings for exhibiting behavioral patterns viewed as disrespectful, uncontrollable, or incorrigible (Wun, 2018; Wun, 2016; Jacobs, 2016; Zou & Trueba, 2002). These disciplinary trends are associated with racial stereotypes and implications of appropriate behaviors, which suggests that girls are expected to be obedient, compliant, and docile. At no point are adolescent GOC uniquely categorized

relative to exhibited behavioral patterns; many of them have experienced violence, sexual abuse, and poverty. Conversely, many of them may simply be expressive in nature.

These trends are not proportional to serious or even violent offenses. Adolescent GOC are seemingly misunderstood. Furthermore, school discipline appears to be guided by insignificant behavioral patterns like dress code violations, the appearance of physical aggression, or profanity (Blake et al., 2001). Adolescent GOC's behavioral patterns are perceived as unacceptable social gender norms because their behaviors reportedly are not synonymous with behavioral patterns associated with White middle-class femininity (Annamma et al., 2016). Without access to effective, targeted leadership development, adolescent GOC are more likely to become WOC who experience sanctions throughout their personal and professional development because their behavioral patterns deviate from what is socially acceptable.

Jean-Marie, Williams, and Sherman (2009) assert that WOC leaders experience isolation and exclusion from social networks that would have helped them gain access to leadership development. WOC leaders, similar to adolescent GOC, are viewed as defiant for sharing different opinions. In addition, they are viewed as "angry Black women" when attempting to iterate questions or concerns surrounding policy implementation or changes (Jean-Marie, Williams & Sherman, 2009). WOC leaders are also sanctioned by being overlooked for promotions, board appointments, or special projects because there are not enough WOC leaders to choose them for these opportunities. According to Hanycz (2014), senior executives in Fortune 500 companies in the United States are predominately male, and they choose individuals who are like them for promotions,

board appointments and social projects. Conversely, if those positions were held by a significant number of WOC, it can be assumed that WOC senior executives would choose WOC leaders for promotions, board appointments, and social projects (Hanycz, 2014; Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016).

Gender

Socially acceptable behavioral patterns also translate into how adolescent GOC learn to ascribe to traditional gender roles. Chan et al. (2011) assert that gender is a psychological and sociological phenomenon. Gender is a learned behavior taught through a system of rewards, punishments, modelling, and instruction based on cultural adaptations of stereotypical gender roles. Furthermore, adolescence is a time when girls are developing their self-awareness and self-worth. Girls learn these behavioral patterns and craft their professional and personal goals based on gender stereotypes (Chan et al., 2011; Galeotti, 2015). A lifetime of learning stereotypical gender roles becomes a staple that affects their career goals, their relationships, and their ability to reach their full potential (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). Adolescent GOC must overcome stereotypical gender and race identities and develop healthy self-awareness and self-esteem in order to benefit from any type of leadership development. There are various ways adolescent GOC may overcome stereotypical gender and race identities.

Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) assert that it is essential for adolescent GOC to have mentors who are WOC leaders within their communities who have overcome those same stereotypes. In addition, Galeotti (2015) asserts that targeted leadership development programs will aid adolescent GOC in overcoming perceived gender and racial

stereotypes. Adolescent GOC will learn to model this behavior, overcome perceived stereotypical gender and race identities, and develop personal and professional leadership goals void of stereotypical gender and racial norms (Galeotti, 2015; Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). Furthermore, adolescent GOC who have overcome perceived stereotypes and race identities will become mentors to other adolescent GOC. They will pass down an evolving sense of confidence that will help other adolescent GOC become comfortable with their uniqueness. Adolescent GOC will have peer mentors of whom they can learn from. They will learn to identify and hone their leadership skills void of stereotypical identifiers (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). Opportunities for adolescent GOC to excel in leadership roles will increase as they become more confident in their leadership abilities.

Confidence, Competition, and Failure

Negative behavioral patterns prevent adolescent GOC from gaining access to leadership development. These behavioral patterns are unacceptable based on social norms characteristic of the White middle class (Archard, 2012; Annamma et al., 2016). As previously mentioned, Cole and Zucker (2007) assert that White Middle-Class femininity is described as females who are passive, polite, and who ascribe to sexual purity. Conversely, Annamma et al., (2006) suggests that adolescent GOC are stereotyped as either sexless or oversexed, masculine, emasculating, overly aggressive, disrespectful, or immoral. Therefore, adolescent GOC are viewed as intolerable when they commit infractions like being loud, exuding aggressive behavioral patterns, or debating while asking for clarification.

Researchers have delineated many reasons why adolescent GOC exhibit negative behavioral patterns. Aside from adolescent GOC being stereotyped and judged harshly based on acceptable social norms, Archard (2012) asserts that the negative behavioral patterns of adolescent GOC are a result of their lack of confidence, their fear of competition, and the way they handle failure.

Confidence. Adolescent GOC experience social and racial isolation in their communities, in their schools, and many times within extra-curricular activities (The 14th Annual Soka Education Conference, 2018). Furthermore, isolation has a negative impact on how adolescent GOC develop confidence. According to Anderson and Martin (2018), adolescent GOC are more critical of themselves and overly scrutinize their abilities based on others' perceptions. Many adolescent GOC are so fearful of not succeeding that they fail to develop confidence in their abilities to perform. Eventually, their lack of confidence coupled with their fears are masked as behavioral issues.

Adolescent GOC who lack confidence are challenged when they have to compete with others on any level. The lack of confidence is also a factor in how adolescent GOC perceive failure and how they identify as leaders. Once adolescent GOC fail to perceive themselves as leaders, it will be difficult for them to be chosen for leadership development programs. Archard (2012) asserts that reevaluating how confidence, competition, and failure affects outcomes could allow adolescent GOC to become effective leaders. In addition, Galeotti (2015) asserts that adolescent GOC can shape their confidence through their participation in organized sports. Girls who participate in these programs learn how to handle failure in a competitive environment. Their self-esteem and

self-image are developed while they gain leadership development through a systematic approach. There is significant research about adolescent GOC and organized sports. The research details how sports help them handle confidence, competition, and failure. However, there is a gap in the literature about adolescent GOC and leadership development programs, void of extra-curricular activities, which can aid adolescent GOC handle the aforementioned areas.

Competition. Competition, within proper context, can reveal positive performance measures in most any individual. Perry-Burney and Takyi (2002) assert that healthy competition aids with individual self-identification, positive outlooks on life, and positive relationships with others. Adolescent GOC may fuel their confidence and self-esteem by engaging healthy competition with their peers. According to Archard (2012,) most peer to peer competition is engaged through organized extra-curricular activities. Unfortunately, many adolescent GOC refrain from participating in extra-curricular activities. Therefore, adult leaders must ensure adolescent GOC understand how healthy competition not just synonymous with extra-curricular activities. Adolescent GOC will be able to transfer that competitive spirit into taking risks as they pursue leadership roles in non-extra-curricular activities like the debate club, future business leaders of America, and volunteering in community organizations. Adolescent GOC will learn through working that competition can be a positive, healthy experience.

Failure. Archard (2012) asserts that adolescents engage failure through introspection. They attempt to internalize how they have contributed to the failed act. If the adolescent is not met with positive reinforcements, one small act of failure could lead

to depression (Archard, 2012; Archard, 2013). The fear of failure can be paralyzing for anyone. It can be a life altering event when it is paired with a range of unresolved emotions, racism, and sexism. Adolescent GOC are at a crossroads. They are attempting to define their identities in a world where they are seemingly misunderstood. The fear of failure shapes her confidence and her self-worth. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) suggest adolescent GOC must be met with mentors who can help them articulate their fears, work through their fears, and overcome their fears. In addition, mentors must share real life examples of how they were and are able to work through failures to become effective leaders (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016; Archard, 2012). Adolescent GOC must understand how important failure is to success. They must be told and shown how effective leaders fail in certain aspects regularly. Yet, their self-worth is not tied to their failures. And, those weak areas can be developed if they refuse to give up.

Archard (2012) and Archard (2013) suggest that adolescent GOC are able to shape their confidence through single-sex programs that empower girls in the areas of leadership development by encouraging positive self-esteem, self-image, and confidence. Adolescent GOC must also be made aware of the cultural challenges they may encounter to ensure they are prepared to overcome those obstacles (Archard, 2012; Archard, 2013; Wilton et al., 2014). With targeted leadership development programs, adolescent GOC may become WOC leaders who are confident in their leadership abilities. They are able to engage in healthy competition, and they are able to overcome failure.

Archard (2012) asserts that WOC have unique perspectives and experiences as leaders in corporate America. Archard (2012) and Archard (2013) identified several key

factors that could minimize the negative experiences for WOC leaders. Leadership development programs must start during adolescence for GOC as this is a critical time for personal and professional development (Archard, 2012). Adolescent GOC must be prepared with skills indicative of leaders. They must be taught different styles of leadership so they may gain opportunities to lead in various facets (Archard, 2013). Eventually, adolescent GOC will be able to hone their leadership skills, develop additional ones, and influence other adolescent GOC to become leaders.

Leadership Theories

Wren (1995) asserts that leadership has been discussed, debated, dissected, and researched for decades. The term has various definitions based on its context, the researcher who is attempting to apply its connotation, or the scenario of which it is being applied (Henderson, Simon, & Henicheck, 2018). According to Comstock (2018), leadership is defined as the capability to direct, encourage, or influence others to accomplish a goal. Leadership encompasses viewing issues in unique ways and casting visions to address those issues. Leadership is not defined by a person's personality nor is it male or female (Comstock, 2018; Henderson et al., 2018).

There is a gap in the literature about the plight of adolescent GOC relative to leadership and leadership development. Based on Comstock's (2018) definition of leadership, adolescent GOC are capable to lead, as they can direct, encourage and influence others to accomplish a goal. According to Hoyt and Kennedy (2008), with targeted strategies pertinent to adolescent GOC and their unique experiences relative to race and gender, they will be able to identify themselves as leaders. Archard (2012),

Archard (2013), and Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) suggest that adolescent GOC are at a critical time in their lives as self-discovery is heightened. Therefore, this is an opportune time to introduce leadership development as a process of engagement instead of a transaction.

In the early 1800s, leadership was a position of inheritance, appointment, or encroachment (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Leadership was defined as a position held by White Anglo-Saxon Protestant males who were able to influence others to achieve a goal. In the early 1900s, according to Northouse (2013), the term leadership was defined as social interactions between leader and subordinate. Leaders would apply interpersonal communication to inspire subordinates to work within a group to achieve goals. More recently, leadership was defined as motivating others to participate in the success of the organization (Northouse, 2013). The definition of leadership has evolved over time. However, its core is relatively the same. Leadership is an attainable acumen regardless of a person's gender, age, race, religious affiliation, or social status (Comstock, 2018).

As leadership is defined, leaders are formed. Their effectiveness is determined by his or her results. According to Comstock (2018), Jogulu and Wood (2006) and Zaccaro, (2007), an effective leader gains an understanding of what is in the best interest of his or her subordinates. The leader then creates a targeted plan to encourage subordinates based on their individual needs and the goals of the organization, group, or project. The research sustained by Jogulu and Wood (2006) detailed the early periods of leadership development. The works associated with Northouse (2013) and Zaccaro (2007) describe the maturation of leadership theories that attribute various approaches of an effective

leader. There are several leadership theories, behaviors, and practices. However, this study will dissect trait theory and behavioral theory, as per Comstock (2018), many leadership styles are based on these theories.

Trait theory. Thomas Carlyle made popular the great man theory in the 19th century (Germain, 2012). He simplified leadership in terms of specific skills and abilities that a person inherited. The great man theory established a foundation for trait-based theories. A few of those traits were synonymous with the personality, the social skills, the intelligence and the physical characteristics that set leaders apart from followers (Germain, 2012). However, Zaccaro (2012) posits trait theory is limited because it does not clearly define the difference between the characteristics of a leader and a non-leader.

The strength of the trait theory entails its focus on the leader's qualities, skills, and abilities. Its weakness is that does not define traits indicative of non-leaders. In addition, research has not proven that leaders are effective only because they exhibit certain traits.

Since the inception of the great man theory of leadership, and the perception that men only are great leaders, women have led in various capacities. Many of them exhibited several traits that were initially identified though the great man theory. Wren (1995), Nichols (2016), and Sczesny, Bosak, Neff, & Schyns (2004) assert that the following traits are necessary for every leader: maturity, team-orientation, self-confidence, charisma, and empathy. In addition, Northouse (2013) asserts that an effective leader may house a sense of integrity, flexibility, perseverance, creativity,

emotional intelligence, and ambition. However, how or when a leader develops these traits is debatable.

Initially, researchers perceived that traits could not be taught and that a leader must possess those traits at birth and could be taught only how to use them. Comstock (2018) asserts that traits are like characteristics; they can be taught, they can be learned, and they can be honed. Acker (2006), Archard (2012), Archard (2013) and Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) assert that leadership traits are not specific to one's gender or race. Yet, adolescent GOC leadership traits are overlooked based on stereotypes associated with the marginalization of race and gender (Acker, 2006). An adolescent GOC will be able to develop traits through experience, through targeted mentoring, and through positive reinforcement. The mentor must be able to identify with adolescent GOC's unique challenges. The mentor must also ensure that personal bias does not affect his or her ability to emulate those same traits while providing feedback that acknowledges the adolescent GOC developmental needs. If given the opportunity, an adolescent GOC will become comfortable with taking the initiative. She will learn how being flexible will help her gain emotional intelligence. She will also gain confidence if she is given an opportunity to assert leadership roles in different situations.

Because adolescent GOC are at a critical time in life full of self-discovery, it is important to place them in a position where they can identify their leadership traits, hone those traits and cultivate additional ones. Adolescent GOC will become comfortable within their respective leadership roles and their behaviors will be indicators of what they've learned and practiced. Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, and Humphrey (2011) assert

that the study of leadership has been shaped through stages. It began with the examination of great men which led to the acknowledgement of certain traits and characteristics that separated leaders from non-leaders. Eventually, the study of leadership investigated leader behaviors and leaders' relationships with non-leaders (Derue et al., 2011).

Behavioral theory. Germain (2012) asserts that behavioral theory ensued during the 1950's. Behavioral theory focusses on the developmental attributes of a leader. As such, a person can be conditioned to adapt behavioral patterns effective leaders emulate. The behavioral theory of leadership has different applications than trait theory. Trait theory implies leaders are born. Whereas, behavioral theory suggests leaders can be trained and behavioral patterns emulated by effective leaders can be learned. Wren (1995) and Northouse (2013) assert that behavioral theories of leadership focus more on how the leader interacts with the non-leader. Either the leader is task-oriented, people oriented, or both. Northouse (2013) asserts that task-oriented leader's major concern is with outlining a step by step process for non-leaders to meet specific goals. Task oriented leaders are not as concerned with building relationships with non-leaders. They will monitor progress and achievements of specific assignments. The strengths of a task-oriented leader are he or she will make sure job roles are defined and goals are met. The weakness of this approach is the team could lack motivation.

Unlike task-oriented leaders, people-oriented leaders focus on the human needs of the team while motivating them to meet organizational goals (Northouse, 2013; Wren, 1995). These leaders focus on relationship building, effective communication, and

positive social interaction. People-oriented leaders offer targeted incentives that meet the needs of the employees while encouraging them to meet organizational policies and procedures. People oriented leaders also focus on a transparent work relationship that encourages a cohesive work environment (Northouse, 2013; Wren, 1995). The strength of people-oriented leadership is that employees are in a supportive work environment where leaders care about their well-being. Team members are committed to the organization because they are supported by their leader. The weakness of people-oriented leadership is too much focus on relationship building may detract from the tasks of meeting organizational goals.

Each theory has strengths and weaknesses. However, neither theory defines holistically who can or who cannot be trained to become an effective leader (Northouse, 2013; Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996). Thus, one can assume that adolescent GOC can be trained to develop traits and behaviors indicative of effective leaders of the past and present. As adolescent GOC develop traits through experience, they will also learn to adapt leader behaviors that work best in a given scenario for both the non-leader and the organization. Adolescent GOC must be taught behavioral traits and how they have worked in the past within various organizational settings. Adolescent GOC will be able to adapt their leader behavior to similar situations once they are made aware of how others have led and how effective or ineffective, they were. As mentioned earlier, adolescent GOC must engage mentors who empathize with their unique challenges. They must be provided opportunities to lead in various settings. Mentors should understand how to shape the negative connotations about adolescent GOC traits (Morris & Perry, 2017;

Morris, 2016). Instead of allowing them to be called bossy, suggest that they are leaders. Instead of being called too aggressive, suggest that they are risk takers. Instead of allowing them to be denoted as rude, maybe they are direct. Aggressive, direct, risk takers are traits effective leaders emulate. Redirecting the negative connotations, may help adolescent GOC identify themselves as leaders (Morris & Perry, 2017; Morris, 2016). They may overcome the negativity and recognize they too are able to develop leader traits and leader behaviors.

Leadership Development

Leadership development usually begins when an individual assumes a mentoring role within an organization. It becomes synonymous with the goals, the vision, and the mission of the company. However, many leadership development programs fail. This may be because it is perceived that leadership development should start with helping people identity leadership characteristics. Once those character traits are acknowledged, an effective leadership development program can assist those same individuals hone leadership skills as opposed to helping individuals develop in relation to a company's goals. Archard (2013) suggested ways the educational system could include leadership development for girls prior to and during the adolescent phase. Archard (2013) asserts that girls begin to challenge their leadership roles during puberty. Therefore, targeted tactics are essential in helping adolescent girls navigate ways to identify and develop their leadership skills. Hoyt and Kennedy and Archard (2013) One suggests that female student leaders and women mentors should expose adolescent GOC to internships where they can practice their skills in a nontraditional learning environment. Mather and

Jacobsen (2013) assert that adolescent girls recognize their challenges as having limited opportunities to develop leadership skills in more than one facet. They are overwhelmed with opportunities to learn and apply leadership skills within extra-curricular activities. However, many adolescent GOC are not able to identify how those transferable skills learned from organization sports apply within a leadership role outside of organized sports (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). Additionally, adolescent girls begin to allow their peer relationships shape how they respond to leadership roles (Mather & Jacobsen, 2013; Archard, 2013).

Leadership development is not synonymous to one approach. Single-sex programs are effective ways to engage adolescent GOC and help them identify their leadership abilities (Archard, 2013). However, adolescent GOC may also benefit from being exposed to their male peers as they function in leadership roles. Adolescent GOC will be able to validate their assertiveness while executing their leadership abilities. They will also become comfortable with platonic interactions with their male peers (Archard, 2013). It may also benefit adolescent girls to be exposed to mentors who are women leaders in real world scenarios in various career fields (Archard, 2013). These real-life scenarios can also help female leaders overcome misconceptions of their leadership traits and abilities. In addition, pre-pubescent females should be educated about global gender stereotypes, gender inequality, and how women leaders contribute to positive social change (Archard, 2013). This practice can help adolescent girls overcome perceived misconceptions about women leaders. They will learn and understand how to overcome gender stereotypes. They will also learn to identify gender inequity, so they are able to

overcome it. It is also apparent that educators must develop girls for leadership roles regardless of their race (Archard, 2013). However, there still exists a gap in the literature relative to the marginalization of gender and race and how it negatively impacts adolescent GOC in their quest for leadership development.

Women Leaders

Kray and Kennedy (2017) assert that companies reportedly are committed to gender diversity. Yet, this mission is not translating into a higher percentage of women in the workplace who hold senior leadership positions. Women are underrepresented at every level of management in corporate America. Kray and Kennedy (2017) suggest that the ratio of women to men in senior leadership roles in corporate America is one woman to every five men. Early in 2017, women held 5.8% of CEO positions out of 500 companies (Kray & Kennedy, 2017). They are also underrepresented on corporate boards as they are male dominated. Globally, women made up 24% of senior management roles in 2016 (Kray & Kennedy, 2017; U.S. Department of State, 2016).

There are various reasons women are scarce in senior leadership positions. Gipson et al. (2017) posit many women leaders struggle differently than men in the acquisition of senior leadership positions. Initially, women have to navigate carefully gender stereotypes (Gipson et al.,2017; Kray & Kennedy 2017). Gender stereotypes are cultural perceptions relegated to femininity and masculinity (Gipson et al., 2017). For example, women are perceived as democratic, interactive leaders. They are also perceived as nurturers, gentle, supportive, and understanding. Stereotypes usually become judgements. These judgements may stagnate a women leader's development. Initially, a women leader

who exhibits characteristics different than the prescribed stereotypes, she may be characterized as an ineffective leader (Gipson et al., 2017). She may not be selected for advancement, she may not be selected for certain networking opportunities, or workshops that could help her develop additional leadership skills (Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Gipson et al., 2017).

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) assert that leadership styles between men and women are perceived to be different. Men are perceived as task-oriented leaders who are more concerned with team members meeting company goals. Women are perceived as people-oriented leaders who are perceived to be concerned with encouraging team members through incentives (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Despite research that implies women and men's leadership styles are different, their styles promote similar outcomes (Bass et al., 1996; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Yet, women are under paid and their contributions are devalued even when performing the same job as men. Women leaders have been characterized as effective negotiators who engage compromise that is fair for all parties involved. Yet, they fail to negotiate their salary like they negotiate deals for their organizations. This could be one reason women leaders make considerably less than their male peers while rendering similar results. Women leaders are attempting to overcome stereotypes surrounding gender and how perceptions about women leaders affect their positions within corporate America. However, WOC leaders are attempting to navigate perceptions and stereotypes about gender and race. Because of the intersection of race and gender, WOC struggle differently than their male peers and their White male and female peers.

Women of Color Leaders

WOC were historically and legally prevented from working in many professional occupations (Muzio & Tomlinson, 2012). Unfortunately, may WOC are experiencing similar discriminatory practices within the workforce today due to the intersection of gender and race which is considered a dual subordinate role (Rosette & Livingston, 2012). For every woman of color who holds a senior leadership position in corporate America, there are 25 men who hold senior leadership roles. Early in 2017, women held 5.8% of CEO positions out of 500 companies, yet none of them were WOC (Kray & Kennedy, 2017). In addition, WOC are paid less than their female and male peers when performing the same job. WOC are marginalized by having limited access to mentors who identify with their unique experiences in the workforce. WOC are less likely to be promoted, they are less likely to receive raises, and they receive minimal support from upper management (Worsley & Stone, 2011; O'Brien, Franco, & Dunn, 2014). WOC leaders must work harder to achieve organizational success. They are critiqued more harshly and must work diligently to minimize mistakes as they are penalized more harshly than their male peers and their White female peers (Rosette & Livingston, 2012).

Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) suggest that WOC experience unfair treatment in training and advancement, prejudices, and lack of mentors. These experiences limit WOC from networking opportunities with professionals who can assist them with targeted leadership development, training and advancement. WOC's lack of leadership development could be exemplified in their underrepresentation in the public and private sector. WOC represent less than 7% of the population in congress. WOC make up less

than 8% of senior-executive leadership in the private sector (“AAUW”, 2012). Additionally, WOC are more likely than their White female peers to work in service occupations which are lower paying jobs despite their education and experience (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Therefore, targeted leadership development during adolescence may help adolescent GOC become WOC leaders who hold senior leadership roles in Fortune 500 companies.

Barriers of Women Leaders

Selzer, Howton, and Wallace (2017) assert that women leaders experience barriers that are two-fold; structural and personal. Structural barriers are associated with a work climate that does not positively benefit women leaders. For example, many women leaders will thrive with having a flexible work schedule. However, many organizations fail to offer flexibility in scheduling (Selzer et al., 2017; Slaughter, 2012). Another structural barrier is relative to pay. Women salaries are imbalanced in comparison with their male peers. According to the U.S. Labor Statistics (2014) report, a woman’s pay rate is 83% of her male peer’s pay rate. As indicated by the United Nations News Centre (2015), it will take almost 71 more years for women to obtain pay equity. Additionally, 41% of the female workforce, globally, is still not participating in maternity support. Therefore, women experience personal barriers that are related to the structural barriers. Women are forced to choose between matriculating professionally or starting a family. It appears that women are undervalued, women have a lack of structured and targeted training programs, their decision-making powers are challenged, and women lack guidance and support in the workplace (Slaughter, 2012). Policy implementation and

enforcement can change many of the structural barriers women face in the workforce. Identifying women's personal barriers in the workforce may help articulate ways to overcome them.

Beckwith et al. (2016) assert that further barriers exist in leadership positions in the corporate sector for women because men created the policies and procedures. They established the leadership development programs. They crafted the leadership evaluations from a males' perspective. In addition, WOC experience greater barriers. They must navigate gender and racial stereotypes to overcome the present challenges of the scarcity of women and WOC leaders in the corporate sector (Beckwith et al., 2016; Pafford & Schaefer, 2017).

Summary

Major themes from the literature were acknowledged during the literature review. There is an under representation of WOC in senior leadership positions in most companies. Additionally, WOC are grossly underrepresented in Fortune 500 companies in America. Many companies further the tradition of advancing the standard: White male, men of color, and White woman. In addition, the literature also identified themes relative to parallels between WOC and adolescent GOC. For example, similar to WOC leaders, adolescent GOC experience the marginalization of race and gender socially, educationally, and within peer groups when they participate in extra-curricular activities (Blake et al., 2011).

Freire (2000) asserts that GOC experience greater challenges than their peers during adolescence. Adolescence is a time when girls struggle with low self-esteem and

the lack of confidence (McCullough et al., 1994; Scott & Webber, 2008). Adolescent GOC are attempting to navigate those same challenges in addition to hormonal changes within their bodies coupled with social perceptions associated with the marginalization of race and gender. They are disciplined more harshly in schools for minor behavioral issues. They are seemingly misunderstood, and they are overlooked for leadership development programs more so than their male and Whites female peers.

Adolescence is a time when cognitive development enhances their behaviors and they will benefit from diverse extracurricular activities. The literature uncovered research about adolescent GOC and leadership development while participating in organized sports. The gap in the literature is relative to leadership development through activities void of sports. These activities may also help adolescent GOC identify as leaders. Through these leadership development programs, adolescent GOC will identify and hone their leadership skills. In turn, adolescent GOC may become WOC leaders who are equipped with the skills and abilities necessary to advance to senior leadership roles in Fortune 500 companies in America.

It is necessary to recognize what the literature reveals versus what the literature does not reveal. This will aid in filling the gap in the literature. The gap in the literature is how WOC, who hold senior leadership roles in Fortune 500 companies, were able to overcome the challenges associated with the intersection of race and gender as adolescent GOC while navigating other challenges adolescent girls experience. Their experiences could identify themes that will help adolescent GOC overcome those same challenges and become WOC who hold senior leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. WOC

leaders can become mentors who understand adolescent GOC unique experiences and are able to become positive social change agents. They will be able to provide targeted mentoring to ensure there is a generational cycle of mentorship to leadership for adolescent GOC.

Chapter 3 documents the rationale for exploring a qualitative study. It also details the research design for the study, the research methodology, the participant demographics, the data collection process, and the ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the qualitative research methodology. Qualitative studies are used to explore the experiences of participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2007; Baxter & Jack, 2008). Creswell (2007) asserts that qualitative research is interpretive. Qualitative inquiries draw conclusions based on the themes that develop from the data collected. Qualitative inquiries start with identifying a pattern or an issue, and they are an exploratory approach that allows a researcher to formulate conclusions from the collected data. A researcher's goal is to use a qualitative analysis to make sense of a situation and develop phenomena relative to the participants' meanings. Qualitative researchers acknowledge reflexivity to allow readers to understand their personal stance on the explored subject matter. Qualitative researchers also denote within the literature how their positions did or did not directly affect the outcome of the study (Maxwell, 2005). Qualitative studies incorporate a research process that employs various measures to collect, analyze, and articulate the data, which could include interviews, focus groups, field notes, and observations. Finally, a written report delineates the experiences of the participants, the exploration of the identified problem, and transforms the literature or positions a need for further research (Creswell, 2007). In this chapter, I review the research methodology I used to assess the unique experiences WOC leaders experienced during adolescence. They also shared how they feel they overcame those experiences to become a small portion of WOC leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the adolescent experiences related to leadership development of WOC who hold senior executive leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. In this study, I explored the challenges these WOC executives experienced as adolescent GOC related to leadership development and uncover the intervention strategies they benefited from. The scope of this study was unique because it explored a gap in the literature surrounding the experiences of adolescent GOC and leadership development. Studies exist about adolescent girls and leadership, but few studies focus on adolescent GOC and leadership development outside of sports. Adolescent GOC experience marginalization associated with race and gender, and these experiences influence their experiences with leadership development. Many times, they are not afforded the same leadership opportunities as their male peers and their White female peers.

Leadership and leadership development were defined as positions of power held by White Anglo-Saxon Protestant men (Northouse, 2013). Over time, leadership and leadership development were identified through characteristics and traits (Northouse, 2013; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Initially, it was assumed that individuals were born with those traits and they could be developed over time. However, this school of thought excluded a number of individuals from being considered leaders. Eventually, the definition of leadership and leadership development evolved. Comstock (2018) and Germain (2012) assert that leadership and leadership development incorporate behavioral patterns between the leader and the non-leader. In addition, leaders may be born with certain traits, but individuals with a desire to lead can be taught specific skills that will

allow them to become effective leaders. Those leaders will need to practice the craft in order to master it. Adolescence is a time of inquiry, growth, and development. It is a time when adolescent GOC may benefit from targeted leadership development to help them identify themselves as leaders and help them overcome any challenges they may be experiencing.

In this chapter, I review the research methodology I used to explore the unique experiences of four WOC who hold senior executive leadership roles in Fortune 500 companies. These WOC experienced challenges with gaining leadership development during adolescence. I discussed issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations. In the methodology section I explain how I chose the participants and the procedures I used to identify, contact, and recruit them. In this chapter, I describe how I collected and analyzed the data. This qualitative study involved electronic interviews and used theories that grounded the participants' views and identified their challenges. The results of this qualitative study contribute to the body of knowledge and the gap in the literature related to adolescent GOC and leadership development.

Research Design and Rationale

Three research questions guided this study. They are the following:

RQ1: What types of challenges did WOC experience as adolescent GOC?

RQ2: When WOC were adolescents, how did these challenges impact them in the area of leadership development?

RQ3: What types of leadership development experiences were available to WOC during adolescence in extracurricular activities, electives, and the home?

Research questions are central to a study's main idea. They are answerable inquiries about the studied issues. Research questions are clear, specific, and direct. In addition, they are the starting point of the data analysis. The interview questions I used were open-ended and resulted in the participants detailing their opinions and perspectives. The participants detailed their challenges during adolescence as well as intervention techniques or strategies that helped them overcome those challenges.

The chosen research methodology was a qualitative case study. A case study afforded me the ability to draw data from different cases that share similar characteristics and similar perspectives. Studying multiple cases made it possible to denote various perspectives of an issue. The rationale behind choosing a multiple case study research methodology was because of its correlation with critical theory.

Critical theory is the conceptual paradigm framing the constructs of this study of the marginalization of adolescent GOC relative to leadership development. Freire (2000) and Zou and Trueba (2002) assert that critical theory exposes ways an unjust society uses a set of ideas to convince people that marginalization is normal. Critical theory has grounded research that allows people to explore their experiences

through a case study. The study identified themes and it identified intervention strategies from the participants' experiences. These data benefit adolescent GOC as they pursue leadership development opportunities. Adolescent GOC also benefit from WOC leaders' experiences during adolescence by helping them recognize how they may overcome their challenges and identify themselves as leaders. Because this research study explored the experiences of WOC leaders as adolescents relative to leadership development, a qualitative case study is appropriate and the best fit for answering the research questions.

Role of the Researcher

My role in this research study was to explore the perspectives and experiences of WOC leaders who have self-identified as having challenges during adolescence relative to leadership development. I gained an idea of whether their experiences had an effect on their leadership abilities and leadership preparedness. I explored how the participants benefited from intervention strategies that influenced their pursuit of leadership roles. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) suggest that racial and gender inequity may cause social, economic, and even cultural obstacles. These obstacles may hinder people's ability to identify themselves as leaders. The interviews addressed the research questions and added crucial information and data to the current body of research surrounding adolescent GOC and leadership development. This research study denoted positive social change implications for nonprofit leaders. My desire was that more programs will surface that

will develop adolescent GOC in the area of leadership outside of extracurricular activities.

As a community leader, mentor, and nonprofit leader, I work with youth to help them overcome obstacles. These data helped me identify ways of better assisting GOC as they develop educationally, socially, and emotionally. Exploring WOC and their perspectives as adolescent GOC allowed me to identify ways to direct training programs to provide adolescent GOC with the best possible opportunity to become successful leaders. I believe a qualitative inquiry addressed this topic sufficiently because it explored the experiences through the eyes of the participants.

Qualitative research is suggestive and voluminous. It incorporates various factures, methods, and cycles (Patton, 2015). Ultimately, qualitative researchers articulate the voices of the participants through descriptions and interpretations of the data. The goal is to explore phenomena through the participants' lenses (Patton, 2015). A researcher is an instrument in the data collection process and must acknowledge ethical considerations throughout the research process because this method explores participants' views. A researcher must acknowledge all bias because the readers must be able to identify the researcher's viewpoint. In addition, readers must be able to separate the researcher's views from the presented data.

I experienced many challenges during adolescence as a GOC, and I acknowledged my bias when approaching this research. I compartmentalized my beliefs to gain the perspective of each participant without influencing their responses. Ultimately, I ensured that the data support the views of the participants only. The discoveries I uncovered may

affect how organizations offer leadership development for adolescent GOC. It may help mentors, parents, teachers, and leaders understand the challenges adolescent GOC experience based on marginalization and the intersection of race and gender. This research study will bring about positive social change in the area of leadership development for adolescent GOC. The change will be reflected in how adolescent GOC are developed for leadership outside extracurricular activities. The change will be reflected in the number of adolescent GOC who begin to identify as leaders. The results of this research study can be used to redirect negative connotations about adolescent GOC into positive affirmations. Instead of referring to adolescent GOC as *bossy* and *loud*, adolescent GOC can be viewed as *assertive leaders*. Over time, as the number of adolescent GOC leaders increase, the number of WOC senior leaders in Fortune 500 companies should increase.

I managed potential biases during the research process by adhering to the interview questions and following the interview guide. I asked each participant the same questions and the same follow-up questions. I documented the follow-up questions based on participants' responses without expressing my own opinions, beliefs, or experiences. Additionally, I did not allow my nonverbal communication to affect the data collection process. Once the interviews were completed, I reflected on my verbal and nonverbal communication during the interview as a self-evaluation. This helped me refrain from inserting bias. I managed relationships by remaining professional at all times. I was punctual with all scheduled interviews. I reviewed the transcripts with the participants within 5 calendar days. I was also mindful of the timeframes for the interviews. Each

interview lasted no longer than 90 minutes. I also ensured that I followed the established projected timeline to ensure my participants and I had an opportunity to transcribe the interviews for clarity. By adhering to this protocol with each participant, I fortified our professional relationship throughout the data collection process.

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is interpretive. Its researchers promote studies of individuals' lived experiences in their natural setting to make sense of and develop phenomena relative to the participants' meanings (Patton, 2015; Cresswell, 2007). Qualitative researchers acknowledge reflexivity to allow readers to understand their personal stance on the explored subject matter. They also denote within the literature how their positions did or did not directly affect the outcome of the study (Maxwell, 2005). Qualitative studies incorporate a research process that employs various measures to collect, analyze and articulate the data, which could include interviews, focus groups, field notes, and observations. The final written report delineates the experiences of the participants, the exploration of the identified problem, and it transforms the literature or positions a need for further research (Creswell, 2007).

Creswell (2007) asserts that qualitative research is a method of inquiry that investigates how individuals or groups attribute meanings to a phenomenon. Descriptive multiple case study research is a qualitative method of analysis. A qualitative case study method identifies an individual's perception of the meaning of a particular event. The focus of such an inquiry is to explore participants' experiences relative to leadership development when they were adolescents. By exploring the participants' views of the

same situation, the researcher can explore what it was like to experience this from their perspective.

Patton (2012) and Creswell (2007) assert that a qualitative case study involves a rigorous analysis of a situation with more than one participant. It is also an investigation of a phenomenon while the participants are in real-life settings. The case study explores the how or why of a situation. It also investigates iterations of phenomena as articulated though the views of the participants without preconceived theories about their explanations. I used a qualitative case study to analyze the participants' experiences related to leadership development during adolescence. The participants were all WOC who hold senior executive leadership positions within Fortune 500 companies.

Methodology

Participant Selection/Recruitment

Moser and Korstjens (2017) assert that sampling is the selection of participants based on the specifics of the research process. For this research study, I engaged a homogeneous purposive sampling to choose four participants who are WOC who articulated having challenges during adolescence relative to leadership development. In addition, the four participants are WOC who hold senior executive roles in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. I also identified additional participants as alternates in the event a chosen participant dropped out of the research study for any reason.

Purposive sampling was the most effective sampling strategy for this research study. Moser and Korstjens (2017) suggest that purposive sampling is effective when incorporated in research studies that participants meet a specific characteristic of the

population in question. This sampling strategy enabled me to select the most viable participants to participate in this research study. In addition, this sampling strategy ensured that participants were excluded if they failed to meet the selection criteria. The research questions also led me to use a purposive sampling strategy because the research study focused on a specific group of individuals who met the criteria relevant to answer the research questions. The group was considered homogeneous because they all shared similar characteristics. This increased the potential for gaining participants who would be committed to the research study based on their familiarity with the objectives of the research study.

As a member of several female-based volunteer organizations, I have access to several WOC leaders who hold senior executive positions in Fortune 500 companies. Once cleared to select participants, I acquired contact information through personal and professional affiliations. I made initial contact was through personal e-mails provided from potential participants. I sent a recruitment/consent document that detailed the nature of the study, the participant criteria, and pertinent volunteer information. This document ensured that the participants embodied the characteristics needed to participate in this research study. I identified at least eight individuals to participate in the study: four participants and four alternates. I designed this strategy to ensure I had additional participants available in the event that a participant decided to discontinue with the study.

Data Collection Methods

Moser and Korstjens, 2017 assert that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to prepare an effective interview guide for participants while ensuring the

conversation is natural. The researcher is able to ask additional questions of the participants to gain essential details during this process. Therefore, semi structured interviews are effective data collection methods used to collect data for this dissertation project. In addition, the researcher should note the additional questions with an interview guide to ensure all participants answer the same questions during the data collection process (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). According to Patton (2002), an interview guide allows the researcher to ensure the participants are presented with the same method of inquiry throughout the interview process.

I collected data from four WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States who have identified having challenges with obtaining leadership development during adolescence. Through interviews, I explored the participant's experiences with leadership development as adolescent GOC. I recorded, transcribed, and played back the interviews for the participants to ensure transparency, accuracy, and agreement of the responses. I established a timeframe of five calendar days to review the interviews with each participant. I gathered pertinent information about gender, race, leadership experience, family structure, and educational experiences using these data collection strategies. I ensured peer reviews of the interview questions were conducted to establish content validity. I determined which participants benefited from intervention strategies that helped them overcome challenges with obtaining leadership development during adolescence. The participants denoted their challenges with gaining effective leadership development as adolescent GOC. They also detailed the intervention strategies that helped them become senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in

the United States. I identified themes that will add to the body of knowledge to fill the gap in the literature about adolescent GOC and leadership development.

Data Analysis Plan

Fracturing the data is when the analyst organizes the data into themes and categories (Maxwell, 2005; Creswell, 2007). During this portion of the research process, I compared the data within those categories to uncover theoretical concepts. Broader themes may appear that direct or redirect the analyst's research process. Maxwell (2005) suggests that the analyst may want to organize potential categories into sections that are from predetermined issues. Those categories are more like topics or potential areas of discovery. They may come from assumptions, which were established during the literature review.

I used Microsoft Excel software to code and to categorize the data. I sectioned the data within the spreadsheet based on the interview questions. Coding requires that all data be organized into sections. I identified themes and I captured the main ideas of the interview transcripts. Organizing the coded data into sections during analysis assisted me with identify themes. As I coded the data, categories emerged. These categories uncovered identified themes. I benefited from The Microsoft Excel software because it aided me in analyzing the data collected from the four participants.

As the researcher, I decided which information was useful for the research process and I analyzed it. Patton (2015) asserts that the researcher should engage an effective content analysis. This is when the researcher codes the data, categorizes the

data, and identifies reoccurring themes from the data (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) asserts that the analyst must decide which information is necessary to minimize or emphasize.

The semi structured interview questions were as follows:

1. How do you describe the challenges you experienced as an adolescent girl of color related to leadership development?
2. How did your teachers, parents, or mentors encourage you when you were in middle/junior high school in regard to STEM courses, extracurricular activities, physical fitness?
3. Where there any organizations outside of school that you could gain leadership development from?
4. Do you feel you were treated differently than your male peers and female White peers? If so, how did you handle it?
    a. How did you express it?
    b. Did you share it with others, or did you internalize it?
5. Can you describe any other barriers you may have experienced during adolescence outside of leadership development?
    a. How did you articulate those barriers?
6. If you could have changed any part of your educational, social, personal development during adolescence, what would it have been?
7. What obstacles have you currently had to overcome in order to excel into senior leadership?

   a. Do think you would have been prepared for these obstacles through intervention strategies during adolescence? Can you elaborate on the different ways?

8. Can you articulate how your race and gender affected your ability to receive leadership development during adolescence?
   a. How has it affected your career development?
   b. Based on your career development, what advice would you give your younger self?
   c. What advice would you give to an adolescent GOC who is currently experiencing challenges with leadership development?

Interview questions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 answered RQ1. The interview questions that related to RQ2 included, 2, 4, 6, and 7. Interview questions number 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 answered RQ3.

Coding required that I organize the data into sections to identify themes and to capture the essence of the interview transcripts. Organizing the coded data into concise chunks during analysis aided in theme identification. As the coding began, I created categories, which housed the various themes that I identified. I coded the data using The Microsoft Excel software. I used The Microsoft Excel software to analyze the data that I collected from the four participants. I used The Microsoft Excel software to section off each research question, the transcribed responses to the questions, and the codes that emerged from the data analysis. The interview questions that related to the research questions were added into their respective sections. I then added the comments by each of

the four participants for the specific semi-structured interview questions. I analyzed the comments made by the participants. I looked for similarities and differences. I employed a critical analysis of the participants' comments to ensure I identified critical themes. I categorized each theme under each research question, which will be explained in detail in Chapter 5.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Issues of trustworthiness must be outlined to ensure the research study is valid and credible. Credibility was established based on the strength of the internal validity of the research study. Berger (2015) asserts that this can be established by having non-biased third parties provide peer review feedback of the coded data. This is essential in identifying reflexivity throughout the data collection process (Berger, 2015; Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) asserts that peer reviewers ensure the researcher's finding are honest and void of personal bias. The reviewer poses questions to the researcher about the data collection method and the interpretations of the researchers' findings (Berger, 2015; Creswell, 2007).

External validity was strengthened based on the participant pool being representative of the population being studied. The participants are all WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States who have identified having challenges with obtaining leadership development as adolescents. The participants were identified through my personal and professional networks of WOC who are senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States are. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process. Creswell (2007) and Berger (2015) assert

that reflexivity is how the researcher's background, experiences, and culture may possibly guide the direction of the study relative to interpretation and uncovered themes.

As the researcher, I am a survivor of many challenges I experienced during adolescence. I acknowledged my bias and I compartmentalized my beliefs to gain the perspective of each participant without influencing their responses. Ultimately, I ensured the data support the views of the participants only. I reflected on how non-verbal communication could change the trajectory of the participants' interview process and I ensured this did not happen. I also ensured that my close relationship with the research study did not shape the study.

Ethical Procedures

Qualitative research is interpretive, suggestive, and voluminous. It incorporates various factures, methods, and cycles (Patton, 2015). Ultimately, qualitative researchers articulate the voices of its participants through descriptions and interpretations of the data. Its goal is to explore phenomena through the participants' lens (Patton, 2015). Because this method explores participant's views, coupled with the researcher is an instrument in the process, ethical considerations must be acknowledged throughout the research process. In addition, the researcher must acknowledge all bias to ensure the readers identify his or her viewpoint to ensure they are able to separate them from the presented data.

Lee (2018) asserts that the researcher must handle human participants in an ethical manner. The researcher must treat all humans fairly who participate in a research study. In addition, the researcher must not coerce the participant (Orb, Eisenhauer, &

Wynaden, 2001). To ensure that all human participants were handled in an ethical manner, I upheld the American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethic's principles to ensure the participants were not harmed. I remained professional and I was attentive to the needs of the participants. I made available the results to the public. I also ensured the participants received a summary of the results of the study.

The data collected for the research study remained confidential. The privacy and the participants' rights were protected. All information regarding the participants will be held for the minimum amount of time allowable and then destroyed. I ensured the privacy rights outlined in the confidentiality agreements were adhered to and I stored the data in a password protected computer file. Participants knew that their involvement was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw from the research study at any time. If any participant decided to drop out of the research study, I would have replaced that individual with a participant who was denoted as an alternate prior to the data collection process.

Summary

As the researcher, I explored the experiences WOC leaders had as adolescent GOC related to leadership development. I also identified themes and intervention strategies that helped them overcome challenges to become WOC who hold senior executive leadership roles in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. I also identified how their experiences can add to the body of knowledge to fill the gap in the literature related to adolescent GOC and leadership development.

I employed a homogeneous purposive sampling strategy to ensure that the sample of participants was a representative of the characteristics demonstrated by the population in question. I identified and interviewed those participants to secure data necessary to answer the research questions. The data collection methods consisted of electronic interviews and phone interviews. I transcribed the data by hand and verified the information with each participant at least five calendar days after each interview for clarity via a phone interview. I analyzed the data using The Microsoft Excel software, which assisted me in identifying the themes of this research study. Finally, the results of this research study and the relationship they had to the research questions were shared with the participants and with the community. The details of the results and the overall outcome of the research study will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the adolescent experiences related to leadership development of WOC who hold senior executive leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies. In this study, I explored the challenges these WOC experienced as adolescent GOC related to leadership development to uncover the intervention strategies they benefited from to become leaders. The central research question that guided this study was how the lack of WOC in senior executive leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies was based on the lack of leadership development they received during adolescence. In Chapter 4, I describe the demographics and recruitment process of the participants, details of the participants' profiles, as well as general observations. I also discuss the data collection process, data storage, data analysis process, and data verification. Finally, I delineate the themes identified from the three research questions.

Demographics and Recruitment

This research study was restricted to a specific demographic. The target population consisted of WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States who self-identified as having challenges with obtaining leadership development during adolescence. The study consisted of four participants.

I identified the participants through purposive sampling. I initiated the recruitment process by contacting, via personal email, WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States through personal and professional affiliation. I did not

provide incentives to any participants in this study. The purposive sampling approach allowed me to acquire the four WOC participants to become interested in participating in the study. I also identified four alternate participants in the event participants voluntarily declined to continue with the study. I introduced myself and provided a brief description of the study in the welcome letter I emailed to potential participants. Once I received email confirmation of their desire to participate in the research study, I emailed each person individually the informed consent form that included samples of the interview questions, specific information about the study, the specific information that detailed how the study was voluntary, and notification that they could decline to continue with the study at any time. The informed consent form also detailed the length of the interviews and a free referral service if they experienced any form of trauma from reminiscing about their past challenges during adolescence.

Participant Profiles

Each participant identified herself as being a WOC who holds a senior executive leadership position with a Fortune 500 company in the United States. Each participant also identified as having challenges with receiving leadership development during adolescence.

Participant 1 (P1) has an MBA. She is a senior executive in the operations department of a Fortune 500 company in the United States. P1 stated that she felt she was invisible during adolescence. She was not chosen for any leadership development programs in middle school or high school even though she expressed interest. P1 was raised in a single-parent household where her mother was the custodial parent. She grew

up in an urban area, and her family's household income was slightly above the poverty level. She did visit her father regularly, but she did not garner a significant relationship with him until she graduated from high school. P1played basketball throughout high school, but she did not have a love for the sport. Throughout her career, she engaged with both male and female management staff of various ethnic backgrounds. She believed much of her career trajectory was substantially similar under various management staff.

Participant 2 (P2) has a master's degree in public administration with a concentration in project management. P2 is a senior executive in the coaching and development department in a Fortune 500 company in the United States. P2 stated she was never chosen for leadership development programs during middle school or high school. She remembers being overlooked, and she did not understand how other peers were chosen. She was raised by her maternal grandmother in an urban area. Their household income was below the poverty level and they benefited from government assistance. She did not visit her mother and father regularly. However, she did garner a relationship with her mother once she graduated from high school. P2 played basketball throughout high school. She was involved with Future Homemakers of America and Future Business Leaders of America. She did not have a love for either program. She participated based on teacher recommendations. Throughout her career, she engaged with both male and female management staff of various ethnic backgrounds. She believed much of her career trajectory was substantially similar under various management staff although she preferred the supervision of WOC leaders.

Participant 3 (P3) has a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication and an MBA. P3 is a senior executive in the finance department in a Fortune 500 company in the United States. P3 stated she was never chosen for leadership development programs during middle school or high school even though she maintained a 3.4 grade point average and she graduated from high school with highest honors. She was raised by a single mother, and they lived in an urban area. Their household income was below the poverty level, and they benefited from government assistance. She did not visit her father regularly, but she did garner a relationship with him during her high school years. P3 was enrolled in Future Business Leaders of America. She did not have a love for the program, and she eventually stopped participating in it. She spent most of her time after school babysitting her siblings while her mother was at work. Throughout her career, she engaged with both male and female management staff of various ethnic backgrounds. She believed much of her career trajectory was substantially similar under various management staff although she preferred male leaders of various ethnicities.

Participant 4 (P4) has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management. She has a Master's Degree in Public Administration. P4 is a senior executive in the human resources department in a Fortune 500 company in the United States. P4 stated she was never chosen for leadership development programs during middle school or high school despite her desire to participate in them. She remembers asking why she was not chosen. P4 states she was overlooked because the opportunities were granted to the male students in her classroom. P4was raised by her maternal grandmother, and they lived in an urban area. Their household income was slightly above the poverty level, and they benefited

from government assistance. She did not visit her father or her mother regularly, but she did garner a relationship with her mother once she became a mother herself. P4 was enrolled in Future Homemakers of America and played basketball. She did not have a love for the Future Homemakers of America, but she did like playing basketball. As she transitioned through adolescence, playing basketball became a chore. She did not have anyone to help her with her hair or the financial responsibilities for uniforms and sneakers. Eventually, she stopped playing basketball. She also reduced the amount of time she participated in Future Homemakers of America. Throughout her career, she engaged with a majority of WOC management staff. She believed much of her career trajectory was difficult being supervised by WOC. It was as if they felt there was not enough room at the top for additional WOC leaders.

Data Collection and Storage

The four participants were interviewed through Skype and over the telephone. The participants took part in two interview sessions as described in Chapter 3. The initial data collection event was the Skype interview. The participants answered a series of semi structured questions, which provided data about their unique experiences related to leadership development during adolescence. After the interview session, I transcribed the data and emailed it to each participant through an encrypted file prior to the second interview. The second interview session was via telephone. I contacted each participant via telephone to review the transcripts for clarity. This was the second interview. This event was to secure the accuracy of the transcript. It allowed the interviewee to ask questions, provide input, and provide clarification. All four participant interviews lasted

no more than a total of 2 hours. All elements of the collected data were stored in a password-protected file on my computer. Each interview was recorded using the recording mechanism via Skype and via the telephone. All information that could identify the participants was removed from the transcripts prior to the second data collection session.

Data Analysis

I reviewed each transcript thoroughly after I completed all interviews. The semi structured interview questions were the same for each participant and I used an interview guide. Many of the responses were similar, but not identical. The collected data were organized into categories. I used Microsoft Excel to separate spreadsheets into three sections. Each section housed the research question and the semi structured interview questions that related to the research question. After reviewing the transcripts, I entered detailed comments made by the participants into the spreadsheet that related to the research question and interview questions. I coded the data into common words and phrases based on the research questions. I identified the most common words by using different color fonts in the Microsoft Excel software. This process helped me identify the most important themes relevant to this research topic.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Evidence of trustworthiness was denoted to validate this research study. Credibility was established based on the strength of the internal validity of the research study. Berger (2015) asserts that internal validity can be established by having nonbiased

third parties provide peer review feedback of the coded data. This was an effective way to identify reflexivity throughout the data collection process (Berger, 2015; Creswell, 2007). The peer reviewer was a senior executive WOC in a Fortune 500 company who did not participate in the study. This person was not aware of the nature of the study and reviewed only the coded data, categories, and the reoccurring themes from the data to protect the identity of the participants.

Creswell (2007) asserts that peer reviewers validate that a researcher's findings are truthful and void of personal bias. The reviewer posed questions to me about the data collection method and the interpretations of my findings (Berger, 2015; Creswell, 2007). Credibility also includes confirming that the research findings are accurate by reviewing them with the participants involved in the study (Creswell, 2009). This study also established credibility by implementing a member checking process that enabled me to share the data and the understanding of the data with the participants for trustworthiness in the research.

Triangulation

Credibility was also achieved through data triangulation, which was implemented in the data analysis process. The data were triangulated using interview transcripts, coded results into emerging themes, and trends for synthesis and interpretation. I did this to decrease the likelihood of my beliefs affecting the outcome of the study. Finally, external validity was strengthened because the participant pool was a representation of the population being studied. The participants were all WOC senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States who self-identified as having challenges with

obtaining leadership development as adolescents. The participants were identified through my personal and professional networks of WOC who are senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States are.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process. Reflexivity is the researcher's history, the researcher's experiences, and the researcher's culture and how these entities may guide the study because the researcher is the instrument during the data collection process (Creswell, 2007; Berger, 2015). During adolescence, I experienced barriers similar to those experienced by the participants. I discussed my bias in this research study. I compartmentalized my feelings, my beliefs, and my experiences. I did not discuss them with my participants, and I made sure that the data support the views of the participants only.

Researcher's General Observations

The participants were excited to be a part of the research study. Understanding how their input cold impact how adolescent GOC may overcome challenges with leadership and implications for social change helped me gain more than enough participants for this research study. The participants were verbose during the interview as they detailed their experiences related to leadership development during adolescence. They expressed how they internalized their challenges even though many times it was overt. The participants were different in many ways. Yet, they shared similarities based on their race and gender and the way they perceived and denoted their challenges during adolescence relative to leadership development. Each participant expressed how difficult

their journey to senior leadership was and how the journey could have been more effective if, they were given opportunities to lead during adolescence. They all agreed that representation during adolescence was necessary as well. They also denoted how scarce WOC are in senior executive roles in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. Many times, it is because WOC gain access to leadership development late in life.

I observed a range of emotions during the interviews. The emotions came because as they answered the interview questions. They realized how they were excluded from leadership development programs even though their grades were excellent. Many times, the participants shared how their display of confidence was mistaken for arrogance. Yet, their male peers and female White peers were celebrated when they displayed confidence in their abilities. This racial and gender discrimination was overlooked as adolescents. However, their facial expressions during the skype interviews showed their disdain when they realized how they were discriminated against. The emotions changed from negative to positive when they realized how important it is for them to ensure future adolescent GOC do not experience the challenges they experienced. They also discussed how they could become mentors.

I observed anger, revelations, and hope. The anger came from realizing that even in 2019 WOC are underrepresented in senior executive positions in Fortune 500 companies. The anger also came from realizing how they were overlooked for leadership programs that could have diminished some of the challenge they face today as leaders. They all denoted how better prepared they could have been for leadership roles. The revelations also came from realizing they were discriminated against based on the

marginalization of race and gender even during adolescence. However, hope was prevalent as the participants realized that they excelled to these positions despite being overlooked during adolescence. They detailed how representation even in its simplest form helped them overcome some of their challenges. Hope was also prevalent as they realized how important it is for them to become mentors for not only the WOC within their respective companies but also for adolescent GOC. Mentoring could help both groups overcome the same marginalization, they experienced during adolescence. This same hope was evident when the participants realized that it was their duty to become positive social change agents within their communities. The participants verbalized their desire to collaborate with individuals who have nonprofit organizations designated for assisting GOC with gaining leadership skills. Although anger is a strong emotion, the participants realized their revelations of hope and change outweighed their feelings of anger.

Identified Themes

Baxter and Jack (2008) assert that a qualitative case study methodology offers researchers the means of sustaining a study with complex ideals within a specific context. This descriptive, qualitative, multiple case study purposed to identify themes based on the participants' experiences during adolescence with leadership development. The participants are WOC who hold senior executive leadership positions in Fortune 500 companies within the United States who have identified having challenges with gaining targeted leadership development during adolescence. The study sought to provide a means for the participants to share their challenges, their intervention strategies, and the

impact of having leadership entrust them with opportunities despite those challenges. The findings are sectioned below by research questions and the themes that were identified under that particular research question. The participants' comments are denoted to strengthen the identified themes.

Theme 1: Lack of Representation

Participants were asked to describe the challenges they experienced as adolescent GOC related to leadership development. They described their challenges with not having leaders who looked like them. They detailed that it was difficult for them to picture themselves as leaders without viewing someone they could mimic.

P1 shared "I believe that I wasn't given an opportunity to lead because I didn't look like the leader who was making the decisions. I believed that I had the same skills my male and female White peers had even though I was overlooked." P3 stated "My mother placed me in a school with a small number of minorities because she thought it would give me a more efficient educational experience. I often felt like my teachers didn't understand me or my issues. For example, we were outside when it started raining. I wanted to go inside because I didn't want to mess up my hair. I was admonished for not wanting to stay with the group. Because of situations like this, it was difficult for me to be led or mimic their leadership abilities when they didn't understand my cultural differences." P2 shared that she did not have any women leaders in her life who looked like her. "They were not in my schools and they weren't in my home. My mother gave up on life early. She was not helpful with my journey, as I wanted more than a life with

limitations. I would have benefited from a cost-effective organization outside of school that could help me identify my leadership skills."

Theme 2: Lack of Direction

Participants were asked to describe any other barriers they may have experienced during adolescence outside of leadership development that could have affected their leadership identity. Participants articulated their challenges with developing healthy relationships with diverse groups of individuals.

P1 expressed, "Being a leader was the last thing on my mind. I wanted someone to walk me through dealing with my emotions, my differences, and internal challenges I didn't know how to articulate. I felt like a fish out of water far from the shore. I was lost." "I was labeled angry if I voiced my opinion in a strong or abrupt way. This sometimes made me keep my thoughts to myself." P2 stated, "I lived in the ghetto but I was enrolled in talented and gifted programs throughout middle and high school. I felt like I didn't have help navigating our cultural differences. It was like adults would put us in a room and let us try to figure it out. I had to learn how to be a "code switcher." I had to learn how to articulate my feelings differently between my classmates and my friends from my neighborhood. It was like I was two different people. I really wish I had someone to help me handle the cultural differences between my different groups of friends." P4 shared "It was hard for me to be myself. I wanted to be accepted by everyone. But I felt like everybody couldn't understand me. So, this made me doubt who I was. It was hard for me to even think of myself as a leader when I didn't know who I was."

Theme 3: Racial and Gender Discrimination

The participants were asked to denote any leadership development experiences that were available to them during adolescence. The overwhelming theme was there were minimal leadership development opportunities for them as adolescent GOC in school. Hey were ushered into programs that were geared toward their gender and their race. There was Future Homemakers of America, Future Business leaders of America, and Basketball. P2 stated, “I didn’t want to continue to play basketball because it messed up my hair and I was tired all of the time. I rarely had time to do my homework because I had to baby sit my siblings when I got home from school.” P3 said, “I was enrolled in Future Business Leaders of America but I was never chosen for a leadership position even though I expressed interest. The guest speakers didn’t look like me and it was hard for me to identify with them and their experiences. I eventually stopped participating in the program.” P4 posited, “My teacher encouraged me to enroll in Future Homemakers of America. She told me it would be a good opportunity for me to learn how to cook and how to sew. My teacher insisted that I needed know how to sew and cook to become a wife and a mother. I told her I didn’t want to be either. I felt like I was a fish out of water.” P1 shared, “If I didn’t want to play basketball or become a wife and a mother, there was nothing else for me to do.”

The participants were asked what obstacles they had to overcome in order to excel into senior leadership positions. The participants collectively articulated their experiences about being discriminated against based on race and gender.

P1 stated, “I was told that I should stick to lower level positions because I would do better managing people who looked like me. P2 verbalized that she had to ask permission from her White male supervisor to apply for a leadership development program that was available to all employees within her company. She was told that she did not have enough experience to benefit from the program. However, two years later, her company merged with a larger corporation whose mission was diversity in senior executive leadership. The participant applied again and she was accepted. P4 shared “As an adolescent and much of my adult career, I believed my skin color was my barrier. I hated it. As an adolescent, I was told that the only career paths I should aspire to was being a nurse, a teacher, or a mother. I didn’t understand why the conversations my teachers had with me were different than the conversations they had with my male peers and my male and female White peers.” She articulated that much of her career she was discriminated against by women who looked like her. She shared, “I was alarmed that many of them felt there was not enough room at the top for more than a few WOC.” She was even deterred from continuing employment within the organization. Instead of resigning, she transitioned to a different department. The participant was given an opportunity to enroll in a diversity and inclusion executive training program. Although she felt discouraged based on her prior experiences, she persevered and was able to matriculate to senior executive leadership. She described the journey as difficult and most times, it was unbearable.

Theme 4: Lack of Collaboration

The participants felt that during middle and high school, teachers were trying to groom leaders instead of helping them focus on learning how to share the leader experience.

P1 shared, “I think the emphasis in middle school and high school is identifying and grooming leaders to be great individually. There was a lack of emphasis on collaboration amongst a diverse group. By emphasizing this earlier, there would be little to no culture shock during the transition from youth to adulthood when meshed with people from various cultures.” P2 asserted, “I believe we should have been encouraged to share our experiences within the group. We may have been able to understand our difference a little better. We may have appreciated our differences and learned about our similarities. Adolescence was a difficult time for me.” P3 posited, “I felt like a pink elephant in a room full of hyenas. This was a time of self-discovery for me. Nevertheless, I couldn’t understand how we all fit together. I felt like I was a double minority. I was a Black girl from the projects mixed in with students who couldn’t identify with the way I wore my hair or my background. I was as smart as they were but I felt so out of place.”

The participants expressed how they felt with effective collaboration they would have understood how to be politically correct and how to share their passion without seeming overwhelming or condescending.

P1 shared, “I would have practiced how to be politically correct when expressing myself on topics I am passionate about. I would have understood better how to communicate without being viewed as the angry Black woman. I would have learned

earlier how to draft my thoughts and ideas before speaking them within a group. I would have practiced how to better control my emotions." P2 voiced, "I wish I could have had conversations with woman in leadership who looked like me and who shared similar experiences. I believe I would have been better prepared for corporate America. I also believe my journey would have been a lot smoother and much less frightening." P3 said, "I believe with more practice, I would have been equipped with skills that could not be overlooked. There would be no way for anyone to scrutinize my abilities. My results would substantiate my qualifications regardless of my race or gender." P4 explained, "There are nonprofit organizations everywhere now that I am older. I believe I could have benefited from being a part of one when I was younger because my family did not attend church. My company collaborates with nonprofits of all kinds now. There are middle and high school aged youth who participate as well. If I were able to be a part of something like this when I was younger, I believe I would have been able to practice how not to react negatively when someone said something I did not agree with. You cannot gain those skills in a classroom setting."

Summary

Chapter 4 provided information surrounding the research study's demographics and recruitment practices. It provided essential information about the data collection and the analysis process. It also incorporated statements made by the participants, which answered the research questions and strengthened the significance of this research study.

The reflections from the participants also substantiated the four identified themes: (a) lack of representation, (b) lack of direction, and (c) racial and gender discrimination,

and (d) lack of collaboration based on the data analysis. Results of this study indicated that all four WOC participants who hold senior executive positions in Fortune 500 companies within different departments shared the same trials and triumphs regarding the lack of leadership training during adolescence.

The participants were able to overcome several barriers using similar tactics. They all experienced the drawbacks of feeling as though they did not have leaders who shared their unique character traits. The participants felt they would have been able to identify with their leaders if they looked like them. The participants also agreed that many times they felt lost as adolescence while they were attempting to gain leadership skills. The participants recognized how the marginalization of race and gender negatively affected their ability to gain targeted leadership development during adolescence. They also shared how collaboration would have been an excellent way to gain skills from others. They would have learned how to share the workload while creating a collaborative environment. Although the participants engaged several challenges during adolescence relative to gaining leadership development, they were able to overcome them. They shared how they draw strength from within and built resilience in similar ways to overcome those barriers and matriculate to senior executive positions in Fortune 500 companies in the United States.

Chapter 5 will provide an interpretation of the findings, significance of the study, limitations of the study, implications for social change, implications for practice, recommendations for future research, and pertinent conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative, multiple case study was to explore the experiences of WOC during adolescence relative to leadership development. The four participants were senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. This study identified the challenges they experienced and acknowledged the intervention strategies they benefited from to overcome those challenges and become senior executive leaders. The scope of this study was unique because it explored the participants' experiences during adolescence and, in their own words, how they were able to overcome those challenges.

The scope of this study explored the marginalization of gender and race based on the participants' experiences during adolescence in the context of leadership development. I was able to draw conclusions from the data analysis while examining the participants' perceptions and experiences. I identified themes to answer the research questions and to strengthen the participants' voices. I discussed those four themes in Chapter 4; they represented the collective experiences of the participants. The final chapter includes the interpretations of the findings, implications for positive social change, recommendations for future research, and relevant conclusions.

The results from the interviews disclosed that all four women shared similar experiences related to leadership development during adolescence. The participants shared similar intervention strategies that may aid future adolescent GOC in the area of leadership development. They experienced racism and sexism during adolescence even

though they may not have acknowledged it at the time. Although the women grew up in different areas around the world, they all identified with the intersection of race and gender and the impact it had on them developing the leadership skills necessary to prepare for future leadership roles. They all contended that they would have been better prepared for their professional journey if they would have gained skills during adolescence, which was an opportune time for development.

Interpretation of Findings

The study results revealed four themes based on data analysis of the participants' responses: (a) lack of representation, (b) lack of direction, (c) racial and gender discrimination, and (d) lack of collaboration. Collectively, the participants agreed that having leaders who looked like them would have benefited them during adolescence as they attempted to acquire leadership skills and practice. The participants believed that representation would have provided them with tangible applications of who they could become. All four participants agreed that they felt lost. They did not have clear direction during adolescence. In addition, as the participants reflected on their experiences during adolescence relative to leadership development, they recognized blatant racism and sexism. The actions of their leaders substantiated this claim. Finally, the participants agreed that they would have benefited from collaborating with others. The participants shared how teamwork gains the buy-in from others and creates a collaborative environment. As I explored the experiences of WOC during adolescence related to leadership development, their experiences were aligned through the three research questions and the semi structured interview questions related to the research questions.

Below is a description of the themes and an interpretation in conjunction with the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2.

Lack of Representation

The interview questions were coupled with each research question. In the first research question, I inquired about the challenges each participant experienced during adolescence. My intent was to explore those challenges within the context of leadership development. The goal of the interview questions was to provide in-depth responses based on the participants' views. The participants' comments strengthened the value of the identified themes. Once I analyzed the data, I discovered that the participants collectively reported it was difficult for them to picture themselves as leaders during adolescence because they were not surrounded by leaders who looked like them. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008) and Chan et al. (2011) assert that puberty is a pivotal time for GOC to be surrounded by leaders they can emulate. It is also a time of discovery. The participants collectively described how isolated they felt by not being surrounded by leaders who looked like them. They also felt like their career choices were limited based on the interactions they shared with their leaders. The participants shared how their teachers and administrators did not understand their challenges, as much of them were rooted in stereotypes associated with the marginalization of gender and race. Comstock (2018) asserted that leadership traits are not synonymous with gender and race, but leaders typically replace themselves with people who look and act like they do. Therefore, it is necessary for adolescent GOC to be surrounded by leaders who understand their social, emotional, racial, and gender-related issues (Galeotti, 2015).

Lack of Direction

With RQ2, I was examining the participants' experiences during adolescence outside of leadership development that could have affected their leadership identity. The participants collectively articulated their challenges with developing healthy relationships in culturally diverse groups. The results showed that collectively participants felt they needed help navigating the cultural differences between them and their peers. They felt lost and helpless. It was as if no one understood their challenges with self-expression. They were viewed as being too aggressive when asking clarifying questions. The participants shared that it was difficult for them to view themselves as leaders because their leaders did not view them as leaders. Blake et al. (2011) substantiated this premise, as GOC are often unfairly stereotyped in schools, extracurricular activities, and even at home. They are misunderstood based on societal gender norms that are synonymous with the stereotypical behavioral patterns associated with White middle-class femininity (Annamma et al., 2016).

I asked the participants how they verbalized their challenges. Collectively, they shared that they internalized their challenges. The participants felt misunderstood. Instead of sharing their feelings, they internalized their struggles. Many times, their outward expressions were manifested as negative behavioral patterns. Wise (2000) asserts that adolescence is a time of transition. In addition, adolescent GOC are attempting to navigate these transitions through the lens of individuals who may not understand how to help them handle their internal changes and outside influences. Adolescent GOC's behavioral patterns are perceived as unacceptable social norms. As a result, they are

punished more harshly and overlooked for leadership development (Wun, 2018; Wun, 2016; Jacobs, 2016; Zou & Trueba, 2012). The participants also articulated how they struggled with communicating effectively with their peers. They learned how to navigate between using colloquialisms and standard English. The participants shared how often they felt like they were living two different lives: one person with their schoolmates and a different person with their neighborhood friends. However, the participants gained leadership skills while navigating their challenges. They learned how to structure their conversations based on their audience. This is a soft skill that is necessary in leadership. Leaders must understand their audience. They must be able to articulate effectively with diverse groups of people. According to Comstock (2018), Jogulu and Wood (2006), and Zaccaro (2007), effective leaders must understand what is in the best interests of their subordinates. Therefore, leaders must communicate effectively with subordinates to understand their needs.

Racial and Gender Discrimination

Lack of Collaboration

The final research question focused on the types of leadership development experiences the participants engaged during adolescence, how they felt they could be better prepared for leadership opportunities, and what advice they could give to future adolescent GOC who may be experiencing similar challenges with gaining leadership development. The participants collectively shared how their leadership experiences were limited. They were encouraged to pursue nursing and teaching careers based on the number of WOC who excelled in those careers. The participants shared how they were

encouraged to learn how to sew and cook because those skills would be necessary once they became wives and mothers despite expressing that they did not want to be mothers or wives. Can, Tufte, Cappello, and Williams (2011) assert that gender roles are learned behaviors. Girls learn these behavioral patterns and craft their professional and personal goals based on gender stereotypes (Chan et al., 2011; Galeotti, 2015). When asked what else the participants felt they could have benefited from during adolescence, collectively they shared they would have been better prepared for leadership if they were taught how to collaborate with one another to accomplish goals instead of relying solely on their individual talents. According to Archard (2012), collaboration is usually learned through participation in extracurricular sports related programs. However, many adolescent GOC refrain from participating in sports for various reasons. In addition, they are not taught how to transfer those learned skills into nonathletic leadership roles (Archard, 2012; Archard, 2013).

Through all their challenges, the participants relied on their faith and resilience to overcome those obstacles. They drew strength from learning about the many WOC leaders who faced similar obstacles, yet they rose to leadership positions in spite of their challenges. The participants were asked what advice they would give to adolescent GOC who may be experiencing similar struggles. The shared they would tell them to find a mentor. They can find a different mentor at different stages of their lives. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) posit that it is necessary for adolescent GOC to have mentors who are WOC within their communities who have overcome similar stereotypes. Adolescent GOC will

gain confidence in their abilities. Finally, the participants collectively shared they would tell adolescent GOC to work together with others to accomplish their goals.

To interpret the findings, I conducted an analysis to determine how similar the participants' experiences were as adolescent GOC considering these women were from different regions within the United States. They were not the same age. And, the participants are leaders within different organizations. Upon completing the analysis, I found that their commonality was that they were adolescent GOC. They were connected by marginalization associated with the intersection of gender and race. The four participants were very similar. They shared similar stories and they had similar advice for future adolescent GOC. In addition, the lens through which the participants expressed their experiences did not conflict based on their individual differences.

Significance of the Study

This research study was significant because it explored how gender and racial inequity effects access to leadership development for adolescent GOC through the lens of WOC leaders who overcame those challenges. This research study was also significant because its participants were once adolescent GOC who experienced gender and racial inequity. However, they overcame those challenges and transitioned into senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. This research filled a gap in understanding adolescent GOC experiences relative to leadership development. Hoyt and Kennedy (2008), Archard (2012) and Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) assert that the intersectionality of race and gender negatively affect adolescent GOC because they are challenged with balancing their changing hormones while experiencing obstacles;

socially, economically, and culturally. According to Callahan, Wilson, Birdsall, Estabrook-Fishinghawk, Carson, Ford, Ouzts, and Yob (2012), adolescent GOC typically experience gender and racial inequity during puberty as they develop educationally, socially, and emotionally. They are less likely to be chosen for leadership development programs due to stereotypical innuendos that imply adolescent GOC are inferior educationally and behaviorally (Jacobs, 2016).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative analysis explores the experiences of its participants. As such, there are limitations in its results (Yin, 2011). This qualitative inquiry yields several limitations. As the researcher, I am of the same background as the participants. I am a marginalized individual. I was also a marginalized adolescent GOC who was misunderstood. I was overlooked for leadership roles and leadership opportunities because of race and gender-based oppression. My potential bias could have effective the study's results. In addition, the researcher is a data collection tool in qualitative studies. As the data collection tool, I ensured my bias did not negatively affect the way I collected, coded, and presented the data. Another limitation is the participants' views may contain bias during the data collection process. However, I uncovered themes that add value to the body of knowledge in this subject area.

An additional limitation of this research study is the use of four WOC senior executive leaders in a Fortune 500 companies. The number of participants is a limitation of the study. However, the collected data will add to the body of knowledge regarding the experiences of adolescent GOC related to leadership development. In addition, WOC

leaders in other fields such as nonprofit organizations are excluded from this research study. The data may not yield findings that will generalize a large population. However, the research sustained an in-debt understanding of the factors that influenced WOC's leadership development process despite their challenges of not receiving leadership development as adolescent GOC.

Implications for Social Change

My intention for this study was to explore the experiences of the participants as adolescent GOC related to leadership development. I uncovered intervention strategies they benefited from to help them become senior executive leaders within Fortune 500 companies in the United States. Their experiences denoted within this research study may start the conversation about adolescent GOC and how the intersection of race and gender negatively effects their ability to gain leadership development outside of sports related activities.

This research study may contribute to Marx's idea of Critical Theory. Critical Theory was the theoretical foundation that grounded this research study. It seeks to identify inequality of any kind and assert ways for people to free themselves from it (Fischer & Tepe, 2011; Kaplan, 2003). Critical theory also acknowledges that marginalization is a form of oppression and inequality. This theory is applicable to the adolescent GOC's experiences as they attempt to gain targeted leadership development as its tenants employ the critique of power, race, gender, culture, and ethnicity.

Wun (2016) asserts that Black femininity stereotypically suggests that WOC and GOC are not capable of human behaviors associated with being warm and inviting.

Instead, they are overly aggressive, overly sexual and combative. This research study may restart the conversation to debunk these aforementioned stereotypes. This research study may also restart the conversation about how the intersection of gender and race adds an additional barrier for adolescent GOC just as it does for WOC as they are shaping their leader identities based on these stereotypes, negative images, negative views, and misguided preconceived notions.

Implications for Practice

This research study may help nonprofit leaders, whose mission is to mentor adolescent GOC, develop targeted leadership development programs to help train them so they are better prepared for leadership. Those nonprofit leaders may gain insight about the perceptions and experiences of adolescent GOC. In turn, they may craft leadership development opportunities for adolescent GOC to practice those learned skills. Festekjian et al., 2014, Sanchez-Hucles, and Davis (2010) assert that WOC are underrepresented in senior executive positions in Fortune 500 companies. This may be based on their inability to gain targeted leadership development as adolescent GOC. Adolescent GOC who are better prepared to lead will become WOC leaders who are equipped with skills and experiences to help them navigate challenges associated with leading in corporate settings. In turn, the workforce will become more diverse with effective WOC leaders who are able to advance to senior executive leadership positions within Fortune 500 companies in the United States. This study may also start the conversation about supporting policy creation that will provide funding for nonprofit organizations whose mission is to mentor adolescent GOC in the area of leadership development.

Recommendations for Future Research

The primary limitation of this research study was the use of four WOC senior, executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States. This eliminates WOC in various leadership roles within other organizations. In addition, the participant selection was small. I recommend that similar studies be done with WOC in various levels of leadership within Fortune 500 companies in the Unites States. I also recommend future studies of WOC leaders within nonprofit organizations who have identified having challenges with gaining leadership development during adolescence. The future studies may yield generalizable results. Furthermore, this study focused on WOC who are of African Descent. I would also suggest studying other marginalized groups like women of Hispanic, Asian, and Native American descent. Studying women of other marginalized groups may add substantial insight about their experiences. We may learn how similar or how different their experiences were. Finally, future research may include studies of WOC leaders who are of various socio-economic statuses. Studies may report differences in experiences of adolescent GOC who are in higher or lower socio-economic statuses.

Conclusion

This research study addressed the gap in the literature related to adolescent GOC and their challenges associated with gaining targeted leadership development based on the intersection of race and gender. This research study was significant because it explored how gender and racial inequity effects access to leadership development for adolescent GOC through the lens of WOC leaders. This research study was also significant because its participants were once adolescent GOC who experienced gender

and racial inequity. However, they overcame those challenges and became senior executive leaders in Fortune 500 companies in the United States.

The conducted interviews answered the research questions and substantiated the significance of this research study. The participants provided valued insight into their experiences as adolescent GOC, their challenges, and the intervention strategies that helped them overcome their challenges to become WOC senior executive leaders within Fortune 500 companies in the United States. Further research is necessary. However, this research study adds to the body of knowledge regarding adolescent GOC and leadership development and how their experiences are negatively affected by the intersection of gender and race.

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